TABLE TALK

OF

JOHN SELDEN

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EDITED

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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# CONTENTS

<p>| Introduction                                      | ix  |
| List of editions referred to in the notes        | xxvi|
| Introductory letter or dedication by Richard Milward | 1   |
| I. Abbeys. Priories                              | 3   |
| II. Thirty-nine Articles                         | 5   |
| III. Baptism                                     | 7   |
| IV. Bastard                                      | 8   |
| V. Bible, Scripture                              | 9   |
| VI. Bishops before the Parliament                | 13  |
| VII. Bishops in the Parliament                   | 16  |
| VIII. Bishops out of the Parliament              | 23  |
| IX. Books. Authors                               | 29  |
| X. Canon Law                                     | 31  |
| XI. Ceremony                                     | ib. |
| XII. Chancellor                                  | 32  |
| XIII. Changing Sides                             | 33  |
| XIV. Christians                                  | 35  |
| XV. Christmas                                    | 37  |
| XVI. Church                                      | 38  |
| XVII. Church of Rome                             | 40  |
| XVIII. Churches                                  | 41  |
| XIX. City                                        | 42  |
| XX. Clergy                                       | 43  |
| XXI. High Commission                             | 45  |
| XXII. House of Commons                           | 46  |
| XXIII. Competency                                | 47  |
| XXIV. Confession                                 | 48  |
| XXV. Great Conjunction                           | ib. |
| XXVI. Conscience                                 | 49  |
| XXVII. Consecrated places.                       | 51  |
| XXVIII. Contracts                                | 52  |
| XXIX. Convocation                                | 53  |
| XXX. Council                                     | ib. |
| XXXI. | Creed | 53 |
| XXXII. | Damnation | 54 |
| XXXIII. | Self-denial | 55 |
| XXXIV. | Devils | <em>ib.</em> |
| XXXV. | Duel | 58 |
| XXXVI. | Epitaph | 60 |
| XXXVII. | Equity | <em>ib.</em> |
| XXXVIII. | Evil speaking | 62 |
| XXXIX. | Excommunication | 64 |
| XL. | Fasting Days | 68 |
| XLI. | Fathers and Sons | 69 |
| XLII. | Faith and Works | <em>ib.</em> |
| XLIII. | Fines | 70 |
| XLIV. | Free-will. | 71 |
| XLV. | Friends | <em>ib.</em> |
| XLVI. | Friars | <em>ib.</em> |
| XLVII. | Genealogy of Christ | 72 |
| XLVIII. | Gentlemen | <em>ib.</em> |
| XLIX. | Gold | 73 |
| L. | Hall | 74 |
| LI. | Hell | 75 |
| LII. | Holy-days | 77 |
| LIII. | Humility | 78 |
| LIV. | Idolatry | <em>ib.</em> |
| LV. | Jews | 79 |
| LVI. | Invincible Ignorance | <em>ib.</em> |
| LVII. | Images | 80 |
| LVIII. | Imperial Constitutions | 81 |
| LIX. | Imprisonment | 82 |
| LX. | Incendiaries | 83 |
| LXI. | Independency | <em>ib.</em> |
| LXII. | Things Indifferent | 85 |
| LXIII. | Public Interest | <em>ib.</em> |
| LXIV. | Human Invention | <em>ib.</em> |
| LXV. | God's Judgments | 86 |
| LXVI. | Judge | 87 |
| LXVII. | Juggling | 88 |
| LXVIII. | Jurisdiction | <em>ib.</em> |
| LXIX. | Jus Divinum | <em>ib.</em> |
| LXX. | King | 89 |
| LXXI. | King of England | 91 |
| LXXII. | The King | 94 |
| LXXIII. | Knight's Service | 97 |
| LXXIV. | Land | <em>ib.</em> |
| LXXV. | Language | 98 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS.</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LXXVI.</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXVII.</td>
<td>Law of Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXVIII.</td>
<td>Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXIX.</td>
<td>Lecturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXX.</td>
<td>Libels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXXI.</td>
<td>Liturgy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXXII.</td>
<td>Lords before the Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXXIII.</td>
<td>Lords in the Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXXIV.</td>
<td>Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXXV.</td>
<td>Marriage of Cousin-Germans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXXVI.</td>
<td>Measure of Things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXXVII.</td>
<td>Difference of Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXXVIII.</td>
<td>Minister Divine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXXXIX.</td>
<td>Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X.</td>
<td>Moral Honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XCI.</td>
<td>Mortgage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XCII.</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XCIII.</td>
<td>Oaths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XCV.</td>
<td>Oracles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XCV.</td>
<td>Opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XCVI.</td>
<td>Parity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XCVII.</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XCVIII.</td>
<td>Parson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XCIX.</td>
<td>Patience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI.</td>
<td>Penance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CII.</td>
<td>People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIII.</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIV.</td>
<td>Pleasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV.</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVI.</td>
<td>Pope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVII.</td>
<td>Popery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVIII.</td>
<td>Power. State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIX.</td>
<td>Prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CX.</td>
<td>Preaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXI.</td>
<td>Predestination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXII.</td>
<td>Preferment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXIII.</td>
<td>Premunire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXIV.</td>
<td>Prerogative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXV.</td>
<td>Presbytery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXVI.</td>
<td>Priests of Rome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXVII.</td>
<td>Prophecies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXVIII.</td>
<td>Proverbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXIX.</td>
<td>Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CXX.</td>
<td>Reason</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONTENTS.

CXXI. Religion .................................................. 161
CXXII. Non-Residency ........................................... 167
CXXIII. Retaliation .............................................. 168
CXXIV. Reverence ............................................... ib.
CXXV. Sabbath ................................................ 169
CXXVI. Sacrament ............................................... 170
CXXVII. Salvation ............................................... ib.
CXXVIII. Ship-Money ............................................ 171
CXXIX. Simony .................................................. ib.
CXXX. State .................................................... 172
CXXXI. Subsidies ............................................... 173
CXXXII. Superstition .......................................... ib.
CXXXIII. Synod Assembly ...................................... 174
CXXXIV. Thanksgiving ......................................... 177
CXXXV. Tithes .................................................. ib.
CXXXVI. Trade .................................................. 181
CXXXVII. Tradition ............................................. 182
CXXXVIII. Transubstantiation ................................. ib.
CXXXIX. Traitor ................................................ 183
CXL. Trial ...................................................... ib.
CXLI. Trinity ................................................... 185
CXLII. Truth ..................................................... 186
CXLIII. University ............................................. 187
CXLIV. Vows ..................................................... 188
CXLV. Usury ...................................................... ib.
CXLVI. Pious Uses ............................................. 189
CXLVII. War ..................................................... 190
CXLVIII. Wife ................................................... 194
CXLIX. Wisdom .................................................. ib.
CL. Witches ..................................................... 195
CLI. Wit ........................................................ ib.
CLII. Women ..................................................... 196
CLIII. Year ....................................................... 197
CLIV. Zealots .................................................... 199

Excursus A. Excommunication .................................. 201
   " B. Incendiaries ............................................. 202
   " C. The King's Chapel Establishment .................... 205
   " D. The Prior of St. John ................................ 206
   " E. Questions sent to the Assembly ..................... 208
   " F. Changes in present Text ................................ 209
   " G. Testimonies and Criticisms about Selden .......... 211

Index .............................................................. 213
INTRODUCTION

It is now more than thirty years since the late Mark Pattison suggested to me to prepare an edition of Selden's Table Talk, and gave me some valuable hints as to the way in which a work of the kind ought to be done. Pattison was an enthusiast for Selden; he considered him a typical Englishman, at once a representative of the best points in the distinctively English character, and wholly free from its common prejudices and shortcomings. Selden had certainly what have been termed the three main interests of Englishmen, politics, business and religion. His Table Talk gives us specimens of his remarks on all three, but on matters of business not so many as on the other two. That the conversations which it reports were held between 1634 and 1654, the year in which Selden died, may be assumed with certainty. The reporter, Milward, says in his introductory letter that he had the opportunity to hear Selden discourse twenty years together, and he thus fixes the range of time which his notes cover. Now the letters referred to in Tythes, sec. 6, bear date in the Autumn of 1653, so that the conversation about them must have come very shortly before Selden's death. The chief part of the discourse is about contemporary events, and Selden's remarks upon these throw an
interesting light on the history of his opinions and on his attitude to the parties of his day.

The early history of the book must be left incomplete on many points. It seems clear, as Mr. Singer has pointed out, that the MS. of it was put together within a few years of Selden's death. He finds proof of this in Milward's introductory letter where he speaks of 'Mr. Justice Hale, one of the Judges of the Common Pleas.' Hale, afterwards Sir Matthew Hale, ceased to be a judge of the Common Pleas in 1658 on Cromwell's death. It is clear too from this introductory letter, that when the MS. was ready it was placed in the hands of Selden's Executors, probably in the hands of Hale, whose name stands first in the list. But what became of it afterwards I do not know. It is not to be found among Sir Matthew Hale's papers in the Lincoln's Inn Library. The collection includes several of Selden's own papers, some of them unpublished as yet, but no part of the Table Talk. I have to thank the Librarian for his courtesy in placing within my reach very full means of information on this point. Now the earliest printed edition did not come out until 1689, more than thirty years after the MS. had been prepared. Of the history of the book in the meanwhile we know little or nothing. In some form or other it must have been accessible, for it is certain that there were copies made from it or from some second-hand rendering of it. But the long time which was suffered to pass before it was sent to press, suggests that there were parts of it which its trustees did not approve, and there are some at which they may have taken very reasonable offence. Religious questions are handled with a freedom of expression not at all to Hale's mind: the political sentiments are not those of Hale himself, and the book is disgraced by the insertion of several indecent references and expressions, which add nothing to the force of the passages in which they occur,
INTRODUCTION.

and which Selden himself could hardly have wished should go down to posterity as specimens of his every-
day talk.

After the Restoration, and during the whole reigns of
Charles II and James II, not even the remainder of the
Table Talk could have been received with much approval.
The course of opinion and of events was setting another
way; and Selden's outspoken words, his attack on the
divine right equally of kings and of bishops, his reduc-
tion of the Monarchy to a limited constitutional form,
his love of liberty, his insistence on obedience to law as
part of a contract by which kings and subjects were alike
bound—all this would have been very unlike the theory
that found favour under the Stuarts. When the book at
length appeared, in 1689, it was in a form which leaves
much to be desired, replete as it is with blunders and
in more than one place making downright nonsense of
the passage. The present edition does something to
bring the text back to what it must originally have been,
and it certainly clears away some gross faults of which
neither Selden nor his reporter can have been the origin-
ating cause. The Harleian MS., No. 1315, in the British
Museum Library, has been taken as the basis of the text.
The Library has three MSS. of the Table Talk. To the
earliest of these, the Harleian, No. 690, the date assigned
by Mr. Warner, the Assistant Keeper of MSS., is circa
1670. Next in order of time and a little later comes
the Sloane MS., No. 2513, and latest of the three is the
Harleian, No. 1315, for which the posterior limit of date
can (for reasons which I shall presently explain) be fixed
with certainty as 1689. Mr. Warner's authority as a
palaeographer is so high that his opinion may be taken
as conclusive. It is certain, however, that no one of these
MSS. can have been the original copy of the Table Talk.
The Harleian 690, the earliest of the three, leaves blank
spaces for all the Greek words under the heading ‘Descent into Hell,’ and besides numerous other faults, blunders badly with the French. The Sloane MS. is even more out of the question. Besides its later date, it abounds throughout with blunders, grammatical and others, of the most obvious kind. Some of these have been corrected by a later hand, but the paper on which the MS. is written is so very like blotting-paper that almost every correction or change involves a deletion of the original text. The Harleian 1315 is of much better stamp than the Sloane. It accords very nearly with the MS. 690, and it has a special authority of its own by reason of an inscription on the back side of the title, which, as Harley’s Librarian says, was written in it by Harley himself. The inscription runs thus—‘This book was given in 168 (the final figure is unfortunately wanting) by Charles earl of Dorset and Middlesex to a bookseller in Fleet Street, in order to have it printed: but the bookseller delaying to have it done, Mr. Thomas Rymer sold a copy he procured to Mr. Churchill, who printed it as it came out in 169 . . .’ This inscription is dated February 17, 1697. It thus fixes the date of the MS. as not later than 1689, and gives it an authority of its own, since it stands as proof that, but for the printer’s delay, it would have been the basis of the earliest printed edition. The inscription is incorrect on one point, since it implies that the edition of 169 . . . (presumably the edition printed in 1696, by Jacob Tonson and Awnsham and John Churchill) was the first that had appeared. This, as we have seen, is not so. The first printed edition came out in 1689.

For bringing back the text to some nearer approach to its original and correct form, the choice lay between the Harleian MSS. 690 and 1315. Both contain excellent readings, and the two together, with occasional help from
the Sloane MS. and from the early printed editions, supply material for a fairly satisfactory revision. But where no notice appears to the contrary, the text now printed is that of the Harleian MS. 1315. In all three MSS. several passages which have been detached from the body of the book are misplaced, or are added in an Appendix at the end. These, in the present edition, have been put back to the places to which they properly belong, and as they appear in the edition of 1689. This, and an occasional change of the spelling where it was obsolete or obviously incorrect, are the only changes which have been made without notice. Those who set a value on the vagaries of a half-lettered scribe, will find them in abundance and of all sorts in the Sloane MS. 2513.

With all helps, but in the absence of any conclusive authority, the settlement of the text has been a matter of difficulty and doubt. In deciding between different readings, or in conjectural emendations, I have taken as my guide Selden’s own rule. ‘A man,’ he says, ‘must in this case venture his discretion, and do his best to satisfy himself and others in those places where he doubts.’ It is safe to assume that Selden did not talk nonsense, and that he was not ignorant of matters with which his published works prove him to have been perfectly conversant. For example, when he is made to say that a suffragan was no bishop, we may conclude with certainty that he did not say this, although the MSS. and the early printed editions agree in putting it into his mouth. When he is made to speak of Sir Richard Weston as the Prior of St. John’s, and of Valentine’s novels as laying down the limits of episcopal jurisdiction, I have borne in mind Porson’s remark that no editor in his senses adopts a reading which he knows to be wrong, and I have changed the text accordingly. But in every instance the reader has notice of the change.
Milward, in his introductory letter, requests the reader to distinguish times, and in his fancy to carry along with him the when and the why many of these things were spoken. The alphabetical arrangement of the matter of the book gives us no help here. There is no attempt at a chronological order. Times are confused throughout, and we pass from subject to subject with no notice of either when or why except such as we can gather from the contents of each paragraph. I have done what I could, in an imperfect tentative way, to supply the want. Out of the great stream of events and writings and speeches which formed, so to say, the environment of Selden’s life, I have picked out, here and there, what seemed likely to have suggested some of his remarks. In some instances the reference has been clear and certain; in some his published writings have given the clue, and have served to supplement the imperfect information in the Table Talk as well as to correct mistakes which must have been due to his reporter not to himself. Of his very numerous works, his History of Tithes is the only one to which he makes direct reference in the Table Talk. (See Tithes, sec. 6.)

Selden was born in 1584. In 1600 he entered at Hart Hall, Oxford. In 1602 he was a law-student at Clifford’s Inn, and thence migrated to the Inner Temple in 1604. He soon became known as a man of vast and exact learning. So great was his fame as a constitutional lawyer, that before he became a member of Parliament he was often called in to advise the House on questions of prerogative, and he is credited with having had a principal part in framing the Protestantation of 1621—a service for which he paid the penalty of five weeks’ imprisonment by order of the Council. He was thus already a marked man when, in 1624, he was elected a member of the House, a position which he held in several Parliaments, viz. in 1626, 1628, and in the second Parliament of 1640. It was not
long before he again became a prominent champion of the Parliamentary cause and an opponent of the highhanded acts of injustice done by the King or in the King's name. His knowledge of past history and of precedents made him a valuable ally, and when the Petition of Right was drawn up, Selden was one of those who had been appointed to give help in preparing it. This, and his general outspokenness in his place in the House, marked him out, a second time, as a proper object for royal vengeance. In the spring of 1629 he was one of what he terms the 'Parliament men imprisoned tertio Caroli,' by a stretch of the prerogative, aided and rendered effective by the subservient temper of the judges before whom the prisoners were brought. Denzil Hollis, Eliot, and Valentine were among his fellow prisoners—an illustrious company, in which Selden may not have been unwilling to find himself included. The charge against them had to do with their conduct and language in Parliament—matters about which no challenge could legally be made by any outside authority. The judges would have bailed the prisoners if they would have given security for their future good behaviour, but this at Selden's instance they most properly refused to do. It would have been a surrender of their privilege for the past, and a check on their future liberty of deed or word. They were accordingly committed to the Tower, and though in Selden's case the confinement did not last long, and his treatment was not harsh, yet the restraint was an outrage which he did rightly to resent, and which in his case and in that of his fellow sufferers was of grave and lasting injury to the cause which it was intended to serve. In politics, as in religion, it is useless to play at persecution. Charles by his half measures succeeded only in making enemies of those whom he had hoped to terrify into submission. Selden was not the most
formidable or the most bitter, but neither then nor in the future was he an adversary whom it was at all safe to provoke.

But just as Selden started as a Parliamentary champion on strictly constitutional grounds, so it was not long before the proceedings of the second Parliament of 1640 forced him into more or less of an antagonism to his old allies. We have several traces in the Table Talk of his growing coolness towards the advanced section of the Parliamentary party. Not, indeed, that his breach with his old friends had gone so far as to drive him into the opposite camp, expectant as it was and ready to welcome him if he had come over to it. He still held that the original contract between king and people had been broken, and that the subjects had thus been released from their promise of obedience. The quarrel, he saw clearly, had gone so far that it must be settled by an appeal to arms. It was a contest now, in which the original issues had become obscured, 'a scuffle,' as he terms it, between two sets of opponents with neither of whom could he identify himself. They must fight it out between themselves, and leave decent quiet people to their own business or to their books.

The outbreak of the civil war accordingly found him lukewarm, if not indifferent. He could look with no satisfaction to the victory of either side, to the king's high-handed disregard of law, or to the puritans' zeal not according to knowledge, and for objects many of which he disapproved. With the authors of the revolution of 1689 he would have been more entirely in agreement. The declared policy of the new rule was just what he had himself stood up for in evil days when power was triumphant over right. The year for the publication of the Table Talk was thus well chosen. When the illegal rule of James II had been ended, and when the Bill of
INTRODUCTION.

Rights had settled the government of England after the type which Selden approved, then and not till then was his Table Talk given to the world. The day had at length come in which Selden’s own principles were in the ascendant, it was the triumph of the only cause for which he had ever cared personally to contend.

After the beginning of the civil war, there is not much in Selden’s public career that calls for notice here. The references in the Table Talk to the public events of the time are few and indistinct. We have no word about Charles’ trial and execution, or about Cromwell’s rise and administration. It is hardly possible that these should not have been frequent matters of table talk, but we have no record of them in Milward’s report. Has Milward avoided keeping a record of them, or has the Table Talk, prior to publication, been curtailed and bowdlerised in a political sense? Or has Selden kept carefully to his rule that wise men say nothing in dangerous times (Wisdom, 3), and that the wisest way for men in these times is to say nothing (Peace, 1)? If he did say anything, we have certainly no record of it.

The chief subject to which he again and again refers is of a very different class. In 1643 he was appointed one of the learned pious members of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, and the Table Talk abounds with proofs of the kind of interest which he long continued to feel in his new work. The Assembly was formed of all parties in the Church and out of it. The prelatical party were included in it, but they studiously did not attend. The rest were Presbyterians with a moderate infusion of Independents and Erastians. Selden, it is certain, had no great love for bishops and clergy, but he did not regard them with the contemptuous dislike which he felt for the main body of their non-conformist opponents. The lofty claims and the ignorance and
intolerance of the Presbyterian section; the ranting of
the more ignorant Roundhead under the influence of
what he termed the Spirit, were even less to his mind
than the prelatical party had been.

In the Westminster Assembly of Divines it was with
the Presbyterians that he came chiefly into conflict.
They formed a clear majority, and as far as votes went,
contrived to carry things pretty well in their own way.
This, however, was the limit of their success. The
House of Commons refused to ratify their claims to a
free spiritual jurisdiction, or to acknowledge the divine
right by which they claimed to hold their ministry. In
debate they were no less unfortunate. Selden, by the
evidence of friends and of enemies, was one of the chief
thorns in their side. It was his way to lead them on to
argue, to amuse himself with their mistakes and con-
tradictions, and to bring to bear his formidable battery
of learning against their favourite doctrinal strongholds.
His services in this sort were, as we might suppose,
very variously regarded. His friend and fellow divine,
Mr. Whitelock, a sound Erastian like himself, writes—

'Divers members of both houses, whereof I was one,
were members of the Assembly of Divines, and had
the same liberty with the Divines to sit and debate and
give their votes .... In which debates Mr. Selden spake
admirably, and confuted divers of them in their own
learning.

'And sometimes when they had cited a text of Scripture
to prove their assertion, he would tell them, *Perhaps in
your little pocket Bibles with gilt leaves* (which they would
often pull out and read) *the Translation may be thus, but
the Greek or the Hebrew signifies thus and thus; and
so would totally silence them.*' (Memorials, p. 71.)

Anthony à Wood, in his Athenae, quotes Aubrey to the
same effect:—
INTRODUCTION.

'He was one of the Assembly of Divines in those days, and was like a thorn in their sides, for he was able to run them all down with his Greeke and antiquities.'

Fuller, in his Church History, speaks less approvingly of the work, but bears testimony to the skill with which it was done. 'The Assembly,' he says, 'met with many difficulties, some complaining of Mr. Selden, that advantaged by his skill in antiquity, common law and the oriental tongues, he employed them rather to pose than profit, perplex than inform the members thereof in the fourteen queries he propounded. Whose intent was to humble the jure divinoship of Presbytery... This great scholar, not overloving of any (and least of all these) clergymen, delighted himself in raising of scruples for the vexing of others; and some stick not to say that those who will not feed on the flesh of God's word, cast most bones to others to break their teeth therewith.' (Church History, Bk. XI. sec. ix. § 54.)

But when we pass from friends and neutrals to Selden's opponents in the Assembly, we find more ample proof than ever of his prominence and of the vigour of his destructive work. Poor Robert Baillie, a worthy Scotch Presbyterian, who had come up from Glasgow to join the Assembly of Divines, bringing with him the pure light of the Gospel as it was understood in those parts, found Selden terribly in his way in the Assembly and afterwards in Parliament. Baillie speaks sadly of 'Selden and others who will have no discipline at all in any Church jure divino, but settled only upon the free will and pleasure of the Parliament.' (Letters and Journals, ii. 31.)

He rises presently to a more vigorous form of denunciation, after proof given of the effectiveness of Selden's antagonism.

'The Erastian party in the Parliament is stronger than the
Independent, and is like to work us much woe. Selden is their head. If L'Empereur would beat down that man’s arrogance as he very well can . . . . if he would confound him with Hebrew testimonies, it would lay Selden’s vanity, who is very insolent for his oriental literature.’ (Vol. ii. p. 107.) Whether this call on L’Empereur to the rescue was heard, I do not know. I have found no trace that it was in any part of Selden’s writings. In Book I. of his De Synedriis Veterum Ebræorum, Selden quotes L’Empereur and praises him as ‘doctissimus vir.’ On one point he disagrees with him, but on a wholly different matter from those about which Baillie was in need of help. (See Works, i. 874.) The De Synedriis was published in 1650, two years after L’Empereur’s death.

In dealing with the successive religious questions of his day, Selden’s language is substantially the same. The Table Talk, it will be seen, relates to two wholly distinct periods,—to that of the attempted High Church movement under Laud’s impulse and guidance, and to the counter movement when the Presbyterians were in power. The former of these was recognised by the leaders of the Oxford movement of 1633 as in the main identical with their own, since Laud’s claims for the Church served to bring into prominence just those principles and beliefs which they themselves advocated, and which the Reformation had tended to obscure. Laud’s failure is explained in the Table Talk. The promoters of the movement were in too great a hurry. They forced things on too suddenly, and in such a way as to give offence to those whom it would have been easy to conciliate by more gradual and more gentle methods. With the aims and purposes of the movement Selden had no sympathy, nor had he any with those of its more violent and fanatical opponents. He is thus in almost equal antagonism to each of the two parties which became dominant by turns. If he sometimes
INTRODUCTION.

defends the bishops, it is not because he has any love for them, but because there must be some form of Church government, and there was no body more to his mind that could be put into the bishops’ place. On their claim to rule *jure divino*, he speaks with great scorn, but he is no less scornful to those who think them so anti-Christian that they must be put away. In such matters as these, ‘all is as the State likes.’ From first to last Selden shows himself firm and consistent as an Erastian.

His own personal religion has been a matter of some controversy. ‘Gentlemen,’ he remarks, ‘have ever been more temperate in their religion than the common people, as having more reason; the others running in a hurry.’ Selden himself was no exception to the rule. Temperate he certainly was; indifferent or lukewarm he would have been termed by the more zealous. Baxter, indeed, reports, on the authority of Sir M. Hale, that Selden was ‘a resolved serious Christian, an adversary to Hobbes,’ and that the opposition between them was sometimes so sharp that Selden either departed from Hobbes or drove him out of the room. But these alleged contests do not prove much. Both parties to them were men of strong opinions and of somewhat overbearing tempers. If they quarrelled occasionally, as they very probably did, it is much more likely that their quarrels were about politics than about religion. Religion, they both held, was a matter to be settled by the State, and as the State settled it, so it was to be. In politics they were less at one. Selden, as the upholder of a constitutional monarchy based on an assumed contract which both parties were alike bound to observe, could never have been brought to agree with Hobbes, the champion of a monarchy in which no misconduct on the monarch’s part could give the subjects any right to resist. For proof, then, of Selden’s religious faith we must look elsewhere. We shall not find it in Clarendon, who with all his praise
of Selden's learning, humanity, courtesy, affability, and
delight in doing good, is silent on the point of his religion.
Nor will Usher help us with his very laudatory funeral
sermon, in which he finds every excellence in Selden, but
says nothing of his piety, because, as his hearers thought,
he could find nothing which he could say with truth. The
discussions about religion in the Table Talk are not, in-
deed, in the language of a theoretical sceptic. They show,
beyond doubt, that Selden constantly professed a belief in
revealed religion. But they are not at all what we should
expect from a resolved serious Christian. They are rather
in the language of one who takes religion under his wing,
and finds it—like the virtue of humility—very good doc-
trine for other people. Their author will show respect to
the established religion of his country, but he has no great
care what form it takes, except as far as it is a powerful
political engine which must not be suffered to fall into
hands which will turn it to a mischievous use. D'Ewes,
who knew Selden personally, took such offence at his
seeming want of religion that he did not seek to be
intimate with him.

His death-bed scene—he died in November 1654—has,
as we might expect, been very variously reported. Lord
Berkeley ¹ tells us of the pious friends whom he summoned
to be with him at the last, and of his own expressed trust
in the promises of Holy Scripture as his best and only
comfort at so anxious a time. On the other hand,
Aubrey's account, as quoted in Wood's Athenae, is that—
'When he was neer death, the minister (Mr. Johnson)
was coming to him to assoile him; Mr. Hobbes happened
then to be there: sayd he, "What, will you that have
wrote like a man, now dye like a woman?" So the
minister was not let in.' But death-bed stories are pro-

¹ See Historical Applications, &c., written by a Person of Honour, p. 32, and
Josiah Woodward's Fair Warnings to a Careless World, p. 199.
verbially ‘common form.’ They tell us more often what the narrator wishes to believe, than what he has any good authority for. We find accordingly that Selden’s editor and biographer, Archdeacon Wilkins, accepts and records Lord Berkeley’s story, and says nothing whatever about Aubrey’s. (Works, vol. i, Vita Authoris, p. xlv.)

Selden’s vast and varied learning was recognised in his own day by the general testimony of scholars in England and on the Continent, and the fame of it still survives. But this is all that can be said. As a writer, he has never been popular, and is never likely to be. His reputation, like that of Johnson, depends more upon what has been written about him or has fallen from him in conversation, than upon any writings of his own. This is due, in Selden’s case, about equally to the matter and to the manner of his works. The subjects which he treats relate, some of them to the questions of his own day, others to points of real permanent interest, but only to the antiquarian reader, nor had he the art of popularising what he wrote. Much of what he has written is in Latin, and his Latin style, correct as it is, is strangely rough and inelegant. Not seldom it presents an involved series of parentheses within parentheses, until at length the grammatical structure with which we start is put out of sight and lost. When this difficulty has been overcome, and when the reader has at last succeeded in evolving order out of the confused and disorderly mass, the result often is that he finds after all that he has gained nothing for his pains. Selden’s digressions are so frequent and so perplexing as often to make it really doubtful what his drift can possibly have been in his Latin or in his English works. He draws at random on his vast stores, until the thread of his argument is lost by his many and prolonged and wholly irrelevant discursions, each of which gives
rise to fresh discussions, one subject calling up another, under no guide but the chance association of ideas in the very learned author's mind. His enormous erudition thus frequently proves to be a weight too heavy for him, an encumbrance rather than a help to clear methodical arrangement.

This fault does not attach to the Table Talk. Selden, under the stimulus of society, was a different man from what he was when he took pen in hand and set himself down to write out an exhaustive account of some subject which he had made his special study, and to treat incidentally every other subject that suggested itself by the way. In writing, a man may go on unchecked to his own satisfaction and to the impatience of his readers. In the to-and-fro toss of conversation he is under more effective restraint, and he becomes short and incisive in just the degree in which he is possessed of the conversational art. In this art Selden unquestionably excelled. We do not need Clarendon's testimony that he was the most clear discoursor, and had the best faculty in making hard things easy, and presenting them to the understanding of any man that hath been known. The Table Talk is evidence enough. It is as lively as his written works are dull, as attractive as they are many of them repelling. The miscellaneous collection varies in interest of course. Some of it has to do with matters of mere research; some with matters of grave consequence at the time, but of little or none now. Nor is it free from mistakes and contradictions, or from what its critic in the Acta Eruditorum calls φορτικά ἀκούσματα. In one passage, for example, it speaks slightingly of the learning of the bishops; in another it declares that there never was a more learned clergy, and that no one taxes them with ignorance. In the discourse on Preaching, it first condemns and then recommends preaching often in the same sense. In its defence
of duelling, in its explanation of the ass's head story (Christians, 3) and of the Descent into Hell, it is hardly ingenious, much less convincing. Its repeated assertions that moral rules are of no force without a theological sanction, display Selden possibly as a good theologian, certainly as an unsound moralist. Some of its remarks on the obligation of an oath are even more open to question. The discourse on Oaths might almost be headed—the art of perjury made easy. But on all these points it is Selden's reporter with whom the chief fault must rest. It was his business to discriminate between what was worth and what was not worth giving to the world; and not to write down and publish everything said, it might be, at random or in a perverse mood, and forgotten as soon as it was said, or as soon as the thing under discussion had ceased to be a question which Selden had approached as a controversialist rather than as a judge. But when all deductions have been made, enough remains to bear out the very high repute in which the Table Talk has stood. Its critic in the Acta Eruditorum" wishes it included among the 'multa ingenii monumenta quibus (Selden) aeternam famam meruit.' Johnson singles it out as the best book of its kind in existence, better than any of the much be-praised French anas. Coleridge, as a poet, quarrels with it, but he still finds more weighty bullion sense in it than in the same number of pages of any uninspired writer. This is substantially the verdict which the world of letters has accepted and has endorsed. Johnson, one of the vouchers for it, has been termed the wisest and the wittiest of Englishmen. The Table Talk shows us, so to say, the figure in every-day dress of one who might not unfairly take rank as his competitor for one distinction.

1 Supplementa, Tom. 1: see viii. p. 424.
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THE DISCOURSE

OF

JOHN SELDEN, Esq.

OR

HIS SENSE OF VARIOUS MATTERS OF WEIGHT AND HIGH CONSEQUENCE

RELATING ESPECIALLY TO

RELIGION AND STATE

---

Distingue tempora
TO THE HONBLE

MR. JUSTICE HALE,

ONE OF THE JUDGES OF THE COMMON-PLEAS

AND TO THE MUCH HONOURED

EDWARD HEYWARD,

JOHN VAUGHAN,

AND

ROWLAND JEWKS, ESQRS

Most Worthy Gentlemen,

Were you not executors to that person, who (when he lived) to
was the glory of the nation, yet I am confident any thing of his
would find acceptance with you, and truly the sense and notion here
is wholly his, and most of the words. I had the opportunity to hear
his discourse twenty years together, and lest all those excellent
things that usually fell from him might be lost, some of them from
time to time I faithfully committed to writing, which here digested
into this method, I humbly present to your hands: you will quickly
perceive them to be his by the familiar illustrations wherewith they
are set off: in which way you know he was so happy, that (with
a marvellous delight to those that heard him) he would presently so
convey the highest points of religion, and the most important
affairs of state to an ordinary apprehension.

In reading be pleased to distinguish times, and in your fancy
carry along with you the when and the why many of these things
were spoken; this will give them the more life, and the smarter
relish. 'Tis possible the entertainment you find in them may render
you the more inclinable to pardon the presumption of

Your most obliged and
most humble servant

RICH. MILWARD.

1. a. Mr. Justice Hale, } Milward speaks of these as Selden's executors.
1. 5. Edward Heyward } I have therefore given the names as they stand in Selden's will (see Works,
v. i, Vita Authoris, p. 53), and as Milward may be assumed to have given
them.
THE

DISCOURSE OF JOHN SELDEN

I.

ABBEYS. PRIORIES.

The unwillingness of the monks to part with their lands will fall out to be just nothing, because they were yielded up to the king by a supreme hand, viz. a parliament. If a king conquer another country, the people are loth to lose their lands; yet no divine will deny but the king may give them to whom he please. If a parliament make a law concerning leather, or any other commodity, you and I, for example, are parliament-men; perhaps in respect to our own private interests we are against it, yet the

Examination of signs.

Line 3. they were yielded up to the king &c.] The lands were taken from the monks by two Acts of Parliament. The earlier, that of 27 Henry VIII, cap. 28, gave the king the properties of the smaller houses, below a clear annual value of £200. The next Act, that of 31 Henry VIII, cap. 13, confirmed the surrenders which the Abbots or Priors of the larger houses had in the meantime been threatened or cajoled into making. Selden's remarks, here, may have been suggested by any one of the numerous attacks made on church property in his own day.
major part concludes it; we are then involved, and the law is good.

2. When the founders of abbeys laid a curse upon them that should take away those lands, I would fain know what power they had to curse me. 'Tis not the curses that come from the poor, or from anybody, that do me hurt because they come from them; but because I do something ill against them, that deserves God should curse me for it. On the other side, 'tis not a man's blessing me, that makes me blessed; he only declares me to be so; and if I do well, I shall be blessed, whether any bless me or not.

3. At the time of dissolution, they were tender in taking from the abbots and priors their lands and their houses, till they surrendered them, as most of them did. Indeed the prior of St. John's, Sir William Weston, being a stout

1 William Weston] Richard Weston the High Treasurer in the early years MSS. and early editions; probably of Charles' reign.
through confusion with the name of

1. 3. when the founders of abbeys &c.] This may be an objection to one of the arguments which Selden had heard used by Dr. Hacket in defence of the sacredness of cathedral revenues. On May 12, 1641, there was a special session of the House of Commons to hear a dispute between Dr. Burgess, as assailant, and Dr. Hacket, as defender of these revenues; and Hacket, in the course of his speech, urged that 'these' (sc. the chapter revenues and lands) 'are dedicated to God; the founders appoint the uses, and curse any that alter it.' See Verney, Notes on the Long Parliament, p. 75-76.

1. 15. Indeed the prior of St. John's &c.] The priory of St. John of Jerusalem, the chief English seat of the Knights Hospitallers, was not touched by the Act of 31 Henry VIII, since the prior (as Selden implies) had not at that time surrendered; nor does it appear that he ever did surrender. The priory lands were taken away by a special Act passed in the next year. The prior died in May, 1540, on the day on which the suppression took effect. In Dugdale's Monasticon (vol. vi. 800-805) there is a long list of the lands and farms which had belonged to the priory. When the Knights Templars were suppressed, all their lands were given over to the Hospitallers; see (7 Edward II) a letter De Terris quondam Templariorum Hospitalaris liberandis. The grant was confirmed by 6, 7, and 12 Edward III, and some tenements
man, got into France, and stood out a whole year; at last submitted, and the king took in that priory also, to which the Temple belonged, and many other houses in England. They did not then cry no abbots, no priors, as we do now no bishops, no bishops.

4. Henry the 5th put away the friars aliens, and seized to himself £100,000 a year; and therefore they were not the protestants only that took away church lands.

5. In Queen Elizabeth’s time, when all the abbeys were pulled down, all good works defaced, then the preachers to must cry up justification by faith, not by good works.

II.

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES.

The nine and thirty articles are much another thing in Latin, in which tongue they were made, than they are in London, which had been wrongfully seized by Hugh Despencer, were restored and secured to the Hospitallers. Dugdale, Monasticon, vi. 809, 810.

I. 6. the friars aliens] These were religious orders, domiciled abroad, and holding land in England. They were pecked at several times before Henry Vth’s reign. Edward I began in 1285; Edward III followed in 1337. In 1361 their lands were restored, but their revenues were still occasionally taken away for a while. They were sequestered during Richard II, and were finally expropriated in a Henry V. Dugdale, Monasticon, vi. 985 ff. See also Prioratum Alienigenorum Catalogus, qui Leicestrensi Parliamento suppressi sunt. Anno Henrici Quinti secundo. An. Dom. 1414. Dugdale, Monasticon, vi. 1652–53.

I. 13. much another thing in Latin &c.] See e.g. Article 9, in which ‘quamvis renatis et credentibus nulla propter Christum est condemnatio,’ is rendered by, ‘although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized.’ In Article 33, ‘penitentia’ is rendered ‘penance’—an error to which Selden seems to refer in the discourse on ‘Penance.’ The right claimed in Article 37, ‘Christianis licet justa bella administrare,’ is enlarged into ‘it is lawful for Christian men to serve in the wars.’ The older version of 1552 had translated the same
translated into English. They were made at three several convocations, and confirmed by act of parliament six or seven times after. There is a secret concerning them: of late, ministers have subscribed to all of them; but by the act\(^1\) of parliament that confirmed them, they ought only to subscribe to those articles which contain matters of faith, and the doctrine of the sacraments, as appears by the first subscriptions. But Bishop Bancroft, in the conviction held in King James’s days, he began it; that ministers should subscribe to three things, to the king’s supremacy, to the common prayer, and to the 39 articles: Many of them do not contain matter of faith. It is matter of faith how the church should be governed? Whether infants should be baptized? Whether we have any property in our goods?


words by ‘to serve in lawfull warres.’ There are some other minor inaccuracies.

1. 2. six or seven times after\] If this reading is to stand, the word ‘times’ must be taken in a special sense—parliamentary sessions or terms. So, perhaps, in ‘Confession,’ sec. 1, ‘In time of Parliament,’ i.e. when Parliament had met. The Articles were confirmed once only, viz. in 1571, by 13 Elizabeth, chap. 12.

1. 5. by the act of parliament that confirmed them &c.] The Act orders that every minister (except certain specified persons) is to declare his assent, and subscribe to all the Articles of Religion which only concern the confession of the true Christian faith and the doctrine of the Sacraments.

The obligation on the clergy to subscribe to the whole of the Articles was imposed at a Synod of the province of Canterbury, held in 1604, under the presidency of Bancroft, then Bishop of London. It was then settled that no one was to be ordained who had not stated in writing—Quod libro de religionis Articulis, in quos consensum est in Synodo Londinensi an. MDLXII. omnino comprobat, et quod omnes et singulos Articulos in eodem contentos, qui triginta novem citra ratificationem numerantur, verbo Dei consentaneos esse agnoscit (Wilkins, Concilia, iv. 386).
III.

BAPTISM.

1. 'Twas a good way to persuade men to be christened, to tell them that they had a foulness about them, viz. original sin, that could not be washed away but by baptism.

2. The baptizing of children with us, doth only prepare a child, against he comes to be a man, to understand what Christianity means. In the church of Rome it has this effect, it frees children from hell. They say they go into *limbus infantum*. It succeeds circumcision, and we are sure the child understood nothing of that at eight days old. Why then may not we as reasonably baptize a child at that age? In England, of late years, I ever thought the priest baptized his own fingers rather than the child.

3. In the primitive times they had godfathers to see the children brought up in the christian religion, because many times, when the father was a christian, the mother was not; and sometimes when the mother was a christian, the father was not; and therefore they made choice of two or more that were christians, to see the children brought up in that faith.

1. 8. *it frees children from hell. They say they go &c.* i.e. They say that unbaptized children go, &c. The *Limbus Infantum* was one of the divisions of hell. In the Church of Rome baptism is said to free children from this. See Canons, &c. of the Council of Trent, Session v. sec. 2, 3, 4. On the *limbus puorum*, the place of eternal punishment for those *qui solo originali peccato gravantur*, and on the degree of punishment, the *mitissimam poenam* which they are alleged to suffer, see Aquinas, Summa Theolog. Supplementum 3³æ partis. quaeest. 69, art. 5 & 6. So, too, Moroni (Eccles. Dict. under title Limbo, Limbus) writes—Il secondo luogo, che chiamasi limbo o limbus puorum, è quello in che vanno i bambini morti senza battesimo. Many various opinions are collected as to the nature and extent of their punishment. That it is to be eternal all the cited authorities agree. So, too, Dante writes of the occupants of the Limbo, or first circle of the Inferno, a vast crowd of infants, women, and men, there placed *perche non ebber batusmo*, and suffering only *duol senza martiri*. Inferno, Canto iv. 28-35.
IV.

BASTARD.

'Tis said, 23 Deuterom. 2, A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord, even to the tenth generation. *Non ingredietur ecclesiâm Domini*, he shall not enter into the church. The meaning of the phrase is, he shall not marry a Jewish woman. But upon this ground, grossly mistaken, a bastard at this day in the church of Rome, without a dispensation, cannot take orders. The thing haply well enough, where 'tis so settled: but that 'tis upon a mistake (the place having no reference to the church) appears plainly by what follows at the 3 verse; An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord, even to the tenth generation. Now you know with the Jews an Ammonite or a Moabite could never be a priest; because their priests were born so, not made.

1 But that tis, S.] H. and H. a, omit 'that.'

1. 5. The meaning of the phrase is &c.] Selden, in his De Successione in Pontificatum Ebraeorum, says that the sense which he gives here to the words is universally accepted among the Jews. Works, ii. p. 158.

1. 6. But upon this ground, &c.] That the rule in the Church of Rome was based on this text is stated, conjecturally, by Pope Gregory IX. In a letter addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury on the appointment of a bastard to the see of Worcester, Gregory declares—Nos ergo cum fratribus nostris habito super hoc diligenti tractatu, relectis canonibus, quosdam invenimus qui non legitime genitos promoveri vetant ad officium pastorale, causam forte trahentes ex lege divina per quam spuri et manzeres usque in decimam generationem in ecclesiâm Dei prohibentur intrare. The matter is then debated pro and con, and the Pope concludes that although, according to a canon of the Lateran Council, the appointment is irregular, yet he has a dispensing power. Decretalect Gregorii IX, lib. i. tit. 6, cap. xx. Corpus Juris Canonici, vol. 2, pp. 61, 62 (ed. a by Friedberg, 1861).

So, too, Boniface VIII insists on the need of a dispensation, episcopal for the lesser orders, papal for the greater. Ibid. p. 977.

Aquinas cites the text as one among the arguments against the
V.

BIBLE, SCRIPTURE.

1. 'Tis a great question how we know Scripture to be Scripture, whether by the Church, or by man's private spirit. Let me ask you how I know anything? How I know this carpet to be green? First, because somebody told me it was green: that you call the church in your way. And then after I have been told it is green, when I see that colour again, I know it to be green, my own eyes tell me it is green; that you call the private spirit.

2. The English translation of the Bible, is the best translation in the world, and renders the sense of the original best, taking in for the English translation the Bishops' Bible as well as king James's. The translators in king James's time took an excellent way. That part of the Bible was given to him who was most excellent in such a tongue (as the Apocrypha to Andrew Downs) and then they met together, and one read the translation, the rest holding in their hands some Bible, either of the learned tongues, or French, Spanish, Italian, &c. If they found any fault they spoke; if not, he read on.

1 Translators, H. a, corrected from 'translation' ['translation,' H.] admission of bastards to orders. He concludes against their admission without a dispensation, but on general grounds, and without further reference to the text. Summa Theolog. Supplement, 3 part, quaest. 39, art. 5.

l. 2. 'Tis a great question &c.] This question is discussed very fully in the course of the celebrated conference between Laud and the Jesuit Fisher, the first complete account of which was published in 1639. Laud handles the matter at greater length and with more unction than Selden; but for the most part substantially to the same effect. See Laud's Works, vol. ii. p. 70 ff.

l. 10. The English translation &c.] For an account of the persons employed in the translation, and of the rules which they were instructed to follow, see Wilkins, Concilia, iv. 432, and Fuller's Church History, bk. x. sec. 3, § 1, with note h in Brewer's edition.
3. There is no book so translated as the Bible. For the purpose, if I translate a French book into English, I turn it into English phrase, not into French English. *Il fait froid,* I say, it is cold, not it makes cold; but the Bible is translated into English words rather than into English phrase. The Hebraisms are kept, and the phrase of that language is kept: as for example, [He uncovered her shame] which is well enough, so long as scholars have to do with it; but when it comes among the common people, lord, what gear do they make of it!

4. *Scutamini scripturas.* These two words have undone the world. Because Christ spake it to his disciples, therefore we must all, men, women, and children, read and interpret the Scriptures.

5. Henry the 8th made a law, that all men might read the Scriptures, except servants; but no women, except ladies and gentlewomen, who had leisure, and might ask somebody the meaning. The law was repealed in Edward the 6th days.

6. Laymen have best interpreted the hard places of the Bible, such as Joannes Picus, Scaliger, Grotius, Salmasius, Heinsius, &c.

7. If you ask, Which, of Erasmus, Beza, or Grotius, did best upon the New Testament? 'tis an idle question, for they did all well in their way. Erasmus broke down the first brick; Beza added many things, and Grotius added much to him, in whom we have either something new, or

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1. 1. *For the purpose* i.e. for instance: for proof of what I say. A phrase used by Selden elsewhere. See 'Trade,' sec. 1, and—Eudoxus yet hath otherwise placed them; as for the purpose, the spring equinox on the sixth day after the sun's entrance into Aries &c. Works, iii. 1415.

1. 10. *what gear* i.e. what stuff.

1. 11. *Scutamini* Gk. ἱπειρά, probably the Present Indicative, and if so the words have been doubly misinterpreted.

1. 15. *Henry the 8th made a law* This was 34 & 35 Henry VIII, ch. 1.
else something heightened that was said before; and so 'twas necessary to have them all three.

8. The text serves only to guess by; we must satisfy ourselves fully out of the authors that lived about those times.

9. In interpreting the scripture, many do, as if a man should see one have ten pounds, which he reckoned by 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; meaning four was but four units, and five five units, &c., and that he had in all but ten pounds; the other that sees him, takes not the figures 10 together as he doth, but picks here and there, and there- upon reports, that he has five pounds in one bag, and six pounds in another bag, and nine pounds in another bag, &c. when as in truth, he hath but ten pounds in all. So we pick out a text here and there to make it serve our turn; whereas, if we took it all together, and considered what went before, and what followed after, we should find it meant no such matter.

10. Make no more allegories in scripture than needs must. The fathers were too frequent in them: they indeed, before they fully understood the literal sense, looked out for an allegory. The folly whereof you may conceive thus; here at the first sight appears to me in my window, a glass and a book, I take it for granted 'tis a glass and a book; thereupon I go about to tell you what they signify; afterwards, upon nearer view, they prove no such things; one is a box made like a book, the other is a picture made like a glass. Where's now my allegory?

11. When men meddle with the literal text, the question is, where they should stop? In this case, a man must venture his discretion, and do his best to satisfy himself and others in those places where he doubts. For although

1. 20. *The fathers were too frequent in them*] This is amply verified by the 120 closely printed pages of the Index de Allegoriis, in the second vol. of the Indices to Migne's Patrologiae Cursus Completus, p. 123 ff.
THE DISCOURSE OF JOHN SEDLEN.

we call the Scripture the word of God (as it is) yet it was
writ by a man, a mercenary man, whose copy either
might be false, or he might make it false: for example, here
were a thousand bibles printed in England with the text
thus, [Thou shalt commit adultery] the word not left out.
 Might not this text be mended?

12. The scripture may have more senses besides the
 literal, because God understands all things at once; but a
 man’s writing has but one true sense, which is that which
 the author meant when he writ it.

13. When you meet with several readings of the text,
take heed you admit nothing against the tenets of your
church; but do as if you were going over a bridge, be sure
and hold fast by the rail, and then you may dance here and
there as you please; be sure you keep to what is settled,
and then you may flourish upon your various lections.

14. The Apocrypha is bound with the Bibles of all
churches that have been hitherto. Why should we leave it
out? The church of Rome has her Apocrypha, viz:.

Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon, which she does not

1.4. here were a thousand Bibles &c.] Mr. Barker, the printer. There
is a cause begunne against him for false printing of the Bible in divers
places of it, in the edition of 1631, viz in the 20 of Exod[us] ‘Thou
shalt committ adultery’; and in the fift of Deut[eronomy] ‘The Lord
hath shewed us his glory, and his great asse’; and for divers other
faults. High Commission Cases, pp. 296 and 304 (Camden Society).

Barker was not the only sufferer. Laud’s account is that—among
them (i.e. the printers) their negligence was such as that there were
found above a thousand faults in two editions of the Bible and Common
Prayer-Book. And one, which caused this search, was that in Exod.
xx. where they had shamefully printed, Thou shalt commit adultery.
For this, the masters of the printing house were called into the High
Commission, and censured, as they well deserved it . . . . And
Hunsford, being hit in his credit, purse, and friends, by that censure
for so gross an abuse of the Church and religion, labours to fasten his
fangs upon me. History of the Troubles and Trial of Abp. Laud, Laud’s
Works, iv. 165 and 195.

This edition was known as ‘the wicked Bible.’

1. 20. Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon] This is not so. Susannah
esteem equally with the rest of those books that we call Apocrypha.

VI.

BISHOPS BEFORE THE PARLIAMENT.

1. A bishop, as a bishop, had never any ecclesiastical jurisdiction: for as soon as he was electus confirmatus, that is, after the three proclamations in Bow-church, he might exercise jurisdiction, before he was consecrated; but till then 1 he was no bishop, neither could he give orders. Besides, suffragans were bishops, and they never claimed any jurisdiction.

1 But till then, H. a, corrected] not till then, H.

and Bel and the Dragon are canonical in the Church of Rome. They are not specially named in the Decree of the Council of Trent, settling the Canon of Scripture, because they are printed in the Vulgate as part of the book of Daniel, and come, therefore, under the general rule that the books named as canonical are to be received entire, with all their parts, as they are contained in the old Latin Vulgate. The only books of the Apocrypha not received as canonical are the 3rd and 4th Books of Esdras (printed in the English Apocrypha as Esdras 1 & 2) and the Prayer of Manasseh. See Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, Session iv.

Accordingly, in the Douay version, the History of Susannah and Bel and the Dragon stand in their appointed place as parts of the canonical book of Daniel.


l. 6. three proclamations] These were and are part of the ceremony of confirmation. Strype in his life of Archbishop Parker, bk. ii. ch. 1, gives an exact account of the whole process in Parker’s case, as it was performed in the church of St. Mary de Arcubus [i.e. Mary le Bow in Cheapside]... The consecration—until which he ‘was no bishop, neither could he give orders’—came eight days afterwards.

l. 9. suffragans] These are expressly said to have ‘no authority or jurisdiction beyond that expressed in their licenses by a bishop or archbishop to whom they are suffragans by commission under seal.’ 26 Henry VIII, ch. 14, sec. 6.
2. Anciente ly the nobilemen lay within the city for safety and security. The bishops' houses were by the water side, because they were held sacred persons, which nobody would hurt.

3. There was some sense for commendams at first; when there was a living void, and never a clerk to serve it, the bishops were to keep it till they found a fit man; but now 'tis a trick for the bishop to keep it to himself.

4. For a bishop to preach 'tis to do other folks' office. As if the steward of the house should execute the porter's or the cook's place; 'tis his business to see that they and all others about the house perform their duties.

5. That which is thought to have done the bishops hurt,

1. 5. commendams] It was one of Archbishop Laud's projects 'to annex for ever some settled commendams, and those, if it may be, sine curâ, to all the small bishoprics.' Laud's Works, vol. iii. p. 254.

That he had done this was one of the charges brought against him at his trial. In his history of his trial, he explains and defends his act, but he adds in the course of his remarks about it—'I considered that the commendams taken at large and far distant, caused a great dislike and murmur among many men. That they were in some cases materia odiosa and justly complained of.' Works, vol. iv. p. 177.

For further proof of the abuse of which Selden speaks, see Sir Ralph Verney's Notes of Proceedings in the Long Parliament, p. 14, giving the heads of a remonstrance of some of the clergy, referring inter alia to commendams. The remonstrance says, in Article 16, 'Bishops hold commendams and never come at them. As Mainwarin, Bishop of St. Davids, and the Bishop of Chester hold two of £1,100 per annum.'

1. 9. For a bishop to preach &c.] That bishops did not preach is among the charges made against them by Nathaniel Fiennes (Feb. 1640). Nalson, Collections, i. 758.

See, too, Sir Benjamin Rudyard's speech on Sir E. Deering's Bill for the abolishing of bishops, &c. (May, 1641). Some of ours, as soon as they are bishops, adepto fine, cessat motus, they will preach no longer, their office is to govern. But in my opinion they govern worse than they preach, though they preach not at all, for we see to what a pass their government hath brought us. Nalson, Collections, ii. 249.

1. 13. That which is thought &c.] Clarendon, after speaking of the slovenly state into which many churches had fallen during Archbishop Abbot's time, and of the irregular way in which the services had in
BISHOPS BEFORE THE PARLIAMENT.

is their going about to bring men to a blind obedience, imposing things upon them [though perhaps small and well enough] without preparing them, and insinuating into their reasons and fancies. Every man loves to know his commander. I wear those gloves, but perhaps if an alderman should command me, I should think much to do it. What has he to do with me? Or if he has, peradventure I do not know it. This jumping upon things at first dash will destroy all. To keep up friendship there must be little addresses and applications; whereas bluntness spoils it quickly. To keep up the hierarchy, there must be applications made to men, they must be brought on by little and little; so in the primitive times the power was gained, and so it must be continued. Scaliger said of Erasmus; *si minor esse voluerit, major fuisset*; so we may say of the bishops, *si minores esse voluerint, majores fuissent.*

many places been performed, adds—'This profane liberty and uncleanliness the Archbishop [i.e. Laud] resolved to reform with all expedition, requiring the other bishops to concur with him in so pious a work.' He adds, presently, that—'The Archbishop prosecuted this affair more passionately than was fit for the season; and had prejudice against those who, out of fear or foresight, or not understanding the thing, had not the same warmth to promote it. The bishops who had been preferred by his favour, or who hoped to be so, were at least as solicitous to bring it to pass in their respective dioceses; and some of them with more passion and less circumspection than they had his example for, or than he approved; prosecuting those who opposed them very fiercely, and sometimes unwarrantably, which was kept in remembrance.' Clarendon, Hist. vol. i. 148 ff.

l. 9. little applications] i. e. (as explained at length by Bacon in the Adv. of Learning)—'the observing carefully a man's manners and customs, with the intention to understand him sufficiently whereby not to give him offence.' Lord Bacon's Works (Ellis and Spedding), vol. iii. 279.

l. 14. Scaliger said &c.] The nearest I can find to this is a passage in J. J. Scaliger's Table Talk. Erasmus perspicacissimo vir ingenio, se ipso haud dubie futurus major (quod scribit Paulus Jovius) si Latinae linguae conditores imitari, quam petulantì linguae indulgere maluisset. Prima Scaligerana, sub voce Erasmus.

l. 15. voluerit.] voluit MSS. and early printed editions.
THE DISCOURSE OF JOHN SELDEN.

6. The bishops were too hasty; else with a discreet slowness they might have had what they aimed at. The old story of the fellow that told the gentleman he might get to such a place if he did not ride too fast, would have fitted their turn.

7. For a bishop to cite an old canon to strengthen his new articles, is as if a lawyer should plead an old statute that has been repealed God knows how long.

VII.

BISHOPS IN THE PARLIAMENT.

10 1. Bishops have the same right to sit in Parliament as the best of earls and barons; that is, those that were made

1. 6. For a bishop to cite &c.] This was done in the Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical, put out in 1640 by the Synods of the two Provinces. See Canon v. 'Against Sectaries' and Canon ix on the summary or collection of visitatory articles which the Synod had caused to be made out of the rubric and the canons and warrantable rules of the Church. Wilkins, Concilia, iv. 548 and 550.

1. 10. Bishops have the same right &c.] The various objections, here stated and answered, to the right of bishops to sit in Parliament, to the nature of their seat by office and not by blood, and to the policy of allowing them to meddle with temporal affairs, were raised from time to time in the long series of discussions which led finally to the abolition of their right and then of their office.

See, especially, the reasons offered by the Commons in reply to the reasons offered by the Lords in favour of the bishops, June, 1641. They cover most of the points raised in this chapter of the Table Talk.

The Commons do conceive that bishops ought not to have votes in Parliament. First, because it is a very great hindrance to the exercise of their ministerial function.

(2) Because they do vow and undertake at their ordination, when they enter into Holy Orders, that they will give themselves wholly to that vocation.

(5) Because they are but for their lives, and therefore are not fit to have legislative power over the honours, inheritances, persons, and liberties of others.

(6) Because of bishops' dependency and expectation of translation to places of greater profit. Dalson, Collections, ii. 260.
by writ. If you ask one of them [Arundel, Oxford, Northumberland] why they sit in the house? they can only say, their father sat there before them 1, and their grandfather before him, &c. And so says the bishop: he that was a bishop of this place before me, sat in the house, and he that was a bishop before him, &c. Indeed your later earls and barons have it expressed in their patents, that they shall be called to the parliament.

**Objection.** But the lords sit there by blood, the bishops not.

**Answer.** 'Tis true, they sit not there both the same way, yet that takes not away the bishop's right. If I am a parson of a parish, I have as much right to my glebe and tithes, as you have to your land, that your ancestors have had in that parish 800 years.

2. The bishops were not barons, because they had

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1 Before them, H. a] so originally in H. 'him' is written over 'them.'

I. 16. *The bishops were not barons &c.* What Selden here denies was among the statements made by Mr. Bagshaw, Reader of the Middle Temple, in his speech in Hall (1639) on the thesis Whether it be a good Act of Parliament that is made without the assent of the Lords Spiritual. He argues that it is good, because inter alia 'they do not sit in Parliament as bishops, but by reason of the baronies annexed to their bishoprics, which was done 5 W. I, and all of them have baronies except the Bishop of Man, and he is not called to Parliament.' White

lock, Memorials, p. 33.

Selden explains his point more fully in his Titles of Honour, part ii. ch. 5, vol. iii. pp. 659, 724, 727. He shows that in the Saxon times the lay claim to be included in the Witenagemot was the holding of land of the king in chief by knight's service. Those who so held were, after the Normans, parliamentary barons, and their tainlands only were the parliamentary baronies. But in Saxon times, the bishops did not hold by this tenure, yet they were none the less summoned regularly to the Witenagemot, and had voice and place as bishops. And thus their freedom from that tenure . . . continued it seems till the fourth year of King William I, when he made the bishoprics and abbeys subject to knight's service in chief, by creation of new tenures, and so first turned their possessions into baronies, and thereby made them barons of the kingdom by tenure.
baronies annexed to their bishoprics (for few of them had so, unless the old ones, Canterbury, Winchester, Durham, &c. the new erected we are sure had none, as Gloucester, Peterborough, &c. Besides, few of the temporal lords had any baronies). But they are barons, because they are called by writ to the parliament, and bishops were in the parliament ever since there is any mention or sign of a parliament in England.

3. Bishops may be judged by the peers, though in time of popery it never happened, because they pretended they were not obnoxious to a secular court; but their way was to cry, Ego sum frater domini papa, I am a brother to my lord the pope, and therefore take not myself to be judged by you. In this case they impannelled a Middlesex jury, and dispatched the business.

4. Whether may bishops be present in case of blood?

1. 3. as Gloucester, Peterborough &c.] These were among the six bishoprics founded by Henry VIII out of part of the spoils of the monasteries. On the nature of their endowment see the king's grant to the bishopric of Gloucester: 'Damus .... habenda et tenenda omnia et singula praedicta, Aulas, Cubicula .... domos aedificia et caetera omnia et singula praemissa praefato episcopo Gloucestriae et successoribus suis imperpetuum, tenenda de nobis haeredibus et successoribus nostris in puram et perpetuam eolemosinam.' Rymer, Foedera, xiv. 727 (1712 fol.).

'So, too, in the case of Peterborough, the king (1549) grants to the bishop and his successors, various manors and rents (valued at £368 11s. 6d.), in puram et perpetuam eolemosynam, and subject to deductions only for tenths and first-fruits.' Willis, Survey of Cathedrals, iii. 493 (London, 1742, 3 vols.).

1. 9. Bishops may be judged &c.] Selden, in his treatise on the privileges of the baronage, lays it down as a rule of the common law that bishops, although unquestionably peers of the realm, were to be tried by common juries and were in fact so tried; no regard being paid to their claim as churchmen to be free from lay jurisdiction. He gives several instances in which this claim was made and disallowed, and the trial had by a common jury. Works, iii. 1538 ff.

1. 16. Whether may bishops be present &c.] This question became prominent and was hotly disputed at the trial of the Earl of Strafford.
Answer. That they had a right to give votes, appears by this; always when they did go out, they left a proxy; and in the time of the abbots, one man had 10, 20, or 30 voices. In Richard the 2d's time there was a protestation against the canons, by which they were forbidden to be present in case of blood. The statute of the 25th of Henry the 8th may go a great way in this business. The clergy were forbidden to use or cite any canon, &c. but in the later end of the statute, there was a clause, that such canons as were in usage in this kingdom, should be in force till the thirty-two commissioners appointed should make others; provided they were not contrary to the king's supremacy. Now the question will be, whether these canons for blood were in use in this kingdom or no? The contrary whereof may appear by many precedents in Richard 3 and Henry 7 and the beginning of Henry 8 in which time there were more attainted than since, or scarce before. The canons of irregularity for blood were never received in England, but upon pleasure. If a lay lord was attainted, the bishops

1 Richard, Henry, Henry, H. 2] initials only in H.

The bishops were denied all meddling even in the commission of preparatory examinations concerning the Earl of Strafford, as causa sanguinis, and they as men of mercy, not to deal in the condemnation of any person. Fuller, Church History, bk. xi. sec. 9, § 10.

That bishops were forbidden by the canons to pronounce sentence of condemnation at trials on a capital charge, is clear. See e.g. Wilkins, Concilia, vol. i. 112, 365 and 474.

On the authority of the canons, as law, it is laid down by 25 Henry VIII, chap. 19, that the canons are not to be pleaded or used if contrary to the king's prerogative or to the customs, laws and statutes of the kingdom—canons, not thus contrary, to be in force, as Selden states.

In the case referred to in Richard II's time, the exclusion of the bishops was a concession granted to them at their own request. The whole subject is discussed exhaustively in the opinion delivered by the Bishop of Lincoln (Williams) as to the right of the bishops to be present at Strafford's trial. Hacket, Life of Williams, part ii. p. 153 ff.
assented to his condemning, and were always present at the passing of the bill of attainder: but if a spiritual lord, they went out, as if they cared not whose head was cut off, so none of their own. In those days the bishops, being of great houses, were often entangled with the lords in matters of treason; but when d'ye hear of a bishop-traitor now?

5. You would not have bishops meddle with temporal affairs. Think who you are that say it. If a Papist, they do in your church; if an English Protestant, they do among you; if a Presbyterian, where you have no bishops, you mean your Presbyterian lay elders should meddle with temporal affairs as well as spiritual. Besides, all jurisdiction is temporal, and in no church but they have some jurisdiction or other. The question then will be reduced to magis and minus; they meddle more in one church than in another.

1. 8. You would not have bishops meddle with temporal affairs, &c.] So in 1641, a bill was introduced for the second time to forbid bishops having votes in Parliament or holding any temporal office, 'the greatest argument being that their intermeddling with temporal affairs was inconsistent with, and destructive to, the exercise of their spiritual function.' Clarendon, i. 470.

The same argument was used by Lord Say and Sele (June 1641), who based it on the Scriptural rule that—'No man that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of the world.' Nalson, Collections, i. 268.

Early in 1641, a committee of the House of Commons, appointed to consider a remonstrance of some ministers, and the London petition for the better government of the Church, voted, inter alia, that Article 6, complaining that bishops were encumbered with temporal power and state affairs, was material and fit to be considered by the House. Sir R. Verney's Notes of Proceedings in the Long Parliament, pp. 4-14.

Most of the questions treated in the Table Talk, were raised in the course of this inquiry.

See, too,—'It is not possible for one man to discharge two functions, whereof either is sufficient to employ the whole man, especially that of the ministry, so great that they ought not to entangle themselves with the affairs of this world.' Speech of Nathaniel Fiennes, Feb. 1640-41. Nalson, Collections, i. 757.
BISHOPS IN THE PARLIAMENT.

6. *Objection.* Bishops give not their votes by blood in parliament, but by an office annexed to them; which being taken away, they cease to vote; therefore there is not the same reason for them as for temporal lords.

*Answer.* We do not pretend they have that power the same way, but they have a right; he that has an office in Westminster-hall for his life, the office is as much his, as his land is his that has land by inheritance.

7. Whether had the inferior clergy ever anything to do in the parliament?

*Answer.* No, no otherwise than thus; there were certain of the clergy that did use to assemble near the parliament, with whom the bishops, upon occasion, might consult; (but there were none of the convocation, as it was afterwards settled, viz’ the dean, the archdeacon, one for the

Instances to the same effect will be found *passim* in the debates and speeches of the time.

1. 1. *Bishops give not their votes by blood &c.* This was one of the stock arguments against the bishops. See, e.g.

‘If they may remove bishops, they may as well next time remove barons and earls.

‘*Answer.* The reason is not the same, the one sitting by an honour invested in their blood and hereditary, which though it be in the king to grant alone yet being once granted he cannot take away. The other sitting by a barony depending upon an office, which may be taken away; for if they be deprived of their office they sit not.’ Speech of Lord Say and Sele, June, 1641. Nalson, Collections, ii. 268.

1. 14. *the convocation as it was afterwards settled*] In or about 1283, a canon was framed which may be regarded as settling historically the representation of the clergy in the convocation of the province of Canterbury. The rule laid down is ‘ut in proximâ congregatione . . . praeter personas episcoporum et procuratores absentium, veniant duo aut unus a clero episcopatum singulorum.’ The Archbishop’s full writ, of which the canon is a copy, summons the attendance of bishops, abbots, priors, deans, and archdeacons throughout the province of Canterbury. Also ‘de qualibet diocesi duo procuratores nomine cleri, et de singulis capitulis ecclesiarii cathedralium et collegiarum singuli procuratores.’ Stubbs, Documents illustrative of English History, pp. 452 and 456.
chapter, two for the diocese) but it happened by continuance of time (to save charges and trouble), their voices and the consent of the whole clergy were involved in the bishops, and at this day the bishops’ writs run, to bring all these to the parliament, but the bishops themselves stand for all.

8. Bishops were formerly of these two conditions; either men bred canonists and civilians, sent up and down ambassadors to Rome and other parts, and so by their merit came to that greatness; or else great noblemen’s sons, or brothers, or nephews, and so born to govern the state. Now they are of a low condition, their education nothing of that way; he gets a living, and then a greater living, and then a greater than that, and so comes to govern.

9. Bishops are now unfit to govern, because of their learning: they are bred up in another law: they run to the text for something done amongst the Jews, that nothing concerns England. ’Tis just as if a man would have a kettle, and he would not go to our braziers to have it made, as they make kettles; but he would have it made as Hiram made his brass-work, who wrought in Solomon’s temple.

10. To take away bishops’ votes, is but the beginning to

1. 23. To take away bishops’ votes &c. This was borne out by the event. ‘In 1646, by ordinance of Parliament, the name, title, style, and dignity of archbishop and bishop were wholly taken away, from and after September 5, and all and every person was disabled to hold the place, function, or style of archbishop or bishop.’ Rushworth, Hist. Collections, vol. vi. 373.

That they will ‘always go for the king, as he will have them’ was, in effect, one of the arguments used against them in 1641. ‘The Commons do conceive that bishops ought not to have votes in Parliament, because . . . of bishops’ dependency and expectation of translation to places of greater profit.’ Nalson, Collections, ii. 261.

So, too, Lord Say and Sele, in the course of a debate in the same year, urges that bishops ‘have such an absolute dependency upon the king that they sit not here as freemen . . . . For their fears, they cannot lay them down, since their places and seats in
BISHOPS OUT OF THE PARLIAMENT.

take them away; for then they can be of no longer use to the king or state. 'Tis but like the little wimble, to let in the greater auger.

Objection. But they are but for their life, and that makes them always go for the king as he will have them.

Answer. This is against a double charity; for you must always suppose a bad king and bad bishops. Then again, whether will a man be sooner content, himself should be made a slave, or his son after him? [when we talk of our children we mean ourselves]. Besides, they that have posterity are more obliged to the king than they that are only for themselves, in all the reason in the world.

11. How shall the clergy be in the parliament, if the bishops be taken away?

Answer. By the laity; because the bishops, in whom the rest of the clergy are included, assent to the taking away their own votes, by being involved in the major part of the house. This follows naturally.

