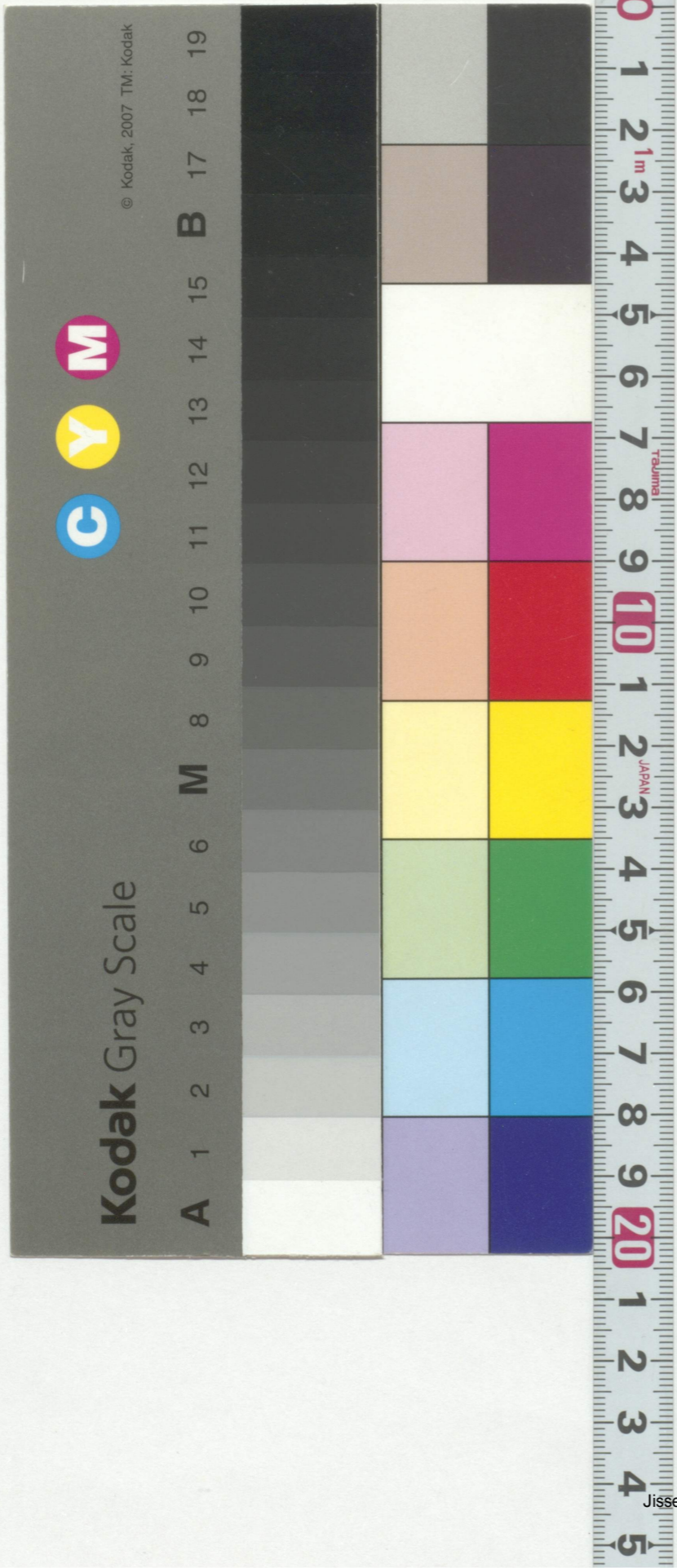


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Vol. **17**



FIRST YEAR—No.

NOVEMBER, 1919

THE NEW WORLD

MONTHLY ALLIED AND INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

LE MONDE NOUVEAU



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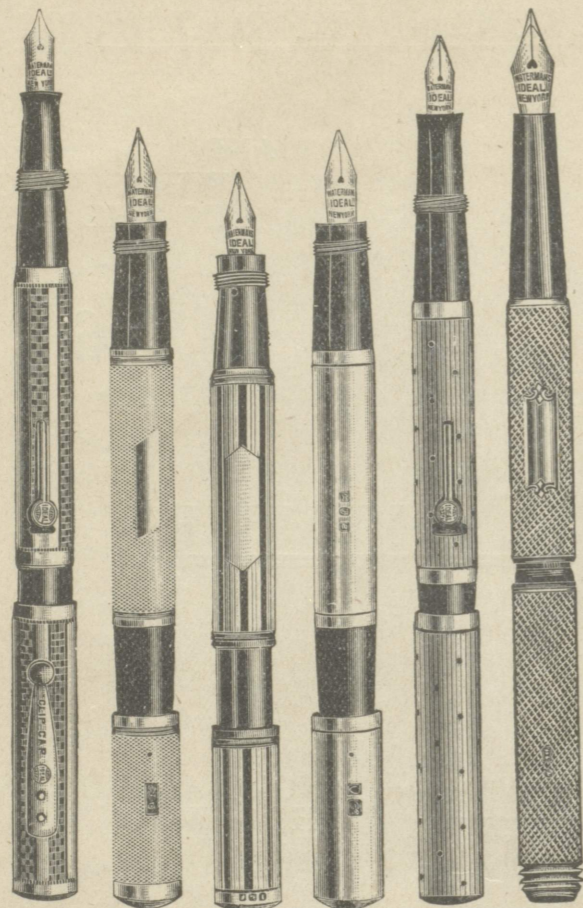
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THE NEW WORLD

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Bolshevism in its Cradle

The Life and Opinions of William Godwin.

By George Saintsbury

IT cannot be quite alien from the objects and subjects of THE NEW WORLD to cast a glance on the prophet of what was once proudly or shrinkingly called "The New Philosophy"; more particularly when this old-new doctrine, or set of doctrines, has recently become new again with a vengeance. What makes the subject more interesting still is that, as so often happens, Godwin was very much forgotten, at least in England, but a very short time ago, comparatively speaking. His novels, indeed (with which it is not proposed to deal here, though "Caleb Williams" is a sort of companion in fiction to "Political Justice"), kept him in a certain remembrance, for the book just mentioned never went out of print; and some people read "St. Leon," though not many ventured on "Fleetwood," fewer still on "Mandeville," and fewest of all on "Cloudesley." But of those who had any notion of "Political Justice" itself, some (probably most) got that notion from a characteristic passage of De Quincey (whereon more presently), and two persons of very high repute in English academics and letters during the latter part of the nineteenth century expressed themselves pretty contemptuously about its author. Mr. Jowett, most famous of all masters of Balliol since Wyclif, is said, if I recollect aright, to have objected to someone reading Godwin's "Political Justice" because it was merely second-rate stuff, and obsolete besides; and Mr. Matthew Arnold, who did not by any means always agree with Mr. Jowett, was much more explicit while delivering the same opinion in a passage of a letter to a French friend of his. This French friend, it would seem, was anxious to find some good subject in English literature for an essay, and had thought of Godwin. Mr. Arnold objected. "Godwin," he says, "is interesting, but he is not a 'source'—an origin." "Of the actual currents which are bearing us along, none comes from him." There was at the time he wrote—it was 1876—the Life of Norman Macleod, there was the Life of Lord Macaulay, there were many good subjects on all sides. "You would be wrong," he says to M. Fontanes, "to leave them on one side and write an article on Godwin."

Here are two weighty authorities to go against, and yet somehow I do not feel, and what is more never did feel, much abashed by them. Mr. Jowett, very free from prejudices in some respects, had plenty of them in others, and was rather notorious for regarding not merely what he did not know, but what he did not care to know, as "not knowledge." He had grown up at a time when Godwin's anarchism had gone out of fashion and had not come into it

again; the man, no exact scholar and a Bohemian in the outskirts of literature, was not likely to appeal to him; and so Godwin was dismissed. Mr. Arnold's disapproval is even more easily intelligible. Expert and leader as he was in literary criticism, exquisite as his accomplishments were in literary practice both of verse and prose, Mr. Arnold was not a great proficient in, and a rather lukewarm admirer of, literary or any history. He thought that the historic estimate tended to make people pay too much attention to things other than the great and principal things to which he would have had us solely devote ourselves; and certainly none would say that Godwin's work was one of these. But see how history revenges herself. Mr. Arnold here made a distinct blunder in fact. Godwin, if not the author, was in England the first clear and thorough-going codifier of those anarchist doctrines in politics and philosophy which were not quite unknown or unimportant things in his own day, and have grown into the greatest portent of our present period. In letters Godwin exercised the very strongest influence for a time on the two men, Wordsworth and Coleridge, who a hundred and twenty years ago revolutionised English poetry and almost English literature. That, too, is something of a claim to be a source—something of a title to be an origin: and the two together may perhaps make him at least as good a subject as Dr. Norman Macleod.

Godwin, whose very name shows his essentially English blood, was born on March 3rd, 1756, at Wisbech in Cambridgeshire, but came of a family which seems to have been established in Wessex, at Newbury, for some generations at any rate. His father was a Nonconformist minister, and a pupil of the famous Dr. Doddridge; he was educated himself for the same vocation, and actually for a time pursued it, first at Ware, then at Stowmarket. And though his orthodoxy gradually gave way, he does not seem to have made any kind of violent severance between himself and his co-religionists, but rather to have slipped almost insensibly out of ministerial and into literary work. Of his performances in his new function very scanty and indistinct accounts exist for some time. He wrote, before his success with "Caleb Williams," at least three novels (which nobody seems to have read, and which I myself never came across) for ridiculous sums of money—ten or twelve pounds apiece. He contributed to reviews at the starvation prices—two guineas the sheet of sixteen pages or thereabouts—which were customary till Jeffrey and the *Edinburgh Review* gave a dead-lift in this matter to the extent of from five hundred to a thousand per cent. He once had, for a time, poorly paid but regular employment on an extremely useful publication, the *Biographia Britannica*. He even appears by degrees to have attained, in a way more common in the eighteenth century than since, a position in London literary society rather justified by his abilities than by his performances, and certainly not due either to wealth or to powerful connections, in blood or friendship, or to party subserviency. For Godwin, though in some ways, as we shall see, not exactly a high-minded man, had an unconquerable scrupulosity in adherence to his own opinions, and would have been quite unable, even if he had been willing, to write to order on any subject or in any prescribed line of policy or creed whatsoever.

He was very nearly forty when his two famous books, different in outward

character but due to very much the same inward purpose, at once made him a personage of distinction in literature and of formidable importance in politics, and gave him an influence the character and amount of which, though for a long time pooh-poohed or ignored, are absolutely undeniable by anyone who has studied the subject. These books were the in more than one sense great treatise on "Political Justice" and the novel of "Caleb Williams." The ideas of both were no doubt partly inspired by his friend Holcroft, a self-educated man of crude and violent opinions, but a dramatist and novelist of real talent. Holcroft, however, had neither the education nor the systematic temperament necessary to work out such a treatise as the "Political Justice." For the book is the most remarkable example extant in its own direction of what has been called the intellect left to itself, and working out consequences from certain assumed principles, without regard to experience, or expediency, or humour, or common sense. Appearing, as it did, just at the time when the practical excesses of the French Revolution had reached their highest, "Political Justice" arranged the Anarchist theory—the theory which regards all positive law, all regular institutions, all punishments, all interferences, in short, of any kind with the individual except in the way of kindness, as things utterly unjustifiable and radically bad. The antithesis between Justice and Law is at the very root of this book, and is not much less at the root of "Caleb Williams."

Marriage, religion, monarchy, being all restraints, have to go; though Godwin is so preternaturally serious and thorough-going that he deprecates the use of force to overthrow institutions quite as strongly as the use of force to maintain them. It was possibly this, and the obvious want of practicalness in his doctrines generally, that saved him from the prosecution which was unsuccessfully directed against his friends Holcroft and Horne Tooke, and more successfully against others. Such a prosecution must almost certainly have succeeded in his own case, either in England, or still more in Scotland, where one can imagine Lord Hermiston finding Godwin a subject equally congenial to his own taste, and inspiring to the pen that, alas! dropped from the hands of his future biographer. Godwin's adversaries, however, who included Canning and other persons plentifully provided with the humour which he as plentifully lacked, declared that "Political Justice" was not prosecuted because a book published in quarto at three guineas could do the general public no harm. There is truth as well as humour in this gibe. The book—my own copy of which, probably in consequence of the odium attaching to it, was bound with no title on the back—formed a huge volume of the size of a large family Bible, printed with margins which, though cut down in binding, are still of the most lavish, containing with Preface and Contents more than nine hundred pages; and, though very well and clearly written, conducting its demonstrations with a relentless and stolid contempt of all sense of the ridiculous on the one hand, and on the other of those appeals by rhetoric to passion, which are most formidable when addressed to popular audiences. Its effect on the unthinking was probably next to *nil*; its fallacies were seen at once by steady heads; but its influence on young and enthusiastic persons of more wits than experience was incalculable. This has been described in the above-mentioned passage of De Quincey's, which, though a little, is not much exagger-

rated in tone, and which, though the writer was too young to have known the facts actually at the time of the book's appearance, represents very recent tradition and a direct acquaintance with some of Godwin's most illustrious if most temporary converts, such as Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey. He speaks of the shock to Society as being, though momentary, fearful—of men being appalled by the cold fury of the challenge.

Perhaps one ought to qualify this rather strong language by showing something of the other side, of the grave and grotesque absurdity which saturates Godwin's anarchism. Despite or through the varnish of amiability above-mentioned, there are germs of the worst results of Bolshevism itself. But we may find something equally amusing and suggestive in his serious proposition that "All attachments to individuals, *except in proportion to their merits*, are plainly unjust." One sees at once how extremely convenient this is, or would be, on one slight supposition—that human beings were not human beings. Attachment being a mere calculus of merits, envy, jealousy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness would vanish at once. If my friend dropped me for another friend I should philosophically observe that the other friend's merits were no doubt superior to mine. If my wife left me in the same way, or if any young lady refused to be my wife, the same reflection would at once remove all soreness of feeling. If my father cut me off with a shilling—though indeed on Godwin's system there would be no shillings and no cutting off, with very dubious fatherhood—I should either acknowledge the paternal acuteness in perceiving my want of merit, or deplore the blindness in miscalculating my possession of it. Perhaps the following passage, which has to do with community of goods, is even funnier. Godwin was a student; and it seems to have occurred even to him that it would be rather a nuisance if another person came into his room and said: "Philosopher, I want this room to sit in and that table to work at." But his undoubting mind was never staggered long by any commonsense consideration. "Disputes," he says—and I am now quoting his very words—"would in reality be impossible. They are the offspring of a misshapen and disproportionate love of ourselves. Do you want my table? Make one for yourself; or, if I be more skilful in that respect than you, I will make one for you. Do you want it immediately? Let us compare the urgency of my wants and yours, and let justice decide." That an abstraction *can't* decide: that each disputant will be quite certain beforehand that she decides for him; and that the upshot of it will be either resort to brute force (which Godwin hated) or to that embodied Justice, to wit Law, which he perhaps hated less, but which his system compelled him to declare to be worse; that if you are perpetually to interrupt business and pleasure to discuss and compare respective claims to their implements life cannot go on for a day—these are the things which the plain man sees at once, but to which Godwin shut his eyes with that sublime, that inexpugnable, that utterly hopeless and desperately mischievous persistence which only implicit faith in theory can confer upon mankind. When a man decides, as Godwin does, that exactly half-an-hour's work per diem on the part of everybody will satisfy all the reasonable wants of the human race, he is beyond argument: you can only laugh at him or shut him up.

"Caleb Williams"—still a common enough book, not merely in libraries but in modern bookshops, ever willing to book orders—is a sort of fictitious illustration or object-lesson in the doctrines of the more abstract treatise. The hero by chance discovers the fact of a murder having been committed (under circumstances, it is true, of gross provocation) by a man of high reputation and otherwise unblemished character, and the whole story of the book, which is very ingeniously constructed, turns upon the efforts of the criminal to suppress the danger of a revelation. Even here the indictment against society is of the most unpractical kind, and Godwin is apparently blind to the obvious retort that in his own ideal commonwealth private murder would probably be one of the most frequent of things, inasmuch as on the one hand there would be no other hope of redressing an injury, and on the other there would, on the strictest system of "Political Justice," be no fear of punishment.

