



# The Open Court.

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## TIDES OF PROGRESS.

BY FELIX L. OSWALD.

In a little watering-place of southern Switzerland, I once met an old French officer, who entertained his comrades with contributions to the military chronicle of the first Empire.

"It is a wonder how your recruits could survive that passage of the Alps," said one of his companions; "do you think that any human beings of modern times could stand greater hardships?"

"That depends," said the veteran; "during the first Italian campaign we weathered worse fatigues and didn't seem to mind it a bit. We all felt like moving along with a tide of good luck that made us forget petty troubles."—"The whole world, in fact, seemed to experience a revival of energy," he added in deference to his international audience. "Only those who witnessed it can realise the elating influence of that time, and a good many hundred years may fail to repeat a chance of that sort, but by some coincidence or other the same quarter of a century appeared to produce the ablest men of some twenty-five different nations."

Can that coincidence be explained? Was it an accident that made Napoleon the Great a contemporary of Goethe, Byron, Volney, Mirabeau, Beethoven, Bentham, Davy, Jefferson, Schopenhauer, Petöfi, Carlyle, Cuvier, and Humboldt? The analogies of history have confirmed, rather than elucidated the fact that eras of memorable reforms were ushered in by meteor showers of genius; but it seems a suggestive circumstance that such eras generally involve a revolt against some abnormal obstacle to the progress of evolution: a phenomenon which finds its most striking analogue in the possibility of changing the current of a stream by the sudden removal of an artificial obstruction. The pent-up waters surge and rise, and the crest of the dam feels the first effect of their more and more irresistible pressure. The foundations of the dike at last give way *en masse*, and the moral history of the seventeenth century proves, indeed, that the great flood-wave of the Napoleonic era revealed its first premonitions of a coming change by its effect on the upper strata of society: the doctrines of Danton and Mirabeau were

foreshadowed by the scepticism of King Frederick, the Emperor Joseph, and the Czarina Katherine. The top of the dam had yielded by inches, the main body yielded with a suddenness that turned the sluggish stream into a rushing torrent.

The outburst of the French revolution, in fact, was the consummation of the long prepared revolt against the most obstinate obstacle that has ever been opposed to the progress of mankind, viz. the alliance of secular power with the doctrine of asceticism and renunciation. The absolutely inhuman tenets of that doctrine: the monstrous monastic ordinances of the Middle Ages had already been modified by the insurrection of the North-European reformers, and the life-blighting gloom of antinaturalism led to a reaction revealed in the Italian revival of pleasure-worship, in the libertinism and licentious literature of the Queen Anne period, in the extravaganzas of luxury at the courts of Louis Quatorze and Augustus the Strong.

The doctrines inculcating the incompetency of human reason and the duty of passive submission to the "powers that be," held their ground longer till they were shattered by the upheaval of downtrodden millions and the equally Titanic explosions by which secular genius proved its ability of shining with a transcendent splendor of its own.

In tracing the record of similar phenomena, we must go back to the end of the seventh century, and the fifty years following the caliphate of Omar the First. Then, too, a world-changing reform was accompanied by the appearance of dazzling luminaries in every quarter of the intellectual horizon: the fame of great warriors, like Musa and Parik was rivalled by that of great statesmen and philosophers, historians, orators, and poets. The enthusiasm of that period led the disciples of the prophet from conquest to conquest and sufficed to lift the noblest of the Semitic nations above reach of the far spread deluge of superstition.

Was that enthusiasm evoked by the precepts of the Koran? We might as well be asked to believe that the victors of Jena and Austerlitz were inspired by the paragraphs of the Code Napoleon. The promise of Paradise may have steeled the arm of numerous

true believers, but thousands of half-believers and sceptics instinctively realised the significance of a mission that turned the scales of fortune against ignorance, misery, priestly terrorism, crusades, and *autos-da-fe*, in favor of Unitarianism, tolerance, science, and prosperity. The rise of Islam was the Protestant revolt of the Far East.

That outbreak, too, had been prepared by centuries of obstruction. About three hundred years after the beginning of our chronological era, the missionaries of Buddhism succeeded in fostering their doctrine upon the nations of the eastern Mediterranean, and the mania of world-renunciation spread southward and westward like a virulent epidemic. Monachism in its ugliest forms infested Syria and before long the entire north coast of the African continent from Alexandria to the western foothills of Mount Atlas. Before the middle of the sixth century all the south-eastern provinces of the Roman Empire were studded with convents. Begging friars roamed the highways. Anchorites haunted the caves of the desert and vied in the exhibitions of self-tortures à la Simon Stylites. "A gaunt, filthy fanatic," says Lecky, "a self-torturing wretch without knowledge, without patriotism, without the instincts of manhood, glorying in self-abasement and crazed by the phantoms of his own diseased imagination, had become the ideal of nations that had been familiar with the writings of Plato and Cicero." The celebration of secular festivals was restricted, and at last entirely abolished. The suppression of secular science not rarely took the form of murder, as in Alexandria, where a noble female disciple of pagan philosophy was slain by a gang of rabid fanatics. The relics of pagan art were demolished with a rage proportioned to their beauty. The propagandists of the new faith became more and more inclined to supplement their logic by an appeal to force. Self-abasement became the chief standard of merit.