12. The bishops being put out of the house, whom will they lay the fault upon now? When the dog is beat out of the room where will they lay the stink?

VIII.

BISHOPS OUT OF THE PARLIAMENT.

1. In the beginning, bishops and presbyters were alike; like your gentleman in the country, whereof one is made

Parliament are not invested in them by blood, and so hereditary, but by annexation of a barony to their office; and depending upon that office and thereby of their places, at the king's pleasure they . . . . sit . . . . but at will and pleasure. ' Nalson, Collections, ii. 268.

1. 20. The bishops being put out of the house &c.] This was done in 1642, when the king was at length induced to give his consent to the Bill excluding them. Clarendon, i. 668.

1. 24. In the beginning, bishops and presbyters &c.] The question
deputy-lieutenant, another justice of peace; so one is made a bishop, another a dean: And that kind of government by archbishops and bishops no doubt came in, in imitation of the temporal government, no *jure divino*. In time of the Roman empire, where they had a legatus, there they placed an archbishop; where they had a rector, there a bishop; that every one might be instructed in Christianity, which now they had received into the empire.

2. They that speak ingenuously\(^1\) of bishops and presby-

\(^{1}\) *Ingenuously*] MSS. ingeniously. The two words are confused in several places.

raised in the first three sections as to the identity of bishops and presbyters was one of the stock subjects of dispute in Selden's day. After the triumph of the Presbyterian party, it was answered by the legislature in the affirmative:—

'Whereas the word Presbyter, that is to say Elder, and the word Bishop, do in the Scripture intend and signify one and the same function, although the title of Bishop hath been by corrupt custom appropriated to one, &c.

'Nov. 8, 1645.'

Ordinance of Lords and Commons. Rushworth, Collections, vi. 212.

Selden's view agrees with, and was not improbably based upon, that of Archbishop Usher, to whom he was in the habit of referring, and for whose judgment he had a great and merited respect. Usher, his biographer Parr writes, was charged 'That he ever declared his opinion to be, that Episcopus et Presbyter gradu tantum differunt non ordine—which opinion,' says Parr, 'I cannot deny to have been my Lord Primate's since I find the same written almost verbatim with his own hand, dated Nov. 26, 1655. And that the Lord Primate was always of this opinion I find by another note of his own hand, written in another book many years before this.' Parr adds some limitations and cautions; but subject to these, confirms the opinion from other writers. 'So that you see,' he adds, 'that as learned men, and as stout asserters of episcopacy as any the Church of England hath had, have been of the Lord Primate's judgment in this matter, though without any design to lessen the order of bishops or to take away their use in the Church.'—Life of Usher, Appendix, pp. 5-7.

1. 4. *In time of the Roman Empire &c.*] Bingham, Christian Antiquities, bk. ix. goes minutely into this, and shows in detail that the Church, in setting up metropolitan, patriarchal, and episcopal sees, commonly took the model from the civil divisions of the state.
ters say, that a bishop is a greater presbyter, and during the time of his being bishop, above a presbyter: as the president of the college of physicians, is above the rest, yet he himself no more than a doctor of physic.

3. The word [bishop] and [presbyter] are promiscuously used; that is confessed by all: and though the word bishop be in Timothy and Titus, yet that will not prove the bishops ought to have a jurisdiction over the presbyters, though Timothy or Titus had by the order that was given them. Somebody must take care of the rest: and that jurisdiction was but to excommunicate; and that was but to tell them they should come no more into their company. Or grant they did make canons one for another, before they came to be in the state: does it follow they must do so when the state has received them into it? What if Timothy had power in Ephesus, and Titus in Crete over the presbyters? Does it follow therefore our bishops must have the same in England? Must we be governed like Ephesus or Crete?

4. However some of the bishops pretend to be jure divino, yet the practice of the kingdom has ever been otherwise; for whatsoever bishops do otherwise than the

1. 20. However some of the bishops pretend &c.] This was and has ever been the claim of the High Church party. We find it e.g. asserted by Andrewes, and approved by Laud, and in express terms asserted by Laud himself. See 'Die Mercurii, ostendit rationes regi cur chartae Episcopi Winton. defuncti, de episcopis quod sint jure divino, praelo tradendae sint, &c.' Laud's Diary, Jan. 17, 1626; Works, iii. 199.

'We maintain that our calling of bishops is jure divino, by divine right... This I will say and abide by it, that the calling of bishops is jure divino, by divine right, though not all adjuncts to their calling.' Speech at the censure of Bastwick, Burton, and Prynne; Works, vi. pt. i. p. 43.

Selden's argument to the contrary seems to be based on the legal control exercised over bishops in the discharge of their functions, most notably in the matter of excommunications. See 'Excommunication.'
law permits, Westminster-hall can controul, or send them to absolve, &c.

5. He that goes about to prove bishops to be jure divino, does as a man that, having a sword, shall strike it against an anvil; if he strike it awhile there, he may peradventure loosen it, though it be never so well riveted; it will serve to cut flesh or strike another sword, but not against an anvil.

6. If you should say, you held your land by Moses’ or God’s law, and would try it by that, you may perhaps lose; but by the law of the kingdom you are sure of it. So may the bishops by this plea of jure divino lose all. The pope had as good a title by the law of England as could be had, had he not left that, and claimed by power from God.

7. There is no government enjoined by example, but by precept: it does not follow we must have bishops still, because we have had them so long. They are equally mad who say bishops are so jure divino that they must be continued; and they who say, they are so anti-christian that they must be put away: All is as the state likes.

8. To have no ministers but presbyters, ‘tis as if in the temporal state, they should have no officers but constables, and justices of peace which are but greater constables. Bishops do best stand with monarchy; that as amongst the laity, you have dukes, lord-lieutenants, judges, &c. to send down the king’s pleasure to his subjects; so you have bishops to govern the inferior clergy: these upon occasion may address themselves to the king, otherwise every parson of the parish must come and run up to the court.

9. The protestants have no bishops in France, because

1. 31. *The protestants have &c.*] Probably suggested by Usher, who is quoted by his biographer Parr, as excusing or palliating the absence of bishops in the Churches of France on the ground that they are ‘living under a popish power and cannot do what they would.’ Parr’s Life, Appendix, pp. 5 and 6.
they live in a catholic country, and they will not have
catholic bishops; therefore they must govern themselves
as well as they may.

10. What is that to the purpose, to what end bishops' lands were given to them at first? We must look to the law and custom of the place. What is that to any temporal lord's estate, how lands were first divided, or how in William the Conqueror's days? And if men at first are juggled out of their estates, yet they are rightly their successors. If my father cheat a man, and he con-
sents to it, the inheritance is rightly mine.

11. If there be no bishops, there must be something else which has the power of bishops, though it be in many; and then had you not as good keep them? If you will have no half-crowns, but only single pence, yet 30 single pence are a half-crown; and then had you not as good keep both? But the bishops have done ill. 'Twas the men, not the function. As if you should say, you would have no more half-crowns, because they were stolen, when the truth is they were not stolen because they were half-
crowns, but because they were money, and light in a thief's hands.

12. They that would pull down the bishops and erect a new way of government, do as he that pulls down an old house, and builds another of another fashion. There's a great deal ado, and a great deal of trouble; the old rubbish must be carried away, and new materials must be brought; workmen must be provided; and perhaps the old one would have served as well.

13. If the prelatical and presbyterian party should dispute, who should be judge? Indeed in the beginning of queen Elizabeth there was such a difference between the

1. 31. **Indeed in the beginning of queen Elizabeth &c.** Strype, in the Annals of the Reformation, vol. i. chap. 5, gives a lengthy account of this 'conference between some popish bishops and other learned
protestants and papists, and Sir Nicholas Bacon, lord chancellor, was appointed to be judge; but the conclusion was, the stronger party carried it. For so religion was brought into kingdoms, so it has been continued, and so it may be cast out, when the state pleases.

14. 'Twill be a great discouragement to scholars, that bishops should be put down. For now the father can say to the son, and the tutor to the pupil, Study hard, and you shall have *vocem et sedem in parliamento*; then it must be, Study hard, and you shall have an £100 a year if you please your parish.

*Objection.* But they that enter into the ministry for preferment, are like Judas that looked after the bag.

*Answer.* It may be so, if they turn scholars at Judas his age. But what arguments will you use to persuade them to follow their books, when they are young?

men of that communion, and certain protestant divines, held in the month of March, 1559, by order of the Queen's privy council, to be performed in their presence, eight on one side and eight on the other. The Queen orders it to be conducted in writing and the papists to begin. The first day passed off quietly. On the second day, difficulties were raised as to the course of the proceedings and the papists refused to go on, as it had been arranged that they should. The conference thereupon broke up, after some ominous words from the Lord Keeper, Sir Nicholas Bacon. 'For that ye would not that we should hear you, perhaps you may shortly hear of us.' And so they did, for, as a punishment for their contempt, the Bishops of Winchester and Lincoln were committed to the Tower, and the others, except the Abbot of Westminster, were bound to make their personal appearance before the Council and not to depart the cities of London and Westminster until ordered. They were afterwards compelled to dance attendance every day at the Council from April 5 to May 12, until at length their fines for contempt were settled; 'and so they were discharged, recognizances for their good abearing being first taken of them.'

In the Editor's Preface to the second volume of Laud's *Works*, numerous instances are given of oral and of written controversies and disputations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, some of them between protestants and papists, others between the champions of different protestant sects.
IX.

BOOKS. AUTHORS.

1. The giving a bookseller his price for his books, has this advantage; he that will do it, shall be sure to have the refusal of whatsoever comes to his hands, and so by that means get many things, which otherwise he should never have seen. So 'tis in giving a bawd her price.

2. In buying books or other commodities, it is not always the best rule to bid but half so much as the seller asks. Witness the country fellow, that went to buy two shove-groat shillings; they asked him three shillings, and he offered them eighteen-pence.

3. They counted the price of the books (Acts xix. 19), and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver; that is, so many sestertii, or so many three-halfpence of our money; about three hundred pound sterling.

4. Popish books teach and inform; what we know, we

1. 10. *two shove-groat shillings.*] Shove-groat was one of the names of a game played by driving a smooth coin with a smart stroke of the hand along a table, at the further end of which nine partitions had been marked off, with a number inscribed on each of them. The score was reckoned according to the number on the partition in which the coin rested. See Strutt, Sports and Pastimes, bk. iv. sec. 19. Nares (Glossary, sub voce ‘shove-groat’) adds that the shove-groat shilling, the coin with which the game was played, was sometimes a smooth shilling, sometimes a smooth groat, sometimes a smooth halfpenny; and that any flat piece of metal would have answered the purpose, and would have passed, therefore, as a shove-groat shilling.

1. 16. *Popish books &c.*] By 3 James I, ch. 5, sec. 25 the importation is forbidden of popish primers, ladies' psalters, manuals, rosaries, popish catechisms, missals, breviaries, portals, legends and lives of saints containing superstitious matter, and the books themselves are ordered to be seized and burned.

It was one of the charges against Laud that he had connived at the importation of popish books, and had restored them to their owners when they had been seized by the searchers. His answer to the charge is that great numbers of them had been burnt, and that if any of them had been re-delivered to their owners it was by order not from himself, but from the High Commission. Laud's Works, vol. iv. p. 347.
THE DISCOURSE OF JOHN SLEDEN.

know much out of them. The fathers, church story, school-men, all may pass for popish books; and if you take away them, what learning will you leave? Besides, who must be judge? The customer or the waiter? If he disallows a book, it must not be brought into the kingdom; then lord have mercy upon all scholars! These puritan preachers, if they have any thing good, they have it out of popish books, though they will not acknowledge it, for fear

Whatever Laud may have done, or omitted to do, while he was in power, the Act against popish books was strictly enforced afterwards. See Nalson's Collections, vol. ii. p. 690, Dec. 1, 1641. This day the Bishop of Exon reported to the Lords' House, 'That the Committee formerly appointed by their House, have perused those books which were seized on coming from beyond the seas... and finds them to be of three several sorts.

'Such as are fit to be delivered to their owners and to be sold.
The Holy Table, name and thing.
Mr. Walker's Treaty of the Sabbath, &c.
'A second sort, fit to be sold to choice persons.
Thomas de Kempis, Of the following of Christ, &c.
'A third sort of superstitious tablets and books, which are fit to be burnt, as

Missals, Primers, and Offices of Our Lady, &c.

'Ordered... the second sort to be delivered over to safe hands, to be sold to Noblemen, Gentlemen, and Scholars, but not to women.
'That the third sort be burned by the Sheriffs of London in Smith field forthwith.'

Selden's remark was probably made about the date at which this more strict rule was put in force.

1. 4. *The customer*] A collector and farmer of the customs. Conft Hakluyt's Voyages, i. 189–191 (ed. of 1809, 4to). 'In the ancient state of Rome, the tenants of the empire paid for rent the tenth of their corn, whence the publicans that hired it, as the customers do here the king's custom, were called decumani.' Selden, Works, iii. 1098.

1. 4. *the waiter*] This probably means the tide-waiter, one of the officers of the customs, whose duty it was to watch the landing of goods arriving from abroad.

1. 6. *These puritan preachers &c.*] So the London Petition against bishops, &c., complains of 'the Liturgy for the most part framed out of the Romish Breviary, Ritualium, Mass Book, also the book of Ordination, framed out of the Roman Pontifical.' Nalson, Collections, i. 662.
of displeasing the people. He is a poor divine that cannot sever the good from the bad.

5. It is good to have translations, because they serve as a comment, so far as the judgment of one man goes.

6. In answering a book, 'tis best to be short; otherwise he that I write against will suspect I intend to weary him, not to satisfy him. Besides in being long I shall give my adversary a huge advantage; somewhere or other he will pick a hole.

7. In quoting of books, quote such authors as are usually to read; others you may read for your own satisfaction, but not name them.

8. Quoting of authors is most for matter of fact; and then I write them as I would produce a witness; sometimes for a free expression, and then I give the author his due, and gain myself praise by reading him.

9. To quote a modern Dutchman where I may use a classic author, is as if I were to justify my reputation, and I neglect all persons of note and quality that know me, and bring the testimonial of the scullion in the kitchen.

X.
CANON LAW.

If I would study the canon-law, as it is used in England, I must study the heads here in use, then go to the practisers in those courts where that law is practised, and know their customs. So for all the study in the world.

XI.
CEREMONY.

1. Ceremony keeps up all things; 'tis like a penny glass to a rich spirit, or some excellent water; without it the water will be spilt, the spirits lost.
2. Of all people, ladies have no reason to cry down ceremonies, for they take themselves extremely slighted without it. And were they not used with ceremony, with compliments and addresses, with legs, and kissing of hands, they were the pitifullest creatures in the world: but yet (methinks) to kiss their hands after their lips, as some do, is like little boys, that after they have eat the apple, fall to the paring, out of a love they have to the apple.

XII.

CHANCELLOR.

10 1. The bishop is not to sit with the chancellor in his court as being a thing either beneath him or beside him, no more than the king is to sit in the king's bench, when he has made a lord-chief-justice.

2. The chancellor governed in the church, who was a layman. And therefore 'tis false which they charge the bishops with, that they challenge sole jurisdiction. For the bishop can no more put out the chancellor, than the

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1 Without it, H. 2] without, H.

1. 4. with legs,] The 'leg' is an old-fashioned bow or courtesy, in which the leg is drawn back. The word occurs again in 'Poetry' sec. 4 and in 'Thanksgiving.' Conf. 'I think it much more passable to put off the hat and make a leg like an honest country gentleman, than like an ill-fashioned dancing master.' Locke, Some Thoughts concerning Education, § 196.

1. 10. The bishop is not to sit &c.] This seems aimed at Canon xi. of the Constitutions and Canons of 1640, which ordains 'that hereafter no bishop shall grant any patent to any chancellor . . . otherwise than with express reservation to himself and his successors of the power to execute the said place, either alone or with the chancellor, if the bishop shall please to do the same.' Wilkins, Concilia, iv. 551.

The next clause in the Table Talk must have been spoken before this Canon had been put out. The Canon clearly gives the bishop a 'sole jurisdiction,' as often as he chooses to claim it.
chancellor the bishop. They were many of them made chancellors for their lives: and he is the fittest man to govern, because divinity so overwhims all other things.

XIII.

CHANGING SIDES.

1. 'Tis the trial of a man to see if he will change his side; and if he be so weak as to change once, he will change again. Your country fellows have a way to try if a man be weak in the hams, by coming behind him, and giving him a little blow unawares; if he bend once, he will bend again.

2. The lords that fall from the king, after they have got estates by base flattery at court, and now pretend conscience, do as a vintner, that when he first sets up, you may bring your wench to his house, and do your things there; but when he grows rich, he turns conscientious, and will sell no wine on the sabbath-day.

3. Colonel Goring serving first the one side and then

1. 2. for their lives] Singer suggests that 'for their learning' would give a better sense here, but there is no authority for the change.

1. 17. Colonel Goring &c.] Goring, in 1641, gave evidence in Parliament about a real or alleged plot of the King for bringing up the army to London to surprise the Tower and overawe the Parliament. His disclosures were thought so important that he received public thanks 'for preserving the kingdom and the liberties of Parliament.'

In 1642 we hear of him as Governor of Portsmouth, 'having found means to make good impressions again in their Majesties of his fidelity.'

In the course of the same year, having come under the suspicion of the Parliament, and having been called to account by them, he contrived so to clear himself that 'they desired him to repair to his government, and to finish those works which were necessary for the safety of the place.' They supplied him with money for
the other, did like a good miller, that knows how to grind
which way soever the wind sits.

4. After Luther had made a combustion in Germany
about religion, he was sent to by the pope, to be taken
off, and offered any preferment in the church, that he
would make choice of: Luther answered, if he had
the purpose, and gave him a lieutenant-general's commission in the
Parliamentary army. On his return to Portsmouth he declared for
the King.

His next act was to surrender Portsmouth to the Parliament,
treacherously according to Clarendon, but certainly not without having
made strenuous efforts for its defence.

In 1643 he was appointed to a command in the King's army at
York 'by the Queen's favour notwithstanding all former failings,'
and from this date onwards he continued to serve the King. Claren-
don sketches his character and conduct in terms of great bitterness,
very unlike Selden's easy-going remark. See Hist. of Rebellion, i.
414-417, 651, 1114-1119; ii. 27, 212, 830 ff.

l. 3. *After Luther had made a combustion &c.] The story of the
offers made to Luther by the Pope's legate, and of Luther's reply to
them, rests on the authority of Father Paul Sarpi. But Selden does
not tell it quite fairly to Luther. What Sarpi says is that in 1535
the legate, Vergerio, had a special commission to treat with Luther
and with other prominent persons among the reformers, and to make
all sorts of promises to them, if only he could bring them to terms.
Vergerio, accordingly, arranged a meeting with Luther at Wittemburg,
and threw out some very clear hints of what the Pope, Paul III,
would do to reward him if he would but cease from troubling the
Church and the world. Luther's answer was that the offers had
come too late, for he had been driven by the harshness with which
he had been formerly treated, to make a more exact enquiry into
the errors and abuses of the papacy, and knowing what he now
knew he could not in conscience refrain from telling it out to the
world. See Istoria del Concilio Tridentino, lib. i. sec. 53 (edition of
1835, in 7 vols.), Luther speaks of this interview in a letter to Jonas,
written in the same year, but he says only that he met the Pope's
legate by invitation,—' sed quos sermones habuerim non licet homini
scribere.' (De Wette, Luther's Briefe, iv. 648.) Sarpi's story must be
taken for what it is worth. His authority is not by any means unim-
peachable, and Pallavicino (iii. c. 18) ridicules the tale as a romance.

I am indebted to the Bishop of Peterborough for all the above
references.
CHRISTIANS.

offered half as much at first, he would have accepted it, but now he had gone so far, he could not come back. In truth he had made himself a greater thing than they could make him; the German princes courted him; he was become the author of a sect ever after to be called Lutherans. So have our preachers done that are against the bishops, they have made themselves greater with the people than they can be made the other way, and therefore there is the less probability of bringing them off. Charity to strangers is enjoined in the text. By strangers is there understood, those that are not of your own kin, strangers to your blood, not those you cannot tell whence they come; that is, be charitable to your neighbours whom you know to be honest poor people.

XIV.

CHRISTIANS.

1. In the church of Jerusalem, the Christians were but another sect of Jews, that did believe the Messias was come. To be called, was nothing else but to become a Christian, to have the name of a Christian, it being their own language; for among the Jews, when they made a doctor of law, 'twas said he was called.

2. The Turks tell their people of a heaven where there is a sensible pleasure, but of a hell where they shall suffer they do not know what. The Christians quite invert this order; they tell us of a hell where we shall feel sensible pain, but of a heaven where we shall enjoy we cannot tell what.

3. Why did the heathen object to the Christians, that

1 Less probability of. Singer conjecturally] less charity probably of, MSS.

1. 28. Why did the heathen &c.] On the identification of Jews and Christians, and on the reasons for it, Selden speaks in several places.
they worshipped an ass's head? You must know, that to a heathen, a Jew and a Christian were all one, that they

What he says in effect is that, since Christianity had its origin in Judæa, since the early Christians were in great part Jews by race, and worshipped the same supreme God as the Jews, and since they preserved for some time the civil rites and ceremonies of their nation, it was quite natural that the alien peoples, among whom they lived and from whose worship they both alike kept markedly aloof, should have seen no difference between them, and that in point of fact they habitually included them both under the common name of Jews. See Selden, Works, i. 59. II. Prolegomena, p. 10. II. 405 and 657.

The fiction about the ass's head was, Bochart says, started by Apion, an Egyptian grammarian of the first half of the first century, and he adds proof of the very wide credence which it received, about the Jews first, and about the Christians afterwards. The origin of the story he explains in several ways, but not very happily. See Hierozoicon, pt. i, bk. ii. ch. xviii.

Morinus criticises Bochart and the authorities which Bochart quotes, and then with some hesitation tries his own hand on the problem. One of his conjectures is that the Hebrew words for a pot (sc. of manna) and for an ass are so nearly alike as hardly to be distinguished, and that the pot of manna, with its two handles or ears, preserved in the holy place, might itself be taken as an image of an ass's head.

Conf. Dissertationes Octo (Geneva, 1683), p. 157, on the question, 'Unde potuit venire in mentem gentium caput asinimum esse Christianorum Deum?'

The story, as told by Apion, takes two forms, viz. that the head of an ass in gold, an object of worship among the Jews, was found in the holy place of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes; and again that a man named Zabidus, in the course of a war between the Jews and the Idumæans, managed to make his way into the Temple, and there found and carried away the golden head. See Josephus against Apion, bk. ii. ch. 7 and 10.

But if the calumny originated with Apion, and if the later versions of it can, as Bochart says, be traced to him as their source, it seems hardly worth while to enquire about it any further. Apion, it must be remembered, was notorious as a hater of the Jews. He not only wrote against them, but he was sent to Rome, on a special mission, as the most fit person to plead before the Emperor Caligula on behalf of the Alexandrian Greeks, in their quarrel with the Alexandrian Jews, and he did his work so effectively that the Emperor refused even to hear his opponent, Philo. The ass's head story, however started, and with whatever accessories it was adorned, would have
regarded him not, so he was not one of them. Now that of the ass’s head might proceed from such a mistake as this. By the Jewish law, all the firstlings of cattle were to be offered to God, except a young ass, which was to be redeemed; a heathen being present, and seeing young calves, and young lambs killed at their sacrifices, only young asses redeemed, might very well think they had that silly beast in some high estimation, and thence might imagine they worshipped it as a God.

XV.

CHRISTMAS.

1. Christmas succeeds the Saturnalia, the same time, the same number of holy days; then the master waited upon the servant, just like the lord of misrule.

2. Our meats and our sports (much of them) have relation to church-work. The coffin of our christmas pies, in shape long, is in imitation of the cratch; our choosing gained ready credence at Rome about a people of whom they knew little, and for whom they had no love. It was told first about the Jews, and the identification of Jews and Christians explains sufficiently how it came to be told about the Christians afterwards.

l. 13. the lord of misrule] Strutt gives a full account of this ‘mock prince,’ or ‘master of merry disports,’ of the manner of his appointment, of the length of his reign, and of the nature and privileges of his office. He refers to and endorses Selden’s opinion that all these whimsical transpositions of dignity are derived from the ancient Saturnalia, or feasts of Saturn, when the masters waited upon their servants, who were honoured with mock titles and permitted to assume the state and deportment of their lords. Sports and Pastimes, bk. iv. chap. 3, sec. 1-8.

l. 16. the cratch] An old English word for rack or manger. Fr. crèche. It is frequently used for the manger in which Christ was laid. Conf. ‘And sche bare hir first borun sone, and wlappe hym in clothis, and leide hym in a cratche.’ Luke ii. 7; Wycliffe’s Trans. second version, as printed by Forshall and Madden.
king and queen on twelfth-night, has reference to the three kings. So likewise our eating of fritters, whipping of tops, roasting of herrings, jack of lents, &c. they were all in imitation of church-work, emblems of martyrdom. Our tansies at Easter have reference to the bitter herbs; though at the same time it was always the fashion, for a man to have in his house a gammon of bacon, to shew himself to be no Jew.

XVI.

CHURCH.

10 1. HERETOFORE the kingdom let the church alone, let them do what they would, because they had something else to think of, viz. wars; but now in time of peace, we begin to examine all things, will have nothing but what we like, grow dainty and wanton; just as in a family, the heir uses to go a hunting, he never considers how his meal is dressed; takes a bit, and away; but when he stays within, then he grows curious, he does not like this, nor he does not like that, he will have his meat dressed his own way, or peradventure he will dress it himself.

20 2. It hath ever been the gain of the church, when the

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1 Takes a bit, H. a] take a bit, H.

l. 3. Jack a lent] Explained in Johnson's Dictionary as a puppet formerly thrown at in Lent, like shrove-cocks. Conf.: "Thou, that when last thou wert put out of service, Travell'dst to Hamstead-heath, on an Ash Wednesday, Where thou didst stand six weeks the Jack o' Lent, For boys to hurl three throws a penny at thee."

Ben Jonson, Tale of a Tub, Act iv. sc. 2.

l. 5. Our tansies] 'Tansy, a herb: also a sort of pancake or pudding made with it.' Bailey, Old English Dictionary.

l. 20. the gain of the church] I am not sure that this is the correct reading. The MSS. give gain, which may quite possibly have been a mistake for game, a word better suited to the sense here. So, in Bacon's Essay 'Of Usury,' the unquestionably correct reading, 'at
CHURCH.

king will let the church have no power, to cry down the
king and cry up the church. But when the church can
make use of the king's power, then to bring all under the
king's prerogative. The catholics of England go one way,
and the court clergy the other 1.

3. A glorious church is like a magnificent feast, there
is all the variety that may be, but every one chooses out
a dish or two that he likes, and lets the rest alone. How
glorious soever the church is, every one chooses out of it
his own religion, by which he governs himself, and lets to
the rest alone.

4. The laws of the church are most favourable to the
church, because they were the church's own making; as
the heralds are the best gentlemen, because they make
their own pedigree.

5. There is a question about that article, concerning

1 The other] corrected in MSS. from 'an other.'

the end of the game,' appears in some copies of the edition of 1625
as 'at the end of the gaine.' So, too, in the Table Talk (Power,
State, end of sec. 7) the Harleian MS. 1315 reads, quite distinctly,
'comine,' instead of 'comme.'

1. 16. There is a question about that article &c.] The words in
question—'The Church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies and
authority in controversies of faith,' or, as they appear in the original
Latin, 'Habet Ecclesiae ritus statuendi jus, et in fidei controversiis
auctoritatem'—were certainly part of the Latin text as printed in 1563,
with the approval of the Queen. They were not in Archbishop Parker's
preparatory draft of the articles, but they certainly were in the copy
finally signed by the archbishop, the bishops and the clergy of the
Lower House, at the convocation on January 29, 1562 (1563). Their
subsequent history is not equally clear. They were not in the English
MS. signed by the bishops in the convocation of 1571. They were
in the Latin articles signed by the Lower House in the same year.
It appears, too, that in 1571 there were copies of the articles printed
in Latin and in English with the above words, and other copies,
certainly in English, without the words. The whole question is dis-
cussed, and a summary of the arguments pro and con given, in Hard-
wick's History of the Thirty-nine Articles, p. 141. See also Laud's
Works, vol. iv. 30, and vol. vi. 64 ff. A charge that the bishops had
THE DISCOURSE OF JOHN SEDDEN.

the power of the church, whether these words (of having power in controversies of faith) were not stolen in; but 'tis most certain they were in the Book of Articles that was confirmed, though in some editions they have been left out: but the Article before tells you, who the church is; not the clergy, but cæsus fidelium.

XVII.

CHURCH OF ROME.

1. Before a juggler’s tricks are discovered we admire him, and give him money, but afterwards we care not for them: so 'twas before the discovery of the juggling of the church of Rome.

2. Catholics say, we out of our charity believe they of the church of Rome may be saved: but they do not believe so of us; therefore their church is better according to our own selves. First, some of them no doubt believe as well of us, as we do of them; but they must not say so. Besides is that an argument, their church is better than ours because it has less charity?

forged the clause and had foisted it into the articles, is dealt with at length in Laud's speech at the censure of Burton, Bastwick, and Prynne. Strype, in his Life of Archbishop Parker, bk. iv. chap. 5, says that a Latin copy of the articles, printed in 1563, and containing the disputed clause, 'is still extant in the Bodleian Library among Mr. Selden's books . . . being found in Archbishop Laud's library, from whence Mr. Selden immediately had it.' He adds, further, that there were three editions of the Thirty-nine Articles in English, printed in 1571 by Jugg and Cawood, all which have this clause; 'which three editions, with the said clause, I myself saw, as well as other inquisitive persons, at Mr. Wilkins's, a bookseller in St. Paul's Church-yard.' 'So that at length an edition that appeared abroad in the same year, printed by John Day, wanting the clause, hath been judged (and that upon good grounds) to be spurious.'

1. 17. Besides is that an argument, &c.] Dr. Prideaux makes this
CHURCH OF ROME.—CHURCHES.

3. One of the church of Rome will not come to our prayers. Does that argue he does not like them? I would fain see a catholic leave his dinner, because a nobleman's chaplain says grace. Nor haphly would he leave the prayers of the church, if going to church were not made a note of distinction between a protestant and a papist.

XVIII.

CHURCHES.

The way coming into our great churches was ancienly at the west door, that men might see the altar, and all the church before them; the other doors were but posterns.

1 Protestant, H. a] protest, H.

point in the course of a series of lectures to which Selden refers elsewhere. See note on 'Predestination,' sec. 3.

l. 9. The way coming &c.] After the narthex (ante-temple) followed that part which was properly called ναός, the temple, and ναβίς, the nave or body of the church... The entrance into it from the narthex was by the gates, which the modern rituals and Greek writers call πόροι διαφωτός and βασιλικά, the 'beautiful and royal gates.' Here their kings were wont to lay down their crowns before they proceeded further into the Church. Bingham, Christian Antiquities, bk. viii. ch. 5, sec. 1.

These royal gates were usually at the west, since the churches were usually built east and west, with the altar at the east end, but the rule was not always observed. See Christian Antiquities, bk. viii. ch. 3, sec. 2.

Bingham gives, in this chapter, the ground-plan of an ancient church, showing the royal gates at the west, with the altar and all the church in full view in front of them, and the other gates or posterns at the sides. See also Selden's letter to Usher of March 24, 1621 (22), asking 'whether we find that any churches in the elder times of Christianity were with the doors or fronts eastward' (Works, ii. 1707), and Usher's reply of April 16, showing that ancient churches were built in a variety of ways, some 'with the doors or fronts eastward,' some standing north and south; but that for the most part they had the entrance at the west and the altar at the east end. R. Parr's Life of Usher. Letters, p. 81. Letter 49.
XIX.

CITY.

1. What makes a city? Whether a bishoprick, or anything\(^1\) of that nature?

   Answer. 'Tis according to the first charter which made them a corporation. If they are incorporated by name of \textit{civitas}, then they are a city; if by the name of \textit{burgum}, then they are a borough.

2. The lord mayor of London by their first charter was to be presented to the king; in his absence to the lord chief justiciary of England; afterwards to the lord chancellor, now to the barons of the exchequer; but still there was a reservation, that for their honour they should come once a year to the king, as they do still.

\(^1\) \textit{Anything, H. a]} any, H.

1. 8. \textit{The lord mayor of London &c.]} The first notice of the presentment of the lord mayor to the King occurs in the fifth charter, granted by King John, 1215. It grants to the barons of the city of London that they may choose every year a mayor, 'so as, when he shall be chosen, to be presented to us or our justice, if we shall not be present.' By the sixth charter of Henry III, the mayor when chosen is to be 'presented to the Barons of the Exchequer, we not being at Westminster, so notwithstanding at the next coming of us or our heirs to Westminster or London, he be presented to us or our heirs, and so admitted mayor.' Edward I fixes the first presentation to be to the 'Constable of our Tower of London, but to us at our next coming to London.' See Noorthouck, Hist. of London, pp. 778, 782, 784. This rule is not varied in any later charters. For the practice, as it had afterwards been settled, see Maitland's Hist. of London, p. 1193 (fol. 1756). 'The Lord Mayor elect,' Maitland says, 'is presented first to the Lord Chancellor, and afterwards to the Barons of the Exchequer, when he has been sworn into his office.'
1. Though a clergyman have no faults of his own, yet the faults of the whole tribe shall be laid upon him, so he shall be sure not to lack.

2. The clergy would have us believe them against our own reason; as the woman would have had her husband against his own eyes, when he took her with another man, which she stoutly denied: What! will you believe your own eyes before your own sweet wife?

3. The condition of the clergy towards the prince, and the condition of the physician is all one: the physicians tell the prince they have agaric and rhubarb good for him and good for his subjects' bodies; upon this he gives them leave to use it; but if it prove naught, then away with it, they shall use it no more; so the clergy tell the prince they have physic good for his soul, and good for the souls of his people; upon that he admits them: but when he finds by experience they both trouble him and his people, then away with them, he will have no more to do with them. What is that to them, or any body else, if a king will not go to heaven?

4. A clergyman goes not a dram further than this: you ought to obey your prince in general. If he does he is lost: how to obey him, you must be informed by those, whose profession it is to tell you. The parson of the Tower (a good discreet man) told Dr. Mosely (who was sent to me, and the rest of the gentlemen committed 3d Caroli, to persuade us to submit to the king) that they found no

1. 6. as the woman would have had &c.] This seems to refer either to the story told in the first of the Adolphi Fabule (quoted in the Aldine ed. of Chaucer, vol. i. 232, Introductory Remarks), or to Chaucer's adaptation of the story in the 'Merchant's Tale,' of January and May.
such words, as parliament, *habeas corpus*, return, tower, &c. neither in the fathers, nor in the schoolmen, nor in the text; and therefore, for his part, he believed they understood nothing of the business. A satire upon all those clergymen that meddle with matters they do not understand.

5. All confess there never was a more learned clergy. No man taxes them with ignorance. But to talk of that, is like the fellow that was a great wenchcr; he wished God would forgive him his lechery, and lay usury to his charge. The clergy have worse faults.

6. The clergy and treaty together are never like to do

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I. II. *The clergy and treaty*] This is the clear reading of the three MSS. which I have examined. The printed editions have 'the clergy and laity,' which gives an easier sense for the line, but does not suit so well with the general drift of the section. Selden seems to be referring to some attempted arrangement between two parties, in which the interference of the clergy, on the one side and on the other, was likely in his judgment to do harm by mixing up matters which had better have been left out. There were several attempted arrangements of which this might have been said. There was, e.g., the attempted treaty for peace between the King and the Parliament in 1643, in which one of the proposals was 'that religion might be settled with the advice of a synod of divines in such a manner as his Majesty, with the consent of both Houses of Parliament, should appoint' (Clarendon, History, ii. 477). Again, there was the abortive treaty of Newport, discussed in September, 1648, between the King, with some divines among his advisers, and the Parliamentary commissioners, attended by a body of their divines. In the course of this, questions about the church came prominently forward, and it was mainly on these that the negotiations finally broke down (Clarendon, History, vol. iii. 324, 327, 338-9). The remark in the text, in whichever form it stands, must clearly be limited to some such instance as the above. It is not to be taken as condemning in every case the joint action of clergy and laity. In 'Synod Assembly,' sec. 3, Selden distinctly approves this, and indeed insists upon it as necessary. He was himself a lay member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, a mixed lay and clerical body, for which religious matters were the appointed business: so that 'the apothecary' was in place there, and his rhubarb and agaric were the proper ingredients of the sauce. The reading, therefore,—'the clergy and treaty'—though an awkward collocation of words, seems to give a sense best suited to
HIGH COMMISSION.

well. 'Tis as if a man were to make an excellent feast, and would have his apothecary and his physician should come into the kitchen: the cooks, if they were let alone, would make excellent meat; but then comes the apothecary, and he puts rhubarb into the sauce, and agaric into another sauce and so spoils all. Chain up the clergy on both sides.

XXI.

HIGH COMMISSION.

Men cry out upon the high commission, as if only clergymen had to do in it; when I believe there are more laymen in commission there, than clergymen. If the laymen will not come, whose fault is that? So of the star-chamber, the people think the bishops only censured Prynne, Burton, and Bastwick, when there were but two there, and one spoke not in his own cause.

the whole passage, and most in agreement with Selden's judgment elsewhere.

I. 8. as if only clergymen &c.] The Commissioners present in the High Commission Court on e.g. Nov. 17, 1631, were six clerics and four laymen; on Nov. 24 there were seven clerics and five laymen; on Jan. 25, 1634, six clerics and four laymen; on Feb. 9 there were three clerics and eight laymen. See High Commission Cases (Camden Society), pp. 239, 245, 261, 264. On the popular dislike of the High Commission Court, and on the very good reasons for it, see Clarendon, Hist., vol. i. p. 439. His statement is, in effect, that it had come to meddle with things which did not properly concern it; that it had extended its sentences and judgments, in matters tryable before it, beyond that degree which was justifiable, and had not only neglected prohibitions from the supreme courts of law, but had reprehended the judges for doing their duty in granting them. The growth of these abuses he ascribes to 'the great power of some bishops at court.'

I. 12. people think the bishops only &c.] They were tried, Clarendon says, 'in as full a court as ever I saw in that place.' The bishops present were 'only the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London.' Hist. i. 310. The bishop who spoke was Laud, the arch-
XXII.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

1. There be but two erroneous opinions in the House of Commons; that the Lords sit only for themselves; whereas the truth is, they sit as well for the commonwealth. The knights and burgesses sit for themselves and others, some for more, some for fewer. And what is the reason? Because the room will not hold all; the Lords being few, they all come; and imagine the room able to hold all the Commons of England, then the Knights and burgesses would sit no otherwise than the Lords do. The second error is,
bishop. His speech is given at length in Laud’s Works, vol. vi. p. 41 ff. The sentence was brutal, and it was carried out with brutal and unusual severity. ‘The report thereof,’ says Rushworth, ‘flew quickly into Scotland, and the discourse among the Scots were, that the bishops of England were the cause thereof.’ Historical Collections, ii. 385. So Prynne, speaking from the pillory, ascribes the whole business to the vexation of the bishops as the subjects of the libels for which he and the others had been sentenced. Cobbett, State Trials, p. 747. His statement is borne out by Whitelock’s account of the case.

‘The King and Queen did nothing direct against him (Prynne) till Laud set Dr. Heylin (who bore a great malice to Prynne for confuting some of his doctrines) to peruse Prynne’s book, &c. The archbishop went with these notes to Mr. Attorney Noy, and charged him to prosecute Prynne, which Noy afterwards did rigorously enough in the Star Chamber, and in the meantime the Bishops and Lords in the Star Chamber sent Prynne close prisoner to the Tower.’ Whitelock, Memorials, p. 18.

The trial in the Star Chamber was in 1637. That court and the High Commission Court were abolished in 1640. Selden’s remarks must therefore have been made at some time between the two dates.

1. 3. that the Lords sit only &c.] ‘If they (sc. the bishops) vote for the clergy, then they are to be elected by the clergy, as the members of the Commons House now are; but your Lordships, voting only for yourselves, need no electors.’ Solicitor St. John’s speech at a conference of the two Houses, 1641. Nelson’s Collections, ii. 501.

So, too, in Baillie’s Letters and Journals, we find it stated that the Lords represent none but themselves. Vol. i. 365.

1. 10. The second error is &c.] That a money bill must originate with
that the House of Commons are to begin to give subsidies; yet if the Lords dissent, they can give no money.

2. The House of Commons is called the Lower House in twenty acts of parliament: but what are twenty acts of parliament amongst friends?

3. The form of a charge runs thus, I accuse in the name of all the Commons of England. How then can any man be as a witness, when every man is made an accuser?

XXIII.

COMPETENCY.

That which is a competency for one man, is not enough for another; no more than that which will keep one man warm will keep another man warm: one man can go in

the House of Commons is admitted on all hands. But whether the opinion, that if the Lords dissent the Commons can give no money, is, as Selden terms it, an error, is more than doubtful. 'It is true that the Bill of Subsidy is offered by the Commons only; but before that stage is reached, it is sent up to the Lords, is thrice read by them, and is then sent back to the Commons, and there it remaineth to be carried by the Speaker, when he shall present it.' See Orders and Proceedings of the Commons, ch. xv. Harleian MS. v. 266.

Sir Erskine May says expressly that 'A grant from the Commons is not effectual, in law, without the ultimate assent of the Queen and of the House of Lords.' Law, &c., of Parliament, p. 638 (9th ed.).

Indeed, that the Commons in Selden's day had a less independent control over grants than they have gained since, appears from the fact that although their right to originate grants was unquestionable, yet bills of supply were, until 1671, liable to be amended by the Lords. Ibid. p. 641.

1. 6. The form of a charge &c.] See, Message to the Lords re Strafford, delivered by Mr. Pym at the command of the House: 'My Lords . . . . I do here in the name of the Commons now assembled in Parliament, and in the name of all the Commons of England, accuse Thomas, Earl of Strafford, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, of High Treason.' Nalson, Collections, vol. ii. p. 7.

There are other instances given at p. 796, and passim.
doublet and hose, when another man cannot be without a cloak, and yet have no more clothes than is necessary for him.

XXIV.

CONFESSION.

1. In the time of parliament it used to be one of the first things the house did, to petition the king that his confessor might be removed; as fearing either his power with the king, or else, lest he should reveal to the pope what the house was in doing, as no doubt he did, when the Catholic cause was concerned.

2. The difference between us and the papists is, we both allow contrition, but the papists make confession a part of contrition; they say, a man is not sufficiently contrite, unless he confess his sins to a priest.

3. Why should I think a priest will not reveal confession? I am sure he will do any other thing that is forbidden him, haply not so often as I. The uttermost punishment is deprivation. And how can it be proved, that ever any man revealed confession, when there is no witness? And no man can be witness in his own cause. A mere gullery. There was a time when 'twas public in the church, and that is much against their auricular confession.

XXV.

GREAT CONJUNCTION.

The greatest conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter happens but once in eight hundred years, and therefore astrologers

1. 124. The greatest conjunction &c.] ‘Conjonction en Astronomie se dit de la rencontre apparente de deux astres ou de deux planètes dans le même point des cieux, ou plutôt dans le même degré du zodiaque.
can make no experiments of it, nor foretell what it means; not but that the stars may mean something, but we cannot tell what because we cannot come at them. Suppose a planet were a simple, or an herb; how could a physician tell the virtue of that simple, unless he came at it, to apply it?

XXVI.

CONSCIENCE.

1. He that hath a scrupulous conscience, is like a horse that is not well wayed; he starts at every bird that flies out of the hedge.

2. A knowing man will do that which a tender con-

1 Wayed, H. a] weighed H.

The conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter, placed by astronomers among the grand conjunctions, happens once in every twenty years. A less frequent conjunction, placed among the very grand, is that of Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars, which happens once in every five hundred years. See Diderot and D'Alembert, Encyclopédie, under heading Conjonction.

If Selden is writing of astrological conjunctions (as it would appear he is, from the remarks which follow) see, on the whole passage,— Planetarum prima diversitas est in virtutibus propriis. Nam Saturnus est frigidus et siccus, et omnis pigritiae et mortificationis et destructionis rerum causativa est per egressum siccitatis et frigoris. Mars vero est corruptivus propter egressum caliditatis et siccitatis et isti duo planetae nunquam faciunt bonum nisi per accidens; sicut aliquando venenum est bonum per accidens . . . .

Habent autem planetae virtutes alias a signis . . . . et iterum penes aspectus, qui sunt conjunctio, oppositio, etc. Conjuncti dicuntur planetae, quando sunt in eodem signo oppositi, quando unus est in septimo ab alio . . . . Quando vero malus opponitur aut conjungitur malo, tune magnum malum est, &c. R. Bacon, Opus Majus, p. 237–8.

l. 9. well wayed;] Explained in Bailey's Etymological English Dict.

to way a horse is to teach him to travel in the way.'

'Way'd Horse (with horsemen) is one who is already backed, supplied and broken and shows a disposition to the manage.'
scienced man dares not do, by reason of his ignorance; the other knows there is no hurt: as a child is afraid to go in the dark, when a man is not, because he knows there’s no danger.

3. If we once come to leave that out-loose, as to preten conscience against law, who knows what inconvenience may follow? For thus, suppose an anabaptist comes and takes my horse; I sue him, he tells me he did according to his conscience; his conscience tells him all things are common amongst the saints, what is mine is his; therefore you do ill to make such a law, if any man take another’s horse he shall be hanged. What can I say to this man? He does according to his conscience. Why is not he as honest a man, as he that pretends a ceremony, established by law, is against his conscience? Generally to pretend conscience against law is dangerous; in some cases haply we may.

4. Some men make it a case of conscience, whether a man may have a pigeon-house, because his pigeons eat other folks’ corn. But there is no such thing as conscience in the business. The matter is, whether he be a man of such quality, that the state allows him to have a dovecourse; if so, there’s an end to the business; his pigeons have a right to eat where they list themselves.

1. 21. The matter is, whether he be &c.] The law seems to have been that—A lord of a manor might build a dove-cote upon his land, parcel of his manor, and this he might do by virtue of his right as lord thereof. It appears also from the obiter dicta in a case before the King’s Bench, that the parson had a like right. But the tenant of a manor could not do it without licence, the reason assigned being that he can have no right to any privilege that may be prejudicial to others.

In every case, however, in which pigeons came upon a man’s land, he might lawfully kill them, the quality of their owner notwithstanding. See Croke’s Reports of cases in the reign of James I, pp. 382, 490, and Salkeld’s Reports of cases in the reign of William and Mary, vol. iii. p. 248, sub voce ‘ Nuisance.’
CONSECRATED PLACES.

XXVII.
CONSECRATED PLACES.

1. The Jews had a peculiar way of consecrating things to God, which we have not.

2. Under the law, God, who was master of all, made choice of a temple to be worshipped in, where he was more especially present: just as the master of a house, who owns all the house, makes choice of one chamber to lie in, which is called the master's chamber; but under the gospel there is no such thing; temples and churches are set apart for the convenience of men to worship in; they cannot meet upon the point of a needle, but God himself makes no choice.

3. All things are God's already, we can give him no right by consecrating any that he had not before, only we set it apart to his service. Just as a gardener brings his lord and master a basket of apricocks, and presents them; his lord thanks him for them, perhaps gives him something for his pains, and yet the apricocks were as much his lord's before as now.

4. What is consecrated, is given to some particular man, to do God service; not given to God, but given to man to serve God. And there's not anything, lands, or goods, but some men or other have it in their power to dispose of as they please. The saying things consecrated cannot be taken away, makes men afraid of consecration.

5. Yet consecration has this power, when a man has consecrated anything unto God, he cannot of himself take it away.

1 Owns] owes, MSS.

1. 20. What is consecrated, &c.] See note on 'Tithes,' sec. 5.
THE DISCOURSE OF JOHN Selden.

XXVIII.
CONTRACTS.

1. If our fathers have lost their liberty, why may not we labour to regain it?

Answer. We must look to the contract; if that be rightly made, we must stand to it. If we once grant we may recede from contracts, upon any inconvenience may afterwards happen, we shall have no bargain kept. If I sell you a horse, and afterwards do not like my bargain, I will have my horse again.

2. Keep your contracts. So far a divine goes, but how to make our contracts is left to ourselves; and as we agree about the conveying of this house, or that land, so it must be. If you offer me a hundred pounds for my glove, I tell you what my glove is, a plain glove, pretend no virtue in it, the glove is my own, I profess not to sell gloves, and we agree for an hundred pounds; I do not know why I may not with a safe conscience take it. The want of that common obvious distinction of *jus præceptivum*, and *jus permisivum*, does much trouble men.

3. Lady Kent articed with Sir Edward Herbert, that he should come to her when she sent for him, and stay with her as long as she would have him; to which he set his hand: then he articed with her, that he should go away when he pleased, and stay away as long as he pleased; to which she set her hand. This is the epitome of all the contracts in the world, betwixt man and man, betwixt prince and subject; they keep them as long as they like them, and no longer.

1. 20. *Lady Kent articed &c.*] This probably means that Lady Kent retained, or sought to retain, Sir Edward Herbert, an eminent lawyer of the time, at a yearly salary, to do her legal work. Such arrangements were not uncommon. See Aikin, Life of Selden, p. 154, note.
CONTRACTS.—CREED.

XXIX.

CONVOCATION.

1. When the king sends his writ for a parliament, he sends for two knights for a shire, and two burgesses for a corporation: but when he sends for two archbishops for a convocation, he commands them to assemble the whole clergy; but they, out of custom amongst themselves, send to the bishops of their provinces, to will them to bring two clerks for a diocese, the dean, one for the chapter, and the archdeacons; but to the king every clergyman is there present.

2. We have nothing so nearly expresses the power of the convocation, in respect of the parliament, as a court-leet, where they have a power to make bye-laws, as they call them; as that a man shall put so many cows or sheep in the common; but they can make nothing that is contrary to the laws of the kingdom.

XXX.

COUNCIL.

They talk (but blasphemously enough) that the Holy Ghost is president of their General Councils; when the truth is, the odd man is still the Holy Ghost.

XXXI.

CREED.

Athanasius's creed is the shortest, take away the preface, and the force, and the conclusion, which are not part of the

1. 6. they, out of custom amongst themselves, &c.] See note on 'Bishops in Parliament,' sec. 7.
creed. In the Nicene creed it is εἰς ἐκκλησίαν, I believe in the church; but now our Common-prayer has it, I believe one catholic and apostolic church. They like not creeds, because they would have no forms of faith, as they have none of prayer, though there be more reason for the one than for the other.

XXXII.
DAMNATION.

1. If the physician sees you eat any thing that is not good for your body, to keep you from it, he cries 'tis poison. If the divine sees you do any thing that is hurtful for your soul, to keep you from it, he cries you are damned.

2. To preach long, loud, and damnation, is the way to be cried up. We love a man that damns us, and we run after him again to save us. If a man had a sore leg, and he should go to an honest judicious surgeon, and he should only bid him keep it warm, and anoint with such an oil (an oil well known), that would do the cure, haply he would not much regard him, because he knew the medicine beforehand an ordinary medicine. But if he should go to a surgeon that should tell him, your leg will gangrene within three days, and it must be cut off, and you will die, unless

1. i. In the Nicene creed it is &c.] In the original Nicene creed the words do not occur. They were introduced in 381 at the Council of Constantinople—πιστεύων . . . . . εἰς μιαν ἁγίαν καθολικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν.

On the distinction, to which Selden refers, between 'I believe in' and 'I believe,' Bishop Pearson shows that 'Credo sanctam Ecclesiam, I believe there is an holy church; or Credo in sanctam Ecclesiam is the same; nor does the particle in added or subtracted make any difference.' See Pearson on the Creed, vol. i. pp. 28, 504, and vol. ii. p. 421.
you do something that I could tell you; what listening there would be to this man! Oh, for the lord’s sake, tell me what this is, I will give you any content for your pains.

XXXIII.
SELF-DENIAL.

'Tis much the doctrine of the times, that men should not please themselves, but deny themselves every thing they take delight in; not look upon beauty, wear no good clothes, eat no good meat, &c. which seems the greatest accusation that can be upon the Maker of all good things. If they be not to be used, why did God make them? The truth is, they that preach against them, cannot make use of them themselves, and then again, they get esteem by seeming to contemn them. But yet, mark it while you live, if they do not please themselves as much as they can; and we live more by example than precept.

XXXIV.
DEVILS.

1. Why have we none possessed with devils in England? The old answer is, the protestants the devil has already, and the papists are so holy, he dares not meddle with them. Why then, beyond seas, where a nun is possessed, when 20

1. 20. Why then, beyond seas, &c.] The argument seems to be that the alleged holiness of the papists is no sufficient safe-guard to prevent the devil from daring to meddle with them, and that the hunting of huguenots out of church is a proof of enmity between the devil and his alleged friends or allies.

In the sixteenth and early in the seventeenth century, there were several outbursts of demoniacal possession. In 1609 the Basque
a huguenot comes into the church, does the devil hunt him out? The priest\textsuperscript{1} teaches him; you never saw the devil throw up a nun's coats; mark that; the priest will not suffer it, for then the people will spit at him.

2. Casting out devils is mere juggling. They never cast out any but what they first cast in. They do it where, for reverence, no man shall dare to examine it. They do it in a corner, in a mortice-hole, not in the market-place. They do nothing but what may be done by art. They make the devil fly out at a window in the likeness of a bat, or a rat. Why do they not hold him? Why, in the likeness of a bat, or a rat, or some creature that is? Why not in some shape we paint him in, with claws and horns? By this trick they gain much, gain upon men's fancies, and so are

\textit{The priest, H. a)} the devil, H.

country was the scene, and it was shifted, in the same year, to the Ursuline convent at Aix. In 1613 the nuns of St. Brigitte, at Lille, were tormented a second time by demons. They had suffered in the same way about half a century before. But the most notorious of all these attacks was the possession of the mother superior and some of the nuns at the Ursuline convent at Loudun in 1632-4. The history of this remarkable affair is given at length by Figuier. It appears to have been the combined result of wild nymphomania and conscious fraud on the part of the possessed nuns, probably aided by some suggestive trickery on the part of other persons. It had, as it was intended it should have, a tragic ending for the curé of Loudun, Urbain Grandier, who was burnt alive in 1634, on a maliciously contrived charge that he had introduced the devils into the bodies of the nuns. For the full details of this awful story, see Figuier, \textit{Histoire du Merveilleux}, vol. i. pp. 81-257, and Bayle, \textit{Dictionnaire}, under the heading 'Grandier.'

I find no mention anywhere of the possessed nuns hunting a huguenot out of the church. The nearest approach to it is in the account of the possession in 1552 of the nuns of the convent of Kintorp near Strasbourg, in the course of which—'Elles ne gouvernaient plus leur volonté. Une fureur irrésistible les portait à se mordre, à frapper et à mordre leurs compagnes, à se précipiter sur les étrangers pour leur faire du mal.' Introduction to the \textit{Histoire du Merveilleux}, p. 47.
reverenced. And certainly if the priest can deliver me from him, that is my greatest enemy, I have all the reason in the world to reverence him.

Objection. But if this be juggling, why do they punish impostors?

Answer. For great reason; because they do not play their part well, and for fear others should discover them, and so think all of them to be of the same trade.

3. A person of quality came to my chamber in the Temple, and told me he had two devils in his head; [I wondered what he meant] and just at that time, one of them bid him kill me, [with that I begun to be afraid, and thought he was mad] he said he knew I could cure him, and therefore entreated me to give him something, for he was resolved he would go to nobody else. I perceiving what an opinion he had of me, and that 'twas only melancholy that troubled him, took him in hand, warranted him, if he would follow my directions, to cure him in a short time. I desired him to let me be alone for an hour, and then to come again, which he was very willing to. In the mean time I got a card, and lapt it handsomely up in a piece of taffeta, and put strings to the taffeta, and when he came, gave it him, to hang about his neck; withal charged him, that he should not disorder himself neither with eating or drinking, but eat very little of supper, and say his prayers duly when he went to bed, and I made no question but he would be well in three or four days. Within that time I went to dinner at his house, and asked him how he did. He said he was much better, but not perfectly well, for in truth he had not dealt clearly with me: he had four devils in his head, and he perceived two of them were gone with that which I had given him, but the other two troubled him still. Well, said I, I am glad two of them are gone; I make no doubt but to get away the other two likewise. So I

\[1\] Think all of them to be, H. 2] all of them thought to be, H.
THE DISCOURSE OF JOHN SELDEN.

gave him another thing to hang about his neck. Three
days after, he came to me to my chamber, and professed
he was now as well as ever he was in his life, and did
extremely thank me for the great care I had taken with
him. I fearing lest he might relapse into the like dis-
temper, told him that there was none but myself and one
physician more, in the whole town, that could cure the
devils in the head, and that was doctor Harvey (whom I
had prepared) and wished him, if ever he found himself ill
in my absence, to go to him, for he could cure this disease
as well as myself. The gentleman lived many years, and
was never troubled after.

XXXV.

DEUEL.

1. A duel may still be granted in some cases by the law
of England, and only there. That the church allowed it

l. 14. *A duel may still be granted &c.* See Selden, Analecta Anglo-

But he adds that there is hardly an instance to be found in which
this form of trial has been actually used in civil cases, and very few
instances in which it has been used in criminal cases.

Blackstone mentions it as still in force in his day.

'The next species of trial is of great antiquity, but much disused;
though still in force if the parties chose to abide by it; I mean the
trial by wager of battle . . . a trial which the tenant or defendant in
a writ of right, has it in his election at this day to demand.' Blackstone,
Commentaries, bk. iii. ch. 22, sec. 5. So too in criminal trials—bk. iv.
ch. 27, sec. 3.

These forms of trial, in civil and criminal cases, were done away
with by 59 George III, ch. 56.

l. 15. *That the church allowed it anciently, &c.* Ducange, Glossary,
sub voce 'Campiones' (champions), mentions the 'Campionum obla-
tiones, in Chartã Manassidis Episc. Lingonensis, ann. 1185, quas ii, prius
quam in arenam descenderent, Ecclesiis offerebant, quo in duellis Deum
sibi propitiun conciliarent.'

Also, sub voce 'Duellum,' he shows that—'sacrenta quae in his
anciently, appears by this. In their public liturgies, there were prayers appointed for the duellists to say; the judge used to bid one of them go to such a church and pray, &c. for the victory: and to the other go to such a prelate in such a church, and pray, &c. But whether is this lawful? If you grant any war lawful, I make no doubt but to convince it. War is lawful, because God is the only judge betwixt two that are supreme. Now if a difference happen betwixt two subjects, and it cannot be decided by human testimony, why may they not put it to God, to judge between them, by the permission of the prince? Nay, what if we should bring it down, for argument’s sake, to the sword-men. One gives me the lie; ’tis a great disgrace to take it, the law has made no provision to give remedy for the injury, (if you can suppose any thing an injury for which the law gives no remedy) why am not I in this case supreme, and may therefore right myself?

2. A duke ought to fight with a gentleman. The reason is this; the gentleman will say to the duke, ’tis true, you hold a higher place in the state than I; there’s a great distance betwixt you and me; but your dignity does not occasionibus de more fiebant super sanctam crucem, sanctas reliquias, aut sancta Evangelia, proferebantur coram sacerdotibus vel Ecclesiae ministris.

Canciani, in his Lex Costumaria Normannica, gives examples of the oaths administered to the combatants that they are using no help from sorcery or magical arts. Leges Barbarorum, vol. ii. p. 395, note.

Muratori shows that judicial combats were held anciently under the full sanction of the Church, and that the clergy were sometimes parties to them, either in person or more often by a champion chosen to defend their cause. Antiq. Italicæ, iii. p. 638, Dissert. 39.

Also, on p. 637, ‘Tanta autem fuit divini patrocinii spes in abominandis hisce certaminibus ut (Johanne Sarisberiensi in Epistol. 169, alisque testibus) certaturi noctem praecedentem ducerent insomnem in Templo ad tumulum alieuscus sancti, ut eum in agone propitium experientur.’ That they were again and again disapproved by the Church and forbidden under heavy ecclesiastical penalties, hardly needs proof. The proofs occur passim.
privilege you to do me an injury; as soon as ever you do me an injury, you make yourself my equal, and as you are my equal, I challenge you; and in sense the duke is bound to answer him. This will give you some light to understand the quarrel betwixt a prince and his subjects. Though there be a vast distance between him and them, and they are to obey him according to their contract; yet he has no power to do them an injury. Then, they think themselves as much bound to vindicate their right, as they are to obey his lawful commands. Nor is there any other measure of justice left upon earth but arms.

XXXVI.

EPITAPH.

An epitaph must be made fit for the person for whom it is made. For a man to say all the excellent things that can be said upon one, and call that his epitaph, 'tis as if a painter should make the handsomest piece that he can possibly make, and say 'twas my picture. It holds in a funeral sermon.

XXXVII.

EQUITY.

1. Equity in law is the same that the spirit is in religion, what every one pleases to make it. Sometimes they go according to conscience, sometimes according to law, sometimes according to the rule of the court.

1. 3. *in sense the duke is bound*] i.e. in reality; in point of fact. Selden uses this phrase elsewhere, see 'Preaching,' sec. 3 and 'Vows.'
2. Equity is a roguish thing. For law we have a measure, know what to trust to; equity is according to the conscience of him that is chancellor, and as that is larger or narrower, so is equity. 'Tis all one as if they should make the standard for the measure we call a foot, a chancellor's foot. What an uncertain measure would this be. One chancellor has a long foot, another a short foot, a third an indifferent foot; 'tis the same thing in the chancellor's conscience.

3. That saying, Do as you would be done to, is often misunderstood; for 'tis not thus meant, that I, a private man, should do to you, a private man, as I would have you to me, but do, as we have agreed to do one to another by public agreement. If the prisoner should ask the judge, whether he would be content to be hanged, were he in his case, he would answer, No. Then says the prisoner, Do

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1 We call a foot, a chancellor's foot. Singer conjecturally] we call a chancellor's foot, MSS.

1. 1. Equity is a roguish thing. &c.] This has ceased to be true, as equity has come gradually to be administered under settled rules. On the conflict between law and equity in Selden's day, and on the general complaint about the aggressive and exorbitant authority of the Court of Chancery, see e.g. Chamberlain's letter to Carleton, November 14, 1616. On Tuesday, one Bertram, an aged gentleman, killed Sir John Tyndall, a master of the Chancery, with a pistol charged with three bullets, pretending he had wronged him in the report of a cause, to his utter undoing, as indeed he was not held for integrerrimus. Mine author, Ned Wymarke, cited Sir William Walter for saying that the fellow mistook his mark, and should have shot hailshot at the whole court, which indeed grows great, and engrosses all manner of cases, and breeds general complaint for a decree passed there this term, subscribed by all the king's learned counsel, whereby that court may receive and call in question what judgments seower pass at the common law, whereby the jurisdiction of that court is enlarged out of measure, and so suits may become as it were immortal. This success is come of my Lord Coke and some of the judges oppugning the Chancery so weakly and unreasonably that, instead of overthrowing that exorbitant authority, they have more established and confirmed it. Court and Times of James I, vol. i. 439 (a vols. 1848).
as you would be done to. Neither of them must do as private men, but the judge must do by him as they have publicly agreed; that is, both judge and prisoner have consented to a law, that if either of them steal they shall be hanged.

XXXVIII.
EVIL SPEAKING.

1. He that speaks ill of another, commonly, before he is aware, makes himself such a one as he speaks against; for if he had civility or breeding, he would forbear such kind of language.

2. A gallant man is above ill words. An example we have in the old lord of Salisbury, who was a great wise man. Stone had called some lord about court, fool, the

1. 13. Stone had called &c.] Doran (Court Fools, p. 156) says that this remark is all that we know of Stone. It seems to have been suggested by the unseemly passages of arms between Archbishop Laud and Archibald Armstrong, the Court Fool of the time (1637). Their enmities had been of long standing. The Fool had on several occasions offered public affronts to the Archbishop, with the result (according to Francis Osborn) that Laud 'managed a quarrel with Archie the King's fool, and by endeavouring to explode him the court rendered him at last so considerable... as the fellow was not only able to continue the dispute for divers years, but received such encouragement from bystanders as he hath oft, in my hearing, belched in his face such miscarriages as he was really guilty of, and might, but for this foul-mouthed Scot, have been forgotten; adding such other reproaches of his own as the dignity of his calling and greatness of his parts could not in reason or manners admit.' Osborn goes on to speak of the Archbishop as 'hoodwinked with passion' and as led by his too low-placed anger into no less an absurdity than an endeavour to bring the fool into the Star Chamber, and as having at last through the mediation of the Queen got him discharged the Court. Rushworth says, further, that when news had come from Scotland that there had been tumults about the new service-book, introduced at Laud's suggestion, 'Archibald, the King's fool, said to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury,
lord complained, and has Stone whipped: Stone cries, I might have called my lord of Salisbury fool often enough, before he would have had me whipped.

3. Speak not ill of a great enemy, but rather give him good words, that he may use you the better, if you chance to fall into his hands. The Spaniard did this when he was a dying; his confessor told him (to work him to repentance), how the devil tormented the wicked that went to hell: the Spaniard replying, called the devil my lord; I hope my lord the devil is not so cruel: his confessor reproved him. Excuse me for calling him so, says the Don; I know not into what hands I may fall, and if I happen into his, I hope he will use me the better for giving him good words.

as he was going to the Council Table, 'Whea's feule now? doth not your Grace hear the news from Striveling about the Liturgy?' with other words of reflection. This was presently complained of to the Council, and it produced an order from the King and the assembled Lords that 'Archibald Armstrong, the King's fool, for certain scandalous words of a high nature, spoken by him against the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, his Grace, and proved to be uttered by him by two witnesses, shall have his coat pulled over his head and be discharged the King's service and banished the Court.'—Rushworth, Collections, ii. 470.

It may be questioned whether Rushworth is correct in thus limiting the occasion of Archie's disgrace. 'Archye,' writes Mr. Gerrard to Lord Strafford (Strafford Papers, vol. ii.), 'is fallen into a great misfortune; a fool he would be, but a foul-mouthed knave he hath proved himself; being at a tavern in Westminster, drunk as he saith himself, he was speaking of the Scottish business, he fell a railing of my Lord of Canterbury, said he was a monk, a rogue, and a traitor. Of this, his Grace complained at Council, and the King being present, it was ordered he should be carried to the Porter's Lodge, his coat pulled over his ears, and kicked out of the Court,' &c.

We have also the well-known story of the fool's grace at dinner—'Great praise be given to God, and little Laud to the devil.' See Doran, Court Fools, 205-207.
THE DISCOURSE OF JOHN Selden.

XXXIX.

EXCOMMUNICATION.

1. That place they bring for excommunication, put away from among yourselves that wicked person, 1 Cor. v. 13, is corrupted in the Greek. For it should be τὸ πονηρὸν, put away that evil from among you, not τὸν πονηρὸν, that evil person. Besides, ὁ πονηρὸς is the devil, in Scripture, and it may be so taken there; and there is a new edition of Theodoret come out, that has it right τὸ πονηρὸν. 'Tis true the Christians, before the civil state became Christian, did by covenant and agreement set down how they would live; and he that did not observe what they agreed upon, should come no more amongst them; that is, be excommunicated. Such men are spoken of by the Apostle, Romans i. 31, whom he calls ἄσωσθεντος καὶ ἄσωτόν τινι; the Vulgar has it, incompositos, et sine fede; the last word is pretty well, but the first not at all. Origen, in his book against Celsius, speaks of the Christians' συνθήκη, the translator renders it convenus, as it signifies a meeting, when it is plain it signifies a covenant, and the English Bible turned the other word well, covenant-breakers. Pliny tells us, the Christians took an oath amongst themselves to live thus and thus.

l. 2. That place they bring &c.] Stanley, in his notes on the Epistles to the Corinthians, remarks on this verse that—ἐξάφασι τὸν πονηρὸν is the usual formula for punishment on great crimes. See Deut. xiii. 17, xvii. 7, xxiv. 7, &c., also 2 Kings xxxiii. 24. He adds, however, that Theodoret and Augustine read τὸ πονηρὸν, and interpret it 'put away evil from amongst you.'

l. 16. Origen, in his book &c.] ὅτι δὲ καὶ Ἑρωμαῖος... συνθήκας ποιοίται παρὰ τὰ νεομορμένα τῷ διαβάλῳ κατὰ τὸν διαβάλῳ. Contra Celsum, bk. i. ch. i. The word συνθήκη occurs several times in this chapter, and in the sense which Selden gives to it.

l. 20. Pliny tells us, &c.] He reports it, in a letter to Trajan, as a statement made to him by certain persons who had been brought
2. The other place [*dic ecclesiae*] tell the church (Matt. xviii. 17), is but a weak ground to raise excommunication upon, especially from the sacrament, the lesser excommunication; since when that was spoken, the sacrament was not instituted 1. The Jews’ *ecclesia* was their Sanhedrim, their court: so that the meaning is, if after once or twice admonition this brother will not be reclaimed, bring him thither.

3. The first excommunication was 180 years after Christ,

1 Was not instituted] was instituted, MSS.

before him charged with being Christians, and who had ceased so to be. ‘Adfirmabant autem, hanc fuisse summam vel culpae sua vel erroris, quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire; carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem, seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furt, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegaret.’ Epistolcs, bk. x. 97.

1. 1. The other place, *dic ecclesiae &c.*] Selden, in interpreting this place, is following Erastus in his Explicatio gravissimae questionis &c. (1589) where he discusses it at great length. Conf. e.g. ‘Clarior evadet tractatio si quae et qualis fuerit illa Ecclesia, cui jussit dicere, consideretur. In cujus rei declaratione hoc pro initio et fundamento pono . . . Christum scilicet de Ecclesia loqui quae tum esset.’ Thesis 46.