This point is of importance. It will be observed, and may be objected, that this "Bolshevism in its Cradle" lacks a good many things which are associated with the same creed, or no-creed, at the present day. There are no Soviets; there is no *special* anti-Capitalism; there is no *special* worship of the proletariat; and there is a special putting forward of sweet reasonableness and absence of violent methods. But then most of us in our cradles do differ considerably from our grown-up stages: even Lord Palmerston, who thought we were all "born good," certainly did not think that we all remained good. And while Godwinism was practically certain to develop all the corruptions of its maturity, that development would be as certain in some cases by reaction as in others by development proper. If Godwin did not say in so many words, "*La propriété c'est le vol*," his own theory of temporary and readjustable property according to merit must (human nature being what human nature is) turn into Proudhon's; and it only wanted time and the Marxian miasma to spread the notion that capital is the worst form of property. So, also, though Soviet authority must logically share the curse of *all* authority according to the pure Godwinian anarchism, something of the kind was sure to arise. As for the transformation of mild persuasion into murder, that is the most inevitable of all. "Be my brother or I will kill you" is not a joke, but a simple expression of natural human sentiment, observable and verifiable in all fanatics—religious, political, social, teetotal and every other kind. Once remove government according to law as found necessary and imposed by traditional experience of human history, and all these things follow, with the agreeable further developments in detail of Moscow and Munich, as a matter of course. And this removal is certainly the be-all, though in two senses, good and bad, it cannot be pronounced the end-all, of Godwin's New Philosophy. On the abstract characteristics of that no more need be said; but something remains to be said in regard to his later life. It was in some ways curiously inconsistent with his opinions; but it never was false to his doctrine of what was due to merit—which in his own case he naturally presumed to be high.

The period—the eventful years 1793-4—which saw Godwin shoot up from his long-occupied position of a respectable hack of letters to that of a dreaded or revered political philosopher and a popular novelist, also begins, again late, his history as a personally interesting hero of another kind of romance. If he

was such a hero, it was to a great extent in his own despite. He was all his life an exceedingly cold-blooded person, though his admirers will have it that he was passionately in love with his first wife, the famous and luckless Mary Wollstonecraft. But either because of this very insensibility, or because of his fame, he seems to have been rather an object of admiration to the other sex; and though he had the unpleasant experience of being more than once rejected as a suitor, and at least once cast off as a friend, by ladies, it seems to have been due, in all cases, mainly to his extraordinary inability to conduct himself like a man of this world. Before he met Mary Wollstonecraft he was on terms of intimate and honourable friendship with the beautiful and bewitching actress and dramatist, Mrs. Inchbald, who found "Caleb Williams" "sublimely horrible, captivatingly frightful," and whose breach with him on his marriage was pretty certainly due to pique. He had also, it would seem, aroused, though no doubt most innocently, the jealousy of a Mr. Reveley, the husband of a very pretty lady who is well known to readers of Godwin's future son-in-law as a friend of the Shelleys, though under the name of Gisborne, which she took by a second marriage. But when he met the author of the "Rights of Woman" he seems to have succumbed to her almost at once.

She was not very young; and she had had no pleasant experience of the male sex, in a spendthrift father, an unkind brother, and a lover who behaved as badly as any lover possibly could behave. Her portraits show her to have been, though not regularly beautiful as Mrs. Inchbald was, yet of very attractive appearance, and her charm is attested by every impartial person who knew her, and by some on the opposite side to her in politics. The insubordinate character of her principal book, however, with her unhappy history, and, it must be admitted, some crudities and vulgarities of expression which seem to have been due to an unfortunate bringing-up rather than to any want of real delicacy of mind, had prejudiced the general opinion very much against her: and it was only in distinctly Jacobin, or, to antedate a useful word, distinctly Bohemian, circles in London that she could hope to be welcomed without awkward limitations. The really comic thing was that, according to a very common but always amusing law of humanity, she and Godwin, both of whom testified against marriage, lost no time in getting married. Their married life was short, not unhappy, though it might have become so, but at least as unconventional as could be expected from the prophet of the New Philosophy of General Anarchism and the prophetess of the "Rights of Woman." Although they did not exactly keep entirely separate establishments, Godwin had separate lodgings in which he spent sometimes the whole, sometimes part of the day; and they wrote notes to each other asking for "a call" if they had occasion to confer with each other. An exchange of letters during a tour which he took in the country not long after the marriage is sufficiently lover-like, but not least so in containing some lovers' quarrels on the lady's side. But perhaps it is rather difficult to expect continued happiness in the case of a passionate and excitable woman like Mary Wollstonecraft, and a man like Godwin, the eccentricity of whose opinions was only equalled by the extraordinary phlegm of his temperament. It is, however, certain in the first place that his two chief women friends, Mrs. Inchbald and Mrs. Reveley, were, the one irretrievably, the other tem-

porarily, estranged by the marriage; and in the second place that Godwin very bitterly lamented the loss of his wife, which followed shortly after the birth of the future Mrs. Shelley. It is, according to established opinion, no argument against the sincerity of this lamenting that he very speedily resolved to marry again, though the resolve emphasises the comment on his previously expressed opinions upon marriage still more tragi-comically. "Marriage, that institution which I wish to see abolished," says he, "and which I would recommend to my fellow-men never to practise but with the greatest caution." As we shall see, if he did not in the second instance practise it with caution, it was not for want of repeated trials; and the caution was rather on the other side.

In a remarkable collection of Essays published in the year of his marriage (1797) and called "The Enquirer," Godwin did not so much recant or draw back from any of his previously announced opinions as vary and extend his method of enquiry into other and sometimes, though not always, less dangerous districts of discussion. The preface, however, contains, though no recantation, a distinct apology for the previous effervescence of his zeal, confesses that he "did not escape the contagion of exaltation and ferment," and avows his old plan of starting with one or two simple principles and deducing fearlessly without any regard to consequences; accompanying the avowal with a further confession of its extreme danger, and acknowledging that he has substituted the recurrence to experiment and actual observation. Accordingly "The Enquirer" has nothing of the interest of startling and scandalous novelty which belongs, or at least belonged, to "Political Justice." To those who only want excitement it is rather a humdrum book; though Godwin's invincible insensibility to those considerations, now of prudence, now of absurdity, now of other restraints, which beset ordinary minds, gives it piquancy now and then. It was quite clear, however, that in such paths no literary fortune was to be won; and Godwin turned to drama (the unlucky "Antonio" of the damnation of which Lamb has given a delightful account); the later novels above referred to, and other things. But these are not for us to-day.

We may return to the personal interest of Godwin's life, which now grew acute again. He had, as I have said, discovered that whether it was desirable or not that mankind should "practise marriage with caution," there is a good deal to be said for the practice in itself. And with two girl children of tender years to be taken care of (his own, and Mary's by her lover Imlay), there would have been much excuse for him even if he had had no other reason for returning to the said practice. Unluckily that incurable incapacity for behaving like a man of this world which has been noticed, and which is so closely connected with his opinions, rather increased upon him. His friend, Mr. Reveley, died in July, 1799; and before a month was out Godwin proposed to the widow. We have not got Mrs. Reveley's answers to his letters; but we have the letters themselves, or some of them, and they are quite enough. He storms at "cowardly ceremonies"; his confession, or practical confession, in the Preface to "The Enquirer" that there was a good deal more in cowardly ceremonies than he had once thought, having apparently been forgotten under the pressure of personal disappointment. He tells the lady, with his customary maladroitness, that she said she loved him when she had a husband, and there-

fore she ought to marry him now that she has none. She seems to have told him that she was afraid of his superior understanding; whereupon instead of protesting, as any lover with a grain of intelligence would have done, that she was much the cleverer of the two, he admits the soft impeachment, says that she ought to like him all the better, and tells her that he knows she esteemed him more than she ever esteemed any man, and that she cannot form so despicable an opinion of him as to suppose that he can regard her with no eyes except those of a lover. Having thus said "nothing that he ought to say and everything he oughtn't to," he was, it is scarcely surprising to add, summarily rejected: at least it is supposed so. Nor can there be any doubt that he was intensely astonished.

This, however, was not the only, or the first, attempt he made to fill Mary Wollstonecraft's place. A year earlier, in 1798, between the publication of "The Enquirer" and that of "St. Leon," he had paid his addresses (if such a phrase can be used when there was so singular a want of address) to another person once of repute, now much forgotten—Miss Harriet Lee, joint author with her sister Sophia of divers novels and tales. How absolutely impossible a person (in a sense of the word in which French has anticipated English) Godwin was may almost sufficiently be judged from the fact that after he had first met Miss Lee at Bath he set to work when he got back to London "to make elaborate analyses of her conversation." Having satisfied himself that she would suit him by the process of elaborate analysis of her conversation (let it be remembered that Miss Lee, though a woman of letters, was not in the least of advanced or unconventional ideas in any respect), he suggested that she should come and stay in his house as that of a person who "did justice to her merits." Not unnaturally she sent him no answer; and after puzzling himself as to what this silence could possibly mean, he wrote to say that he was "obliged to be in Bristol next week," and would come and see her. The lady, who seems to have been a prude with a dash of the coquette and more than a dash of pride, was offended at his exceedingly naïf avowal that he was not coming on purpose; but agreed to see him. Her difficulties in accepting him were chiefly religious, and in any such case Godwin's chance was quite hopeless, inasmuch as he was both far too honest a man to conceal his opinions, and far too clumsy a one to put them in any way that could fail to be offensive to a sincere believer. He lectured her by letter, in a popular and condescending manner, on the points at issue, very much as he might have done if it had happened that she preferred Tweedledum and he Tweedledee; and at last received from her a plain statement (which even then did not take the scales from his eyes) that the difference between them was not in her eyes a matter of theory, and that she would have nothing more to say to him. In fact, Godwin might have been described by Dr. Johnson (whom, naturally enough, he did not like) as an unshubbable person. It is recorded that on one occasion, when his friend and constant helper, Thomas Wedgwood, had told him frankly that their friendship was safer if they did not meet, Godwin replied by suggesting that they *should* meet to "discuss the question whether it was better that they should meet or not"!

When a man has made up his mind in this way, to marry, no matter whom,

for better, for worse, it nearly always happens that he does so for worse. And so it happened to Godwin, though not quite as much for worse as, perhaps, he deserved. A widow of the name of Clairmont took a house next to his in the North of London; and, though it was not Leap Year, addressed him one evening as they sat on their contiguous balconies: "Is it possible that I behold the immortal Godwin?" She is admitted—it is one of the few good things said about her—to have been handsome, and not a fool; the immortal Godwin was always to be caught by flattery, and they very shortly married, the bride adding her own two children to the curiously assorted Godwin nursery; proceeding to comport herself after the fashion which made Lamb nickname her "The Bad Baby"; but, in business respects especially, perhaps giving Godwin as good a wife as he deserved.

The marriage took place just inside the nineteenth century, and Godwin lived till 1836. A great deal could be said (very easily, too, by the present writer) about this later part of his life, which saw many of the events connecting him most closely with general knowledge. He always worked hard; but his work was now almost purely literary in character, interesting, too, in its kinds, and perhaps not quite sufficiently valued, but out of our main subject. It was in this time that the events which gave his family affairs a notoriety of no very pleasant character—the suicide of Fanny Imlay and the elopements of Mary Godwin and Claire (less prettily but more accurately Jane) Clairmont—took place. In the last years of it occurred one of the least unpleasant ironies of Fate, the appointment by the Reformers of 1832 of this ancient anarchist to a sinecure office, the Yeoman Ushership of the Exchequer. I have sometimes thought that it would be amusing to print a collection of title-pages of famous books adjusted to the history and characters of their authors. "Political Justice, by the Yeoman Usher of the Exchequer," would not be the least piquant of these. But it was also during this later half of his life that a feature of our New Philosopher developed itself which may be fairly connected with his earlier opinions—which, indeed, has been definitely and elaborately excused by reference to these opinions. Godwin, to put it plumply, became, whatever he may have been earlier, the most shameless spunger on record—the most shameless, that is to say, of the grave and serious kind as opposed to the lighter methods and attitude of that contemporary and friend of his whom men call "Leigh Hunt" and gods "Skimpole." Everybody knows the fashion in which he bled Shelley. But perhaps everybody does not know that he borrowed money from poor men like Ritson and did not pay it; that the very next morning after he had been introduced to young Talfourd, he called upon that sucking and luckily quite impecunious barrister to request a loan of £150; or that after Sir Walter's misfortune, and when he was, as every man of letters in England knew, working himself to death to pay off his own debts and other people's, Godwin pestered him for what was practically a guarantee of money. "Oh! but," say his defenders, "he did not accept ordinary conventions of conduct." One may certainly thank them for that word, and, if such are the fruits, form a very decided opinion as to the tree. No doubt the original New Philosophy might justify an attempt to make someone else exert benevolence and acquire merit thereby; but, as in the other cases noticed earlier in this

article, the logical developments of the proceeding would be inconvenient. It would not take long for housebreaking and highway robbery to result from this principle, just as murder and outrage naturally develop from the others.

That, as he grew older, Godwin grew in some respects wiser—not merely in the way of becoming, without the slightest regard to correlative merit, a sinecurist under Government, though he had previously held that everybody ought to work and that there ought to be no Government at all—is not surprising. The children (or indeed the parents) of Revolution generally grow wiser unless their offspring or parent devours them too soon. But he has also left very amusing letters to intending disciples who took "Political Justice" at the foot of its letter. And his last philosophical work, the "Thoughts on Man," of 1831, would certainly not of itself suggest identity of authorship with his first. But this again is common, and, except to those who care only for the anecdote of literature and history, adds nothing to the interest of "Political Justice" itself. That interest lies in the fact that the book is the first book in English, and one of the first books in any language, to advocate complete reversal, or at any rate removal, of all hitherto accepted principles of law in politics, religion, morals and everything that affects the *conduct* of men. The author's history and personality add a little to the interest of the book and supply comment, sometimes decidedly ironic, on its principles; nor is this addition, perhaps, quite accidental or uninteresting. But it is as an early gossamer of what in various modifications or developments has since been known as Anarchism, Nihilism, Communism (in the *Commune* sense), and finally Bolshevism, that Godwin most deserves attention and will best "repay perusal."

Julius Cæsar, Lord French, and the Graf von Ludendorff

By George H. Mair

WHEN the records of the Great War, 1914-1918, come to be looked at as a whole it will probably be found that it differs from all other previous wars in the extent to which the chief actors have unburdened themselves in writing on their achievements, or at any rate on what they proposed to achieve. In England, Lord Jellicoe and Lord French have already published large volumes on their share in the campaign. In Germany, General von Ludendorff and Admiral von Tirpitz have already published their reminiscences, and there are promises of others from politicians and fighting men. We are still waiting for the Life of Lord Kitchener, the latter part of which must deal with the late war; and though no French General has hitherto published anything at all, it is inconceivable that with these examples before them Marshal Foch and some of his colleagues in the enterprise which resulted in victory will not give their share to the general sum of self-revelation.