The worn-out sensualists of southern Europe might welcome a doctrine of that sort, but on the borders of the Roman Empire its missionaries met with a very different reception. The manifold tribes of the southern Semites were just then emerging into the consciousness of intellectual life and the first phases of national development. The valley of the Atlas Range had recently been colonised by valiant Germanic immigrants, the adventurous vandals and several Suevi hordes,—the ancestors of the modern Zouaves. To such neighbors the constant encroachments of the crusading creed must have been a fearful menace. They could not help witnessing the life-blighting effects of monasticism and the more and more ruinous neglect of science and industry; religious persecution began to rear its horrid head; their own borders were haunted by the harbingers of the moral epidemic.

"Woe unto the race of men! I see a cloud approaching! A great darkness is going to overspread the face of the world!" cried the son of the prophetess Sospitira on awakening from his trance in the temple of Serapis. That darkness began to spread over the hills of the Semitic border, when the advent of the Unitarian prophet ushered in the sunburst of a miraculous Goshen. The doctrine of Mohammed, too, had its substrata of superstitions, but they differed from those of St. Jerome as the fancies of supernaturalism differ from the nightmares of antinaturalism. The zeal of its followers was undeniable, but that zeal was compatible with tolerance, with the love of nature, with a liberal encouragement of science and art. In less than sixty years that revival of common sense triumphed throughout a territory of fifteen hundred thousand square miles, and the enthusiasm of its apostles would have been sufficiently justified by the almost unparalleled prosperity of Moorish Spain—not to mention the palace-cities of Moorish Egypt and Syria—during the five centuries when priest-ridden Europe brooded under the darkest gloom of monastic barbarism.

At the birth of Mohammed just about a thousand years had elapsed since the last great tidal wave of human progress. The energy of the Roman commonwealth in the establishment of its independence during the fourth century of their national existence has perhaps never been equalled in the annals of heroism. Could those deeds of valor and devotion and the cheerful enterprise of almost superhuman toils be explained by the jealousy of petty rival states? The pleasure of substituting the eagle emblems of Rome for the lion emblems of Samnium? Could they be explained by the ambition which often gets its only reward in the honor of a warrior's funeral?

"So much labor for a winding-sheet?"

The last purpose of the Herculean toils bequeathed from sire to son of long successive generations, was revealed by their final outcome and foreshadowed by the inspiration of patriot-poets: The long-cherished, though often only half-conscious hope of deliverance from the very evils which reached their climax during the storms of the transition period: The horrors of continuous warfare.

War, in that boisterous spring-time period of the human race was a curse that could not be exorcised by homilies, but only by the dread of rousing the wrath of a clearly superlative and inexpugnably established military power. Under the auspices of such a power, developed beyond the fear of invasive barbarians, the arts of peace might hope to flourish for centuries, and an era of that kind was actually inaugurated by the establishment of the Pax Romana—the three hundred years' calm intervening between the

bustle of erecting the citadel of the Roman world-empire and the crash of its final collapse.

It has been said that the sceptre of the Roman Cæsars was only a club in disguise, but the fact remains that under their sway the tributary provinces enjoyed a prosperity and an amount of personal freedom unknown under the yoke of their native rulers; and no sophistry of court-chaplains can explain away the still more significant fact that during a period equal to the long interval between the birth of Luther and the death of Napoleon III, the peace of an empire embracing thirty-five different nations and nearly four million square miles was maintained by a standing army of eighty thousand men.

#### NON-MYSTICAL AGNOSTICISM

BY ELLIS THURTELL.

MR. T. B. WAKEMAN'S essay entitled "The Nature of the Soul," and inserted in *The Open Court* of Dec. 17th, is one with which I feel a good deal of general agreement. I should however like to be allowed a few paragraphs of protest against certain over sweeping condemnations of agnostic world-conceptions contained therein.