‘*Dic ecclesiae, id est, Dic synedrio . . . Ego enim verba haec Dic ecclesiae idem significare assero, quod ista significant, Dic magistratui tuo, si non est impiae religionis defensor.’ Confirmatio Thesium, p. 322. See also Thesis 45 and 56.

1. 3. the lesser excommunication,] There were two forms of excommunication—the lesser, involving mainly exclusion from the eucharist, and the greater involving also exclusion from all intercourse with the rest of the Christian body. See Erastus, Explicatio gravissimae questionis, &c., Thesis 7; and Selden’s De Synedriis veterum Ebraeorum, i. ch. 9. Works, vol. i. p. 918.

1. 8. The first excommunication &c.] This is not clearly and probably not correctly reported. The excommunication in 180 A.D. and that by Victor are distinct. Victor’s, too, was much more than what Selden is here made to term it. It was a wide sweeping sentence, cutting off the whole of the Asiatic churches from communion with the rest of the Church Catholic; and though not the first absolutely, was, in this respect, the first of its kind. See Selden, De Synedriis veterum Ebraeorum, bk. i. ch. 9. Works, i. 916. But
and that by Victor, bishop of Rome. But that was no more than this, that they should communicate and receive the sacrament amongst themselves, not with those of the other opinion: the controversy (as I take it) being about the feast of Easter. Men do not care for excommunication because they are shut out of the church, or delivered up to Satan, but because the law of the kingdom takes hold of them. After so many days a man cannot sue, no, not for his wife, if you take her from him. And there may be as much reason to grant it for a small fault, if there be contumacy, as for a great one. In Westminster hall you may outlaw a man for forty shillings, which is their excommunication, and you can do no more for £40,000.

4. When Constantine became Christian, he so fell in love with the clergy, that he let them be judges of all things; but that continued not above three or four years, by reason they were to be judges of matters they understood that there were excommunications earlier than this and earlier than 180 A.D. is clear from p. 930 and from the chapter passim.

1. 5. *Men do not care &c.* See e.g. Nathaniel Fiennes’ speech in Parliament (1640): ‘Were it not for the civil restraints and penalties that follow upon it (sc. Excommunication) no man will purchase an absolution though he may have it for a half-penny. And I have heard of some that have thanked the Ordinaries for abating or remitting the fees of the Courts, but I never heard of any that thanked them for reclaiming their souls to repentance by their excommunications.’ Nalson, Collections, i. 760.

1. 9. *there may be as much reason to grant it &c.* This is the argument of the bishops in their answer to a book of articles in 1584. They urge that they do not excommunicate for two-penny causes, ‘though indeed there be as much in 2d as in £100,’ but for disobedience to the order, decree, and sentence of the judge. So, in a temporal cause of 2d, a man is outlawed if he appear not or obey not; but he is not outlawed for 2d, but for his disobedience in a two-penny matter. Wilkins, Concilia, iv. 311.

1. 14. *When Constantine became Christian &c.* The evidence for this is found in a rescript, purporting to be addressed by Constantine to the Prefect Ablavius. For the contents of this document, and for the discussions which have been raised about it, see Excursus A.
not; and then they were allowed to meddle with nothing but religion. All jurisdiction belonged to him, and he scantled them out as much as he pleased, and so things have since continued. They excommunicate for three or four things, matters concerning adultery, tithes, wills, &c. which is the civil punishment the state allows for such faults. If a bishop excommunicate a man for what he ought not, the judge has power to absolve, and punish the bishop. If they had that jurisdiction from God, why does not the church excommunicate for murder, for theft? If the civil power might take away all but three things, why may they not take away them too? If this excommunication were quite taken away, the presbyters would be quiet; 'tis that they have a mind to, 'tis that they would fain be at.

1 A man, H. 2] omitted in H.

1. 2. he scantled them out] i.e. simply—he measured them out. The word involves no notion of a scanty measure, as the reading in the printed editions—'scanted'—does.

1. 7. If a bishop excommunicate &c.] Selden, in his De Synedriis veterum Ebraeorum, bk. i. ch. 10, gives numerous examples in support of his assertion that in this country, as in other Christian states, the power of excommunication was fixed and strictly limited by the law of the land. He shows that a sentence, illegally pronounced, was liable to be annulled by the King’s order; that punishment was threatened or inflicted on clerics who refused to obey the order; and that satisfaction in money was granted to the person injured. This he traces from William I to his own day. Works, vol. i. 977-990. See also note on Power, State, sec. 7.

1. 14. 'tis that they have a mind to, &c.] The Westminster assembly of divines claimed for the Presbytery the uncontrolled right, jure divino, to suspend from the sacrament such persons as they should judge to be ignorant, or profane, or of scandalous lives. This they first settled by a majority vote among themselves, Selden and his friends dissenting, and then again and again pressed upon Parliament to admit and ratify their claim. This, however, the Parliament refused to do. After some delay it granted them the power they sought, but added a provision that if any person suspended from the Lord’s Supper found himself aggrieved by the proceedings of the local Presbytery, he should have the right to appeal to the Assemblies, and thence, in
LIKE THE WENCH THAT WAS TO BE MARRIED; SHE ASKED HER MOTHER WHEN 'TWAS DONE, IF SHE SHOULD GO TO BED PRESENTLY? NO, SAYS HER MOTHER, YOU MUST DINE FIRST; AND THEN TO BED MOTHER? NO, YOU MUST DANCE AFTER DINNER; AND THEN TO BED MOTHER? NO, YOU MUST GO TO SUPPER; AND THEN TO BED MOTHER? &C.

XL.

FASTING DAYS.

1. WHAT THE CHURCH DEBARS US ONE DAY, SHE GIVES US LEAVE TO TAKE IT OUT IN ANOTHER. FIRST WE FAST, AND THEN WE FEAST. FIRST THERE IS A CARNIVAL, AND THEN A LENT.

2. WHETHER DO HUMAN LAWS BIND THE CONSCIENCE? IF THEY DO, 'TIS A WAY TO ENSNARE: IF WE SAY THEY DO NOT, WE OPEN A DOOR TO DISOBEDIENCE.

Answer. In this case we must look to the justice of the law, and intention of the lawgiver. If there be not justice in the law, 'tis not to be obeyed; if the intention of the lawgiver be absolute, our obedience must be so too. If the intention of the lawgiver enjoin a penalty as a compensation for the breach of the law, I sin not if I submit to the penalty; if it enjoin a penalty, as a further enforcement of obedience to the law, then ought I to observe it; which may be known by the often repetition of the law. The way of fasting is enjoined unto them who yet do not observe it. The law enjoins a penalty as an enforcement to obedience; which intention appears by the often calling upon the last instance, to Parliament. See Whitelock, Memorials, pp. 129, 135, 164, 165, 169, 170; Neal's History of the Puritans, iii. 242, 246. The exact words of the Parliamentary resolution are given in Rushworth, Collections, part iv. vol. i. 212. Selden's speech in the debate, covering the same ground as his remarks in the Table Talk, is given by Whitelock, p. 169. For the sequel of the dispute, see 'Presbytery,' sec. 4.

1. 25. which intention appears &c.] See Gibson, Codex, tit. x. ch. 6,
us to keep that law by the king, and the dispensation to the Church to such as are not able to keep it, as young children, old folks, diseased men, &c.

XLI.

FATHERS AND SONS.

It hath ever been the way of fathers to bind their sons. To strengthen this by the law of the land, every one, at twelve years of age, is to take the oath of allegiance in court-leets, whereby he swears obedience to the king.

XLII.

FAITH AND WORKS.

'Twas an unhappy division that has been made betwixt faith and works; though in my intellect I may divide them, just as in the candle, I know there is both heat and light; but yet put out the candle, and they are both gone: one remains not without the other. So 'tis betwixt faith and works. Nay, in a right conception, fides est opus. If I believe a thing, because I am commanded, that is opus.

p. 254, where the successive statutes on fasting, with the penalties for disobeying them and the provisions made for dispensations in case of need, are set out at length.

1. 7. the oath of allegiance in court-leets] 'The court-leet ... is a court of record, held once in the year, within a particular hundred, lordship or manor, before the steward of the leet; being the king's court granted by charter to the lords of those hundreds or manors. . . . It was also anciently the custom to summon all the king's subjects as they respectively grew to years of discretion and strength to come to the court-leet, and there take the oath of allegiance to the king.' Blackstone, Comment., bk. iv. ch. 19, sec. 10.

That twelve was the age of discretion appears from the fact that persons under that age were excused attendance at the court-leet.
XLIII.

FINES.

The old law was, that when a man was fined, he was to be fined salvo contenemento, so as his countenance might be safe; taking countenance in the same sense as your countryman does, when he says, if you will come unto my house, I will shew you the best countenance I can, that is, not the best face, but the best entertainment. The meaning of the law was, that so much should be taken from a man, such a gobbet sliced off, that yet notwithstanding he might live in the same rank and condition he lived in before. But now they fine men ten times more than they are worth.

1. 11. But now they fine men &c.] It was one of the grievances urged against the High Commission Court that ‘they imposed great fines upon those who were culpable before them; sometimes above the degree of the offence . . . . which course of fining was much more frequent and the fines heavier after the King had granted all that revenue to be employed for the reparation of St. Paul’s Church.’ Clarendon, Hist., i. 439. So, too, in the Star Chamber, part of the sentence on Burton, Bastwick and Prynne was that they were fined £5000. Bishop Williams, for having received and divulged some libellous letters, was fined £8000. It was not paid, and could not have been, owing to what the bishop termed ‘the vacuity of his purse.’ Fuller, Church Hist., bk. xi. sec. 8, § 4.

Again, in 1641, when the High Commission Court and Star Chamber had been swept away, and when judges and accused had changed places, the fines were as heavy as before. Archbishop Laud, e.g. for his part in framing and putting out the Canons of 1640, was sentenced by Parliament to pay a fine of £20,000; Bishop Juxon of London, and Bishop Wren of Ely to pay £10,000 each; the rest of the offending bishops to pay £5000. Rushworth, Collections, iv. 235.

A fine of £20,000 was imposed on Judge Berkley for his opinion in favour of ship-money, and £10,000 was actually paid by him and by his fellow-culprit Baron Trevor. Clarendon, Hist. ii. 566.
FINES.—FRIARS.

XLIV.
FREE-WILL.

The Puritans who will allow no free-will at all, but God does all, yet will allow the subject his liberty to do or not to do, notwithstanding the king, the god upon earth. The Arminians, who hold we have free-will, yet say, when we come to the king there must be all obedience, and no liberty must be stood for.

XLV.
FRIENDS.

Old friends are best. King James used to call for his old shoes; they were easiest for his feet.

XLVI.
FRIARS.

1. The friars say they possess nothing; whose then are the lands they hold? Not their superior's, he hath vowed poverty as well as they. Whose then? To answer this 'twas decreed they should say they were the pope's. And why must the friars be more perfect than the pope himself?

2. If there had been no friars, Christendom might have continued quiet, and things remained at the stay.

If there had been no lecturers [which succeed the friars in their way] the Church of England might have stood and flourished at this day.

1. 20. *If there had been no lecturers &c.* See note on 'Lecturers,' sec. i.
XLVII.

GENEALOGY OF CHRIST.

1. They that say, the reason why Joseph's pedigree is set down, and not Mary's, is, because the descent from the mother is lost, and swallowed up, say something, for so it was; but yet if a Jewish woman married with a Gentile, they only took notice of the mother, not of the father. But they that say they were both of a tribe, say nothing; for the tribes might marry one with another, and the law against it was only temporary, in the time while Joshua was in dividing the land, lest the being so long about it, there might be a confusion.

2. That Christ was the son of Joseph is most exactly true. For though he was the Son of God, yet with the Jews, if any man kept a child, and brought him up, and called him son, he was taken for his son; and his land (if he had any) was to descend upon him; and therefore the genealogy of Joseph is justly set down.

XLVIII.

GENTLEMEN.

1. What a gentleman is, 'tis hard with us to define. In other countries he is known by his privileges; in Westminster-hall he is one that is reputed one; in the court of honour, he that hath arms. The king cannot make a

1. 7. But they that say &c.] This is a little obscure. It means, apparently, that whether Joseph and Mary had been of the same tribe, or of different tribes (as they might lawfully have been), the descent from the mother would equally have been 'lost and swallowed up.' An assertion, therefore, that the pedigree was set down on the father's side because they were both of a tribe would miss the real point.

1. 8. the law against it] Numbers xxxvi. 8, 9.
GENEALOGY OF CHRIST.—GOLD.

73

gentleman of blood; [what have you said?] nor God Almighty; but he can make a gentleman by creation. If you ask which is the better of these two; civilly, the gentleman of blood; morally the gentleman by creation may be the better; for the other may be a debauched man, this a person of worth.

2. Gentlemen have ever been more temperate in their religion than the common people, as having more reason, the others running in a hurry. In the beginning of Christianity the fathers writ contra gentes, and contra gentiles, they were all one; but after all were Christians, the better sort of people still retained the name of Gentiles, throughout the four provinces of the Roman empire; as gentilhomme in French, gentil-huomo¹ in Italian, gentil-hombre in Spanish, and gentle-man² in English: and they, no question, being persons of quality, kept up those feasts which we borrow from the Gentiles; as Christmas, Candlemas, May-day, &c. continuing what was not directly against Christianity, which the common people would never have endured.

XLIX.

GOLD.

There are two reasons given why those words, Jesus autem transiens per medium eorum ibat, were about our old

² Gentleman, H. a] gentilman, H.

1. 22. There are two reasons &c.] The second reason given here is not what Selden gives elsewhere. After mentioning the alchemical reason for the inscription, he adds—"ali opinati sunt... amulcri vicem obtinuisse, et caedi et vulneribus averruncandis. Certe verba illa in iis quibus tormentor quaeestiones subjecti interdum, dolori allevando abigendoque, utuntur locum habere ex jurisconsultis aliquot scimus." Works, vol. ii. p. 1386.

Camden mentions the story told by the alchemists; but, with a
gold. The one is, because Ripley the alchymist, when he made gold in the tower, the first time he found it, he spoke these words, per medium eorum, that is, per medium ignis et sulphuris. The other is, because these words were thought to be a charm, and that they did bind whatsoever they were written upon, so that a man could not take it away. To this reason I rather incline.

L.

HALL.

The hall was the place where the great lord did use to eat, (wherefore else were the halls made so big?) where he disregarded dates, he gives Raymond Lully as the successful projector in the Tower. He adds that others say that the text on the coins was only an amulet used in that credulous warfaring age to escape dangers in battle. See Camden, Remains, sub tit. 'Money,' p. 242 (ed. 7, London, 1674).

We learn, too, that the rose nobles of other nations, as well as of ours, had these words stamped upon them. They were used in England first by Edward III, and were copied on the coins of several later reigns. Sometimes another passage of Scripture was used instead of them; as e.g. 'A domino factum est istud, et est mirabile in oculis nostris;' or 'per crucem tuam salva nos Christe redemptor.' See Archbishop Sharpe, Dissertation on the Golden Coins of England, secs. 4 and 6.

1. 9. The hall was the place &c.] See e.g. Household Statutes (first half of thirteenth century), framed for Bishop Grosseteste. 'Make ye your own household to sit in the hall, as much as ye may... And sit ye ever in the middle of the high borde (table) that your face and cheer be shown to all men. And all so much as ye may, without peril of sickness and weariness, eat ye in the hall before your men. For that shall be to you profit and worship.' Manners and Meals in Olden Time, Part I, p. 329, 331 (Early English Text Society).

The Eltham Ordinances for the government of the royal household under Henry VIII are framed in view of the King's dining in Hall, and they give special permission for private meals when the King does not dine in the Hall. See chh. 44, 45, and 52, pp. 151, 153.
saw all his servants and his tenants about him. He eat not in private, except in time of sickness; when once he became a thing cooped up, all his greatness was spilled. Nay, the king himself used to eat in the hall, and his lords sat with him, and then he understood men.

LI.

HELL.

I. There are two texts for Christ's descending into hell; the one, Psalm xvi. the other, Acts ii. where the Bible, that

But that the custom was ceasing to be observed appears from ch. 77, p. 160, which gives rules which had become necessary 'by reason of the seldom keeping of the King's Hall.'

The above are printed in A Collection of Ordinances for the Government of the Royal Household (1790, 4to).

1. 7. There are two texts &c.] This is incorrect. There are other texts which have been, rightly or wrongly, interpreted to prove the descent. Conf. Ephesians iv. 9: 'Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?' and 1 Peter iii. 19: 'By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.' In the Forty-two Articles of 1552, the descent into hell is explained and confirmed by a reference to this passage: 'Quamadmodum Christus pro nobis mortuus est et sepultus, ita est etiam credendus ad inferos descendisse. Nam corpus usque ad resurrectionem in sepulchro jacuit; spiritus ab eo emissus, cum spiritibus qui in carcere sive in inferno detinebantur fuit, illisque praedicavit, quamadmodum testatur Petri locus.' In the Thirty-nine Articles of 1562, the Article on the descent ends with the words 'ad inferos descendisse,' and omits all reference to the preaching to the spirits in prison. At this date the authorised version of the Bible was Cranmer's, or the great Bible (1539), in which (as in Tyndale's earlier version) the reading in Acts ii. 27 is 'thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.' The Thirty-nine Articles were confirmed or recognised by Parliament in 1571, at which date, and up to 1611, the authorised version was the 'Bishops' Bible' (1568). In this version the text remains unchanged—'because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell'; and in the corresponding passage in Psalm xvi. io the word 'hell' is marginally explained as 'in the state that souls be after this life.'
was in use when the Thirty-nine Articles were made, has it (hell). But the Bible that was in Queen Elizabeth’s time, when the Articles were confirmed, reads it (grave), and so it continued till the new translation in King James’s time, and then ‘tis hell again. But by this we may gather the Church of England declined, as much as they could, the descent; otherwise they never would have altered the Bible.

2. *He descended into hell.* This may be the interpretation of it. He may be dead and buried, then his soul ascended into heaven. Afterwards he descended again into hell, that is, into the grave, to fetch his body, and to rise again. The ground of this interpretation is taken from the Platonic

The text is changed in the Geneva Bible (1557) which reads ‘grave’ for hell. This version was in common private use, and was most favoured by the Puritan party, but it was not authorised or appointed to be read in church. It does not appear, therefore, that the Church of England at any time ‘altered the Bible,’ as Selden incorrectly says.

l. 13. *the Platonic learning*] That a metempsychosis was a Platonic doctrine is certain. It appears in the story of Er, the son of Arminius, in Rep. x. and in the Phaedrus 248, 249, where, in one passage, the soul which is to take a new body is said to fall to the earth. So among the later Platonists, Porphyry speaks of τὰς ψυχὰς ἐκ γίνεσιν κατανόειν (De Antro Nympharum, sec. 10), and again in his Ἀφορμαὶ πρὸς τὰ νοητά, sec. 32. Conf. also Plotinus, Enneades, Enn. 4, lib. 8, ΠΕΡΙ ΤΗΣ ΕΙΣ ΤΑ ΣΩΜΑΤΑ ΚΑΘΟΔΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΨΥΧΗΣ, passim: and especially in § 4. Εἰπεῖται ὁ δὲ (ἡ ψυχὴ) πεσοῦσα, καὶ πρὸς τῷ δεσμῷ οὖσα . . . τεῦθεν τε λέγεται καὶ ἐν σπηλαίῳ εἶναι.

But that these views affected the language of the early Christians, and that they understood the descent into hell in Selden’s sense of the words, there is nothing to show, and there is abundant evidence to the contrary. On this subject the Greek and Latin fathers speak with one voice. They understand Christ’s descent into hell as a fact distinct from his burial and resurrection. It is a literal visit to the lower regions where the souls of the dead were detained, and from which the souls of the old prophets and saints were liberated at Christ’s coming. Pearson, in his long and learned discussion on the descent, puts the question, thus far, beyond all reasonable doubt. Archbishop Usher, writing on the descent, shows out of Plato and other philosophers and poets, that the word Hades is used to signify
learning, who held a metempsychosis, and when a soul did descend from heaven to take another body, they called it κατάβασις εἰς ὅνημα, taking ὅνημα for the lower world, the state of mortality. Now the first Christians, many of them, were Platonic philosophers, and no question spoke such language as then was understood amongst them. To understand by hell, the grave, is no tautology, because the creed first tells what Christ suffered, He was crucified, dead, and buried; then it tells us what he did, He descended into hell, the third day he rose again, he ascended, &c.

LII.

HOLY-DAYS.

They say the Church imposes holy-days. There's no such thing, though the number of holy-days is set down in some of our Common-prayer books. Yet that has relation to an act of parliament, which forbids the keeping of any other holy-days. The ground thereof was the multitude of holy-days in time of popery. But those that are


a general invisible future state of the soul after it is separated from the body, and he interprets the descent accordingly. Conf. Parr's Life of Usher, Appendix 27. Selden's interpretation appears to be entirely his own. I can find no other authority for it.

15. an act of parliament, which forbids &c. This is the 5 and 6 of Edward VI, ch. 3, which enacts: 'that all the days hereafter mentioned shall be kept and commanded to be kept holy-days, and none other . . . and that none other day shall be kept and commanded to be kept holy-day, or to abstain from lawful bodily labour.' The list given corresponds with that now in the Book of Common Prayer. Selden's remark must have been made at some date before June 8, 1647, when an Ordinance was put out by Parliament that festivals called holy-days were no longer to be observed, any law, statute, custom or canon to the contrary notwithstanding. Rushworth, Collections, vol. vi. p. 548.
kept, are kept by the custom of the country; and I hope you will not say the Church imposes that.

LI.  

HUMILITY.

1. Humility is a virtue all preach, none practise, and yet every body is content to hear. The master thinks it good doctrine for his servant, the laity for the clergy, and the clergy for the laity.  

2. There is *humilitas quædam in vitio*. If a man does not take notice of that excellency and perfection that is in himself, how can he be thankful to God, who is the author of all excellency and perfection? Nay, if a man has too mean an opinion of himself, 'twill render him unserviceable both to God and man.  

3. Pride may be allowed to this or that degree, else a man cannot keep up his dignity. In gluttony there must be eating, in drunkenness there must be drinking; 'tis not the eating, nor 'tis not the drinking that is to be blamed, but the excess. So in pride.

LIV.  

IDOLATRY.

1. Idolatry is in a man's own thought, not in the opinion of another. Put case I bow to the altar, why am I guilty of


1. 21. *Put case I bow &c.* This practice had been attacked as idolatrous by Burton, in his Sermon for God and the King (p. 105), and had been described by Prynne, in his Histrio-mastix (p. 236), as 'our late crouching and ducking unto newly erected altars, a ceremony much in use with idolatrous Papists heretofore, and derived by them.
HUMILITY.—INVINCIBLE IGNORANCE.

idolatry? Because a stander-by thinks so? I am sure I do not believe the altar to be God, and the God I worship may be bowed to in all places, and at all times.

LV.

JEWS.

1. God at the first gave laws to all mankind, but afterwards he gave peculiar laws to the Jews, which they only were to observe. Just as we have the common law for all England, and yet you have some corporations that, besides that, have peculiar laws and privileges to themselves.

2. Talk what you will of the Jews, that they are cursed, so they thrive where'er they come; they are able to oblige the prince of their country by lending him money; none of them beg; they keep together; and for their being hated, my life for yours, the Christians hate one another as much.

LVI.

INVINCIBLE IGNORANCE.

'Tis all one to me, if I am told of Christ, or some mystery of Christianity, if I am not capable of understanding it, as if I am not told at all, my ignorance is as invincible; and therefore 'tis vain to call their ignorance only invincible, who never were told of Christ. The trick of it is to advance the priest, whilst the Church of Rome says a man must be told of Christ by one thus and thus ordained.

from pagan practices.' Laud, in his speech at the censure of Burton, Bastwick and Prynne, justifies it at great length, and substantially for the same reasons as Selden. See Laud's Works, vol. vi. p. 55 ff. But he does not use Selden's phrase of bowing to the altar. What he defends is carefully guarded as bowing towards the altar.
LVII.
IMAGES.

1. The papists taking away the second commandment, is not haply so horrid a thing, nor so unreasonable amongst Christians as we make it. For the Jews, they could make no figure of God but they must commit idolatry, because he had taken no shape; but since the assumption of our flesh, we know what shape to picture God in. Nor do I know why we may not make his image, provided we be sure what it is: as we say St. Luke took the picture of the Virgin Mary, and St. Veronica of our Saviour. Otherwise it would be no honour to the king, to make a picture and call it the king’s picture, when 'tis nothing like him.

2. Though the learned papists pray not to images, yet 'tis to be feared the ignorant do; as appears by that tale of St. Nicholas in Spain. A countryman used to offer daily to St. Nicholas's image; at length by a mischance the image was broken, and a new one made of his own plum-tree; after that the man forbore. Being complained of to his Ordinary, he answered, 'tis true, he used to offer to the old image, but to the new he could not find in his heart because he knew it was a piece of his own plum-tree. You see what opinion this man had of the image; and to this tended the bowing of their images, the twinkling of their eyes, the virgin's milk, &c. Had they only meant representations, a picture would have done it without these

1. 2. The papists taking away &c.] The papists do not do this in terms. They read the second Commandment continuously with the first, and as forming part of the first. The first Commandment they take as—'Thou shalt have none other Gods before me, i.e. in my presence,' and they interpret the second as enlarging upon and explaining this. See e.g. the Douay Version—'Thou shalt not have strange Gods before me' (Latin Vulgate, coram me)—explained in the notes to Haydocks's edition of the version as =i in my presence. I shall not be content to be adored with idols.'
tricks. It may be with us in England they do not worship images, because living among protestants they are either laughed out of it, or beaten out of it by shock of argument.

3. 'Tis a discreet way concerning pictures in churches to set up no new, nor to pull down no old.

LVIII.

IMPERIAL CONSTITUTIONS.

They say imperial constitutions did only confirm the canons of the Church; but that is not so, for they inflicted punishment, which the canons never did. Viz. If a man converted a Christian to be a Jew, he was to forfeit his estate, and lose his life. In Valentinian's novels, 'tis said Constat episcopos forum legibus non habere, et judicant tantum de religione.


l. 8. confirm the canons of the Church] Θεοπίστωμεν τοῖς, τάξιν νόμων ἐπίχειν τῶν ἁγίων ἐκκλησιαστικῶν κανώνας τούτων ὑπὸ τῶν ἁγίων τεσσάρων συνόδων ἐκπέδευται ἡ βασιλείαν ... Τῶν γὰρ προκριμάτων ἁγίων συνόδων ... τῶν κανόνων ἐκ νόμων φιλάνθρωπον. Justinian's Novels, 131, ch. 1.

l. 10. If a man converted &c.] Conf. e.g. 'Judaes servum Christianum nec compare debebit nec largitatis titulo consequi ... Verum ceteros, quos rectae religionis participes constitutos in suo censu nefanda superstitio jam videtur esse sortita ... sub hac lege possideat, ut eos, nec invitatos, nec volentes, caeno propriae sectae confundat: ita ut, si haec forma fuerit violata, sceleris tanti auctores capitali poenâ, prescriptione comitante, plectantur.' Codex Theodosianus, lib. 16, tit. 9, sec. 4.

l. 12. In Valentinian's novels &c.] See the novels of Valentinian the Third, tit. 34.
LIX.

IMPRISONMENT.

Sir Kenelm Digby was several times taken and let go again, at last imprisoned in Winchester house. I can compare him to nothing, but to a great fish that we catch and

1. 4. *I can compare him to nothing, but to a great fish &c.*] This comparison seems to refer to Sir Kenelm Digby's bodily size and bearing. 'He was a man of very extraordinary person and presence, which drew the eyes of all men upon him, which were the more fixed by a wonderful graceful behaviour, a flowing courtesy and civility, and such a volubility of language as surprised and delighted; and though in another man it might have appeared to have somewhat of affectation, it was marvellous graceful in him, and seemed natural to his size and mould of his person, to the gravity of his motion, and the tune of his voice and delivery.' Clarendon's Life, vol. i. p. 38. (Oxford 1827.) 'His person,' says Anthony à Wood, 'was handsome and gigantic, and nothing was wanting to make him a complete chevalier.' Athenae, iii. 689.

In 1638 Sir Kenelm Digby had been induced by Queen Henrietta Maria to write a circular letter to the Roman Catholics of the country, urging them to contribute liberally to the King's expenses in the matter of the war with the Scotch. Rushworth, Collections, iii. 1327. In January, 1640 (1641), he was called to account for this by the Parliament, and a Committee was appointed to prepare questions about what he and others had done. Commons Journals, ii. 74. In March, the two Houses presented a joint petition, praying that he and certain others be removed from the Court, as popish recusants, ii. 106. In May, 1641, six members were appointed with power to call before them Sir Kenelm Digby and others, and to offer them the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, and if they refuse to take them, to give orders that they shall be proceeded against according to law, ii. 158. In June, 1641, a peremptory order was made for Sir Kenelm Digby to attend the Committee for Recusants Convict, ii. 182. That he was, at length, committed to Winchester House, appears by a letter, read in Parliament from the Lord Mayor of London, concerning his committal, and enclosing his petition for release. This petition the House refused to grant. Journals, ii. 978. His release was due to the intercession of the Queen Regent of France, as appears by a letter from the two Houses.—'We are commanded to make known to your Majesty that, although the religion, the past behaviour, and the abilities of this gentleman might give just umbrage of his practising
let go again; but still he will come to the bait; at last therefore we put him into some great pond for store.

LX.

INCENDIARIES.

Fancy to yourself a man sets the city on fire at Cripplegate, and that fire continues by means of others, till it come to Whitefriars, and then he that began it would fain quench it; does not he deserve to be punished most that first set the town on fire? So 'tis with the incendiaries of the state. They that first set it on fire, [by monopolies, forest business, imprisoning of the parliament-men 3° Caroli, &c.] are now become regenerate, and would fain quench the fire. Certainly they deserved most to be punished, for being the first authors of our distractions.

LXI.

INDEPENDENCY.

1. INDEPENDENCY is in use at Amsterdam, where forty churches or congregations have nothing to do one with another. And 'tis, no question, agreeable to the primitive times, before the emperor became Christian. For either we must say every church governed itself, or else we must to the prejudice of the constitutions of this realm, yet nevertheless, having so great regard to the recommendation of your Majesty, they have ordered him to be discharged. Biographia Britannica, vol. iii. p. 1706, note f.

I find no more distinct references to what Wood terms his 'activity for the King's cause at the beginning of the civil wars,' or, as Selden puts it, 'his coming again and again to the bait.'

1. 3. Incendiaries.] See Excursus B.
fall upon that old foolish rock, that St. Peter and his successors governed all. But when the civil state became Christian they appointed who should govern whom; before, they governed by agreement and consent; if you will not do this, you shall come no more amongst us. But both the independent man and the presbyterian man do equally exclude the civil power, though after a different manner.

2. The Independents may as well plead they should not be subject to temporal things, not come before a constable, or a justice of peace, as they plead they should not be subject in spiritual things, because St. Paul says, Is it so, that there is not a wise man amongst you?

3. The pope challenges all churches to be under him. The king and the two archbishops challenge all the Church of England to be under them. The presbyterian man divides the kingdom into as many churches as there be presbyteries. And your independent would have every congregation a church by itself.

1 Congregation, H. 2] congrega, H.

L. 15. The presbyterian man divides the kingdom &c.] This is an incomplete account. See the form of Presbyterial Church Government agreed upon by the Westminster Assembly of Divines in 1645.

‘Of Synodical Assemblies, the Scripture doth hold out another sort of assemblies, for the government of the Church, besides classical and congregational, all of which we call synodical. Synodical assemblies may lawfully be of several sorts, as provincial, national, and œcuménical.

‘It is lawful and agreeable to the word of God that there be a subordination of congregational, classical, provincial, and national assemblies for the government of the Church.’ Neal, Hist. of Puritans, vol. v. app. ix.

L. 17. your independent &c.] The view of the Independents as stated by themselves was that ‘Every particular congregation of Christians has an entire and complete power and jurisdiction over its members, to be exercised by the elders thereof within itself. Apologetical Narrative of Independents (1643), quoted by Neal, Hist. of Puritans, vol. iii. p. 118.

Their main platform, says Fuller (Church History, bk. xi.), was
LXII.

THINGS INDIFFERENT.

In time of a parliament, when things are under debate, they are indifferent; but in a church or state settled, there is nothing left indifferent.

LXIII.

PUBLIC INTEREST.

All might go well in the commonwealth, if every one in the parliament would lay down his own interest, and aim at the general good. If a man were sick, and the whole college of physicians should come to him, and administer severally, haply so long as they observed the rules of art, he might recover; but if one of them had a great deal of scamony by him, he must put off that, therefore he prescribes scamony; another had a great deal of rhubarb, and he must put off that, and therefore he prescribes rhubarb, &c. they would certainly kill the man. We destroy the commonwealth, while we preserve our own private interest, and neglect the public.

LXIV.

HUMAN INVENTION.

1. You say there must be no human invention in the church, nothing but the pure word.

that churches should not be subordinate, parochial to provincial, provincial to national (as daughter to mother, mother to grandmother), but co-ordinate, without superiority, except seniority of sisters, containing no powerful influence therein.
Answer. If I give any exposition, but what is expressed in the text, that is my invention: if you give another exposition, that is your invention, and both are human. For example, suppose the word [egg] were in the text; I say, 'tis meant an hen-egg, you say a goose-egg; neither of these are expressed, therefore they are human invention; and I am sure the newer the invention the worse; old inventions are best.

2. If we must admit nothing but what we read in the Bible, what will become of the parliament? For we do not read of that there.

LXV.

GOD'S JUDGMENTS.

We cannot tell what is a judgment of God; 'tis presumption to take upon us to know. In time of plague we know we want health, and therefore we pray to God to give us health¹; in time of war, we know we want peace, and therefore we pray to God to send us peace. Commonly we say a judgment falls upon a man for something in him we cannot abide. An example we have in King James, con-

¹ And therefore we pray to God to give us health, H. 2] omitted in H.

1. 13. We cannot tell what is a judgment &c.] Suggested, possibly, by a book, published in 1636, under the title of 'A divine tragedie lately acted,' or 'A collection of sundry memorable examples of God's judgments upon Sabbath-breakers and other like libertines in their unlawfull sports.' It gives fifty-five examples of some misfortune to Sabbath-breakers in the course of two years, and it appeals confidently to these as proof of direct divine interposition. It ends with an account of the death of Mr. William Noy, closely following the execution of the Star Chamber censure on the 'well deserving gentleman, Mr. Prynne.' The book has been ascribed to Prynne, but it does not bear his name or signature. It is entered as Prynne's in the British Museum catalogue, and is so lettered on the cover.
cerning the death of Henry the IVth of France; one said he was killed for his wenching, another said he was killed for turning his religion. No, says King James, (who could not abide fighting) he was killed for permitting duels in his kingdom.

LXVI.

JUDGE.

1. We see the pageants in Cheapside, the lions, and the elephants, but we do not see the men that carry them. We see the judges look big, look like lions, but we do not see who moves them.

2. Little things do great works, when great things will not. If I would take a pin from the ground, a little pair of tongs will do it, when a great pair will not. Go to a judge to do a business for you; by no means, he will not hear of it; but go to some small servant about him, and he will dispatch it according to your heart’s desire.

3. There could be no mischief done in the commonwealth without a judge. Though there be false dice brought in at the groom-porter’s, and cheating offered, yet unless he allow the cheating, and judge the dice to be good, there may be hopes of fair play.

1. 17. There could be no mischief &c.] See note on ‘The King,’ sec. 6.

1. 19. groom-porter] ‘An officer of the royal household, whose business is to see the king’s lodging furnished with tables, chairs, stools and firing: as also to provide cards, dice, &c., and to decide disputes arising at cards, dice, bowling, &c.’ Quoted by Nares (Glossary, sub voce) from Chamb. Dict. Nares adds that ‘formerly he was allowed to keep an open gambling table at Christmas . . . He is said to have succeeded to the office of the master of the revels, then disused.’
LXVII.

JUGGLING.

'Tis not juggling that is to be blamed, but much juggling, for the world cannot be governed without it. All your rhetorick, and all your elenchs in logic, come within the compass of juggling.

LXVIII.

JURISDICTION.

1. There's no such thing as spiritual jurisdiction; all is civil, the church's is the same with the lord mayor's. Suppose a Christian came into a pagan country, how can you fancy he shall have power there? He finds fault with the gods of the country. Well, they will put him to death for it. Then he is a martyr; what follows? Does that argue he has any spiritual jurisdiction? If the clergy say the church ought to be governed thus, and thus, by the word of God, that is doctrine all, that is not discipline.

2. The pope, he challenges jurisdiction over all; the bishops, they pretend to it as well as he; the presbyterians, they would have it to themselves; but over whom is all this? The poor layman.

LXIX.

JUS DIVINUM.

1. All things are held by *jus divinum*, either immediately or mediately.

2. Nothing has lost the pope so much in his supremacy, as not acknowledging what princes gave him. 'Tis a scorn
upon the civil power, and an unthankfulness in the priest. But the church runs to *jus divinum*, lest if they should acknowledge what they have, they have by positive law, it might be as well taken from them, as given to them.

LXX.

KING.

1. A *king* is a thing men have made for their own sakes, for quietness' sake. Just as in a family one man is appointed to buy the meat. If every man should buy, or if there were many buyers, they would never agree; one would buy what the other liked not, or what the other had bought before, so there would be a confusion. But that charge being committed to one, he according to his discretion pleases all. If they have not what they would have one day, they shall have it the next, or something as good.

2. The word king directs our eyes. Suppose it had been consul or dictator. To think all kings alike, is the same folly, as if a consul of Aleppo or Smyrna, should claim to himself the same power that a consul at Rome had. What, am not I consul? Or a duke of England should think himself like the duke of Florence. Nor can it be imagined that the word *βασιλεύς* did signify a king.

1. 15. *directs our eyes.*] This seems to mean, the word catches our eyes and suggests the notion that it bears everywhere the same sense.

This and the next clause seem directed against the Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical of 1640, framed by the Convocations of Canterbury and of York, in which the most high and sacred order of Kings is said to be 'of divine right, being the ordinance of God himself, founded in the prime laws of nature, and clearly established by express texts both of the Old and New Testaments.' Wilkins, *Concilia*, iv. 545.
the same in Greece, as the Hebrew word יְהִי did with the Jews. Besides, let divines in their pulpits say what they will, they in their practice deny that all is the king's. They sue him, and so does all the nation, whereof they are a part. What matter is it then, what they preach or talk in the schools?

3. Kings are all individuals, this or that king; there is no species of kings.

4. A king that claims privileges in his own kingdom, because they have them in another, is just as a cook, that claims fees in one lord's house because they are allowed in another. If the master of the house will yield them, well and good.

5. The text [Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's] makes as much against kings as for them; for it says plainly that some things are not Caesar's. But divines make choice of it, first in flattery, and then because of the other part adjoined to it [Render unto God the things that are God's], where they bring in the Church.

6. A king outed of his country, that takes as much upon him as he did at home, in his own court, is as if a man and I being upon different ground, I used to lift up my voice to him, that he might hear me, at length should come down to me and then expect I should speak as loud to him as I did before.

1 As if a man and I being upon different ground, I used, &c., H. a] as if a man and I being upon the ground used, &c., H. As if a man upon a tree, and I being upon the ground used, &c., S. As if a man on high, and I being upon the ground used, &c. Early printed editions. No one of all these is quite satisfactory. I have chosen what seems the least faulty.

1. 2. let divines in their pulpits &c.] See, e.g., Dr. Manwaring's two Sermons on the King's prerogative, in which he insists that the King's power is not bounded by law; that it is the duty of his subjects to obey his illegal commands; and that if they are deprived of property in their goods they have no choice but to submit. Fuller, Church History, century xvii, bk. xi. secs. 61, 62, 63, in ann. 1628.
KING OF ENGLAND.

LXXI.

KING OF ENGLAND.

1. The king can do no wrong: that is, no process can be granted against him, you can have no remedy against him. What must be done then? Petition him, and the king writes upon the petition *Sot il droit fait*, and sends it to the chancery, and then the business is heard. His confessor will not tell him he can do no wrong.

2. There's a great deal of difference between head of

L. 2. *The king can do no wrong*] Explained by Blackstone as meaning only 'that in the first place, whatever may be amiss in the conduct of public affairs is not chargeable personally on the king; nor is he, but his ministers, accountable for it to the people: and secondly, that the prerogative of the Crown extends not to do any injury.' Commentaries, bk. iii. ch. 17, sec. 1. Selden's remark deals only with one incident of the maxim, and guards, in the last clause, against one possible misinterpretation of it.

L. 8. *There's a great deal of difference &c.*] By 26 Henry VIII, cap. i. it is declared and enacted that the King's Majesty is the only supreme head in erthe of the Church of England. This Act was confirmed, with penalties, by 1 Edward VI, cap. 12.

In 'our Canons,' i.e. in the Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical of 1640, sec. 1, Concerning the Regal Power, the words used are 'The most high and sacred order of Kings is of divine right. . . . A supreme power is given to this most excellent order by God himself in the Scriptures, which is that kings should rule and command in their several dominions all persons of what rank and estate soever, whether ecclesiastical or civil. . . .

'The care of God's church is so committed to Kings in the scripture that they are commended when the church keeps the right way, and taxed when it runs amiss, and therefore her government belongs in chief unto Kings.' Wilkins, Concilia, iv. 545.

The difference of which Selden speaks is that the King, as head of the Church, is the fountain or original of all spiritual authority in his dominions, in the full sense in which he is the fountain of honour and the fountain of law; while the words of the Canon mean no more than that the Church and its ecclesiastical rulers are subject to the civil power. This latter is all that was claimed by Elizabeth, and all that was expressed in Article 37. On the other hand, every Bishop in his Oath of Homage, taken when he obtains the tem-
the church, and supreme governor, as our canons call the
king. Conceive it thus; There is in the kingdom of England
a college of physicians, the king is supreme governor
of these, because they live under him, but not head of them,
nor president of the college, nor the best physician.

3. After the dissolution of the abbeys, they did much
advance the king’s supremacy, for they only cared to
exclude the pope: hence have we had several translations
of the Bible put upon us. But now we must look to it,
otherwise the king may put upon us what religion he
pleases.

4. 'Twas the old way when the king of England had his
house, there were canons to sing service in his chapel:
so at Westminster, in St. Stephen’s chapel, (where the
House of Commons sits) from which canons the street
Canon-row has its name, because they lived there; and
he had also the abbot and his monks, and all these the
king’s house.

5. The three estates are the lords temporal, the bishops

poralities of his see, acknowledges ‘that I hold the said Bishopric,
as well the spiritualities as the temporalities thereof, only of your
Majesty.’ This appears to be a survival of the earlier view.

l. 12. 'Twas the old way &c.] On the King’s Chapel Establishment
see Excursus C.

l. 19. The three estates are &c.] Who formed the three estates was one
of the disputed questions of the time. See, e.g., a speech by Bagshaw
(Feb. 9, 1640): ‘(It was said) that episcopacy was a third estate in Par-
liament, and therefore the King and Parliament could not be without
them; this I utterly deny, for there are three estates without them, as
namely the King, who is the first estate; the Lords Temporal is the
second; and the Commons the third. Nalson, Collections, i. 762.

Nalson quotes, on the other hand, from the Parliamentary Roll,
1 Richard III, ‘at the request and by the assent of the three estates of
the realm, that is to say the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the
Commons of this land assembled in this present Parliament,’ &c.,
i. 764. See, also, a proclamation by Queen Elizabeth (1588) which
speaks of ‘the estate of the prelacy, being one of the three ancient
estates of this realm under her Highness.’ Wilkins, Concilia,
iv. 340.
are the clergy, and the commons. The king is not one of the three estates, as some would have it, [take heed of that], for then if two agree, the third is involved; but he is king of the three estates.

6. The king has a seal in every court; and though the great seal be called *sigillum Angliae*, the great seal of England, yet 'tis not because 'tis the kingdom's seal, and not the king's, but to distinguish it from *sigillum Hiberniae*, *sigillum Scotiae*.

7. The court of England is much altered. At a solemn dancing, first you had the grave measures, then the corantoes, and the galliards, and all this is kept up with ceremony; at length they fall to Trench-more¹, and so to the cushion dance, and then all the company dance, lord and groom, lady and kitchen-maid, no distinction. So in our court in Queen Elizabeth's time, gravity and state was kept up; in King James's time things were pretty well;

¹ Trenchmore] Frenchmore, MSS.

Nelson, in his remarks on Lord Say and Seal's speech (1641) against Bishops, points out, as Selden does, the consequence which would follow from counting the King as one of the three estates. The opinion, he says, that the Bishops are not one of the three estates, in Parliament, has been deservedly exploded by all persons of sense and honour 'except such as would therefore have the King to be the third estate, that so by bringing in a co-ordinacy of power, they may the better accomplish their anti-monarchical designs, or at least reduce the ancient and imperial Crown of these realms to the condition of a Venetian seigniory.' Collections, ii. 269.

1. 13. Trench-more] A kind of lively dance, in triple time, to which it was usual to dance in a rough and boisterous manner. Nares, Glossary.

The reading in the MSS. is 'Frenchmore,' but there is no dance so named, while 'Trenchmore,' the reading in the early printed editions, is, as Nares shows, a name in common use.

1. 14. cushion dance] 'A dance of a rather free character, used chiefly, it would appear, at weddings.' Its character is distinctly shown by a passage which Nares quotes from Taylor (1630):--'There are many pretty provocatory dances, as the kissing dance, the cushion dance, the shaking of the sheets, and such like.' Nares, Glossary.
but in King Charles's time, there has been nothing but Trench-more and the cushion dance, omnium gatherum, tolly polly, hoyte cum toyte.

LXXII.

THE KING.

1. 'Tis hard to make an accommodation betwixt the king and the parliament. If you and I fell out about money, you said I owed you twenty pounds, I said I owed you but ten pounds, it may be a third party allowing me 20 marks, might make us friends. But if I said, I owed you twenty pounds of silver, and you said I owed you twenty pounds of diamonds, which is a sum innumerable, 'tis impossible we should ever agree; this is the case.

2. The king using the House of Commons, as he did in Mr. Pym and his company; that is, charging them with treason, because they charged my lord of Canterbury and Sir George Ratcliffe, it was just as much logic as the boy, that would have lain with his grandmother, used to his father: You lay with my mother, why should not I lie with your's?

3. There is not the same reason for the king's accusing men of treason, and carrying them away, as there is for the houses themselves, because they accuse one of themselves. For every one that is accused, is either a peer or a commoner; and he that is accused has his consent going along with them; but if the king accuses, there is nothing of this in it.

4. The king is equally abused now as before; then they flattered him, and made him do ill things, now they would force him against his conscience. If a physician should tell me that every thing I had a mind to was good for 1

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1 Because they charged] 'because' omitted in MSS.
me, though in truth 'twas poison, he abused me; and he abuses me as much, that would force me to take something whether I will or no.

5. The king, so long as he is our king, may do with his officers what he pleases; as the master of the house may turn away all his servants, and take whom he please.

6. The king's oath is not security enough for our property, for he swears to govern according to law; now the judges they interpret the law; and what judges can be made to do we know.

19. what judges can be made to do we know.] Selden had good reason to know this. He was one of the members committed to prison after Charles' third Parliament, having been refused bail by the judges unless he would find sureties for his future good behaviour. This he and the others rightly and manfully refused to do, and were remanded to the Tower. Whitelock, Memorials, pp. 13, 14.

Again, in 1635 the King was advised by the Lord Chief Justice Finch and others to require the opinion of his judges (on ship-money), which he did, stating the case in a letter to them.

'After much solicitation by the Chief Justice Finch, promising preferment to some, and highly threatening others whom he found doubting (as themselves reported to me) he got from them in answer to the King's letter and case, their opinion ... that when ... the whole kingdom is in danger, your Majesty may by writ command all your subjects to furnish ships with men, victuals and ammunition, and may compel the doing thereof. And that in such case your Majesty is the sole judge both of the dangers and when and how the same is to be prevented and avoided. This opinion was signed by twelve judges.' Whitelock, Memorials, p. 25.

Clarendon remarks on this that 'The damage and mischief cannot be expressed that the Crown and State sustained by the deserved reproach and infamy that attended the judges, by being made use of in this and other like acts of power.' Men heard the payment of ship-money 'demanded in a court of law as a right, and found it, by sworn judges of the law, adjudged so upon such grounds and reasons as every stander-by was able to swear was not law.' He traces the disregard of law afterwards as due very largely 'to the irreverence and scorn the judges were justly in.' History, pp. 108, 109.

But the day of reckoning was at hand. In 1640, Judge Berkley, one of the twelve, was impeached by the Commons for his opinion
7. The king and the parliament now falling out, are just as when there is foul play offered betwixt gamesters; one snatches the other's stake, they seize what they can of one another's. 'Tis not to be asked whether it belongs not to the king to do this or that: before, when there was fair play, it did, but now they will do both what is most convenient for their own safety. If two fall to scuffling, one tears the other's band, the other tears his; when they were friends they were quiet, and did¹ no such thing; they let one another's bands alone.

8. The king calling his friends from the parliament, because he had use of them at Oxford, is as if a man had use of a little piece of wood, and he runs down into

¹ They were quiet, and did, H. 2] and 'and' is written over the original were quiet and did, H. The second 'they.'

in favour of ship-money, and was taken from his seat to prison by black-rod 'which,' says Whitelock, 'struck a great terror in the rest of his brethren.' Memorials, p. 40. Their turn came next, p. 47.

l. ii. The king calling his friends &c.] In 1643 the King ... summoned all the members of both Houses of Parliament (except only such as, having command in His Majesty's armies, could not be absent from their charges) to attend upon His Majesty at Oxford, upon a day fixed in January next. Clarendon, Hist. ii. 622.

Thither, accordingly, the King's friends went, and a Parliament at Oxford was opened in due form. Meanwhile work of a different kind was in progress elsewhere; so that the Earl of Essex, in reply to a long letter from the absentees, written in the interest of peace and assuring him of the King's gracious purposes and general good-will to his subjects, was able to enclose with his curt answer a copy of 'a national covenant solemnly entered into by both the kingdoms of England and Scotland, and a declaration passed by them both together with another declaration by the kingdom of Scotland.' Clarendon, Hist. ii. 666.

These documents, the effect of which was to bind the signatories to keep firm in their armed resistance to the King, are given by Clarendon—the first at full length, the others (passed and published about the very time that the overture for peace came from Oxford) in substance; pp. 560, 667, ff.

So true did Selden's words prove, that—'when his friends are absent, the King will be lost.'
KNIGHT'S SERVICE.—LAND.

the cellar, and takes the spiggot, in the meantime all the beer runs about the house. When his friends are absent, the king will be lost.

LXXIII.

KNIGHT'S SERVICE.

Knight's service in earnest means nothing, for the lords are bound to wait upon the king when he goes to war with a foreign enemy, with, it may be, one man and one horse; and he that does not, is to be rated so much as shall seem good to the next parliament. And what will that be? So 'tis for a private man that holds of a gentleman.

LXXIV.

LAND.

1. When men did let their lands under foot, the tenants would fight for their landlords, so that way they had their retribution; but now they will do nothing for them; nay, be the first, if but a constable bid them, that shall lay the landlord by the heels; and therefore 'tis vanity and folly not to take the full value.

2. Alloburium is a law-word contrary to feudum, and it signifies land that holds of nobody. So regna allodiata are kingdoms that are not held in fee of any body. We so have no such lands in England. 'Tis a true proposition; all the land in England is held, either immediately or mediately, of the king.

1. 12. under foot] i.e. for less than their value. See Bacon, Essay 41, Of Usury: 'they would be forced to sell their means, be it lands or goods, far under foot.'
THE DISCOURSE OF JOHN SELDEN.

LXXV.

LANGUAGE.

1. To a living tongue new words may be added, but not to a dead tongue, as Latin, Greek, Hebrew, &c.

2. Latimer is the corruption of latiner, it signifies he that interprets Latin; and though he interpreted French, Spanish, or Italian, he was called the king's latimer, that is, the king's interpreter.

3. If you look upon the language spoken in the Saxon time, and the language spoken now, you will find the difference to be just as if a man had a cloak that he wore plain in queen Elizabeth's days, and since has put in here a piece of red, and there a piece of blue, here a piece of green, and there a piece of orange-tawny. We borrow words from the French, Italian, Latin, as every pedantic man pleases.

4. We have more words than notions; half-a-dozen words for the same thing. Sometimes we put a new signification to an old word, as when we call a piece, a gun. The word gun was in use in England for an engine to cast a thing

1. 4. Latimer] sometimes spelt Latiner or Latinier, has the different senses of interpreter, herald, and secretary, all based on the original sense—one who knows several languages, and who is thus qualified to act in any one of the above three capacities. See Warton, Hist. of English Poetry, vol. i. p. 65, text and note (ed. 1840, in 3 vols.), where numerous instances are given of its use by early English and French writers.

1. 17. The word gun, &c.] Conf.: 'Theo othre into the wallis stygh (climb)
And the kynges men with gonnes sleygh.'

King Alisaunder, pt. i. chap. 12, l. 3668.

The date of this poem is very early in the fourteenth century and therefore before gunpowder was in use. See Warton, Hist. of English Poetry, sec. 6. Weber's note on the passage is:—

'As to the word gonne, we have here perhaps the earliest use of it that can now be adduced, and it certainly signifies a machine for expelling balls of some kind. ... A gun might have originally been a machine of the catapult kind; and on the adoption of powder, having
from a man, long before there was any gunpowder found out.

5. Words must be fitted to a man's mouth. 'Twas well said of the fellow that was to make a speech for my lord mayor; he desired to take measure of his lordship's mouth.

LXXVI.

LAW.

1. A man may plead not guilty, and yet tell no lie; for by the law no man is bound to accuse himself: so that when I say, Not guilty, the meaning is, as if I should say by way of paraphrase, I am not so guilty as to tell you; if you will bring me to trial, and have me punished for this you lay to my charge, prove it against me.

2. Ignorance of the law excuses no man; not that all men know the law, but because 'tis an excuse every man will plead, and no man can tell how to confute him.

3. The king of Spain was outlawed in Westminster-hall, changed its form, might still retain its name.' Metrical Romances, vol. iii. p. 306 (Edinburgh, 1810).

See also Chaucer, in his description of a battle between Antony and Augustus:

'With grisly soune out gooth the grete gonne,
And hertely they hurteleyn al attones,
And fro the toppe downe cometh the grete stones.'

Legend of Good Women. Legenda Cleopatrie, l. 58.

This may, of course, be an anachronism, as the use of gunpowder was known to Chaucer and is referred to by him elsewhere. But the general drift of the passage makes for the earlier sense of the word. That after the invention of gunpowder the word soon passed to the sense which it now bears, appears from a passage in Grafton's Chronicle in ann. 1380: 'In this time, as saith Polidore in his boke De Inventoribus rerum, gonnas were first in use, which were invented by one of Germany. But, saith he, lest he should be cursed for ever that was the author of this invention, therefore his name is hidden and not known.' Chronicle, p. 429 (London, 1809).
I being of counsel against him. A merchant had recovered costs against him in a suit, which because it could not be got, we advised to have him outlawed for his not appearing, and so he was. As soon as Gondomar heard that, he presently sent the money; by reason, if his master had stood outlawed, he could not have had the benefit of the law; which would have been very prejudicial, there being then many suits depending betwixt the king of Spain and our English merchants.

4. Every law is a contract betwixt the king and the people, and therefore to be kept. An hundred men may owe me a hundred pounds, as well as one man, and shall they not pay me because they are stronger than I?

Objection. Oh! but they lose all if they keep that law.

Answer. Let them look to the making of their bargains. If I sell my lands, and when I have done, one comes and tells me I have nothing else to keep me, I and my wife and children must starve, if I part with my land: must I not therefore let them have my land that have bought it, and paid for it?

5. The parliament may declare law, as well as any inferior court may, viz. the king’s bench. In this or that particular case the king’s bench will declare unto you what the law is; but that binds nobody but whom that case concerns: so the highest court, the parliament, may do, but not declare law, [that is] make law, that was never heard of before.

1. 25. but not declare law &c.] In a Declaration or Remonstrance of the Lords and Commons (May, 1642), an uncontrolled power of declaring law as they please is claimed for the Parliament in direct terms. See, ‘If the question be, whether that be law which the Lords and Commons have once declared to be so, who shall be the Judge? Not his Majesty; for the King judgeth not of matters of law but by his courts, and his courts, though sitting by his authority, expect not his assent in matters of law. Nor any other courts, for they cannot judge in that case because they are inferior, no appeal lying to them from Parliament, the judgment whereof is, in the eye of the law, the King’s judgment in his highest court, though the King in
LXXVII.

LAW OF NATURE.

I cannot fancy to myself what the law of nature means, but the law of God. How should I know I ought not to steal, I ought not to commit adultery, unless somebody had told me so? Surely 'tis because I have been told so. 'Tis not because I think I ought not to do them, nor because you think I ought not; if so, our minds might change: hence then comes the restraint? From a higher power; nothing else can bind. I cannot bind myself, for I may untie myself again; nor an equal cannot bind me, for we may untie one another. It must be a superior, even God Almighty. If two of us make a bargain, why should either his person be neither present nor assenting thereto.' Rushworth, Collections, iv. 698.

This can hardly be distinguished from a claim to do what Selden terms 'make law that was never heard of before.' Selden's restriction applies, of course, to Parliament sitting in its judicial, not in its legislative capacity. See 'Power, State,' sec. 8, where he lays it down that 'the Parliament of England has no arbitrary power in point of Judicature, but in point of making law.'

I. 2. I cannot fancy to myself &c.] This is Selden's position in his treatise De Jure Naturali, &c., apud Ebreaeos. He there treats the Law of Nature as identical with certain precepts handed down by Noah to his descendants. These precepts were of Divine origin, communicated by God to Adam, and by Adam to Noah. The same theory will be found in Gratian's work on the Canon Law (written about 1150) known as the Decretum Gratiani, and long an accepted authority for the subject of which it treats. But it appears there in a different form and without the laboured proofs which Selden accumulates from Jewish traditional sources. See 'Humanum genus duobus regitur, naturali videlicet jure et moribus. Jus naturae est, quod in lege et evangelio continentur, quo quiseque jubetur alii facere quod sibi vult fieri, et prohibetur alii inferre quod sibi nolit fieri. Unde Christus in Evangelio: “Omnia quae cuncte vultis ut faciant vobis homines, et vos, eadem facite illis. Haec est enim lex et prophetae.”

of us stand to it? What need you care what you say, or what need I care what I say? Certainly because there is something about me that tells me *fides est servanda*, and if we after alter our minds, and make a new bargain, there's *fides servanda* there too.

__LXXVIII. LEARNING.______

1. No man is the wiser for his learning; it may administer matter to work in, or objects to work upon, but wit and wisdom are born with a man.

2. Most men's learning is nothing but history dully taken up. If I quote Thomas Aquinas for some tenet, and believe it because the schoolmen say so, that's but history. Few men make themselves masters of the things they write or speak.

3. The Jesuits and the lawyers of France, and the Low Countrymen, have engrossed all learning. The rest of the world make nothing but homilies.

4. 'Tis observable, that in Athens where the arts flourished, they were governed by a democracy; learning made them think themselves as wise as anybody, and they would govern as well as others; and they spake, as it were by way of contempt, that in the east and in the north they had kings. And why? Because the most part of them followed their business; and if some man had made himself wiser than the rest, he governed them, and they willingly submitted to him. Aristotle makes the observation. And as

in Athens, the philosophers made the people knowing, and therefore they thought themselves wise enough to govern, so does preaching with us, and that makes us affect a democracy; for upon these two grounds we all would be governors; either because we think ourselves as wise as the best, or because we think ourselves the elect, and have the spirit, and the rest a company of reprobates that belong to the devil.

LXXIX.

LECTURERS.

I. Lecturers do in a parish church what the friars did heretofore; get away not only the affections, but the bounty, that should be bestowed upon the minister.

Καὶ δὲ τοῦτ’ ἰσως ἐβασιλεύσαντο πρότερον, ὅτι σπάνιον ἦν εὑρεῖν ἄνδρας πολὺ διαφέροντας καὶ ἀρετῆς, ἄλλωσ τε καὶ τότε μικρὰς οἰκονύμες πόλεσ. Ἔτι δ’ ἀν’ ἐνεργεῖσις καθίστασε τοὺς βασιλείας, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἐργον τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἄνδρῶν. Ἐπεῖ δὲ συνέβαινε γίγνεσθαι πολλοὶ δυοίς πρὸς ἀρετῆς, σκέτοι ὑπὲρ οὖν ἅλλ’ ἐξήπτων κοινὸν τι, καὶ πολιτείαν καθίστασε.—iii. 14. 11.

He shows elsewhere how at Athens successive popular leaders and demagogues διὸς τυράννων τῶν δήμων χαριζόμενοι τὴν πολιτείαν ἔστιν τὴν δημοκρατίαν κατέστησαν.—ii. 12. 4 and 5.

I. 10. Lecturers do in a parish church &c.] In the early part of Charles's reign, the lecturers were under the control of the bishops, and we have frequent proof of the trouble which they caused, and of the pains taken by Laud and by other bishops to keep a tight hand upon them, and to see that they did not abuse the somewhat anomalous position which they occupied as licensed trespassers on another man's ground. By the parliamentary party they were regarded with great favour, and were, so to say, established by an Order of the House (Sept. 6, 1641) 'that it shall be lawful for the Parishioners of any Parish in the Kingdom of England or Dominion of Wales, to set up a lecture, and to maintain an orthodox minister at their own charge, to preach every Lord's day where there is no preaching, and to preach one day in every week where there is no weekly lecture.'

'Thus (says Nalson) did they set up a spiritual Militia of those lecturers who were to marshall their troops... neither parsons,
2. Lecturers get a great deal of money, because they preach the people tame [as a man watches a hawk] and then they do what they list with them.

3. The lecture in Black-friars, performed by officers of the army, tradesmen, and ministers, is as if a great man should make a feast, and he would have his cook dress one dish, and his coachman another, his porter a third, &c.

vicars, nor curates, but like the order of the Friers Predicants among the Papists, who run about tickling the people's ears with stories of legends and miracles, in the meantime picking their pockets, which were the very faculties of these men.' Nalson, Collections, ii. 447, 8.

1. 2. as a man watches a hawk] i.e. forces it to watch; keeps it without sleep. For this obsolete use of the word, conf.:

    'Another way I have to man my haggard,
    To make her come and know her keeper's call,
    That is to watch her, as we watch these kites
    That bate and beat and will not be obedient . . .
    Last night she slept not, nor to-night she shall not,' &c.

    Taming of the Shrew, iv. sc. 1.

    'my lord shall never rest,
    I'll watch him tame.' Othello, iii. sc. 3.

    This is still a known method by which wild hawks are tamed: see
    'I have trained haggards or wild hawks perfectly in three weeks.
    This is done by keeping them awake at night and during the day,
    until tame.' Corballis, Forty-five Years of Sport. Falconry, p. 463.

1. 4. The lecture in Black-friars &c.] By 1647, after a good deal of alarm had been caused to the Presbyterian party by the growing influence of the Independents, and after several efforts had been made to put down their unlicensed preaching in the army and elsewhere, 'liberty of conscience was now become the great charter; and men who were inspired, preached and prayed when and where they would. Cromwell himself was the greatest preacher; and most of the officers of the army, and many common soldiers, shewed their gifts that way.' Clarendon, Hist. iii. 175.

    Walker, in his History of Independency, gives a specimen of a common soldier's sermon, preached in 1649; and tells how, on the Sunday after Easter day, six preachers militant at Whitehall tired the patience of their hearers, until at last the Spirit of the Lord called up Oliver Cromwell, who spent an hour in prayer and an hour and a half in a sermon. Part ii. pp. 152, 153 (ed. of 1660).
LIBELS.—LORDS BEFORE THE PARLIAMENT. 105

LXXX.

LIBELS.

Though some make slight of libels, yet you may see by them how the wind sits. As take a straw and throw it up into the air, you shall see by that which way the wind is, which you shall not do by casting up a stone. More solid things do not shew the complexion of the times so well as ballads and libels.

LXXXI.

LITURGY.

1. There is no church without a liturgy, nor indeed can there be conveniently, as there is no school without a grammar. One scholar may be taught otherwise upon the stock of his acumen, but not a whole school. One or two that are piously disposed, may serve themselves their own way, but hardly a whole nation.

2. To know what was generally believed in all ages, the way is to consult the liturgies, not any private man’s writing. As if you would know how the Church of England serves God, go to the Common-prayer book, consult not this, or that man. Besides, liturgies never compliment, nor use high expressions. The fathers oft-times speak oratoriously.

LXXXII.

LORDS BEFORE THE PARLIAMENT.

1. Great lords, by reason of their flatterers, are the first that know their own virtues, and the last that know their

1 compliment] complement, MSS.
own vices. Some of them are ashamed upwards, because their ancestors were too great. Others are ashamed downwards, because they are too mean.

2. The prior of St. John of Jerusalem is said to be *primus baro Angliae*, the first baron of England; because being last of the spiritual barons, he chose to be first of the temporal. He was a kind of an otter, a knight half spiritual, and half temporal.

3. *Question.* Whether is every baron a baron of some place?

*Answer.* 'Tis according to his patent. Of late years they have been made baron of some place, but anciently not, called only by their sirname, or the sirname of some family into which they have been married.

4. The making of new lords lessens all the rest. 'Tis in the business of lords as 'twas with St. Nicholas's image: the countryman, you know, could not find in his heart to adore the new image, made of his own plum-tree, though he had formerly worshipped the old one. The lords that are ancient we honour, because we know not whence they were; but the new ones we slight, because we know their beginning.

5. For the Irish lords here to take upon them in Eng-

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1. *In his heart, H. a] in his own heart, H.*

1. 4. *The prior of St. John &c.*] See Excursus D.
1. 11. *'Tis according to his patent &c.*] See Selden's Titles of Honour, Part ii. ch. 5, sec. 28, where the whole subject is discussed at length, and illustrations are given of the earlier and later forms of patents of nobility. Works, iii. 774.
1. 23. *For the Irish lords here &c.*] In 1626 a petition was addressed to the King, complaining that Scotch and Irish Lords, presuming on a precedence which had been granted them by courtesy, 'do by reason of some late created dignities in those kingdoms of Scotland and Ireland, claim precedence of the peers of this realm, which tends both to the disservice of your Majesty and these realms, and to the great disparagement of the English nobility. . . .

'We therefore humbly beseech your Majesty that . . . some course may be taken . . . so as the inconvenience to your Majesty may be
LAND, is as if the cook in the friars¹ should come to my lady Kent's kitchen, and take upon him to roast the meat there, because he is a cook in another place.

LXXXIII.

LORDS IN THE PARLIAMENT.

1. The lords' giving protections is a scorn upon them. protection means nothing actively, but passively. He

In the friars, H. original reading. 'friars' restored in the margin in a th fayrs' written over it, and with different hand] faires, H. 2; fayers, S.

evented, and the prejudice and disparagement of the Peers and ability of this kingdom be redressed.' Rushworth, Collections, i. 233.

Among the reasons given in support of the petition is a statement that these Scotch and Irish Lords, whatever titles they bear, are 'in the eye of the Law no more than mere Plebeians.'

l. i. cook in the friars] After the death of the Earl of Kent, Selden lived with the Countess Dowager, generally at her house in Whitefriars. The obtrusive 'cook in the Friars' may be understood therefore as he cook from some neighbour's house. The var. lec. 'fair' or 'fairs' seems to have been put in by some one who did not bear in mind where Selden had been domiciled.

l. 5. The lords' giving protections &c.] The effect of a protection was that the person holding it could not be arrested for debt. It was rightfully given to a servant of a member of either House, and was sought and obtained and used by many persons who had no rightful claim to it, and who used it to evade payment of their just debts.

In 1641 a petition was delivered to the Commons by divers citizens of London, against the abuses of Parliamentary protections, alleging that if there were not some speedy order for the calling in or regulating the same, they would occasion the undoing of many families. Rushworth, Collections, iv. 279.

It appears from the Lords' Journals that this petition was addressed to both Houses, and was considered by both. A few days afterwards a Committee of the House sat, and concluded that divers protections should be annulled, some being surreptitiously obtained, others procured by persons of ability, on purpose to defeat their creditors. iv. 282. This abuse of protections was felt by London tradesmen as a greater grievance than ship-money. iv. 396.
that is a servant to a parliament-man is thereby protected. What a scorn is it to a person of honour to put his hand and seal to two lies at once, that such a man is my servant and employed by me; when haply he never saw the man in his life, nor before never heard of him!

2. The lords' protesting is foolish. To protest is properly to save to a man's self some right. But to protest as the lords protest, when they themselves are involved in no more than if I should go into Smithfield, and take my horse, and take the money; and yet when I have your money, and you my horse, I should protest this horse is mine, because I love the horse, or I do not know what. Ridiculous! when they say the bishops anciently

1. 6. The lords' protesting is foolish. The first formal protest of the Lords was on Sept. 9, 1641, against a resolution of the House of Commons for printing and publishing a former order concerning Divine Service while a question was pending as to a conference between the Houses on the subject. Six lords protested, and their protest of assent to the vote was entered on the Journals of the House. Rogers, Protests of the Lords, vol. i. p. 7.

There were two more protests in that year, and several in the following. Rogers defends the practice as being, at that time, a courageous avowal of sympathy with the Parliamentary party. He remarks, further, that under the old rules of the House of Lords, division lists were entered on the Journals, but that in 1641 this ceased to be done, so that a formal protest of dissent was then the only method by which an adverse vote could be recorded.