All these memoirs will be valuable to the future historian, but they will also be perplexing. Of those which have already been published it is, I think, no exaggeration to say that the bulk are directed not merely to justify their authors before posterity, but to making a point, very often of an extremely controversial character, against some other leader still living or lately dead. We can hardly regard, for instance, the account by Lord French of the initial months of the war up to the end of 1914 as being impartial history without checking it by what the representatives of Lord Kitchener have to say about it; and still more, perhaps, without hearing, if he were to find candour possible, what were the views of Marshal Joffre. We should equally be wrong if we took Lord Jellicoe's account of the proceedings of the Grand Fleet, painstaking and sincere as it is, for an actual record of historical fact without knowing what the British Admiralty had to say about the same series of incidents, and perhaps also without hearing what Admiral Beatty had to tell about those episodes in which he personally was concerned. The General or the Admiral has, in fact, become since the Armistice a propagandist in his own defence, and we are in danger of taking for history what may be no more than an *ex parte* statement of a man who occupied a historical position. The same difficulty, of course, has confronted historians dealing with the past. Von Moltke, when he wrote his own account of his great achievements in the Franco-Prussian War, was the subject of sharp criticism from war correspondents who had witnessed his campaigns, and he was accused, not without justice, of having described events

as happening according to plan when in fact he had snatched the victory out of a situation of considerable peril. Rather than admit that he had not foreseen everything, he was content to claim merit for his own tactical dispositions where observers preferred to give the credit to the valour of the troops under his command. A similar criticism could easily be applied to the writings of commanders in the recent war who have so far published their narratives. These questions cannot, however, be discussed properly except by those who have some professional knowledge of the art of war. Soldiers must judge the military records and sailors the naval. It is, however, possible for the ordinary reader of books to estimate these productions from their literary point of view, and to consider whether, leaving aside the question, Has the art of war progressed or not, the art of writing about it by an actor chiefly concerned is any better than it was when the first essays of the kind were attempted at the threshold of modern history?

Generally speaking, it has been one of the main canons of literary criticism in the past that the description of his achievements by someone who had lived adventurously and had something serious to do was well written, simply because the author could not help writing well. The accounts of the voyages across the Atlantic, for instance, in the sixteenth century, as printed in the English collections by Hakluyt and Purchas, have always been regarded as of the first rank in English literary style, not because the authors were literary people, but because they had something exciting and interesting to tell, and were so well informed about it themselves, that the writing of it came easily, and became when written a model of literary style even though the authors would have been puzzled to account for their capacity with the pen. It is to be feared that either the spread of education in a minor degree, or self-consciousness in writing, due to reading too many newspapers, has robbed our men of action of the capacity to write their experiences and achievements down in the manner of those of older days. The dispatches, for instance, announcing the various naval victories of the British Fleet during the War, were almost uniformly written in a style calculated to give their readers the least possible degree of realisation of what had been accomplished. Lord French's despatches were much better, and had he not given his critics a handle by writing a book, he might have gone down to history as one of the British Generals best able to expound in print what he had done in the field.

Unfortunately he published his book, and the book, though interesting in its combativeness and in its determination to carry on after the Armistice an internal warfare in the small fighting area of British politics, is neither lucid nor adequate in describing the achievements either of himself or of his armies. You get no continuous picture from its pages of the epic retreat of the British Army from Mons to the Marne or of its equally epic advance. You picture from it the Commander-in-Chief rushing this way and that, lying flat on top of a haystack looking at something which anyone could have told him at second-hand, calling continuously on his subordinate commanders, losing his motor-car in the middle of streams of transport, and generally feeling himself to be the sport of circumstances rather than in command of them. I do not say that this is a clear statement of Lord French's achievement: far from it. But

it is the impression which a fairly careful reader of his book would get, and it only shows that, however skilled he may have been in writing despatches at the moment, he has contrived for one reason or another, in writing about these events at some distance, to give his readers the impression of a lack of command, on his part, of the situation as a whole. And just as the Elizabethan sailors were good writers because they were able to describe a continuous action in which the logic of words followed from the logic of events, Lord French becomes a bad writer because you do not feel the presence of any logic of events, and therefore it naturally follows there is no logic of words. There are half-a-dozen accounts of the events described in his volume, "1914," which are more intelligible, better written and probably nearer the truth, than the accounts of the Field-Marshal himself.

Examples of Lord French's casualness, of the perfunctory following of some notes or diary kept at the time, which is really the negation of literary composition, would not be difficult to find in almost any chapter of the book. Take, for instance, the following from Chapter VII. after the British Army had crossed the Aisne:—

"From this time I sent constant and urgent warnings to London by wire and by letter to look out for the safety of these same ports.

"It was just about now that I began to conceive the idea of disengaging from the Aisne and moving to a position in the north, for the main purpose of defending the Channel ports and, as a secondary reason, to be in a better position to concert combined action and co-operation with the Navy.

"At the moment of which I am speaking, and for many days afterwards, there was no serious thought or belief that Antwerp was in danger. My fear for the Channel ports, which then began to lay a strong hold upon my thoughts, in all probability influenced my mind, and, perhaps, affected my dispositions throughout the rest of the time during which I took my part in the Battle of the Aisne.

"I remember on the same day (September 16th) visiting some hospital trains which were taking the wounded away. It was gratifying to mark the great improvement in their organisation and equipment.

"On the 17th the 1st Corps was heavily attacked, but repulsed the enemy with great loss. Craonne was lost by the 18th French Corps, but a strong position was still maintained by them on the Chemin des Dames.

"Our operations on the Aisne were at this time much hampered by heavy rain.

"On this day (September 17th) a French Reserve Division captured two complete battalions of Prussian Guards in Berry-au-Bac, and a French Cavalry Corps made a splendid raid on the German communications, operating from Roye and moving east as far as the neighbourhood of Ham and St. Quentin. In this raid General Bridoux, commanding the Cavalry Corps, was killed in his motor and his papers were captured.

"I detached the 6th Division from Pulteney's command (3rd Corps) to form an Army Reserve, but gave him the use of the Divisional artillery" (pp. 157-158, "1914," first edition).

I have stopped there, but the reader will see there is no particular reason why one should not stop or start anywhere. He will perceive the absence of an ordered mind so far as literary expression is concerned, and he may, like me, be intrigued with the idea whether this is a thing connected with Lord French's capacity as a commander or separated from it.

When Lord French is giving a picture and not attempting to give a consecutive and comprehensible narrative of events he is on much surer ground. Some of his personal touches are entirely admirable, and will remain for his-

torians to give something of the vividness of a thing seen to the pages of their narrative. What could be better, indeed, than the following, describing the latter end of the great retreat:—

"I spent several hours of the 28th in going the round of the troops, as it was possible to intercept various columns on the march or at their temporary halts. I was able to get the men together on the roadside, to thank them for the splendid work they had done, to tell them of the gratitude of the French Commander-in-Chief, and the immense value of the service they had rendered to the Allied cause. I charged them to repeat all this to their comrades, and to spread it throughout the units to which they belonged. There was neither time nor opportunity for any formal inspection or set parade. The enemy was on our heels, and there was little time to spare, but it touched me to the quick to realise how, in the face of all the terrible demand made upon their courage, strength, and endurance, these glorious British soldiers listened to the few words I was able to say to them with the spirit of heroes and the confidence of children. It afforded me gratifying evidence of the wonderful instinctive sympathy which has always existed between the British soldier and his officer. These men had seen how they had been *led*, they *knew* the far greater proportionate loss suffered by their officers, they *felt* that they trusted them and were ready to follow them anywhere. It is this wonderful understanding between 'leaders' and 'led' which has constituted the great strength and glory of the British Army throughout all ages.

"In all these roadside talks and confidences never did I hear one word of complaint or breath of criticism. The spirit of discipline was as palpably shown amongst these scattered groups of unkempt, overstrained, tired soldiers as on any 'King's Birthday' Review ever held on the Horse Guards Parade. Their one repeated question was: 'When shall we turn round and face them again?' And they would add: 'We can drive them to hell.'

"It was distressing, indeed, to look at some battalions, which I had seen near Mons only some three or four days earlier in all their fresh glory and strength, now brought down to a handful of men and two or three officers; but the glorious spirit I saw animating the men gave me the keenest pleasure, and inspired a confidence which was of the utmost help."

There speaks the humane commander, and, as I have said, he gives you a picture. You cannot help feeling that if the whole book had been conceived in that vein how much better it would have been. Equally good and indeed dramatic in its intensity is the description of the commander-in-chief's passage through Ypres on the great day when the whole fortunes of the British front, and perhaps of the Alliance, seemed at stake.

"As I passed through Ypres on my way to Haig, there were manifest signs of unusual excitement, and some shells were already falling in the place. It is wonderful with what rapidity the contagion of panic spreads through a civilian population. I saw loaded vehicles leaving the town, and people were gathered in groups about the streets, chattering like monkeys or rushing hither and thither with frightened faces.

"As we passed by the ancient Cloth Hall, the old Cathedral, and the other splendid examples of Flemish architecture for which this town was famed, I did not realise how soon the atmosphere of German 'frightfulness' was to reduce all these noble buildings to a heap of ruins. Although to-day Ypres as a city has ceased to exist, I am thankful to know that no German soldier has ever set foot within its walls save as a prisoner. Here, as at Verdun, they did not pass; and the glory is that of every soldier in the ranks.

"On reaching the eastern exit of the town, on my way to Hooge, I was stopped by a guard specially posted by First Corps Headquarters, with orders to prevent anyone leaving the city.

"Satisfying them as to my identity, I proceeded on my way. I had not gone more than a mile when the traffic on the road began to assume a most anxious and threatening

appearance. It looked as if the whole of the 1st Corps was about to fall back in confusion on Ypres. Heavy howitzers were moving west at a trot—always a most significant feature of a retreat—and ammunition and other wagons blocked the road almost as far as the eye could see. In the midst of the press of traffic, and along both sides of the road, crowds of wounded came limping along as fast as they could go, all heading for Ypres. Shells were screaming overhead and bursting with reverberating explosions in the adjacent fields.

"This spectacle filled me with misgiving and alarm. It was impossible for my motor-car to proceed at any pace, so we alighted and covered the rest of the way to Haig's Headquarters on foot."

It is passages such as these, apart, naturally, from Lord French's *ex parte* statement of his conflict with the Government and with Lord Kitchener, that give the main value to his book.

Ludendorff's memoirs are work of a very different type, yet the points of contact between the two men are curious enough. Lord French was no more than what would have been in the later stages of the war an Army Commander; indeed in numbers the force under his command was, I suppose, greatly inferior to that of any of the five British Army Commanders in the later stages of the war. Ludendorff, on the other hand, from the time when von Falkenhayn was dismissed after the battle of Verdun, virtually controlled the whole of German policy, and though he could not always get the political authorities to see eye to eye with him, what he said did in fact get done because he said it. It is somewhat remarkable, therefore, that though his job was mainly strategical and Lord French's mainly tactical, Lord French seems always to have been thinking of strategy, and Ludendorff of tactics. Lord French does, as a matter of fact, refer to the tactical aspect of the military situation as it was disclosed in the course of the retreat and subsequently revealed in its fullness when the Germans stood on the Aisne, but his reference is in the nature of a comment made after the event, and he definitely admits that the considerations which are now plain enough did not occur to him at the time. If they had—if he had occupied himself with the tactical aspects of the German stand on the French line, the war might have ended sooner than it did. As it was, his whole tactical interests began—and ended, apparently—in one highly important but by no means complete aspect of the question—the provision of high explosive shells for the artillery. Otherwise his interest was strategical and very soundly so. His preoccupation was to keep a free and easy communication between France and England, to preserve the Channel ports, and to prevent the enemy making the harbours of Belgium a menace to their shipping. To Ludendorff, tactics seem the breath of war. Throughout he seems to have put his chief trust in tactical experiments, and no doubt in the history of the art of war he must always take a high place for this reason. Everywhere in the military portions of his book this preoccupation appears. The capture of Liège by a *coup de main* is "the favourite recollection of my life as a soldier." "It was a bold stroke in which I was able to fight just like any soldier of the rank and file who has proved his worth in battle." In the case of the Battle of Tannenberg he is at pains to prove that there was no question of a prearranged strategical conception, but of a tactical seizure of possibilities as they arose.

"In October, 1914, on the occasion of his first visit to Headquarters at Posen, Major Valdivia, the worthy Spanish Military Attaché during the war, asked me whether the

Battle of Tannenberg had been fought in accordance with a long-settled plan. I was bound to say that this was not the case. He was astonished; like many other people, he had assumed the contrary.

"An assemblage of troops into line of battle may, and indeed must, be prepared a long time beforehand. The requirements of the battles in position-warfare are somewhat similar. In a war of movement, and in the case of the battle that develops out of a war of movement, the situations which the commander has to picture to himself follow one after the other in motley succession. In this case he must decide in accordance with his instinct; this is where soldiering becomes an art and the soldier becomes a general."

In December, 1916, when he made his first tour as Hindenburg's deputy on the Western front, it was to tactical questions that he devoted his mind. "In the end of ends, infantry is the deciding factor in every battle. I was in the infantry myself, and was body and soul an infantryman. I told my sons to join the infantry." And it was to the infantry he paid all his attention—not to the question of *moral*, which, as the extract I have quoted above shows, was always preoccupying Lord French, but as regards equipment. Throughout his book Ludendorff looks on *moral* as a civilian virtue, the lack of which in Germany indeed lost the war, but lost it because civil backbone went rather than military. The famous French poilu's remark, "*Pourvu que les civils tiennent,*" would have been his motto. In all his dealings with his men, it was their methods and weapons he was concerned with.

"I attached great significance to what I learned about our infantry at Cambrai, about their tactics and preparation. Without doubt they fought too doggedly, clinging too resolutely to the mere holding of ground, with the result that the losses were heavy. The deep dug-outs and cellars often became fatal man-traps. The use of the rifle was being forgotten, hand grenades had become the chief weapons, and the equipment of the infantry with machine-guns and similar weapons had fallen far behind that of the enemy. The General Field-Marshal and I could for the moment only ask that the front lines should be held more lightly, the deep underground works be destroyed, and all trenches and posts be given up if the retention of them were unnecessary to the maintenance of the position as a whole, and likely to be the cause of heavy losses. The problems of the reorganisation and equipment of the infantry could be dealt with only step by step. The excessive use of hand grenades had come about because these could be usefully and safely employed from behind shelter, whereas a man using a rifle must leave his cover. In the close fighting of some of our own undertakings, and also in the large-scale attacks by the enemy, where the fighting at any moment came to be man to man, hand grenades were readier weapons for unpractised men and easier to use than rifles, the latter also having the disadvantage of getting dirty easily. One could understand that; but infantry must keep able to hold the enemy off and to fight from a distance. When it came to hand-to-hand fighting, the superiority of the enemy in men was much too great.

"The infantry soldier had forgotten his shooting through use of grenades. He had to relearn it. He had to reacquire confidence in his weapon, and that meant that he must become master of it. That was easier to advise than to get accomplished. In the short training given to our new drafts little could be accomplished even if the attempt were made. Complete training was possible only under the conditions of peace, if the use of the rifle were to be a real protection when war came.

"In the case of the hostile infantry, the strength of the men had been greatly increased by machine-guns; we, on the other hand, had still to rely chiefly on our men. We had every reason to be sparing of them. An important change, moreover, had occurred; the machine-gun had to become the chief firearm of the infantry. The companies must be provided with new light machine-guns, the serving of which must be done by the smallest possible number of men. Our existing machine-guns in the machine-gun sections were too heavy for the purpose.

"In order to strengthen our fire, at least in the most important parts of the chief theatre of war, it was necessary to create special machine-gun companies—so to speak, machine-gun sharpshooters. Already a beginning had been made; it was necessary to consolidate and to increase it.

"The fighting power of the infantry had to be further strengthened by hand mines and grenades. All quick-loading weapons had to be increased.

"Lastly, the formation of storm troops from the infantry, which had begun during the war, had not only to be regularised, but to be adapted to the common good."

I have ventured to quote this passage somewhat at length because it is an excellent example of Ludendorff's expository method, and contrasts markedly in its solidity, its laboriousness, and in its sense of the importance of detail with the writing of Lord French. Enough has perhaps been said to illustrate the insistence of Ludendorff on tactical considerations. It emerges again in his discussion of the steps which he took to hold up the British offensive at Passchendaele and in his chapter on his supreme effort—the great attack on the British Fifth Army and the thrust towards Amiens in the spring of 1918.