To start with—the lines translated from Goethe saying

"Into the Infinite wouldst thou stride?  
Go in the Finite only on every side,"

have my entire assent. But Mr. Wakeman must needs spoil perfect satisfaction with the spirit of his citation by declaring: "These lines give no quarter to agnosticism. They are the essence of monistic positivism." Now if it turns out that Monistic Positivism has really so excellent an essence as this, I for one shall have to grapple it to my soul with hooks of steel. But I shall by no means feel bound to give up my Agnosticism in so doing. I say my Agnosticism advisedly. For it seems beyond question that there is more than a single type of this philosophic faith, and that my own can scarcely be called the most orthodox of all.

That, as Mr. Wakeman declares, "there is no "room for an unknowable," I fully believe. And in this belief am reluctantly compelled to fall behind (or is it to shoot ahead of?) Herbert Spencer, and other lesser thinkers for whose opinions I feel much regard. For his and their Unknowable is simply my Unknown. To say that anything whatever is absolutely and forever unknowable seems certainly nowadays a somewhat needless piece of dogmatism. And it is a psychological conclusion to which the advanced and advancing views of a younger generation of Agnostics appears to give but scant support. So that when Mr. Wakeman speaks of a "ghost-world" which "simply "does not exist, except in the imagination of agnostic "philosophers," there are many of us—who would

fain be philosophers, and who consider the term agnostic as on the whole our most appropriate epithet—whose withers will nevertheless remain unwrung. For Dr. Fiske, whom our author is especially attacking, I of course do not presume to answer. But for myself, and I should fancy for some others also, I may express a very strong conviction that there does still exist, beyond our utmost stretch of working thought, the realm of the Unknown. And that in this region dwell those problems of "Materialism, Atheism, Agnosticism," from which Mr. Wakeman would (apparently under the high authority of Professor Haeckel) have us "get free" through the easy expedient of smothering our doubts in that blessed word Monism.

I am as far as possible from wishing to cast ridicule upon a philosophic theory that, under one form or another, is probably destined to become the common intellectual possession of the foremost thinkers in this century's last decade. But Monists have yet much to make out, and must keep their head. For Monism is at present but a tendency, and is far from being a terminus of thought. One may very well be monistic, in the sense of believing in an ultimate tracing of all existences and all ideas to a single origin appropriate to each, without declaring that this suitable and single source has hitherto been found in any but an occasional and uncomplicated instance. Moreover Materialism, whether old or new, is in itself monistic. The older forms of it may be discredited by the best opinions of the day. But the Neo-Materialism so ably set forth by Mr. Edmund Noble (in *The Open Court* for Nov. 26th) has assuredly the promise and potency of much strong and continued life. Nor does Monism any more get us free from Atheism, which is again essentially monistic. To say, as the Positive Monists do, that God and the world are one; that God *is* the world, or the world *is* God may be by them called Pantheism or Entheism. But the difference between this belief and Atheism is not so obvious after all. It may well enough be doubted whether any clearly-defined difference of either practical or philosophic value has ever been conclusively set forth. Whether Atheism is a true solution or not, it is most certainly a monistic one. And monistic again Agnosticism very generally is, though not necessarily so. Monism indeed can certainly not at present set us free from the agnostic attitude of thought. This attitude I at least hold to be but tentative and transitional to a state of greater certitude. But the greater knowledge necessary to the greater certainty is still withheld, and no ignoring of palpable and present limitations will do anything to speed our acquisition. We may all be monistic with the authority of the best science of our time. But we can I think be Monists only with great reserve—a reserve frankly recognised by the Agnostic,

but far too boldly or blindly resented by the positivistic household of belief.

I cannot therefore at all assent to what is expressed in Mr. Wakeman's second quotation from Germany's great philosophic poet. To the context I am not able to refer. But the citation stands as follows:

"Is it then so great a secret, what God, and Man, and the World may be?  
No! But no one is willing to hear it. So a secret it remains."

Upon this sentiment Mr. Wakeman's comment is: "Thus our Agnostic or Unknowable [sic] friends seem 'unable or unwilling to have this great 'mystery' explained. They keep telling us that if feeling is not 'a space—motion—force correlate it must be some 'inscrutable kind of power, entity, or spook. But the 'monist says: No it is not such at all, but simply 'the *fact side* of nervous changes, which *as facts* are 'being *noted* by the organism. Such noting is a fact, 'and the continued repetition of such noting of facts 'is a process constantly going on and called aware-  
'ness, feeling, consciousness, etc.'" Well here, though not caring much to speak of the Unknowable myself, I nevertheless side promptly with those who do so speak. And I have no hesitation in emphatically declaring that Mr. Wakeman's so called "Unknowable friends" are—unless they are altogether unlike my own friends of the same persuasion—just as willing to have this or any other mystery explained as Mr. Wakeman is himself. They are also just as little able to give any satisfactory explanation of "what God, and man, and the world may be." But they are much more able to see their own inability than their Positive Monist friends appear to be to see the equal inability that exists for them. What feeling may, in its actual essence, be, is still a very much disputed and disputable point. The Agnostic at any rate is in fully as good a position as the Positivist to find the solution that science shall eventually accept. Nor would any Agnostic with whose ideas I am acquainted dream of describing feeling as an "entity or spook." Whether or not we gain anything by calling Feeling "the fact side of nervous changes," it is certain that there is nothing about a belief in the Unknowable to prevent anyone assenting to this proposition, should it seem to him for psychological reasons a sound one. It is really high time that we should have done with this idea that people who agree with us entirely upon the grand principle of a perfectly naturalistic (as against a supernaturalistic) philosophy, are to be considered precluded from employing any of the methods, or attaining any of the results appropriate to that philosophy, merely because of some difference of opinion as to how far our cosmic theory is capable of carrying us at present.