1. 14. when they say the bishops anciently did protest &c. This paragraph refers to a speech which had been made by Hyde (better known as Lord Clarendon) in defence of Geoffrey Palmer. After the vote of the Commons in favour of the Remonstrance of 1641, and when motion before the House was that the Remonstrance should be printed, Palmer, one of the minority, had, with others, claimed right to protest, in the event of the motion being carried. He called to account for this as a breach of privilege, and in the course of the debate on the matter Hyde said: 'He was not old enough to know the ancient customs of that House; but that he well knew it was a very ancient custom in the House of Peers, and leave was never denied to any man who asked that he might protest, and enter
protest, it was only dissenting, and that in the case of the pope.

LXXXIV.

MARRIAGE.

1. Of all actions of a man's life, his marriage does least concern other people; yet of all actions of our life, 'tis most meddled with by other people.

2. Marriage is nothing but a civil contract. 'Tis true 'tis an ordinance of God; so is every other contract; God commands me to keep it, when I have made it.

3. Marriage is a desperate thing. The frogs in Æsop were extreme wise, they had a great mind to some water, but they would not leap into the well, because they could not get out again.

4. We single out particulars, and apply God's providence to them. Thus when two are married, and have undone one another, they cry it was God's providence we should come together, when God's providence does equally concur to everything.

LXXXV,

MARRIAGE OF COUSIN-GERMANS.

Some men forbear to marry cousin-germans out of this kind of scruple of conscience, because 'twas unlawful dissent against any judgment of the House to which he would not be understood to have given his consent.' Clarendon, Hist. vol. i. 489.

1. 21. because 'twas unlawful before the Reformation &c.] The more ancient prohibition of the Canon Law was to the seventh generation: 'De affinitate consanguinitatis per gradus cognitionis, placuit usque ad septimum generationem observari. And the same was the law of the Church of England . . . But in the 4th Council of Lateran, which was held in the year of our Lord 1215, the prohibition was reduced to the fourth degree . . . which limitation was also the rule of the Church of
before the Reformation, and is still in the Church of Rome. And so by reason their grandfather, or their great grandfather did not do it, upon that old score they think they ought not to do it; as some men forbear flesh upon Friday, not reflecting upon the statute, which with us makes it unlawful, but out of an old score, because the Church of Rome forbids it, and their forefathers always forbore flesh upon that day. Others forbear it out of a natural consideration, because it is observed (for example) in beasts, if two couple of a near kin, the breed proves not so good. The same observation they make in plants and trees, which degenerate being grafted upon the same stock. And 'tis also farther observed, those matches between cousin-germans seldom prove fortunate. But for the lawfulness, there is no colour but cousin-germans in England may marry, both by the law of God and man: for with us we have reduced all the degrees of marriage to those in the Levitical law, and 'tis plain there's nothing against it. As for that that is said, cousin-germans once removed may not marry, and therefore, being a further degree may not, 'tis presumed a nearer should not 1, no man can tell what it means.

LXXXVI.

MEASURE OF THINGS.

1. We measure from ourselves, and as things are for our use and purpose, so we approve them. Bring a pear to

1 And therefore being a further degree is inserted after 'being.' The rest is as may not, 'tis presumed a nearer should not, S.] omitted in H. In H. a 'it is'

England; as appears, not only by this Statute (i.e. by 32 Henry VIII, cap. 38, declaring as a new rule that all marriages are lawful if beyond the Levitical degrees) but also by the frequent dispensations for the third degree, and no further, which we meet with in our ecclesiastical records, as granted here by special authority from the see of Rome.' Gibson, Codex, p. 411.
MEASURE OF THINGS.—DIFFERENCE OF MEN.

The table that is rotten, we cry it down, 'tis naught; but bring a medlar that is rotten, and 'tis a fine thing; and yet I warrant you, the pear thinks as well of itself as the medlar does.

2. We measure the excellency of other men, by some excellency we conceive to be in ourselves. Nash, a poet poor enough (as poets use to be), seeing an alderman with his gold chain, upon his great horse, said by way of scorn to one of his companions, Do you see yon fellow, how goodly, how big he looks? why that fellow cannot make a blank verse.

3. Nay, we measure the excellency of God from ourselves. We measure his goodness, his justice, his wisdom, by something we call just, good, or wise in ourselves; and in so doing, we judge proportionably to the country-fellow in the play, who said, If he were a king, he would live like a lord, and have peas and bacon every day, and a whip that cried slash.

LXXXVII.

DIFFERENCE OF MEN.

The difference of men is very great. You would scarce think them to be of the same species, and yet it consists more in the affection than in the intellect. For as in the strength of body, two men shall be of an equal strength, yet one shall appear stronger than the other, because he exercises, and puts forth his strength; the other will not stir nor strain himself. So 'tis in the strength of the brain; the one endeavours, and strains, and labours, and studies; the other sits still, and is idle, and takes no pains, and therefore he appears so much the inferior.
LXXXVIII.
MINISTER DIVINE.

1. The imposition of hands upon the minister, when all is done, will be nothing but a designation of a person to this or that office or employment in the church. 'Tis a ridiculous phrase that of the canonists, conferre ordines. 'Tis cooptare aliquem in ordinem, to make a man one of us one of our number, one of our order. So Cicero would understand what I said, it being a phrase borrowed from the Latins, and to be understood proportionally to what was amongst them.

2. Those words you now use in making a minister, Receive the Holy Ghost, were used among the Jews in

1. 5. conferre ordines.] This is the phrase used by Aquinas passim. Conf. e.g. Summa Theolog. Supplem. pt. iii. quaest. 34, art. 3.

1. 12. were used among the Jews &c.] This seems to have been somewhat loosely reported. Selden, in his In Eutychii Origines Commentarius, treats at length of the process by which judges, and elders, and chief doctors of the law, were appointed among the Jews. 'Quisquis in potestatem judiciariam seu causarum rite cognoscendarum facultatem evehendus erat, is per manuum impositionem, verbis insuper de creatione conceptis, dignitatem eam regulariter adipsiceratur; adeo ut dein dignus seu idoneus haberetur qui in synedria, sive vigintitriumviralia sive septuagintauniusvirale cooptari legitime posset, ibique judicis praeesse.' Works, vol. ii. p. 436.

He does not say that the words 'receive the Holy Ghost' were any part of the ceremony, but only that it was believed that the Holy Spirit rested on those who had been thus duly appointed. 'Internus ordinationis effectus habebatur eis ejusmodi, ut Spiritus Sanctus . . . . super ordinatos quiesceret. De LXX Senioribus Mosi ejusmodi ordinatione adscitis, et de eis qui seculis sequentibus rite ordinabantur, aient Et quievit super eos Majestas divina, quam et Spiritum Sanctum vocitant.' p. 438.

Alting, like Selden, traces the custom from very early days, from the appointment by Moses of the seventy elders, and from the appointment of Joshua as Moses' successor. Conf. 'Tertius (ritus) est manus impositio . . . . unde tota promotionis solennitas . . . .
making of a lawyer; from thence we have them; which is a villainous key to something; as if you would have some other kind of prefecture, than a mayoralty, and yet keep the same ceremony that was used in making the mayor.

3. A priest has no such thing as an indelible character. What difference do you find betwixt him and another man after ordination? Only he is made a priest (as I said) by designation; as a lawyer is called to the bar, then made a χειροτονία appellari consuevit.’ Historia promotionum Academiarum apud Hebraeos (1652), p. 108.

In an earlier part of the treatise, speaking of Joshua’s appointment per impositionem manus, he adds ‘Atque hic notandum venit Symbolum secundum in Magistrorum promotionibus adhibitum, χειροτονίας ritus, a Deo ipso, si non usurpatus in Mosis inauguratione, saltem huic praeexcerptus.’ p. 82.

But there is no mention by Alting of the use of the words, ‘receive the Holy Ghost,’ fully and particularly as he describes every detail of the ceremony in use. Nor do the words in the text, ‘in making of a lawyer,’ adequately express the rank and authority conferred. That the imposition of hands was copied by the Christians from the old Jewish rite Selden does say, and this is probably what he ought here to have been reported as saying. Works, ii. p. 439.

l. 5. an indelible character.] Aquinas insists on the indelible character of orders of all ranks, of the minor not less than of the priestly. Summa Theolog. Supplem. pt. iii. quaest. 35, art. 2.

‘If anyone saith that in the three Sacraments, Baptism to wit, Confirmation, and Order, there is not imprinted in the soul a character, that is, a certain spiritual and indelible sign . . . let him be anathema.’ Session vii. Of the Sacraments, Canon ix. Canons, &c., of the Council of Trent.

‘Forasmuch as in the Sacrament of Order, a character is imprinted which can neither be effaced nor taken away; the holy Synod condemns the opinion of those who assert that those who have once been rightly ordained can again become Laymen.’ Session xxiii. ch. 4.

On the other hand, Bingham, a very safe authority, quotes Calvin as saying that the indelibility of orders ‘was a fable, first invented in the schools of the ignorant monks, and that the ancients were altogether strangers to it: and that it had more of the nature of a magical enchantment than of the sound doctrine of the Gospel in it,’ &c. Bingham himself concludes against it as a Romish superstition. The whole subject is gone into very fully in Part ii. of his Discussion on lay-baptism. Bingham, Works, vol. ix. p. 150 ff.
serjeant. All men that would get power over others, make themselves as unlike them as they can; upon the same ground the priests made themselves unlike the laity.

4. A minister when he is made, is materia prima, apt for any form the state will put upon him; but of himself he can do nothing. Like a doctor of law in the university; he has a great deal of law in him, but cannot use it till he be made somebody's chancellor: or like a physician, before he be received into a house, he can give nobody physic; indeed after the master of the house has given him charge of his servants, then he may. Or like a suffragan, that could do nothing but give orders, and yet he was a bishop.¹

5. A minister should preach according to the articles of religion established in the church where he lives. To be a civil lawyer, let a man read Justinian, and the body of law, to conform his brain to that way; but when he comes to practise, he must make use of it so far as it concerns the law received in his own country. To be a physician, let a man read Galen and Hippocrates; but when he practises, he must apply his medicines according to the temper of those men's bodies with whom he lives, and have respect to the heat and cold of the climate; otherwise that which in Pergamus (where Galen lived) was physic, in our cold climate may be poison. So to be a divine, let him read the whole body of divinity, the fathers and the schoolmen; but when he comes to practise, he must use it and apply it according to those grounds and articles of religion that are established in the church, and this with sense.

6. There be four things a minister should be at; the con-

¹ He was a bishop] he was no Bishop, MSS.

1. 12. and yet he was a bishop] The reading in the MSS. and in the early printed editions is 'he was no Bishop.' This spoils the argument and is untrue in fact. See 'Bishops before the Parliament,' sec. 1.
MINISTER DIVINE.

115

cionary part, ecclesiastical story, school divinity, and the casuists.

(1) In the concionary part, he must read all the chief fathers, both Latin and Greek, wholly; St. Austin, St. Ambrose, St. Chrysostom, both the Gregories, and 1 Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Epiphanius, which last have more learning in them than all the rest, and write freely.

(2) For ecclesiastical story, let him read Baronius, with the Magdeburgenses, and be his own judge; the one being 10 extremely for the papists, the other extremely for the protestants.

(3) For school divinity, let him get Cavellus's 2 edition of Scotus or Mayro 3, where there be quotations that direct you to every schoolman, where such and such questions are handled. Without school divinity, a divine knows nothing logically, nor will be able to satisfy a rational man out of the pulpit.

(4) The study of the casuists must follow the study of the schoolmen, because the division of their cases is according 20 to their divinity; otherwise he that begins with them will know little, as he that begins with the study of the reports

1 The Gregories and H. 2] the 2 Cavellus] Javellus, MSS.

I. 13. Cavellus—Mayro] The reading of the MSS. and of the early editions is 'Javellus' and 'Mayco,' which (as Mr. Singer has pointed out) must be incorrect. Some of Duns Scotus' writings were edited in 1620 by Hugo Cavellus (i.e. Mac Caghwell) a Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh. In 1639 there was a complete edition of Duns Scotus published with variorum notes, in which H. Cavellus is one of several commentators cited.

Mayro, or Franciscus de Mayronis, a voluminous ecclesiastical writer, belongs to the first half of the fourteenth century. He was a disciple of Duns Scotus, and was known among the Franciscans as Doctor Illuminatus. A complete list of his writings will be found in Wadding's Scriptores Ordinis Minorum.

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and cases in the common law, will thereby know little of the law. Casuists may be of admirable use, if discreetly dealt with, though among them you shall have many leaves together very impertinent. A case well decided would stick by a man, they would remember it whether they will or no, whereas a quaint exposition dies in the birth. The main thing is to know where to search; for talk they what they will of vast memories, no man will presume upon his own memory for anything he means to write or speak in public.

7. Go and teach all nations. This was said to all Christians that then were, before the distinction of clergy and laity; there have been since men designed to preach only by the state, as some men are designed to study the law, others to study physic. When the Lord's Supper was instituted, there were none present but the disciples. Shall none then but ministers receive?

8. There is all the reason you should believe your minister, unless you have studied divinity as well as he, or more than he.

9. 'Tis a foolish thing to say, a minister must not meddle with secular matters, because his own profession will take up the whole man. May he not eat, or drink, or walk, or learn to sing? The meaning of that is, he must seriously intend his calling.

10. Ministers with the papists [that is, their priests] have much respect; with the puritans they have much, and that upon the same ground, they pretend to come both of them immediately from Christ; but with the protestants they have very little; the reason whereof is,—in the beginning of the Reformation they were glad to get such to take livings as they could procure by any invitations, things of

1. 25. intend] i.e. give his mind to.
1. 32. things of pitiful condition] Archbishop Parker, in a letter to the Bishop of London, written circa 1560, says that owing to the
pitiful condition. The nobility and gentry would not suffer their sons or kindred to meddle with the church, and therefore at this day, when they see a parson, they think him to be such a thing still, and there they will keep him, and use him accordingly; if he be a gentleman born, that is singled out, and he is used the more respectively.

11. That the protestant minister is least regarded, appears by the old story of the keeper of the Clink. He had priests of several sorts sent unto him; as they came in, he asked them who they were; who are you? to the first. I am a priest of the Church of Rome. You are welcome, quoth the keeper, there are those will take care of you. And who are you? A silenced minister. You are welcome too, I shall fare the better for you. And who are you? A minister of the Church of England. O God help me (quoth the keeper) I shall get nothing by you, I am sure you may lie and starve, and rot, before anybody will look after you.

great want of ministers, the bishops had 'heretofore admitted into the ministry sundry artificers and others not traded and brought up in learning; and as it happened in a multitude some that were of base occupations.'

These men are termed 'very offensive to the people; yea, and to the wise of this realm; they were thought to do a great deal more hurt than good; the Gospel thereby sustaining slander.' Strype, Life of Parker, bk. ii. ch. iv.

Even in Selden's day, the clergy were a mixed multitude, some of them (according to Sir Edward Deering) 'so poor that they cannot attend their ministry but are fain to keep schools, nay alehouses some of them.' Nalson, Collections, vol. i. 760.

I. 8. the Clink] The clink, according to Stow, was a prison, adjoining the Bishop of Winchester's House in Southwark, used in old time for such as should brabble, fray, or break the peace. Survey of London, bk. iv. p. 6 (ed. of 1720, 2 vols. folio).

For the use to which it was put afterwards, see Foxe (Acts and Monuments), who says that Bishops Hooper and Rogers, after being questioned by the Bishop of Winchester, were 'carried to the Clink, a prison not far from the Bishop of Winchester's house.' Vol. vi. p. 650, and again, p. 691 (8 vols. 1849).
12. Methinks 'tis an ignorant thing for a churchman to call himself the minister of Christ, because St. Paul, or the Apostles called themselves so. If one of them had a voice from heaven, as St. Paul had, I will grant he is a minister of Christ, and I will call him so too. Must they take upon them as the Apostles did? Can they do as the Apostles could? The Apostles had a mark to be known by, spoken tongues, cured diseases, trod upon serpents, &c. Can they do this? If a gentleman tell me he will send his man to me, and I did not know his man, but he gave me this mark to know him by, he should bring in his hand a rich jewel if a fellow came to me with a pebble-stone, had I any reason to believe that he was the gentleman's man?

LXXXIX.

MONEY.

1. Money makes a man laugh. A blind fiddler playing to a company, and playing but scurvily, the company laughed at him; his boy that led him, perceiving it, cried, Father, let us be gone, they do nothing but laugh at you. Hold thy peace, boy, says the fiddler, we shall have their money presently, and then we will laugh at them.

2. Euclid was beaten in Boccaline, for teaching his...
scholars a mathematical figure in his schools, whereby he shewed that all the lives both of princes and private men tended to one centre, con gentilesza handsomely to get money out of other men's pockets, and put it into their own.

3. The pope used heretofore to send the princes of Christendom to fight against the Turk; but prince and pope finely juggled together; the moneys were raised, and some men went out to the holy war, but commonly after they had got the money, the Turk was pretty quiet, and the prince and the pope shared it betwixt them.

4. In all times the princes in England have done something illegally, to get money. But then came a parliament, and all was well; the people and the prince kissed and were friends, and so things were quiet for a while. Afterwards there was another trick found out to get money, and after they had got it, another parliament was called to set all right, &c. But now they have so outrun the constable——

XC.

MORAL HONESTY.

They that cry down moral honesty, cry down that which is a great part of religion, my duty towards God, and my duty toward man. What care I to see a man run after a sermon, if he cozen and cheat me as soon as he comes home? On the other side, morality must not be without religion, for if so, it may change, as I see convenience. Religion must govern it. He that has not religion to govern his morality, is not a dram better than my mastiff-dog; so long as you stroke him, and please him, and do not pinch him, he will play with you as finely as may be, he's a very good moral mastiff; but if you hurt him, he will fly in your face, and tear out your throat.
XCI.

MORTGAGE.

In case I receive a £1000, and mortgage as much land as is worth £2000 to you, if I do not pay the money at such a day. I fail; whether you may take my land and keep it in point of conscience?

Answer. If you had my land as a security only for your money, then you are not to keep it; but if we bargained so that if I did not repay your £1000, my land should go for it, be it what it will, no doubt you may with a safe conscience keep it; for in these things all the obligation is, servare fidem.

XCI.

NUMBER.

All those mysterious things they observe in number, come to nothing, upon this very ground; because number in itself is nothing, has nothing to do with nature, but is merely of human imposition, a mere sound. For example when I cry one o’clock, two o’clock, three o’clock, that but man’s division of time, the time itself goes on; and had been all one in nature, if those hours had been called 9, 10, and 11. So when they say the seventh son is fortunate, it means nothing; for if you count from the seventh backwards, then the first is the seventh; and who is not he likewise fortunate?

1. 14. *number in itself is nothing*] Numbering, Hobbes says, is an act of the mind; and by division of space or of time ‘I do not mean the severing or pulling asunder of one space or time from another (for does any man think that one hemisphere may be separated from the other hemisphere, or the first hour from the second?), but diversity of consideration.’ Hobbes, Computation or Logic, pt. ch. 7, secs. 3 and 5.
XCIII.

OATHS.

1. Swearing was another thing with the Jews than with us, because they might not pronounce the name of the Lord Jehovah.

2. There is no oath scarcely, but we swear to things we are ignorant of: for example, the oath of supremacy: how many know how the king is king? what are his right and prerogative? So how many know what are the privileges of the parliament, and the liberty of the subject, when they take the protestation? But the meaning is, they will defend them when they know them. As if I should swear I would take part with all that wear red ribbons in their hats; it may be I do not know which colour is red; but when I do know, and see a red ribbon in a man’s hat, then will I take his part.

3. I cannot conceive how an oath is imposed, where there is a parity, viz. in the House of Commons; they are all pares inter se, only one brings a paper, and shews it the rest, they look upon it, and in their own sense take it. Now they are but pares to me, who am one of the house, for I do not acknowledge myself their subject; if I did, then, no question, I was bound by oath of their imposing. ’Tis to me but reading a paper in my own sense.

4. There is a great difference between an assertory oath

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1 One of the house none of the house, MSS.

1. 9. when they take the protestation The form of oath agreed upon, and taken by the members of the House of Commons, was as follows: ‘I, A. B., do, in the Presence of Almighty God, promise, vow, and protest, to maintain and defend . . . . the Power and Privileges of Parliament, the lawful rights and liberties of the Subject, and every person that maketh this protestation, in whatsoever he shall do in the lawful pursuance of the same’ (May 3, 1641). Commons Journals, ii. 132.
and a promissory oath. An assertory oath is made to man before God, and I must swear so, as man may know what I mean. But a promissory oath is made to God only, and I am sure he knows my meaning. So in the new oath it runs [Whereas I believe in my conscience, &c. I will assist thus and thus]; that whereas gives me an outloose, for if I do not believe so, for aught I know, I swear not at all.

5. In a promissory oath, the mind I am in is a good interpretation; for if there be enough happened to change my mind, I do not know why I should not. If I promise to go to Oxford tomorrow, and mean it when I say it, and afterwards it appears to me that 'twill be my undoing, will you say I have broken my promise if I stay at home? Certainly I must not go.

6. The Jews had this way with them concerning a promissory oath or vow; if one of them had vowed a vow, which afterwards appeared to him to be very prejudicial, by reason of something he either did not foresee, or did not think of, when he made his vow; if he made it known to three of his countrymen, they had power to absolve him, though he could not absolve himself; and that they picked out of some words of the text. Perjury has only to do

1. 3. a promissory oath is made to God only] There seems no reason for this limitation, nor does it agree with what Selden says elsewhere. See 'All oaths are either promissory or assertatory (assertatory?); the first being that which binds to a future performance of trust; the second that which is taken for the discovery of a past or present truth. The first kind they . . . used in taking the oath of all the Barons for the maintenance of the great charter,' &c. &c. Works, iii. p. 1533.

The statement in the text must be understood, therefore, as part and parcel of the argument in sec. 3, which, so helped out, seems to run thus—that since the oaths imposed by Parliament are promissory oaths, and since only a superior can rightfully impose such oaths or can give his own sense to them, it follows that any member of Parliament taking a Parliamentary promissory oath, takes it to God only, and in any non-natural sense which he himself chooses mentally to put upon it.
with an assertory oath, and no man was punished for perjury by man’s law till Queen Elizabeth’s time; ’twas left to God as a sin against him. The reason was, because ’twas so hard a thing to prove a man perjured; I might misunderstand him, and he swears as he thought 1.

7. When men ask me whether they may take it in their own sense, ’tis to me, as if they should ask whether they may go to such a place with their own legs. I would fain know how they can go otherwise.

8. If the ministers that are in sequestered livings will not take the engagement, threaten to turn them out and put in the old ones, and then I’ll warrant you they will quickly take it. A gentleman having been rambling two or three days, at length came home, and being abed with his wife, would fain have been at something that she was unwilling to, and instead of complying, fell to chiding him for his being abroad so long: Well, says he, if you will not, call up Sue (his wife’s chambermaid); upon that she yielded presently.

9. Now oaths are so frequent, they should be taken like pills, swallowed whole: if you chew them you will find them bitter: if you think what you swear, ’twill hardly go down.

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XCIV.

ORACLES.

ORACLES ceased presently after Christ, as soon as nobody believed them. Just as we have no fortune-tellers, nor

1 As he thought, H. 2] as the thought, H.

1. i. no man was punished for perjury till Queen Elizabeth’s time] This was by 5 Eliz. ch. 9, sec. 2. Earlier statutes had dealt only with the suborning of false witnesses, and had left the false witnesses themselves untouched.
wise men, when nobody cares for them. Sometime you have a season of them, when people believe them; and neither of these, I conceive, wrought by the devil.

XCV.

OPINION.

1. Opinion and affection extremely differ. I may affect a woman best, but it does not follow I must think her the handsomest woman in the world. I love apples best of any fruit; it does not follow that I must think apples to be the best of fruit. Opinion is something wherein I go about to give reason why all the world should think as I think, Affection is a thing wherein I only look after the pleasing of myself.

2. 'Twas a good fancy of an old Platonic: the gods which are above men, had something whereof man did partake, [an intellect, knowledge] and the gods kept on their course quietly. The beasts, which are below men, had something whereof man did partake [sense, and growth] and the beasts lived quietly in their way; but man had something in him, whereof neither gods nor beasts did partake, which

l. 13. 'Twas a good fancy &c.] This bears some resemblance to a passage in the Phaedrus (p. 247–249), in which the Gods are described as borne aloft by winged horses of pure and noble breed, and as thus keeping steadily in their course and in the possession of true knowledge. Other souls, whose horses are unequally yoked, one noble and the other ignoble, cannot easily follow the upward movement of the Gods, but are troubled and confused by the wild tricks of the ignoble horse; and if they are thrown out of their course, and fall to earth, they suffer many disadvantages and are fed with opinion (τροφὴ δοξαστὶ χρῶναι) in the place of true knowledge. If Selden's reference is to some later Platonist, this must have been the original which he had in mind. It is one out of many variations on the regular Platonic theme of the distinction between real and phenomenal existence and between the faculties by which they are severally known.
OPINION.—PARITY.

gave him all the trouble, and made all the confusion we see in the world; and that is opinion.

3. 'Tis a foolish thing for me to be brought off from an opinion in a thing neither of us know, but are led only by some cobweb-stuff; as in such a case as this, *Utrum angeli invicem colloquantur?* If I forsake my side in such a case, I shew myself wonderfully light, or infinitely complying, flattering the other party. But if I be in a business of nature, and hold an opinion one way, and some man's experience has found out the contrary, I may with a safe reputation give up my side.

4. 'Tis a vain thing to talk of an heretic, for a man for his heart can think no otherwise than he does think. In the primitive times there were several opinions; nothing scarce but some or other held: one of these opinions being embraced by some prince, and received into his kingdom, the rest were condemned as heresies; and his religion, which was but one of the several opinions first, is said to be orthodox and to have continued ever since the Apostles.

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XCVI.

PARITY.

This is the juggling trick of parity; they would have nobody above them, but they do not tell you they would have nobody under them.

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1 *Heresies, H. a* [heretics, H.]

1. 5. *Utrum angeli invicem colloquantur?* This is a point which Aquinas discusses at length, and on which he concludes in the affirmative. *Summa Theolog. pt. i. quaest. 107, art. 1 and 2.*

1. 21. *parity* A term, in general use, for a form of Church government by a body of Presbyters or elders and lay assessors all equal in power, as opposed to Church government by bishops. It is so ex-
XCVII.

PARLIAMENT.

1. All are involved in a parliament. There was a time when all men had their voice in choosing knights. About Henry the Sixth they found the inconvenience; so one parliament made a law, that only he that had forty shillings per annum should give his voice, they under should be excluded. They made the law who had the voices of all, as well under forty shillings as above; and thus it continues at this day. All consent civilly in a parliament; women are involved in the men, children in those of perfect age, those that are under forty shillings a year in those that have forty shillings a year, those of forty shillings in the knights.

2. All things are brought to the parliament, little to the courts of justice; just as in a room where there is a banquet presented, if there be persons of quality there, the people must expect, and stay till the great ones have done.

plained, e.g. by Laud, in his sermon before Charles' second Parliament: 'I know there are some that think the Church is not yet far enough beside the cushion; that their seats are too easy yet and too high too. A parity they would have; no bishop, no governor, but a parochial consistory, and that should be lay enough too. Well, first, this parity was never left to the Church by Christ. He left Apostles, and disciples under them. No parity. It was never in use with the Church since Christ; no Church ever, anywhere, till this last age, without a bishop. . . . And there is not a man that is for parity—all fellows in the Church—but he is not for monarchy in the State.' Laud's Works, vol. i. pp. 82, 83.

1. 4. so one parliament made a law &c.] The Act 8 Henry VI, ch. 7, recites that elections of knights of shires have been made by large and excessive numbers of persons of small substance, and that riots and disturbances are likely thence to arise. It enacts, accordingly, that knights of shires to come to Parliament be chosen by residents in the shire having free land or tenement worth at least a clear forty shillings by the year.

By 10 Henry VI, ch. 2, it is further expressly said that the qualifying estate must be a freehold.
3. The parliament in flying upon several men, and then letting them alone, does as a hawk that flies a covey of partridges, and when she has flown them a good way, grows weary and takes a tree; then the falconer lures her down, and takes her to his fist; on they go again, hei ret; up springs another covey; away goes the hawk, and as she did before, takes another tree, &c.

4. Dissentions\(^1\) in parliament may at length come to a good end, though first there be a deal of do, and a great deal of noise, which mad wild folks make; just as in brewing of wrest-beer, there is a great deal of business in grinding the malt, and that spoils any man’s clothes that comes near it; then it must be mashed; then comes a fellow in and drinks off the wort, and he’s drunk; then they keep a huge quarter when they carry it into the cellar, and a twelvemonth after ’tis delicate fine beer.

5. It must necessarily be that our distempers must be worse than they were in the beginning of the parliament. If a physician comes to a sick man he lets him blood, it may be he scarifies him, cups him, puts him into a great disorder, before he makes him well; and if he be sent for to cure an ague, and he finds his patient has many diseases, a dropsy, and a palsy, he applies remedies to them all, which makes the cure the longer, and the dearer: this is the case.

6. The parliament men are as great princes as any in the world, when whatever they please is privilege of parliament; no man must know the number of their privileges, and whatsoever they dislike is breach of privilege. The

\(^1\) Dissentions. H. 2, written above the line] dissenters, H. and S.

1. 14. *drinks off the wort* i.e. drinks some from the wort.

1. 15. *they keep a huge quarter* i.e. they make a great noise or disturbance. See Halliwell, Glossary of Archaic Words; *sub voce* 'Quarter.'

1. 29. *breach of privilege* Clarendon remarks, with instances, on the extent to which this claim was made, and condemns, as Selden
duke of Venice is no more than the speaker of the house commons; but the senate at Venice are not so much our parliament men, nor have they that power over the people, who yet exercise the greatest tyranny that is anywhere. In plain truth, breach of privilege is only the actual taking away of a member of the house; the rest are offences against the house. For example, to take process against a parliament man, or the like.

7. The parliament party, if the law be for them, they can have law; if it be against them, they will go to a parliamentary way: if law be for them, then for law again: like his

1 If law be for them] if no law be for them, MSS.

does, the notion 'that their being judges of their privileges should qualify them to make new privileges, or that their judgment should create them such.' This he terms 'a doctrine never before now (i.e. before 1641) heard of.' Hist. vol. i. 618-620.

7. if the law be for them &c.] This seems to refer to the proceedings at the trial of the Earl of Strafford. As Clarendon tells the story, his accusers began in due form of law, and when there were difficulties in the way of obtaining a conviction, they then resolved to proceed by attainder. Later, when the Bill of Attainder had been sent up to the Lords, and his accusers had promised 'to give the Lordships satisfaction in the matter of law,' Mr. Solicitor St. John speaking on behalf of the Commons, urged \textit{inter alia}, 'That, in the way of bill, private satisfaction to each man's conscience was sufficient; although no evidence had been given in at all, and as to pressing the law, he said, it was true we give law to hares and deer because they are beasts of chase, but it was never accounted either cruelty or for play to knock foxes and wolves on the head as they can be four because they are beasts of prey.' Clarendon, Hist. i. 337 ff.

St. John's speech, as Nalson relates it, points no less clearly to 'Parliamentary way' of overriding the law: 'My Lords, in judgment of greatest moment, there are but two ways for satisfying those that are to give them, either the \textit{lex lata}, the law already established, else the use of the same power for making new laws, whereby the old are at first received life. . . . The same law gives power to the Parliaments to make new laws, that enables the inferior court to judge according to the old. . . . What hath been said is, because that this proceeding is lawful by way of Bill implies the use of the meer legislati power, in respect new laws are for the most part passed by Bill' Nalson, Collections, ii. 162.
that first called for sack to heat him; then small drink to
cool his sack; then sack again to heat his small drink.

8. The parliament party do not play fair play, in sitting
up till two of the clock in the morning, to vote something
they have a mind to. 'Tis like a crafty gamester that
makes the company drunk and then cheats them of their
money. Young men and infirm men go away. Besides,
a man is not there to persuade other men to be of his
mind, but to speak his own heart; and if it be liked—so:
if not, there's an end.

XCVIII.

PARSON.

1. Though we write [parson] differently, yet 'tis but
person; that is the individual person set apart for the
service of such a church, and 'tis in Latin persona, and per-
onatus is a parsonage. Indeed with the canon lawyers,
personatus is any dignity or preferment in the church.

1. 3. in sitting up till two of the clock] This was done in the debate
on the Remonstrance (1641). The Remonstrance was carried shortly
after midnight by 159 to 143 votes. Then came a new debate whether
the Remonstrance should be printed, and it was finally resolved that it
was not to be printed without the particular order of the House. The
attempt to introduce a further restriction that it was not to be 'printed
or published' did not succeed, the adverse votes being 124 to 101.
The House rose at two in the morning. See Cobbett's Parliamentary
History, and Forster's Grand Remonstrance, §§ 17 and 18. The
Commons Journals, ii. 322, record the debates and their result, but say
nothing about the hour at which a division was taken or at which the
House rose. Clarendon's account is exact as to the hours. Hist. i. 485.
1. 12. yet 'tis but person] 'Those words universae personae regni, I
interpret all Abbots, Conventional Priors, and the like ... which yet time
and use with us hath long since confined only to the Rectors of Parish-
churches.' Selden, Titles of Honour, ii. 5, sec. 20; Works, iii. 732.
1. 14. personatus is a parsonage] 'Personatus et dignitas vere sup-
ponunt pro eodem; licet in aliquibus locis rectores ecclesiarum
2. There never was a merry world since the fairies left dancing, and the parson left conjuring. The opinion of the latter kept thieves in awe, and did as much good in a country as a justice of peace.

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XCIX.

PATIENCE.

Patience is the chiepest fruit of study. A man by striving to make himself a different thing from other men by much reading, gains this chiepest good, that in all fortunes he hath something to entertain and comfort himself withal.

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C.

PEACE.

1. King James was pictured going gently down a pair of stairs, and upon every step was written peace, peace, peace; the wisest way for men in these times is to see nothing.

2. When a country-wench cannot get her butter to come, she says the witch is in her churn. We have been churning for peace a good while, and 'twill not come; surely the witch is in it.

3. Though we had peace, yet 'twill be a great while ere things be settled: though the wind lie, yet after storm the sea will work a great while.

vocantur Personae et sic habent personatum non tamen dignitatem. Ducange, Glossary, Personatus; and see Selden, iii. 732.

That parson and person were once used indifferently, appears from e.g. 'An Acte that no parson or psions shall susteyne any prejudic peace by means of the attaynder of the Lord Cardinall.' 21 Henry VIII, cap. 25. So, too, in 1 Edward VI, cap. 12, sec. 5.
PATIENCE—PEOPLE.

CI.

PENANCE.

Penance is only the punishment inflicted, not penitence, which is the right word; a man comes not to do penance, because he repents him of his sin, but because he is compelled to it; he curses him, and could kill him that sends him thither. The old canons wisely enjoined three years' penance, sometimes more; because in that time a man got a habit of virtue, and so committed that sin no more, for which he did penance.

CII.

PEOPLE.

1. There is not anything in the world so much abused as this sentence, Salus populi suprema lex esto; for we apply it, as if we ought to forsake the known law when it may be most for the advantage of the people, when it means no such thing. For first, 'tis not salus populi suprema lex est, but esto, it being one of the laws of the twelve tables; and after divers laws made, some for punishment, some for reward, then follows this, salus populi suprema lex esto; that is, in all the laws you make, have a special eye to the good of the people; and then what does this concern the way they now go?

1. 2. penitence, which is the right word] This probably refers to the English version of Article 33, in which the original Latin 'donec per poenitentiam publice reconciliatus fuerit,' is wrongly rendered by 'until he be openly reconciled by penance.' Penitence would clearly be 'the right word' here.

1. 16. it being one of the laws of the twelve tables] The words, as Selden states them, occur in Cicero de Leg. iii. 3, sec. 8; but, like the other laws in the treatise, they are said not to be quoted from the twelve tables; ii. 7, sec. 18.
THE DISCOURSE OF JOHN SELDEN.

2. Objection. He that makes one, is greater than he that is made; the people make the king; ergo, &c.

Answer. This does not hold. For if I have £1000 per annum, and give it you, and leave myself ne'er a penny, I made you; but when you have my land, you are greater than I. The parish make the constable, and when the constable is made, he governs the parish. The answer to all these doubts is, Have you agreed so? If you have, then it must remain till you have altered it.

CIIII.

PHILOSOPHY.

When men comfort themselves with philosophy, 'tis not because they have got two or three sentences, but because they have digested those sentences, and made them their own. So, upon the matter, philosophy is nothing but discretion.

CIV.

PLEASURE.

1. Pleasure is nothing else but the intermission of pain, the enjoying of something I am in great trouble for till I have it.

1. 14. upon the matter] i.e. in strict fact, really. See "Subsidies," sec. 1, and: 'It was upon the matter an appeal to the people, and to infuse jealousies into their minds.' Clarendon, Hist. i. 485. 'So that upon the matter, in a great wit, deformity is an advantage to rising.' Bacon, Essay 44, Of Deformity.

1. 17. Pleasure is nothing else &c.] This agrees with one of the accounts of pleasure which Aristotle criticises in the 7th Book of the
2. 'Tis a wrong way to proportion other men's pleasures to ourselves. 'Tis like a child's using a little bird, [O poor bird, thou shalt sleep with me] so lays it in his bosom, and stifes it with his hot breath; the bird had rather be in the cold air: and yet too 'tis the most pleasing flattery, to like what others like.

3. 'Tis most undoubtedly true, that all men are equally given to their pleasure; only thus, one man's pleasure lies one way, and another's another. Pleasures are all alike, simply considered in themselves. He that hunts, or he that governs the Commonwealth, they both please themselves alike, only we commend that, whereby we ourselves receive some benefit; as if a man place his delight in things that tend to the common good. He that takes pleasure to hear sermons, enjoys himself as much as he that hears plays; and could he that loves plays endeavour to love sermons, possibly he might bring himself to it as well as to any other pleasure. At first it might seem harsh and tedious, but afterwards twould be pleasing and delightful. So it falls out in that which is the great pleasure of some men, tobacco; at first they could not abide it, and now they cannot be without it.

4. While you are upon earth enjoy the good things that are here, (to that end were they given) and be not melancholy, and wish yourself in heaven. If a king should give you the keeping of a castle, with all things belonging to it, orchards, gardens, &c. and bid you use

Nicomachian Ethics, and which he proves to be incomplete by showing that there are some kinds of pleasure to which it does not apply. Conf. "Εστι ἔπει τοῦ ἁγαθοῦ τὸ μὲν ἐνέργεια τὸ δ’ ἔξις, κατὰ συμβεβηκός αἱ καθιστάσει εἰς τὴν φυσικὴν ἐξω ἡθεία εἰσιν. "Εστι δ’ ἡ ἐνέργεια ἐν τοῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῆς ἰσολόγου ἐξερχόμενοι καὶ φόβῳ καὶ ἐπιθυμίαις εἰσὶν ἠθεία, οἷον αὶ τοῦ δημοτῶν ἐνέργεια, τῆς φόβους οὐκ ἐνδεικτὸς ἀδικω. . . . Διὸ καὶ οὐ καλῶς ἔχει τὸ αἰσθήτην γένεσθαι φύσιν εἶναι τὴν ἠθείαν, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον λεγεῖν ἐνέργειαν τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ἔξω, ἀντὶ δὲ τοῦ αἰσθήτην ἀνεμπόδιστον. Eth. Nicom. vii. 13 (12), sec. 2 and 3.
THE DISCOURSE OF JOHN SELDEN.

them, withal promise you after\(^1\) twenty years to remove you to the court, and to make you a privy councillor; if you should neglect your castle, and refuse to eat of those fruits, and sit down, and whine, and wish that I was a privy councillor, do you think the king would be pleased with you?

5. Pleasures of meat, drink, clothes, &c. are forbidden those that know not how to use them; just as nurses cry, pah! when they see a knife in a child’s hand; they will never say any thing to a man.

CV.

POETRY.

1. Ovid was not only a fine poet, but, as a man may speak, a great canon lawyer, as appears in his Fasti, where we have more of the festivals of the old Romans than anywhere else: 'tis pity the rest were lost.

2. There is no reason plays should be in verse, either in blank or rhyme; only the poet has to say for himself, that he makes something like that which somebody made before him. The old poets had no other reason but this, their verse was sung to music, otherwise it had been a senseless thing to have fettered up themselves.

3. I never converted but two, the one was Mr. Crashaw from writing against plays, by telling him a way how to understand that place, of putting on women's apparel, which

\(^1\) Promise you after:] promise you that after, H. and H. 2. In S. so originally, with 'that' deleted.

1. 24. that place, of putting on women's apparel] Deuteron. xxii. 5. This text is explained by Selden, after Moses Maimonides, as intended to forbid certain magical or idolatrous rites, in the course of which females appeared in male dress, males in female dress, and as having no reference, therefore, to the representation on the stage of female
has nothing to do with the business [as neither has it, that the fathers speak against plays in their time, with reason enough, for they had real idolatries mixed with their plays, having three altars perpetually upon the stage]. The other was a doctor of divinity, from preaching against painting, which simply in itself is no more hurtful than putting on my clothes, or doing anything to make myself like other folks, that I may not be odious or offensive to the company. Indeed if I do it with an ill attention it alters the case. So, if I put on my gloves with an intention to do to a mischief, I am a villain.

4. 'Tis a fine thing for children to learn to make verse, but when they come to be men they must speak like other men, or else they will be laughed at. 'Tis ridiculous to speak, or write, or preach in verse. As 'tis good to learn to dance, a man may learn his leg, learn to go handsomely; but 'tis ridiculous for him to dance when he should go.

5. 'Tis ridiculous for a lord to print verses; 'tis well enough to make 'em to please himself, but to make them public is foolish. If a man in a private chamber twirls his bandstring, or plays with a rush to please himself, 'tis well characters by male actors. See Works, ii. p. 365. De Venere Syriacâ; and p. 1690, where Selden discusses it at length in a letter to Ben Jonson. The text was used by Tertullian (e. g. De Spectaculis, cap. 23) and by Cyprian (Epist. 61, sec. 1) in the sense which Selden disallows; and Prynne, in his Histrio-mastix, quotes and endorses both these authorities, and adds reasons of his own against the practice which they and he condemn. See, especially, p. 208 ff. (in the small 4to. ed. of 1633). It is clear that the objections to the practice do not depend only on what the text in question may or may not mean.

1. i. as neither has it, that the fathers &c.] The objections urged against stage-plays by the fathers were on account of their indecency even more than of their idolatry, and were continued as forcibly as ever at a time when the idolatry had ceased. See Bingham, Christian Antiquities, bk. XI. ch. v. §§ 6 and 9; and, especially, bk. XVI. ch. xi. § 12. Prynne, in his Histrio-mastix, quotes numerous passages from the fathers in condemnation of stage-plays, some of which are clearly open to Selden's remark, while others are not.
enough; but if he should go into Fleet-street, and sit upon
a stall, and twirl a bandstring, or play with a rush, then all
the boys in the street would laugh at him.
6. Verse proves nothing but the quantity of syllables; they are not meant for logic.

CVI.

POPE.

1. A pope's bull and a pope's brief differ very much, as
with us the great seal and the privy seal, the bull being the
highest authority the pope can give; the brief is of less.
10 The bull has a leaden seal upon silk, hanging upon the
instrument; the brief has sub annulo piscatoris upon the
side.

2. He was a wise pope, that when one that used to be
merry with him, before he was advanced to the popedom,
refrained afterwards to come at him, (presuming he was
busy in governing the Christian world) the pope sends for
him, bids him come again, And [says he] we will be merry
as we were before; for thou little thinkest what a little
foolery governs the whole world.

30 3. The pope in sending relics to princes, does as wenches
do by their wassail at new year's tide; they present you
with a cup, and you must drink of a slabby stuff; but the
meaning is, you must give them moneys, ten times more
than it is worth.

4. The pope is infallible where he has power to com-
mand; that is where he must be obeyed; so is every
supreme power and prince. They that stretch this in-
fallibility further, do but they know not what.

5. When a protestant and a papist dispute, they talk like
30 two madmen, because they do not agree upon their prin-
ciples. The only way is to destroy the pope's power; for
if he has power to command me, 'tis not my alleging reasons to the contrary can keep me from obeying: for example, if a constable command me to wear a green suit to-morrow, and has power to make me, 'tis not my alleging a hundred reasons of the foolery of it, can excuse me from doing it.

6. There was a time when the pope had power here in England, and there was excellent use made of it; for 'twas only to serve turns, as might be manifested out of the records of the kingdom, which divines know little of. If the king did not like what the pope would have, he would forbid his legate to land upon his grounds. So that the power was truly in the king, though suffered in the pope. But now the temporal and the spiritual power (spiritual so called because ordained to a spiritual end) spring both from one fountain; they are like two twists that—

7. The protestants in France bear office in the state, because though their religion be different, yet they acknowledge no other king but the king of France. The papists in England they must have a king of their own, a pope, that must do something in our king's kingdom; therefore there is no reason they should enjoy the same privileges.

8. Amsterdam admits of all religions but papists, and 'tis upon the same account. The papists where'er they live, have another king at Rome; all other religions are subject to the present state, and have no prince elsewhere.

9. The papists call our religion a parliamentary religion, but there was once, I am sure, a parliamentary pope. Pope Urban was made in England by act of parliament, against pope Clement. The act is not in the book of...
statutes, either because he that compiled the book, would not have the name of the pope there, or else he would not let it appear that they meddled with any such thing, but 'tis upon the rolls.

10. When our clergy preach against the pope, and the Church of Rome, they preach against themselves; and crying down their pride, their power, and their riches, have made themselves poor and contemptible enough; they did it at first to please their prince, not considering what would follow. Just as if a man were to go a journey,

1 They did it at first altered in H. a reading which stands in S., and in H. a from 'they dedicate first,'— the early printed editions.

translated. A few words in the following extract have been changed where the translation does not quite agree with the original text:

'Because our Sovereign Lord the King hath perceived, as well by Letters Patent newly come from certain Cardinals, rebels against our Holy Father Urban now Pope, as otherwise by common fame, that division and discord was betwixt our said Holy Father and the said Cardinals, which afforded them with all their power to depose our said Holy Father from the state papal, . . . our Sovereign Lord the King caused the said letters to be showed to the Prelates, Lords, and other great men of the realm being at the said Parliament . . . and it was pronounced and published by the said Prelates, by great and notable reasons there showed in the full Parliament, . . . that the said Urban was duly chosen Pope, and that so he is and ought to be true Pope, and ought to be accepted and obeyed as Pope and chief of Holy Church. And this to be done all the Prelates, Lords and Commons in the said Parliament do accord.' 2 Richard II, stat. 1, ch. 7.

It appears from Walsingham's History that the interference of the English Parliament had been expressly sought by both parties to the dispute.

and seeing at his first setting forth the way clean, ventures forth in his slippers, not considering the dirt and the sloughs that are a little further off, or how suddenly the weather may change.

CVII.

POPERY.

1. The demanding a noble for a dead body passing through a town, came from hence. In time of popery, they carried the dead body into the church, where the priest said dirges; and twenty dirges at fourpence a-piece come to a noble; but now 'tis forbidden by an order from my lord marshal, the heralds carry his warrant about them.

2. We charge the prelatical clergy with popery to make them odious, though we know they are guilty of no such thing: just as heretofore they called images mam- mets, and the adoration of images mammetry; that is Mahomet and Mahometry, odious names; when all the world knows the Turks are forbidden images by their religion.

1 Come, H. a] comes, H.  
2 Carry, H. a] carrying, H.

1. 10. but now 'tis forbidden &c.] That it continued or was revived after Selden's day appears from the register of St. Clement's parish, Oxford: 'The Earl of Conway being carried through the parish in a hearse, and the minister of St. Clement's appearing in his surplice to offer burial, he received for the same 6s. 8d. The same he received for Sir Lionel (Leoline ?) Jenkins, whose corpse was brought through the parish, and interred in Jesus College Chapel.' See Peshall's Wood's City of Oxford, p. 284 (1773, 4to). The first and only Earl of Conway died without issue in 1683. Sir Leoline Jenkins died in 1685, and was buried in Jesus College Chapel. I am indebted to Mr. C. H. O. Daniel for the above reference.
CVIII.

POWER. STATE.

1. There is no stretching of power. 'Tis a good rule, eat within your stomach, act within your commission.

2. They that govern most, make least noise. You see when they row in a barge, they that do the drudgery work, slash, and puff, and sweat; but he that governs sits quietly at the stern, and scarce is seen to stir.

3. Syllables govern the world.

4. All power is of God means no more than fides est servanda. When St. Paul said this, the people had made Nero emperor. They agreed, he to protect, they to obey. Then God comes in, and casts a hook upon them, keep your faith; then comes in all power is of God. Never king dropped out of the clouds. God did not make a new emperor, as the king makes a justice of peace.

5. Christ himself was a great observer of the civil power, and did many things only justifiable because the state required it, which were things merely temporary for the time that state stood; but divines make use of them to gain power to themselves; as, for example, that of Dic ecclesiae, Tell the church; there was then a Sanhedrim, a court to tell it to, and therefore they would have it so now.

6. Divines ought to do no more than what the state permits. Before the state became Christian, they made their own laws, and those that did not observe them, they excommunicated, [naughty men] they suffered them to

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1 Required it, H. 2] required, H.

1. 8. Syllables govern the world] Conf. 'Considerare debemus quod verba habent maximam potestatem; et omnia miracula facta a principio mundi fere facta sunt per verba. Et opus animae rationalis precipuum est verbum.' R. Bacon, Opus Tertium, cap. 26 (p. 96, Brewer's ed.).
come no more amongst them. But if they would come amongst them, could they hinder them? By what law? By what power? They were still subject unto the state, which was heathen. Nothing better expresses the condition of the Christians in those times, than one of the meetings you have in London, of men of the same country, of Sussex-men, or Bedfordshire-men; they appoint their meeting, and they agree, and make laws amongst themselves [he that is not there shall pay double, &c.], and if any one mis-behave himself, they shut him out of their company; but can they recover a forfeiture made concerning their meeting by any law? Have they any power to compel one to pay? But afterwards when the state became Christian, all the power was in them, and they gave the church as much, or as little as they pleased; took away when they pleased, and added when they pleased.

7. The church is not only subject to the civil power with us that are protestants, but also in Spain, if the church does excommunicate a man for what it should not, the civil power will take him out of their hands. So in France, the bishop of Angers altered something in the

1. 19. but also in Spain] Selden, in his treatise De Synedriis veterum Ebraeorum, offers full proof of the supremacy of the Civil Power in France and Spain as well as in England. See Works, i. 975 ff. In the Preuves des Libertez de l'Eglise Gallicane, a work to which Selden refers as a leading authority, there are numerous instances given in which French excommunications, illegally pronounced, have been annulled by the civil power, or in which their authors have been forced to revoke them. See ch. vi. p. 92 ff., and the Traitez des droits et libertez de l'Eglise Gallicane (a companion volume to the Preuves), in which the subject is discussed at length by several writers.

1. 22. the bishop of Angers &c.] This was in 1602. See 'Arrest de la Cour donné en l'audience, sur l'appel comme d'abus du changement du Breviaire d'Anjou, ordonné par l'Evesque d'Angers en l'Eglise de la Trinité audit Angers, de l'injonction par lui faite d'user de celui du Concile de Trente.' The case was heard on complaint by the Canons and Chaplains of the Church, and the decree of the Court, as entered on the Registres
Breviary; they complained to the parliament at Par
that made him alter it again, with a comme d’abus.¹

8. The parliament of England has no arbitrary pow
in point of judicature, but in point of making law.

9. If the prince be servus natura, of a servile base spir
and the subjects liberi, free and ingenuous, often-time
they depose their prince, and govern themselves. On
the contrary, if the people be servi natura, and some or
amongst them of an ingenuous² free spirit, he makes him
self king of the rest; and this is the cause of all change
in state, commonwealths into monarchies, and monarchies
into commonwealths.

10. In a troubled state we must do as in foul weather
upon the Thames, not think to cut directly through
so, the boat may be quickly full of water; but rise as
fall as the waves do, give as much as convenient
we can.

¹ Comme d’abus] the MSS. and
printed editions go wild here; come of
abuse, H., come abuse, H. a, comme è
abuse, S., comme abuse, 1st and 2nd
editions.

² Ingenious] H. reads free and
genious, but gives ‘ingenious’ a l
or two afterwards. The words
confused here and elsewhere in
MSS.

de Parlement, was ‘La Cour . . . . ordonne que le service di
ordinaire en l’église de la Trinite soit continué; et a fait et
inhibitions et défenses audit Evesque d’innover aucune chose
l’exercice et célébration du service divin aux églises de son diec
s sans l’autorité du Roi.’ Preuves des Libertez de l’Église Gallica
ch. xxxi. p. 842.

The chapter is headed ‘Que le changement des Missels et Bre
aires des Églises particulières de France, ne se peut faire sans or
et permission du Roy.’ It gives several instances in which
attempted change had been annulled.

l. 2. with a comme d’abus.] The appeal from the spiritual to
the temporal power is known as l’appel comme d’abus: the person plead-
it is described as appellant comme d’abus. Preuves des Libert
p. 104 and passim.
PRAYER.

CIX.

PRAYER.

1. If I were a minister, I should think myself most in my office, reading of prayers, and dispensing the sacraments; and 'tis ill done to put one to officiate in the Church, whose person is contemptible out of it. Should a great lady that was invited to be a gossip, in her place send her kitchen-maid, 'twould be ill taken; yet she is a woman as well as she; let her send her gentle-woman at least.

2. You shall pray, is the right way, because according to as the Church is settled, no man may make a prayer in public of his own head.

3. 'Tis not the original Common-prayer Book. Why, shew me an original Bible, or an original Magna Charta.

4. Admit the preacher prays by the spirit, yet that very prayer is common-prayer to the people; they are tied as much to his words, as in saying Almighty and most merciful Father. Is it then unlawful in the minister, but not unlawful in the people?

5. There were some mathematicians, that could with one fetch of their pen make an exact circle, and with the next touch, point out the centre; is it therefore reasonable to banish all use of the compasses? Set forms are a pair of compasses.

6. God hath given gifts unto men. General texts prove nothing: let him shew me John, William, or Thomas in the text, and then I will believe him. If a man has a voluble tongue, we say, he hath the gift of prayer. His gift is to pray long, that I see; but does he pray better?

7. We take care what we speak to men, but to God we may say any thing.

8. The people must not think a thought towards God,
but as their pastors will put it into their mouths. They
will make right sheep of us.

9. The English priests would do that in English, which
the Romish do in Latin, keep the people in ignorance; but
some of the people out-do them at their own game.

10. Prayer should be short, without giving God Almighty
reasons why he should grant this, or that; he knows best
what is good for us. If your boy should ask you a suit of
clothes, and give you reasons (otherwise he cannot wait
upon you, he cannot go abroad but he shall discredit you)
would you endure it? You know it better than he; let him
ask a suit of clothes.

11. If a servant that has been fed with good beef, goes
into that part of England where salmon is plenty, at first he
is pleased with his salmon, and despises his beef; but after
he has been there awhile, he grows weary of his salmon,
and wishes for his good beef again. We have awhile been
much taken with this praying by the spirit, but in time we
may grow weary of it, and wish for our Common-prayer.

12. 'Tis hoped we may be cured of our extemporary
prayers, the same way the grocer's boy is cured of his
eating plums, when we have had our bellies full of them.

CX.

PREACHING.

1. Nothing is more mis-taken than that speech, preach the
gospel; for 'tis not to make long harangues, as they do
now-a-days, but to tell the news of Christ's coming into the

1. 23. [Preaching:] There are frequent instances of a demand for
'preaching ministers,' and of complaints that ministers do not preach
often enough, and that some, bishops especially, do not preach at all.
See, e.g. a formal complaint in the House of Commons that there
was a deficiency of preaching ministers, a matter which was thought
world; and when that is done, or where 'tis known already, the preacher's work is done.

2. Preaching, in the first sense of the word, ceased as soon as ever the gospels were written.

3. When the preacher says, this is the meaning of the Holy Ghost in such a place, in sense he can mean no more but this; that is, I by studying of the place, by comparing one place with another, by weighing what goes before, and what comes after, think this is the meaning of the Holy Ghost; and for shortness of expression I say, the Holy Ghost says thus, or this is the meaning of the Spirit of God. So the judge speaks concerning the king's proclamation, this is the intention of the king; not that the king has any other way declared his intention to the judge, but the judge examining the contents of the proclamation, gathers by the purport of the words the king's intention, and then for shortness of expression says, this is the king's intention.

4. Nothing is text but as it was spoken in the Bible, and meant there for person and place; the rest is application, which a discreet man may do well; but 'tis his scripture, not the Holy Ghost's.

5. Preaching by the spirit, as they call it, is most esteemed by the common people, because they cannot abide art or learning, which they have not been bred up in. Just as in the business of fencing; if one country fellow amongst the rest, has been at school, the rest will undervalue his skill, or tell him he wants valour [You come with your school-tricks: there's Dick Butcher has ten times more mettle in him]. So they say to the preachers, You come with your school-learning; there's such a one has the spirit.

so important and so pressing that a Committee of the House was appointed to enquire about and to find a remedy for it. Commons Journals, ii. p. 54. See also note on 'Lecturers,' p. 103.
6. The tone in preaching does much in working on the people's affections. If a man should make love in an ordinary tone, his mistress would not regard him: and therefore he must whine. If a man should cry fire, or murder, in an ordinary voice, nobody would come out to help him.

7. Preachers will bring any thing into the text. The young masters of arts preached against non-residency in the university; whereupon the heads made an order, that no man should meddle with any thing but what was in his text. The next day one preached upon these words, Abraham begat Isaac; when he had gone a good way, at last he observed, that Abraham was resident, for if he had been non-resident, he could never have begot Isaac; and so fell foul upon the non-residents.

8. I could never tell what often preaching meant, after a church is settled, and we know what is to be done: 'tis just as if a husbandman should once tell his servants what they are to do, when to sow, when to reap; and afterwards one should come and tell them twice or thrice a day what they know already; You must sow your wheat in October, you must reap your wheat in August, &c.

9. The main argument why they would have two sermons a day, is, because they have two meals a day; the soul must be fed as well as the body. But I may as well argue, I ought to have two noses, because I have two eyes; or two mouths, because I have two ears. What have meals and sermons to do one with another?

10. The things between God and man are but a few, and those, forsooth, we must be told often of; but the things between man and man are many; those I hear not of above twice a year, at the assizes, or once a quarter at a sessions; but few come then, nor does the minister ever exhort the people to go at these times to learn their duty towards their neighbour. Often
preaching is, sure, to keep the minister in countenance, that he may have something to do.

11. In preaching, they say more to raise men to love virtue than men can possibly perform, to make them do their best: as if you would teach a man to throw the bar; to make him put out his strength, you bid him throw further than 'tis possible for him, or any man else: throw over yonder house.

12. In preaching, they do by men as writers of romances do by their chief knights, bring them into many dangers, but still fetch them off: so they put men in fear of hell, but at last they bring them to heaven.

13. Preachers say, Do as I say, not as I do. But if the physician had the same disease upon him that I have, and he should bid me do one thing, and himself do quite another, could I believe him?

14. Preaching the same sermon to all sorts of people, is as if a school-master should read the same lesson to his several forms: if he read *amo, amas, amavi*, the highest form laugh at him; the younger admire him. So it is in preaching to a mixed auditory.

*Question.* But it cannot be otherwise; the parish cannot be divided into several forms: what must the preacher then do in discretion?

*Answer.* Why then let him use some expressions by which this or that condition of people may know such doctrine does more especially concern them; it being so delivered that the wisest may be content to hear it. For if he delivers it all together, and leaves it to them to single out what belongs to themselves (which is the usual way) 'tis as if a man would bestow gifts upon children of several ages, two years old, four years old, ten years old, &c., and there he brings tops, pins, points, ribbands, and casts them all in a heap together upon a table before them: though the boy of ten years old can tell how to choose his top, yet
the child of two years old, that should have a ribband, takes
a pin, and the pin ere he be aware pricks his fingers, and
then all's out of order, &c. Preaching, for the most part,
is the glory of the preacher, to shew himself a fine man.
Catechising would be more beneficial.

15. Use the best arguments to persuade, though but
few understand; for the ignorant will sooner believe the
judicious of the parish, than the preacher himself; and
they teach when they dissipate what he has said, and be-
lieve it the sooner, confirmed by men of their own side;
for betwixt the laity and the clergy there is, as it were, a
continual driving of a bargain; something the clergy would
still have us be at, and therefore many things are heard
at first from the preacher with suspicion [they are afraid
of some ends] which are easily assented to, when they
have it from one of themselves. 'Tis with a sermon as 'tis
with a play; many come to see it, which do not under-
stand it; and yet hearing it cried up by one, whose judg-
ment they cast themselves upon, and of power with them,
they swear and will die in it, that 'tis a very good play, which
they would not have done if the priest himself had told
them so. As in a great school, 'tis not the master that
teaches all; the monitor does a great deal of work; it
may be the boys are afraid to see their master: so in a
parish 'tis not the minister does all; the greater neigh-
bours teach the lesser, the master of the house teaches
his servant, &c.

16. First in your sermons use your logic, and then
your rhetoric. Rhetoric without logic is like a tree with
leaves and blossoms, but no root; yet I confess more are
taken with rhetoric than logic, because they are caught
with a free expression, when they understand not reason.
Logic must be natural, or 'tis not at all: your rhetoric
figures may be learned. That rhetoric is best which is
most seasonable and most catching. An instance we
have in that old blunt commander at Cadiz, who shewed himself a good orator, being to say something to his soldiers (which he was not used to do) he made them a speech to this purpose: What a shame will it be, you Englishmen, that feed upon good beef and brewess, to let those rascally Spaniards beat you, that eat nothing but oranges and lemons: and so put more courage into his men than he could have done with a more learned oration. Rhetoric is either very good, or stark naught: there's no medium in rhetoric. If I am not fully persuaded, I laugh at the orator.

17. 'Tis good to preach the same thing again, for that's the way to have it learned. You see a bird, by often whistling to, learns a tune, and a month after records to herself.

18. 'Tis a hard case a minister should be turned out of his living for something they inform he should say in his pulpit. We can no more know what a minister said in his sermon by two or three words picked out of it, than we can tell what tune a musician played last upon the lute, by two or three single notes.

CXI.

PREDESTINATION.

1. Is a point inaccessible, out of our reach; we can make no notion of it, 'tis so full of intricacy, so full of contradiction; 'tis in good earnest, as we state it, half a dozen bulls one upon another.

2. They that talk nothing but predestination, and will not proceed in the way of heaven till they be satisfied in that point, do as if a man would not come to London,

1 *His sermon* his sermons, H. and H. 2.
unless at his first step he might set his foot upon the top of Paul's.

3. Doctor Prideaux in his lectures, several days used arguments to prove predestination; at last tells his auditory they are damned if they do not believe it; doing herein just as school-boys; when one of them has got an apple,

I. 4. *at last tells his auditory &c.* This is not quite so. Dr. Prideaux gave a series of nine lectures on Romans ix. 10, 11, 12. The first three treat of predestination, and several of the others touch upon it. In none of these does he tell his auditory that they are damned that do not believe it. But in the last lecture of the series, against the Roman Catholics, he is provoked by their assertion that he himself, as a Protestant, must be damned, and he retorts accordingly, with some warmth of expression, that the fate in question is much more likely to be theirs.

His imaginary opponent has been arguing (Dr. Prideaux, it will be seen, conducts both sides of the dispute) as a point in favour of the Roman Catholic Church, 'Fatentur Protestantes sub Papismo quam plurimos salutem consequi. At Papistae damnatos pronuntiant omnes Protestantes.' Dr. Prideaux rejoins, 'Respondeo. Hoc ipsum arguit Protestantes non tantum Religionis puritate, sed charitate etiam esse adversarii superiores, qui distinguunt tamen inter seductores et seductos, et inter seductos rursus in simplicitate cordium, ante Lutheri reformationem, et obstantos sequentis seculi, qui monit ad obortam lucem claudunt oculos. Nam ut de istor dictat charitas ut speramus optima; ita de his nihil possimus praeter horrenda polliceri, quamdui characterem Bestiae in frontibus aut dextris praefertunt. Inter sores autem istas, ista quae summo cum periculo expectetur salus, non ipsorum additamentis sed ipsis quae nobis habent communia fundamentis, est attribuenda.' Lectures by John Prideaux (Bishop of Worcester), p. 143 (ed. 3, 1648).

It seems probable from 'Church of Rome,' sec. 2, that Selden may have had this passage in his mind.

Prideaux's first lecture on predestination ends, not with dammatory threats, but with a defence of the doctrine of reprobation, attacking no one in particular, and proceeding somewhat after the fashion of Rabbi Busby with the puppet. 'Si cui haec sententia de absoluta reprobatione videatur asperior, possem respondere cum Augustino. ... Hoc scio, neminem contra istam praedestinationem, quam secundum Scripturam contra istam praedestinationem, quam secundum Scripturam sanctas defendimus, nisi errando disputare posse.' p. 14. But he does not press this, and it cannot be the passage to which Selden is referring.
or something the rest have a mind to, they use all the arguments they can to get some of it from him [I gave you some th’ other day: you shall have some with me another time]; when they cannot prevail, they tell him he is a jackanapes, a rogue, and a rascal.

CXII.

PREFERMENT.

1. When you would have a child go to such a place, and you find him unwilling, you tell him he shall ride a cock-horse, and then he will go presently: so do those that govern the state deal by men, to work them to their ends; they tell them they shall be advanced to such or such a place, and then they will do any thing they will have them.

2. A great place strangely qualifies. John Read was in the right [groom of the chamber to my lord of Kent]. Attorney Noy being dead, some were saying, How will the king do for a fit man? Why, any man, says John Read, may execute the place. I warrant (says my lord) thou thinkest thou understandest enough to perform it. Yes, quoth John, let the king make me Attorney, and I would so fain see that man that durst tell me, there’s anything I understand not.

3. When the pageants are a coming, there’s great thrusting and riding upon one another’s backs, to look out at the windows; stay a little and they will come just to you, you may see them quietly. So ’tis when a new statesman or officer is chosen; there’s great expectation and listening who it should be; stay but awhile, and you shall know quietly.

4. Missing preferment makes the presbyters fall foul
upon the bishops. Men that are in hopes and in the way
of rising, keep in the channel, but they that have none,
seek new ways. 'Tis so amongst lawyers; he that has
the judge's ear will be very observant of the way of the
court; but he that has no regard will be flying out.

5. My lord Digby having spoken something in the
House of Commons, for which they would have ques-
tioned him, was presently called to the upper house. He
did by the parliament as an ape when he has done some
waggery; his master spies him, and looks for his whip,
but before he can come at him, whip says he to the top of
the house.

1. 6. My lord Digby &c.] Lord Digby, who had been one of the
accusers of the Earl of Strafford, afterwards, just before the final
vote, spoke strongly in his favour, declaring that he did, with a clear
conscience, wash his hands of that man's blood, and protesting: 'that
my vote goes not to the taking of the Earl of Strafford's life.' Excep-
tion was taken to this speech at the time when it was made (April,
1641): the speech afterwards, by order of the House, was burnt by
the hand of the common hangman. Nalson, Collections, ii. 160.

Clarendon adds that when Lord Digby was questioned in the
House about his speech, he defended himself so well, and so much
to the disadvantage of those who were concerned, that from that time
they prosecuted him with an implacable rage and uncharitableness
upon all occasions. Hist. i. 359.

Clarendon's further account of his call to the Upper House and of
the reasons for it, will throw some light on this. He had made private
and secret offers of his service to the King, and the King being
satisfied both in the discoveries he had made of what had passed,
and in his professions for the future, called him by writ to the House
of Peers, from which time forward he did visibly advance the King's
service. i. 534, 535.

Forster thinks that Selden's image, of the ape who has done some
waggery, may have been suggested by the apish tricks of Lord
Digby's younger brother, member for Milborn Port. This young gentle-
man had perched himself upon a ladder in the House of Commons,
and was called to by the Speaker and ordered to come down and not
sit on the ladder as if he were going to be hanged. This happened
on the day when his brother would have been expelled the House,
if the King's letters patent had not issued the night before calling
6. Some of the parliament were discontented that they wanted places at court which others had got; but when they had them once, then they were quiet. Just as at a christening, some that get no sugar-plums, when the rest have, mutter and grumble; presently the wench comes again with her basket of sugar-plums, and then they catch and scramble, and when they have got them, you hear no more of them.

CXIII.
PRÆMUNIRE.

There can be no præmunire. A præmunire (so called from the word præmunire facias) was when a man laid an action in an ecclesiastical court, for which he could have remedy in any of the king’s courts; that is, in the courts of common law; by reason the ecclesiastical courts before Henry the 8th were subordinate to the pope, and so it was

1. 10. There can be no præmunire] This statement, as reported, is wider than the facts warrant; and as the rest of the chapter shows, is wider than Selden meant it to be. He is probably arguing against Coke’s opinion that a suitor in an ecclesiastical court might still incur the penalties of a præmunire. The first Statute of Præmunire, that of 27 Edward III (A.D. 1353), headed ‘Statutum contra adnullatores judiciorum curiae Regis,’ enacts that all subjects suing in a foreign court for matters cognizable in the King’s court, or questioning elsewhere the judgments of the King’s court, shall have warning to answer for such contempt, and on non-appearance shall be outlawed, forfeit their land and goods and be imprisoned. This Act was repeated in more stringent form by 38 Edward III (1363-4), but the offence against which the two Acts were directed was substantially the same, and it was one which, as Selden points out, had become impossible in his time. But a præmunire there still was, for several other named offences, to which the old penalties of a præmunire had been attached in express words. See Blackstone’s Comm. Bk. IV, ch. viii.
THE DISCOURSE OF JOHN SELDEN.

contra coronam et dignitatem regis; but now the ecclesiastical courts are equally subordinate to the king. Therefore it cannot be contra coronam et dignitatem regis, and so præmunire.