There is, however, another side to his book, outside the scope of Lord French's. The latter does not touch politics except in those cases in which he came into conflict with the War Secretary or the Prime Minister. He is not concerned with English internal affairs. Ludendorff, by virtue of the position which he acquired in the last two years of the war, was. His book is a steady criticism of the internal organisation of his country for war and the part the politicians played in it. Not, let it be said, a criticism of his country's ideals. I do not find in all the book a single trace of any conception that the war meant anything more than a military victory, accomplished in the main by the effect of Allied propaganda, which was never properly counteracted by the Government, and which spread ultimately from the civil population, which it had first demoralised, to the troops. But, though he can see no flaw in German ideals, on organisation he is severe. From the outset he wanted universal conscription for men and women from 15 to 60, industrial as well as military, and he wanted the soldier's pay raised and the workman's depressed so as to ease the budget and promote equality of treatment.

"I understood, of course, that such regulations would seriously interfere with political, industrial, and private life. And it was not to be forgotten that the attempt to interfere, if pushed too far, would defeat itself. There was bound to be opposition, even although the proposals went no further than what was demanded by the iron necessities of the war. Self-interest and the desire for gain had spread widely. It was necessary to show the people the way to victory. When its eyes had been opened, it would have to decide its own fate."

"The Government," however, "did not adopt such a course." "The Government lacked the necessary determination." Its proposals were "neither fish nor flesh," and he allows it to be inferred that similar vacillation permitted the entry of America, impaired the efficiency of the submarine campaign, and lost the war for Germany.

We have had no similar examination of the internal state of any other belligerent country by a man of Gen. Ludendorff's position, nor is it likely that we shall have one for many years to come. That alone is enough to assure the importance of his book as a historical document. Nor is there any reason to

doubt that it is as fair a statement as its author could make it of his work and opinions.

What has Julius Cæsar to do with all this? His name is at the head of this article because of the writer's experience when the other day he read what were to him the forgotten "Commentaries on the Gallic Wars." If any soldier or sailor who has not already completed his memoirs or begun them wishes inspiration, here is a model ready to his hand—lucid in its logic, its march of ideas, the proportion it holds between narrative and commentary, between tactical disquisition and the exposition of strategy, temperate in its author's claims to personal success and full and generous in the mentions and the credit it gives to others. Our generals are very fine fellows, but they cannot write like Julius Cæsar. None the less, let us hope that more of them will make the attempt.

The Spirit of Rheims

By Paul Adam

X

THE master of the work during all this labour of the sculptors, Bernard of Soissons, furthermore terminated the façade. About 1280 he finished the placing in position of the big rose-window and its marvellous glass. The ancient cults of the Sun, the Egyptian adoration of Ammon-Râ, the fertiliser, or the religion of the Aztecs, never imagined anything so striking as this decomposition of the white light into all the colours of the prism—translucid enamels. They become the red, blue, or violet robes of the persons, the warm glow of their faces, the green of fields and weeds, the yellow of gildings. They thus endow with a thousand lives the ray of light which, passing through the glass, with its acquired shades, kisses the brows of kneeling women. It is the kiss of the Virgin herself, of her Angels, Patriarchs, and Princes who are enthroned in the circle of the sun. The heat of the orb carries the very love of Our Lady, and the consoling warmth of her lips to the crowd at their prayers.

For with the King lying dead at Tunis, how many a brave man was still being mourned there by mothers, widows and orphans. They were imploring the divine pity to protect the souls of the Crusaders who succumbed in the Sands of Carthage. So greatly were these dead warriors admired that, after the death of Barbarossa, the Pope, with the desire of liberating Italy from the Germanic grip, gave the investiture for the two Sicilies to the brother of St. Louis. With the Angevins of Chartres, many a native of Champagne was at this time ruling at Naples and Palermo, victorious over Manfred and his Germans, over Conrad and his Bavarians—that Conrad who was executed by the French for ravaging Italy and sacking Rome—a deed still charged by the Germans against the French. These monks of France, in the name of the Virgin, whose worship they were importing, spread the taste for French arts, manners, and piety. Here they collected the contributions necessary for a fresh expedition to the East. The great hope of the Christians was not abandoned on the tomb of St. Louis. Soon a fleet of beflagged barques will set sail from Italian ports carrying the chivalry of Charles of Anjou, his siege machines, food and treasures of war, when the Sicilians have dropped all their gold pieces into the coffers of the preaching friars. Then the dead of Damietta and Tunis will be avenged, and the Holy Sepulchre will once more be purified.

That is what the colours of the splendid glasses contained in the rays of the great Rose, promise to the devotion of Rheims. And the giant Goliath, who stands out as a symbol of the Infidel, will fall, struck by the arms of other Davids as pure and beautiful in their strength as the shepherd who is fashioned out of the stone up there by the talent of the sculptors. Then the two enormous pilgrims, the shaven one, and the handsome bearded one, on the left and right of the Rose, may set out on their journey again to pray on the earth where Jesus suffered. At any rate, their garb and scrip and staff counsel sinners also to prepare for the journey of Redemption.

Unfortunately, a Provençal soldier at Palermo one Sunday was too ardent in embracing a young girl in the crowd going to the service. It was an ill-timed kiss which brought to an end the dream that had been so dear to Rheims ever since the youth of Urban II. and the teachings of St. Bruno. The massacre of the Sicilian vespers drowned all the projects of fresh Crusades in the blood of France. The Angevins ceded Sicily to Peter of Aragon, what time Bernard of Soissons was passing away, after thirty-five years of labour. He had seen the West front rise almost complete in the sun with its three "portals" guarded by the statues, and adorned with the Coronation of the Virgin triumphant—before the colours of the great Rose, and higher up the relief of Goliath and David, and still higher the line of standing monarchs, fifty in number, with their attributes, each one in his ogive, facing the purple setting sun. Rheims showed a face worthy of her history.

In the interior of the Basilica beat the sublime heart of the Coronation City, while the best blood of France thronged hither on the great days of its history.

The beauty of the interior lines has many a time been described. M. E. Mâle, M. Demaison, M. Moreau Nelaton, M. Louis Gillet, and others have worthily descanted on its form and soul. Justly have the harmony of the nave been pointed out, of its three floors, that of the arcades and pillars, each with five columns joined together, with five capitals with delicately worked foliage, the supports of the ogives, that of the triforium gracefully hollowed out behind its columns in line, and that of the splendid windows with glass through which the splendour of heaven from the zenith illumines the tiny crowd beneath. M. Louis Gillet has in pious phrases sung the "music" of the apsis and the semi-circular appearance of its columns, the majesty of the colonnade in a circle, and all the spaces of light, which is the goddess of the Cathedral, in the chapels of the side naves, the chapels spreading out from the end, the walls and vaults.

This mystical beauty of air and sky which became the *leit-motif* of the edifice was conceived by Jean d'Orbais, and carried out by Bernard of Soissons so as to suggest to the victorious subjects of Philip Augustus and St. Louis the highest hopes, the same as to the less happy subjects of the three Phillips—The Fair, the Long, and the Valois, who struggled perpetually like their successors, the Charleses and Jean, to restore France that was being ceaselessly demolished by the divisions of heirs and nuptial gifts. One at least incorporated Champagne in the Crown domain when Philip the Fair married the daughter of Henry the Fat, the last Duke. But what was re-

covered in one reign was alienated in another. Death made its will. A father endowed his marriageable daughter in order to marry her to the Princes of Flanders, Spain, or England. At the end of the century the whole work of the beginning had to be recommenced, as it had all been upset by the habit of keeping kingdoms as private property, that was divisible, saleable, and exchangeable at will. The Church did its best to resist this funereal and matrimonial traffic, and made every effort to uphold those who would reconstitute the country in its integrity. The appetites of the great vassal lords, their Germanic traditions, their thirst of Imperialism, their perpetual use of violence to acquire, pillage, dominate, checkmate the King, and even substitute themselves for him, from lustrum to lustrum destroyed the strength of the nation which was with great pains reconstructing itself. It was a very labour of Penelope. The Latin principle of the Motherland was foreign to the sons of the Salic Franks, the Rhine-side Franks, the Burgundians, and Visigoths. The Counts of Champagne were no less greedy. These Thibauts—the Cheat, the Great and the Singer—conspired with all the feudal lords for three centuries against the unity of the State. Rheims exhorted them in vain by the voice of the clergy. Excommunicated and vanquished by the Royal arms, the feudatories soon rose again with the help of the foreigner, Burgundian, German, British, or Flemish. The perpetual treasons of the Dukes of Burgundy established the English in France. During the Hundred Years' War, most of the feudatories trafficked with the enemy without shame, according to the interests of the moment. The patriotic sense was utterly lacking with them. They acted as proprietors through right of conquest, and they and theirs sold or hired themselves to anyone who would pay. For money or promise of booty they would attack the ally of yesterday, or the Sovereign to whom they had sworn allegiance in the homage of chivalry. No disloyalty shamed them, no felony disgusted them, for they did not understand.

The clergy, on the other hand, held all the more strongly to the Latin principle of patriotism. The disciples of St. Remi remembered the lesson of Aetius. Even though Boniface VIII. protested against the tax of the fiftieth ordered by Philippe le Bel to the detriment of the clergy as of the laymen, twenty-three Bishops, disregarding their own personal interests, announced to the Pope that they would satisfy the tax. In face of such an attitude the astonished Pontiff understood his error, and he swept away the pretensions put forward in the Bull *Clericis Laicos*, and canonised St. Louis in order to become reconciled again with the dynasty. In the second act of the quarrel, the legists and monks united at the States Generals of April, 1302, pronounced for the independence of the King anointed at Rheims, and when the Pontiff called them to Rome they refused to go, but remained faithful to the excommunicated Prince, to his banner and his fleurs-de-lys—to the successor of the Clovis and Charlemagne sculptured on the Cathedral of the Coronations. Boniface VIII. died in September, 1303, killed by the shame of his defeat. All his intelligence and prestige vanished before the principle and the strength of Rheims.

There was the same close union between the Church and the Capétian in the cause—which was an iniquitous one—started against the Order of

the Temple and Jacques Molay. The King crowned at Rheims represented for the majority of the Bishops and clergy the living flag of the nation. Blindly they defend him even in schism. They approved when in 1309 he installed Clement V. in Avignon, the preliminary act of the Great Schism, which was to last until 1429. They approved him in death when the Archbishop of Rheims, Robert de Courtenay, at the Council of Senlis rehabilitated Pierre de Latilly, whom the feudatories had through vengeance wrongly accused of regicide.

The clergy persisted in their rôle. They were with the "bourgeois of the King" /to defend the franchises of the towns and corporations. And from their ideas were born the States General, the first form of national control.—the first assizes of the sovereign people. Those of 1355, when Jean de Craon, Archbishop of Rheims, Gauthier de Brienne, Duke of Athens, and Etienne Marcel, provost of the merchants have spoken, vote the pay for 30,000 men, in order to combat the invader. King John shares his power with the assembly. The equality of the three orders is admitted. The order which refused its approval to the law was not engaged by the approval of the two others; this was the right of minorities which we do not yet possess. The States nominated the collector of the taxes. S.P.Q.R., the "Senatus Populusque Romanus" of the ensigns carried at the head of the legions had again become the maxim of Gallic liberties as in the times of Remy and Durocor-torum, allied with Cæsar. The Church, municipia and corporations revived in its entirety the law of Rome, overcoming the Gallic spirit of the feudatories.

The spirit of Rheims will triumph. Her Cathedral may proudly regard the future by the eyes of her fifty Kings in line. It decides a century and a half later, after the terrible trial imposed by the passions of the feudatories on France, during the Hundred Years War, after the siege of the city by Edward III. of England, begun in December, 1359 and raised in January, 1360, thanks to the bravery of the defenders, after the criminal struggles between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians, after the death of the "Téméraire" in an icy pond at Nancy, and after that of Charles V. in his deception in his arid Spain. The Cathedral of the Coronations was now ready for the genius of Louis XI., for the noble valour of Francis I. and his "Pléiade," for the skill of the Valois and the Latin spirit of Montaigne, for the "apogee" of Louis XIV. in the sun of 1680.

XI

A miracle was, indeed, taking place while studious artists were cutting the images of the Princes in the episcopal workshops, while Robert de Coucy, Colard, Gille, Jean de Dijon, Colard de Givry were one after the other directing the masons who were putting the finishing touches to the beauty of the Cathedral, while the life of the city was concentrating in the great days in the sanctuary of St. Remi for the feast of the Ass and the attendant saturnalia, for the representation of the mysteries and spiritual joys of the spectators, for verdant Palm Sundays, and bringing out of fresh robes and new high caps, or *hennins*, for the lighted tapers of Easter and the communion of fair sinners, while the nation is threatened with extinction at Poitiers and Agincourt, and

Champagne is sacked successively by the troops of Charles the Bad, by the English armies, as by the great companies.

The warriors who followed Charles of France to the Two Sicilies took with them much of our French art, our poems and our tastes, and doubtless too the now pre-eminent worship of the Virgin according to the art of Rheims. These conquerors left friends who, in 1382, called Louis of Anjou, the uncle of Charles VI. M. Valois, in his Study of the Great Schism, has related how 80,000 French then travelled over Italy from end to end to receive the heritage of Queen Jeanne. M. Hanotaux has noted the influence of the Mediterranean conceptions, which the survivors of these great times brought back with them in the folds of their standards as the merchants and priests of the suite did in their baggage. Among these new ideas the least was not that of addressing Christ and the Virgin direct over the heads of the high clergy. This led to Jesus being proclaimed by Savonarola Lord of Florence. So too, Mary was Princess of Siena. And the Saint Catherine of this town cried, speaking of the Bishops, "They will not hearken to me. But whether they will or will not, they shall listen to God."

Translated by SOMMERVILLE STORY.

Plain Facts We Ought to Face

By Hannen Swaffer

THEY promised us, when Peace came, a new Heaven and a new earth; we only find a different kind of Hell. . . .

The League of Nations is suffering from premature birth. You must either find it an incubator or a lethal chamber.

What a world for a new idea to be born in! It is a world in which the war, while breaking down almost all the old beliefs, has created new doubts by the dozen.

Most things that mankind accepted as its guides, its masters, five years ago, are played-out things in the eyes of millions. The churches failed lamentably when war came. Not even backed as they were by Divine authority, could they point the way. The altar was an echo, the pulpit a compromise. They preached, not that war was wrong, but that you, whatever nation you fought for, were right.

The robes were stripped from monarchy. Kings became merely cousins on different sides—just ordinary folk who now touted for the homage no longer their privilege. Aristocracy was seen as common flesh.

Soldiering, as a trade, was found out; there was nothing secret in it, after all. You could take a city clerk, put him in khaki, give him a rifle and train him for three or four months, and then he could beat the Prussian Guard itself. You could race a dragoon, but you could not dragoon a race. Strategy consisted of sitting in a trench. Even forty years of planning and plotting by great military leaders could be overcome by civilians who usually sold tea.

So-called facts were often only dead ideas.

The theory that war brings out the best in men has gone for ever. Behind the battle lines, factories extorted so much more per cent.; no one would make anything, even to save his own life with, unless you paid him overtime. Thousands made fortunes out of other people's loss. The old jeered the young into the death-line, and women were photographed and paragraphed because they held wounded soldiers' hands. Art became the screaming poster and the bad revue; and jazz was the dance of death.

Statesmen were not so clever as we thought them once; they knew as little of diplomacy, it seemed, as a market gardener, and blundered always, except by accident. How many lives they threw away for nothing, History, for-

tunately, will never tell. History is last year's ha'penny paper censored by the dead.

So came new doubts. What could one trust?

These are all platitudes—else it would not be worth while saying them. The world thinks in platitude and longitude.

Then came Bolshevism, the "Spanish 'flu" of the body politic. The old quack medicines were found useless; the medicine men made faces at it in vain.