With Mr. Wakeman's last quotation from Goethe: "There is no wisdom save in truth," I am of course, having no theological prepossessions, in entire accord.

But I cannot see that the truth is served by the casting of such aspersions upon a school of severely scientific opinions as would be merited only by a body of spiritualists, theosophists, or theologians. I feel no such antagonism to the school of Positive Monists as some of the leading writers of that school exhibit to the circle of Agnostic Monists. That sort of intellectual *animus* is reserved for the genuine exponents of spookism, sorcery, and superstition. Of these—Christians apart—we have a most menacing and strangely increasing number still amongst us. These are the true traitors to common sense, sound science, and profound philosophy. Even ordinary honesty is by some of them plainly set aside to suit purposes of popular edification or personal ambition. We Monists, of the positivistic and agnostic school alike, shall do well to close our ranks more firmly, and to concentrate our fire more effectively than we have hitherto done. What we now chiefly need is, I believe, a more clearly conceived distinction between our friends and foes. And to this end let Mr. Wakeman and myself both bend our powers.

#### IS MONISM A TERMINUS OF THOUGHT?

IN REPLY TO MR. ELLIS THURTELL.

THE agnostic that has surrendered the idea of the unknowable is most certainly a very welcome confederate to monists and positivists; but we were always under the impression that the very core of agnosticism lies in the doctrine of the unknowable. The name agnosticism seems to have no sense otherwise, for I do not know that any thinker would object to what is best called the agnosticism of modesty, which prescribes that we suspend our judgment until proofs are forthcoming. There is accordingly no quarrel with Mr. Ellis Thurtell's agnosticism.

Mr. Thurtell says of monism, that it "is at present but a tendency and far from being a terminus of thought." I wish to add a few explanations to this sentence, which I should say is true, but must be rightly understood.

Monism is in a certain sense indeed a terminus of thought; yet in another sense it is a tendency, or rather a principle applied to scientific investigations.

Monism, as we understand the term, is a solution of certain philosophical questions. It explains certain problems concerning which agnostics usually say that we can know nothing at all. Such problems are the God-idea, the nature of the soul, the connection between soul and body, the immortality of the soul and others. Monism looks upon all existence as one great inseparable whole and does not forget that man's ideas are abstract symbols representing certain features of reality. They do not, any of them, exist as absolute

or separate entities, but as parts or qualities of the One and All.

If anybody pleases, he might call monism a hypothesis or a tentative theory. We have no objection either to calling the Copernican system a hypothesis or the Newtonian doctrine of gravitation a tentative theory. We might call the law of causation an assumption and mathematical theorems dogmas which may not hold true in other worlds. But we should say that these names are at least misleading. Monism is more than a tentative theory, it is the basis of cognition; it is the condition of all scientific work when applied to practical life, it serves as the corner-stone for the formulation of our rules of conduct.

What is knowledge but a description of facts? what is cognition but a systematisation of knowledge in one unitary conception free from contradiction and formulated with consistency? Every science exists only by the application of this principle; every branch of science is the attempt to establish monism in a special province of nature, every problem is an apparent dualism, every discovery is always a step forward in recognising the unity of facts, the solution of a problem is the establishment of a monistic conception.

Thus monism is a terminus of thought which is the solution of a very important problem, the problem of method. Monism, however, does not solve all the problems, it only solves one fundamental problem, and this solution is made the basis of further scientific progress.

We do not hold our judgment suspended concerning the monistic solution of the philosophical problem, but we use the solution, we operate with it, we apply it to new problems.

The monistic solution is thus a terminus of thought as much as the Copernican conception of the planetary system is a terminus of certain astronomical investigations. But neither the one nor the other is a terminus of thinking. On the contrary, both represent starting points for entirely new departures; they become leading principles for the solution of new problems, and monism indeed was the principle of science even before the scientists became conscious of it.