CXIV.

PREROGATIVE.

1. PREROGATIVE is something that can be told what it is, not something that has no name. Just as you see the archbishop has his prerogative court, but we know what is done in that court. So the king's prerogative is not his will, or what divines make it, a power to do what he list.

2. The king's prerogative; that is, the king's law. For example, if you ask if a patron may present to a living after six months by law? I answer, No. If you ask whether the king may? I answer he may by his prerogative; that is, by the law that concerns him in that case.

CXV.

PRESBYTERY.

1. THEY that would bring in a new government, would very fain persuade us they met it in antiquity; thus the

1. 13. If you ask whether the king may &c.] In a case decided 2 James I, it was held that the King, as to the advowson, hath a greater privilege than another person. This judgment was reversed two years afterwards on the ground that the King had special privilege. Croke, Reports, vol. ii. pp. 54, 123.

This later decision seems to be based on the general principle that 'in the King can be no negligence or laches, and therefore delay will bar his right. Nolium tempus occurrit regi has been standing maxim upon all occasions.' Blackstone, Comm. Bk. ch. vii.
interpret presbyters, when they meet the word in the fathers. Other professions likewise pretend to antiquity. The alchymist will find his art in Virgil's *aureus ramus*, and he that delights in optics, will find them in Tacitus. When Caesar came into England they would persuade us they had perspective glasses, by which he could discover what they were doing upon the land; because it is said, *positis speculis*: the meaning is, his watch or his sentinel discovered this and this unto him.

l. 3. Virgil's *aureus ramus*] Aeneid, vi. 136–148.

Robertus Vallensis, in his De Veritate et Antiquitate Artis Chemicae (Paris, 1561, the book is not paged), quotes this passage, together with some others from Virgil, as if it proved or illustrated something in his alchemical art, but he gives no precise interpretation to it.

Borrichius, writing a little before Selden's day, says of the lines: 'Haec de materià chémici magisterii fudisse cumaeam vatem opinio est variorum, quos inter Robertus Vallensis, Glauberus, aliique; nec inficiendum sub illo fabulae involucro arcanum sensum delitescere, forsan Virgillio ipsi, qui ex alió haec mutuatus est, incognitum.' The golden bough reminds him of a passage in Acosta (Hist. Nat. lib. iv. cap. 1), in which the veins of metal are compared to the boughs of plants, in their form and in the manner of their growth. De Ortu et Progressu Chemicae, p. 101.

Wedel, a later writer, mentions and approves the alchemical interpretation of the lines: 'Majori fide et applausu ad se nos vocant chimicorum filii, qui suum faciant hunc locum. Hos inter præcipuus Robertus Wallensis . . . quem secuti hinc non pauci ali. Instar omnium sit Borrichius, chimicae deus summum.' See Georgii Wolffgangi Wedelii propempticum inaugural de aureo ramo Virgillii.


l. 8. *positis speculis*] There is some difficulty about these words. As the text stands, Selden quotes them as having been misinterpreted
2. Presbyters have the greatest power of any clergy in the world, and gull the laity most: for example, admit there be twelve laymen to six presbyters, the six shall govern the rest as they please. First, because they are constant, and the others come in like churchwardens in their turns, which is a huge advantage. Men will give way to those that have been there before them. Next, the laymen have other professions to follow; the presbyters make it their sole business; and besides too, they learn and study the art of persuading; some of Geneva have confessed as much.

3. The presbyter, with his elders about him, is like a young tree fenced about with three or four stakes; the stakes defend it, and hold it up; but the tree only prospers and flourishes; it may be some willow-stake may bear a leaf or two, but it comes to nothing. Lay-elders are stakes, the presbyter the tree that flourishes.

4. When the queries were sent to the assembly con-

by Roger Bacon, or by some other writer, and he then adds what he considers to be their true sense. But the words do not occur in any history of Caesar's invasion that I have seen, and I have searched for them with some care. Nor do they seem to admit of the sense which Selden is reported as putting upon them. I think it likely that there has been some error in the report, and that the words in question are a free rendering of what Roger Bacon himself says, and that the rest of the clause ought to appear as Selden's own statement of the real facts of the case, not as his interpretation of what 'positis speculis' means.

1. 18. When the queries were sent &c.] The power of the Presbytery to pass sentence of excommunication had been limited by the final appeal which the Parliament allowed to a body of lay commissioners of its own appointment. The Westminster Assembly of Divines petitioned against this appeal, and claimed *jure divino* a right to uncontrolled spiritual jurisdiction. The Parliament in reply sent them a number of very searching queries, drawn up by a Committee of the House, touching the point of *jus divinum*, and demanding exact scriptural proofs for it (see Excursus E). The Assembly, however, had no scriptural proofs ready, and they were in a great fright to know what to do. They held a consultation, they proclaimed a fast,
cerning the *jus divinum* of presbytery, their asking time to answer them, was a satire upon themselves. For if it were to be seen in the text, they might quickly turn to the place and shew us it. Their delaying to answer makes us think there’s no such thing there. They do just as you have seen a fellow do at a tavern reckoning, when he should come to pay his share; he puts his hands into his pockets, and keeps a grabling and a fumbling and shaking, at last tells you he has left his money at home; when all the company knew at first he had no money there; for every man can quickly find his own money.

CXVI.

PRIESTS OF ROME.

1. The reason of the statute against priests, was this; in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth, there was a statute and appointed committees of their own body to prepare an answer. When the questions came before the committees, first the Independents withdrew, then the Erastians entered their dissent from the answer proposed to question 1, and at length a form of words was agreed upon by a majority vote. The rest of the questions were discussed from May till late in July, but the answers, if any, were never sent to Parliament, and the matter practically dropped, as far as the Assembly had to do with it. Neal, Hist. of Puritans, iii. 253 and 278. See Appendix, Excursus E.

1. 14. *in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth &c.*] The statutes, of which Selden speaks, strengthen and grow precise as they proceed. By 1 Elizabeth, ch. 1, sec. 27, penalties are fixed on those who maintain or depend or endeavour to advance any foreign authority in the Queen’s dominions. To do this is made high treason on the third offence. Then, 5 Elizabeth, ch. 1, sec. 2 enacts more particularly that any person maintaining the authority of the Bishop of Rome, in any part of the Queen’s dominions, shall come under the pains, &c., of the statute of provisions and praemunire; and shall on the second offence (secs. 10 and 11) be guilty of high treason. Next, 13 Elizabeth, ch. 2 declares that, notwithstanding the above statute, divers
made, that he that drew men from their civil obedience was a traitor. It happened this was done in privacies and confessions, when there could be no proof; therefore they made another act, that for a priest to be in England was treason, because they presumed that was his business here, to fetch men off from their allegiance.

2. When Queen Elizabeth died, and king James came in, an Irish priest does thus express it: *Elizabethā in orcum detrusā, successit Jacobus, alter hæreticus.*

10 You will ask why they do use such language in their church?

*Answer.* Why does the nurse tell the child of raw-head and bloody-bones? To keep it in awe.

3. The queen-mother and count Rosset are to the priests and Jesuits like the honey-pot to the flies.

Seditious and very evil-disposed people have procured bulls and writings from the Bishop of Rome to absolve all those that will be content to forsake their due obedience to the Queen; and enacts that such people shall be deemed and adjudged high traitors to the Queen and the realm and shall be punished by death and forfeiture. Then, 23 Elizabeth, ch. 1 makes it treason for any one to withdraw any or to be himself withdrawn to the Romish religion. Lastly, 27 Elizabeth, ch. 2 declares that divers jesuits, seminary priests and other priests have come to this country for the purpose of withdrawing men from their due obedience to her Majesty; and enacts that all such persons are to leave the country, and that if being natural born subjects of the Queen, they are found here or come here, they shall suffer the penalties of high treason.

1. 14. *The queen-mother and count Rosset &c.* i.e. Mary de Medici, the French Queen-mother, who had sought a refuge at the English Court. In May 1641 the Commons resolved to suggest to the King—'That her Majesty be moved to depart this kingdom, the rather for the quieting of those jealousies in the hearts of his Majesty's well-affected subjects, occasioned by some ill instruments about the Queen's person, by the flowing of priests and papists to her house,' &c., &c. House of Commons' Journals, ii. 149.

Hobbes, in the Behemoth (pt. ii. beginning), after speaking of the belief, encouraged by the Parliamentary party, that it was the King's purpose to introduce popery, goes on to say that—'the colour they had for this slander was, first that there was one Rosetti, resident, at
4. The priests of Rome aim but at two things, to get power from the king, and money from the subject.

5. When the priests come into a family, they do as a man that would set fire on a house: he does not put fire to the brick-wall, but thrusts it into the thatch. They work upon the women and let the men alone.

6. For a priest to turn a man when he lies a dying, is just like one that has a long time solicited a woman, and cannot obtain his end; at length makes her drunk, and so lies with her.

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CXVII.

PROPHECIES.

Dreams and prophecies do thus much good; they make a man go on with boldness and courage, upon a danger or a mistress; if he obtain, he attributes much to them; if he miscarries, he thinks no more of them, or is no more thought of himself.

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CXVIII.

PROVERBS.

The proverbs of several nations were much studied by bishop Andrews; and the reason he gave was, because by

and a little before that time, from the Pope, with the Queen . . . . Also the resort of English Catholics to the Queen’s chapel, gave them colour to blame the Queen herself, not only for that, but also for all the favours that had been shown to the Catholics.'

See also a letter from Secretary Windebank to the King (Sep. 7, 1640). 'I most humbly beseech your Majesty to give me leave to propose your writing to the Queen that Rosetti may be advised to retire into France, or some other foreign part, for awhile, and that the Capuchins may likewise disperse,' &c. Clarendon’s State Papers, vol. ii. p. 113.
them he knew the minds of several nations, which is a brave thing: as we count him a wise man that knows the minds and insides of men, which is done by knowing what is habitual to them. Proverbs are habitual to a nation being transmitted from father to son.

CXIX.

QUESTION.

When a doubt is propounded, you must learn to distinguish, and shew wherein a thing holds, and wherein it does not hold. Aye, or no\(^1\), never answered any question. The not distinguishing where things should be distinguished, and the not confounding, where things should be confounded, is the cause of all the mistakes in the world.

CXX.

REASON.

1. In giving reasons, men commonly do with us as the woman does with her child; when she goes to market about her business, she tells it she goes to buy it a fine thing, to buy it a cake, or some plums. They give us such reasons as they think we will be caught withal, but never let us know the truth.

2. When the schoolmen talk of *recta ratio* in morals,

\(^1\) *Aye or no* I or no, MSS.

1. 21. *When the schoolmen talk &c.* Selden follows here the same line of thought as when he says that the Law of Nature means only the Law of God (p. 101). He urges, in effect, that moral rules must be based on positive law, human or divine, and that without this they have no sanction or meaning.
either they understand reason, as 'tis governed by a command from above; or else they say no more than a woman, when she says a thing is so, because it is so; that is, her reason persuade her it is so. The other acceptance has sense in it. As take a law of the land, I must not depopulate; my reason tells me so. Why? because if I do, I incur the detriment.

3. The reason of a thing is not to be enquired after, till you are sure the thing itself is so. We commonly are at what’s the reason of it? before we are sure of the thing. It was an excellent question of my lady Cotton, when Sir Robert Cotton was magnifying of a shoe, which was Moses’s or Noah’s, and wondering at the strange shape and fashion of it: But, Mr. Cotton, says she, are you sure it is a shoe?

CXXI.

RELIGION.

1. KING James said to the fly, Have I three kingdoms, and thou must needs fly into my eye? Is there not enough to meddle withal upon the stage, or in love, or at the table, but religion?

2. Religion amongst men appears to me like the learning they got at school. Some men forget all, others spend upon the stock, and some improve it. So some men forget all the religion that was taught them when they were young, others spend upon that stock, and some improve it.

3. Religion is like the fashion; one man wears his doublet slashed, another laced, another plain; but every man has a doublet: so every man has his religion. We differ about the trimming.

4. Men say they are of the same religion for quietness’ sake; but if the matter were well examined, you would
scarce find three anywhere of the same religion in all points.

5. Every religion is a getting religion; for though I myself get nothing, I am subordinate to them that do. So you may find a lawyer in the Temple that gets little for the present; but he is fitting himself to be in time one of those great ones that do get.

6. Alteration of religion is dangerous, because we know not where it will stay; it is like a millstone that lies upon the top of a pair of stairs; ’tis hard to remove it, but if it once be thrust off the first stair, it never stays till it comes to the bottom.

7. Question. Whether is the church or the scripture judge of religion?

Answer. In truth neither, but the state. I am troubled with a boil; I call a company of surgeons about me; one prescribes one thing, another another; I single out something I like, and ask you that stand by, and are no surgeon, what you think of it: you like it too; you and I are the judges of the plaister, and we bid them prepare it, and there’s an end. Thus ’tis in religion; the protestants say they will be judged by the scripture; the papists they say so too; but that cannot speak. A judge is no judge, except he can both speak and command execution: but the truth is, they never intend to agree. No doubt the pope, where he is supreme, is to be judge; if he says we in England ought to be subject to him, then he must draw his sword and make it good.

8. By the law was the Manual received in the church

1. 29. the Manual] was one of the many service-books in use before the Reformation. See e.g. a decree of a synod at Exeter (1287), giving a list of books with which every church was to be furnished, viz. missale bonum, gradale, troparium, manuale bonum, legenda, antiphonale, psalteria, ordinale, venitare ympnare, collectare. Wilkins, Concilia, ii. 139.

The manual contained the offices and rites and ceremonies which
before the Reformation. Not by the civil law, that had nothing to do with it; nor by the canon law, for that Manual that was here, was not in France, nor in Spain; but by custom, which is the common law of England; and custom is but the elder brother to a parliament; and so it will fall out to be nothing that the papists say; that ours is a parliamentary religion, by reason the service-book was established by act of parliament, and never any service-book was so before. That will be nothing that the pope sent the Manual. 'Twas ours, because the state received it. The state still makes the religion, and receives into it, what will best agree with it. Why are the Venetians Roman Catholics? Because the state likes the religion. All the world knows they care not three-pence for the pope. The Council of Trent is not admitted at this day in France.

9. Papist. Where was your religion before Luther, an hundred years ago?

Protestant. Where was America an hundred or six-score years ago? Our religion was where the rest of the Christian Church was.

Papist. Our religion continued ever since the Apostles, and therefore 'tis the better.

Protestant. So did ours. That there was an interruption in it, will fall out to be nothing; no more than if another earl should tell one of the earls of Kent; He is a better earl than he, because there was one or two of the family of a parish priest in the discharge of his ordinary duties would be called upon to perform, and a variety of other offices less frequently needed. Maskell, in the preface to his Monumenta Ritualia, ch. v, gives a copy of the table of contents of the manual according to the Salisbury use. They were not quite the same as those in use elsewhere, but the claim and belief of Roman Catholic writers is that together with the other devotional books in public use, they represent, substantially and very closely, the forms which Augustine received from Pope Gregory, when he set out on his English mission.

Selden appears to use the word 'manual' here as equivalent to service-book of every kind.
Kent did not take the title upon them; yet all that while they were really earls; and afterwards a great prince declared them to be earls of Kent, as he that made another family an earl.

10. Disputes in religion will never be ended, because there wants a measure by which the business should be decided. The Puritan would be judged by the word of God: if he would speak clearly, he means himself, but there he is ashamed to say so; and he would have me believe him before a whole church, that have read the word of God as well as he. One says one thing, and another another, and there is, I say, no measure to end the controversy.

’Tis just as if two men were at bowls, and both judged by the eye: one says ’tis his cast, the other says ’tis my cast, and having no measure, the difference is eternal. But Jonson satirically expressed the vain disputes of divines by Rabbi Busy disputing with a puppet in his Bartholomew Fair.

1. 2. [a great prince] so in MSS. and early editions. Some later editions read ‘as great a prince.’

1. 17. [Rabbi Busy disputing &c.] The dispute referred to between Rabbi Busy and a puppet belonging to Lanthorne Leatherhead, see Barthol. Fair, Act v. sc. 3. There are various readings in the text of the Table Talk. The Harleian MS. 690, gives—’In Lanthorne disputing with a puppet in Bartholomew Fair.’ The Slop MS. 2513 reads, ’in his Bartholomew Fair,’ but otherwise agrees with the Harleian 690. The early printed editions read—’Inigo Lanthorne disputing with his puppet in a Bartholomew Fair.’ The reading which I have followed—that of Harleian MS. 1315—is the only one which is not obviously incorrect. I am inclined to think that the original reading may have been ‘Rabbi Busy disputing with Inigo Lanthorne his puppet, in his (sc. Ben Jonson’s) Bartholomew Fair’ and that this has been cut down and changed into the various forms given above. Inigo Lanthorne is of course a half-way name between Lanthorne Leatherhead and Inigo Jones, who is assumed to have been satirized by Jonson under the name of Lanthorne Leatherhead. Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones were for many years fellow-workmen on the stage, Jonson contributing the words of the masque or play and Jones undertaking the scenery and stage-properties. This unequal partnership lasted for more than ten years after Bartholomew Fair was brought out (1614). How sharply they quarrelled afterward.
fair. It is so: it is not so: it is so: it is not so; crying thus one to another a quarter of an hour together.

11. In matters of religion, to be ruled by one that writes against his adversary, and throws all the dirt he can in his face, is, as if in point of good manners a man should be governed by one whom he sees at cuffs with another, and thereupon thinks himself bound to give the next man he meets a box on the ear.

12. It is to no purpose to labour to reconcile religions, when the interest of princes will not suffer it. 'Tis well if they would be reconciled so far, that they should not cut one another's throats.

13. There is all the reason in the world divines should not be suffered to go a hair's breadth beyond their bounds, for fear of breeding confusion, since there now be so many religions on foot. The matter was not so narrowly to be looked after when there was but one religion in Christendom; the rest would cry him down for an heretic, and there was nobody to side with him.

14. We look after religion, as the butcher did after his knife, when he had it in his mouth.

15. Religion is made a juggler's paper; now 'tis a horse, now 'tis a lanthorn, now 'tis a boat, now 'tis a man. To serve ends, religion is turned into all shapes.

16. Some men's pretending religion, is like the roaring boys' way of challenges: (their reputation is dear, it cannot

and what a mean opinion Ben Jonson had of his old partner, may be seen from inter alia his 'Expostulation with Inigo Jones' and his verses 'To Inigo Marquis-would-be,' in which Inigo Jones is held up to ridicule as a mere stage-property-man and puppet-play presenter and would-be poet, very much as Lanthorn Leatherhead is shown in Bartholomew Fair. The resemblance between the two, as Ben Jonson has drawn them, is certain; their intended identification is almost certain. Selden knew Ben Jonson intimately, and if the words 'Inigo Lanthorne' ever came from Selden's mouth, the proof may be regarded as complete.

1. 25. like the roaring boys &c.] In Overbury's Characters, 'A roaring
stand with the honour of a gentleman:) when, God knows, they have neither reputation nor honour about them.

17. Pretending religion and the law of God, is to set all things loose. When a man has no mind to do something he ought to do by his contract with man, then he gets a text, and interprets it as he pleases, and so thinks to get loose.

18. We talk much of settling religion. Religion is well enough settled already, if we would let it alone. Methinks we might look after, &c.

19. If men should say they took arms for anything Boy is represented as a bullying cheating fellow. 'He sends challenges by word of mouth; for he protests (as he is a gentleman and brother of the sword) he can neither read nor write. . . . Soldier he is none, for he cannot distinguish between onion-seed and gun-powder: if he has worn it in his hollow tooth for the tooth-ache, and so come to the knowledge of it, that's all.' Overbury, Miscell. Works, p. 173 (ed. 1756).

In the old play, Amends for Ladies, Act iii. sc. 4, Whorebang, Bots, Tearchaps, and Spillblood appear as 'Roarers,' i.e. as noisy, cowardly bullies. Hazlitt's Old English Plays, vol. xi.

In the Dramatis Personae of Bartholomew Fair, Val. Cutting is described as a Roarer or Bully.

His honour, his reputation, are words frequently in Bobadil's mouth (Every man in his Humour).

1. 11. If men should say &c.] A care for religion was a chief reason alleged in the Declaration of the Kingdom of Scotland to justify their expedition into England in 1643. They said 'It was most necessary that every one, against all doubting, should be persuaded in his mind . . . . of the goodness of the cause maintained by him; which they said was no other than the good of religion in England, and the deliverance of their brethren out of the depths of affliction; the preservation of their own religion, and of themselves from the extremity of misery.' They trusted, therefore, 'that the Lord would save them from the curse of Meroz, who came not to help the Lord against the mighty.' There is much more to the same effect in this Declaration, and in a joint Declaration put out at the same time in the name of both kingdoms, England and Scotland. 'Their confidence was in God Almighty, the Lord ofHosts . . . It was his own truth and cause which they maintained against the heresy, superstition, and tyranny of Anti-Christ: the glory of his name, the exaltation of the kingdom
but religion, they might be beaten out of it by reason; out of that they never can, for they will not believe you whatever you say.

20. The very arcum of pretending religion in all wars is, that something may be found out in which all men may have interest. In this the groom has as much interest as the lord. Were it for land, one has one thousand acres, and the other but one; he would not venture so far, as he that has a thousand. But religion is equal to both. Had all men land alike, by a lex agraria, then all men would say they fought for land.

CXXII.

NON-RESIDENCY.

1. The people thought they had a great victory over the clergy, when in Henry 8th's time they got their bill passed, that a clergyman should have but two livings; before, a man might have twenty or thirty; 'twas but getting a dispensation from the pope's limitor, or gatherer of the Peter-

1 Henry 8th's, H. 2] H. 8th's in H.

of his Son, and the preservation of his church, was their aim, and the end which they had before their eyes.' Clarendon, Hist. ii. 667 ff.

1. 4. The very arcum &c.] 'The great pretences (in an alleged design against episcopacy and monarchy) were liberty, property and religion; for, as Mr. Hambden, one of the principal grandees of the faction, told a private friend, without that they could not draw the people to assist them.' Nalson, Collections, ii. 234.

1. 15. that a clergyman should have &c.] The Act against pluralities (21 Henry VIII, ch. 13) enacts that if a clerk, holding a living worth £8 a year, takes another cure, his original living becomes ipso facto void. But there are numerous exceptions to this rule. Vested rights are respected in the case of actual holders of not more than four cures; and certain named classes and orders are allowed for the future to hold, some three, some two cures.
pence, which was as easily got, as now you may have a license to eat flesh.

2. As soon as a minister is made, he hath power to preach all over the world; but the civil power restrains him; he cannot preach in this parish or in that; there is one already appointed. Now if the state allows him two livings, then he has two places where he may exercise his function, and so has the more power to do his office, which he might do every where if he were not restrained.

CXXIII.

RETLATION.

An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. That does not mean, that if I put out another man's eye, therefore I must lose one of my own, (for what is he the better for that?) though this be commonly received; but it means, that I shall give him what satisfaction an eye shall be judged to be worth.

CXXIV.

REVERENCE.

'Tis sometimes unreasonable to look after respect and reverence, either from a man's own servants, or from other inferiors. A great lord and a gentleman talking together, there came a boy by, leading a calf with both his hands; says the lord to the gentleman, You shall see me make the boy let go his calf; with that he came towards him, thinking

1. 3. As soon as a minister is made &c.] See 'Minister Divine,' sec. 4.
the boy would have put off his hat, but the boy took no notice of him. The lord seeing that, Sirrah, says he, do not you know me, that you use no reverence? Yes, says the boy, if your lordship will hold my calf, I will put off my hat.

CXXV.

SABBATH.

Why should I think all the fourth commandment belongs to me, when all the fifth does not? What land will

1. 7. Why should I think &c.] The right way of keeping Sunday was among the standing points of dispute between High and Low Church, between the Anglican party and the Puritans. Selden, who belonged to neither side, follows his usual rule—περὶ ποιῶν τῆς θεο-θύλας, and pronounces against strict Sabbath observances. The controversy had become marked towards the latter part of Queen Elizabeth's reign, when Sunday, which used to be the regular day for games, dances and sports, began to be kept more precisely. The governing clergy exclaimed against the change. Archbishop Whitgift and Chief Justice Popham did what they could to put down current Sabbatarian writings, and declared that the Sabbath doctrine agreed neither with the teaching of the Church nor with the laws and orders of the kingdom. In 1618, James put out his declaration concerning lawful sports to be used on Sundays after divine service; and in 1635 it was ratified and republished by Charles, at Laud's instigation, and encouragement was given to May Games, Whitsun Ales, and the like. But with the rise of the Presbyterian party, all this was changed. On March 5, 1641, Dr. Bray was sent for to the bar of the House of Lords for having licensed Dr. Pocklington's books, called Sunday no Sabbath and Altare Christianum, and he acknowledged his offence and expressed regret for it. The obnoxious books were ordered to be publicly burned. On May 5, 1643, it was ordered by the Lords and Commons in Parliament that the book, concerning the enjoining and tolerating sports on the Lord's day, be forthwith burned by the hand of the common hangman in Cheapside and other usual places. That this was in agreement with the popular sentiment of the day is clear from Baxter's statement, that the publication of this book by the Bishops was one of the reasons why 'serious godly people had been alienated from them, and had thought that they concurred with the profane.' Laud's share in publishing this book and in punishing
the Lord give me for honouring my father? It was spoken to the Jews with reference to the land of Canaan; but the meaning is, if I honour my parents, God will also bless me. We read the commandments in the church-service, as we do David's Psalms; not that all there concerns us, but a great deal of them does.

CXXVI.

SACRAMENT.

1. Christ suffered Judas to take the communion. Those ministers that keep their parishioners from it, because they will not do as they will have them, revenge, rather than reform.

2. No man living can tell whether I am fit to receive the sacrament; for though I were fit the day before, when he examined me, at least appeared so to him, yet how can he tell what sin I have committed that night, or the next morning, or what impious atheistical thoughts I may have about me, when I am approaching to the very table?

CXXVII.

SALVATION.

We may best understand the meaning of σωτηρία, salvation, from the Jews, to whom the Saviour was promised. They held that themselves should have the chief place of happiness in the other world; but the gentiles that were ministers for not reading it in church, was among the charges brought against him at his trial. See Rushworth, Collections, ii. 193, iv. 207, v. 317. Fuller, Hist. of Church, xvii. xi. 32. Baxter's Life, p. 33. Laud's Works, iv. 251–3.
good men, should likewise have their portion of bliss there too. Now by Christ the partition-wall is broken down, and the gentiles that believe in him, are admitted to the same place of bliss with the Jews. And why then should not that portion of happiness still remain to them who do not believe in Christ, so they be morally good? This is a charitable opinion.

CXXVIII.

SHIP-MONEY.

1. Mr. Noy brought in ship-money first for maritime towns; but that was like putting in a little auger, that afterwards you may put in a greater. He that pulls down the first brick, does the main work, afterwards 'tis easy to pull down the wall.

2. They that at first would not pay ship-money, till it was decided, did like brave men, though perhaps they did no good by the trial; but they that stand out since, and suffer themselves to be distrained, never questioning those that do it, do pitifully; for so they only pay twice as much as they should.

CXXIX.

SIMONY.

The name of simony was begot in the canon law: the

1. 9. Mr. Noy brought in &c.] 'The King required a loan of money and sent to London and the port towns to furnish ships for guard of the sea. Noy, his attorney, a great antiquary, had much to do in this business of ship-money.' Whitelock's Memorials, p. 7, in ann. 1626.

Next, 'by advice of his privy council and council learned, the King requires ship-money. The writ for it was at first but to maritime towns and counties; but that not sufficing, other writs were issued out to all counties to levy ship-money.' Ib., p. 22, in ann. 1634.
first statute against it was in Queen Elizabeth's time. Since the reformation simony has been frequent: one reason why it was not practised in time of popery, was the pope's provisions: no man was sure to bestow his own benefice.

CXXX.

STATE.

In a troubled state save as much of your own as you can. A dog had been at market to buy a shoulder of mutton; coming home, he met two dogs by the way, that quarrelled with him; he laid down his shoulder of mutton, and fell to fighting with one of them; in the meantime the other dog fell to eating his mutton; he seeing that, left the dog he was fighting with, and fell upon him that was eating; then the other dog fell to eat; when he perceived there was no remedy, but which of them soever he was fighting withal, his mutton was in danger, he thought he would save as much of it as he could; and thereupon gave over fighting, and fell to eating himself.

1. 1. the first statute against it &c.] This was 31 Elizabeth, ch. 6, secs. 4 and 5, which declares void all simoniacal presentations to benefices: and enacts, further, that in case of simony, the presentation devolves to the crown, and that both parties to the transaction incur a fine of double the yearly value of the benefice.

1. 2. one reason why &c.] That the Pope used to present to benefices in this country appears by, e.g., the Statutes passed to forbid it. The Statute of Provisors, 25 Edward III, enacts that if the Pope tries to appoint, the King shall present, and counterclaimants to the King's presentment are made liable to fine and imprisonment. So in 16 Richard II, the Pope is said to have proposed inter alia to translate prelates out of the realm, or from one living to another. All procuring such translations are put out of the King's protection, forfeit lands and goods, and are brought to answer for it under former statutes.
CXXXI.

SUBSIDIES.

1. Heretofore the parliament was wary what subsidies they gave to the king, because they had no accounts; but now they care not how much they give of the subjects' money, because they give it with one hand and receive it with the other; and so upon the matter give it themselves. In the meantime what a case the subjects of England are in! If the men they have sent to the parliament misbehave themselves, they cannot help it, because the parliament is eternal.

2. A subsidy was counted the fifth part of a man's estate, and so fifty subsidies is five and forty times more than a man is worth.

CXXXII.

SUPERSTITION.

1. They that are against superstition, oftentimes run

1. 3. but now they care not &c.] This change was one of the first acts of the second Parliament of 1640. When they raised money they did not follow what had been the usual way, of giving it immediately to the King, to be paid into the exchequer, but provided for its payment into the hands of members of the House, named by them, who were to take care to discharge all public engagements. The King allowed the first money bill to pass with the names of Commissioners inserted in it, who were to receive and dispense the money; and from that time there was no bill passed for the raising of money, but it was disposed of in like manner, so that none of it could be applied to the King's use, or by his direction. Clarendon, Hist. vol. i, pp. 321-2 and 678.

1. 6. upon the matter] i.e. in strict fact: really. See 'Philosophy' and note.
into it on the wrong side. If I will wear all colours but black, then am I superstitious in not wearing black.

2. They pretend not to abide the cross, because 'tis superstitious; for my part I will believe them, when I see them throw away their money out of their pockets, and not till then.

3. If there be any superstition truly and properly so called, 'tis their observing the sabbath after the Jewish manner.

CXXXIII.

SYNOD. ASSEMBLY.

1. We have had no national synod since the kingdom hath been settled, as now it is, only provincial; and there

1. 4. when I see them throw away their money &c.] 'The Parliament's gold coins are just like their silver ones, viz. on one side two shields with the cross and harp.' Abp. Sharpe, Dissertation on the Golden Coins of England, sec. 6.

The cross was a common impress on earlier English coins.

1. 7. If there be any &c.] See 'Sabbath' and note.

1. 11. We have had no national synod &c.] The London ministers, in their petitions in 1641, prayed the Houses of Parliament to be mediators to his Majesty for a free Synod. Neal, Hist. of Puritans, iii. 43. The Commons accordingly included this among the requests in the grand Remonstrance of December 1, 1641:—'We desire that there may be a general synod of the most grave, pious, learned, and judicious divines of this island, assisted with some from foreign parts professing the same religion with us, who may consider of all things necessary for the peace and good government of the church.' Rushworth, iv. 450.

Selden's objections to the calling so many divines together, and to the forming of a Synod to do work which could be done by the existing Convocation, seem to have been directed against this request. It was not granted by the King; but the Commons finally took the matter into their own hands, and summoned, in 1643, the Westminster Assembly of Divines to advise with Parliament on the points for which a general Synod had been prayed for. But it was not sum-
SYNOD. ASSEMBLY.

will be this inconveniency, to call so many divines together; it will be to put power in their hands, who are too apt to usurp it, as if the laity were bound by their determinations. No; let the laity consult with the divines on all sides, hear what they say, and make themselves masters of their reasons; as they do by any other profession, when they have a difference before them. For example, goldsmiths; they enquire of them, if such a jewel be of such a value, and such a stone of such a value; hear them, and then, being rational men, judge themselves.

2. Why should you have a synod, when you have a convocation already, which is a synod? Would you have a superfluous generation of another synod? The clergy of England, when they cast off the pope, submitted themselves to the civil power, and so have continued; but these challenges to be jure divino, and so to be above the civil power: these challenges power to call before their presbyteries all persons for all sins directly against the law of God, as proved to be sins by necessary consequence. If you would buy gloves, send for a glover or two, not Glovers' hall: consult with some divines, not send for a body.

3. There must be some laymen in the synod, to over-

moned under the name of a Synod, indeed it was expressly claimed for it that it was not a national Synod or representative body of the clergy, but only a body to deliberate on matters submitted to it by the House. Neal, Hist. of Puritans, iii. 43, 44, 49.

On the claim of the Presbyterian clergy of this body 'to be jure divino, and so above the civil power,' see note on 'Presbytery,' sec. 4.

1. 23. There must be some laymen &c.] This takes us to a time, at or about 1643, when the constitution of the Assembly of Divines had not been finally settled, and when its name had not yet been fixed. The next section shows that the point insisted upon in sec. 3 had been so determined when the Assembly actually met. The Ordinance (June, 1643) is termed: 'an ordinance for the calling of an assembly of learned and godly divines and others'; but in the ordinance itself the assembly is said to be: 'of learned, godly, and judicious divines,'
look the clergy, lest they spoil the civil work. Just as when the good woman puts a cat into the milk-house to kill a mouse; she sends her maid to look after the cat, lest the cat should eat up the cream.

4. In the ordinance for the assembly, the lords and commons go under the names of learned, godly, and judicious divines; there is no difference put betwixt them, and the ministers in the context.

5. It is not unusual in the assembly to revoke their votes, by reason they make such haste, but 'tis that will make them scorned. You never heard of a council revoked an act of its own making. They have been wary of that, to keep up their infallibility; if they did anything, they took away the whole council; and yet we would be thought as infallible as anybody. It is not enough to say, the House of Commons revokes their votes, for theirs are but civil truths, which they by agreement create, and uncreate, as they please; but the truths the synod deals in are divine; and when they have voted a thing, if it be then true, 'twas true before, not true because they voted it; nor does it cease to be true, because they vote it otherwise.

6. Subscribing in a synod, or to the articles of a synod, is no such terrible thing as they make it; because, if I am of a synod, 'tis agreed, either tacitly or expressly, that which the major part determines, the rest are involved in; and therefore I subscribe, though my own private opinion be otherwise; and upon the same ground, I may without scruple subscribe to what these have determined, whom I sent, though my private opinion be otherwise; having respect to that which is the ground of all assemblies, The major part carries it.

Selden, who was a member of the assembly, must have been a little amused to find himself included in the description. Rushworth, v. 337.
CXXXIV.

THANKSGIVING.

At first we gave thanks for every victory as soon as e’er ’twas obtained; but since we have had many, now we can stay a good while. We are just like a child; give him a plum, he makes his leg; give him a second plum, he makes another leg: at last when his belly is full, he forgets what he ought to do; then his nurse, or somebody else that stands by him, puts him in mind of his duty, Where’s your leg?

CXXXV.

TITHES.

1. Tithes are more paid in kind in England, than in all Italy and France. In France they have had impropriations a long time; we had none in England till Henry the 8th.

1. 13. we had none in England] They were, Selden shows, not common in England till Henry VIII, but he mentions them as occasionally found. Conf. ‘Although in other states these infeodations or conveyances of the perpetual right of tythes to laymen be very ancient and frequent also, yet no such certain and obvious testimony of their antiquity is in the monuments of England as can enough assure us that they were before the statute of dissolutions in any common use here. But some were, and, for ought appears in the practice of the time, many more might equally have been. . . . In sum then we may affirm that some such ancient infeodations have been in England as in other states.’ Works, iii. 1774 ff.

‘Neither hath the canon law wrought otherwise in Italy, but that there also particular customs, as well of non decimando as in the modus, are frequent. Multis Italae locis, says Cajetan, contingit ex consuetudine that nothing at all is paid. And so is the practice there for the most part at this day, the parish priests being sufficiently maintained by manse and glebe, and the revenues that are in some places paid as according to a modus.’ iii. 1774.

‘In that state (sc. France), against the whole course of the canon law in this kind, they have, what by reason of ancient infeodations still continuing, what through customs, allowed divers lands to be not at
2. To make an impropriation, there was to be the consent of the incumbent, the patron, and the king; and then 'twas confirmed by the pope: without all this the pope could make no impropriation.

3. Or what if the pope gave the tithes to any man, must they therefore be taken away? If the pope gives me a jewel, will you therefore take it from me?

4. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedec; what then? 'Twas very well done of him: it does not follow therefore that I must pay tithes, no more than I am bound to imitate any other action of Abraham's.

5. 'Tis ridiculous to say, the tithes are God's part, and all subject to any tythes payable to the Church. For their infeodations... are to this day remaining, and are conveyed and desend as other lay inheritances... Those infeodations of tythes are there very frequent, and in very many parishes the tythes are taken only by laymen.' iii. 1169.

'J'oseray encore mettre entre les privileges, mais non Ecclesiastiques, le droit de tenir dixmes en fief par gens pur laics. Ce qu'on ne peut nier avoir prins son origine d'une licence et abuz commencé sousbs Charles Martel, Maire du Palais, et continué principalement sousbs les Rois de sa race.' Pithou, printed in Libertez de l'Eglise Gallicane, vol. i. p. 19.

1. 2. *then 'twas confirmed by the pope* The consent of the provincial primate was ancietly needed for the alienation of Church property. See 'Placuit etiam ut rem ecclesiae nemo vendat, Quod si aliqua necessitas cogit, hanc insiunendam esse primati provinciae ipius, ut cum statuto numero episcoporum, utrum faciendum sit arbitretur.' Canon of the 5th Council of Carthage, quoted by Bingham, Christian Antiquities, Bk. V. ch. vi. sec. 7.

In pre-Reformation days, when the Pope had an admitted primacy in the Western Church, this right of final judgment naturally devolved on him. That he could not move in the matter by his own mere will was effectually settled in this country by the Statutes of Provisors.

1. 12. *'Tis ridiculous to say, &c.* Selden's view is not that of the sacerdotal champions of the Romish or of the English Church. See e.g. Decrees of Pope Boniface I, sec. 3: 'Nulli liceat ignorare quod omne quod domino consecratur... ad jus pertinet sacerdotum.' Labbé, Conciliorum Collectio, vol. iv. p. 397; and Laud's argument to prove that the payment of tithes to the ministers under the Gospel is due *jure divino*. Laud, Works, vi. 159.
therefore the clergy must have them: why, so they are if the layman has them. 'Tis as if one of my Lady Kent's maids should be sweeping this room, and another of them should come and take away the broom, and tell for a reason, why she should part with it; 'Tis my lady's broom: as if it were not my lady's broom, which of them soever had it.

6. They consulted in Oxford where they might find the best arguments for their tithes, setting aside the *jus divinum*; they were advised to my History of Tithes, a book so much cried down by them formerly (in which, I dare boldly say, 10

I. 9. *they were advised to my History of Tithes* by Gerard Langbaine, Provost of Queen's, who wrote the letter to which Selden here refers:

'HOND. SIR,

'Upon occasion of the business of Tythes now under consideration, some whom it more nearly concerns, have been pleased to enquire of me what might be said as to the civil right of them; to whom I was not able to give any better direction than by sending them to your History. Happily it may seem strange to them; yet I am not out of hopes but that work (like Pelias hasta) which was lookt upon as a piece that struck deepest against the divine, will afford the strongest arguments for the civil right: and if that be made the issue, I do not despair of the cause. . . .

GER. LANGBAINE.

Queen's Coll., Oxon.,
22 Aug. 1653.'


I. 9. *a book so much cried down by them formerly* Selden's History of Tythes was published in 1617, and roused the anger of the whole clerical party, mainly by its treatment of the tithe as a matter of variable civil right, and not as due to the clergy *jure divino*. So strong was the feeling against Selden that he found it necessary, in order to escape being called before the Court of High Commission—if indeed he did escape, which Dr. Tillisley denies—to express in writing his sense of the error which he had committed in publishing his History, and his grief that he had thereby incurred the King's displeasure and that of the bishops and lay officials to whom his 'retracation' was addressed. The History was vehemently attacked in print by champions of the *jure divino* right, a right which Selden had ignored but had not denied, his end and purpose being 'to leave that question of divine right to divines, to whom it properly pertains,'
there are more arguments for them than are extant together anywhere): upon this, one writ me word, that my history of tithes was now become like *Pelia\text{\textasciitilde}as\text{\textasciitilde} hast\text{\textasciitilde}*, to wound and to heal. I told him in my answer, I thought I could fit him with a better instance. 'Twas possible it might undergo

*Pelia\text{\textasciitilde}as\text{\textasciitilde} hast\text{\textasciitilde}]* Peleus's hast\text{\textasciitilde}, MSS.

These numerous attacks Selden was for the time forced to suffer in silence, for King James had told him that he would put him in prison if he or any of his friends made any answer to them. But as he insists, when he was at length able to reply to Dr. Tillesley's 'Animadversions,' he had been careful in making his submission to retract nothing. 'I was and am,' he says, 'sorry that I published it, and that I so gave occasion to others to abuse my history, by their false application of some arguments.' A full account of the whole matter will be found in Works, vol. i. Vita Authoris, p. v–viii. See also vol. iii. pp. 1370, 1394 and 1452 ff.

1. 3. *like Pelia\text{\textasciitilde}as\text{\textasciitilde} hast\text{\textasciitilde}]*

'Vulnus in Herculeo quae quondam secerat hoste,
Vulneris auxilium Pelia\text{\textasciitilde}as hast\text{\textasciitilde} tuit.'

Ovid, Remedium Amoris, 47.

1. 4. *I could fit him with a better instance]* See 'Ante annos scilicet ccclx, aut circiter ... prorsus dammati sunt ejusdem libri illi (sc. Aristotelis physices et metaphysices libri) ut Christianismo nimis dissoni; quod a Rogero Bachone Franciscano, qui paulo post id tempus floruit philosophus et mathematicus summus, didici. ... Theologi, inquit, Parisiis, et episcopus, et omnes sapientes jam ab annis circiter quadraginta damnaverunt et excommunicaverunt libros naturales et metaphysicae Aristotelis, qui nunc ab omnibus recipiuntur. Et alibi idem—Scimus enim quod temporibus nostris Parisiis diu fuit contradictum philosophiae naturali et metaphysicae Aristotelis per Avicennam et Averroym expositis, et ob densam ignorantiam suere libri eorum excommunicati, et utentes eis, per tempora satis longa.' De Jure Naturali et Gentium, lib. i. cap. 2; Works, i. pp. 98 and 947.

The former of these passages occurs in Roger Bacon's *Opus Tertium*, p. 28 (Brewer's ed. 1859), the latter in the *Opus Majus*, cap. 9, p. 14. The *Opus Tertium* was written in 1267, as Bacon expressly states (p. 278). The sentence of excommunication, therefore, must have been about 1227, and could not have been pronounced by 'Stephen, Bishop of Paris,' who did not become bishop until 1268, i.e. a year after the *Opus Tertium* was written, and some forty years after the sentence. See *Ecclesia Parisiensis*, in *Sainte Marthe's Gallia Christiana*, vol. vii. p. 108.

Bishop Stephen's name must have been introduced through some
the same fate that Aristotle, Avicen, and Averroes did in France, some five hundred years ago, which was excommunicated by Stephen, bishop of Paris, (by that very name, excommunicated,) because that kind of learning puzzled and troubled their divinity: but finding themselves at a loss, some forty years after (which is much about the time since I writ my history), they were called in again, and so have continued ever since.

CXXXVI.

TRADE.

I. There is no prince in Christendom but is directly a tradesman, though in another way than an ordinary tradesman. For the purpose, I have a man; I bid him lay out twenty shillings in such a commodity; but I tell

1 Troubled, H. a] trouble, H.

confusion on the part of Selden's reporter, Milward. The controversy in which Stephen figures had to do with the nature and origin of the higher form of intelligence, Aristotle's νοῦς πνευματικός, Roger Bacon's intellectus agent. The authority of Aristotle and of his Arabian commentators, Avicenna, Averroes, and others, had been used, not unfairly, to support the theory that this intelligence was no constituent part of each human mind, but that it was of a divine nature, infused into the mind, and the same in all minds, being a pre-existent entity distinct from the human faculties properly so called, and quickening them to the discovery of truth. This, which had long been the accepted view, began to be called in question in the thirteenth century, and was publicly condemned at Paris by Bishop Stephen in 1270. The objections made to it, and the terms of compromise by which the dispute was finally adjusted, are very fully set down in Selden's De Jure Naturali et Gentium, lib. i. cap. 9 (Works, i. 154–157).

It is clear, from Langbaine's letter, that the discourse reported in the text must have been towards the close of 1653 or in 1654, the year of Selden's death.
him for every shilling he lays out I will have a penny: I trade as well as he. This every prince does in his customs.

2. That which a man is bred up in, he thinks no cheating; as your tradesman thinks not so of his profession, but calls it a mystery. Whereas if you would teach a mercer some other way to make his silks heavy than what he has been used to, he would peradventure think that to be cheating.

3. Every tradesman professes to cheat me, that asks for his commodity twice as much as 'tis worth.

CXXXVII.

TRADITION.

Say what you will against tradition, we know the signification of words by nothing but tradition. You will say the Scripture was written by the Holy Spirit, but do you understand that language 'twas writ in? No. Then for example, take these words, *In principio erat verbum*. How do you know those words signify, *In the beginning was the word*, but by tradition, because somebody has told you so?

CXXXVIII.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

1. The fathers using to speak rhetorically, brought up transubstantiation: as if because 'tis commonly said, *amicus est alter idem*, one should go about to prove that a man and his friend are all one. That opinion is only rhetoric turned into logic.

2. There is no greater argument (though not used) against transubstantiation, than the Apostles, at their first council,
forbidding blood and suffocation. Would they forbid blood, and yet enjoin the eating of blood too?

3. The best way for a pious man is to address himself to the sacrament with that reverence and devotion, as if Christ were really there present.

CXXXIX.

TRAITOR.

'Tis not seasonable to call a man traitor, who has an army at his heels. One with an army is a gallant man. My Lady Cotton was in the right, when she laughed at the Duchess of Richmond for taking such state upon her; when she could command no forces. She a duchess! there is in Flanders a duchess indeed; meaning the arch-duchess.

CXL.

TRIAL.

1. Trials are one of these three ways; by confession; or by demurrer, that is, confessing the fact, but denying it to be that wherewith a man is charged; for example, denying it to be treason, if a man be charged with treason: or by a jury.

2. Ordalium was a trial, and was either by going over

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1 The best way for a pious man, &c.] with heading 'Transubstantiation' to
 This section appears in H. under
 heading 'Sacrament.' In H. 2, it
 appears as an appendix to the MS.

1. 19. Ordalium was a trial] There were several forms of the ordeal. In the aquae frigidae judicium—una ex purgationibus vulgaribus quas judicia Dei appellabant—the suspected or accused person was plunged into deep water; if he swam he was held guilty, if he sank innocent. In the aquae ferventis judicium, the accused had
nine red hot ploughshares, (as in the case of Queen Emma, accused for lying with the bishop of Winchester, over which she being led blindfold, and having passed all her irons, asked when she should come to her trial;) or 'twas by taking a red hot coulter in a man's hand, and carrying it so many steps, and then casting it from him. As soon as this was done, the feet or the hands were to be bound up, and certain charms to be said, and a day or two after to be opened; if the parts were whole, the party was judged to be innocent; and so on the contrary.

3. The rack is used nowhere as in England. In other countries 'tis used in judicature, when there is a semiplena probatio, a half proof against a man; then to see if they can make it full, they rack him if he will not confess. But here in England they take a man and rack him, I do not to plunge his bare hand and arm into boiling water. Of the same kind was the judgment by hot iron, to which Selden here refers. See Ducange, Gloss., under Aquae and Ferrum Candens.

Muratori adds, under 'Judicium ferri candentis,' the passing blindfold over hot ploughshares, and a further form known as the judicium crucis, in which the accused had to stand with his arms held out in the form of a cross, while a chapter in the Bible or some of the Psalms were read. If he could maintain the posture he was pronounced innocent, if he gave way he was guilty. See Muratori, Antiq. Ital. Dissert. 38, p. 611 ff.

1. 1. as in the case of Queen Emma] The account of Queen Emma's trial is given, as in the text, in Fabyan's Chronicle, pp. 224-5 (Ellis's ed. 1811). The ordeal, as might be assumed, was under the management of her episcopal friends. The Archbishop, Robert, who had declared against her, was not present.

1. 14. But here in England they take a man &c.] The infliction of torture was certainly against the English common law and against the Magna Charta, but it was no less certainly of regular and frequent occurrence. As to its illegality, we have, e.g., the statement of Chief Justice Fortescue, quoted and endorsed by Coke, and we have the declared opinion of the judges in Felton's case (November, 1628); 'That he ought not by the law to be tortured by the rack, for no such punishment is known or allowed by our law.' 'And yet' (says Jardine, in his Reading on the use of torture in England) 'it is an historical fact that, anterior to the Commonwealth, torture was
know why, nor when; not in time of judicature, but when somebody bids.

4. Some men before they come to their trial, are cozened to confess upon examination, upon this trick. They are made to believe somebody has confessed before them; and then they think it a piece of honour to be clear and ingenuous 1 , and that destroys them.

CXL.I.

TRINITY.

The Second Person is made of a piece of bread by the Papist; the Third Person is made of his own frenzy, malice, ignorance and folly, by the Roundhead. To all these the spirit is intituled 2 . One the baker makes, the other the cobbler; and betwixt these two, I think the First Person is sufficiently abused.

1 Ingenious] ingenious, MSS. 2 Intituled, H. 2] intitiled, H.

always used, as a matter of course, in all grave accusations, at the mere discretion of the King and the Privy Council, and uncontrolled by any law besides the prerogative of the sovereign. He traces the practice from Henry VIII’s reign down to May 1640, Archer’s case, which is (he says) ‘the last recorded instance of the infliction of torture in England, and as far as I have been able to discover the last instance of its occurrence.’ Jardine holds that, though not lawful by the common law, it was lawful as an act of prerogative, a power superior to the laws and able to suspend the laws; but it may be fairly questioned whether this strain of prerogative over law can be allowed to have been lawful in any sense. See ‘Prerogative,’ sec. 1.

It is curious to find Grotius and other foreign jurists praising the law of England for its singular humanity in conducting criminal proceedings without the use of torture, and devising ingenious reasons to account for it; while Selden, well acquainted with the facts, compares English practice disadvantageously with that of other countries—an opinion which Jardine confirms by contrasting in detail the arbitrary and uncontrolled licence of the English method with the limitations and definite rules which prevailed in countries whose code was based on the Roman law. Reading, &c., p. 67.
CXLII.

TRUTH.

1. The Aristotelians say, all truth is contained in Aristotle, in one place or another. Galileo makes Simplicius say so, but shews the absurdity of that speech, by answering, that all truth is contained in a lesser compass, viz. in the alphabet. Aristotle is not blamed for mistaking sometimes, but Aristotelians for maintaining those mistakes. They should acknowledge the good they have from him, and leave him when he is in the wrong. There never breathed that person to whom mankind was more beholden.

2. The way to find out the truth is by others' mistakings: for if I was to go to such a place, and one had gone before me on the right hand, and he was out; another had gone on the left hand, and he was out; this would direct me to keep the middle way, that peradventure would bring me to the place I intended to go.

1. 3. Galileo makes Simplicius say so, &c.] The passage occurs in the second of a series of imaginary conversations on mathematical and physical science, between Salviati and Sagredo, the spokesmen for modern science, and Simplicius, the Aristotelian commentator. Simplicius asserts that, with the aid of the syllogistic method, the man who can make a proper use of Aristotle's writings 'saprà cavar da' suoi libri le dimostrazioni di ogni scibile, perchè in essi è ogni cosa.' Sagredo replies, banteringly, 'Ma, Signor Simplicio mio... questo che voi, e gli altri filosofi bravi, farete con i testi d'Aristotile, farò io con i versi di Virgilio, o di Ovidio... Ma che dico io di Virgilio, o di altro poeta? io ho un libretto assai più breve di Aristotile e d'Ovidio, nel quale si contengono tutte le scienze... e questo è l'alfabeto; e non è dubbio che quello, che saprà ben accoppiare e ordinare questa e quella vocale con quelle consonanti o con quell' altre, ne caverà le risposte verissime a tutti i dubbj, e ne trarrà gli insegnamenti di tutte le scienze e di tutte le arti.' Opere di Galilei, vol. xi. p. 266 (Classici Italiani, Milan, 1868-1811, in 13 vols.).
3. In troubled water you can scarce see your face; or see it very little, till the water be quiet and stand still. So in troubled times you can see little truth. When times are quiet and settled, then truth appears.

CXLIII.

UNIVERSITY.

1. *The best argument why Oxford should have precedence of Cambridge, is the act of parliament, by which Oxford is made a body; made what it is; and Cambridge is made what it is; and in that act it takes place. Besides, Oxford has the best monuments to show.*

2. 'Twas well said of one, hearing of a history lecture to be founded in the university; Would to God, says he, they would erect a lecture of discretion there, this would do more good an hundred times.

3. He that comes from the university to govern the state,

1. 6. *The best argument why Oxford &c.* This question of precedence was raised in the House of Commons in January, 1640–1, when 'the Bill of four subsidies for the relief of the King’s army and the northern counties having been drawn by a Committee, Cambridge was placed before Oxford in the same.' This gave rise to a hot and prolonged debate. Sir Simonds D’Ewes spoke at length in favour of giving Cambridge the precedence, on the ground that Cambridge was a renowned city before Oxford, and a nursery of learning before Oxford, so that Cambridge was in all respects the elder sister. So sharp was the contention that on that day 'the House came not to a final determination in the reading of the Bill.' See, Two Speeches by Sir S. D’Ewes (printed in 1642), and Nalson, Collections, l. 703.

1. 7. *the act of parliament &c.* This is 13 Elizabeth, ch. 29, 'An Act concerning the incorporations of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge,' in which Oxford is named before Cambridge in several places. Once only, towards the end of the Act, we have 'the said Universities of Cambridge and Oxford.'
before he is acquainted with the men and manners of the place, does just as if he should come into the presence all dirty, with his boots on, his riding-coat, and his hat all daubed. They may serve him well enough in the way, but when he comes to court, he must conform to the place.

CXLIV.

VOWS.

**Question.** Suppose a man find by his own inclination he has no mind to marry, may he not then vow chastity?

10 **Answer.** If he does, what a fine thing has he done? 'Tis as if a man did not love cheese; and then he would vow to God Almighty never to eat cheese. He that vows can mean no more in sense than this; to do his utmost endeavour to keep his vow.

CXLV.

USURY.

1. The Jews were forbidden to take use one of another, but they were not forbidden to take it of other nations. That being so, I see no reason why I may not as well take use for my money as rent for my house. 'Tis a vain thing to say, money begets not money; for that no doubt it does.

2. Would it not look oddly to a stranger, that should

1 *No doubt it does, H. 2] no doubt is does, H.*
come into this land, and hear in our pulpits usury preached against; and yet the law allow it? Many men use it, perhaps some churchmen themselves. No bishop nor ecclesiastical judge, that pretends power to punish other faults, dares punish, or at least does punish, any man for doing it.

CXLVI.

PIOUS USES.

The ground of the ordinary's taking part of a man's estate, who died without a will, to pious uses, was this; to give it somebody to pray that his soul might be delivered out of purgatory. Now the pious uses come into his own pocket. 'Twas well expressed by John o' Powls in the play, who acted the priest; one that was to be hanged, being brought to the ladder, would fain have given something to the poor; he feels for his purse, (which John o' Powls had picked out of his pocket a little before) missing it, cries out, he had lost his purse now he intended to have given something to the poor: John o' Powls bid him be pacified, for the poor had it already.

l. 12. 'Twas well expressed &c.] The same incident occurs in the following, which is probably the passage which Selden had in mind:—

'Malheureux (pinioned and led out to execution):
My endless peace is made; and to the poor—
My purse, my purse!'

'Cocledenoy (who has just picked Malheureux' pocket):
Ay, sir; and it shall please you, the poor has your purse already."

—Marston, Dutch Courtezan, Act v. sc. 3 (vol ii. p. 98 in Bullen's ed. of Marston's works).

I am indebted to Mr. P. A. Daniel for this reference.
CXLVII.

WAR.

1. Do not undervalue an enemy by whom you have been worsted. When our countrymen came home from fighting against the Saracens, and were beaten by them, they pictured them with huge, big, terrible faces, (as you still see the sign of the Saracen's head is) when in truth they were like other men. But this they did to save their own credits.

2. Martial law in general, means nothing but the martial law of this or that place; with us 'tis to be used in fervore belli, in the face of the enemy, not in time of peace; then they can take away neither limb nor life. The commanders need not complain for want of it, because our ancestors have done gallant things without it.

I. II. In the face of the enemy, not in time of peace] The billeting of great companies of soldiers and mariners, and the appointment of special commissioners to deal summarily, 'as is agreeable to martial law,' with them or with other dissolute persons joining with them to commit murder, robbery, felony, mutiny, or other outrage or misdemeanor, are among the grievances set down in the 'Petition of Right' of 1628. The result of them is said to have been the illegal execution of some persons by the commissioners, and the escape of 'sundry grievous offenders,' against whom the judges refused to proceed 'upon pretence that the said offenders were punishable only by martial law,' &c. Somers, Historical Tracts, vol. iv. pp. 118, 119.

There are several speeches of Selden's on this matter, in which he argues and brings proof that in time of peace there can be no martial law; that wherever the sheriff in the county can execute the king's writs, there it is time of peace, though in other parts there be war; that in time of peace, so defined, soldiers are under the common law; and that martial law, where it legitimately exists, is not the abrogation of law but proceeds by settled rules. Works, iii. 1986 ff.

The subject was fully discussed in Parliament by several other speakers, and the proclamation of martial law in time of peace was condemned as unconstitutional and illegal. Rushworth, Collections, vol. iii. Appendix, p. 76.
3. Question. Whether may subjects take up arms against their prince?

Answer. Conceive it thus; here lies a shilling betwixt you and me; tenpence of the shilling is yours, twopence is mine by agreement: I am as much king of my twopence, as you of your tenpence: if you therefore go about to take away my twopence, I will defend it; for there you and I are equal, both princes.

4. Or thus; two supreme princes meet; one says to the other, Give me your land; if you will not, I will take it from you: the other, because he thinks himself too weak to resist him, tells him, Of nine parts I will give you three, so I may quietly enjoy the rest, and I will become your tributary. Afterwards the prince comes to exact six parts, and leaves but three; the contract then is broken, and they are in parity again.

5. To know what obedience is due to the prince, you must look into the contract betwixt him and his people; as if you would know what rent is due from the tenant to the landlord, you must look into the lease. Where the contract is broken, and there is no third person to judge, then the decision is by arms. And this is the case between the prince and the subject.

1. Whether may subjects &c.] The right of subjects to take up arms against their Prince was a natural subject of discussion in Selden’s day. The clergy pronounced against it. The new Canons of 1640, put out by the two Synods and accepted and endorsed by the King, speak very decidedly about it. ‘For subjects to bear arms against their Kings, offensive or defensive, upon any pretence whatsoever, is at least to resist the powers which are ordained of God; and though they do not invade, but only resist, St. Paul tells them plainly, they shall receive to themselves damnation.’ Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical, sec. 1. Wilkins, Concilia, iv, 545.

It was one of the charges against Archbishop Laud that he had ordered the clergy to preach in the above sense four times in the year. This order appears in the preface to the first Canon, and the doctrine thus approved is defended at length in Laud’s own history of his troubles and trial. Conf. Laud’s Works, vol. iii. pp. 366–370.
6. Question. What law is there to take up arms against the prince, in case he break his covenant?

Answer. Though there be no written law for it, yet there is custom, which is the best law of the kingdom; for in England they have always done it. There is nothing expressed between the king of England and the king of France, that if either invades the other's territory, the other shall take up arms against him; and yet they do it upon such an occasion.

7. 'Tis all one to be plundered by a troop of horse, or to have a man's goods taken from him by an order from the Council-table. To him that dies, 'tis all one whether it be by a penny halter, or a silk garter; yet I confess the silk garter pleases more; and, like trouts, we love to be tickled to death.

8. The soldiers say they fight for honour; when the truth is they have their honour in their pocket. And they mean the same thing that pretend to fight for religion. Just as a parson goes to law with his parishioners, he says, for the good of his successor, that the church may not lose its right; when the meaning is to get the tithe into his own pocket.

9. We govern this war as an unskilful man does a casting-net; if he has not the right trick to cast the net off of his shoulder, the leads will pull him into the river. I am afraid we shall pull ourselves into destruction.

10. We look after the particulars of a battle, because we live in the very time of the war. Whereas of battles past, we hear nothing but the number slain. Just so for the death of a man; when he is sick, we talk how he slept this night, and that night; what he eat, and what he drank: but when he is dead, we only say, he died of a fever, or name his disease; and there's an end.

11. Boccaline has this passage of soldiers; they came to

1. 34. Boccaline has this passage &c.] This is not quite correct.
Apollo to have their profession made the eighth \footnote{The eighth\footnote{the eighth, H. and H. 2.}} liberal science, which he granted. As soon as it was noised up and down, in came the butchers, and they desired their profession might be made the ninth: for, say they, the soldiers have this honour for killing of men; now we kill as well as they; but we kill beasts for the preserving of men, and why should not we have honour likewise done us? Apollo could not answer their reasons, so he reversed his sentence, and made the soldier's trade a mystery, as the butcher's is.

\footnote{The eighth\footnote{the eighth, H. and H. 2.}} The passage is as follows:—'The precedency between Arms and Learning is still obstinately disputed on both sides, between the Literati and Military men in Parnassus. And it was resolved in the last Ruota that the question should be argued if at least the name of Science and Discipline might be attributed to the exercise of war. ... The business was very subtilly canvassed and argued, and the Court seemed wholly to incline to the Literati; but the Princes used such forcible arguments, as it was resolved that military men in their exercise of war might use the honourable names of science and discipline. The Literati were much displeased at this decision ... when unexpectedly all the Butchers of the world were seen to appear in Parnassus; ... all besmeared with blood, with hatchets and long knives in their hands. ... Apollo, that he might know what they meant, sent some Deputies to them. To whom those butchers stoutly said, that hearing that the Court had decided that the art of sacking and firing of cities, of cutting their inhabitants in pieces ... and of calling with sword in hand, mine thine, should be termed a science and discipline, they also, who did not profess the killing of men ... but the killing of calves and muttons to feed men withal, demanded that their art might be honoured by the same illustrious names. ... The same Signori Auditore di ruota, when they saw the butchers appear in the Palace, and heard their demand, they were aware of the injustice which but a little before they had done to all the Virtuosi by their decision; wherefore they again propounded the same question, and unanimously agreed, that the mysterie of War, though it were sometimes necessary, was notwithstanding so cruel and so inhumane, as it was impossible to honest it with civil terms.' Boccacini, Advertisements from Parnassus, Century i. Advert. 75. Trans. by Henry, Earl of Monmouth, p. 143.
CXLVIII.

WIFE.

1. He that has a handsome wife, by other men is thought happy; 'tis a pleasure to look upon her, and be in her company; but the husband is cloyed with her. We are never content with what we have.

2. You shall see a monkey sometime that has been playing up and down the garden, at length leap up to the top of the wall, but his clog hangs a great way below on this side: the bishop's wife is like that monkey's clog; himself is got up very high, takes place of temporal barons; but his wife comes a great way behind.

3. 'Tis reason a man that will have a wife should be at the charge of all her trinkets, and pay all the scores she sets on him. He that will keep a monkey, 'tis fit he should pay for the glasses she breaks.

CXLIX.

WISDOM.

1. A wise man should never resolve upon anything, at least never let the world know his resolution; for if he cannot arrive at that, he is shamed. How many things did the king resolve in his declaration concerning Scotland, never to do, and yet did them all? A man must do according to accidents and emergences.

2. Never tell your resolution before-hand; but when the cast is thrown, play it as well as you can to win the game you are at. 'Tis but folly to study how to play size-ace, when you know not whether you shall throw it or no.

3. Wise men say nothing in dangerous times. The lion,
WIFE.—WIT.

you know, called the sheep, to ask her if his breath smelt; she said, Aye\(^1\); he bit off her head for a fool. He called the wolf, and asked him; he said, No; he tore him in pieces for a flatterer. At last he called the fox, and asked him; Truly he had got a cold, and could not smell. King James was pictured, &c.

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CL.

WITCHES.

The law against witches does not prove that there be any; but it punishes the malice of those people that use such means to take away men’s lives. If one should profess that by turning his hat thrice, and crying buz, he could take away a man’s life (though in truth he could do nothing), yet this were a just law made by the state, that whosoever should turn his hat thrice, and cry buz, with an intention to take away a man’s life, shall be put to death.

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CLI.

WIT.

1. Wit and wisdom differ; wit is upon the sudden turn, wisdom is in bringing about ends.

2. Nature must be the ground-work of wit and art; otherwise whatever is done will prove but jack-pudding’s work.

3. Wit must grow like fingers; if it be taken from others, ’tis like plums stuck upon blackthorn; there they are for awhile, but they come to nothing.

4. He that will give himself to all manner of ways to get

\(^1\) Aye [I, MSS.]

O 2
money may be rich; so he that will let fly all he knows or thinks, may by chance be sarcastically witty. Honesty sometimes keeps a man from being rich; and civility from being witty.

5. Women ought not to know their own wit, because then they will still be shewing it, and so spoil it; like a child that will be continually shewing its fine new coat, till at length it all bedaub's it with its pah hands.

6. Fine wits destroy themselves with their own plots, in meddling with great affairs of state. They commonly do as the ape that saw the gunner put bullets in the cannon, and was pleased with it, and he would be doing so too; at last he puts himself into the piece, and so both ape and bullet were shot away together.

CLII.

WOMEN.

1. Let the woman\(^1\) have power on her head, because of the angels. The reason of the words, because of the angels, is this; the Greek Church held an opinion that the angels fell in love with women; an opinion grounded upon that in Genesis vi, The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair. This fancy St. Paul discreetly catches, and uses it as an argument to persuade them to modesty.

2. The grant of a place is not good by the canon law before a man be dead; upon this ground, that some mischief might be plotted against him in present possession, by poisoning or some other way. Upon the same reason a contract made with a woman during her husband's life, was not valid.

\(^1\) Let the woman, H. 2 and S.] Let the women, H.
3. Men are not troubled to hear a man dispraised, because they know, though he be naught, there’s worth in others. But women are mightily troubled to hear any of them spoken against, as if the sex itself were guilty of some unworthiness.

4. Women and princes must both trust somebody; and they are happy or unhappy, according to the desert of those under whose hands they fall. If a man knows how to manage the favour of a lady, her honour is safe; and so is a prince.

CLI\text{II}.

YEAR.

1. It was the manner of the Jews (if the year did not fall out right, but that it was dirty for the people to come up to Jerusalem at the passover, or that their corn was not ripe for their first-fruits) to intercalate a month, and so to have, as it were, two Februaries; thrusting up the year still higher, March into April’s place, April into May’s place, &c. Whereupon it is impossible for us to know when our Saviour was born, or when he died.

1. 18. \textit{Whereupon it is impossible for us \\ &c.]} Selden, in his review of the 4th ch. of his book on Tithes, says:—"The learned know that until about \textit{cccc} years after Christ \ldots that day (sc. Dec. 25, as the day of the Nativity) was not settled, but variously observed in the Eastern Church\ldots. And S. Chrysostom then learned the time of the 25th of December (which yet most think not to be the exact time) from the Western or Latin Church." Works, iii. 1314.

This passage gave great offence to King James; and Selden, after several interviews with the King, wrote at his command a further tract on the subject. In this, after discussing the authorities at length, he concludes on a balance of evidence, "It rests that we resolve on it (sc. on the 25th of December being the correct day) upon as certain and clear a truth of tradition, as by rational inference, by express testimony of the ancients, by common and continual practice of
2. The year is either the year of the moon, or the year of the sun; there is not above eleven days' difference. Our moveable feasts are according to the year of the moon; else they should be fixed.

3. Though they reckon ten days sooner beyond sea, yet it does not follow their spring is sooner than ours; we keep the same time in natural things, and their ten days sooner, and our ten days later in those things, mean the self-same time; just as twelve sous in French, are ten-pence in English.

4. The lengthening of days is not suddenly perceived, till they are grown a pretty deal longer; because the sun, though it be in a circle, yet it seems for a while to go in a right line. For take a segment of a great circle especially, and you shall doubt whether it be straight¹ or no. But when the sun is got past that line, then you presently perceive the days lengthened. Thus it is in the winter and summer solstice; which is indeed the true reason of them.

5. The eclipse of the sun is, when it is new moon; the eclipse of the moon, when it is full. They say Dionysius

¹ Be straight, H. 2] be not straight, H. and S.

several churches, and by accurate inquiry, may be discovered.' Works, iii. 1450.

The remark in the Table Talk shows that this forced retraction was not seriously made.