It is no good talking to a Bolshevik about Law and Order. He does not know what you mean; I am not sure that I do. "Your Law and Order has been in power for centuries," he could say. "You have had centuries of kings and prisons and doctors and sewers and churches and schools and public executioners, centuries of popes and creeds and priests and asylums, centuries of savings banks and guns and parliaments, centuries of navies and academies and Siberia. And what did they all amount to? There were thirty wars in thirty years—you have forgotten most of them—then the world conflict in which millions died, and then the great Peace during which twenty-three wars were still going on, nearly all wars that you had never heard of. Is our Soviet worse than your Siberia? Is Trotsky a worse tyrant than Nicholas because he is only an unknown Jew?"

You could not answer that. Law and Order has no answer to make.

The Bolsheviks acquired things for common ownership; they communised and socialised; and that was wrong. But the only answer to Socialism was being an individualist; and who would dare to be that? Do we not possess commonly owned roads and kings, and commonly owned soldiers and sailors, and commonly owned parks and tramways, and commonly owned post offices and sewers? And certain it is that the proposal to dig the first sewer, in the interests of public health, met with a terrible amount of opposition from the small landlord, who objected to paying rates for such a fantastic purpose, and who believed in the divine right to own his own private cesspool at the bottom of his own private garden.

Individualism must go back to cesspools—if it dares to mean what it says. Who will re-start turnpike gates on the Great North Road? Motorists mostly claim to be individualists, so I trust the Royal Automobile Club will consider this individualistic idea before somebody else makes its members pay a toll.

At such a time, when the world has almost ceased to believe in anything at all—even if it reads, "If you would have peace, prepare for war," it thinks of German militarism, what happened to it, and the Kaiser hiding in Holland—we are trying to make it believe in a League of Nations. We are doing our utmost to persuade it that if President Wilson, Mr. Lloyd George, M. Clemenceau and Signor Orlando and all the others wear frock coats and sit at a table every time there is a crisis, the crisis will be all over.

Then suddenly the world reads that D'Annunzio has seized Fiume on

behalf of Italy and practically told the League of Nations to go to the devil. So does the hysteric become the historic. The world disapproves, but Italy applauds; charity begins at Rome.

And the world knows, too, that the same America that wants us to give Home Rule to the Irishmen who can't agree about it is still refusing self-government to its own Filipinos; while the same President who is pledged to assist in preventing all wars in the future is still waging, against the tiny negro republics of Hayti and San Domingo, two little wars that we never hear anything about because the news censorship is absolute. As for Mexico, even what happened there yesterday afternoon is only a matter for wonder. It is magnificent, but it is not peace.

What can you do to boost the League of Nations in such a time of doubt? You must first destroy the stupid idea that a League of Nations can only live in a world of idealists. Were there such a world, it would not be needed. In a perfect age the policeman and the judge are among the first to lose their jobs.

The worse the world is, the more necessary a League of Nations becomes. Mankind does not know that. The more sordid and grasping nations are, the more need for a remedy. The more quarrelsome and antagonistic they be, the more need for a court of appeal. The more divergent the views and ambitions of peoples are, the greater the use for a means of unity.

The ideals and the aims of the League of Nations should be in the curriculum of every school in every country, and every teacher in every class-room in the world should teach perpetually that, never mind what country you are born in, you can't be born a foreigner.

"I believe in the League of Nations," should be the first article of every schoolchild's creed.

Why don't we use the films as a medium for international good? A film play by H. G. Wells pointing out the evils the League of Nations can remedy would achieve an infinity of benefit.

At present the film, controlled as it is by mere tradesmen Americans, is a weapon of evil. Every night, on scores of thousands of screens all over the world, dramas are being shown in which white men seduce white women, and white millionaires turn their sons out of doors, and in which white drunkards, white grafters, white blackmailers, white dope-fiends and white burglars all play principal parts. Black people and yellow people by the million watch these every night, wondering whether boasted white supremacy really consists of this. By moral force, as much as by the sword, we have held India hitherto; what do the Indians think of us now? They sit there in the dark, watching, wondering. . . .

Every civilised newspaper every day should contain an article on the League of Nations and its doings, so that all should be used to the idea. It is now in the minds of professors; we want it in the brain of every man and every

woman. It is in the clouds; bring it down to earth. The tables of stone were no use on Sinai; the commandments were no good to God.

And the preachers—how often are their voices heard spreading the tidings of the new dispensation? Peter the Hermit's advocacy of the freeing of the Holy Land has left its mark on history; here is the message, still undelivered, that all lands are holy, that all lands should be free. The pulpits are still waiting for the preachers who will lead the new crusade. "Be ye members one of another." Here is a theme broader than the confines of any faith.

By creating new republics, we have not saved the world; nor by deciding that there are more Croatians somewhere than Laplanders, have we won the next war by preventing it. Trade rivalries will embitter as they never did. . . .

These newly-rich Americans, fat with the money spoils of war, spying out the land. We do not see, or hear, the silent millions who pray, and praying, believe, that there is a formula that will save mankind—the mothers of the young Americans who died; the old people who remember how civil war once cut their big family into two. Only the Meat King do we hear of, and the Ford car . . . and the Yankee who carried samples in his Red Cross suit and used the uniform of the Y.M.C.A. as a camouflage while he mapped out a trade campaign. . . .

And these young Japanese now in our midst by hundreds. You see them in every train, in every theatre, in every seaside town, everywhere. For what have they come? Labour is very cheap in Japan . . . and in Europe it is demanding the profit of its toil.

They promised us, when peace came, a new Heaven and a new earth; we only find a different kind of Hell.

The Reconstruction of the French Northern Railway System

By M. Javarry,

Managing Director of the Northern Railway System of France.

[What introduction could be more eloquent and concise than the following Order of the Day, referring to M. Javarry, Managing Director of the Northern Railway system:— "An organiser of the first rank who, by his industry and energy, succeeded in establishing on the Northern system a state of efficiency surpassing all calculations"?

During the war M. Javarry had so to organise this system, in spite of its losses and the inroads upon it, as to get out of it an effort even more considerable than the demands made upon it in times of peace. Now it is necessary to rebuild and reorganise as quickly as possible the vital artery serving several regions.—EDITORIAL.]

FROM the very beginning of the war, the French railway systems of the North and the East made a remarkable effort which astonished even our American Allies themselves. In the North, especially, the tenacity of the effort far exceeded even the hopes in which the country had every confidence. It was a two-fold effort, embracing at once a period of organisation and of new construction in the very midst of military operations, face to face with and under the fire of the enemy, as well as a period of general reconstruction, which is at present going on, and which has followed in the train of the enemy's retreat and capitulation.

If the railway system has suffered so much from the destructive spirit of Germany, that is the result of two contingent causes. On the one hand, Germany wished to destroy systematically the richest industrial region of France in order to assure economic supremacy for herself, on the other hand, the war that Germany forced upon us went on for four and a half years without intermission in the regions served by the lines of the Northern System, which had to suffer nearly all the great battles of the Western front. If to-day the North works with so much energy to repair either definitively or provisionally the losses suffered there, it is because it is necessary, at any price, for the economic future of France, as of Belgium, to have rebuilt and renewed those wonderful centres of intense commercial activity, whose prosperity had been unceasingly increasing in the later pre-war years.

A plain statement of figures will give a good idea of the part played in the struggle by the Northern railway system. During the entire war more than 60 million troops were carried; with the enormous transports of material and food, there thus resulted an average daily circulation of loaded trucks which greatly exceeded, on a system reduced to about 1,400 miles, the figures reached in time of peace on the entire system of nearly 2,400 miles. For such

efforts, it was necessary to build stations, sometimes very large, for loading, unloading and shunting, to establish connections between existing lines, to double the tracks which had only a single line, and to construct new lines; hence the laying down of from 3,200-3,700 miles of rails and the construction of the necessary bridges and tunnels.

When, in 1918, the Allied front was broken, the sheds and the workshops of Amiens were evacuated. Montdidier was occupied and the trains no longer even passed through Amiens and could not go forward beyond Saint Just and Ailly-sur-Somme. Deprived since 1914 of its great repair shops for engines and rolling stock at Hellemmes and Tergnier, then of the Amiens shops, the system had to improvise, in the districts still free from invasion and on the State railway system, the necessary workshops to repair the wearing-out of the rolling-stock.

But whilst the *personnel* itself was thus cruelly tested and tried, the system was in large measure wiped out, as the victorious advance of the Allied armies, from July to November, 1918, was to show. On the day following the Armistice, it can, in fact, be said that the system found itself, out of 1,320 miles of lines, without a single bridge or tunnel intact, without a single locomotive dépôt, without a single station, large or small, which had not been either almost completely destroyed or rendered unusable. The greater part of this destructive work was systematically carried out with the aim of wiping out the industrial equipment of France. The Germans blew up all the bridges and tunnels, great and small alike, by means of heavily-charged explosive mines which, in the majority of cases, resulted in the collapse, not only of the steel arches and floors, but also of the piers and abutments down to their very foundations. In the same way they blew up all the points and for a distance of many score consecutive miles, destroyed the permanent way either by blowing up every other joint, which put all the rails out of use, or by tearing up the rails from the sleepers by means of heavy ploughs drawn by locomotives, which left the track in such a state that there was nothing to be done but to clear completely the permanent way, in order to replace by an entirely new track the rails and the sleepers of the old track thus put out of action.

This systematic destruction involved 1,180 bridges, 210 of which were more than 11 yards, 8 large viaducts and 5 tunnels, the restoration of which must require long and extremely careful labour. It equally involved 228 stations; that is to say, practically one-third of the number of stations included in the system, almost the entire telegraph and telephone lines, lighting or power stations, water supplies, buildings, pointsmen's cabins, signal posts, signals, gear, etc. To this must be added the fact that owing to the explosion of delayed mines, this destruction was still going on several months after the Armistice.

The engineers of the Company found the dépôts of Lens, Orchies, and Tergnier completely destroyed. The dépôts at Hazebrouck, Bethune, Tourcoing, Lille, Douai, Arras, Somain, Valenciennes, Cambrai, Busigny, Aulnoye, Hirson, Layon et Roye, were partly destroyed.

After the workshops, those of Tergnier and of Lens were destroyed, those of Amiens disorganised by the evacuation in the summer of 1918, those of Roye destroyed after having been refitted in 1917. The workshops for the building

and repairing of engines, carriages and trucks at Hellemmes, abandoned by the enemy, with the buildings left intact, had been completely stripped of their plant. Finally, throughout all the system, there was found destroyed 115 arrangements for water supply (works and water mains, etc.), and in 350 stations the electric equipment, the furniture, the plant, the varied supplies, which were not removed *en masse* by the enemy, were found broken up and useless.

Such was the lamentable state presented by the Northern Railway system on the day after the Armistice, at a moment when it was being called upon to do the impossible by undertaking, as quickly as possible, the feeding of the liberated populations. It is estimated that the reparation of all this damage will cost 2½ milliard francs, and when this sum has once been paid, the Northern Railway system will still have to suffer an indefinite loss for many a long year, because of the systematic ruin of the prosperous region that it served.

Freed from the German occupation, the system found itself then, the day after the Armistice, confronted with enormous difficulties. It went on facing, with admirable energy and determination, this unprecedented situation.

Behind our victorious armies thousands of French and English railway engineers, thousands of old employees, either demobilised from the armies or newly recruited, rivalled each other in zeal and activity, the former in rebuilding first a single track, crossing streams by improvised wooden trestles, or descending by means of deviations to the bottom of the valleys, the latter in restoring the permanent way behind the engineers, rebuilding bridges and installing in the stations the minimum necessary equipment for allowing first the services for supplying the civil population and afterwards ordinary travellers the means of moving about as quickly as possible. It was thus that it became possible to carry passengers to Lille after October 27th, 1918, to Laon from November 28th, to Saint-Quentin, starting on December 5th, a little later to Douai, Valenciennes and Cambrai.

The officials and the workmen (numbering 35,000 in April) had gone forward on foot at the same time as the rails and equipage. They themselves helped to organise their nomadic sort of life, sleeping in trucks standing in sidings, taking up their abode in the old "dug-outs" of the troops, in the temporary wooden hutments, taking their meals at improvised canteens. Having been closely associated with the army in doing war-work, the engineers, officials and workmen made it a point of honour to take up peace work in the same spirit of devotion to France. A collaboration, inspired by mutual confidence, united all the *personnel* in one and the same task, and it is thanks to this collaboration that progressive improvement was brought about, week by week, in the two-fold services for passengers and goods, under conditions which well earned for the system, from all those interested, valuable testimonials of their approval.

After the Armistice Lille could only be reached by way of Calais, Saint André, and Madeleine; a little later this great city of the north could be visited *via* Bethune, Lille-Porte-d'Arras, and Lille-Porte-des-Postes. Later, the route entered through the Saint-Sauveur goods stations. Finally, when the main lines between Fives and Lille were cleared, the Lille passenger station was opened for working. Before the war the journey from Lille to Paris took 3

hours; after the Armistice it took 8 hours; to-day, *via* Douai, it only takes 4½ hours.

It is difficult to reckon up adequately the enormous task of reconstruction without having witnessed the clearing of the tracks, the workshops and the stations, heaped up with masses of material which, in shapeless chaos, blocked all access.

Station halts, wooden bridges, carriage sheds turned into offices, the whole sites of the big as of the small stations had been completely turned upside down. To re-establish these sites, such as they were before the war is a heavy task requiring all the knowledge of the experts and the energy of the staff.

Already at the date of the Armistice it had been found possible to effect certain provisional repairs. Yet, on November 11th, 1918, these repairs had still to be properly completed and there remained to be reconstructed throughout the system 370 miles of double line track and 330 miles of single line track. On August 1st, 1919, 350 miles of double lines and 330 miles of single lines had been relaid. There then remained to be done no more than about 8 miles of double track and a little over one mile of single track, in all about nine miles out of the nearly 700 miles which remained to be reconstructed eight months previously.

Work has been rendered possible on almost all the lines, and ten stations only remain to be re-opened, four of which are on the Guise-Huson line, formerly a narrow-gauge railway, which has been reconstructed as a standard-gauge.

The thorough and definite restoration of the bridges and tunnels is being pushed forward energetically. Temporary bridges have been placed on the pier abutments already definitely rebuilt, and they are now awaiting delivery of the steel bridges. On November 11th, 1918, 793 bridges and tunnels required reconstructing, not including bridges of less than 4 yards (593 crossings at road level, 195 above road level, and 5 tunnels).

On August 1st, 1912, 97 of these works were entirely finished and, in the case of 22 others, only the delivery by the builders of the steel portions was being awaited. 451 works of this kind had been temporarily reconstructed. Thus, on August 1st, there still remained to be reconstructed, but in a final and complete form, 498 crossings at road level, 198 crossings above road level, not directly concerned with the railway, and 3 tunnels, that is, in all, 696 bridges and tunnels.

It is true that much remains to be done, and that many years must pass away before all traces of the war can be eliminated.

If the inland railway systems which had suffered no damage are far from having re-established their normal pre-war state, it is clearly impossible to foresee the date on which the Northern system will have got back to that economic position which was a matter of such envy a few years ago. Before the railways can hope to cope, without any restrictions, with the general demands of traffic, it is necessary at first to reconstitute the staff, material, and equipment, and it is equally necessary that the railway industry should have the time to adapt itself to the application of the eight-hour day and to solve the new difficulties which arise on every side in the social as in the economic sphere.

Oscar Wilde
Poet, Essayist, Dramatist

By Lewis Melville

II*

IT has been said that Wilde never remained faithful to any one form of writing, and even his sympathisers, while declaring that he won success in all by sheer force of genius, have echoed this, if not as a complaint, yet at least as a lament. This, however, is no more than saying that Wilde has not yet found his *métier*. That *métier*, it is now generally admitted, was play-writing. Indeed, it is almost certain that, in spite of his undoubted merits as a poet and an essayist, it is not as a poet or an essayist that Wilde will go down to posterity, but as a dramatist.