Agnosticism (that agnosticism which believes in the unknowable) either suspends judgment concerning the God-idea or it calls its unknowable itself God. Either solution is very unsatisfactory. Atheism, starting from the popular conception of God as a personal being, denies the existence of God. This is also unsatisfactory because it does not explain how an absolute error could be the fundamental ethical idea of mankind for ages. Ethical ideas that are wrong cannot enjoy a long existence. Perhaps the God-idea is no absolute error. There may be some truth in it!

The God idea is the solution of a certain problem which although insufficient held good for certain purposes. There is a moral order in the world; there is a law which cannot be violated with impunity; there is an authority which with irresistible power enforces a certain kind of conduct. This moral order, this law, this power or authority is that something in the world through which and in which we live such as we are—thinking, aspiring, and constantly progressing beings. This something exists and we call it God.

God has been conceived as a person, and this conception of God is the best allegory by which man on a certain stage of scientific maturity or rather immaturity can form an approximate idea of God. The allegory is wrong, but the idea is right. To say that God is no person is not atheism.

Atheism says there is no God, for man was not shaped by a huge person but is the product of evolution. Very well, these conditions that shaped man are not a chaotic play of forces, but a certain and consistent order. The materialist sees in a stellar nebula only a heap of gaseous matter in an irregular turmoil of raging whirls. But there is something more in it which he cannot see. How grand this cosmic existence is of which we are a part, how spiritual it is in its nature, how orderly in its relations and arrangements, can be seen in the highest efflorescence of the world which we know—in man, his intelligence, his civilisation, his ideals.

The problem is not (as Atheism puts it), Is there a God at all? but What is God? And denying the personality of God is not yet a solution of the problem.

The problem, What God and man and the world may be, is not a mere theoretical problem, for our actions are expressions (albeit unconscious expressions) of a certain solution of this problem. It has to be solved again by every generation, and let us hope that the solution of every new generation will be an improved edition of the solution of former generations. The personal God idea is a solution which we no longer accept. But, after all, it is truer than the atheistic solution; for the personal God-idea is a mythological conception of a great truth. There are very astute and keen thinkers among atheists; nevertheless atheism is superficial: it disposes too quickly of a problem which is deeper than it seems.

Most philosophical systems come with great pretensions as a final solution of all problems, which implies that they form a terminus of thinking. Monism is different: it solves the problem of method; or rather it renders it clear, for it has been applied in science unconsciously since times immemorial, and thus it will be of help for further investigations. Negative solutions of denying an error or keeping judgment suspended, or assuming an attitude of reserve, are only

partial solutions. Doubt is better than going astray and reserve is better than making mistakes; but doubt and reserve are demands to arrive at a positive solution. The test of truth is always the practical applicability of an idea. So far as an idea can be used in real life, so far as it works in the right way with the desired results, that far it is true. Thus a mythological idea may be true. We may know that the mythology of the idea is a mere and an erroneous analogy, we may at the same time be unable to express it better, yet it would be a mistake to say that the idea is wrong. This is not only true of religious ideas but also of scientific ideas. The terms electric current, atoms, ether-waves, etc., are mythological expressions, but we have no better means of describing certain facts than by such terms, and although they are insufficient because mythological, they are (so far as they go) true. We use them for practical purposes, and we know that we can rely on them. The mythology of the terms is an artifice to represent truth, but the truth contained in this mythology is no mere hypothesis, no mere tentative conception of things, but it is a description of facts that can be employed when we have to deal with facts; and that is after all the purpose of all knowledge.

P. C.

## CURRENT TOPICS.

ONCE upon a time, when a boy, I visited some of my relatives, and on a certain evening by riotous romping in the house with two or three cousins, I gave serious annoyance to my aunt, who was busily cooking supper while my uncle sat in the chimney corner serenely smoking his pipe. Having tried in vain to keep us quiet, she at last appealed to my uncle for protection, and wanted to know whether he was going to "attend to them boys"; and whether he was going to let them "ride rough shod" over her; I quote the dear old lady's very words; to all of which he calmly answered, "They ain't a meddlin' wi' me." This indolent reply will serve as a motto for the American citizen, in his individual character, so careless has he become about the injustice that others have to bear. So long as he can hear his national clock ticking with mechanical regularity he cares very little whether it is truthfully telling the time or not. So long as he enjoys a republican form of government, he is willing to let the substance go. Only when a political wrong falls heavily upon himself does he invoke the spirit of the Constitution. He sympathises with the subjects of Russian despotism, but for the victims of American misrule he cares nothing. He knows that the Constitution ordains that freedom of the press must be respected as part of the organic law, but when the ministers of government suppress that freedom where he himself is not concerned, he calmly smokes his pipe, and says, "They ain't a meddlin' wi' me."