1. 11. The lengthening of days &c.] The sense of this passage is not clear. Selden's meaning perhaps is that in winter so small a part of the sun's orbit is visible above the horizon, that the sun appears to the eye to be travelling in a right line. In the much larger summer orbit, the curvature is distinctly seen. But that the lengthening of the days is on this account suddenly perceived, does not seem to follow. It is likely enough that the passage has been incorrectly reported.

1. 21. They say Dionysius &c.] The story is found in a letter written as from Dionysius the Areopagite to Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna. It says that he and the Sophist Apollonius were together at Heliopolis at the time of the Crucifixion, and that they then
ZEALOTS.

was converted by the eclipse that happened at our Saviour's death, because it was neither of these, and so could not be natural.

CLIV.

ZEALOTS.

One would wonder Christ should whip the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and nobody offer to resist him, considering what opinion they had of him; but the reason was, they had a law, that whosoever did profane sanctitatem Dei, aut templi, the holiness of God, or the temple, before ten persons, it was lawful for any of them to kill him, or to do any thing on this side killing him, as whipping him, or the like. And hence it was, that when one struck our Saviour before a judge, (where it was not lawful to strike, and there observed the moon pass in an unaccountable way over the face of the sun, and so remain from the sixth hour until the evening. Apollonides, he remarks, must know that such an event as this, happening out of the ordinary course of nature, must have been due to direct divine interposition. Indeed, Apollonides himself had admitted this, for at the time of the eclipse he said to Dionysius that what they saw must be the consequence of matters which concerned the Gods (θείων διόν χάρι παγγεία). The actual conversion of Dionysius is ascribed to the preaching of St. Paul at Athens, Acts xvii. 34. The unseasonable eclipse is referred to by Dionysius in his letter as supplying an argument which Polycarp is to press on the scoffing sophist Apollonides. The result is said to have been that Apollonides too became a Christian. See S. Dionysii Epistola 7, in vol. iii. of Migne's Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca, and Epistola 11, extant only in Latin and marked by Migne as spurious—as indeed the rest of the writings ascribed to Dionysius commonly are.

1. 7. the reason was, they had a law &c.] Selden, in his De Jure Naturali, refers at length to this law, and to its enforcement by the Zealots. He gives, among instances of its being put in force, the well-known case of Phineas, and the case of Mattathias who, inflamed with zeal, slew a Jew who was about, in the sight of all, to offer sacrifice on a pagan altar (1 Maccabees, ch. ii. 23–26). The stoning of Stephen, and the oath taken against Paul's life, are other instances in point. See Works, i. 456 ff.
as it is not with us at this day), he only replied, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me? He says nothing against their smiting him, in case he had been guilty of speaking evil, that is, blasphemy, and they could have proved it against him. They that put this law in execution were called zealots; but afterwards they committed many villanies.

1. 7. afterwards they committed many villanies] See Josephus, Wars of the Jews, bk. iv. chs. 4, 5, 6, 7, for an account of the wholesale murders and robberies which they committed during the great war with the Romans.
APPENDIX

EXCURSUS A.

EXCOMMUNICATION: p. 66.

Note on sec. 4. The evidence for this is found in a rescript, &c.

Constantine in this rescript states it as law, that in every cause the judgment pronounced by bishops is to hold good absolutely and without appeal, that either of two disputants may carry the case to the bishop’s court, whether his opponent wishes it or not; and further, that the evidence of any one bishop is to be accepted as final, and that when a bishop has given his testimony, no other witness is to be heard.

That there is fraud or error attaching to this rescript seems certain, for it is found inserted in the later Codex Theodosianus, which contains laws wholly inconsistent with it. These show that if it was written by Constantine—and this is a disputed point—the law which it recites must have been abrogated some fifty years before the Codex Theodosianus was compiled. Sirmondī, however, includes it in his Appendix Codicis Theodosiani. Selden, here and in his treatise De Synedriis Veterum Ebraeorum (Works, i. 956), accepts it as Constantine’s, but he insists that it was fraudulently inserted in the Codex Theodosianus, of which it could not possibly have formed part. See Works, ii. 830 and 1067. Godefroy, in his edition of the Codex, prints it under the heading, Extravagans seu subdititius titulus de Episcopali Judicio, and he gives reasons (endorsed by Gibbon, Decline and Fall, ch. xx. sec. 4, note) for rejecting it as an entire forgery, vol. vi. 303–308 (ed. 1665 fol.). Haenel does not include it in his edition of the Codex, but he prints it at the end of his volume as forming part of Sirmondī's
THE DISCOURSE OF JOHN SELDEN.

Appendix, and he prefaces the Appendix with a discussion of his own, concluding in favour of the rescript as the genuine work of Constantine, but rejecting it from the Theodosian Code. He adds also a list of the various authorities who may be consulted on the above points.

The rescript runs thus: 'Sanximus namque, sicut edicti nostri forma declarat, sententias episcoporum, qualibet genere latas, ... inviolatas semper incorruptasque servari, scilicet ut pro sanctis semper ac venerabilibus habeatur quicquid episcoporum fuerit sententia terminatum. ... Quicunque itaque item habens, sive possessor sive petitor erit, ... judicium eligit sacrosanctae legis antistitis, illico sine aliquid dubitatione, etiam si alia pars refragatur, ad episcopum cum sermone litigantium dirigatur. ... Omnes itaque causae, quae vel praetorio jure vel civil tractantur, episcoporum sententiis terminatae, perpetuo stabilitatis jure firmentur, nec liceat ulterius retractari negotium, quod episcoporum sententia deciderit. Testimonium etiam, ab uno licet episcopo perhibitum, omnes judices indubitanter accipiant, nec alius audiatur cum testimonium episcopi a qualibet parte fuerit repromissum.' Constitutiones Sirmondi, Appendix, cap. i. On the other hand, conf. e.g. a law of Arcadius and Honorius, which was certainly part of the Codex: 'Quoties de religione agitur, episcopos convenit agitare; ceteras vero causas, quae ad ordinarios cognitores, vel ad usum publici juris pertinent, legibus oportet audiri.' Codex, lib. xvi, tit. xi. sec. i.

The Novels of Valentinian III, of later date than the Codex, are not less conclusive. 'Constat episcopos forum legibus non habere, nec de aliis causis (secundum Arcadii et Honorii divalia constituta) praeter religionem posse judicare.' Tit. xxxiv.

EXCURSUS B.

INCENDIARIES: p. 83.

1. 9. They that first set it on fire &c.] The King's chief advisers in the matters which brought about the conflict with the Parliamentary party were, or were assumed to have been, the Duke of Buckingham, the High Treasurer, Sir Richard Weston, the Earl of Strafford, and Archbishop Laud. It is
not clear to what time Selden is referring, when he says that they had now ‘become regenerate’; it is perhaps to the early part of the second Parliament of 1640, when the punishment of Strafford and Laud had already been taken in hand, and when it was clear that the Commons were in no temper to be trifled with. The Duke of Buckingham and Sir Richard Weston were both dead—unregenerate in Selden’s sense of the word. On the death of the High Treasurer, Laud had been made one of the Commissioners of the Treasury and Revenue, which (says Clarendon) he had reason to be sorry for, because it engaged him in civil business and matters of state, wherein he had little experience and which he had hitherto avoided. Hist. vol. i. 152.

It appears, however, from Whitelock’s Memorials, that he had long before this been credited with interfering in matters of state. On the imprisonment of the members (3rd Caroli), ‘the people were discontented. Libels were cast abroad especially against Bishop Laud, and Weston the Treasurer. . . . My father (i.e. Justice Whitelock) said that if Bishop Laud went on in his way, he would kindle a flame in the nation,’ p. 13. The charge of being an incendiary is urged again in 1640, by the same authority, on general and on special grounds. ‘He (Laud) was more busy in temporal affairs and matters of state than his predecessors of later times had been. My father, who was anciently and thoroughly acquainted with him and knew his disposition, would say, “He was too full of fire, though a just and good man; and that his want of experience in state matters, and his too much zeal for the Church, and heat, would set this nation on fire.”’

‘By his council chiefly (as it was fathered upon him) the Parliament being dissolved,’ &c. Whitelocke, Memorials, p. 34.

Curiously, too, in the same year, we find the term ‘incendiary’ used about him by the Scotch Commissioners, and a charge brought by them in the Upper House in proof of it. Laud’s Works, iii. 238.

1. 9. Monopolies] How numerous these monopolies had been will appear from the King’s proclamation (April 15, 1639) revoking some of them. See also Sir John Culpeper’s speech in the Parliament which met on November 3, 1640: ‘I have but one grievance more to offer unto you, but this one comprizeth
many. It is a nest of wasps or swarm of vermin which have overcrept the land. I mean the monopolies and polers of the people; these, like the frogs of Egypt, have gotten possession of our dwellings, and we have scarce a room free from them. They sup in our cup. They dip in our dish. They sit by our fire. We find them in the Dye-fat, Wash-bowl, and Powdring-tub. They share with the butler in his box. They have marked and sealed us from head to foot. Mr. Speaker, they will not bate us a pin. We may not buy our own cloaths without their brokage. These are the leeches that have sucked the commonwealth so hard that it is almost become hecticall,' &c. Rushworth, Collections, ii. 915-917.

Clarendon, like Selden, traces the troubles of his day to the arbitrary and unwise proceedings in the early years of Charles's reign. 'And here I cannot but let myself loose to say that no man can shew me a source from whence those waters of bitterness we now taste have more probably flowed, than from these unreasonable, unskilful, and precipitate dissolutions of Parliaments... And whoever considers the acts of power and injustice of some of the ministers in those intervals of parliament, will not be much scandalized at the warmth and vivacity of those meetings.' Clarendon, Hist. vol. i. p. 6.

These points, with many others, are referred to in the 'Remonstrance' of 1641. They reproached his Majesty... 'with the enlargements of forests, and compositions thereupon; the ingrossing gunpowder and suffering none to buy it without licence; with all the most odious monopolies of soap, wine, salt, leather, sea-coal and the rest.' They remembered 'the dissolution of the Parliament in the fourth year of his reign... the imprisoning divers members of that Parliament after the dissolution, and detaining them close prisoners for words spoken in Parliament; sentencing and fining them for those words.' Clarendon, Hist. i. 492, 493.

1. 9. forest business This was the extortion in 1630 and subsequent years of large sums of money on account of alleged encroachments on the royal forests, although the lands thus reclaimed for the King had been held without dispute under an adverse title dating back for three or four centuries. In 1630, Clarendon says, 'the old laws of the forest were revived, by which not only great fines were imposed, but great annual rents
intended and like to be settled by way of contract, which burden lighted most upon persons of quality and honour, who thought themselves above ordinary oppressions, and were therefore likely to remember it with more sharpness.' Clarendon, Hist. i. 105.

This grievance was finally put an end to by the Act of 1640, 'that from henceforth the Meets, Meers, Limits, and Bounds of all and every the Forests shall be adjudged and taken to extend no further respectively than the Meets, Meers, Limits, and Bounds in the several counties respectively, wherein the said Forests were commonly known, reputed, used, or taken, in the 20th year of the reign of the late king James and not beyond, &c.' Rushworth, Collections, iii. 1386.

I. 10. parliament men 3o Caroli] Whitelocke in his Memorials for this year speaks of 'Warrants of the Council issued for Hollis, Selden, Hobert, Elliot, and other Parliament men to appear before them; Hollis, Curriton, Elliot, and Valentine appeared, and refusing to answer out of Parliament, they were committed close prisoners to the Tower, and a Proclamation for apprehending others went out, and some of their studies were sealed up. All the judges were contented that the prisoners should be bailed, but they must also find sureties for their good behaviour. This, at Selden's instance, they refuse to do, and are remanded to the Tower.' Memorials, pp. 13 and 14.

EXCURSUS C.

THE KING'S CHAPEL ESTABLISHMENT: p. 92. sec. 4.

I. 12. 'Twas the old way &c.] In the Ordinances for the Government of the Royal Household (1790, 4o), there are frequent references to the King's Chapel establishment. In the household of Henry VI it consisted of 1 dean, 20 chaplains and clerks, and 7 children, p. 17. In the Liber Niger Domus Regis Edw. IV, the duties, &c. of the dean, chaplains, yeomen and children of the chapel are set out, pp. 49, 50. The whole subject is treated at length in the Ordinances made at Eltham in 1526. 'The King's pleasure is that at all times when his Highness shall lie in his castle of Windsor, his Manors of Bewlye, Rich-
mond, and Hampton Court, Greenwich, Eltham or Woodstock, his hall shall be ordinarily kept and continued, and at all such times of keeping the said hall, the King's noble chapel to be kept in the same place. Nevertheless, forasmuch as... it would not only be a great annoyance, but also excessive labour, travell, charge and pain, to have the King's whole chapel continually attendant upon his person... specially in riding journeys and progresses it is... ordained that the master of the children, and six men with some officers of the vestry, shall give their continual attendance in the King's court... for which purpose no great carriage either of vestments or books shall be required,' p. 160. See, too, Jebb, Choral Service of the Church (1843), pp. 147, 148.

I. 14. *In St. Stephen's Chapel &c.*] On the 6th of August, 1348, 22 Edward III, that King, by his royal charter recited, 'that a spacious chapel, situate within the palace of Westminster, in honour of St. Stephen, protomartyr, had been nobly begun by his progenitors and had been completed at his own expense—which he appointed to be collegiate; and that there should be established therein a dean, twelve secular canons, with the same number of vicars and other sufficient ministers, to celebrate divine service for the King, his progenitors and successors for ever.' A statement follows of the endowments successively granted to the above-named dean, canons, and college. 'Canon Row, since by corruption called Channel Row, belonged also to the said dean and canons, where they had sometimes lodged.' This college was suppressed and surrendered in 1 Edward VI. The chapel was soon afterwards fitted up for the meeting of the House of Commons, which had before usually assembled in the Chapter House of the Abbey of Westminster. Dugdale, Monasticon, vi. 1348–49. The chapel was burnt in the fire of 1835.

**EXCURSUS D.**

**LORDS BEFORE THE PARLIAMENT:** p. 106. sec. 2.

I. 4. *The Prior of St. John &c.*] 'The Lord Prior here' (i.e. of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem near Clerkenwell)
'had precedence of all the lay barons in Parliament, and chief power over all the Preceptories and lesser Houses of this order throughout England.' Dugdale, Monasticon, vi. 799.

In Camden's Britannia (Gough's trans.), the list of abbots who were barons of Parliament ends with 'the Prior of St. John of Jerusalem, commonly called Grand Master of the Knights of St. John, and claiming to be the first baron of England.' Introduction, cap. on Orders in England.

In the sixteenth century, this claim had certainly been admitted. In the Journals of the House of Lords, giving a list of the Lords present at each Parliament in the reign of Henry VIII, the Prior of St. John of Jerusalem appears always among the temporal peers, immediately after the Earls and higher nobles, and above the Barons. This order is invariably observed down to 1536, the date at which the Priory was suppressed, after which the Prior's name disappears from the lists. In 1556 (4 & 5 Phil. and Mary) it reappears in its old place, the Priory having been restored by the Queen, and it finally disappears in the course of 1558 after the accession of Elizabeth. Conf. Journals of the House of Lords, vol. i.

At an earlier date, the Prior's position is not thus fixed. In the Parliamentary Roll of 13 Edward III his name comes last but one in the list of spiritual peers; the Abbot of Westminster is below him. Conf. Rotuli Parliamentorum, printed by order of the Lords. In the writ of summons to Parliament of 23 Edward I it is clear that the Prior was then included among the spiritual peers. Conf. Dugdale: A perfect copy of all the summonses of the nobility, p. 8 (ed. 1685). In 13 and 49 Henry VI, he is the last of the spiritual barons, and he is addressed as they are in the summonses to Parliament—*in fide et dilectione quibus nobis tenemini*; the form for the temporal barons being *in fide et homagio*, p. 161. But, as the head of a military order, his office must at all times have been lay rather than clerical. 'The Templars and Hospitalers,' says Selden, 'were devout soldiers only. . . . Their prayers or devotions in private were not the services expected from them in the Church, but their swords and valour only gave the desert.' Hist. of Tythes, vol. iii. p. 1140.
EXCURSUS E.

Presbytery, sec. 4. When the queries were sent to the Assembly.

The questions sent (April 1646) were as follows:—

"1. Whether the Parochial and Congregational Elderships, appointed by ordinance of Parliament, or any other Congregational or Presbyterial Elderships are jure divino, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ? and whether any particular Church Government be jure divino? and what that government is?"

"2. Whether all the members of the said Elderships, as members thereof, or which of them, are jure divino, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?"

"3. Whether the superior Assemblies or Elderships, viz. the Classical, Provincial, and National, whether all, or any of them, and which of them are jure divino, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?"

"4. Whether the appeals from Congregational Elderships to the Classical, Provincial, and National assemblies, or any of them, and to which of them are jure divino, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?"

"5. Whether Ecumenical assemblies are jure divino? and whether there be appeals from any of the former assemblies to the said Ecumenical, jure divino, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?"

"6. Whether by the Word of God the power of judging and declaring what are such notorious and scandalous offences, for which persons guilty thereof are to be kept from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and of convening before them, trying, and actual suspending from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper such offenders accordingly, is either in the Congregational Eldership or Presbytery, or in any other Eldership, Congregation, or persons; and whether such powers are in them only, or any of them, and in which of them, jure divino, and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?"

"7. Whether there be any certain and particular rules expressed
in the Word of God to direct the Elderships or Presbyteries, Congregations, or persons, or any of them, in the exercise and execution of the powers aforesaid, and what are those rules?

'8. Is there anything contained in the Word of God that the supreme magistracy in a Christian State may not judge and determine what are the aforesaid notorious and scandalous offences, and the manner of suspension for the same; and in what particulars concerning the premisses is the said supreme magistracy by the Word of God excluded?

'9. Whether the provision of Commissioners to judge of scandals not enumerated (as they are authorized by the ordinance of Parliament) be contrary to that way of government which Christ has appointed in his Church, and wherein are they so contrary?

In answer to these particulars, the House of Commons desires of the Assembly of Divines their proofs from Scripture, and to set down the several texts of Scripture in the express words of the same: and there were orders added that every Minister present at the debate of any of these questions, shall put his Christian name to the answer, in the affirmative or negative; and that those who dissent from the major part shall set down their positive opinions, with express texts in proof of them.' Rushworth, Collections, vi. 260.

Selden, who had had a hand in framing these queries, was well aware that search as they would, they would never find answers to them in the text of Scripture.

EXCURSUS F.

ERRORS IN FORMER TEXTS.

I APPEND some instances of obvious blunders in former texts, which have been corrected in this edition on the authority of the Harleian MSS. In 'Holy-Days,' for example, the old reading is: 'Yet that has relation to an Act of Parliament which forbids the keeping of any Holy-days in time of popery.' There is no such Act, and the alleged prohibition is, on the face of it, absurd. The reading, as restored from the MS., is: 'Yet that has relation to an Act of Parliament which forbids the keeping of any other Holy-days. The ground thereof was
multitude of Holy-days in time of popery.’ This makes sense, and is in agreement with the language of the Act. Again, in ‘King of England,’ sec. 5, the old editions of 1689 read: ‘The three estates are the Lords Temporal, the Bishops are the clergy, and the Commons, as some would have it [take heed of that] for then if two agree the third is involved, but he is king of the three estates.’ This jumble of nonsense is cured in the MS. by the insertion of a full stop after ‘Commons.’ Then follows: ‘The King is not one of the three estates, as some would have it [take heed of that] for then,’ &c., &c. In sec. 3 of the same discourse, the reading ‘they did not much advance the king’s supremacy’ makes the statement at once incorrect and irrelevant. Again in ‘Bishops out of the Parliament’ sec. 13, we have: ‘If the Parliament and Presbyterian party should dispute, who should be the judge?’ a question which Selden would certainly never have asked, and which was answered effectively more than once when such a dispute did happen. The reading should be: ‘If the Prelatical and Presbyterian party’ &c., for, as Selden says (Religion, sec. 10), ‘Disputes in religion will never be ended, because there wants a measure by which the business should be decided . . . One says one thing, and one another: and there is, I say, no measure to end the controversy.’

In ‘Learning,’ sec. 2, the old reading is: ‘Most men’s learning is nothing but history duly taken up.’ It should be ‘duly taken up.’

In ‘Oaths,’ sec. 3.—‘Tis to me but reading a paper in their own sense’ corrected to ‘in my own sense,’ as the argument clearly requires.

In ‘Devils,’ sec. 2—‘and so all of them ought to be of the same trade,’ an absolutely unmeaning remark, is corrected in the Harleian MS. 1315 to ‘thought to be of the same trade.’ But the reading of MS. 690, ‘and so think all of them to be of the same trade,’ seems preferable here.

In several places a faulty punctuation has marred the sense, as e.g. in ‘Devils,’ sec. 2—‘Why in the likeness of a bat or a rat or some creature? That is, why not in some shape we paint him in,’ &c. This should be ‘Why in the likeness of a bat, or a rat, or some creature that is?’ i.e. some creature that exists and that could therefore be more easily produced on occasion than a real live Devil with claws and horns.
EXCURSUS G.

So, too, in ‘Bible,’ sec. 3, we have: ‘There is no book so translated as the Bible for the purpose.’ Here the full stop should come after ‘the Bible,’ and ‘For the purpose,’ a regular Seldenian phrase = ‘for example,’ should begin the next clause. Again, in ‘Preaching,’ sec. 15, we have: ‘many things are heard from the preacher with suspicion. They are afraid of some ends, which are easily assented to when they have it from some of themselves.’ This piece of nonsense is cured in the MS., which puts a comma after ‘suspicion,’ brackets off the words [they are afraid of some ends] and thus makes the things easily assented to not ‘some ends,’ but the things which had been heard from the preacher with suspicion.

There are other changes introduced in the present text, but most of them are wholly unimportant, and adopted only because the MSS. so read. One or two are doubtful, as e.g. ‘Treaty’ for ‘Laity’ in ‘Clergy,’ sec. 6.

EXCURSUS G.

TESTIMONIES TO SELDEN, AND CRITICISMS OF SELDEN’S STYLE.

Dr. Wilkins, in the preface to his edition of Selden’s Works, and in his life of the author, has collected proofs of the high esteem in which Selden was held, not only by his own countrymen, but by the learned of all countries.


If I have ventured in my Introduction to speak disparagingly of Selden’s style and method, I have good warrant for what I have said. Clarendon, e.g., writes,—‘His style in all his writings seems harsh and sometimes obscure: which is not wholly to be imputed to the abstruse subjects of which he commonly treated, out of the paths trod by other men; but to a little undervaluing
the beauty of a style, and too much propensity to the language of antiquity.' Clarendon, Life, i. p. 35.

Le Clerc writes more severely—'Selden, un des plus savans que l'Angleterre ait eus, est l'un de ceux qui gardoit le moins ce que l'on a dit touchant l'ordre, ce qui fait que ses écrits, quoique savans et utiles, sont lus par peu de gens d'un bout à l'autre': and again—'Quoique je ne voulusse pas imiter la méthode confuse, ni le stile de Selden . . . . les bonnes choses qu'il dit, et l'érudition qu'il fait paraître par tout, surpassent de beaucoup en utilité ce qu'il y a d'ailleurs defectueux dans ses ouvrages.' Most severe of all is the judgment in the Ars Critica—'Apparet eum ita studia sua perturbasse, ut eodem tempore de rebus toto genere diversis cogitaret; digressiones enim captat adeo remotas, et interdum tam longas, ut nisi ita studia instituisset, non potuisset tantam ordinis et rerum perturbationem ferre. Ac sane dum ordinem et perspicuitatem negligit, non parum taedii lectoribus creat.' And Le Clerc goes on to complain that where Selden errs, as he is said to do in some parts of the De Synedriis Veterum Ebraeorum, it is hardly possible to trace out how he has got wrong, since 'confusio, digressiones, testimonia aliena, et immensa illa eruditionis congesta farrago, facile fucum faciunt, et perspicaces etiam obruunt.' Quoted in Works, vol. i. Prefatio, p. 2.
INDEX

The Arabic numerals refer to the pages of Text of Table Talk, the Roman to those of the Introduction. The letter n refers to the notes to the Text.

A.
Abbeys, spoliation of, 3, 4.
Abraham, example of, not now binding, 178.
Acta Eruditorum, praise of Selden in the, xxv.
Affection, nature of, 124.
Alchemists find their art in Virgil's 'aurum rarus,' 155.
Allodium, meaning of, 97.
Altar, bowing to or towards, whether idolatrous, 78 and n.
Amsterdam, independency in use at, 83.
An eye for an eye, &c., meaning of command, 168.
Andrews, Bishop, much studied proverbs, why, 159.
Angers, Bishop of, attempts to change the Breviary, 141.
Anglican religion, antiquity and continuity of the, 163.
Apocrypha, 12.
Aquinas on unbaptized children, 7 n.
— on admission of bastard to orders, 8 n.
Archer, the last person tortured in England, 185 n.
Aristotelians, absurd saying of the, 166.
Aristotle excommunicated in France, 161.
— quotations from, 102 n., 139 n.
Armstrong, the king's fool, insolent to Abp. Laud, 69 n.
Article, changes made in the, on the Descent into Hell, 75 n.
— concerning Power of Church, question about the, 39 and n.
Articles, the Thirty-nine, 5.

Articles, English translation of, faulty, 5 and n.
— subscription to, 6 and n.
Ass's head, alleged Christian worship of, 25 and n.
Assemblies, different sorts of synodical, 84.
Assembly of Divines, lay members of, how described, 176.
— open to scorn for revoking their votes, 176.
Athens, why governed by a democracy, 102.

B.
Bacon, Sir Nicholas, judge in an ecclesiastical dispute, 27 and n.
— Roger, on Astrological Conjunctions, 49 n.
— on Caesar's use of perspective glasses, 155 n.
— on the change of opinion among theologians about Aristotle, 180 n.
Baillie, Robert, complains of Selden's antagonism, xix.
Bancroft, Bishop, changes subscription to Articles, 6 and n.
Baptism in the Church of England, 7.
— in the Church of Rome, 7 and n.
Bastard, not to enter into the congregation of the Lord, 8.
— not admitted to Orders in Church of Rome, 8 and n.
— appointment of, to See of Worcester, letter on, 8 and n.
Baxter on Selden's religion, xxi.
Bible, how to be judged, 9, sec. 1, and n.
INDEX.

Bible, English translation of the, 9, 10.
— how misprinted, 19 and n.
Bishops, nature of jurisdiction of, 13.
— confirmation of, 13 n.
— not to preach, 14.
— failure of reforms attempted by, 14,
sec. 5, and 16, sec. 6.
— subject to lay jurisdiction, 18.
— right of, to vote in "cases of blood,"
19 and n.
— may meddle with temporal affairs,
20.
— contrast between old and new, 22,
sec. 8.
— unfit to govern, 22.
— votes of, whether to be taken away,
22, 29.
— originally the same as presbyters,
23, 24, 25.
— whether "jure divino," 25, sec. 4,
and n.; 26.
— stand best with monarchy, 26, sec. 8.
— Protestants in France have not,
26.
— to be retained, 26, sec. 8; 27, secs.
11 and 12; 28, sec. 14.
— lands of, 27, sec. 10.
Boccaccio, story about Euclid, 118.
— precedence of scholars, soldiers,
and butchers, how settled in, 192.
— how to be answered, 31, sec. 6.
— what, are to be quoted, 31, secs. 7-9.
Borrichius interprets Virgil's "golden
bough" alchemically, 155 n.

C.

Cesar said to have used perspective
glasses, 155.
Cambridge, why Oxford to have prece-
dence of, 187.
Canon law, how to be studied, 31.
— canons, how far received in England,
10.
Catholicks uncharitable, 40.
Cavallerus, an editor of Duns Scotus, 115.
Ceremony, use of, 31.
— not to be decried by ladies, 32.
Chancellor, bishop's, his jurisdiction,
32.
Chapel establishment, the king's, 92,
205.
Christ, a great observer of the civil
power, 140.
— exact birth and death of, cannot be
known, 197.
— acted lawfully in whipping buyers
and sellers out of the temple, 199.

Christian, punishment for converting,
to be Jew, 87.
Christians identified with Jews, 35.
— why believed to worship an ass's
head, 35 and n.
— their views about Heaven and Hell
contrasted with those of the Turks,
35.
— position of, before the state became
Christian and after, 140.
Christmas succeeds the Saturnalia, 37.
Church, policy of, about royal prero-
gative, 38.
Church subject to the civil power in
England, Spain, and France, 141.
Churches, main entrance to, by the
west door, 41 and n.
City, what makes a, 42.
Clergy, claim of, to teach, how far
admitted, 43.
— a learned body, 44.
— interference of, sometimes mis-
chievous, 44.
Clink, keeper of the, story about, 117.
Coeledency, probably referred to by
Selden, 189 n.
Coleridge, S. T., remarks by, on
Selden's Table Talk, xxv.
Commandment, the second, view of
Papists about, 80 and n.
Commune d'abus, 149.
Commandments, use and abuse of, 14.
Commission, High, a mixed lay and
clerical court, 45.
Commons, House of, erroneous
opinions in, 46.
Confession, 48.
Conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn,
48.
Conscience, a scrupulous, a tender,
49.
— not to be pretended against law,
50.
— special case of, 50 and n.
Consecration, its effect, 51.
Constantine, alleged rescript of, 66
and n.; how far genuine, Excursus
A, 201.
Constitutions, Imperial, punishments
inflicted by, 81.
Contracts, not to be rescinded from,
52.
— always to be kept, 100.
— some not valid, 196.
Convocation, who to be members of,
53, 21 and n.
Cotton, Sir Robert, story about, 161.
Councils, general, swayed by a
majority of votes, 53.
Court of England, change of manners
in the, 93.
Crashaw, Mr., how converted from
writing against plays, 134.
INDEX.

Creed of St. Athanasius, 53.
— Nicene, how altered, 54.
Creeds, why disliked, 54.
Cruciﬁxion, exact date of the, cannot be known, 197.
Crusades, frauds about the, 119.
Cushion-dance, 93 n.

D.

Damnation, preachers of, liked and run after, 54.
Dead body passing through a town, money charged for, 159.
Devils, why none possessed with, in England, 55.
— nuns possessed by, 55 and n.
— casting out of, is mere juggling, why practised, 56.
— man possessed by, how cured by Selden, 57.
Die ecclesiæ, meaning of, 65, 140.
Difference of men, in what it consists, 111.
Digby, Sir Kenelm, 82 and n.
— Lord, oﬀends the Commons and is called to the Upper House, 159.
Dionysius the Areopagite, conversion of, 168.
Do as you would be done to, how to be understood, 61.
Dreams, good done by, 159.
Duel, how far allowable, 58.
Duellists, prayers appointed for, 59.

E.

Eclipses, when they occur, 198.
Emma (Queen), ordeal of, 184.
Enemy, a powerful, not to be abused, 62; not to be undervalued, 190.
Epitaph ought to ﬁt the person, 60.
Equity, uncertain and rougish, 60, 61.
Erasmus, Scaliger on, 15.
Estates, the three, 92.
Euclid, story about, in Boccalino, 118.
Excommunication, whether enjoined in Scripture, 64, 65.
— ﬁrst instance of, 65 and n.
— why disliked, 66.
— how limited by law, 67 and n.
— power of, sought by presbytery, 67.
Exposition of Scripture, when human, 86.

F.

Faith and works, not to be divided, 69.
Fasts, commanded absolutely by law, 68 and n.
Fines, moderate and excessive, 70 and n.
Forest laws, revival of the, 204.
Free will, paradoxical views about, 71.
Friars, their vows of poverty questioned, 71.
— disturbers of the peace of Christendom, 71.
— aliens, 5 and n.
Friends, old, are best, 71.
Frogs, fable of, in Æsop, 109.
Fuller, remarks of, on Selden, in the Westminster Assembly, 21x.

G.

Galileo, quotation from, 186 and n.
Genesis vi. 2, how interpreted by Greek Church, 196.
— — St. Paul’s argument based upon, 196.
Gentiles, meaning and survival of word, 73.
Gentlemen temperate in their religion, 73.
Gold coin, reasons of inscription on, 73 and n.
Goring, his changes of sides, 33 and n.
Gregory IX, letter on appointment of bastard to See of Worcester, 8 n.
Groom-porter, his oﬃce and business, 87 n.
Grossetest, Bishop, household statutes of, 74 n.
Gun, old meaning of, 98 and n.

H.

Hall, its use in old times, 74 and n.
Hell, Christ’s descent into, Scriptural proofs of, 75 and n.
— how explained by Selden, 76.
— how understood by the ﬁrst Christians, 77 and n. on 76.
Henry V puts away friars aliens, 5.
— VIII, law about reading the Scriptures, 10.
Heretic, a vain thing to talk of, 125.
Hobbes, alleged contests between Selden and, xxii.
— story of, at Selden’s death-bed, xxii.
Holy-days, statute limiting number of, 77 and n.
Honesty must not be without religion, 119.
Hospitalers, priory of, 4 and n.
House of Commons, erroneous opinions in, 46.
Humility, all think it good for other people, 78.
— excess of, is a vice, 78.

I.

Idolatry, true nature of, 78.
Ignorance, invincible, nature of, 79.
Image of St. Nicholas, story about, 80, 106.
Images, use of, whether defensible, 80.
— whether worshipped by Papists, 80.
Imperial constitutions, punishments inflicted by, 81.
Impropriations of Tithes, 177, 178.
Incendiaries of the State, 83, 202.
Independency, nature and antiquity of, 83.
Independents, claim of, to be above the law, 84.
Irish Lords, rank of, in England, 106.

J.

James, King, his opinion about the death of Henry IV, 86.
Jardine, reading on torture in England, 184 n.
Jesuits, learned, 102.
Jewish year, how reckoned, 197.
Jews are cursed and hated, but thrive, 79.
Jews, how a doctor of law was made among the, 112.
John O'Powls, 189.
Johnson, praise of the Table Talk by, xxv.
Jonson, Ben, his satire on the disputes of divines, 164.
Joseph, Christ's pedagogue, why traced through, 72.
Judges, rascality of, the cause of all mischief in the commonwealth, 87.
Judgments of God, presumptuous to pronounce about, 86.
Juggling necessary for government, 88.
Jurisdiction in the Church, not spiritual but civil, 88.

K.

King, made for quietness' sake, 89.
— banished, must not claim same respect, 90.
— can do no wrong, meaning of, 91.
— his headship or supremacy over the Church, 92.
— his chapel establishment, 92, 205.
— not one of the three estates, 93.
— all land in England held of the, 97.
Kings, not all alike, 89.
King's oath, why not to be relied upon, 95.
Knight's service, duties attaching to, 97.

L.

Ladies dependent on ceremonies and compliments, 32.
Land in England all held of the King, 97.
Langbaine (Provost), recommends Selden's History of Tithes, 179 n.
Latimer, meaning of, 98.
Laud quarrels with Archibald Armstrong, 62 n.
— his defence of bowing towards the altar, 78 n.
— accused for his sanction of sports on Sundays, 169 n.
— Justice Whitelock's opinion about, 203.
Law, human, when binding on the conscience, 68.
— ignorance of, why no excuse, 99.
— of nature, meaning of, 101.
— martial, nature and limit of, 190.
— a contract between king and people, 100.
Lawyers of France, learned, 102.
Le Clerc severely criticises Selden's style and method, 212.
Learning, what use it is, what it commonly is, 102.
Lecturers, harmful to the English Church, 71.
— defraud the parochial ministers, 103.
— why favoured by the parliamentary party, 103 n.
Libels, indications given by, 105.
Liturgies prove general beliefs, 105.
INDEX.

Liturgy, no Church without a, 105.
London, Lord Mayor of, how inducted into office, 42.
Lords, self-ignorance of great, 105.
— Irish, rank of, in England, 106.
— protests of, 108.
Low Countrymen, learning of the, 102.
Luther, refuses preferment offered by Pope, 34 and n.

M.

Manual, how received in England before the Reformation, 162.
Marriage is a civil contract, 109.
— is a desperate thing, 109.
— of cousins-german not unlawful, 109.
Marston, quotation from a play of, 189 n.
Martial law, nature and limit of, 190.
Mayro, writings of, 115.
Metempsychosis believed in by Platonists, 76 and n.
Minister, ordination of, its force and the terms by which it is properly described, 112.
— his position when ordained, 114.
— course of study recommended for, 114 ff.
— degree of respect shown to, among Protestants, 116, 117.
— how his claims can be tested, 118.
— limits of his right to preach, 168.
Money illegally got by English princes at all times, 119.
Monopolies, Sir John Culpeper's speech about, 203.
Mortgage, incidents of a, 120.

N.

Nash, a sensible remark by, 111.
Nativity of Christ, date of the, cannot be known, 197.
Non-residency a favourite topic with the young M.A's, 146.
— forbidden by statute, 167.
Noy brings in ship-money, 171.
Number is nothing in itself, 120.
Nuns, possessed, 55 and n.

O.

Oath, the King's, not security enough, why not, 95.

Oath of allegiance, when and by whom taken, 69.
Oaths taken without knowledge of their meaning, 131.
— cannot be imposed where there is a parity, 121.
— different kinds of, 121.
— may be broken if their observance is very prejudicial, 122.
— rule concerning, among Jews, 122.
— to be taken in the swearer's own sense, 123.
— so frequent that they should be 'swallowed whole,' 123.
Obedience due to a prince, how to be determined, 191.
Opinion, nature of, 124.
Oracles ceased after Christ, why, 123.
Ordeals, 183 and n.
Ovid, judgment about, 134.
Oxford, the King's friends summoned to, 96.
— why to have precedence of Cambridge, 187.

P.

Papists, why not to be admitted to office in England, 137.
— why under disabilities at Amsterdam, 137.
Parity, juggling trick of, 125.
Parliament, all consent to decisions of, 126.
— right of electing to, how fixed, and why, 126.
— its power as a court of law, 100, 142.
— privilege of, its asserted and its true nature, 127.
Parliamentary party, unfair tactics of the, 128, 129.
Parson, meaning of word, 129.
— conjuring by, did much good, 130.
Pelias hasta, Selden's History of Tithes compared to, 180.
Penance, not to be confused with penitence, 131.
People, good of the, to be studied by lawgiver, 131.
Perjury first punished in Queen Elizabeth's time, 123.
Personatus, meaning of word, 129.
Philosophy, how useful, 132.
Pictures in churches, a discreet rule about, 81.
Pigeon-house, who licensed to keep, 50 n.
INDEX.

Pious uses, perversion of, 189.
Place, a great, often qualifies its holder, 151.
Platonic, fancy of a, 124.
Plays, why written in verse, 134.
Pleasure, the nature of, 133.
— ought to be enjoyed, 133.
Pocklington (Dr.), his books burned, 169 n.
Pope, limit of infallibility of the, 156.
— English clergy inconsiderate in preaching against the, 138.
Popery, the prelatical clergy falsely charged with, 139.
Possession, diabolical, 55 and n.
Power, all, is of God, meaning of words, 140.
Præmunire, nature of, 153.
Prayer, defence of set forms of, 143.
— should be short, why, 144.
Preach the Gospel, how command is to be obeyed, 144.
Preaching often, condemned, 146; approved, 149.
— democratic influence of, 163.
— by the Spirit, why most esteemed by the common people, 145.
— some rules for, 147, 148.
Predestination, a point out of our reach, 149.
Preferment, prospect of, makes men obedient, 151.
— not getting, makes the presbyters discontented, 157.
— some Parliament men discontented until they got, 159.
Prerogative, nature and limit of the King's, 154.
Presbyters, their power over the laity and lay-elders, 156.
— claim to be jure divinum, 175.
Presbytery, queries concerning jus divinum of, 156, 208.
Pride, how far permissible, 78.
Prideaux, his lectures on Predestination, 150.
Priest has no indelible character, 113.
— an Irish, on the accession of James the First, 158.
Priests, reason of statutes against, 157 and n.
— of Rome, their objects and methods, 159.
Prior of St. John's, 4 and n.
— his rank as a temporal baron, 166, 206.
Priories, spoliation of, 3, 4.
Prophecies, use of, 159.

Protections, their nature; abuses of, 107 and n.
Protestants and Papists, a dispute between, 97 and n.
Protestants, why rightly admitted to office in France, 137.
Protests of the Lords, 168.
Proverbs, use and value of, 159.
Prynne censured in Star-Chamber, 45.

Q.
Queen-mother (Mary de Medici) draws priests and Jesuits about her, 158.
— Commons suggest that she be moved to leave England, 158 n.
Queries sent to the Assembly on jus divinum of presbytery, 156, 208.

R.
Rabbi Busy disputes with a puppet, 164.
Rack, how used in England, 184.
Reasons commonly fictitious, 160.
— must be enquired about after the fact is known, 161.
Recta ratio, meaning of, in the schoolmen, 160.
Regna allodiata, 97.
Religion, meddled with at unfrat times, 161.
— very little agreement about, 161.
— alteration of, dangerous, 162.
— who have the right to judge about, 162.
— disputes about, between Protestants and Papists, 97, 163.
— disputes about, must be interminable, 164.
— is turned into all shapes to suit ends, 165.
— nature of some men's pretence of, 165.
— why men say they fight for, 166, 167.
Religions, when impossible to reconcile, 165.
Reverence, it is sometimes unreasonable to demand, 168.
Ripley the alchemist, story about, 74.
Robertus Vallensis on Virgil's aureus ramus, 155 n.
Rosset (Rosetti), Count, 158.
INDEX.

S.
Sabbath, observance of the, 169 and n.
Sacrament taken by Judas, 170.
— no one can judge about another's fitness to receive, 170.
Saint Nicholas, image of, 80, 106.
Salisbury, Lord, was above ill words, 62.
Salus populi suprema lex esto, 131.
Salvation, how understood by the Jews, 170.
— Selden's charitable opinion about, 170.
Saracens, how pictured by Crusaders, and why, 190.
Scaliger on Erasmus, 15.
Scripture, interpretation of, 11, 145.
— allegoric on, 11.
— different readings in, how to be judged, 11, 12.
Selden, some laudatory notices of, 211.
— criticisms of style and method of, 211, 212.
Self-denial not meritorious, 55.
— more pretended than practised, 55.
Ship-money, how brought in. Selden on refusals to pay, 171.
Simplicius on Aristotle, 186.
Simony first forbidden in Queen Elizabeth's time, 171.
— why not practised in time of Popyery, 172.
Soldiers, dispute about profession of, 190.
Spain, the King of, outlawed in Westminster Hall, 99.
Spaniard, a, his death-bed prudence, 63.
Sports, how related to church-work, 37.
— declaration about lawful, on Sundays, 169 n.
— offends serious, godly people, 169 n.
State, rule for conduct in a troubled, 172.
Stephen, bishop of Paris, said to have excommunicated Aristotle, 181 and n.
Stone, a court fool, 62 and n.
Subjects may take up arms against their prince, 191, 192.
Subsidies, not now given to the King, amount of, how calculated, 173.
Suffragans, 13.
Superstition, mistakes and pretences about, 174, 175.

Synod, national, why not to be summoned, 174.
— why there must be laymen in, 175.
— meaning of subscription to articles of, 176.

T.
Table Talk, blunders in printed editions of, 209.
— manuscript copies of, xi.
Tithes, impropriations of, 177.
— impropriations of, by what authority made, 178.
— need not belong to the clergy, 178.
— Selden's History of, 179.
Tradesman, every prince is a, 181.
Tradesmen, tricks of, 182.
Tradition, importance of, 182.
Traitor, he who can command an army is not to be called a, 189.
Transubstantiation, arguments about, 182.
Trenchmore, a dance so termed, 93 n.
Treat, Council of, not admitted in France, 163, 141 n. on line 22.
Trial, various kinds of, 183.
Trinity, the three Persons of the, 185.
Truth, all, said to be contained in Aristotle, 186.
Turks, their notions about Heaven and Hell contrasted with those of the Christians, 35.
— are forbidden to use images, 199.

U.
Urban the Sixth, a Parliamentary Pope, 137.
Uses, pious, perversion of, 189.
Usury, how far forbidden among the Jews, 188.
— defence of, 188.

V.
Valentinian's Novels, 81.
Vallensis, Robertus, his references to Virgil, 155 n.
Venetians, why Roman Catholics, 163.
Verse, well for children to learn how to make, 135.
— ridiculous for a lord to print, 135.
Virgil's ausus ramus, how interpreted by the alchemists, 155.
Vows, instances of absurd, 188.
INDEX.

W.

Wayed, word explained, 49 n.
Wedel interprets Virgil's 'golden bough' alchemically, 153 n.
Whitelock on Selden's speeches in the Westminster Assembly, xviii.
Wife, remarks on a handsome, 194.
— a bishop's, compared to a monkey's clog, 194.
— compared to a mischievous female monkey, 194.
Wisdom, some rules of, 194.
— how different from wit, 195.
Wit, nature of, 195.
— should be restrained by civility, 196.
— fine, sometimes injurious to its possessor, 196.

| Witches, remarks about, 195. |
| Women ought not to know their own wit, 196. |
| — and angels, opinion in Greek Church about, 196. |
| — are sensitive about dispraise of other women, 197. |
| — must trust somebody, 197. |

Y.

Year, the Jewish, how reckoned, 197.

Z.

Zealots, Jewish law about, 199.
— committed many villainies, 200.
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George Bernard Shaw:
A CRITICAL SURVEY • EDITED

BY LOUIS KRONENBERGER

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## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A SHORT CHRONOLOGY</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Beerbohm: <em>A Cursory Conspectus of G. B. S.</em> (1901)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Huneker: <em>The Quintessence of Shaw</em> (1905)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. K. Chesterton: <em>The Critic</em> (1909)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Palmer: <em>George Bernard Shaw: Harlequin or Patriot?</em> (1915)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. P. Howe: <em>Shaw's Economics</em> (1915)</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dixon Scott: <em>The Innocence of Bernard Shaw</em> (1916)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip Littell: <em>The Bondage of Shaw</em> (1917)</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludwig Lewisohn: <em>Shaw Among the Mystics</em> (1922)</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Jean Nathan: <em>Mr. Shaw and the Ogre</em> (1931)</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Wood Krutch: <em>The Shavian Dilemma</em> (1935)</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmund Wilson: <em>Bernard Shaw at Eighty</em> (1938)</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. H. Auden: <em>The Fabian Figaro</em> (1942)</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacques Barzun: <em>Bernard Shaw in Twilight</em> (1943)</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronald Peacock: <em>Shaw</em> (1946)</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. E. M. Joad: <em>Shaw's Philosophy</em> (1946)</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Bentley: <em>Shaw's Political Economy</em> (1947)</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stark Young: <em>Heartbreak Houses</em> (1948)</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Spender: <em>The Riddle of Shaw</em> (1949)</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Mason Brown: <em>Caesar and Cleopatra</em> (1950)</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Mann: <em>&quot;He Was Mankind's Friend&quot;</em> (1951)</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A SHORT CHRONOLOGY

(Plays are dated by the year Shaw finished writing them)

1856—G. B. S. born July 26, in Dublin
1871—Goes to work for a Dublin estate agent
1876—Moves to London
1879—Works for Edison Telephone Company; writes first novel, Immaturity
1880— Writes novel, The Irrational Knot
1881— Writes novel, Love among the Artists; grows beard; turns vegetarian
1882— Writes novel, Cashel Byron’s Profession; turns Socialist
1883— Writes without completing An Unsocial Socialist
1884— Joins Fabian Society
1885— Death of Shaw’s father
1886— Begins three-year stretch as art critic of The World
1888— Begins two-year stretch as music critic (Corno di Bassetto) on The Star
1889— Publishes Fabian Essays
1890— Begins four-year stretch as music critic of The World
1891— The Quintessence of Ibsenism
1892— Widowers’ Houses
1893— The Philanderer; Mrs Warren’s Profession
1894— Arms and the Man; Candida
1895— Begins three-year stretch as drama critic of the Saturday Review; The Man of Destiny; You Never Can Tell
A Short Chronology

1896—The Devil’s Disciple
1898—Marries Charlotte Payne-Townshend; Caesar and Cleopatra; The Perfect Wagnerite
1899—Captain Brassbound’s Conversion
1903—Man and Superman
1904—John Bull’s Other Island; defeated as candidate for London County Council
1905—Revisits Ireland for the first time; buys house at Ayot St Lawrence; Major Barbara
1906—The Doctor’s Dilemma; Our Theatres in the Nineties; meets Ellen Terry
1908—Getting Married
1909—Misalliance; The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet
1911—Fanny’s First Play
1912—Androcles and the Lion; Pygmalion
1914—Common Sense About the War
1919—Heartbreak House
1920—Back to Methuselah
1923—Saint Joan
1925—Awarded Nobel Prize for Literature
1928—The Intelligent Woman’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism
1929—The Apple Cart
1931—Visits U.S.S.R.; Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence
1932—The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God
1933—Visits America
1934—Collected Prefaces
1939—In Good King Charles’s Golden Days
1943—Wife dies at 86
1950—Shaw dies, Nov. 13, at 94
INTRODUCTION

Shaw was not simply the longest-lived of modern writers and in some degree the most many-sided; he was also in a sense the most challenging and disruptive. No other writer, as a result, has been the subject of so much criticism and so much near-nonsense. In an effort to understand what Shaw “meant,” a whole battery of journalists, a whole army of pundits have sadly misunderstood what he was. Some of them have wrestled in solemn social-worker fashion with Shaw as though he were entirely a writer of textbooks and tracts; some, at the other extreme, have tried to make Shaw’s irreverence and iconoclasm the engine of their own craving to startle or demolish. But neither through ignoring what was most Shavian nor through trying to outdo it did much worth saying about Shaw get said. And even the wisest of Shaw’s critics cannot always have known how far Shaw’s showmanship concealed his serious intentions, how far it coincided with them, and how far it concealed the lack of any.

But, in whatever spirit and from whatever side, it has been notably easy to write about Shaw. Any man with a specialty or a mania must somewhere have found Shaw adverting to it; any man with a grievance must have found in Shaw an antagonist or ally; whatever a man’s politics, or his God, or his denial of one, Shaw—early or late—must have had his say about it. For on however outmoded or ill-reasoned or cantankerous a basis, Shaw’s collected works constitute a sort of encyclopaedia. Shaw has greeted an endless succession of events with a twenty-one-gun salute—his little innovation being to take lethal aim as well. He not only took all human activity for his province, but strongly suggested that nothing superhuman was alien to him, either—he swept Heaven clean of charm, drastically lowered the temperature of Hell, brought back the dead, landscaped and peopled the future. No matter what one’s field or one’s foible—God or Devil, O’Leary or John Bull, prizefighters or soldiers or poets, armament-makers or brothel-keepers, Shakespeare or Wagner, phonetics or marriage or divorce, slums or drama critics, war or revolution—Shaw may serve as a pretext for writing about it, or it as a pretext for writing about Shaw.
Introduction

But exactly as his work supplies something for almost everyone to write about, it embraces too many things for any one person to write about with sufficient authority. Whoever would deal definitely with Shaw must go well beyond the writer of plays or of prefaces, the critic of plays or of music, must plunge into Marx and cross over to Ireland and turn back to Lamarck, must buy himself an atlas and burrow deep in history, must know medicine and law, the Church and many churches, the whole arena of politics, half the arcana of science, plus much miscellaneous knowledge and very much curious lore. Even where Shaw is shallow or fanciful or mistaken, the critic who would pronounce judgment cannot be. Hence the most we can really hope for is that anyone who would write with some breadth about Shaw should be a man of letters with an informed concern for ideas; should offer a literary man's verdict of Shaw's talent and a knowledgeable, however disputable, version of Shaw's "thought." No one can write comprehensively of Shaw as just a literary or dramatic critic: for again and again one must stop and explain, or digress and coordinate, or go after the facts and compare. And the difficulty isn't just how much Shaw wrote about, it is how consistently—or inconsistently—he wrote about it, in how dedicated or mischievous a spirit, with how controversial a slant, how contradictory an aim: so that one is dealing with shock tactics as well as principles, with the man who wrote for Hearst as well as for posterity, with poseur no less than puritan, thinker and thought-processor too, and with in some ways the most bourgeois as well as the most anti-bourgeois writer of his time.

All the same, if we are to isolate and honor what remains most vital and Shavian about Shaw we must neglect the role he assumed most vividly in his own time for the role he more and more occupies in ours; we must care less about how informed or inflammatory or even intelligent he was in favor of how supple and witty and articulate he remains. Like Shakespeare he filled his plays with historical characters, like Ibsen with social ideas, and as with them it only matters now how creatively he went about it: the problem of Ghosts no longer presses, the first act of Ghosts is a marvel of exposition still. To be sure, from the real place he occupies in history Shaw's treatment of issues and ideas has a more than usual historical interest: due tribute must be paid to such of his "thinking" as proved fruitful, or to such leadership as actually led somewhere. But equally where Shaw seemed most sound or most mistaken, his thinking side has, for our day, been too much stressed; not because of how often Shaw may have been wrong or right, but because his true genius and—as it happened—his real job lay elsewhere. Most of all and most triumphantly of all, Shaw was a showman of ideas. If it is true that
intellectually he was something more, perhaps it is also unfortunate that he was; for what counts less has blurred what easily bulks largest. By a showman of ideas, I mean something big-scaled as well as admirable, I mean someone who, at his weakest, made a fashion show of all the contending issues of his age, and who, at his most trenchant, made a superb military spectacle where those issues crossed swords and drew blood and often killed one another off. His were, in many cases, sham battles and arbitrary victories and defeats: but such was his staging of them, he attracted the whole civilized world to the battlefield. This is not to deny how serious, how astute, how learned Shaw could be. There is much solid matter indeed to Shaw's encyclopaedia, as there is much to Dr. Johnson's Dictionary; but its value will rest more and more on what is Shavian about it, as with the Dictionary it is what is Johnsonian that counts. Shaw's delineation of ancient Egypt or modern England is, for vividness and bias alike, of a piece with Johnson's definition of lexicographer or excise.

So long as we have a Shaw in the role of showman, dramatist, virtuoso, entertainer; so long as his chief function is rather to exhilarate than enlighten the audience, it matters much less how often he contradicts himself, how glaringly his demonstrations nullify each other, or even how wantonly he betrays the scruples of a lifetime for the gratification of the moment. And what for me clinches the fact that Shaw is above all a showman of ideas—equally in terms of classification as of achievement—is that his is so very much more a triumph of method than of meaning—that again and again we can admire the approach while resisting, while rejecting, the arguments. T. S. Eliot once raised the point how far one can enjoy a writer whose ideas antagonize one: I don't know that he answered it, or that it is safely answerable; but the answer may well be, to the degree that he is an engaging showman. (With the pure work of art, something different—something like a willing suspension of disbelief—is involved.) In any case, write though he did on a hundred subjects, with cogency very often, with real conviction as often as not, Shaw yet never wrote so as to fuse all his contentions, reconcile all his contradictions, make some innermost quality of self light up the whole. He wears no heraldic armband, neither the Que sais-je of a Montaigne wise enough to doubt his own wisdom, nor the cor laceratum of Swift, in lifelong explosion for what deep down refused to explode, nor the Écrasez l'infâme of Voltaire, divided by passion from Shaw however joined to him by wit and prankishness. Of dialectics, again, Dr. Johnson, like Shaw, often made a mere game, playing brusquely and unfairly to win; but the dialectics was one thing, the view of life another. When we speak of Dr. Johnson as a humane reactionary,
the two words are ultimately not a contradiction but a coalescence, for to Johnson the Tory scheme of things was really at one with the tragic sense of life: inequality must needs be acquiesced in as a principle since it could not be escaped as a fact. But despite how many things Shaw espoused and militantly fought for, or exposed and fought militantly against, just where do we pierce to the heart of the matter? We all know G. B. S.; but what, precisely, is the Gbessence? Possibly no symbolic heart exists because no human heart declares itself; how much gayer is a Johnson or a Mozart or a Keats for his streak of melancholy. But we no sooner seize on the gaiety of Shaw’s mind than we become aware of the gaunt puritanism of his body; we no sooner respond to his anti-bourgeois laughter than we are conscious of his curiously bourgeois art. He ridicules Ireland by way of England, England by way of Ireland, he turns waggish in the pulpit, injects purpose into his pranks. Plumping for reason, he dissolves in mysticism; whooping up socialism, he lets his eye stray toward the Strong Man and worldly power. Such dazzling contradictions go far to explain Shaw’s success as dramatist, but tend also to point up his untrustworthiness of mind. To put it mildly, it is all much too confusing, it is as though what one’s doctor prescribed as a sedative should also prove an emetic. Were Shaw’s the pervasive skepticism that frowns on all absolutes and is mistrustful of all systems, were his even the feeling that every human benefit has its price, we should know where and in what excellent company we stood. But in spite of his laughter, Shaw does deal in absolutes; in spite of snarling them up in paradoxes, he does offer solutions; and we have accordingly to reconcile a constructive program with a nihilist technique. And superbly as laughter can demolish, or paradox reinterpret, neither thing can be systematically constructive. Shaw’s modus operandi becomes too much an end in itself; the penalty, perhaps, of diverting all who watch you is converting none of them. It is the showmanship that drapes itself in sacerdotal robes, that chants and swings incense and utters solemn proclamations—whether after Wagner’s fashion, or Stanislavsky’s, or Mr. Eliot’s—that acquires not just audiences, but followers. The really costly thing with Shaw was not how many other people he made light of, but that—and never more than when he swaggered—he so decidedly made light of himself.

Yet we must always bear in mind two things. A man born with a genius for juggling—whether colored balls or controversial ideas—can hardly escape the role of performer, can hardly avoid ending up on the stage. So much for what Shaw was; as for what he in some measure failed to be, as for his final lack of philosophic wholeness and weight, the very thing that made him in one sense more than
man—the free, volatile, unavenging, dazzlingly gymnastic play of mind—left him not a complete man as well. He rather reversed the usual human order: in him, the animal spirits and sensual enjoyments that keep other men zestful and young were soberly dislodged or puritanically suppressed; while the philosophic doubts, the worries over the world, the concern for the good life that turn other men into split and neurotic personalities were for Shaw a source of invigoration and release. The effect, if extraordinary, is also just a little monstrous, as of someone not created but invented, as of someone marvelously, miraculously . . . two dimensional.

The masks, the pranks, the poses were in their way, of course, psychologically necessary as well as professionally shrewd. Shaw—as he himself confessed and Bertrand Russell and others quickly noted—was by nature a painfully shy man; one who compensated in print for a lack of ease in ordinary conversation; one who went still farther, and made of himself not just a dramatic figure but an almost fictional one. It doesn’t matter that part of the fiction consisted in speaking the truth. Shaw’s habitual joshing, moreover, bespoke not a mocking mind or witty tongue alone: the habitual joser is oftenest someone who finds the unself-conscious give-and-take of human intercourse a strain. His joshing, on the personal side, represents a kind of avoidance of conversation, while on the intellectual side it is a way, among one’s inferiors, of not having to talk drivel or talk down. Something faintly mysterious, because faintly monstrous, surrounds this man in whom the mind bulks so large and the body so blatantly dwindles; whose puritan view of sex may rather signify a sexual difficulty “solved” by puritanism. But the more palpable and, I would think, serious personal difficulty was social and economic, and derives from the shabby-genteel family background, from the indigently transplanted Irishman, from the father who drank and the mother forced to work. Shaw solved the thing magnificently as a writer, but the emotions it begot he never wholly mastered or outgrew. He was one of those to whom birth wouldn’t have mattered in the slightest had he only been really wellborn; he was a snob not for something he was but for something he wasn’t. One thinks, if for only a moment, of Swift. Shaw, like Swift, resented his ambiguous social position, and took more than good care of his money. Like Swift again, Shaw was fascinated by men of power, and oddly evasive about women and love. But the likenesses only emphasize, in the end, the contrast between one of the most perfectly managed and one of the most tragically mishandled of all careers; between a self-regulated and smooth-functioning life and one that, deeply fissured within, ended in madness. For want of a brooding and melancholy streak, Shaw’s work fails of a kind of beauty inherent in much
of the finest art; but the absence of it in Shaw himself left the showman free to shuffle his masks at will and achieve the most unlikely roles: a Savonarola who should twinkle while he thundered; a puritan man-of-the-world who, in the most Jaegerish of garments, attainted to the jauntest of styles. Consider merely the beard—by which Shaw instantly attracted attention and permanently concealed his face; by which he contrived to look flatteringly male and engagingly Mephistophelian; and by which, most of all, through seeming to part with it, Shaw permanently preserved his youth.

If in these comments of my own I have stressed a certain side of Shaw, the side that cracked a whip rather than carried a lantern, that will also explain a possible bias in my choice from the comment of others. I am not conscious of any, but it seems wise to allow for one since the whole problem of what to include in this volume was from the outset thorny. There was first of all—before deciding what to choose—the matter of what to choose from. Only someone with a fanatic’s ardor and an archaeologist’s skill could read all the criticism that has been written about Shaw, and even he would need to master several dozen languages, or maintain a staff of resident translators. Take Shaw’s plays alone: somebody must somewhere be reviewing some one of them every day in the year; while in how many obscure and ill-fated journals dear to vegetable-eaters or élanvitalitarians must there not have been critiques about Shaw and the flesh, or Shaw and the spirit? I can’t pretend to have made even a beginning in this huge, mad, musty storehouse of provincial newspapers, crank periodicals, and privately printed brochures. Even working on a greatly restricted scale, even rooting out—from the accumulated files and stacks of nearly sixty years—what seemed reasonably promising or pertinent, proved a trifle exhausting: the more so as, among so much Shaw criticism that could be termed adequate, so little seemed really impressive.

The precise basis for choosing raised problems, too. With so many-sided a writer, should critical merit be the sole criterion, or should variety and comprehensiveness be considered also? Shouldn’t there be articles on not the dramatist or drama critic, the prose-writer or pamphleteer alone, but on the Fabian, the Lamarckian, the Butlerite, the Irishman, the Anglo-Irishman, the critic of theologians and medicos and painters and pianists and critics? Again, should there not be articles on Shaw whose writers sum up various points of view—American and English, Eire and Ulster, Tory and Marxist, religious and rationalist? And finally, should there not be a balance of opinion—or a critical spectrum, rather, ranging from eulogy to excoriation? Well—no. Other things being equal, I have wherever possible
favored variety; but since other things seldom are equal, merit for
the most part has proved decisive. If there is more here on Shaw’s
writing and playwriting gifts than on what he wrote about, it is both
because they gave rise to keener criticism and because they arouse
keener interest now. If sharply defined points of view fell by the
wayside, it is because there is so little point in viewing them; the set
Tory or Marxist, the militant Churchman or anti-clerical—however
incisive at moments—will far likelier write propaganda than criticism,
much oftener exploit Shaw than examine him. Finally, a balance of
opinion cannot be achieved through using opinion unbalanced in
itself, through babbling praise or unbridled vituperation: though I
daresay I would have included a sufficiently brilliant tirade could I
have found one.

There emerges a certain range and variety withal. Along with so
much else, Edmund Wilson’s essay applies socialist and Marxist
criteria to Shaw’s political and social thinking. Though highly con-
troversial, Eric Bentley’s defense of Shaw’s politics and political
affiliations has its expository no less than its critical merits. Joa’s
discussion of Shaw’s philosophy—which means his biology as well—
seems as definitive as it is lucid. There is P. P. Howe, again, on
Shaw’s economics; there is Chesterton on his criticism. I would
have liked a proper piece on Shaw as art critic, and as music critic
even more; but among a handful of tries, none turned up. B. H.
Haggin, after a page or two, writes of other things; Professor Dent,
for the most part, writes memoirs of things past; Mr. William Irvine
is more descriptive than critical; and Virgil Thomson—of whom I
inquired—has written nothing at all. At the outset, too, I had hopes
of including a number of reviews, and I have included one or two,
notably Stark Young’s valuable dissent on Heartbreak House. But
reviews, however sound, not only barnacle the comment with details
of the story, they befog the play with details of the production. Even
Pirandello writing, after the first New York production, of Saint Joan
imbeds a few bright nuggets in sandy soil. A great many of Shaw’s
better-known critics have gradually lost, or perhaps always lacked,
real critical value—or so I have reacted, at least, to Archer, Walkley,
Desmond McCarthy, C. E. Montague, Havelock Ellis and a number
of others. Mencken’s long out-of-print little book is mere prentice-
work in which Mencken took far more of Shaw’s manner than his
measure; Mencken’s later essay, “The Ulster Polonius,” is one of
many articles from which, while the piece itself may be left to
perish, a line or remark should be saved. Thus Mencken ascribed
Shaw’s success to his treating “the obvious in terms of the scandal-
ous.” Thus—for one among many examples—W. J. Turner remarked
that “like all Puritans, Shaw feels that passion must be put to use.”
And of course there is Egon Fridell's all-too-famous but more than just clever mot. Shaw, said Fridell, was very shrewd: always, in prescribing for the public, he coated his pills with chocolate. But the public, Fridell added, was even shrewder: it licked off the chocolate without swallowing the pills.

Of the criticism that I have included, much of the best—and this is no doubt as it should be—came reasonably early. Chesterton's book, published forty-odd years ago, was not simply a milestone; in certain of its judgments it remains a terminus as well. Dixon Scott's essay, so much admired where known (but so little known), praises and indicts, I think, with equal sharpness; and Max Beerbohm—his Tory esthetics perhaps even more outraged than his Tory politics—makes a neat blend of Shaw's gifts and his own misgivings. John Palmer brings much wit to the matter and much sense as well; while Mr. Nathan is sharp as well as blunt on the subject that Shaw most tends to sidestep and that Nathan is always enchanted to greet. Indeed, for a certain flavorsomeness, for a way of meeting Shaw on his own ground, with cognate wit or comparable weapons, the best of the Old Guard are much superior to all but the very best of the new. In general, however, the older writers sadly date, and almost as sadly—with their luxuriant literary-journalistic prose—in style as in substance.

In our time there have been some very good things written about Shaw, and some very good names indeed among the writers. Yet what stands forth glaringly is the extent to which Shaw has not been written about—that is to say, by the most influential of our serious critics. Though often touching on Shaw, Mr. Eliot has made no attempt to traverse him; nor, so far as I know, has a Leavis, a Blackmur, a Tate, a Trilling, a Ransom, a Winters—the list, if it is not to be lengthy, can only be suggestive. And it is of real interest to ask why so many fashionable and formidable critics have passed Shaw by, even though the answer, up to a point, seems clear enough. For one thing, of course, Shaw lived too long and, save here and there, his later work—a full twenty years of it—had almost in common decency to be ignored. More integrally, Shaw in his "art" was the kind of bourgeois writer who would antagonize today's higher criticism, and in his tactics was the kind of anti-bourgeois writer who would perhaps antagonize it even more. And not only, of course, is Shaw's method sharply didactic; his concern is not with humanity but with society. He goes at slums in terms of slum clearance, at brothels in terms of capitalist profiteers, at marriage in terms of crippling divorce laws, at the early Christians in pointed contrast to the later ones. His Caesar or his Joan is not, thanks to the creative imagination, more richly complex than in history's pages; rather each is
brilliantly simplified and straightened out, each his own most eloquent spokesman. Thus not only art in the final reckoning, but life itself at the very outset, is too much cut to measure; everything functions mechanically, nothing breathes. Worse still, there is the fact that Shaw, whether a poet of sorts or no poet at all or Mr. Eliot’s poet strangled at birth, quite lacks the kind of poetic sensibility that prevails today. And indeed, even after scraping away all that is not Shaw’s view of Shakespeare, his insistence on the banality of Shakespeare’s thinking really constitutes a misapprehension of Shakespeare’s art. It is part of Shakespeare’s greatness as a creative writer that he avoided Shaw’s mistake, that he preferred poetic truism to scientific truth; that with such a writer ripeness is all, and ratiocination, in the end, is nothing. Shaw is indeed least poetic where he tries hardest to be. Marchbanks is most a monster for being even less of a poet than of a normal human being; he is quite inept when he tries to talk like Shelley and only forceful when he begins to talk like Shaw. And when Shaw himself aspires to poetry, as with the March winds and frisking lambs of *Saint Joan*, his rank failure is all too notorious.

As many critics would find no sense of poetry in Shaw, so would they find no awareness of evil; of a troubled, darkly religious vision of life; of the lost, or damned, or guilt-gnawed, or salvation-seeking soul. There are no bad people, no black-hearted, God-hounded evildoers in Shaw; there are only corrupt classes or intolerable social conditions or vicious laws. (Shaw’s failure to understand personal wickedness is a real deficiency.) And we have finally to reckon with the fact that serious modern criticism has shown, quite understandably, little interest in the theater, for there has been little there to interest it. Thus, for many critics, if there has been no incentive to discuss Shaw’s own achievement as a playwright, there has equally been no need to examine his influence—or even his lack of influence—on playwriting.

But though one can well understand why so many critics have failed to write about Shaw, one yet can wish that they had, or that they would. They might nail all that on the one hand is frivolous and on the other hand tractarian, all that is bloodless or bogus or mongrel or out-of-date, and contrive a sharp new formulation of where he failed or fell short. But they might also conclude that, in violation of his own tenets quite as much as theirs, Shaw achieved magnificent effects; that with his verve and energy he is, time and again, nothing less than irresistible; that for sheer articulateness and wit, he is in modern times, all but unmatched. No one can dismiss Shaw’s talent; one can at most deplore what Shaw did with it.