Wilde had always been attracted by the theatre. So early as 1882 he had produced in New York, *Vera, or The Nihilists*, a crude melodrama that has little to recommend it, save some well-written speeches. His next attempt was *The Duchess of Padua*, written in 1881, and produced in New York ten years later, though not published until after his death. Of this there is little to be said, beyond noting that there are some beautiful passages in blank verse. Wilde's mastery of blank verse is shown to greater effect in the fragment, *A Florentine Tragedy*, the end of which is truly dramatic. In the other fragment, *La Sainte Courtisane*, the author developed his favourite theory, already expressed in "The Portrait of Mr. W. H.," that when you convert someone to an idea you lose faith in it. *Salomé*, written in 1891, is on an entirely different plane, and therein for the first time may be discerned Wilde's great dramatic gifts. As it introduces a biblical character it cannot be publicly performed in this country, but a perusal of the piece shows how the whole is developed in a mystic atmosphere, and how admirably sustained throughout is the tragic note.

It is said that there is always room at the top of every tree, and certainly nowhere is there more room than at the top of the tree up which writers for the theatre climb. Play-writing is, indeed, the most difficult branch of the literary art. Nearly every generation in England since Fielding has produced novelists, if not of the first, at least of the second rank, whose works are still read and appreciated. How many plays since Fielding's day are still performed, or even read, and appreciated? Perhaps the reason is, that if a play is not in the first rank it must speedily die: certainly nothing in literature ages so quickly as the second-rate comedy or drama.

* The first part of this article appeared in the September-October number of THE NEW WORLD.

It is, of course, something that a man should write a successful play, but it is more that a man should write a literary play; and it is one of life's little ironies that most successful plays are not literary—wherein lies the cause of their early demise. Literary plays are usually divorced from dramatic effect, and in that fact may be discerned the cause why they do not endure. It is only when the man of letters writes a play instinct with action and dramatic possibilities, with stage-dialogue as opposed to novel-dialogue, that a play is produced that can withstand the assaults of time, and how rarely this happens! The Georgian era, so brilliant in fiction, produced in plays that live to-day as fresh as when they were created, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *The School for Scandal*, and *The Rivals*. Nor is the Georgian era an unfair test. The only comedy staged in the Victorian era for which there is hope of prolonged life is *The Importance of Being Earnest*. *Caste*, with its simple pathos and humour, will undoubtedly be revived from time to time; but Robertson will live rather as one who showed the way to others more gifted than himself, than as the author of great plays. A study of the masterpieces of Goldsmith and Sheridan shows that a really fine comedy must contain inimitable character-drawing, fanciful humour, a touch of malice, and kindly satire on society; it must also have its foundations fixed firmly in a broad outlook on life. The play that lacks any of these essentials may be vastly successful for a while, as may be that which deals with some passing fashion or topical subject; but the history of literature shows conclusively that none of these have endured or can endure.

The first thing for the dramatist to realise is the truth that the public is a dull dog; a sadder truth is that the public does not know it is a dull dog. The sense of humour of the bulk of the population in this country is admirably reflected in the successful farces to the representations of which it flocks, where to pour tea into a silk hat, or to sit on a handbox, is sure to be rewarded with such ringing plaudits as would not be evoked by the most brilliant writing. The ordinary Englishman of the middle-classes cannot play the fool; he cannot understand what enjoyment others can find in playing the fool; it is beyond the range of his intelligence to realise that people can be serious underneath their motley, and hide commonsense under a flow of epigram and paradox, as, for instance, does Lord Goring in *An Ideal Husband*. The fact is that serious people in England take life solemnly, while sensible people, like Prince Paul in *Vera*, think "life is much too important a thing even to talk seriously about it."

It is not surprising, therefore, that the chief complaint made against Oscar Wilde as a playwright is that he is too flippant: there have actually been men and women who, taking his epigrams and paradoxes as their text, have pronounced against the author's philosophy of life. Of most of the phrases in the plays, it would be easy to contend, as Wilde does in the person of Algernon Moncrieff, that "it is perfectly phrased, and quite as true as any observation in civilised life need be." We are told that a cynic is "a man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing," that "experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes," that women are "sphinxes without secrets," that "Life is simply a *mauvais quart d'heure* made up of

exquisite moments," that "In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it. The last is much the worst"; and that the popular idea of health is "the English country gentleman galloping after a fox—the unspeakable in full pursuit of the uneatable." Now, in plays as in novels, an actual representation of real life would be terribly tedious. It is, by common consent, permitted to an author to portray such interesting scenes as he shall select from a mass of scenes; shall not the same licence be extended to dialogue? No dramatic author has ever dared to put on the stage the ordinary verbosity of everyday life, because he knows that no one would sit through the three or four acts of such a play. Indeed, selection and exaggeration, that is, of course, careful selection and skilful exaggeration, are the cardinal points to which every playwright addresses himself. The ideal dramatist is he who, with a good plot, can make his selection and exaggeration seem natural to the audience. It may be conceded that no group of persons ever talked so well as those who contribute to the first act of *A Woman of No Importance*, but that is not the question. The question is, are the epigrams and paradoxes such as the characters might have evolved for themselves?—and it would be a bold critic who would give an unhesitating denial after taking into consideration that the speakers are some witty men about town of a day when the epigram was as much the thing as the pun in the time of H. J. Byron. It is these characters, and not the whole caste, who are brilliant. Wilde never succumbed to the temptation to make everybody in the play brilliant conversationalists. It would be difficult in the range of the English theatre to find two duller people than Lady Stutfield and Mr. Kelvin, M.P., in *A Woman of No Importance*—so far as they are concerned, humour is extracted through them, no brilliancy of phrase comes from them. "Tuppy" Lorton is allowed no illuminating phrase, nor is Lord Darlington a wit, though he does deliver himself of the famous definition of a cynic. Mrs. Erlynne and Mrs. Cheveley are clever but not witty; Hester Worsley is good but dull; and neither Mrs. Arbuthnot nor her son are used as phrase-makers. The brilliant talkers are the exception in *Lady Windermere's Fan*, in *A Woman of No Importance*, and in *The Ideal Husband*, but so brilliant are the brilliant talkers, and so cleverly are the other characters drawn, and so mercilessly satirised, that the audience comes away delighted with the wit of the play, and careless (and perhaps in most cases confused) as to what is due to the brilliancy of the dialogue and what to the brilliancy of the character-drawing and the situations. As for epigrams and paradoxes, they, taken *en masse*, are masterpieces of polished wit of the ironic vein, not always profound certainly, but usually with enough truth in them to demand consideration apart from their wit. For airy persiflage, what is there better than Mrs. Allonby's reply to a request for a definition of the ideal man?

"The Ideal Man! Oh, the Ideal Man should talk to us as if we were goddesses, and treat us as if we were children. He should refuse all our serious requests, and gratify every one of our whims. He should encourage us to have caprices, and forbid us to have missions. He should always say much more than he means, and always mean much more than he says. . . . He should never run down other pretty women. That would show he had

no taste, or make one suspect he had too much. No; he should be nice about them all, but say that somehow they don't attract him If we ask him a question about anything, he should give us an answer all about ourselves. He should invariably praise us for whatever qualities he knows we haven't got. But he should be pitiless, quite pitiless, in reproaching us for the virtues that we have never dreamed of possessing. He should never believe we know the use of useful things. That would be unforgivable. But he should shower on us everything we don't want. . . . He should persistently compromise us in public, and treat us with absolute respect when we are alone. And yet he should be always ready to have a perfectly terrible scene, whenever we want one, and to become miserable, absolutely miserable, at a moment's notice, and to overwhelm us with just reproaches in less than twenty minutes, and to be positively violent at the end of half-an-hour, and to leave us for ever at a quarter to eight, when we have to go and dress for dinner. And when, after that, one has seen him for really the last time, and he has refused to take back the little things he has given one, and promised never to communicate with one again, or to write one any foolish letters, he should be perfectly heart-broken, and telegraph to one all day long, and send one little notes every half-hour by a private hansom, and dine quite alone at the club, so that everyone should know how unhappy he was. And after a whole dreadful week, during which one has gone about everywhere with one's husband, just to show how absolutely lonely one was, he must be given a third last parting, in the evening, and then, if his conduct has been quite irreproachable, and one has behaved really badly to him, he should be allowed to admit that he has been entirely in the wrong, and when he has admitted that, it becomes a woman's duty to forgive, and one can do it all over again from the beginning, with variations."

While Wilde's brilliancy is often even more clearly evinced in his people than in his dialogue—a point that has not been frequently made—strangely enough, the majority of the principal characters in the three plays under discussion are not subtle or subtly drawn—which shows how clearly Wilde understood the stage and the public. The heroes and heroines are shown under a white lime, the villains and adventuresses under a green lime. Lord Illingsworth is a heartless *roué*, and the insult which causes Mrs. Arbuthnot to strike him has the true Adelphi flavour; Lord Windermere is a good dull man, and his scene in Lord Darlington's rooms where he sees his wife's fan is more theatrical than probable; Lady Windermere, Lady Chiltern, and Helen Worsley are rigid Puritans; Mrs. Cheveley is a wicked woman. Wilde, who had seen that action throughout a play is not imperative, had not discovered when he wrote his first two modern plays that strong contrast can also be dispensed with by a great craftsman. In these plays he had not entirely shaken off the conventions alleged to be essential for success in playwriting: he was not yet giving full range to his powers, was, indeed, probably not yet aware of them; he was still to some extent, even in *A Woman of No Importance*, incomparably the best of the trilogy, the brilliant tyro. Everywhere showing his sense of the theatre, at the same time he gave unmistakable signs of the limits of his dramatic conceptions. Thus, in *Lady Windermere's Fan*, he places Lady

Windermere behind a curtain, and when the people in the play expect to see her, out steps Mrs. Erlynne; and the trick is repeated with a slight variation in *An Ideal Husband*, where, when Lady Chiltern is thought to be in the next room, Mrs. Cheveley appears. Wilde had his good woman as a contrast to his adventuress: Lady Windermere and Mrs. Erlynne, or Lady Chiltern and Mrs. Cheveley, or, in another form, the puritan opposed to the woman of the world, Hester Worsley and Mrs. Allonby. Yet in spite of these limitations he contrived to introduce characters and situations very true to life. It was not unnatural that when Margaret Erlynne married Lord Windermere, her mother, who had deserted her a score of years before and was thought by her to be dead, should blackmail the husband; but, on the other hand, it is in keeping with her character that for her daughter's sake, and to prevent the girl treading the path her mother had trodden after her first false step, she should sacrifice her last shred of reputation, even though such sacrifice involved the abandonment of an excellent marriage. It was, further, strictly realistic that, having saved her child, Mrs. Erlynne was anxious not to pay a higher price than was absolutely necessary, and the author knew his character well when he allowed her, by a plausible explanation at the eleventh hour, to win back the man who had wanted to marry her.

Wonderfully handled, too, are Mrs. Arbuthnot and her son in *A Woman of No Importance*. When Mrs. Arbuthnot tells her son she would not now marry the man who had seduced her and deserted her many years ago, she makes a pathetic and beautiful appeal to him, which, as the finest speech in any of the plays, deserves quotation:—

“Men don't understand what women are. I am no different from other women except in the wrong done me, and the wrong I did, and my very heavy punishments and great disgrace. And yet, to bear you I had to look on death. To nurture you I had to wrestle with it. Death fought with me for you. All women have to fight with death to keep their children. Death, being childless, wants our children from us. Gerald, when you were naked I clothed you, when you were hungry I gave you food. Night and day all that long winter I tended you. No office is too mean, no care too lowly for the thing we women love—and oh! how I loved you. Not Hannah, Samuel more. And you needed love, for you were weakly, and only love could have kept you alive. Only love can keep anyone alive. And boys are careless often and without thinking give pain, and we always fancy when they come to man's estate and know us better they will repay us. But it is not so. The world draws them from our side, and they make friends with whom they are happier than they are with us, and have amusements from which we are barred, and interests that are not ours: and they are unjust to us often, for when they find life bitter they blame us for it, and when they find it sweet we do not taste its sweetness with them. . . . You made many friends and went into their houses and were glad with them, and I, knowing my secret, did not dare to follow, but stayed at home and closed the door, shut out the sun and sat in darkness. What should I have done in honest households? My past was ever with me. . . . And you thought I didn't care for the pleasant things of life. I tell you I longed for them, but did not dare to touch them,

feeling I had no right. You thought I was happier working among the poor. That was my mission, you imagined. It was not, but where else was I to go? The sick do not ask if the hand that smooths their pillow is pure, nor the dying care if the lips that touch their brow have known the kiss of sin. It was you I thought of all the time; I gave to them the love you did not need: lavished on them a love that was not theirs. . . . And you thought I spent too much of my time in going to church, and in church duties. But where else could I turn? God's House is the only house where sinners are made welcome, and you were always in my heart, Gerald, too much in my heart. For though day after day, at morn or evensong, I have knelt in God's House, I have never repented of my sin. How could I repent of my sin when you, my love, were its fruit. Even now that you are bitter to me I cannot repent. I do not. You are more to me than innocence. I would rather be your mother—oh! much rather!—than have been always pure. . . . Oh, don't you see, don't you understand? It is my dishonour that has made you so dear to me. It is my disgrace that has bound you so closely to me. It is the price I paid for you—the price of soul and body—that makes me love you as I do. Oh, don't ask me to do this horrible thing. Child of my shame, be still the child of my shame!”

Such an appeal would touch most people, and not one dramatist in a hundred would have resisted the temptation to make the son throw himself into his mother's arms at the end of the speech. This would be perfectly legitimate, but Wilde did better. It was a stroke of genius to make the lad, strong in the selfishness and hardness of youth, untouched by his mother's agony.

In Wilde's last play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, there is no longer any evidence of the limitations that hitherto had hampered the dramatist; no longer are there any conventional situations or conventional characters, no heroes or villains, no heroines or adventuresses: the brilliant tyro had passed through his apprenticeship, and appeared for the first—and unhappily the last—time in the Master's robes. A development of the fantastic vein indicated with such success in the brilliant story, “Lord Arthur Saville's Crime,” it is a whole so perfect that it does not lend itself to quotation, even the epigrams and paradoxes do not stand out as in the other plays, being strictly in keeping with the whimsical nature of the plot and characters. Perhaps if Gilbert had not shown the way, Wilde might not have conceived *The Importance of Being Earnest*, but there the obligation ends, for this “Trivial Comedy for Serious People” has a lightness and daintiness all its own. It is a step removed from life, yet the border-line is so thin, that it can scarcely be called fantasy. It is, as Mr. Thomas Secombe has happily put it, “an irresistible dramatic trifle, at once insolent in its levity and exquisite in its finish.” But though it may correctly be described as a dramatic trifle, its literary qualities and its dramatic qualities give it a place among the masterpieces of the theatre.

While *The Importance of Being Earnest* was drawing the town, the curtain fell upon the public life of the author. It is no part of the scheme of this essay to deal with the man apart from his work, and this brief reference to the tragedy is made only because that tragedy brought to a close Wilde's

career as a dramatist. From his prison-cell he sent forth a cry that he might be permitted to rehabilitate himself: "If I can produce only one beautiful work of art I shall be able to rob malice of its venom, and cowardice of its sneer, and to pluck out the tongue of scorn by the roots." His prayer was in some degree granted, for he produced "De Profundis" and "The Ballad of Reading Jail." He had lived for amusement: suffering made him take a broader view of life; and he who had written: "There is something terribly morbid in the modern sympathy with pain. One should sympathise with the colour, the beauty, the joy of life. The less said about life's sores the better," now changed the note of his song: "Pleasure for the beautiful body, but pain for the beautiful soul."