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There is published in the city of New York a journal called *The Voice*, an influential organ of the Prohibition party. In a country blessed with "two great parties," one Republican, and the other Democratic, there is evidently no need for a third, and the Prohibition party, or any other party intruding into American politics must be regarded as a trespasser, infringing on the patent right of exclusive ballot-boxing; a right which the two great par-

ties claim to own in common. Where there is no use for a prohibition party there cannot be any need for a prohibition paper, and therefore certain postmasters, with a public spirited zeal to protect the vested rights of the two old parties, refuse to recognise *The Voice* as legitimate mail matter, and they decline to deliver it. Up to date, no less than twenty-seven postmasters have refused to deliver *The Voice*, and there are several states to hear from yet. Eager to perform their duty according to party ethics, and anxious that the people should receive only proper politics through the mail, those postmasters have written to the editor of *The Voice* telling him not to send any more of his papers because "they are not taken out," which indeed was true, for the sufficient reason that they were not "given out" by the postmasters, as appears by more than a hundred letters received from subscribers and others to whom the paper had been sent. All this reminds us of the dear departed good old slavery times, when the two great parties were Democratic and Whig, and when the intrusion of the Republican party into politics was rebuked in that very same way, as the history of the *New York Tribune* will clearly show. When Horace Greely complained to the Postmaster General that certain postmasters refused to deliver the *Tribune* to subscribers, the answer was that it served the *Tribune* right, and that the conduct of the postmasters was praiseworthy and patriotic. We know what came of all that, and what a ragged appearance that Postmaster General makes in history. Now the republican postmasters apply the same discipline to *The Voice*; and republican papers complacently remark, "they ain't a meddlin' wi' me." Mr. Wannamaker himself must be held guiltless of this wrong until he has had an opportunity to correct it, but no longer than that. No doubt *The Voice* is a very aggravating paper, especially to the two great parties, but the suppression of it by the "Department" at a post office is a despotic assault upon the rights of every newspaper and every magazine published in the United States.

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There is something hopeful and stimulating in the prospect of plenty of money, and I feel as grateful to the St. Louis convention for the promise of it, as I do to my bankrupt friend, who, not having five cents in all the world, leaves me ten thousand dollars in his will. He shows at least his love. So the Third Party Conference, with the same powerless generosity, would give to every man of us ten thousand dollars a piece if it could. For a beginning it will be satisfied with fifty dollars a head as a circulating medium, to be issued by the government in a currency "safe, sound, and flexible," and to be loaned at a rate of interest not to exceed two per cent. per annum, "as set forth in the Sub Treasury plan of the Farmers Alliance or some better system." There is a suspicious look in that alternative, as if the leaders of the People's Party, were about to betray the Sub Treasury plan, and substitute for it "some better system." What better system can there be than making unlimited money and loaning it to the people at two per cent. a year? Pleasing as the prospect is, I feel discouraged by the contradiction of the policy by one of its ablest advocates, as I find it in *The Arena*. Describing the "plenty of money" paradise, and the financial good time coming, he says, "When money is so plenty that the farmer or planter who has need of \$50, or a \$100, can obtain it for thirty or sixty days of a neighbor, as easily as he can borrow that neighbor's wagon; then there will be plenty of money in the country and not before." I fear that the logic of the Alliance is no better than its money; for if that argument proves anything, it proves that there is not plenty of money in the country, when farmers and planters are ground down to the necessity of borrowing from neighbors \$50, or \$100, for thirty or sixty days. Why not borrow it of the government, the creator of money out of nothing, rather than of a neighbor who must earn every dollar he gets?

In the *New Review* for February is an article by Tom Mann and Ben Tillett on "The Labor Platform," that social and political structure which is again undergoing alterations and repairs. The architects who have presented in the *New Review* their plans and specifications for an improved labor platform are the popular firm of Tillett and Mann, platform builders and cabinet makers, and they will put in as low a bid as any other firm for the job of building it. Messrs. Tillett and Mann are a couple of statesmen with much practical sense and some theoretical nonsense in their scheme of social change. By force of mental and moral ability they have become the teachers and leaders of many men; but unfortunately they have been in the reprehensible habit of earning their daily bread by daily labor, and therefore society cannot patronize them with any higher titles than the nicknames "Tom" and "Ben." After they enter parliament, and the cabinet, which by the way will be a fine improvement, they will get revenge for "the proud man's contumely" when he doffs his plume to "The Right Hon. Thomas, and The Right Hon. Benjamin." Perhaps, however, Messrs. Tillett and Mann affect those very sociable nicknames, as our own aspiring politicians do, to captivate the crowd by a show of equal 'umbleness and a public invitation to friendship and familiarity. In that case I should withdraw the praise I have sincerely given them, and class them no higher than I do the Honorable Toms, Dicks, Harrys, and Micks, who so profusely ornament American public life.