Louis Kronenberger
George Bernard SHAW:
A CRITICAL SURVEY
Assuming that Mr. Shaw will live to the age of ninety (and such is the world's delight in him that even then his death will seem premature), I find that he has already fulfilled one half of his life span. Yet is it only in the past seven years or so that he has gained his vogue. One would suppose that so distinct a creature, so sharply complete in himself, must have been from the outset famous. But the fact remains that every morning for some thirty-seven years Mr. Shaw woke up and found himself obscure. Though, of course, his friends and fellow-workers recognised in him a being apart, for the Anglo-Saxon race he did not exist. I have often wondered what was the reason: was it the world's usual obtuseness, or was it that Mr. Shaw was unusually late in development? I had no means of deciding. I did not possess any of Mr. Shaw's early work. Thus very welcome to me is the reprint of a novel* written by Mr. Shaw in the flush of youth. Of the novel itself Mr. Shaw himself evidently thinks no great shakes. For on this excursion he takes with him even more than his usual armful of light baggage—prefaces, notes, appendices, quotations; he has also a new portable dramatic version of his book. And, as he bustles along the platform with these spick-and-span impedimenta in his grasp, he seems hardly to care whether or not that battered old resuscitated trunk of his be thrown into the van. Yet for me that is the real object of interest. I rush to examine it, and tears of joy well up at the sight of "G. B. S." printed on it, as on the new hand-baggage, in letters of flame.

Yes! Cashel Byron's Profession is quite mature. Mr. Shaw is fully himself in it, and throughout it. It tallies with all his recent work.

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* Cashel Byron's Profession by Bernard Shaw. London; Grant Richards. 1901.
Such differences as may be found in it are differences of mere surface, due to the fashions of the decade in which it was written, not essential differences in the writer. Apart from them, it might be his latest book. It has all his well-known merits and faults, and who shall say whether his faults or his merits are the more delicious? His own quick strong brain is behind it all, darting through solid walls of popular fallacy to the truths that lie beyond them, and darting with the impetus of its own velocity far beyond those truths to ram itself against other walls of fallacy not less solid. All through the book we hear the loud, rhythmic machinery of this brain at work. The book vibrates to it as does a steamer to the screw; and we, the passengers, rejoice in the sound of it, for we know that tremendous speed is being made. As a passage by steam is to a voyage by sail, so is Mr. Shaw's fiction to true fiction. A steamboat is nice because it takes us quickly to some destination; a sailing-yacht is nice in itself, nice for its own sake. Mr. Shaw's main wish is to take us somewhere. In other words, he wants to impress certain theories on us, to convert us to this or that view. The true creator wishes mainly to illude us with a sense of actual or imaginative reality. To achieve that aim, he must suppress himself and his theories: they kill illusion. He must accept life as it presents itself to his experience or imagination, not use his brain to twist it into the patterns of a purpose. Such self-sacrifice is beyond Mr. Shaw. He often says (and believes) that he is, despite his propagandism, a true delineator of life. But that is one of his delightful hallucinations, due to the fact that his sight for things as they are is weak in comparison with his insight into himself. In fact, Mr. Shaw is not a creator. He cannot see beyond his own nose. Even the fingers he outstretches from it to the world are (as I shall suggest) often invisible to him. Looking into his own heart, he sees clearly the world as it ought to be, and sees (as I have already suggested) further still. Of the world as it is he sees a clean-cut phantasmagoria, in which every phantom is his own unrecognised self. When he describes what he has seen, himself is the one person illuded. Some novelists fail through being unable to throw themselves into the characters they have projected. They remain critically outside, instead of becoming the characters themselves. This is not the explanation of Mr. Shaw's failure. He does not stand outside his characters: a man cannot slip his own skin. Mr. Shaw fails because the characters are all himself, and all he can do is to differentiate them by "quick-changes." But these disguises he makes in a very perfunctory way—a few twists of diaphanous gauze, a new attitude, nothing more. Thus it is in Cashel Byron, as in his plays. Take Cashel himself. Mr. Shaw means to present him as a very stupid young man with a genius for pugilism. But soon he turns out
to be a very clever young man, with a genius for introspection and ratiocinatory exposition. These powers are not incompatible with a genius for prize-fighting. But quite incompatible with it are physical cowardice and lack of any sentiment for the art practised. Mr. Shaw makes Cashel a coward, and lets him abandon prize-fighting without a pang at the first opportunity, in order to prove his thesis that prize-fighting is a mere mechanical business in which neither sentiment nor courage is involved. As usual he goes further than the truth. It is untrue that prize-fighters are heroes and artists and nothing else, as the public regards them. But it is equally untrue that you can use your fists (gloved or ungloved) without courage, or that any man with supreme natural ability can care nothing for the channel in which it exclusively runs. Thus Cashel does not credibly exist for us: he is the victim of a thesis. Besides, he is Mr. Shaw. So, of course, is Lydia, the heroine, the imperturbable, strong-minded, blue-stockinged heroine, who, like the rest of Mr. Shaw's heroines, has nothing to do but set every one right—a sincere, so easily does she do it. The only characters that really illude us are the subordinate characters, of whom we see merely the surfaces and not the souls. Mr. Shaw has a keen eye for superficial idiosyncrasies, and such figures as Mellish and Mrs. Skene are as possible as they are delicious, though even they are always ready to dart out on us and ratiocinate in Mr. Shaw's manner.

After all, it is Mr. Shaw qu'il nous faut. My analogy of the steamship was misleading. Though Mr. Shaw's chief aim, indeed, is to proselytise, we enjoy his preaching for its own sake, without reference to conviction. We enjoy for its own sake the process by which he arrives at his conclusions. At least, we do so if we take him in the right way. We must not take him too seriously. An eminent scholar once said to me that what he disliked in Mr. Shaw was his lack of moral courage. I pricked up my ears, delighted: here was a new idea. Urged by me to explain himself, the eminent scholar said "Well, whenever he propounds a serious thesis of his own, he does so in a jocular vein, not being sure that he is right, and knowing that if he is wrong he will have saved his face by laughing in his reader's"—or words to that effect. I was disappointed. My interlocutor had betrayed simply his incapacity to understand the rudiments of Shawism. The fact that he is a Scotchman, and that Mr. Shaw is an Irishman, ought to have forewarned me. To take Mr. Shaw thus seriously is as inept as to believe (and many folk do believe) that he is a single-minded buffoon. In him, as in so many Irishmen, seriousness and frivolity are inextricably woven in and out of each other. He is not a serious man trying to be frivolous. He is a serious man who cannot help being frivolous, and in him height of
spirits is combined with depth of conviction more illustriously than in any of his compatriots. That is why he amuses me as does no one else. The merely “comic man” is as intolerable in literature as in social intercourse. Humour undiluted is the most depressing of all phenomena. Humour must have its background of seriousness. Without this contrast there comes none of that incongruity which is the mainspring of laughter. The more sombre the background the brighter skips the jest. In most of the serious writers who are also humorous there is perfect secretion between the two faculties. Thus in Matthew Arnold’s controversial writings the humorous passages are always distinct interludes or “asides” consciously made, and distinct from the scheme of the essay. They are irresistible by reason of the preceding seriousness. But in Mr. Shaw the contrast is still sharper and more striking. For there the two moods are, as it were, arm in arm—inseparable comrades. Mr. Shaw cannot realise his own pertness, nor can he preserve his own gravity, for more than a few moments at a time. Even when he sets out to be funny for fun’s sake, he must needs always pretend that there is a serious reason for the emprise; and he pretends so strenuously that he ends by convincing us almost as fully as he convinces himself. Thus the absurdity, whatever it be, comes off doubly well. Conversely, even when he is really engrossed in some process of serious argument, or moved to real eloquence by one of his social ideals, he emits involuntarily some wild jape which makes the whole thing ridiculous—as ridiculous to himself as to us; and straightway he proceeds to caricature his own thesis till everything is topsy-turvy; and we, rolling with laughter, look up and find him no longer on his head, but on his heels, talking away quite gravely; and this sets us off again. For, of course, when seriousness and frivolity thus co-exist inseparably in a man, the seriousness is nullified by the frivolity. The latter is fed by the former, but, graceless and vampire-like, kills it. As a teacher, as a propagandist, Mr. Shaw is no good at all, even in his own generation. But as a personality he is immortal.
JAMES HUNEKER

1909

The Quintessence of Shaw

I

To my friend, George Bernard Shaw, the Celtic superman, critic, novelist, socialist, and preface writer, to whom the present author—circa 1890—played the part of a critical finger-post for the everlasting benefit (he sincerely hopes) of the great American public; and to whom he now dedicates this particular essay in gratitude for the rare and stimulating pleasure afforded him by the Shaw masques, the Shavian philosophy, and also the vivid remembrance of several personal encounters at London and Bayreuth.

The announcement that Bernard Shaw, moralist, Fabianite, vegetarian, playwright, critic, Wagnerite, Ibsenite, jester to the cosmos, and the most serious man on the planet, had written a play on the subject of Don Juan did not surprise his admirers. As Nietzsche philosophized with a hammer, so G. B. S. hammers popular myths. If you have read his Cesar and Cleopatra you will know what I mean. This witty, sarcastic piece is the most daring he has attempted. Some years ago I described the Shaw literary pedigree as—W. S. Gilbert out of Ibsen. His plays are full of modern odds and ends, and in form are anything from the Robertsonian comedy to the Gilbertian extravaganza. They may be called psychical farce, an intellectual comédie rosse—for his people are mostly a blackguard crew of lively marionettes all talking pure Shaw-ese. Mr. Shaw has invented a new individual in literature who for want of a better name could be called the Super-Cad; he is Nietzsche's Superman turned "bounder"—and sometimes the sex is feminine.

We wonder what sort of drama this remarkable Hibernian would have produced if he had been a flesh-eater. If he is so brilliant on

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bran, what could he not have accomplished on blood! One thing is
certain: at the cosmical banquet where Shaw sits is the head of the
table—for him.

When Bernard Shaw told a gaping world that he was only a
natural-born mountebank with a cart and a trumpet, a sigh of relief
was exhaled in artistic London. So many had been taking him seri-
ously and swallowing his teachings, preachings, and *pronuncia-
mentos*, that to hear the merryman was only shamming came as a
species of liberation from a cruel obsession. Without paying the cus-
tomary critical toll, Shaw had slipped duty free into England all
manners of damnable doctrines. What George Moore attempted in a
serious manner George Shaw, a fellow-Irishman, succeeded in ac-
complishing without the *chorale* of objurgation, groans, exclama-
tions of horror, and blasts of puritanical cant. Thus Proudhon, Marx,
Lassalle, Ibsen, Wagner, Nietzsche, and a lot of free-thinkers in
socialism, religion, philosophy, and art, walked un molested through
the pages of critical reviews, while Mr. Moore was almost pilloried
for advocating naturalism, while Vizetelly was sent to prison for
translating Zola.

After the Shaw criticisms came the novels, then the plays. The
prefaces of the latter are literature, and will be remembered with
joy when the plays are forgotten. In them the author has distilled
the quintessence of Shaw. They will be classics some day, as the
Dryden prefaces are classics. Nevertheless, in the plays we find the
old Shaw masquerading, this time behind the footlights. He is still
the preacher, Fabian debater, socialist, vegetarian, lycanthrope, and
normally abnormal man of the early days—though he prides himself
on his abnormal normality. Finding that the essay did not reach a
wide enough audience, the wily Celt mounts the rostrum and blar-
neys his listeners something after this manner:

"Here's my hustings; from here will I teach, preach, and curse the
conventions of society. Come all ye who are tired of the property
fallacy! There is but one Karl Marx, and I am his living prophet.
Shakespeare must go—Ibsen is to rule. Wagner was a Fabianite; the
Ring proves it. Come all ye who are heaven-laden with the moral-
ities! I am the living witness for Nietzsche. I will teach children to
renounce the love of parents; parents to despise their offspring; hus-
bands to hate their wives; wives to loathe their husbands; and
brothers and sisters will raise warring hands after my words have
entered their souls. Whatever is is wrong—to alter Pope. The prosti-
tute classes—I do not balk at the ugly word—clergymen, doctors,
lawyers, statesmen, journalists, are deceiving you. They speak in
divers and lying tongues. I alone possess the prophylactic against
the evils of life. Here it is: Plays, Pleasant and Unpleasant; and Three Plays for Puritans."

But Shaw only removed another of his innumerable masks. Beware, says Nietzsche, of the autobiographies of great men. He was thinking of Richard Wagner. His warning applies to Bernard Shaw, who is a great comedian and a versatile. He has spoken through so many different masks that the real Shaw is yet to be seen. Perhaps on his death-bed some stray phrase will illuminate with its witty gleam his true soul’s nature. He has played tag with this soul so long that some of it has been lost in the game. Irishman born, he is not genial after the Oliver Goldsmith type; he resembles much more closely Dean Swift, minus that man’s devouring genius. When will the last mask be lifted—and, awful to relate, will it, when lifted, reveal the secret? A master hypnotist perhaps he may be, illuding the world with the mask idea. And what a comical thing it would be to find him smiling at the end and remarking, “I fooled you, Brethren, didn’t I?”

In his many rôles one trait has obstinately remained, the trait of irresistible waggery. Yet we sadly suspect it. What if this declaration of charlatanism were but a mask! What if Shaw were really sincere! What if he really meant to be sincere in his various lectures and comedies! What if his assumption of insincerity were sincere! His sincerity insincere! The thought confuses. In one of his plays—The Philanderer—a certain character has five or six natures. Shaw again, *toujours* Shaw!

Joke of all jokes, I really imagine that Shaw is a sentimentalist in private; and that he has been so sentimental, romantic, in his youth, that an inversion has taken place in his feelings. Swift’s hatred of mankind was a species of inverted lyricism; so was Flaubert’s; so may be Shaw’s. Fancy him secretly weeping over Jane Eyre, or holding a baby in his lap, or—richest of all fancies—occasionally eating sausage and drinking beer! I met him, once upon a time, in Bayreuth. He spoke then in unmeasured terms of its beer drinkers, and added, without the ghost of a smile, that breweries should be converted into insane asylums.

Whether we take him seriously or not, he is a delightful, an entertaining writer. His facile use, with the aid of the various mouthpieces he assumes at will, of the ideas of Nietzsche, Wagner, Ibsen, and Strindberg, fairly dazzles. He despises wit at bottom, using its forms as a medium for the communication of his theories. Art for art’s sake is a contradiction to this writer. He must have a sense of beauty, but he never boasts of it; rather does he seem to consider it something naked, almost shameful—something to be hidden away.
So his men are always deriding art, though working at it like devils on high pay. This puritanical vein has grown with the years, as it has with Tolstoy. Only Shaw never wasted his youth in riotous living, as did Tolstoy.

He had no money, no opportunities, no taste. A fierce ascetic and a misogynist, he will have no regrets at threescore and ten; no sweet memories of headaches—he is a teetotaller; no heartaches—he is too busy with his books; and no bitter aftertaste for having wronged a fellow-being. Behold, Bernard Shaw is a good man, has led the life of a saint, worked like a hero against terrible odds, and is the kindest-hearted man in London. Now we have reached another mask—the mask of altruism. Nearly all his earnings went to the needy; his was, and is, a practical socialism. He never let his right hand know the extent of his charities, and mark this—no one else knew of it. Yet good deeds, like murder, will out. His associates ceased deriding the queer clothes, the flannel shirt, and the absence of evening dress; his money was spent on others. So, too, his sawdust menu—his carrots, cabbage, and brown bread—it did not cost much, his eating, for his money was needed by poorer folk. So you see what a humbug is this dear old Diogenes, who grows cynically at the human race, abhors sentiment-mongers, and despises conventional government, art, religion, and philosophy. He is an arch-sentimentalist, underneath whose frown are concealed tears of pity. Another mask torn away—Bernard Shaw, philanthropist!

He tells us in the preface to Cashel Byron's Profession—which sounds like the title of a Charles Lever novel—that he had a narrow escape from being a novelist at the age of twenty-six. He still shudders over it. He wrote five novels, three of which we know, to wit: Cashel Byron's Profession, An Unsocial Socialist, Love among the Artists—hideous and misleading title. Robert Louis Stevenson took a great fancy to Cashel Byron and its stunning eulogies of pugilism. It was even dramatized in this country. With Hazlitt and George Meredith (oh! unforgettable prize-fight in The Amazing Marriage) Mr. Shaw praised the noble art of slaggerei. The Unsocial Socialist contains at least one act of a glorious farce comedy. He is Early British in his comedic writing. It is none the less capital fun.

This book or tract—it is hardly a novel—contains among other extraordinary things a eulogy of photography that would delight the soul of a Steichen. Shaw places it far above painting because of its verisimilitude! It also introduces a lot of socialistic talk which is very unconvincing; the psycho-physiologist would really pronounce the author a perfect specimen in full flowering of the saintly anarchist. There is a rôle played by a character—Shaw?—which recalls Leonard Charteris in a later play, The Philanderer. All of his men are
modelled off the same block. They are a curious combination of blackguard, philosopher, "bounder," artist, and comedian. His women! Recall Stevenson's dismayed exclamation at the Shaw women! They are creatures who have read Ibsen; are, one is sure, dowdy; but they interest. While you wonder at the strength of their souls, you do not miss the size of their feet. Mr. Shaw refuses to see woman as a heroine. She is sometimes a breeder of sinners, always a chronicler of the smallest kind of small beer, and for fear this sounds like an Iago estimate, he dowers her with an astounding intellectual equipment, and then lets the curious compound work out its own salvation.

He is much more successful with his servants; witness Bashville in *Cashel Byron's Profession*, most original of lackeys, and the tenderly funny old waiter in *You Never Can Tell*, a bitter farce well sprinkled with the Attic salt of irony. Otherwise Mr. Shaw has spent his time tilting at flagellation, at capital punishment, at the abuse of punctuation, at the cannibalistic habit of eating the flesh of harmless animals at Christmas, at Going to Church, extolling Czolgosz—heavens! the list is a league long. His novels as a whole are disappointing, though George Meredith has assured us in the first chapter of *Diana* that brain stuff in fiction is not lean stuff. But there are some concessions to be made to the Great God Beauty, and these Mr. Shaw has not seen fit to make. Episodes of brilliancy, force, audacity, there are; but episodes only. The psychology of a musician is admirably set forth in *Love among the Artists*, and the story, in addition, contains one of the most lifelike portraits of a Polish pianiste that has ever been painted. John Sargent could have done no better in laying bare a soul. Ugliness is rampant—ugliness and brutality. It is all as invigorating as a bath of salt water when the skin is peeled off—it burns; you howl; Shaw grins. He hates with all the vigour of his big brain and his big heart to hear of the infliction of physical pain. He does not always spare his readers. Three hundred years ago he would have roasted heretics, for there is much of the grand inquisitor, the John Calvin, the John Knox, in Shaw. He will rob himself of his last copper to give you food, and he will be—labour you with words that assault the tympanum if you disagree with him on the subject of Ibsen, Wagner, or—anything he likes.

Beefsteak, old Scotch ale, a pipe, and Montaigne—are what he needs for one year. Then his inhumane criticism of poor, stumbling mankind's foibles might be tempered. Shaw despises weakness. He follows to the letter Nietzsche's injunction, Be hard! And there is something in him of Ibsen's pitiless attitude toward the majority, which is always in the wrong; yet is, all said and done, the majority. Facts, reality, truth—no Gradgrind ever demanded them more imperiously
than Heervater Shaw, whose red beard and locks remind one of Conrad in *Die Meistersinger*. Earth folk do everything to dodge the facts of life, to them cold, harsh, and at the same time fantastic. Every form of anodyne, ethical, intellectual, æsthetical, is resorted to, to deaden the pain of reality. We work to forget to live; our religions, art, philosophy, patriotism, are so many buffers between the soul of man and bitter truth.

Shaw wants the truth at all hazards; his habit of veracity is like that of Gregers’s Werle, is shocking. So he dips his subjects into a bath of muriatic acid and seems surprised at their wrigglings and their screams. “But I don’t want to hear the truth!” yells the victim, who then limps back to his comfortable lies. And the one grievous error is that our gallant slayer of dragons, our Celtic Siegfried, does not believe in the illusions of art. Its veils, consoling and beautiful, he will not have, and thus it is that his dramas are amusing, witty, brilliant, scarefying, but never poetic, never beautiful, and seldom sound the deeper tones of humanity. With an artist’s brain, he stifles the artist’s soul in him—as Ibsen never did. With all his liberalism he cannot be liberal to liberalism, as Gilbert Chesterton so neatly puts it.

The Perfect Wagnerite and The Quintessence of Ibsenism are two supernally clever *jeux d’esprit*. As he reads Shaw and Fabianism into the Ring of the Nibelungs, so his Ibsen is transformed into a magnified image of Shaw dropping ideas from on high with Olympian indifferance. This pamphlet, among the first of its kind in English, now seems a trifle old-fashioned in its interpretation of the Norwegian dramatist—possibly because he is something so different from what Mr. Shaw pictured him. We are never shown Ibsen the Artist, but always the social reformer with an awful frown. He was a fighter for Ibsen, when in London Ibsen was once regarded as a perverter of morals. Bravery is Bernard’s trump card. He never flinched yet, whether answering cat-calls from a first night’s gallery or charging with pen lowered lance-fashion upon some unfortunate clerical blockhead who endeavoured to prove that hell is too good for sinners.

It is easy to praise Mozart to-day; not so easy to demonstrate the genius of Richard Strauss. Wagner in 1888 was still a bogie-man, a horrid hobbglom threatening the peace of academic British music. Shaw took up the fight, just as he fought for Degas and Manet when he was an art critic. I still preserve with reverence his sweeping answer to Max Nordau. It wiped Nordau off the field of discussion.

And the plays! They, too, are controversial. They all prove something, and prove it so hard that presently the play is swallowed up by its thesis—the horse patiently follows the cart. It may not be art,
but it is magnificent Shaw. You can skip the plays, not the prefaces. *Widowers’ Houses* is the most unpleasant, ugly, damnedly perverse of the ten. The writer had read Ibsen’s *An Enemy of the People* too closely. Its drainpipes, and not its glorification of the individual, got into his brain. It filtered forth bereft of its strength and meaning in this piece, with its nasty people, its stupidities. How could Shaw be so philistine, so much like a vestryman interested in pauper lodgings? In the implacable grasp of Ibsen, this sordid theme would have been beaten on a red-hot anvil until shaped to something of purpose and power. Shaw was not blacksmith enough to swing the Ibsen hammer and handle the Ibsen bellows. He has written me on this subject that if I were a resident of London I would see my way clearer toward liking this play. It is, he asserts, a transcript of the truth—which still leaves my argument on its legs.

*The Philanderer,* with its irresponsible levity and unexpected contortions, is a comedy of the true Shaw order. It is his *Wild Duck,* for in it he pokes fun at an Ibsen club, at the New Woman, and the New Sentiment, at almost everything he upholds in other plays and ways. There is a dramatic critic slopping over with British sentiment and other liquids. The women are absolutely incredible. The first act, like most of the Shaw first acts, is the best; best because, in his efforts to get his people going, the dramatist has little time to sermonize. He usually gets the chance later, to the detriment of his structure. The first act of *The Philanderer* would have made Henry Beque smile. It has something of the Frenchman’s mordant irony—and then you never know what is going to happen. The behaviour of the two women recalls a remark of Shaw’s apropos of Strindberg; Strindberg, who “shows that the female Yahoo, measured by romantic standards, is viler than her male dupe and slave.” Here the conditions are reversed; there is no romance; the dupes are women, and also the Yahoos. The exposure of Julia’s soul, poor, mean, sentimental, suffering little creature, withal heroic, would please Strindberg himself. The play has an autobiographic ring.

As to *Mrs. Warren’s Profession,* it was played January 12, 1902, in London, by the Stage Society. Mr. Grein says that *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* is literature for the study. The mother is a bore, wonderfully done in spots (the spots especially) and the daughter a chilly, waspish prig. The men are better; Sir George Crofts and the philandering young fellow could not be clearer expressed in terms of ink. I imagine that in a performance they must be extremely vital. And that weak old roué of a clergyman—why is Shaw so severe on clergymen? For the rest, *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* creates a disagreeable impression, as the author intended it should. I consider it his biggest, and also his most impossible, *opus.*
You Never Can Tell, Arms and the Man, Candida, and The Devil's Disciple are a quartet difficult to outpoint for prodigal humour and ingenious fantasy. In London the first named was voted irresistibly funny. It is funny, and in a new way, though the framework is old-fashioned British farce newly veneered by the malicious, the roistering humour of Shaw. Arms and the Man and The Devil's Disciple have been in Mr. Mansfield's repertory for years; they need no comment further than saying that the first has something of the Gilbertian Palace of Truth topsy-turvy quality (Louka is a free paraphrase of Regina in Ghosts, though she talks Shaw with great fluency), with a wholly original content and characterization; and the second is perverse melodrama.

Candida is not for mixed audiences. Christian socialism is caviare to the general. In characterization there is much variety; the heroine—if there be such an anomaly as a Shaw heroine—is most engaging. Every time I read Candida I feel myself on the trail of somebody; it is all in the air. The Lady from the Sea comes back when in that last scene, where the extraordinary young poet Marchbanks, a combination of the spiritual qualities of Shelley, Shaw, Ibsen's Stranger, and Shelley again, dares the fatuous James Morell to put his wife Candida to the test. It is one of the oddest situations in dramatic literature, and it is all "prepared" with infinite skill. The dénouement is another of Mr. Shaw's shower baths; withal a perfectly proper and highly moral ending. You grind your teeth over it, as Mr. Shaw peeps across the top of the page, indulging in one of his irritating dental displays.

The Man of Destiny is a mystification in one act. Napoleon talks the purest Balzac when he describes the English, and Mr. Shaw manipulates the wires industriously. It's good sport of its genre.

Captain Brassbound's Conversion is pure force. But the joy of Caesar and Cleopatra is abounding. You chortle over it as chortled Stevenson over the footman. A very devil of a play, one to read after Froude, Michelet, Shakespeare, or Voltaire for the real facts of the case. Since Suetonius, it is the first attempt at true Cæsarean history.

And the stage directions out-Maeterlinck Maeterlinck with their elaborate intercalations. The gorgeous humour of it all!

Arms and the Man has been translated into German and played in Germany. What will the Germans say to Caesar and Cleopatra? They take Shaw too seriously now, which is almost as bad as not taking him seriously at all. What will the doctors of history do when the amazing character of Cleopatra is dissected? If Shaw had never written another line but this bubbling study of antiquity, in which the spirit of the opera bouffe has not entered, he would be entitled to a free pass to that pantheon wherein our beloved Mark Twain sits
enthroned. It is all truth-telling on a miraculous plane of reality, a reality which modulates and merges into fantasy. One almost forgets the prefaces and the notes after reading Caesar and Cleopatra.

Whether he will ever vouchsafe the world a masterpiece, who can say? Why demand so much? Is not he in himself a masterpiece? It depends on his relinquishment of a too puritanical attitude toward art, life, and roast beef. He is too pious. Never mind his second-hand Nietzsche, his Diabolonian ethics, and his modern version of Carlylean Baphometic Baptisms. They are all in his eye—that absolutely normal eye with the suppressed Celtic twinkle. He doesn’t mean a word he utters. (Who does when writing of Shaw?) I firmly believe he says his prayers every night with the family before he goes to his Jaeger-flannel couch!

II

Candida is the very quintessence of her creator. Many prefer this sprightly sermon disguised as a comedy to Mr. Bernard Shaw’s more serious works. Yet serious it is. No latter-day paradoxioneer—to coin a monster word, for the Shaws, Chestertons, et al.—evokes laughter so easily as the Irishman. His is a cold intellectual wit, a Swiftian wit, minus the hearty and wholesome obscenity of the great Dublin dean. But it is often misleading. We laugh when we should reflect. We laugh when we might better hang our heads—this is meant for the average married and bachelor man. Shaw strikes fire in almost every sentence he puts into Candida’s honest mouth. After reading his eloquent tribute to Ibsen, the crooked places in Candida become plainer; her mission is not alone to undeceive but to love; not only to bruise hearts but to heal them.

In a singularly vivid passage in The Quintessence of Ibsenism, Mr. Shaw writes: “When Blake told men that through excess they would learn moderation, he knew that the way for the present lay through the Venusberg, and that the race would assuredly not perish there as some individuals have, and as the puritans fear we all shall unless we find a way round. Also, he no doubt foresaw the time when our children would be born on the other side of it, and so be spared the fiery purgation.”

This sentiment occurs in the chapter devoted to a consideration of The Womanly Woman. Let us look at the phrases on the printed page of Candida that might be construed as bearing upon the above, or, rather, the result of the quoted passage.

Candida speaks to James, her husband, in Act II:—

Don’t you understand? I mean, will he forgive me for not teaching him myself? For abandoning him to the bad woman for the sake of my
goodness—my purity, as you call it? Ah, James, how little you understand me, to talk of your confidence in my goodness and purity! I would give them both to poor Eugene as willingly as I would give my shawl to a beggar dying of cold, if there were nothing else to restrain me. Put your trust in my love for you, James, for if that went I should care very little for your sermons—mere phrases that you cheat yourself and others with every day.

Here is one of the most audacious speeches in any modern play. It has been passed over by most English critics who saw in *Candida* merely an attempt to make a clergyman ridiculous, not realizing that the theme is profound and far-reaching, the question put being no more and no less than: Shall a married man expect his wife's love without working for it, without deserving it? Secure in his conviction that he was a model husband and a good Christian, the Rev. James Major Morell went his way smiling and lecturing. He had the "gift of gab," yet he was no humbug; indeed, a sincerer parson does not exist. He is quite as sincere as Pastor Manders, much broader in his views, and consequently not half so dull.

But he is, nevertheless, a bit of a bore, with his lack of humour and his grim earnestness. No doubt Shaw took his fling at that queer blending of Christianity and socialism, that Karl Marx in a parson's collar which startled London twenty years ago in the person of the Christian socialist clergyman. He saw, too, being a man with a sense of character values and their use in violent contrast, that to the rhapsodic and poetic Eugene Marchbanks, Morell would prove a splendid foil. And so he does. Between this oddly opposed pair stands on her solid, sensible underpinnings the figure of Candida. Realist as is Mr. Shaw, he would scout the notion of his third act being accepted as a transcript from life. For two acts we are in plain earthy atmosphere; unusual things happen, though not impossible ones. In the last act Shaw, droll dramatist and acute observer of his fellow-man's foibles, disappears, only to return in the guise of Shaw the preacher.

And how he does throw a sermon at our heads! The play is arrested in its mid-ocean, and the shock throws us almost off our feet. Do not be deceived. That mock bidding for the hand of Candida, surely the craziest farce ever invented, is but this author's cunning manner of driving home his lesson. Are you worthy of your wife? Is the woman who swore to love and honour you ("obey" is not in the Shaw vocabulary, thanks to J. S. Mill) worthy of you? If your love is not mutual then better go your ways—you profane it! Is this startling? Is this novel? No and yes. The defence of love for love's sake, coming from the lips of a Shaw character, has a surpris-
ing effect, for no man is less concerned with sex questions, no man has more openly depreciated the ascendancy of sex in art and literature. He would be the first to applaud eagerly Edmund Clarence Stedman’s question apropos of Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*: Is there no other light in which to view the beloved one than as the future mother of our children? (I trust to a treacherous memory; the meaning is expressed, though not in Mr. Stedman’s words.)

Therefore *Candida* is a large exposition of the doctrine that love should be free—which is by no means the same thing as free love; that it should be a burden equally borne by both partners in the yoke; that happiness, instead of misery, would result if more women resembled Candida in candour. She cut James to the heart with the confounding of her shawl and personal purity; it was an astounding idea for a clergyman’s ears. She proved to him later that she was right, that the hundredth solitary sinner is of more consequence than the ninety-nine reclaimed. Shaw, who is a Puritan by temperament, has, after his master, Ibsen, cracked with his slingstone many nice little glass houses wherein complacent men and women sit and sun their virtues in the full gaze of the world. One of his sharp and disconcerting theories is that woman, too, can go through the Venus-berg and still reach the heights—a fact always denied by the egotistical man, who wishes to be the unique sinner so that he may receive the unique consolation. After a gay life, a sober one; the reformed rake; Tannhäuser’s return to an Elizabeth, who awaits him patiently; dear, sweet, virtuous Penelope! Shaw sees through this humbug of the masculine pose and turns the tables by making his Candida ride the horse of the dilemma man-fashion. Maeterlinck, in his *Monna Vanna* and *Joyzelle*, enforces the same truth—that love to be love should be free.

And the paradoxical part of it all is that Candida is a womanly woman. She is so domestic, so devoted, that the thin-skinned idealist Eugene moans over her kitchen propensities. Shaw has said that “the ideal wife is one who does everything that the ideal husband likes, and nothing else,” which is a neat and sardonic definition of the womanly woman’s duty. Candida demands as her right her husband’s trust in her love, not heavenly rewards, not the consciousness of her own purity, not bolts and bars will keep her from going from him if the hour strikes the end of her affection. All of which is immensely disconcerting to the orthodox of view, for it is the naked truth, set forth by a man who despises not orthodoxy, but those who profess it only to practise paganism. This Shaw is a terrible fellow; and the only way to get rid of a terrible fellow is not to take him seriously but to call him paradoxical, entertaining; to throw the sand of flattery in his eyes and incidentally blind criticism at the same
time. But Bernard Shaw has always refused to be cajoled, and as to
the sand or the mud of abuse—well, he wears the very stout spec-
tacles of common sense.

III

What does Mr. Shaw himself think of Candida? Perhaps if he
could be persuaded to tell the truth, the vapourish misconceptions
concerning her terrible “shawl” speech—about which I never de-
cieved myself—might be dissipated. It was not long forthcoming—
his answer to my question, an answer the publication of which was
left to my discretion. It may shock some of his admirers, disconcert
others, but at the same time it will clear the air of much cant; for
there is the Candida cant as well as the anti-Shaw cant. He wrote
me:—

Don’t ask me conundrums about that very immoral female, Can-
dida. Observe the entry of W. Burgess: “You’re the lady as hused
to typewrite for him.” “No.” “Naaaow: she was younger.” And therefore
Candida sacked her. Prossy is a very highly selected young person
indeed, devoted to Morell to the extent of helping in the kitchen but to
him the merest pet rabbit, unable to get the slightest hold on him.
Candida is as unscrupulous as Siegfried: Morell himself sees that “no
law will bind her.” She seduces Eugene just exactly as far as it is worth
her while to seduce him. She is a woman without “character” in the
conventional sense. Without brains and strength of mind she would be
a wretched slattern or voluptuary. She is straight for natural reasons, not
for conventional ethical ones. Nothing can be more cold-bloodedly rea-
sonable than her farewell to Eugene: “All very well, my lad; but I don’t
quite see myself at fifty with a husband of thirty-five.” It is just this
freedom from emotional slop, this unerring wisdom on the domestic
plane, that makes her so completely mistress of the situation.

Then consider the poet. She makes a man of him finally by showing
him his own strength—that David must do without poor Uriah’s wife.
And then she pitches in her picture of the home, the onions, and the
tradesmen, and the cossetting of big baby Morell. The New York haus-
frau thinks it a little paradise; but the poet rises up and says, “Out then,
into the night with me”—Tristan’s holy night. If this greasy fool’s para-
dise is happiness, then I give it to you with both hands, “life is nobler
than that.” That is the “poet’s secret.” The young things in front weep
to see the poor boy going out lonely and brokenhearted in the cold night
to save the proprieties of New England Puritanism; but he is really a
god going back to his heaven, proud, unspeakably contemptuous of the
“happiness” he envied in the days of his blindness, clearly seeing
that he has higher business on hand than Candida. She has a little quaint
intuition of the completeness of his cure; she says, “he has learnt to do
without happiness.”

So here is Shaw on Shaw, Shaw dissecting Candida, Shaw at last
letting in light on the mystery of the “poet’s secret!” There may be
grumbling among the faithful at this very illuminating and sensible
exposition, I feel. So thinks Mr. Shaw, for he adds, “As I should cer-
tainly be lynched by the infuriated Candidamaniacs if this view of
the case were made known, I confide it to your discretion”—which
by a liberal interpretation means, publish it and be hanged to you!
But “Candidamaniacs!” Oh, the wicked wit of this man who can
thus mock his flock! His cod\textit{a} is a neat summing up: “I tell it to you
because it is an interesting sample of the way in which a scene,
which should be conceived and written only by transcending the
ordinary notion of the relations between the persons, nevertheless
stirs the ordinary emotions to a very high degree, all the more be-
because the language of the poet, to those who have not the clew to it,
is mysterious and bewildering and therefore worshipful. I divined it
myself before I found out the whole truth about it.”

\textbf{IV}

Some day in the far future, let us hope, when the spirit of Bernard
Shaw shall have been gathered to the gods, his popular vogue may
be an established fact. Audiences may flock to sip wit, philosophy,
and humour before the footlights of the Shaw theatre; but unless
the assemblage be largely composed of Shaw \textit{replicas}, or overmen
and overwomen (“oversouls,” not altogether in the Emersonian
sense), it is difficult to picture any other variety listening to \textit{Man and
Superman} \textit{.} For one thing, it is not a play to be played, though it may
be read with delight bordering on despair. A deeper reason exists
for its hopelessness—it is such a violent attack on what might be
called the Shaw superstructure, that his warmest enemies and chilli-
est admirers will wonder what it is all about. Even William Archer,
one of the latter, confessed his disappointment.

\textit{Man and Superman}—odious title—is Shaw’s new attempt at a
\textit{Wild Duck}, formerly one of Ibsen’s most puzzling productions.
Shaw mocks Shaw as Ibsen sneered at Ibsen. This method of view-
ing the obverse of your own medal—George Meredith would say the
back of the human slate—is certainly a revelation of mood-versa-
tility, though a disquieting one to the man in the street. It does not
seem to be playing fair in the game. Sometimes it is not. With Ibsen
it was; he wished to have his fling at the Ibsenite, and he had it.
Shaw-like one is tempted to exclaim, Aha! drums and trumpets
again, even if the cart be re-painted. (\textit{Vide} his earlier prefaces.)
The book is dedicated to Mr. Arthur Bingham Walkley, who once wrote of his friend, "Mr. Bernard Shaw fails as a dramatist because he is always trying to prove something." In the end it is Shaw the man who is more interesting than his plays—all the characters are so many,—Shaw's winking at one through the printed dialogue.

In the pleasing and unpleasing plays, in the puritanical comedies, his "forewords" were full of meat served up with a Hibernian sauce, which produced upon the mental palate the flavours of Swift, of Nietzsche, of Aristophanes, and of Shaw. This compound could not be slowly degustated, because the stuff was too hot. Velocity is one of Shaw's prime characteristics. Like a pianoforte virtuoso whose fingers work faster than his feelings, the Irishman is lost when he assay massive, sonorous cantilena. He is as emotional as his own typewriter, and this defect, which he parades as did the fox in the fable, has stood in the way of his writing a great play. He despises love, and therefore cannot appeal deeply to mankind.

In the present preface the old music is sounded, but brassier and shriller; the wires are wearing. It is addressed to Arthur Bingham Walkley, by all odds the most brilliant, erudite, and satisfying of English dramatic critics. Now the cruel thing about this preface is that in it the author tries to foist upon the critic of the London Times the penalty attached to writing such a play as Man and Superman. We all cannot be Drydens and write prefaces as great as poems; and Mr. Shaw might have left out either the play or the preface and spared the nerves of his friends. He started out to make a play on Don Juan, an old and ever youthful theme. He succeeded in turning out an amorphous monster, part dream, part sermon, that will haunt its creator as Frankenstein was haunted for the rest of his days. Man and Superman is a nightmare.

To be impertinent is not necessarily an evidence of wisdom! nor does the dazzling epigram supply the missing note of humanity. But our author is above humanity. He would deal with the new man who is to succeed the present used-up specimen. We must freeze up, if needs be by artificial process, all the springs of natural instincts. Man must realize that in the inevitable duel of the sexes he will be worsted unless he recognizes that he is the pursued, not the pursuer. In the animal kingdom it is the male that is gorgeously bedizened for the purpose of attracting the feebler faculty of attention in the female. But in the human order the man is the cynosure of the woman. Her whole education and existence is an effort to win him—perhaps not for himself, nevertheless to win and wear him. This is biologically correct, though hardly gallant; and it is as old as Adam and Eve. Henry James once defined the situation succinctly, "It was much more the women... who were after the men than the men
who were after the women; it was literally visible that the general attitude of one sex was that of the object pursued and defensive, apologetic and attenuating. . . .” (In the Cage.)

Mr. Shaw might have added that, unlike lightning, women strike twice in the same spot. Frivolity, however, is not in Mr. Shaw’s present scheme of applied Unsociology.

As is the case with most reformers, he has harked back to the past for his future types. His men and women, though they go down to the sea in motor cars, converse about Ibsen, Nietzsche, and Karl Marx, affect twentieth-century modes, are in reality as old as the hills and as savage as hillmen. They are only a trifle more self-conscious. The present play—let us call it one for the sake of the argument—deals with a precious “baggage” named Ann Whitefield. She is, in the words of Ibsen, “a mighty huntress of men.” She is pert, very vulgar, quite uncivilized, quite ignorant of everyday feminine delicacies; in a word, the new woman, according to the gospel of Shaw. Her pursuit of a man, unavowed, bold, is the story of the play. She is hot-footed after a revolutionary socialist, John Tanner. Every word that springs or saunters from his lips, every movement of his muscular person, betrays the breed of Daredevil Dick, of all the revolutionaries in all the Shaw plays—the true breed of which Saint Bernard is himself the unique protagonist. Tanner is rich and believes himself an anarchist. He is mistaken. He is only a Fabianite with cash, a Fabianite who has lost the “shining face” of a neophyte and talks daggers and dynamite, though he uses them not. Ann has been left an orphan. She is a new Hedda Gabler, who knows what she wants, sees it, secures it; therefore she burns no dramatic “children,” sends no man to a drunkard’s doom; nor will she, one feels quite certain, deceive her husband. To secure him she attempts all the deception before she marries him, and if she seldom succeeds with her white lies she nevertheless bags her game.

To supply these two pleasing persons with characters upon whom they may act and be reacted, Mr. Shaw has devised a middle-aged hypocrite, a white sepulchre and man of the world, named Roebuck Ramsden; a sap-headed young man who dotes so much on Ann that he sacrifices his own happiness that she may be happy—or humbugs himself into that belief; a self-willed young lady, his sister Violet, who conceals her marriage with evil results to her reputation; a comical low-comedy chauffeur; several pale persons; a snobbish American youth of humble Irish parentage gilded by American wealth; some brigands, a dream Don Juan, and last, but not least, the Devil, who in this case is not a gentleman.

The first act is promising. Mr. Shaw’s little paragraphs—they are intended as a prompt-book in miniature—are more amusing than his
The Quintessence of Shaw

preface. We are deluded into the notion that a first-class comedy is at hand. There are all the materials ready. Ramsden, an “advanced” thinker of the antiquated Bradlaugh type, has been appointed co-executor, co-guardian with Tanner, a thinker of the latter-day type; that is, a man who has read Marx, Proudhon, Nietzsche, but not Max Stirner. The fair Ann, her mother and sister are the stakes of the game. Octavius, the sap-headed young man, is ready to sacrifice himself, and his sister shocks all by not acknowledging the father of her unborn child. Here is potential stuff for a tragic comedy. But Mr. Shaw will not mould his material into viable shapes. He refuses to be an artist. He loathes art. And so he is punished by fate—his inspiration vanishes almost at the point of execution, and, except for a few fugitive flashes, never burns serenely or continuously.

One telling bit is when Tanner congratulates Violet (what an appropriate name!) on her delicate condition and is scorned by that young person, scorned and snubbed. What—she a wicked woman? No, she is but secretly wedded; in the fulness of time her husband will be revealed. Tanner sneaks away, feeling that not to women must man look for the emancipation of the sexes from conventional notions. There are long harangues on prevailing economic evils, social diseases—all the old Shaw grievances are paraded.

Act II is rather thin. In Act III, which recalls a Gilbertian farce, there are cockney brigands, a bandit corporation, limited, devoted to the robbing of automobiles that pass through Spain. The idea is not sufficiently novel to be funny. A lengthy parabasis, written in genuine Shavian, shows us hell, the Devil, Don Juan, and Anna of Mozartean fame. At least the talk here is as brilliant as is commonly supposed to prevail in the nether regions. Inter alia, we read that marriage is the most licentious of human institutions—hence its popularity. Even the Devil is shocked. “The confusion of marriage with morality has done more to destroy the conscience of the human race than any other single error.” “Beauty, purity, respectability, religion, art, patriotism, bravery, and the rest are nothing but words which I or any one else can turn inside out like a glove,” continues this relentless rake and transformed preacher. Too true; but the seamy side as exhibited by Don Juan Shaw is not so convincing as in Nietzsche’s transvaluation of all values. “They are mere words, useful for duping barbarians into adopting civilization, or the civilized poor into submitting to be robbed and enslaved.”

Admitted, keen dissector of contemporary ills; but how about your play? In effect the author says: “To the devil with all art and plays, my play with the rest! What I wish to do is to tell you how to run the universe; and for this I will, if necessary, erect my pulpit in hell!”
After this what more can be said? The play peters out; there is talk, talk, talk. Ann calls the poetic temperament “the old maid’s temperament”; the brigand chief tentatively remarks: “There are two tragedies in life: one is not to get your heart’s desire; the other is to get it”—which sounds as if wrenched from a page of Chamfort or Rivarol; and Ann concludes with “Go on talking, Tanner, talking!” It is the epitaph of the piece, dear little misshapen, still-born comedy. Well may Mr. Shaw write “universal laughter” at the end. Yet I am willing to wager that some critics will be in tears at this exhibition of perverse waste and clever impotence.

The Revolutionists’ Handbook and Pocket Companion, which tops this extraordinary contribution, sociology masking as comedy, is its chiefest attraction. There, petrified into glistening nuggets, may be found Shaw philosophy, Shaw humour. There are maxims, too. “Do not unto others as you would that they should do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same.” This smacks of the inverted wisdom of the late James Whistler. Marriage, crime, punishment, the beating of children, title, honours, property, servants, religion, virtues, vices—everything of vital import to thinking men and women is regarded with the charmingly malevolent eye of Shaw. He exclaims: “Property, said Proudhon, is theft. This is the only perfect truism that has been uttered on the subject.” Come, come, Bernard Shaw! Proudhon said it, but the speech was not his own property. You, who know your social classics so well, should have remembered Brissot’s Philosophical Examination of Property and Theft, only published in 1780! You also say, “Beware the man whose God is in the skies,” and “Every man over forty is a scoundrel.” Tut, tut! Why not add—all girls over fifty should be drowned? It is just as logical. But can one condense the cosmos in a formula?

The general impression of the book causes us to believe there is a rift in the writer’s lute; not in his mentality, but in his own beliefs, or scepticisms. Perhaps Shaw no longer pins his faith to Shaw. Ibsen asserts that after twenty years a truth that has outlived its usefulness is no longer truth, but the simulacrum of one. Shaw’s truths may be decaying. We feel sure that if they be, he will be the first to detect the odour and warn away his public. Some years ago he printed a pamphlet against anarchy and anarchist, which was to be expected from a mild, frugivorous man. Now he seems to be wearying of the milk-white flag of socialism; and yet his revolutionary maxims are maxims for children in the time of teething. The world has moved since the Fabian society scowled at the British lion and tried to twist its tail with the dialectics of moderate socialism. To use Mr. Shaw’s own pregnant remark, “Moderation is never applauded for its own sake”; and: “He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches.”
Fabianism taught, taught moderation! Yet to-day the real thing is not Elisé Reclus, but Michael Bakounin; not Peter Kropotkin, but Sergei Netschajew; not Richard Wagner, but his friend, Roeckel, who was sent by him across the cannon-shattered barricades at Dresden in 1849 to fetch an ice to the thirsty composer. Wagner rang the alarm bells on this opera bouffe and escaped to Switzerland, Bakounin and Roeckel remained and went to prison!

Shaw is still ringing alarm bells, but somehow or other their music is missing and carries no message to his listeners. Is it possible that he regrets the anarchy that he has never had the courage to embrace and avow? A born anarchist, individualist, revolutionist, he has always gone in for half-hearted measures of reform. Never, like Bakounin, has he applied the torch, thrown the bomb; never, like Netschajew, has he dared to pen a catechism of destruction, a manual of nihilism so terrific that advanced Russian thinkers shudder if you mention its title. It is even rumoured that the Irish dramatist serves his parish as a meek citizen should—he will be writing poetry or melodrama next. His pessimism is temperamental, not philosophical, like that of most pessimists, as James Sully has pointed out. And instead of closely observing humanity, after the manner of all great dramatists, he has only closely studied Bernard Shaw.

"Regarded as a play, *Man and Superman* is, I repeat, primitive in invention and second rate in execution. The most disheartening thing about it is that it contains not one of those scenes of really tense dramatic quality which redeemed the squalor of *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*, and made of *Candida* something very like a masterpiece." Thus William Archer.

Most modestly Mr. Shaw entitles a farce of his, the celebrated drama in two tableaux and in blank verse,—*The Admirable Bashville, or Constancy Unrewarded*. It is nothing else but the story of *Cashel Byron's Profession* put into blank verse, because, as Mr. Shaw says, blank verse is so much easier to write than good prose. It is printed at the end of the second edition of the prize-fighting novel. As there has been a dramatization made—unauthorized—for a well-known American pugilist-actor, Mr. Shaw thought that he had better protect his English interests. Hence the parody for copyright purposes which was produced in London the summer of 1903 by the Stage Society at the Imperial Theatre. It is funny. It gibes at Shakespeare, at the modern drama, at Parliament, at social snobbery, at Shaw himself, and almost everything else within reach. The stage setting was a mockery of the Elizabethan stage, with two venerable beef-eaters in Tower costume, who hung up placards bearing
the legend, "A Glade in Wiltstoken Park," etc. Ben Webster as Cashel Byron and James Hearn as the Zulu King carried off the honours. Aubrey Smith, made up as Mr. Shaw in the costume of a policeman with a brogue, caused merriment, especially at the close, when he informed his audience that the author had left the house. And so he had. He was standing at the corner when I accosted him. Our interview was brief. He warned me in grave accents and a twinkling Celtic eye never again to describe him as "benevolent." Half the beggars of London had winded the phrase and were pestering him at his back gate. Mr. Shaw still looks as if a half-raw beefsteak and a mug of Bass would do him a world of good. But who can tell? He might then lose some of his effervescence—that quality of humour so happily described by Edmund Gosse when he spoke of the vegetable spirits of George Bernard Shaw.

The new play, John Bull's Other Island, was first played in London by the Stage Society last November. It is said—by Shaw's warmest enemies—to be witty, entertaining, and dramatically boneless. There is no alternative now for Mr. Shaw—he must visit America, lecture, and become rich. It is the logical conclusion of his impromptu career, for it was first in America that the Shaw books and plays were successful and appreciated; the plays largely because of the bold efforts of Arnold Daly and Winchell Smith, two young dramatic revolutionists. And Mr. Shaw may rediscover America for the Americans!
It appears a point of some mystery to the present writer that Bernard Shaw should have been so long unrecognised and almost in begging. I should have thought his talent was of the ringing and arresting sort; such as even editors and publishers would have sense enough to seize. Yet it is quite certain that he almost starved in London for many years, writing occasional columns for an advertisement or words for a picture. And it is equally certain (it is proved by twenty anecdotes, but no one who knows Shaw needs any anecdotes to prove it) that in those days of desperation he again and again threw up chances and flung back good bargains which did not suit his unique and erratic sense of honour. The fame of having first offered Shaw to the public upon a platform worthy of him belongs, like many other public services, to Mr. William Archer.

I say it seems odd that such a writer should not be appreciated in a flash; but upon this point there is evidently a real difference of opinion, and it constitutes for me the strangest difficulty of the subject. I hear many people complain that Bernard Shaw deliberately mystifies them. I cannot imagine what they mean; it seems to me that he deliberately insults them. His language, especially on moral questions, is generally as straight and solid as that of a bargee and far less ornate and symbolic than that of a hansom-cabman. The prosperous English Philistine complains that Mr. Shaw is making a fool of him. Whereas Mr. Shaw is not in the least making a fool of him; Mr. Shaw is, with laborious lucidity, calling him a fool. G.B.S. calls a landlord a thief; and the landlord, instead of denying or resenting it, says, “Ah, that fellow hides his meaning so cleverly that one can never make out what he means, it is all so fine spun and fantastical.” G. B. S. calls a statesman a liar to his face, and the statesman cries in a kind of ecstasy, “Ah, what quaint, intricate and

half-tangled trains of thought! Ah, what elusive and many-coloured mysteries of half-meaning!” I think it is always quite plain what Mr. Shaw means, even when he is joking, and it generally means that the people he is talking to ought to howl aloud for their sins. But the average representative of them undoubtedly treats the Shavian meaning as tricky and complex, when it is really direct and offensive. He always accuses Shaw of pulling his leg, at the exact moment when Shaw is pulling his nose.

This prompt and pungent style he learnt in the open, upon political tubs and platforms; and he is very legitimately proud of it. He boasts of being a demagogue: "The cart and the trumpet for me," he says, with admirable good sense. Everyone will remember the effective appearance of Cyrano de Bergerac in the first act of the fine play of that name; when instead of leaping in by any hackneyed door or window, he suddenly springs upon a chair above the crowd that has so far kept him invisible; “les bras croisées, le feutre en bataille, la moustache herissée, les nez terrible.” I will not go so far as to say that when Bernard Shaw sprang upon a chair or tub in Trafalgar Square he had the hat in battle, or even that he had the nose terrible. But just as we see Cyrano best when he thus leaps above the crowd, I think we may take this moment of Shaw stepping on his little platform to see him clearly as he then was, and even as he has largely not ceased to be. I, at least, have only known him in his middle age; yet I think I can see him, younger yet only a little more alert, with hair more red but with face yet paler, as he first stood up upon some cart or barrow in the tossing glare of the gas.

The first fact that one realises about Shaw (independent of all one has read and often contradicting it) is his voice. Primarily it is the voice of an Irishman, and then something of the voice of a musician. It possibly explains much of his career; a man may be permitted to say so many impudent things with so pleasant an intonation. But the voice is not only Irish and agreeable, it is also frank and as it were inviting conference. This goes with a style and gesture which can only be described as at once very casual and very emphatic. He assumes that bodily supremacy which goes with oratory, but he assumes it with almost ostentatious carelessness; he throws back the head, but loosely and laughingly. He is at once swaggering and yet shrugging his shoulders, as if to drop from them the mantle of the orator which he has confidently assumed. Lastly, no man ever used voice or gesture better for the purpose of expressing certainty; no man can say “I tell Mr. Jones he is totally wrong” with more air of unforced and even casual conviction.

This particular play of feature or pitch of voice, at once didactic and yet not uncomrade-like, must be counted a very important fact,
especially in connection with the period when that voice was first heard. It must be remembered that Shaw emerged as a wit in a sort of secondary age of wits; one of those stale interludes of prematurely old young men, which separate the serious epochs of history. Oscar Wilde was its god; but he was somewhat more mystical, not to say monstrous, than the average of its dried and decorous impudence. The two survivals of that time, as far as I know, are Mr. Max Beerbohm and Mr. Graham Robertson, two most charming people; but the air they had to live in was the devil. One of its notes was an artificial reticence of speech, which waited till it could plant the perfect epigram. Its typical products were far too conceited to lay down the law. Now when people heard that Bernard Shaw was witty, as he most certainly was, when they heard his mots repeated like those of Whistler or Wilde, when they heard things like "the Seven deadly Virtues" or "Who was Hall Caine?" they expected another of these silent sarcastic dandies who went about with one epigram, patient and poisonous, like a bee with his one sting. And when they saw and heard the new humorist they found no fixed sneer, no frockcoat, no green carnation, no silent Savoy Restaurant good manners, no fear of looking a fool, no particular notion of looking a gentleman. They found a talkative Irishman with a kind voice and a brown coat; open gestures and an evident desire to make people really agree with him. He had his own kind of affections no doubt, and his own kind of tricks of debate; but he broke, and, thank God, forever, the spell of the little man with the single eyeglass who had frozen both faith and fun at so many tea-tables. Shaw’s humane voice and hearty manner were so obviously more the things of a great man than the hard, gem-like brilliancy of Wilde or the careful ill-temper of Whistler. He brought in a breezier sort of insolence; the single eyeglass fled before the single eye.

Added to the effect of the amiable dogmatic voice and lean, swaggering figure, is that of the face with which so many caricaturists have fantastically delighted themselves, the Mephistophelean face with the fierce tufted eyebrows and forked red beard. Yet those caricaturists in their natural delight in coming upon so striking a face, have somewhat misrepresented it, making it merely Satanic; whereas its actual expression has quite as much benevolence as mockery. By this time his costume has become a part of his personality; one has come to think of the reddish-brown Jaeger suit as if it were a sort of reddish-brown fur, and was, like the hair and eyebrows, a part of the animal; yet there are those who claim to remember a Bernard Shaw of yet more awful aspect before Jaeger came to his assistance; a Bernard Shaw in a dilapidated frock-coat and some sort of straw hat. I can hardly believe it; the man is so much of a
piece, and must always have dressed appropriately. In any case his brown woollen clothes, at once artistic and hygienic, completed the appeal for which he stood; which might be defined as an eccentric healthy-mindedness. But something of the vagueness and equivocation of his first fame is probably due to the different functions which he performed in the contemporary world of art.

He began by writing novels. They are not much read, and indeed not imperatively worth reading, with the one exception of the crude and magnificent Cashel Byron's Profession. Mr. William Archer, in the course of his kindly efforts on behalf of his young Irish friend, sent this book to Samoa, for the opinion of the most elvish and yet efficient of modern critics. Stevenson summed up much of Shaw even from that fragment when he spoke of a romantic griffin roaring with laughter at the nature of his own quest. He also added the not wholly unjustified postscript: "I say, Archer,—my God, what women!"

The fiction was largely dropped; but when he began work he felt his way by the avenues of three arts. He was an art critic, a dramatic critic, and a musical critic; and in all three, it need hardly be said, he fought for the newest style and the most revolutionary school. He wrote on all these as he would have written on anything; but it was, I fancy, about the music that he cared most.

It may often be remarked that mathematicians love and understand music more than they love or understand poetry. Bernard Shaw is in much the same condition; indeed, in attempting to do justice to Shakespeare's poetry, he always calls it "word music." It is not difficult to explain this special attachment of the mere logician to music. The logician, like every other man on earth, must have sentiment and romance in his existence; in every man's life, indeed, which can be called a life at all, sentiment is the most solid thing. But if the extreme logician turns for his emotions to poetry, he is exasperated and bewildered by discovering that the words of his own trade are used in an entirely different meaning. He conceives that he understands the word "visible," and then finds Milton applying it to darkness, in which nothing is visible. He supposes that he understands the word "hide," and then finds Shelley talking of a poet hidden in the light. He has reason to believe that he understands the common word "hung"; and then William Shakespeare, Esquire, of Stratford-on-Avon, gravely assures him that the tops of the tall sea waves were hung with deafening cloums on the slippery clouds. That is why the common arithmetician prefers music to poetry. Words are his scientific instruments. It irritates him that they should be anyone else's musical instruments. He is willing to see men juggling, but not men juggling with his own private tools.
and possessions—his terms. It is then that he turns with an utter relief to music. Here is all the same fascination and inspiration, all the same purity and plunging force as in poetry; but not requiring any verbal confession that light conceals things or that darkness can be seen in the dark. Music is mere beauty; it is beauty in the abstract, beauty in solution. It is a shapeless and liquid element of beauty, in which a man may really float, not indeed affirming the truth, but not denying it. Bernard Shaw, as I have already said, is infinitely far above all such mere mathematicians and pedantic reasoners; still his feeling is partly the same. He adores music because it cannot deal with romantic terms either in their right or their wrong sense. Music can be romantic without reminding him of Shakespeare and Walter Scott, with whom he has had personal quarrels. Music can be Catholic without reminding him verbally of the Catholic Church, which he has never seen, and is sure he does not like. Bernard Shaw can agree with Wagner, the musician, because he speaks without words; if it had been Wagner the man he would certainly have had words with him. Therefore I would suggest that Shaw's love of music (which is so fundamental that it must be mentioned early, if not first, in his story) may itself be considered in the first case as the imaginative safety-valve of the rationalistic Irishman.

This much may be said conjecturally over the present signature; but more must not be said. Bernard Shaw understands music so much better than I do that it is just possible that he is, in that tongue and atmosphere, all that he is not elsewhere. While he is writing with a pen I know his limitations as much as I admire his genius; and I know it is true to say that he does not appreciate romance. But while he is playing on the piano he may be coxing a feather, drawing a sword or draining a flagon for all I know. While he is speaking I am sure that there are some things he does not understand. But while he is listening (at the Queen's Hall) he may understand everything including God and me. Upon this part of him I am a reverent agnostic; it is well to have some such dark continent in the character of a man of whom one writes. It preserves two very important things—modesty in the biographer and mystery in the biography.

For the purpose of our present generalisation it is only necessary to say that Shaw, as a musical critic, summed himself up as "The Perfect Wagnerite"; he threw himself into subtle and yet trenchant eulogy of that revolutionary voice in music. It was the same with the other arts. As he was a Perfect Wagnerite in music, so he was a Perfect Whistlerite in painting; so above all he was a perfect Ibsenite in drama. And with this we enter that part of his career with which this is more specially concerned. When Mr. William Archer
got him established as dramatic critic of the *Saturday Review*, he became for the first time "a star of the stage"; a shooting star and sometimes a destroying comet.

On the day of that appointment opened one of the very few exhilarating and honest battles that broke the silence of the slow and cynical collapse of the nineteenth century. Bernard Shaw the demagogue had got his cart and his trumpet; and was resolved to make them like the cart of destiny and the trumpet of judgment. He had not the servility of the ordinary rebel, who is content to go on rebelling against kings and priests, because such rebellion is as old and as established as any priests or kings. He cast about him for something to attack which was not merely powerful or placid, but was unattacked. After a little quite sincere reflection, he found it. He would not be content to be a common atheist; he wished to blaspheme something in which even atheists believed. He was not satisfied with being revolutionary; there were so many revolutionists. He wanted to pick out some prominent institution which had been irrationally and instinctively accepted by the most violent and profane; something of which Mr. Foote would speak as respectfully on the front page of the *Freethinker* as Mr. St. Loe Strachey on the front page of the *Spectator*. He found the thing; he found the great unassailed English institution—Shakespeare.

But Shaw's attack on Shakespeare, though exaggerated for the fun of the thing, was not by any means the mere folly or firework paradox that has been supposed. He meant what he said; what was called his levity was merely the laughter of a man who enjoyed saying what he meant—an occupation which is indeed one of the greatest larks in life. Moreover, it can honestly be said that Shaw did good by shaking the mere idolatry of Him of Avon. That idolatry was bad for England; it buttressed our perilous self-complacency by making us think that we alone had, not merely a great poet, but the one poet above criticism. It was bad for literature; it made a minute model out of work that was really a hasty and faulty masterpiece. And it was bad for religion and morals that there should be so huge a terrestrial idol, that we should put such utter and unreasoning trust in any child of man. It is true that it was largely through Shaw's own defects that he beheld the defects of Shakespeare. But it needed some one equally prosaic to resist what was perilous in the charm of such poetry; it may not be altogether a mistake to send a deaf man to destroy the rock of the sirens.

This attitude of Shaw illustrates of course all three of the divisions or aspects to which the reader's attention has been drawn. It was partly the attitude of the Irishman objecting to the Englishman turning his mere artistic taste into a religion; especially when it was
a taste merely taught him by his aunts and uncles. In Shaw's opinion (one might say) the English do not really enjoy Shakespeare or even admire Shakespeare; one can only say, in the strong colloquialism, that they swear by Shakespeare. He is a mere god; a thing to be invoked. And Shaw's whole business was to set up the things which were to be sworn by as things to be sworn at. It was partly again the revolutionist in pursuit of pure novelty, hating primarily the oppression of the past, almost hating history itself. For Bernard Shaw the prophets were to be stoned after, and not before, men had built their sepulchres. There was a Yankee smartness in the man which was irritated at the idea of being dominated by a person dead for three hundred years; like Mark Twain, he wanted a fresher corpse.

These two motives there were, but they were small compared with the other. It was the third part of him, the Puritan, that was really at war with Shakespeare. He denounced that playwright almost exactly as any contemporary Puritan coming out of a conventicle in a steeple-crowned hat and stiff bands might have denounced the playwright coming out of the stage door of the old Globe Theatre. This is not a mere fancy; it is philosophically true. A legend has run round the newspapers that Bernard Shaw offered himself as a better writer than Shakespeare. This is false and quite unjust; Bernard Shaw never said anything of the kind. The writer whom he did say was better than Shakespeare was not himself, but Bunyan. And he justified it by attributing to Bunyan a virile acceptance of life as a high and harsh adventure, while in Shakespeare he saw nothing but profligate pessimism, the vanitas vanitatum of a disappointed voluptuary. According to this view Shakespeare was always saying, “Out, out, brief candle,” because he was only a ballroom candle; while Bunyan was seeking to light such a candle as by God's grace should never be put out.

It is odd that Bernard Shaw's chief error or insensibility should have been the instrument of his noblest affirmation. The denunciation of Shakespeare was a mere misunderstanding. But the denunciation of Shakespeare's pessimism was the most splendidly understanding of all his utterances. This is the greatest thing in Shaw, a serious optimism—even a tragic optimism. Life is a thing too glorious to be enjoyed. To be is an exacting and exhausting business; the trumpet though inspiring is terrible. Nothing that he ever wrote is so noble as his simple reference to the sturdy man who stepped up to the Keeper of the Book of Life and said, “Put down my name, Sir.” It is true that Shaw called this heroic philosophy by wrong names and buttressed it with false metaphysics; that was the weakness of the age. The temporary decline of theology had in-
volved the neglect of philosophy and all fine thinking; and Bernard Shaw had to find shaky justifications in Schopenhauer for the sons of God shouting for joy. He called it the Will to Live—a phrase invented by Prussian professors who would like to exist, but can’t. Afterwards he asked people to worship the Life-Force; as if one could worship a hyphen. But though he covered it with crude new names (which are now fortunately crumbling everywhere like bad mortar) he was on the side of the good old cause; the oldest and the best of all causes, the cause of creation against destruction, the cause of yes against no, the cause of the seed against the stony earth and the star against the abyss.

His misunderstanding of Shakespeare arose largely from the fact that he is a Puritan, while Shakespeare was spiritually a Catholic. The former is always screwing himself up to see truth; the latter is often content that truth is there. The Puritan is only strong enough to stiffen; the Catholic is strong enough to relax. Shaw, I think, has entirely misunderstood the pessimistic passages of Shakespeare. They are flying moods which a man with a fixed faith can afford to entertain. That all is vanity, that life is dust and love is ashes, these are frivolities, these are jokes that a Catholic can afford to utter. He knows well enough that there is a life that is not dust and a love that is not ashes. But just as he may let himself go more than the Puritan in the matter of enjoyment, so he may let himself go more than the Puritan in the matter of melancholy. The sad exuberances of Hamlet are merely like the glad exuberances of Falstaff. This is not conjecture; it is the text of Shakespeare. In the very act of uttering his pessimism, Hamlet admits that it is a mood and not the truth. Heaven is a heavenly thing, only to him it seems a foul congregation of vapours. Man is the paragon of animals, only to him he seems a quintessence of dust. Hamlet is quite the reverse of a sceptic. He is a man whose strong intellect believes much more than his weak temperament can make vivid to him. But this power of knowing a thing without feeling it, this power of believing a thing without experiencing it, this is an old Catholic complexity, and the Puritan has never understood it. Shakespeare confesses his moods (mostly by the mouths of villains and failures), but he never sets up his moods against his mind. His cry of vanitas vanitatvm is itself only a harmless vanity. Readers may not agree with my calling him Catholic with a big C; but they will hardly complain of my calling him catholic with a small one. And that is here the principal point. Shakespeare was not in any sense a pessimist; he was, if anything, an optimist so universal as to be able to enjoy even pessimism. And this is exactly where he differs from the Puritan. The true Puritan is
not squeamish: the true Puritan is free to say “Damn it!” But the Catholic Elizabethan was free (on passing provocation) to say “Damn it all!”

It need hardly be explained that Bernard Shaw added to his negative case of a dramatist to be depreciated a corresponding affirmative case of a dramatist to be exalted and advanced. He was not content with so remote a comparison as that between Shakespeare and Bunyan. In his vivacious weekly articles in the Saturday Review, the real comparison upon which everything turned was the comparison between Shakespeare and Ibsen. He early threw himself with all possible eagerness into public disputes about the great Scandinavian; and though there was no doubt whatever about which side he supported, there was much that was individual in the line he took. It is not our business here to explore that extinct volcano. You may say that anti-Ibsenism is dead, or you may say that Ibsen is dead; in any case, that controversy is dead, and death, as the Roman poet says, can alone confess of what small atoms we are made. The opponents of Ibsen largely exhibited the permanent qualities of the populace; that is, their instincts were right and their reasons wrong. They made the complete controversial mistake of calling Ibsen a pessimist; whereas, indeed, his chief weakness is a rather childish confidence in mere nature and freedom, and a blindness (either of experience or of culture) in the matter of original sin. In this sense Ibsen is not so much a pessimist as a highly crude kind of optimist. Nevertheless the man in the street was right in his fundamental instinct, as he always is. Ibsen, in his pale Northern style, is an optimist; but for all that he is a depressing person. The optimism of Ibsen is less comforting than the pessimism of Dante; just as a Norwegian sunrise, however splendid, is colder than a Southern night.

But on the side of those who fought for Ibsen there was also a disagreement, and perhaps also a mistake. The vague army of “the advanced” (an army which advances in all directions) were united in feeling that they ought to be the friends of Ibsen because he also was advancing somewhere somehow. But they were also seriously impressed by Flaubert, by Oscar Wilde and all the rest who told them that a work of art was in another universe from ethics and social good. Therefore many, I think most, of the Ibsenites praised the Ibsen plays merely as choses vues, aesthetic affirmations of what can be without any reference to what ought to be. Mr. William Archer himself inclined to this view, though his strong sagacity kept him in a haze of healthy doubt on the subject. Mr. Walkley certainly took this view. But this view Mr. George Bernard Shaw abruptly and violently refused to take.