"Prosperity, pleasure and success, may be rough of grain and common in fibre, but sorrow is the most sensitive of all created things," he wrote now. "There is nothing that stirs in the whole world of thought to which sorrow does not vibrate in terrible and exquisite pulsation. The thin beaten-out leaf of tremulous gold that chronicles the direction of forces the eye cannot see is in comparison coarse. It is a wound that bleeds when any hand but that of love touches it, and even then must bleed again, though not in pain. Where there is sorrow, there is holy ground."

Painful for those to read who have sympathy and imagination, "De Profundis" was written with a fierce joy by the man who, through despair and bitterness, reached humility. "Love is a sacrament that should be taken kneeling," he wrote, "and *Domine, non sum dignus* should be on the lips and in the hearts of those who receive it." Full of exquisite tenderness and poetic feeling, and written in pure, nervous English, in a style shorn of the earlier extravagances, "De Profundis" remains a monument to the author's best qualities. Doubt has been cast upon its sincerity, but this cry from out the depths of a tortured soul bears sincerity upon its every page; such sincerity, that is, of which the writer was capable. It was written with sincerity, and believed by Wilde to be sincere: if it was, as some contend, something of a *tour de force*, the question arises, who, among men, ever is or can be entirely sincere?

"The Ballad of Reading Jail" has all the qualities of Wilde's earlier poetry, and a note of sincerity and greater tenderness that was not always to be found before. Through the tragedy—for tragedy it is, and nothing less—the sense of humility that suffering had brought is always present.

"And thus we rust Life's iron chain
Degraded and alone:
And some men curse, and some men weep,
And some men make no moan:
But God's eternal Laws are kind
And break the heart of stone.

"And every human heart that breaks,
In prison-cell or yard,
Is as that broken box that gave
Its treasure to the Lord,
And filled the unclean leper's house
With the scent of costliest nard.

"Ah! happy they whose hearts can break
And peace of pardon win!
How else may man make straight his plan
And cleanse his soul from Sin?
How else but through a broken heart
May Lord Christ enter in?"

Wilde has been dead but a bare score of years, and the time has not yet come when, with any hope of success, an attempt can be made to pronounce a final verdict on his works. Yet it may even now be contended that his poems, strangely neglected, will be read more and more; that his fairy-tales will again become the vogue; and that "Intentions" will endure by virtue of the wit, cleverness and brilliance that inspired the essays. With less of hesitation it may be suggested that when the whirligig of time sifts out the wheat from the chaff, it is as the author of *The Importance of Being Earnest* that Oscar Wilde will take his place in the hierarchy of English letters.

The Future of the French Mercantile Marine

By Anatole de Monzie

[M. de Monzie is a Deputy and a lawyer as well. He has published books, one of which, "Rome sans Canossa," caused a very great stir. He is a specialist in financial matters, but has a passion for politics which is not utilised as it ought to be in regard to the Vatican, Islam, and Zionism. Yet he was a member of the Government on three occasions as head of the French Mercantile Marine, and he still keeps on advocating his ideas on maritime affairs as President of the Navy League. Those who judge him from a distance—and they are many—the man being at once difficult to approach, although no one can receive more kindly—freely accuse him of intellectual dispersion and of inconsistent curiosities. He plumes himself, on the contrary, of having a systematic view of things, a realistic method applied to solutions, one of which conditions the other, and he is concerned to defend an external policy in accord with his vision of an expanding and an all-embracing France, without Imperialism and without Protection, but which would insist upon her exact due in the international distribution of powers and influences. His doctrine on the subject of the mercantile marine is an integral part of the system to which he hopes, sooner or later, to rally new support at a time when we are witnessing the disintegration of the old traditional parties, which are, he argues, the most dangerously out-of-date, and to which no supplementary moratorium ought to be granted.]

THE NEW WORLD may well congratulate itself on this new contributor, who, we are glad to say, will henceforth regularly collaborate in the work of the review. M. de Monzie will conduct, in fact, within the pages of THE NEW WORLD, and with the authority and competence on the subject already officially recognised in him by three successive Presidents of the Council, a mercantile marine bulletin which each month will put at the disposal of the great international public, as well as of the specialists, facts, figures, and information of every kind which no other publication will be able to furnish in so exact and trustworthy a form.—EDITORIAL.]

NEVER did the future appear so gloomy: never did decadence, unceasingly deplored, seem more irremediable. Formerly, happy rivals of the English and Dutch mercantile marines, hardy mariners, setting sail from the coasts of France, carried on a prosperous trade in all the seas, selling in the markets of the world the products of our factories and the rich crops of our soil. But, since the seventeenth century, the part played by them has gone on declining in importance. On the eve of the war our mercantile fleet stood no more than the fifth in order among the fleets of the world; it was surpassed by that of the poor but industrious Norway, closely pressed by those of young Japan and enterprising Italy. Scarcely did it register 2,400,000 tons; it carried scarcely a half of our exports, a quarter of our imports.

The war accelerated this decline: 920,000 tons disappeared through acts of war, 117,000 through ordinary sea risks, 400,000 at least by the normal process of becoming too old or obsolete for service. What remains after five years' intensive service, without relaxation, without rest for repairs, needs long, complete, thorough and costly overhauling.

Little account can be taken of our purchases: they were too long delayed,

they were small in quantity, and their quality was doubtful. Construction should have been carried on. All around us were applying themselves to that task. But, faced as we were more directly by the actual necessities of the war, the needs of the moment thus concealing the future from us, we were making in our dockyards land material for all those who were working side by side with us in the defence of our cause. We were making tanks and guns for them all—for Italy, for America—shells for all. Yet 4 million tons were launched from the American yards, 1 million from the Japanese yards. Two new and redoubtable competitors thus made their appearance on the seas. England put on the water some 3,800,000 tons, and the increased activity of her shipbuilding establishments will soon have made good her entire losses. Italy is feverishly employed in repairing hers. Yards are extending and multiplying there, and the powerful Ansaldo firm is vigorously extending its energies even into Spain. We alone have built nothing. And here we are reduced to depend on the goodwill of our friends for the tonnage necessary for our supplies of food and raw material. At the present day sailors without boats remain idle in the ports. To-morrow what will become of our commerce? Deprived of the prestige of the national ensign, of the safe and loyal help of our mercantile fleet, exporters will pay milliards to foreign carriers. With the aggravation of the exchange difficulties, and the rise in the price of raw material and foodstuffs, who to-day then cannot see the deadly results of this lack of foresight and neglect?

A strong effort to put things right is necessary. Merely to re-establish the pre-war situation would not in itself suffice. To respond to the needs of increased trade, to stimulate exports, to re-establish our international financial situation, we need 5 or 6 million tons. In that fact lies the entire problem, now and in the future to present itself, of the maritime renaissance of France—a vital problem, an urgent problem, the wide reach and sweep of which public opinion has not yet grasped. Who will solve the problem and how will it be done?

I.

Who will solve it? This is the burning question in regard to the mercantile fleet of the State. It has been put before the country by the Press and by means of public meetings. And its solution, having been prejudged, has led the Administration into actions which were sometimes regrettable. I might here recall the negative dialogue which, for entire months, went on between the *Commissariat aux transports maritimes* and one of our most enterprising companies, the most distinct result of which was the preventing of any purchase from abroad, the State being solely concerned with keeping under its control the entire amount of tonnage promised by England. The mercantile marine must perish rather than a principle should be surrendered!

Now it is this very principle that experience has condemned. I have shown enough proof of my tendency towards State Socialism to have the right to speak of it with some freedom. Why deny that it has come out of the war with little glory! Neither the food monopolies nor the requisition of shipping have given encouraging results. The bureaucratic State, such as ours, is not

made—and it has shown it—to carry on a commercial enterprise. Jouhaux and Prété, in the name of Syndicalism, have made the most pitiless and just criticism of its incapacity.

“The communal form of State exploitation,” they say, “bureaucracy, with its principles of irresponsibility, of advancement by unchangeable regulations, applied without regard to personal capacity; the administration conceived not to obtain a rational return but to serve as a financial complement to a complicated Budget, and that in the safe shelter of a monopoly which guarantees the bureaucracy from competition, can only lead to a deplorable result. Under such conditions intelligence has no room to exercise itself, initiative is proscribed, deadly routine does its work, and the consumer has to pay. Workmen form themselves into a strict caste, solely anxious about their own interests, careless of the common weal. Routine, corporate interests, bureaucracy, form the cycle in which State industry evolves and causes it to set itself against the general interest. Instead of becoming a regulating influence and of furnishing an example likely to stimulate private initiative, State enterprise thus finds itself to be an obstacle to the development of social progress.” (*La Houille Blanche*, “Un Solution Ouvrière,” p. 81.)

By the vigorous pen of its distinguished Vice-President, M. Hubert Giraud, the Marseilles Chamber of Commerce brought some most irrefutable arguments against a State mercantile fleet. The dispute is settled: I shall not come back to it. A state-administered shipping enterprise advertises itself as a cause of dear living or as the instrument of a policy of benevolence. Let me explain: benevolence in this case means ruinous administration—that is to say, a squandering of time, money and labour. Neither the high cost of living nor ruinous waste is likely to suit us.

But, in truth, the schemes for a State mercantile marine have their origin in colonial and especially Algerian disappointments. Now, the Navy League has made especially its own a programme formerly drawn up at the Under-Secretariat of Maritime Transport, approved by the Algerian delegations, a programme which gives, it seems, satisfaction to all interests.

This programme includes: (1) A civil association, formed of the representatives of the general interests and of the consumers grouped according to territorial districts (State, Chambers of Commerce, and Mediterranean departments, Railway Companies, Algeria, Tunis), and delegates from the maritime corporations. (2) A Commercial Association, working according to strictly commercial principles, in conformity with a schedule of charges drawn up and imposed by the civil association, the sole *concessionnaire* of the services and the sleeping partner, as it were, providing the funds. This system has the triple advantage of assuring to the consumers an efficacious protection without putting any obstacle in the way of rational management. Next it has an economic advantage; and thirdly, by the *rôle* assigned to the maritime corporations, it will open out a path for the new social groupings that industrial developments are bringing imperiously to the forefront. Guaranteeing reasonable freights to the shippers and regular services to travellers, to the working-classes their just share, not only in the profits but also in the management, affording ample opportunity to talent and enterprise, and allowing the stimulus

of private interest still to play its part, this scheme, approved by the shipping representatives as well as by those of the sailors' trades-unions, is free from the objections justly brought against a bureaucratic system of State Socialism, swathed in red-tape and devoid of initiative.

It was adopted only for commercial relations between France and North Africa. Eventually if, as is probable, the facts justify it by its success, and circumstances also prove its necessity, it will be able to extend itself to other shipping and even industrial spheres. It is permitted to the Navy League to feel a legitimate pride in having been the first to show themselves inspired and made enthusiastic by this scheme.

II.

Thus, it is private initiative, under public control, which is going to rebuild the French mercantile marine. Under what conditions? That is the problem to be faced in a spirit of practical collaboration by shipbuilders, shippers and seamen. Let us state the case clearly. We need ships and we need to run them profitably. Without that, no mercantile marine is possible. We need ships: we need them urgently, to ward off the immediate necessities of supplies and to prevent our competitors out-distancing us in the chase for trade and thus, before the reconstruction of our fleet, getting hold of all the commercial connections. We need ships, too, at a price equal to that paid by foreign shipbuilders, so that the first establishment costs will not burden our activities with crushing charges.

The Navy League has many times demanded as a special privilege the handing-over to France of 920,000 tons, levied on the German ships surrendered to the Entente in virtue of the Peace Treaty. Our naval losses, our sacrifices in men and wealth, the vital necessity for the country to rebuild a fleet for itself without delay, amply justifies this demand. It does not appear the inter-Allied consent has been secured for this request. The United States are retaining the German ships interned in their ports; Brazil advances the pretension of benefiting from a similar advantage: England, finally, claims “the lion's share.” And, as it was easy to foretell, the allocations on the basis of management, which had so often been affirmed as provisional, have become final and definite. These allocations cannot be said to favour us. They bring us only 400,000 tons. At the most it may, perhaps, be possible to arrange for the United States to leave to us the 200,000 tons that at the present time it has working under the inter-Allied flag.

It is true that the Peace Treaty imposes on Germany the obligation to build annually 200,000 tons chargeable to the indemnities. Of these 200,000 tons, about 50,000 will probably be allotted to France. The *Berliner Tageblatt* is not very anxious about this requirement. It foresees that before long there will be a plethora of tonnage on the markets and that the Allies will waive the condition without delaying. The *Berliner Tageblatt* is perhaps mistaken, and I have some reason to think that we are not likely to be threatened with an excess of tonnage. It is at least certain that the German shipyards will only bring a mediocre contribution to our maritime renaissance. Our needs are not

such as can stand over for five years; they are immediate and urgent. It was necessary to draw upon the existing supply of German ships. Our agreements do not allow us to take this step. Shall I be too severe if I say that we have been defrauded?

I am acquainted with neither negotiations for purchase entered upon abroad nor the offers which have come to us from that direction. I know neither the agreements with England, nor the *pourparlers* with the United States, nor the offers made by Canada. But none of these give the guarantees that we have the right and obligation to ask for. From the British Government M. Clémentel has obtained an option on 500,000 tons: a first portion has just been levied, but the other two will only be available in one and two years. These ships, built mainly in the feverish haste of the submarine war, at a time when it was necessary, cost what it might, and whatever its working value might be, to put tonnage on the sea, are of doubtful quality, whether they come from the other side of the Channel or from across the Atlantic. Many of them are even built of wood. In Canada, it is true, we are offered vessels of a higher standard of construction and less expensive to work, all built since the Armistice or to be built according to the sound methods of the British shipyards. But the prices are excessive. A gross ton register is quoted 195 to 200 dollars, plus 5 per cent.—that is to say, in the course of the day on which these offers were made in last July, 1,454 to 1,470 francs. Since then the shrinkage of our exchange has still further increased these quotations. The United States shipyards scarcely show themselves any less exacting; they have asked 175 to 200 dollars (1,242 to 1,420 francs). M. Loucheur, who reckoned on finding there a fleet of colliers of 500,000 tons, offered 150 dollars (1,065 francs). As for the ships purchased in England, they cost on the average £28 or £30 (868 to 930 francs, according to the day's quotation). This price is higher than that paid by the English ship-owners. The British Government has not been willing for foreigners to make profits out of the sacrifices, direct or indirect, made to the shipbuilders to stimulate their activity during the war.

Thus ships of mediocre quality, undoubtedly difficult to work, delivered often after too long delays, at prices which would place French shipping in a situation of marked inferiority—all that represents what we can find abroad. Considerable purchases on the English, American or Canadian markets will further aggravate, to the detriment of our entire economic system, our international financial situation. The necessity of rebuilding, without delay of any kind, our mercantile marine no doubt puts us under the obligation of knocking at every door and of giving our orders to all those who, at reasonable and honest prices, are in a position to execute them. But anxiety about the cost of running the ships and of our monetary equilibrium imposes upon us the duty of appealing, above all, for an effort no less immediate than energetic on the part of our national industry.

It is true that this effort will only be efficacious if our shipbuilders can lower their net cost of production to the same level as their foreign and more especially their English competitors. They will have at first to renew and renovate their plant. The war, in necessitating the transformation and develop-

ment of plant and stock in view of munitions of war, will have to a large extent facilitated this renewal.

Entirely new shipyards have besides been set up. Naturally they have adopted the most modern machinery. But the high prices they have had to pay for land, buildings, plant, weigh heavily on their general expenses. And if we do not wish to see these yards, whose activity is indispensable to the renaissance of our mercantile marine, endangered by the competition of older and more favoured enterprises, if we do not wish to see the market price of ships fixed at an abnormally raised productive cost, it will be necessary to take measures to balance the selling prices. This was one of the problems which first engaged the attention of the Navy League, and its intervention with the public authorities. In spite of the promises then received from the very mouth of the President of the Council, it does not appear that the question is yet settled. What the Government has not known how to carry out, private initiative and care for the national interests, which more and more actuates the maritime corporations, will no doubt be able to effect. As for me, it seems desirable to unite all the shipbuilders into a single group. A sales bureau would receive and share out orders, and would regulate the prices. If it happened that opposition were to show itself, opposition to hamper this work of public utility, the State, representing the permanent interests of the nation, would find means to break this opposition by means of the privileges and assistance it would be called upon to accord to our shipbuilding industry, and which would be strictly reserved for those firms alone who had decided to form part of the group.