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One of the easiest and most pleasant of the mental exercises that I enjoy is the luxury of calling every man a crank whose theories and arguments I have not sense enough to understand. I shall not do so now, although Mr. Mann offers me some very strong temptation when he says, "We demand that the slums be cleared out, that healthy dwellings be constructed at reasonable rents, that town life be made tolerable, even comfortable, and we demand that *poverty be banished*." In that part of the "demand" which Mr. Mann has placed in italics every man can join, because it includes all the rest of his claim, and it is an absolute and final solution of the social problem. When poverty is banished there will be no slums; and town life, and country life too, will be not only comfortable, but happy. We may demand that poverty be banished, and we may "call spirits from the vasty deep"; but who is to abolish poverty, and how shall the work be done? The editor of a social reform paper was one day carrying his "form" to a job office to be printed, when he was met by a friend, who said, "Joe, why don't you buy a power press?" "Yes," he answered, "and why don't I buy the Palmer House, and the Auditorium?" Men large of heart and brain, impatient of injustice, and seeking like Archimedes for a fulcrum by which to lift the world, look to beneficent conclusions, and passionately demand that they be established at once by some revolutionary miracle. But the mills of the Gods grind slowly, and the banishment of poverty is a work of painful detail, comprising hundreds of specific improvements in our own individual characters, in our social customs, and in our public laws. Mr. Mann is in the debatable domain of statesmanship with social ethics for his guide when he demands "the abolition of systematic overtime, the fixing of a forty-eight hour maximum working week, the abolition of the half time system for children under thirteen years of age, and the withdrawal of wives from mills and workshops." Here he is definite, and we can all confer with him as to the wisdom of his plans and the best means of securing their adoption; but he steps into the mist again when he demands that there shall be "some kind of communal responsibility recognised, making provision for those who are dislodged from their ordinary occupations by changes of fashion, of seasons, or methods of manufacture. Borrowing the jargon of the lawyers, who is to fix 'the measure of damages' here? And how is the community to be made responsible for a change of seasons?"

I desire to notice for a moment one part of Mr. Tillett's argument, because the ends he aims at are like those of Mr. Mann, ideally good, although I think his reasons are occasionally unsound. In a summary of the points that he has made, he advocates the "abolition of all poverty by a scientific appreciation of natural and economic laws; assuming each human being's real worth to consist of capacity to consume as well as to produce. If the wages of ten thousand are no more than adequate to maintain in comfort one thousand, it necessarily follows that trade is impoverished in an ever narrowing circle." The logical connection between those two propositions is not very clear, but I only wish to notice "the capacity to consume" doctrine, which, although it has long been cherished by the working men of England is, I believe, unsound in social, domestic, and political economy. It stands as the antithesis of "the capacity to save" doctrine, and it converts waste and extravagance into virtues. For ages, English working men have held it mean to save their wages instead of spending it because extravagance is "good for trade"; and so is loss by fire and by flood. The capacity to consume, and the greed for its gratification is one fruitful cause of the injustice that oppresses the working men to-day. One day when Sam Weller and his father were enjoying themselves over a "pot o' beer," Sam took a ravenous long pull at the mug, and his father looking into it and observing the enormous cavity that Sam had made, remarked with reproachful sarcasm, "You've a werry good power of suction, Sammy; you would have made a good oyster, if you had been born in that station of life." Here Sam's healthy "capacity to consume" was all very well, but in the gratification of it he deprived his father of a fair proportion of the beer. And this principle carried as it is into all the relations of human life, deprives millions of their legitimate social share. The "capacity to consume" creates more poverty than it cures.

M. M. TRUMBULL.

#### BOOK REVIEWS.

CHEAP-MONEY EXPERIMENTS IN PAST AND PRESENT TIMES. New York: The Century Company. 1892. Price 10 cents.

This pamphlet is a compilation from "Topics of the Time" in *The Century Magazine* from March 1891, to January 1892. It contains much more than ten cents worth of instruction; and warning examples worth millions of dollars. The argument of it has been anticipated in *The Open Court*, especially in the "Wheelbarrow" papers and the discussions growing out of them. We are glad to see it in this pamphlet form, because having upon it the image and superscription of *The Century Magazine*, it ought to have a circulation of many many thousands, as it very likely will. The pity of it is that the men who need its lessons most will read it least, the mechanics and laborers who want their wages paid in cheap money, and the farmers who want to be paid in cheap money for their corn. The "awful examples" of the cheap money mistake presented in the book are The English Land Bank, The Rhode Island Paper Bank, The John Law Bubble, The Argentine Cheap-Money Paradise, The Michigan Wild Cat Banks, and some others. These would be amply sufficient warning if the question were one of economics only. Unfortunately, ambitious men use the "cheap money" theory for their own political advantage, while thousands of others think they see in it a method by which they may scale their debts. The subject must be discussed from the ethical side.