This organisation would further have the advantage of facilitating the specialisation of the yards and of standard construction. The English and American yards have given the example of these methods of intensive production. Let us imitate them. But yet that is not enough. Let us transform the entire organisation of the industry, the system of production and of labour according to the teachings of Taylor, even were it necessary, in order to do so, to call in the help of foreign engineers. Their practical minds will be able to correct what is too theoretical and speculative in the technique imposed on our specialists by our great schools.

Finally, and especially above all, it is indispensable that the French shipyards should be able to command raw material at as little a cost as that of the English yards. The raw material consists of steel plates and coal. The equal distribution of the price of plates, immediately advocated by the Navy League, has been already considered several months ago by the Minister of Industrial Reconstruction, who reckons on bringing it about with the help of the products of the Saar basin, where the depreciation of the mark was reducing in a very large proportion the cost price. But deliveries, at the discounted price of 50 francs the 100 kilos., are still awaited. The shipbuilders, who on the faith of Ministerial promises had filled their order-books, see themselves under the necessity of suspending the laying of any vessels on the stocks. Perhaps they also find themselves fully occupied with carrying out war work, no longer useful, but which no one takes the initiative to cancel. And it is thus that, in the table of shipbuilding in hand up to June 31st, 1919, published in *Lloyd's*

Register, France only occupies the eighth place, with 38 ships and 109,000 gross tons register, outstripped by :—

				Tons.
The United States	with	994	vessels registering	3,874,143
United Kingdom...	"	782	" "	2,524,050
Japan	...	63	" "	282,060
Italy	...	96	" "	271,620
Holland	...	88	" "	219,332
Canada	...	—	" "	198,150
Spain	...	40	" "	118,854

It is true that perhaps the eyes of the shipbuilders have been made to glisten with chimerical hopes that even the English rolling mills are incapable of realising—at the very least that the equal distribution should be established in fact on the basis of the prices actually accepted in England and that the deliveries should be made without delay. Let us always guard ourselves from illusions. The equalisation of the price of plates by the help of the Saar factories can only be temporary. It will last as long as the French occupation and the depreciation of the mark. Only an international and permanent policy in regard to raw material will furnish a solid and lasting foundation for our shipbuilding industry.

There is still the question of coal. Already in December, 1918, as the result of steps taken by the associated shipbuilders and shipowners, M. Loucheur had formed the scheme of delivering, at prices equal to the English prices, the necessary quantities of fuel by levying them on the stocks to be handed over by Germany as compensation for the destruction carried out in the coalfields of the North. It will be necessary to take up the scheme again. It will be necessary even to extend it to bunker coal in order to put our shipping on a footing of complete equality with its competitors. That was the object of a motion brought forward in the Chamber by me last June.

The shipowners on their part must not let themselves be outstripped in the matter of technical innovations. How could their working be profitable with ships built by less improved methods, less practically designed and fitted out? And from this point of view one problem appears of prime importance—that of the method of propulsion. Is the future to belong to the steamer, or to the internal combustion engine, to coal or to petrol? The controversies have opened and the experiments begun. Scandinavian shipowners are working a number of motor vessels which have given favourable results on long voyages and which effect a notable economy in labour, space, weight, even in fuel, and the general running costs. Italian shipowners appear to have adopted from now on oil fuel for vessels of high tonnage. English, French, and other shipowners besides have recently given their support to the same system. The problem is thus before us. We must not let it be resolved against us.

Nor is it any less urgent to effect the standardisation of the conditions of sea-going labour in all countries. The International Congress of Seamen, held at London and Paris last February and March, adopted the principle of the standardisation of wages on the American basis. But at the same time, fully

aware of the demands of competition, it laid down the principle of the uniform regulations for labour in all the mercantile marines. An International Conference of Shipowners and Seamen is to meet, in October or November, to draft this world standardisation of regulations. This collaboration of workmen and masters clearly reflects the new character of the industrial and social evolution. Similar groups are being set up with the object of investigating and defending the interests of different homogeneous sections of the national industry. The French Navy League has shown the way. An analogous movement is developing in England, and the great Seamen's Federation, in the person of its distinguished President, Mr. Havelock Wilson, appears to be energetically employed in successfully directing this tendency.

This collaboration certainly does not always proceed without clashings and difficulties. The divergent interests and opposed social conceptions still face and sometimes distrust each other. It is also not merely concerned with effecting a fanciful co-operation, but with developing, by a common effort, the wealth whose distribution is the object of indefensible rivalries and which marches with but slow steps, through discussions and conflicts, towards the establishment of an ever-changing and just balance of interests. Now these joint organisations have the essential virtue of giving to all their members, first the sentiment and afterwards the clear notion of the close and unavoidable solidarity uniting all the interests engaged in the same branch of industry. Above class prejudices and struggles, beyond the rivalry of individual enterprises, they are thus raised to the conception of the national interest. In the Navy League the seamen have grasped the fact that questions of plant, victualling, even of labour, require international solutions, if we do not wish to ruin for ever our maritime transport industry. It is this point of view that, with remarkable and praiseworthy energy, Rivelli and Réaud, secretaries of the Federation of Registered Seamen, brought into prominence at the International Congress of Seamen.

They did more. Not content with associating themselves with a programme of purely maritime reorganisation, they extended their plans so as to embrace the complete readjustment of the national economic system. The prosperity of the mercantile marine does not depend solely on a combination of technical and purely professional conditions; it is intimately bound up with the economic organisation of the country. And it is thus that we ought, with as little delay as possible, to complete our national equipment. This involves the improvement and multiplication of our railroads and riverways, whose task it is to facilitate the transport towards the great powerfully equipped ports of our exports, and of collecting in these ports complete and homogeneous cargoes for our seamen. Hitherto freights, being too widely scattered, lent themselves especially to completing the cargoes of ships whose holds had already been practically filled at Hamburg, Rotterdam or Anvers. It is necessary, moreover, to work out combined direct rates from the centres of production to the centres of consumption, rates analogous to those which had made the maritime fortune of Germany.

Finally, and above all, the task is to transform our national economic system, hitherto too specialised in the production of articles of luxury. It must henceforward devote itself to solid manufactures for which there is a

widespread demand. The possession of the richest iron-mines in Europe will facilitate this evolution. It is true that the district of Lorraine and the North, where for the most part steel works and blast furnaces are concentrated, are found in the natural hinterland of Anvers. Now this great Belgian metropolis, a cosmopolitan centre for European trade, is almost exclusively frequented by foreign shipping, and the intensification of our metallurgical production runs the risk of being advantageous to the English, Dutch, Scandinavian, and even, at an early date, German flags. Why, then, should the French companies not establish their headquarters there? In the vast scheme drawn up for the resumption of their services, the *Chargeurs Réunis* have not been afraid to face this initiative. It will undoubtedly be to their profit. It is the duty besides of the public authorities to facilitate rail and river communications between the districts of the East and the Channel ports.

It is from this combination of steps to be taken that the French mercantile marine must hope for its renaissance. Protection has given no tangible result. It has simply burdened the budgets. The experience was so conclusive that I presume no one will recommend a return to these vain and expensive proceedings. Subsidies from public funds which, according to the latest development of Government schemes, were intended for the purpose of fostering shipbuilding, appear to me neither a necessity nor a happy initiative. The shipping industry is in no need of capital, and the inevitable fall in freights will bring to the State a perceptible loss on the ships constructed. Does our financial situation permit of such squandering? I doubt it. Safety lies elsewhere. It is to be found in an international policy which will equalise the real prices of raw material, fuel and labour; it is to be found in the methodical carrying-out of public works capable of equipping the country up to the level of its great competitors.

This is a vast scheme which demands a vigorous and continued effort from us all. Whatever difficulties may follow in its train, whatever obstacles may be excited by social passions, the initial impulse has been given. All those who live on and by the sea have clearly grasped the close solidarity of their interests. Many times already have they showed the wisdom that springs from competent knowledge. Before the greatness and the urgent necessity of the task to be accomplished, they will know how to strengthen their collaboration, and in the economic State, which is gradually substituting itself for the political State, they will be able to make heard, imperiously if it is necessary, their realistic policy. Thus they will allow us to profit from one new fact which reverses the conditions of international maritime navigation. England, who finds in her coal an abundant and heavy-weighting return freight, always disposable for the traffic of the whole world, has not longer any excess supplies to export. One of the chief causes of her maritime supremacy has disappeared. Our iron mines, our metallurgical industries, offer us the means of taking up in part the succession. Let us see well that this is done.

The Basis of Economic Recovery

By Leonard J. Reid, M.A.

THE great war has destroyed the old economic order in all countries that have had a hand in waging it. This is true even of those countries which, by reason of geographical situation, have been spared any considerable amount of physical devastation. How much more true of those countries whose geographical position placed them in the front line of battle, and who saw their countryside ravaged and their prosperous towns razed to the ground. War pulled down, upset, destroyed. The delicate fabric of international commerce was shattered. Production, development, trade, commerce in all countries took on a new orientation, all energy being of necessity concentrated upon war-making efficiency, the efficiency of destruction. But if the war in all belligerent countries destroyed, pulled down, upset, it also taught—taught great new lessons of industrial organisation and efficiency. It also to some extent—an extent greatly varying in different countries—rebuilt where it had destroyed, and substituted for the old economic structure a new artificial and temporary one, only adapted simply and solely to the requirements of efficient war-making. The economic resources of nations, without regard to normal economic laws or to national or world needs in times of peace, were harnessed to the chariot of the War God and answered his pull on the reins.

It is highly important that we should remember that this is so. For in all countries to-day we hear a great deal about the struggle to get back to "normal" conditions. There is serious danger lest people should be misled into interpreting that word "normal" as meaning the "pre-war normal." We have all at the outset to realise that nowhere is a return to normal economic conditions of pre-war days a possibility. The war has destroyed what cannot be replaced, and it has built up what we cannot now destroy. Nor should we wish it otherwise. For what peoples, what nation in the bulk, found its pre-war economic conditions so perfect that it wishes to see them identically restored? The havoc that the war has wrought is so immeasurable, so far beyond the power of human computation, that we cannot afford not to clutch eagerly at and strive to make the best use of, the new opportunities it has brought us by wiping out much that was bad in the old economic order. The vast labouring populations of Western Europe have awakened from the apathy which alone caused them to tolerate the conditions under which millions toiled fiercely and existed miserably. A new sense and realisation of their power has risen like wine to the heads of the labouring masses. That is a fact possessing immense potentiality, either for good or for evil. For good not only for one class, but for nations, if long-headed and clear-sighted policies prevail; for evil

and chaos for all if the new sense of power, unguided by wise leadership, runs riot in the paths of blind and intoxicated Bolshevism. Employing classes, too, have awakened to new estimates of justice and responsibility, and nations are more ready than ever before to agree that the only worthy motto of a nation should be "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." These new factors, this new spirit, new estimates of duty, new realisations of national solidarity and of the community of interest of all classes—all this provides a great opportunity. That opportunity is made far greater still by the new hope of sounder international stability, of the diminution of the danger of future wars, and the lifting of the intolerably costly burden of competitive armaments. The League of Nations could be turned by human folly and sectional bickerings into a farce and a mockery; but if all nations have learnt at last the lesson of what war means and will set honestly to work to perfect the embryo machinery of international peace, it will be the greatest boon to the suffering peoples of the world. If through human folly the League fails in its task of promoting international goodwill and reducing war to a minimum, then it is of little use to speak or think of economic recovery. All the great nations go back to work with the one idea of attaining the greatest potential power for war. Economics will again and permanently be subservient to requirements of war preparation. But surely after the price at which victory has been won, the nations cannot allow such failure to take place. In the success of the League lies the only hope of setting to work, relieved of the perpetual fear of war, lightened of the terrible burden of competitive armaments, to pay off the great debts that the war has piled on their shoulders, and to build on new foundations the structure of a wider and more stable prosperity.

But, true though it is that we have to change all our ideas about the word "normal" and to get clearly before our eyes as the goal to aim at a "post-war normal" very different from the "pre-war normal," yet there are certain underlying economic principles that must be recognised as permanent—just as true and far more compellingly urgent than in the days before the war. And the chief of these permanent, abiding principles are true for all nations. For all the belligerents are faced by economic problems similar in their main features, though varying in degree. Each is faced with a huge burden of national debt, representing the cost of victory, and inflated national expenditure, by the problem of a greatly inflated currency, and by a cost of living so high as to be a perpetual source of agitation and discontent. These troubles are the most prominent part of the economic legacy of the war; and they are of course interdependent; they cannot be solved separately, or examined in "water-tight compartments." Then there is the actual destruction of wealth by the war to be made good—and in this connection I leave for the moment out of account the reparation moneys to be received from the defeated enemy. Countries within whose territories warfare has been waged have been, of course, the greatest losers on this count. But even island Britain has suffered the loss of an enormous amount of valuable shipping. I need not enter here upon the controversy as to the extent to which capital has been destroyed in the war. One school holds—as regards Britain, for instance—that she is only poorer for the war—apart from human and shipping losses and damage by

raids—by the amount she has had to borrow abroad for war purposes and raise for the same end by selling her securities abroad; while another school holds that every penny spent on quickly consumed war material represents a dead loss. Be that as it may, every belligerent country faces its post-war task poorer for the loss or maiming of millions of its best workers and producers, and has foregone five years of productive work from all who left the factory, workshop or farm for war service. There is no need to indulge in cold-blooded statistics as to the actual values of human lives lost. It is obvious that the immense loss of man power and human producing potentiality constitutes one of the severest handicaps to all the belligerent nations in their journey along the uphill road of economic recovery.

Fortunately there are—in greatly varying degrees, of course, in various nations—war assets to place against these war liabilities. In the first place many lessons of industrial organisation and manufacturing efficiency have been learnt in the hard school of necessity. Again the tremendous concentration upon the production of war material of all kinds has left some of the warring countries—and this is especially true, perhaps, of Britain—in possession of a greatly increased manufacturing capacity. For many of the war factories and most of the plant can be and are being transformed to meet the requirements of peace time. Greatly increased manufacturing capacity, combined with the lessons learnt of efficiency and organisation, are an asset of which the most must be made.

This existence of greater potentiality for manufacturing production leads us to the most important economic question of the day for all nations impoverished by war, namely, how to increase production to the greatest possible extent. There is no Aladdin's Lamp which in a flash can take us to the post-war normal that we seek. There is no one panacea that will solve all the intense economic problems before us. But there is one necessity, which stands out above all other necessities, and which is a necessity common to all the nations lately involved in the war. It is the necessity for increased production. Take the leading problems of the day and see how the question of increased production affects them. Take the problem of currency depreciation. The enormously high cost of everything we use is due mainly to two causes, the scarcity of the goods we have to buy and the inflation of the currency we have to buy them with. Greater production will relieve the scarcity. World markets are depleted and must be restocked. Hard productive work and hard thrift are needed in order that real saved capital may take the place of inflated credits by which the war cost was so largely met. Production is the creation of wealth, and only by increasing national wealth and national income can nations face with a good heart the burdensome taxation that must lie upon them for many years, and pay off their overwhelming debts. Produce and save: hard work and thrift. It is not, perhaps, an attractive programme, but in it lies the only road to economic salvation for the nations who have to shoulder the cost of the victory which has saved civilisation. It is the only programme which leads to a return of comparative cheapness, to decreasing taxation and quick repayment of debt. Nor must we forget the great cry for a "better distribution of wealth" which is so insistent in the programme of all