The author of this pamphlet says, "The harmful delusion that the Government has the power to create money is traceable directly to the Legal Tender Act of 1862." Perhaps so, in its more direct and immediate influence upon the American people, but the virus of it was in our monetary legislation long before that. It was put there when the government first usurped the power to de-

clare anything whatever a Legal Tender in payment of debts. The "fiat" that makes gold coins a legal tender in payment of debts is just as potential in the case of silver, brass, leather, or paper coins; the difference is only in the extent and degree of the mischief done by the "fiat." The truth is that Legal Tender acts are all morally void. A debt cannot be paid until the moral obligation contained in it is cancelled, and no government can cancel that. It appears by the papers that a recent explorer has discovered that the source of the Mississippi river is not in Lake Itasca, as we have long supposed, but in a fountain farther back. So, the author of this pamphlet will discover that the source of this "harmful delusion" lies in legal tender legislation farther back than the Legal Tender Act of 1862. The greatest statesman that this world has ever produced was the ruler who invented indirect taxation, and persuaded the people who could not see the amount they paid, that the taxation itself was the source of their prosperity. The next greatest was the man who invented the scheme of "Legal Tender," and nicknamed coins so that the people might be deceived as to their weight, quality, and value; calling them shillings, dollars, florins, and other abstract names instead of ounces, half-ounces, quarter-ounces, and other concrete words expressive of the actual quantity of metal they contain.

M. M. T.

## NOTES.

Baronin Bertha von Suttner is an author of uncommon repute. She wrote a powerful novel under the title, "Die waffen nieder!" in which she preached peace upon earth and good will among men. We are now in receipt of a new monthly published and edited by Bertha von Suttner which bears the same significant title as her novel. (Price 6 marks per year. Berlin, W. Potsdamer St., 27.) It is designed to be an organ for the aspirations of those who endeavor to supplant war by decisions of international tribunals. Bertha von Suttner had received when attending the last Congress of Peace, at Rome, many exhortations from prominent men among whom she mentions E. Haeckel, F. Spielhagen, E. de Laveleye, Fr. Bodenstedt, L. Fulda, the Duke of Oldenburg, Prince Stahremberg, B. Carneri, P. K. Rosegger, L. Büchner, H. Heiberg, and Count L. Tolstoi. In the first number of the new periodical she publishes several additional letters from Max Nordau, Lieut. Col. M. v. Egidy, Charles Lemonier, Frédéric Passy, and Dr. M. G. Conrad. The more threatening a constant danger of war hangs over Europe, which may be brought about as the last war between France and Germany for frivolous reasons, the more the nations yearn for peace; and it is right that they should not submit to being rushed into war for mere party considerations of a government that uses such means to remain in power. One of the contributors says: "Struggle is necessary, struggle is beautiful, struggle is human, struggle is a natural law, the strong, the healthy must be victorious,—but war is not struggle, war is horrible murder!" Dr. Knauer, of Vienna, gives a short exposé of Kant's propositions how to attain a perpetual peace among the nations. It is no mere fancy, says Kant (*kein leeres Hirngespinnst*). "The eternal norm as the basis of a state constitution abolishes war among its members. A society organised in this way is its representation according to laws of liberty, practically given in experience; yet it can only be acquired with difficulty after various struggles and wars; but its constitution, if once accomplished, is best qualified to keep off war the destroyer of all good things."

*Die Waffen nieder!* is so far as we are informed the only German periodical of its kind. Similar periodicals are *Concord*, a journal of the international arbitration and peace association, London (40 Outer Temple, Strand), *L'amico della pace*, published at Milan, *Almanach de la Paix*, published by Plon-Nourrit & Co., Paris.

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## CONTENTS OF NO. 238.

TIDES OF PROGRESS. FELIX L. OSWALD..... 3175

NON-MYSTICAL AGNOSTICISM. ELLIS THURTELL.... 3177

IS MONISM A TERMINUS OF THOUGHT? In Reply

to Mr. Ellis Thurtell. EDITOR..... 3178

CURRENT TOPICS. Suppression of *The Voice*. Plenty of

Money. Tom Mann and Ben Tillet. Labor Platform.

The Capacity to Consume. M. M. TRUMBULL..... 3180

BOOK REVIEWS..... 3181

NOTES..... 3182