With the full Puritan combination of passion and precision he in-
formed everybody that Ibsen was not artistic, but moral; that his dramas were didactic, that all great art was didactic, that Ibsen was strongly on the side of some of his characters and strongly against others, that there was preaching and public spirit in the work of good dramatists; and that if this were not so, dramatists and all other artists would be mere panders of intellectual debauchery, to be locked up as the Puritans locked up the stage players. No one can understand Bernard Shaw who does not give full value to this early revolt of his on behalf of ethics against the ruling school of \textit{L'art pour L'art}. It is interesting because it is connected with other ambitions in the man, especially with that which has made him somewhat vainer of being a Parish Councillor than of being one of the most popular dramatists in Europe. But its chief interest is again to be referred to our stratification of the psychology; it is the lover of true things rebelling for once against merely new things; it is the Puritan suddenly refusing to be the mere Progressive.

But this attitude obviously laid on the ethical lover of Ibsen a not inconsiderable obligation. If the new drama had an ethical purpose, what was it? and if Ibsen was a moral teacher, what the deuce was he teaching? Answers to this question, answers of manifold brilliancy and promise, were scattered through all the dramatic criticisms of those years on the \textit{Saturday Review}. But Bernard Shaw had already dealt with these things somewhat more systematically before he began to discuss Ibsen only in connection with the current pantomime or the latest musical comedy. It is best in this matter to turn back to a previous summary. In 1891 had appeared the brilliant book called \textit{The Quintessence of Ibsenism}, which some have declared to be merely the quintessence of Shaw. However this may be, it was in fact and profession the quintessence of Shaw's theory of the morality or propaganda of Ibsen.

The book itself is much longer than the book that I am writing; and as is only right in so spirited an apologist, every paragraph is provocative. I could write an essay on every sentence which I accept and three essays on every sentence which I deny. Bernard Shaw himself is a master of compression; he can put a conception more compactly than any other man alive. It is therefore rather difficult to compress his compression; one feels as if one were trying to extract a beef essence from Bovril. But the shortest form in which I can state the idea of \textit{The Quintessence of Ibsenism} is that it is the idea of distrusting ideals, which are universal, in comparison with facts, which are miscellaneous. The man whom he attacks throughout he calls "The Idealist"; that is the man who permits himself to be mainly moved by a moral generalisation. "Actions," he says, "are to be judged by their effect on happiness, and not by their conformity
to any ideal.” As we have already seen, there is a certain inconsistency here; for while Shaw had always chucked all ideals overboard the one he had chucked first was the ideal of happiness. Passing this however for the present, we may mark the above as the most satisfying summary. If I tell a lie I am not to blame myself for having violated the ideal of truth, but only for having perhaps got myself into a mess and made things worse than they were before. If I have broken my word I need not feel (as my fathers did) that I have broken something inside me, as one who breaks a blood vessel. It all depends on whether I have broken up something outside me; as one who breaks up an evening party. If I shoot my father the only question is whether I have made him happy. I must not admit the idealistic conception that the mere shooting of my father might possibly make me unhappy. We are to judge of every individual case as it arises, apparently without any social summary or moral ready-reckoner at all. “The Golden Rule is that there is no Golden Rule.” We must not say that it is right to keep promises, but that it may be right to keep this promise. Essentially it is anarchy; nor is it very easy to see how a state could be very comfortable which was Socialist in all its public morality and Anarchist in all its private. But if it is anarchy, it is anarchy without any of the abandon and exuberance of anarchy. It is a worried and conscientious anarchy; an anarchy of painful delicacy and even caution. For it refuses to trust in traditional experiments or plainly trodden tracks; every case must be considered anew from the beginning, and yet considered with the most wide-eyed care for human welfare; every man must act as if he were the first man made. Briefly, we must always be worrying about what is best for our children, and we must not take one hint or rule of thumb from our fathers. Some think that this anarchism would make a man tread down mighty cities in his madness. I think it would make a man walk down the street as if he were walking on egg-shells. I do not think this experiment in opportunism would end in frantic licence; I think it would end in frozen timidity. If a man was forbidden to solve moral problems by moral science or the help of mankind, his course would be quite easy—he would not solve the problems. The world instead of being a knot so tangled as to need unravelling, would simply become a piece of clockwork too complicated to be touched. I cannot think that this untutored worry was what Ibsen meant; I have my doubts as to whether it was what Shaw meant; but I do not think that it can be substantially doubted that it was what he said.

In any case it can be asserted that the general aim of the work was to exalt the immediate conclusions of practice against the general conclusions of theory. Shaw objected to the solution of every
problem in a play being by its nature a general solution, applicable to all other such problems. He disliked the entrance of a universal justice at the end of the last act; treading down all the personal ultimatums and all the varied certainties of men. He disliked the god from the machine—because he was from a machine. But even without the machine he tended to dislike the god; because a god is more general than a man. His enemies have accused Shaw of being anti-domestic, a shaker of the roof-tree. But in this sense Shaw may be called almost madly domestic. He wishes each private problem to be settled in private, without reference to sociological ethics. And the only objection to this kind of gigantic casuistry is that the theatre is really too small to discuss it. It would not be fair to play David and Goliath on a stage too small to admit Goliath. And it is not fair to discuss private morality on a stage too small to admit the enormous presence of public morality; that character which has not appeared in a play since the Middle Ages; whose name is Everyman and whose honour we all have in our keeping.
JOHN PALMER
1915

George Bernard Shaw.

HARLEQUIN OR PATRIOT?

I

SHAW THE ENIGMA

The first fallacy is that Bernard Shaw is an immensely public person; that he is a sort of twentieth century Grand Monarch who, if manners allowed, would dine like Louis XIV in the presence of the people and receive the press in his dressing-gown. Now, it is true that Bernard Shaw has been photographed by Alvin Langdon Coburn without a stitch; that at one period of his career he almost lived upon a public platform; that he invariably tells us the private history of each of his books and plays; that, partly from a sense of fun, and partly from a determination that what he has seriously to say shall be heard, he talks and writes a good deal about himself; and that he has allowed Mr. Archibald Henderson to compile a sort of concordance to his personality.

Nevertheless, it is not true that Bernard Shaw is an immensely public person. Or perhaps I should put it this way: Bernard Shaw whom the public knows is not an authentic revelation of the extremely private gentleman who lives in Adelphi Terrace. The Bernard Shaw whom the public knows might more accurately be described as a screen. What the public knows about Bernard Shaw is either trivial or misleading. Thus the public knows that Bernard Shaw can read diamond type with his left eye at a distance of twenty-eight inches; that he can hear a note the pitch of which does not exceed 30,000 vibrations per second; that, when he sits down upon a chair, the distance between the crown of his head and the

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38
seat is 3 feet, 1.8 inches. These things are trivial. Or the public
knows that Bernard Shaw is a very striking and provocative writer
of plays, that he is also a socialist and a vegetarian; and these things
are misleading.

That is why any satisfactory account of Bernard Shaw rendered
to those who have allowed themselves to be deceived by common
fame must necessarily take the form of a schedule of popular fal-
lacies. Such a schedule will at any rate be found more useful, and
certainly less hackneyed, than a personal "interview" and descrip-
tion of one who has been more often photographed and handled
in the picturesque and familiar way of the expert pressman than
the most popular member of the British Cabinet. Perhaps, there-
fore, I may regard myself as excused from accurately sketching the
wicket-gate which leads to Bernard Shaw's private dwelling, or
from telling the story of his velvet coat, or from recording the num-
ber of times he has been met upon the top of an omnibus (where
he used virtually to live), or betraying what he writes to young
people in confidence about the nose of a celebrated author.

Intimate revelations of this kind do not take the public far. They
do not seriously disturb the inaccessible privacy which Bernard
Shaw has always contrived to maintain. The truth is that the authen-
tic author of Man and Superman has never really been inter-
viewed; has never really "plucked me ope his doublet and offered
them his throat to cut" to visitors who are likely to be hiding a
kodak under their coat or to be surreptitiously fingering a note-
book. Bernard Shaw of the interviews and the funny stories is
public enough; but this Bernard Shaw is almost entirely a legend.
Before this legend gets as firm a hold upon New York as it has upon
London, it may be well to number some of the more striking fal-
lacies of which it is composed. There is only one serious drawback
to this method of approach, and this drawback vanishes almost as
soon as it is explained. Exploding popular fallacies is disagreeable
work, and it usually gives to the sentences of the author engaged
upon it an air of quarreling violently with his readers and with his
Subject.

Such is not the intention or mood of this present article. I have an
immense enthusiasm and liking for Bernard Shaw and for the
greater part of most of what Bernard Shaw has written. I claim, in-
deed, to admire Bernard Shaw for sounder and weightier reasons
than have yet occurred to Bernard Shaw himself. These reasons will
be presented later in a postscript of appreciation. When the worst
fallacies regarding Bernard Shaw have been briefly described and
contradicted (it would require a large volume to describe and con-
tradict them in detail), I shall be in a better position to assert, briefly
again, wherein Bernard Shaw’s genius truly consists; exactly how serious he is; and, more particularly, why he has just written a pamphlet about the war, and why he ought not to have done so. Meantime I hope that readers of this article will agree to digest the fallacies and to wait for the postscript; also to believe that my habitually indignant manner is simply the result of writing regularly about the British theater.

The first fallacy is already declared; namely, that Bernard Shaw is a public person. The second fallacy is that Bernard Shaw is an easy and profitable subject to write about. He is not. It is true that Bernard Shaw’s interviews with the press are the best interviews, and that he invariably galvanizes the dullest of his appreciators into liveliness. Pronounce the name of Bernard Shaw in almost any company, and immediately every one perks up with an epigram or a paradox or an anecdote. Bernard Shaw like Falstaff is not only witty himself; he is the occasion that wit is in other men.

Nevertheless, Bernard Shaw is not a good subject. It is not encouraging to embark upon an enterprise with the sure knowledge that the thing has been done before and better done. Bernard Shaw is not a good subject because he has already been exhausted. There is not more than one expert upon Bernard Shaw. Every one professionally required to write about Bernard Shaw sets out under an unfortunate sense that the ground has already been covered; that the job has already been done brilliantly, thoroughly and finally.

The best essays on the work of Bernard Shaw, the most impartial authoritative, and penetrating, are by Bernard Shaw himself. The best stories about Bernard Shaw, whether they are the cruel, illuminating anecdotes which delight the envious, or the flashes of resources and honesty which are cherished by his friends and admirers, are once again by Bernard Shaw himself. Should you set out to extol or to advertise Bernard Shaw, you know that this has already been done with incomparable energy and talent, and that it has been done by one who knows. Should you, on the other hand, set out to expose or pull to tatters the reputation and character of Bernard Shaw, again you know that you are the merest amateur compared with G. B. S.; know also that, if you want to do the business effectively, and leave Bernard Shaw obviously for dead on the field of controversy, you will have to call in G. B. S. to help you. It is possible to slay Bernard Shaw; but it is possible to slay him only in alliance with himself. It is a joke of the two hemispheres that Bernard Shaw better understands his merits than any one else in the world. It is a finer joke, and not so thread-worn, that he better understands his limitations. Either way, whether you are celebrating his genius or asserting your position as the candid friend, you are
forced to acknowledge at the last that your researches into Bernard Shaw are simply not in the same class with his own either in intimacy (which is surprising in an age when the press is often more intimate with a man than his own toothbrush); in detachment and absence of favor (which, again, is surprising, in an age when men of letters take themselves very seriously); or in a severely just recognition of the subject’s merit (more surprising still in an age when public men carefully cultivate a reputation for modesty).

II

SHAW NOT AN ORIGINAL THINKER

The third fallacy is that Bernard Shaw is a profoundly original thinker and a propagandist of absolutely new ideas. He has repeatedly told his readers and his friends that he is nothing of the kind. His biographer somewhere quotes him as saying, “I am an expert picker of men’s brains, and I have been extremely fortunate in my friends.” Nor need we go to Bernard Shaw’s biographer for this. Bernard Shaw has spent half his life in telling the world the exact scientific truth about himself, and of course the world has refused to believe him. It is hardly exaggeration to say that whenever Bernard Shaw tells people soberly and honestly exactly the sort of man he is, and exactly the kind of work he has done, they laugh heartily, and say that Bernard Shaw is a very funny and inventive person. Similarly, whenever he ventures into fun and fiction, his hearers insist upon taking him seriously as they would take a prophet.

It follows that Bernard Shaw, who is a modest, conscientious, kindly, industrious, and well-read man of letters, is commonly regarded as a reckless firebrand who lives by the cart and the trumpet, is up to his neck in all that is lawless and improper, is without compassion or shame, speaks always in paradoxes, and claims to be greater than Shakespeare. Not fewer than fourteen years ago Bernard Shaw told the world that he was an elderly gentleman who had made an immense reputation by being the best of a bad lot and by plagiarizing the English classics. He really meant what he said; but the preface in which he said it is still supposed to be the locus classicus of his claim to supersede the author of Macbeth. Here, again, it is impossible to say of Bernard Shaw any true thing he has not already said of himself. He has repeatedly urged his critics and followers to reject utterly the legend of G. B. S. “I find myself,” Bernard Shaw wrote in 1900, “while still in middle life almost as legendary a person as the Flying Dutchman. Critics, like other people, see
what they look for, not what is actually before them. In my play they look for my legendary qualities, and find originality and brilliancy in my most hackneyed claptrap. Were I to replenish Buckstone’s Wreck Ashore as my latest comedy, it would be hailed as masterpiece of perverse paradox and scintillating satire.”

Nothing in modern literary history is more remarkable than the reputation of G. B. S. for original and daring speculation; and one, myself possibly excepted, more thoroughly appreciates the funny side of G. B. S. as philosopher than the man to whom that reputation is so persistently attached. Five years ago I came to London burdened with the classic wisdom of an ancient university. I had read some philosophy in one school and some economy in another. As a musician I had read Wagner for a venerable classic. As the merest Philistine in connoisseurship, I recognized in Rodin a great sculptor of the last generation, as firmly established in immortality as Michelangelo, and I saluted in the New English Art Club a thoroughly respectable academy of painting. As a playgoer destined to succeed Max Beerbohm, who himself in remote antiquity had succeeded G. B. S. on the Saturday Review, I had become weary of Ibsen, and had begun to wonder why Granville Barker seemed old enough to be my uncle. Now, I do not regard myself as being in the least in advance of my time; yet when I came to London I found that Bernard Shaw, who still preached Ibsen and Wagner, who spoke with Rodin as a contemporary, who preached a philosophy which was already introduced into examination-papers at a place not suspected of modernism, who talked economy out of university textbooks which it was a scholarly and pedantic exercise to confute in the lecture-rooms of Oxford—that this thoroughly safe, orthodox, and almost medieval Bernard Shaw was being received by the literary societies and the press of London as an original and revolutionary thinker. I then began to understand why Bernard Shaw has very little respect for some of his contemporaries.

III

THE “BETTER THAN SHAKESPEARE” FALLACY

This brings us to the fourth fallacy. The fourth fallacy is that Bernard Shaw has made enormous and extravagant claims for himself as a critic, philosopher, sociologist, and dramatist. Let us take a passage of Bernard Shaw’s preface to the Plays for Puritans. It is the famous “Better than Shakespeare” passage, the foundation of a public charge that George Bernard Shaw thinks too highly of himself.
It is a conclusive proof that he does nothing of the kind. Observe also that it harks back to our second fallacy:

My stories are the old stories, my characters are the familiar harlequin and columbine, clown and pantaloon (note the harlequin’s leap in the third act of Caesar and Cleopatra); my stage tricks and suspenses and thrills and jests are the ones in vogue when I was a boy, by which time my grandfather was tired of them. . . . It is a dangerous thing to be hailed at once, as a few rash admirers have hailed me, as above all things original; what the world calls originality is only an unaccustomed method of tickling it. Meyerbeer seemed prodigiously original to the Parisians, when he first burst on them. To-day he is only the crow who followed Beethoven’s plough. I am a crow who have followed many ploughs. No doubt I seem prodigiously clever to those who have never hopped hungry and curious across the fields of philosophy, politics and art. Karl Marx said of Stuart Mill that his eminence was due to the flatness of the surrounding country. In these days of Board Schools, universal reading, newspapers and the inevitable ensuing demand for notabilities of all sorts, literary, military, political and fashionable, to write paragraphs about, that sort of eminence is within the reach of very moderate ability. Reputations are cheap nowadays.

Who, after all, will say that Bernard Shaw has in him a particle of author’s conceit? He has never claimed more than is due to him. There is not the least evidence of vanity or self-importance in the printed work of George Bernard Shaw, there is even less in his speeches, letters (the private letters of George Bernard Shaw will be his masterpiece when, and if, they ever come to be published), conversation, or general demeanor. It is true that he has frequently and vigorously claimed not to be entirely foolish, and that sometimes he has insisted that he really does know what he is writing about. But it is also true that no critic has more persistently assured the public that there is nothing really important or new in any of the ideas and devices which so curiously amazed the first audiences of his early plays. Has he not soberly assured the American public that “the novelties of one generation are only the resuscitated fashions of the generation before last”? And has he not proved this with instances out of The Devil’s Disciple? Did he not prophesy outright in 1900 that the lapse of a few years would expose that play for “the threadbare popular melodrama it technically is”?

Nevertheless, though it is possible for anyone read in the works of Bernard Shaw to parallel these instances of self-assessment from almost any volume, pamphlet, speech, or anecdote of his life, the belief still rules that Bernard Shaw is too highly appreciated by Bernard Shaw. The truth is that Bernard Shaw has had to expend vast
stores of energy and time in reproving his friends for thinking too much of him and in snubbing the worship of his followers. He has had continually to explain to the superior socialists that he is not really a great orator; to the dramatic critics that he is not really the supreme dramatist who ever lived; to men of science that he is not the erudite physician they have imagined from *The Doctor’s Dilemma* and not the expert in acoustics they have inferred from *Pygmalion*; to distracted heads of families that he is not in the least qualified to tell them how to control their marriageable daughters. Bernard Shaw has worked harder to escape the greatness which is thrust upon him than many of his contemporaries have worked to achieve wealth and a blue ribbon; and the harder he has worked, the more convinced the public has become that he is an incorrigibly insolent and pertinacious champion of his title to be infallible.

It is essential to get this notion of Bernard Shaw as the *miles gloriosus* corrected at the start, otherwise we shall never handle the key to his achievement. You will ask how it has arisen. It has arisen simply and inevitably from the fact that Bernard Shaw was for many years of his life a professional critic, and that he was by nature able to regard himself and his own performances with complete detachment. Naturally, when he came to write plays, and found that the said plays were incompetently criticized, he used his native gift for regarding himself impartially, and his acquired skill as a professional critic, to inform his readers exactly how good and how bad his plays really were. Hence he has acquired a reputation for vanity, for it is a rooted idea with some people that a man who talks about himself is necessarily vainglorious.

Bernard Shaw’s detached and disinterested observation of his own career and achievements is not within the power of the average man of letters. It was accordingly misunderstood. Not every one can discuss his own work as though it were the work of a stranger. The self-criticism of Bernard Shaw, read as a whole, shows an amazing literary altruism. It shows exactly how far he is from consenting to occupy the throne into which he has been thrust. Bernard Shaw, in his prefaces, is not a prophet claiming inspiration for his script; he is one of the crowd that reads and judges for itself; only he reads and judges a little more closely and severely than the rest. Bernard Shaw’s modesty—his curious aloofness from his own fame—is the more attractive in that it is absolutely innocent of stage-management. There are men who have made corners in retirement—men of whom it is at once exclaimed how humble and unspoiled they are. Shrewd observers will always suspect the man of letters who is famous for his modesty; who seems to think it positively indecent that his face should be seen; who has always “just left the theater”
when there is a call to be taken; who has a reputation for inaccessi-

bility. Bernard Shaw, of course, is entirely free of this organized

and blushing humility. His very real modesty consists in his being

able to assess himself correctly. He is one of the few living authors

who has not been taken in by his own performances. It does not

occur to him to divide the literature of the day into (a) the works

of Bernard Shaw and (b) other people’s works. He thinks of Man

and Superman as he thinks of The Silver Box. It is a play of con-
temporary interest and of some merit, and he does not see why he

should be barred from discussing it as an expert critic just because

he happens to be the author. Bernard Shaw has certainly imposed

upon many of his friends and observers. He has not imposed upon

himself.

IV

SHAW NOT A JESTER

The fifth fallacy is that Bernard Shaw is an incorrigible jester, that

he is never serious, that he is ready to sacrifice his best friend and

his firmest conviction for the sake of a really good joke. Now, the

first thing to realize about Bernard Shaw is his overflowing gravity.

He has taken more things seriously in his career than any living and

notable person. He has taken music seriously, and painting and

socialism and philosophy and politics and public speaking. He has
taken the trouble to make up his mind upon scores of things to

which the average heedless man hardly gives a second thought—

things like diet, hygiene, vaccination, phonetic spelling, and vivisection.

He has even taken seriously the English theater, unlike virtually

every other English man of letters who has had anything to do with

it. Compare for a moment the conduct of Bernard Shaw at a re-

hearsal of one of his own plays with the conduct, say, of Barrie.

Barrie is happy so long as no one takes any notice of him. He has so

immense a disdain for the minutiae of theatrical production that he

would rather write ten plays than control the rehearsal of one. Ber-

nard Shaw, on the other hand, with the amazing industry of a really

serious person, turns up with a closely written volume of notes,
determining down to the minutest detail where, how, and when his
company shall deliver their lines and do their necessary “business.”
It is only because Bernard Shaw is so immensely serious that he can
be so tremendously casual and brilliant. He is ready for everything
and everybody because he has seriously considered everything and
seriously regarded everybody. A first-rate impromptu usually in-
cicates a mind richly stored and well arranged. Bernard Shaw can ex-
temporize on most subjects because he has seriously thought about them. The more brilliantly he sparkles upon a given theme, the more sober has been his education in its rudiments. Unfortunately, many people have come to exactly the opposite conclusion. Because Bernard Shaw has a rapid and vital way of writing, because he presents his argument at a maximum, seasons it with boisterous analogies, and frequently drives it home at the point of a hearty joke, he is suspected of sacrificing sense to sound. The dancing of his manner conceals the severe decorum of his matter. It is true that Bernard Shaw can be funny, but it is wholly false that he is in the least a flippant writer or a careless thinker. He is as serious as Praise-God Barebones and as careful as Octavius Caesar.

V

HIS REPUDIATION OF REASON

The sixth fallacy has to do with the all-head-and-no-heart formula. It is said of Bernard Shaw by some very excellent critics that he is an expert logician arguing in vacuo, that he has exalted reason as a god, that his mind is a wonderful machine which never goes wrong because its owner is not swayed by the ordinary passions, likes, prejudices, sentiments, impulses, infatuations, enthusiasms, and weaknesses of ordinary mankind. How the critics square this notion of Bernard Shaw with the kind friend and counselor who lives in Adelphi Terrace they alone can tell. It is probably this idea of Bernard Shaw which most heartily tickles him. Bernard Shaw greatly enjoys contemplating the motley crowd of his legendary selves; but none can please him more thoroughly—because none could be more outrageously fictitious—than Bernard Shaw the vivisector of his kind, the high priest of reason and common sense.

This last superstition has grown mainly out of the simple fact that G. B. S. as a critic of music, art, and the drama was actually a critic. He took his criticism as seriously as he took his socialism or his conviction that tobacco was a noxious weed. Being a serious critic, he found it necessary to tell the truth concerning the artistic achievements of many sensitive and amiable young people. Naturally, Bernard Shaw got the reputation of being a heartless brute for his candor, and a logical brute, owing to the soundness of his arguments. Then, when Bernard Shaw came to write plays, it was discovered that his young women behaved like reasonable creatures and that his young men appreciated the importance of five per cent. This was unusual in the soft, romantic stage creatures of the late nineties; so here was more evidence of Bernard Shaw’s insensitivity, of his arid
and merciless rationalism, of his impenetrable indifference to all that warms the blood of common humanity.

Of course there was not the slightest real evidence of all this. If there is one idea more than another that persists all through the work of Bernard Shaw, and defines his personality, it is to be found in his perpetual repudiation of reason. Almost his whole literary career has been spent in adapting the message of Schopenhauer to his own optimism and belief in the goodness of life. Not reason and not the categories determine or create, but passion and will. Bernard Shaw has always insisted that reason is no motive power; that the true motive power is will; that the setting up of reason above will is a damnable error. Life is the satisfaction of a power in us of which we can give no rational account whatever—that is the final declaration of Bernard Shaw; and his doctrine corresponds with his temperament. Rudyard Kipling has described the rationalists as men who “deal with people’s insides from the point of view of men who have no stomachs.” Bernard Shaw would agree. No one, in habit or opinion, lives more remotely than Bernard Shaw from the clear, hard, logical, devitalised, and sapless world of Comte and Spencer.

VI

SHAW FAR FROM BEING AN ANARCHIST

The seventh fallacy is that Bernard Shaw is an anarchist, a disturber of the peace, a champion of the right of every man to do as he pleases and to think for himself. This idea of Bernard Shaw is so deeply rooted in the public mind, despite Bernard Shaw’s serious and repeated disclaimers of its accuracy, that, if any young person in London runs away from her parents, or if any elderly gentleman abandons his wife and family, these things are not only regarded as the results of Bernard Shaw’s pernicious teaching, but their perpetrators are upheld and justified by the belief that they are disciples following the lead of G. B. S. as prophet and master. These startling misconceptions have arisen from the fact that Bernard Shaw has pointed out in a popular play that children do not always agree in all points with their parents, and that he has argued in a less popular play that one or two reforms in the marriage laws of Great Britain are already overdue. Was ever a reputation won upon slenderer evidence? Why, Shakespeare told us three hundred years ago how

The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long
That it had its head bit off by its young,

and it is now on record in a British bluebook that a committee of the most respectable gentlemen of the British bar and church have
agreed with Bernard Shaw that British divorce is unnecessarily expensive, inequitable, and humiliating. The practical extent of Bernard Shaw's anarchism coincides with the anarchism of our judges and our bishops.

Those who dig deeper than this, with the preconceived resolution to find that Bernard Shaw is an anarchist, will only be more hopelessly misled. They will find that he preaches, as we have already discovered, the ultimate supremacy of passion and will; that he sees the gods and the laws of each generation as mere expressions of the will and passion of their generation; and that he claims for posterity the right to supersede them as soon as posterity is moved by a higher will and a finer passion. But this is not anarchism. It is so far from being anarchism that side by side with these doctrines Bernard Shaw has, in The Sanity of Art, written down one of the best defenses of law and order—of the convenience and necessity of policemen, churches, and all kinds of public authority—that has appeared in popular form within recent years. It is true that Bernard Shaw pleads for liberty, and points out that it is better for a man to act and think responsibly for himself than to run to the nearest constable or parish priest. But it is also true that he wants people to have no more liberty than is good for them, and that he very seriously distrusts the ability of the average man to think for himself. Bernard Shaw knows that the average man has neither the time nor the brains nor the imagination to be original in such matters as crossing the road or getting married or determining whether he ought or ought not to cut the throat of his neighbor.

Nothing could be further from the mind of Bernard Shaw than the philosophic anarchy of Godwin or John Stuart Mill. Bernard Shaw is not an anarchist either in speculation or in practice. He is as sound on the question of law and order as Mr. Asquith. He is as correct in deportment and as regular in his conduct as the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford. The most pictorial way of emphasizing the difference between a real anarchist and Bernard Shaw is to compare the handwriting of Bernard Shaw and, say, of Cunninghame Graham. Bernard Shaw writes like a sensible citizen who intends his pages to be read. It is true that he asserts his individuality as one who values what is comely by writing the most beautiful hand of any author living, just as he insists that his books shall be printed in a style that proclaims him a pupil of William Morris. But he writes mainly to be read, aware that the liberty of writing illegibly is not worth the trouble it would give to a community which practised it. The writing of Cunninghame Graham, on the other hand, requires an expert in calligraphy. It has baffled half the big printing-houses in London. It is the last, insolent assertion that every man has the right
to do as he pleases regardless of the discomfort and loss of time he thereby inflicts upon his neighbors. It is, in one word, anarchic, a graphic illustration of the great gulf that is fixed between two public figures of the time who, nevertheless, have impartially been described by the careless as anarchists.

VII

SHAW A PRECISION RATHER THAN A CARELESS MAN OF LETTERS

The eighth fallacy is that Bernard Shaw is a headlong, dashing, and opiniative writer, without technical equipment, who succeeds by an impudent trust in his unassisted genius, and brings off his best efforts by a happy fluke. This fallacy has stuck to Bernard Shaw all through his career as a critic of music, painting, the drama, as a playwright, as a pamphleteer, as a public speaker. When G. B. S., as Corso di Bassetto, was writing about music for a London newspaper, the public insisted that his appointment was a joke. It was the public’s own joke, and the public enjoyed it immensely. Indeed, it chuckled so heartily that G. B. S. had not the malice to undeceive it. He played with this popular legend of himself, as he has so often played with a hundred others. He was thought to be merely a rude young man who knocked the professors’ heads together without the least idea of what they contained. Bernard Shaw’s characteristic confutation of this public error was to reduce it to absurdity. When people handed him a score, he held it carefully upside down and studied it in that position. When he was asked to play the piano, he walked to the wrong end. Bernard Shaw’s conduct as a critic of music, acting under provocation, was very natural; but it was in the result unfortunate. Popularly imagined to be an irresponsible amateur with a literary knack, Bernard Shaw, in all he has undertaken, has, if anything, erred from an excessive knowledge and interest in the expert professional and technical side of his subject. Bernard Shaw knew years ago all about the enormity of exploding undiminished chords of the ninth and thirteenth on the unsuspecting ear, just as today he thoroughly understands the appallingly scientific progressions of Scriabin. Similarly he can tell you the difference at a glance between real sunshine in an open field and the good north light of a Chelsea studio, or explain why “values” are more difficult to capture when colors are bright than when they are looked for in a dark interior. As to the technic of the theater—well, the subject is hardly worth discussing. Some of his later plays are nothing if they are not technical.
The fallacy that Bernard Shaw is a happy savage among critics and artists, ignorant and careless of form, unread in the necessary conventions, speaking always at random with the confidence that only a perfect ignorance can give, is particularly deplorable, because it necessarily blinds its adherents to Bernard Shaw’s most serious defect both as critic and creator. Usually Bernard Shaw knows too much, rather than too little, of his subject. He is too keenly interested in its bones and its mechanism. His famous distinction between music which is decorative and music which is dramatic is quite unsound, as I would undertake to show in nothing less than a small pamphlet; but it is not the mistake of a critic ignorant of music. It is rather the mistake of a critic too keenly absorbed in the technic of music.

If the professors in the early nineties had objected to G. B. S. because he was liable to lapse into the pedantry of which they themselves were accused, they would have been nearer the mark than they were in foolishly dismissing him as an ignoramus. Similarly, as a dramatic critic, G. B. S. erred not by attaching too little value to the forms and conventions of the theater, but by attaching too much. It is true that he did not make the absurd mistake of some of his followers, and regard Ibsen as a great dramatist on account of one or two pettifogging and questionable reforms in dramatic convention, such as the abolishing of soliloquies and asides and extra doors to the sitting-room. But he certainly attached too much importance to these things, mainly because he knew so much about them; and this critical insistence of his as a Saturday Reviewer has had its revenge in some of his own plays, where his purely technical mastery of theatrical devices, his stage-cleverness, and craftsman’s virtuosity have led him into mechanical horse-play and stock positions unworthy of the author of John Bull’s Other Island and Major Barbara. Bernard Shaw has continually suffered from knowing his subject too well from the angle of the expert, and he has frequently fallen into the mistakes of the expert. Far from being the happy and careless privateer of popular belief, he is usually to be found struggling for freedom under the oppression of things stored for reference in his capacious memory. The great critic, like any ordinary, unskilled spectator, should be able to look at a work of art without prejudice in favor of any particular form or fashion. It should not matter to him a jot or influence his judgment in the slightest whether the music he hears is symphonic or metrical, whether the thirteenth is exploded as a thirteenth or prepared as a six-four chord. He should be similarly indifferent whether a dramatist talks to him in blank-verse soliloquy or in conversational dialogue. Preoccupation with manner, apart from matter—usually implying an a priori prej-
udice in favor of one manner over another—is the mark of pedantry; and of this pedantry—always the pedantry of a man who is expert and knows too much—Bernard Shaw is not always free, though he is far too good a critic to be often at fault.

VIII
THE REAL SHAW

We have not yet exhausted the popular fallacies about Bernard Shaw, but as most of my readers will already be wondering what is left of the man who has just described Sir Edward Grey as a Junker, I will turn now from George Bernard Shaw, who is as legendary as the Flying Dutchman, to the very positive and substantial author of Common Sense About the War. I have yet to explain why Bernard Shaw, stripped of his professional masks, and rescued from the misconceptions of his admirers, remains one of the most striking public figures of our day, and must fairly be regarded as the most important apparition in the British theater since Goldsmith and Sheridan. We have seen that Bernard Shaw is not original in what he preaches, is erudite rather than adventurous, is in no sense revolutionary or anarchical, is extremely serious, and is far from being an orgiastic and impudent rationalist for whom drifting humanity is stuff for a paradox. Bernard Shaw has not won the notice of mankind because he has thought of things which have hitherto occurred to no one else; nor has he won the notice of mankind because he has a native gift of buffoonery and a talent for the stage. The merit of Bernard Shaw has to be sought outside his doctrine. The secret of his genius lies deeper than his fun, and has scarcely anything to do with his craft.

It ironically happens that Bernard Shaw as a critic has virtually made it impossible for those who accept his criticism to allow that Bernard Shaw as a dramatic author has any right to be really famous. We have seen that Bernard Shaw as a critic repeatedly fell into the grievous error of separating the stuff he was criticizing into manner and matter. Thus, confronted with the Elizabethan dramatists, Bernard Shaw always maintained that they had nothing to say and that they were only tolerable because they had an incomparably wonderful way of saying it. Comparing Shakespeare with Ibsen, for example, he would point out that, if you paraphrased Ibsen’s Peer Gynt, it still remained good intellectual stuff, and that, if you paraphrased Shakespeare’s “Life’s but a walking shadow,” it became the merest commonplace. Bernard Shaw thence proceeded to draw the moral that Ibsen, apart from mere favor and prettiness, was the
George Bernard Shaw
greater and more penetrating dramatist. Fortunately for Bernard Shaw, as we shall shortly realize, this criticism of his is not only false in fact, but it is also nonsense in theory. It is false in fact, because it is quite untrue that Shakespeare paraphrased is commonplace whereas Ibsen paraphrased is an intellectual feast. It would be more to the point if Bernard Shaw had said that Shakespeare paraphrased is commonplace for all time and that Ibsen paraphrased is commonplace for only the nineteenth century. It would be still more to the point if Bernard Shaw had said that it is quite impossible to paraphrase any work of genius in so far as genius has gone to its making. It is absurd to talk of paraphrasing Shakespeare, because Shakespeare is of genius all compact; and it is as true of Ibsen as of Shakespeare that, so far as he is a genius and not merely a scientific naturalist, it is absurd to separate what he says from his way of saying it. When Shakespeare has written:

... Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

he has written more than the equivalent of "life is not worth living." If Bernard Shaw will not admit that Shakespeare in this passage is no more than an utterer of a universal platitude for pessimists, he will have to agree that Ibsen is no more than an utterer of parochial platitude for the suffragette platform. Probably, however, now that Bernard Shaw has himself become a classical author, he has realized that to distinguish between the ideas of a literary genius and the language in which they are expressed is as absurd as to distinguish between the subject of a painter and the way in which it is painted, or between the themes of a musician and the notes in which they are rendered.

At any rate, Bernard Shaw must realize how very badly he himself would fare under such a distinction. We have seen that Bernard Shaw in doctrine and idea is in no sense original. His celebration of the state is as old as Plato. His particular sort of puritanism is as old as Cromwell. His particular brand of socialism is as old as Owen. A paraphrase of Bernard Shaw—a reduction of Bernard Shaw to the bare bones of his subject matter—would be as intolerable as the speeches of his disciples and some of his masters usually are. In a word, if Bernard Shaw is a genius, he is a genius for the same reason that Shakespeare is a genius. He is a genius not because he has anything new to say, but because he has a passionate and a personal
way of saying it. If I had the time to go deeper into this matter, I should like to ask whether it is really possible to get hold of a new idea as distinguished from a new way of presenting an old one. But, at all events, I have already said enough to justify the assumption that, if Bernard Shaw can claim an immortality, however brief, it will not be by virtue of his original, novel, and startling opinions, but by virtue of his literary presentation of them in a manner entirely his own. The equations read:

The ideas of Bernard Shaw = the commonplaces of his time.
The ideas of Bernard Shaw + his way of presenting them = G. B. S.

IX

PASSION AND STYLE THE SECRETS OF SHAW’S SUCCESS

Bernard Shaw, then, has won the attention of the present generation, and he will hold the attention of posterity not because he has new theories about the world, but because, by virtue of strictly personal and inalienable qualities, he is able to give to the most “hackneyed clap-trap” (Bernard Shaw’s own description) an air of novelty. Were he baldly to tell us that incomes should be equally divided, and that interest is an iniquitous and profoundly unsocial device invented by those who have too much money for the purpose of levying blackmail upon those who have not enough, we should simply remember that we had read all this years ago in an old book and turn to something rather more worth our time and attention.

But when Bernard Shaw writes Widowers’ Houses or Socialism and Superior Brains, it is quite another matter. Here we have original work of the first quality. The ideas are common to us all; but Bernard Shaw’s presentation of these ideas thrills us with a conviction that nothing quite like it has ever come within our experience. We realize that we have never before encountered just this blend of wit and sense, this intellectual wrestle and thrust, this fervor and fun, this argumentative and syllabic virtuosity, this apparently impudent disregard of style that only the more piquantly emphasizes a perfectly individual and highly cultivated literary art. Then we begin to wonder what is the inspiration of this rapid Jehu; whence does he get his impulse to drive all these ancient ideas so furiously through the modern world. How are we to explain the passion that fills him and lifts his work to levels higher than the platform he undertakes to fill? We are sensible in Bernard Shaw’s best work of a horsepower, of a spiritual energy, which is no more the product of
his doctrinal prejudice against rent and interest than the energy
which drove Wagner to compose the Nibelung's Ring was the prod-
uct of his desire to justify his revolutionary principles or to improve
the operatic stage scenery of his generation. We know that the in-
spiration of Bernard Shaw must be something deeper than a dislike
of Roebuck Ramsden or a desire to abolish Mr. Sartorius. We know,
in fact, that Bernard Shaw, like every man of genius, is the happy
agent of a power and a passion which uses his prejudices, memories,
and doctrines in a way he is intellectually powerless to resist.

The real thrill of his work is conveyed in some sentences of his
preface to Man and Superman—sentences used by him in quite an-
other connection:

This is the true joy of life: the being used for a purpose recognised
by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you
are thrown on the scrap-heap; the being a force of nature, instead of a
feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that
the world will not devote itself to making you happy.

To apply this passage to the work of Bernard Shaw is again to
destroy the popular conception of him as merely the acute raison-
neur, the intellectual critic of his kind, with a wallet of revolutionary
propaganda whereby his reputation lives or dies. Not his doctrine
and not his deliberate pulpiteering make Bernard Shaw a vital influ-
ence in modern literature. The real secret of his influence can be
explained in a sentence. Bernard Shaw has passion and he has style.
Therefore, like every man of genius, he is driven to say more than he
intends, and to say it in an arresting voice.

It remains to ask what is the prime irritant of this passion in Ber-
ard Shaw. Where are we to look for the catfish which keeps his
mental aquarium alive and astir? First, without preliminary, let us
dart on that preface "Why for Puritans," which more than any other
gives us the key to Bernard Shaw's work and character. Bernard
Shaw writes as follows:

I have, I think, always been a Puritan in my attitude towards Art. I
am as fond of fine music and handsome buildings as Milton was, or
Cromwell, or Bunyan; but if I found that they were becoming the instru-
ments of a systematic idolatry of sensuousness, I would hold it good
statesmanship to blow every cathedral in the world to pieces with
dynamite, organ and all, without the least heed to the screams of the
art critics and cultured voluptuaries.

Bernard Shaw's primal inspiration, that is to say, is not esthetic
or intellectual, but moral. We have to reckon with a moral fury
where he most individually rages. The demon which seizes his pen
at the critical moment, and uses him for its own enthusiastic purpose, is the demon which drove Milton to destroy Arminius. When Bernard Shaw imagines that he coolly and reasonably desires, simply as a practical socialist and in the name of common sense, to nationalize land and capital, and give to everybody as much money as he requires, he is mistaken. Like every other prophet who has succeeded in moving his generation, Bernard Shaw begins with a passion and a prejudice, and afterward manufactures and systematizes the evidence. That Bernard Shaw is a socialist is an accident of the time. The essential thing is that Bernard Shaw passionately hates all that is complacent, malevolent, callous, inequitable, oppressive, unsocial, stupid, irreligious, enervating, narrow, misinformed, unimaginative, lazy, envious, unclean, disloyal, mercenary, and extravagant. Hating all this with the positive, energetic, and proselytizing hatred of an incorrigible moralist, he has naturally seized on the biggest and most adequate stick in reach with which to beat the nineteenth-century sinner. This stick happened to be the socialist stick. If G. B. S. had lived with Grosseteste in the thirteenth century, it would have been the no-taxation-without-representation stick. If he had lived with Star Chamber in the sixteenth century, it would have been the Habeas Corpus stick. If he had lived with Rousseau in the eighteenth century, it would have been the social-contract-and-law-of-nature stick. Bernard Shaw's socialism stick is simply his weapon—the most convenient weapon to hand—with which to convict a society founded upon capitalism of the greatest possible amount of sin with the least possible opportunity of an overwhelming retort from the sinner. The important thing is not that Bernard Shaw preaches socialism, but that he uses the doctrines of socialism as Cromwell's troopers used the psalms of David or as Tolstoy used the gospels of Christ—namely, to put the unjust man and his evil ways out of court and countenance. To this end he employs also his craft as a dialectician, his gift as a stylist, his clear exposition and wit, his fun, irony, observation of men, genius for mystification and effective pose—all, indeed, that enters into the public idea of G. B. S. These things are merely auxiliary; any moment they are likely to be caught up in the service of his passionate mission—a mission of which Bernard Shaw is often himself aware when he is most firmly under its dominion.

x

OUR MODERN TREATMENT OF PROPHETS

This brings us within view of Bernard Shaw's pamphlet on the war. It is natural in a preacher that the most unpardonable sin of the
many he is called to denounce should be the sin of complacency; for
the sin of complacency virtually amounts to the sin of refusing to
hear what the preacher has to say, or, at all events, of refusing to
take it seriously. Bernard Shaw has said continuously for many years
that the average man is an unsocial sinner; and the average man, in-
stead of hanging his head and mending his ways, has smiled in the
face of the prophet. At one time the prophet was stoned, and at an-
other time he was poisoned or ostracized or pelted in the pillory. But
we have lately learned a more effective way of dealing with a
prophet: either we turn him into a society preacher and enjoy his
denunciation of what our neighbors do, or we pay him handsomely
to amuse us in the theater. We have thus improved immensely on
the methods of the scribe and the Pharisee; for where the scribe
and the Pharisee destroyed only the bodies of their prophets, we,
with an even more thorough complacency, aim also at destroying
their souls—usually with some success.

But the British public has not succeeded with Bernard Shaw, who
continues to be periodically stirred to frenzy by his inability to
make everyone realize that he or she is directly responsible for all
the crimes and miseries of modern civilization. Moreover, because
Bernard Shaw has lived most of his life in England, and has there-
fore been less seriously taken in England than elsewhere, he has
concluded that the English are more complacent than any other
people in the world. More and more he has come to regard it as his
special mission to humble this complacency, to convict the English-
man, above all men, of sin, and of the necessity for humility and re-
pentance. Therefore, whenever the British public becomes, in the
view of Bernard Shaw, unduly exalted,—whenever, in fact, it thinks
it has a reason to be proud of the British name,—Bernard Shaw is at
once suspicious and usually incensed. Latterly he has been unable
to resist any occasion of pricking the inflation, real or imagined, of
the British spirit; and latterly, misled by habit, and exaggerating the
sins he was born to chastise, Bernard Shaw has made some serious
mistakes.

Thus when, more than two years ago, the whole British nation
was struck with grief at the loss of the Titanic, and was reading
with a reasonable pride of the splendid behavior of her heroic crew,
Bernard Shaw rose in his robe of the prophet and told the public not
to exaggerate its vicarious gallantry. Then in August, 1914, when
Great Britain was straining every nerve to get her army to the Con-
tinent in time to save Belgium from the worst of war, Bernard Shaw
published an article in the British press virtually to the effect that
Great Britain was not fighting for the sanctity of treaties or the
rights of a little nation, but for British homes and British skins.
Maliciously he chose for the publication of this assault upon British complacency the most obstinately and hatefully complacent British newspaper at his disposal.

Finally there came the celebrated pamphlet Common Sense About the War. This must be read as Bernard Shaw's most audacious effort to puncture the self-esteem of the British public. It has caused much brain-searching among those who have simply regarded George Bernard Shaw as a very discreet and financially successful mountebank; for Bernard Shaw, in writing this pamphlet, has done a clearly unpopular thing. Undoubtedly he has angered and estranged many of his admirers. Some regard the pamphlet as an obscure attempt to discredit the allied cause. Others regard it as an escapade of revolting levity, inexpedient from a patriotic point of view and essentially wrong in its conclusions. The real point that concerns us here is that the pamphlet is not a new, unexpected, or isolated performance of Bernard Shaw, but a natural sequel of all he has hitherto written. Those who have followed Bernard Shaw to the threshold of his pamphlet on the war have no right at this time to be astonished or to refuse him their applause. Common Sense About the War is simply a topical and a later edition of Widowers' Houses. That is to say, it is a tract in which the case against British complacency is put at a maximum by a fearless and passionate advocate for the prosecution.

Not Bernard Shaw, but the time, has changed. Here we strike at the root of Bernard Shaw's mistake. Hitherto, he was doing salutary work in his campaign against the silent self-assurance of the mean, sensual man. There are as many complacent persons in Great Britain as elsewhere, and so long as Great Britain was at peace with her neighbors, it was beneficial that Bernard Shaw should imagine that the British, among whom he lived, were more guilty in this respect than any other extant community, and that he should lose no opportunity for satirical, ironical, comic, or didactic reproof. But when Great Britain and her allies had their back to the wall, when there were opponents to be countered and met, Bernard Shaw's insular mistake that the British as a nation are any more complacent than any other nation with a past to be proud of and a future to believe in became a really injurious heresy. It began, indeed, to look rather like giving away his people to the enemy. Of course it was nothing of the kind. Common Sense About the War, intelligently read, vibrates with patriotism, and it proudly proclaims the essential rightness of the struggle in which Great Britain is now engaged. But the patriotism of Common Sense About the War is less apparent to the audiences which laugh at Bernard Shaw in the theater and outrageously regard him as a privileged fool at the court of King Demos, than the fact that it begins by asserting that Sir Edward Grey is a Junker,
and goes on to examine very particularly whether we really have the
right to condemn our enemies without a preliminary inquiry into
our own consciences and affairs.

Bernard Shaw has made a mistake, but it is a natural, not an
ignoble, mistake. It will have no permanent effect upon those who
are sensible, even in Bernard Shaw's most special pleading, of the
passionate moral sincerity which gives consistency and fire to all he
writes. *Common Sense About the War* was a blunder; but it was also
an act of disinterested courage. It was not dictated by any wish to
stand in front of the picture or to splash in a sea too deep for pur-
poses of exhibition. Bernard Shaw, in writing *Common Sense About
the War*, is simply the priest who insists upon sacrifice before going
into battle, or believes that every good fight should be preceded by
confession, absolution, and high mass.

One word more. Bernard Shaw, the prophet and the puritan, lives
in his work. But the passion which gives him uniformity and pur-
pose as a public figure has not impaired his personal humor, his tol-
erance for all that is sweet and commendable, his breadth of view
and eagerly inquisitive outlook upon life, his candor and honesty of
mind, his generous welcome of new ideas, his love of beautiful
things, his ability to appreciate and sympathize even with those
forces which are banded to destroy him. These are the qualities
which have obscured from contemporaries the essential simplicity
of his mind, and have warmly endeared him to the younger genera-
tion of authors and critics who have learned from their master how
profitably they may supersede him. This younger generation, though
it very frequently turns the weapons of Bernard Shaw against him-
self, will never forget or neglect the debt it owes to the helpful,
patient, and wise counselor it has been privileged to observe and
know.
P. P. Howe
1915
Shaw's Economics

I
If we turn in this section of this study to the consideration of Mr. Shaw as political economist, it is with no wish to surprise that we do so. For if we come to think about it, it was to political economy that Mr. Shaw himself turned first, if we neglect for the moment (but only for the moment) his almost but not entirely negligible novels. And if we do not think about it, if we have not, that is to say, the sequential order of our subject’s career as clearly before us as we should have if it were his biography we were engaged on, do we not then with equal ease deduce the economist from the dramatist? It will be some part of the purpose of this study to do so. We shall find that Mr. Shaw, in his capacity as dramatist (and that, after all, is only one of his capacities), has built, not on the human heart, as Browning’s Sordello exhorted the poet to do, but on the “economic man” of the economists. And if my word is not conclusive, as, at this stage, it can hardly be expected to be, we have the word of Mr. Shaw himself, who wrote in a letter to Professor Henderson, “In all my plays my economic studies have played as important a part as a knowledge of anatomy does in the works of Michael Angelo.”

II
There is no man who prides himself more on the normality of his vision than the economist; indeed, he is often a man who thinks that no other men have any vision at all. Political economy is the only game you may engage in (except perhaps politics) with forty-eight million pawns, and have for your board the national exchequer. At the same time it is one of the most secret of vices; more secret than

politics, in which you have occasionally to meet your opponent at
the poll, although you need never meet his arguments. But the po-
titical economist may go on playing his own game in his own cor-
ner, awarding us our income under his pet law of wages, which he
terms an “iron” law, and disposing of it to his own satisfaction; and
we, who make our living and spend it—or who spend it without
making it—may not be aware of his existence. I suppose there are
not ten men at this moment in the City of London, engaged in bring-
ing us our bread, who have the smallest grasp of the economic
theory, as distinct from the business principle, of what they are
doing. This is neither to their credit nor their discredit; the unreality
of the economist is almost a point of faith in England. Partly the
reason is that the orthodox economists have contented themselves
with “explaining” the system by which we live, and as their explana-
tion has always amounted to one hundred good reasons why that
system cannot possibly be different in any respect, it is no surprise
that we have not taken the trouble to read them. For the system by
which one lives, the iron laws, that is to say, which govern the fact
that one’s particular slice of bread and butter is no bigger, is not a
thing one wants to read about—merely to learn that one’s slice can
be no bigger. It is not a thing like the theory of music, without some
study of which one cannot be a musician; or the theory of literary
 technique, without which one cannot write good novels (despite a
very general belief to the contrary). By the sweat of one’s brow to
earn one’s bread is partly an instinct and partly a stern necessity;
and there is small blame to the plain man if he think neither his in-
stincts nor his necessities a proper subject for theoretic study.

But the Socialist altered all this, because they said to the plain
man if you study the theory of the system by which you live you
will see that your slice may be, nay ought to be, bigger. The Social-
ists thus provided the first definite inducement in the history of the
world (for the study is as old as Aristotle) for the plain man to read
the economists. He would read the orthodox economists, that is to
say, to find them out; to detect in their writings what Bentham
called the sinister interest—to convict them of canonizing a system
merely because it was the system that was current. The Socialists
he would read to obtain a glimpse of an ideal system; or to learn
how, by a catastrophic upheaval of the simplest kind, he might in-
crease the size of his own slice of bread and butter. Unfortunately
the Socialists, when they were economists, were not very good
artists, and when they were artists, were not very good economists;
and frequently they were neither. How charming a picture Fourier
might have made of the phalanstery, if he had had one quarter of
the art of Sir Thomas More; but he had not any at all, merely the
vocabulary of his calling, which was that of a commercial traveller. How persuasive Marx might have been, if his explanation that all values are only definite masses of concealed labour-time, and therefore the sole property of the plain man, had not been more positively unreadable than the explanations of the orthodox economists, in addition to being less accurate. With what eagerness we should have thrown ourselves into the Utopia of Morris, if the limpid and beautiful book had contained any more precise instructions for its attainment than the conversion of the Houses of Parliament into a municipal dung-heap. But it didn't; and even though England for once had grown a Socialist, instead of importing him—Fourier, Saint-Simon, Engels, Marx—the system went on working, and the orthodox economists went on explaining it to the entire satisfaction of themselves and of the very few people who wanted to listen.

III

That was the position when our subject made his double discovery, that his eyesight was normal and that the population of these islands were mostly fools. (Both these discoveries are undated, but I think we may take them as occurring not long after 1856, in which year Mr. Shaw was born in Dublin. I am aware that News from Nowhere did not make its appearance until 1890, fourteen years after Mr. Shaw came to London, and a year later than Fabian Essays.) I think it probable that a third discovery antedated these two by a little, and that was our subject's discovery that he was a good hand at an explanation; indeed, if it were the custom to record as religiously the first words of great men as it is their last—a custom which presents unfortunate difficulties since there is no way of knowing a great man in his cradle—we may be pretty sure that the first words of our subject would prove to be, "Let me explain." Once more, whether this were so or whether this were not so (and it is a domestic scene which, if it occurred, Mr. Shaw has omitted unaccountably from his so carefully presented reminiscences), we should be inclined to deduce it from our subject's work in general; in which, whether dramatic or extra-dramatic, no three words have enjoyed more frequent recurrence. For every reason, then, of destination and of choice, the field of the political economist was open to our subject. He found it for the first time in the history of English letters, an arena in which a man who was bent upon catching the eye of his generation might seriously think of succeeding. Ruskin had Thackeray to thank for a good deal when he found Unto this Last too shocking for the Cornhill; but Ruskin wrote before the Socialists had rendered the explanations of the orthodox economists really i-
teresting to the general public, and he had made his name in other fields before he turned to teaching political economy to young ladies’ academies and to long-suffering and hypothetical working men. It is impossible to assert that the physiocratic sentimentalism of Ruskin, in spite of the eloquence of its expression, has very much influence in England at this moment. But our subject found in the orthodox economist a prime instance of the “hopelessly private person” for whom, doubtless by nature, he had an antipathy. He found a sufficient number of persons—shall we say that he found the newspapers?—willing to give their attention to the phenomenon of the Socialists turning upon the system of society the guns they had wrested from the hands of its trusted if neglected defenders, the economists. He found within his own person an exceptional brain, quite equal to doing rather better in any field of public activity that it chose than most of its contemporaries. Add to this a severe and dutiful sobriety of character which religiously kept that brain working when the nearest rivals among those contemporaries happened to be taking a holiday; and a gift of “effective assertion” (which is our subject’s definition of style), a gift already disciplined to the writing of his quartette of voluble novels. And add to this again the artless pleasure of the undergraduate in mere ratiocination. What better field for these things to cut a figure in, in the English ’eighties at any rate, than that of the economists? Our subject soon was busy cutting it. Within a very small number of years he was delivering an address to the Economic Section of the British Association—putting them into their own corner, as it were, and saying, “Let me explain.”

IV

It is not without significance that what Mr. Shaw undertook to explain to the economists was The Transition to Social Democracy, for that is what the members of The Fabian Society have been explaining to one another ever since. I do not wish, in saying this, to be misunderstood. The Fabian Society, a body of persons of both sexes who have met together once a fortnight for a quarter of a century to listen to Mr. Shaw, and have left before his speech was over if the duration of its interest conflicted with the departure of their train for the suburbs, are only of significance to the subject of our present study in so far as their history is his history. In themselves, and apart from the admirable special activities of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb and others of the platform figures, they may be described as the passionate friends of the unreality of the economist. For a quarter of a century they have discussed how they will behave, how we shall all behave, how they will allow us to behave, “under Social-
ism." It is an amiable hobby, like another, and they have pursued it with the diligent single-mindedness with which another body of persons might discuss how vegetables behave under glass. I propose to assert that Mr. Shaw the borough councillor, the apostle of the cart and trumpet, the cogent advocate of municipal trading, has all the time been a sufferer from the unreality of the economist. He cleared the economists out of their corner just as, later on, he cleared the dramatists out of the theatre, and for the same reason—to make room for some goods of his own which he had all ready for delivery. For the unreality of the orthodox economists he substituted, in the name of reality, a new unreality; just as for the unreality of the orthodox dramatists he went on to substitute, in the name of reality, a new unreality again. But we must not get on too far.

What is, in actual fact, the outcome of our subject's series of treatises—the Fabian Essays of 1889, The Impossibilities of Anarchism, Socialism for Millionaires, Socialism and Superior Brains, Fabianism and the Empire, Fabianism and the Fiscal Question, The Commonsense of Municipal Trading, The Case for Equality of 1914? It is a very delightful series, displaying at every point the tongue of the ready debater as well as the pen of the ready writer. In the series, one would say, lives the athletic charm of our subject's public figure, as it has talked down to its generation from a hundred platforms. That, in itself, is very delightful. One is sure that the series has been read by very many people who have not read any other kind of economist at all. They have imbibed a very great deal of perfectly sound economic theory, and they have not imbibed any nonsense. Our subject's first effort in this particular field was to offer a pronounced opposition to the theory of Marx; partly, no doubt, moved by an instinct to throw out of the field the biggest occupying figure he found in it; partly because our subject has at any time given really very little quarter to other people's nonsense. On the subject of Value, he threw out Marx and allied himself to the late Mr. Stanley Jevons, an orthodox economist. This annoyed the Socialists; but Mr. Shaw has always delighted in annoying those people whose attachment to an idea is by means of a sentiment. Along this line, if it were any part of our immediate business, we might discover in him a great deal of aesthetic as well as intellectual integrity. He annoyed the friends of the little peoples by his advocacy, because of its superior efficiency, of British ascendancy in South Africa; when the Americanized trust then known as the Times Book Club promised superior efficiency, he annoyed the friends of the freedom of letters by giving the enterprise his support. In fact, I suppose our subject has always been more than anything else in love with efficiency. "Become efficient at your own particular trade or
profession," has been his advice to the young Fabians, "and then tell everyone you are a Socialist." That has been his policy of peaceful permeation; in contradistinction to the jolly umbrella-shaking of Mr. Hyndman amongst the lions in Trafalgar Square, and the distinguished hidalgoism of Mr. Cunninghame Graham in the same setting. It is advice with which it is not possible to quarrel.

And our subject's love of efficiency is the real reason why he dislikes the poor so much. The one actual outcome of all these treatises—oh yes, and of a round dozen of prefaces which I haven't forgotten—is our subject's intense dislike for the poor. That is something new in the science of political economy. Because it is a very early utterance which remains absolutely personal and characteristic, I propose to quote here a fairly long passage from the *Fabian Essays*:

But indeed the more you degrade the workers, robbing them of all artistic enjoyment, and all chance of respect and admiration from their fellows, the more you throw them back, reckless, on the one pleasure and the one human tie left to them—the gratification of their instinct for producing fresh supplies of men. You will applaud this instinct as divine until at last this excessive supply becomes a nuisance: there comes a plague of men; and you suddenly discover that the instinct is diabolic, and set up a cry of "over population." But your slaves are beyond caring for your cries: they breed like rabbits; and their poverty breeds filth, ugliness, dishonesty, disease, obscenity, drunkenness and murder. In the midst of the riches which their labour piles up for you, their misery rises up too and stifles you. You withdraw in disgust to the other end of the town from them; you set your life apart from theirs by every class barrier you can devise; and yet they swarm about you still: your face gets stamped with your habitual loathing and suspicion of them; your ears get so filled with the language of the vilest of them that you break into it when you lose your self-control: they poison your life as remorselessly as you have sacrificed theirs heartlessly. You begin to believe intensely in the devil. Then comes the terror of their revolting; the drilling and arming of bodies of them to keep down the rest; the prison, the hospital, paroxysms of frantic coercion, followed by paroxysms of frantic charity. And in the meantime, the population continues to increase!

And to place against that passage, for your edification, I give you another from the preface to the *Major Barbara* of nearly twenty years later:

Now what does this Let Him Be Poor mean? It means let him be weak. Let him be ignorant. Let him become a nucleus of disease. Let him be
a standing exhibition and example of ugliness and dirt. Let him have rickety children. Let him be cheap and let him drag his fellows down to his price by selling himself to do their work. Let his habitations turn our cities into poisonous congeries of slums. Let his daughters infect our young men with the diseases of the streets and his sons revenge him by turning the nation’s manhood into scrofula, cowardice, cruelty, hypocrisy, political imbecility, and all the other fruits of oppression and malnutrition. Let the undeserving become still less deserving; and let the deserving lay up for himself, not treasures in heaven, but horrors in hell upon earth. This being so, is it really wise to let him be poor? Would he not do ten times less harm as a prosperous burglar, incendiary, ravisher or murderer, to the utmost limits of humanity’s comparatively negligible impulses in these directions? Suppose we were to abolish all penalties for such activities, and decide that poverty is the one thing we will not tolerate—that every adult with less than, say £365 a year, shall be painlessly but inexorably killed, and every hungry half-naked child forcibly fattened and clothed, would not that be an enormous improvement on our existing system, which has already destroyed so many civilizations, and is visibly destroying ours in the same way?

Now the voice of those two utterances is demonstrably the same voice, which has gone on saying the same things with an iteration which cannot possibly be condemned. It is the voice, I think, of a man who does not like our old world at all, who pushes it away with the tips of gloved fingers, with the request that it will kindly make itself clean and tidy before presenting itself again for attention. It is a voice that is attenuated, almost into shrillness, by its burden of aesthetic disgust. How enormously (we may conceive that voice saying) how enormously much more I should like you people if you presented a uniform face; a face, above all, that was uniformly clean! Blanche Sartorius, in Mr. Shaw’s first play, spoke in much this tone when she said: “Oh, I hate the poor. At least, I hate those dirty, drunken, disreputable people who live like pigs.” And in one of the latest of Mr. Shaw’s plays—the play which was on no longer ago than the other day—one of the statements of a quarter of a century earlier was illustrated: the statement that our ears get so filled with the language of the vile that we break into it when we lose our self-control.

But it is the message, and not the tone, of the voice which is to the point for the moment. The way to a uniform cleanness of face and of character is by means of a uniform income. That is Mr. Shaw’s economico-psychologic discovery. That is the actual outcome of our subject’s series of treatises. It is hinted at in Fabian
Essays*; it is presented for Mr. Mallock’s consideration in Socialism and Superior Brains; it is affirmed in the preface to Major Barbara; it is reaffirmed in The Case for Equality. Incomes for All is the one positive contribution to the science of political economy made by our subject. It is the Shavian theory of distribution, as you might say the Jevonian theory of value or the Ricardian theory of rent. It is the categoric alternative to Let Him Be Poor. It is the means by which “all the detestable fruits of inequality of condition” (see The Impossibilities of Anarchism) are to be nipped off in the bud.†

What the Fabians discovered, in actual fact, was that it was much more amusing to talk about Socialism than to achieve it. That has very little to do with Quintus Fabius; but we need not trouble ourselves about that. I think it was Mr. Chesterton who, having taken off his hat to our subject’s superior brain, took it off again to the fact that our subject had devoted his superior brain to talking about drain-pipes. Now we may be all for taking off our hats to our subject, and yet not be unaware that he has enjoyed himself talking about drain-pipes. Mr. Shaw has enjoyed talking about everything. It is not as though Mr. Shaw particularly promised himself the pleasure of talking about something else, and gave it up in order to talk about drain-pipes from a stern sense of duty. The stern sense of

* At that point in Mr. Shaw’s second essay at which it is suggested that “rent of managerial ability might in course of time become negative,” that is to say that the manager should receive less for his work than the artisan, the captain less than the cabin boy, because, “under Socialism,” of the honour of superior service. That, in the precise spirit of the undergraduate who suggests to his tutor in political economy that interest should be negative—that is to say, a payment demanded for capital conserved instead of a payment conceded for capital used—is the genesis of Mr. Shaw’s discovery.

† If this were primarily an economic study we might pause to see how Mr. Shaw has proved himself to be, with this single exception, an orthodox economist; or rather, an orthodox economist with a Socialist bias—with the orthodox Socialist bias. For example, we might read in our Mill: “To make the public pay much that the treasury may receive a little, is not an eligible mode of obtaining a revenue. In the case of manufactured articles the doctrine involves a palpable inconsistency. The object of the duty as a means of revenue, is inconsistent with its affording, even incidentally, any protection. It can only operate as protection in so far as it prevents importation; and to whatever degree it prevents importation, it affords no revenue.” Now that is precisely what Mr. Shaw himself has put forward from one thousand platforms; it has been taken to be one of his daringly sudden simplifications. That, for example, among other things, is Fabianism and the Fiscal question. . . . But this is not primarily an economic study. It will not be irrelevant to have noted here our subject’s pleasure in making any kind of a point, whether it is his own or another’s; for that, in its essence, is the debater’s pleasure. He has done nothing as a constructive economist to be compared with Mr. J. A. Hobson’s analysis of the industrial system, for example.
duty is there plain enough in our subject, but I do seriously suggest that we see it in a better perspective if we admit that a drain-pipe is a peculiarly pleasant thing to juggle with to a man of Mr. Shaw's temperament. In the first place a drain-pipe is "real," a real solid fact, with no nonsensical romance about it; and in the second place there are very few men who can balance a drain-pipe. No one would have expected the late Oscar Wilde, for example, to make a very good performance with a drain-pipe; and sure enough when at one point in his career he too caught the Fabian fever (for he was particularly impressionable, far more so than our subject), it was not drain-pipes that he wrote about, but the soul of man, "under Socialism."

The Soul of Man under Socialism has not hitherto, so far as one is aware, been regarded as a Fabian essay; but that is what it is in reality. For the moment, Wilde permitted himself the amusement of granting that Utopia had, indeed, been added to our dominions; and he made for himself in it, along with the other artists, a haven of artificial seclusion in which, with beautiful pens and fair white paper before him, the artist would sit down and would look out over a garden at the high wall which saved him from the rude stresses of a competitive world, and would produce—one may be quite sure, nothing. Now if Mr. Chesterton meant that Mr. Shaw would rather have written about the place of the artist "under Socialism" than about drain-pipes, I think he made a mistake. Did not Mr. Shaw himself write, as we shall find in the next chapter, an exposure of the current nonsense about artists being degenerate? If artists were not degenerate in the highly competitive and distressing year 1895, after having to put up with all but five years of what Mr. Shaw has asserted posterity will call "the wicked century," it is surely a fair inference that in our subject's opinion Utopia is not necessary on their account. As a matter of fact, our subject has steadfastly refused to talk any of the current nonsense about artists; he has worn his hygienic mantle with the most complete absence of affectedness, and that is one of the most charming things about him. He has put on his gloves and balanced a drain-pipe, because—as he has said of the writing of prefaces—he can. And when he came to the writing of plays, he did not immediately drop his drain-pipe, as Wilde dropped his Utopiaism and submitted himself to the impress of the highly competitive West End managers—he wrote plays about drain-pipes.

Our subject, then, has been happy with his drain-pipe: that is the precise spectacle presented by, let us say, The Commonsense of Municipal Trading. If he had not been happy, we should not have read it; and I suppose we all have done that. But while Mr. Shaw
has been busy explaining—with the aid of a great deal of sound economic theory, with a wit which refuses to be frowned off the field of the dullards, and with an incurable zest in the mere processes and triumphs of debate—the precise advantages of the fact that our drain-pipes have been municipalized, he has talked himself into a curious delusion. He has talked himself into the delusion that all this time he has been “pointing out” and “clearing up” he has escaped the unreality of the other economists. Of Life he has said, “Only by intercourse with men and women can we learn anything about it”—with the obvious implication that it is by this means that he himself has learned all about Life. And yet it is the hard fact that the Fabian Society and the cart and trumpet are not intercourse with men and women in the completest of possible senses. If we were to take our subject at his own valuation, he would appear as one of those who, in Plato’s phrase, “have gained a knowledge of each thing in its reality.” By becoming elected to a Borough Council one gains a knowledge of a Borough Council in its reality, and that is admirable; but one does not of necessity gain a knowledge of men and women other than Borough Councillors. I propose to point the reader to those passages quoted on pp. 64-65, and to assert that they do not betray a knowledge of life gained primarily by intercourse with men and women. I will even go so far as to say that they are the words of a man to whom any kind of ordinary mixed public intercourse—say, at the Oval, or at a Socialist meeting, unless he were on the platform—would be extremely distasteful. The fact is that our subject is a platform figure, whose principal intercourse with men and women, we should say from his works, has been by means of talking about them.

VI

We shall find when we come to Mr. Shaw’s plays, with their machinery of the preface, that his procedure is just what we should expect. It is an a priori procedure, from the general to the particular; from “the millions of poor people, dirty people, abject people,” for example, of whom one reads in the preface to Major Barbara, to West Ham, and not vice versa. It is as though Mr. Shaw, having written a letter to The Times establishing that poverty is a crime, had then paid a visit to a Salvation Army shelter, and found there everything which he had expected to find. His observation, that is to say, does not begin with Rummy Mitchens, and Snobby Price, and Bill Walker; it begins in the economist’s own corner, and only condescends, in a humorous and delightful manner, to make itself concrete
in Rummy and Snobby and Co. And now perhaps it will be as well to substitute for the word "economist" the word "publicist." Our subject has only sometimes been the economist, he has been the publicist all the time. In one sense, of course, every artist is a publicist; if he does not find his matter in what people happen to be interested in, he hopes that people will happen to be interested in his matter. But the true publicist, whether he is an artist or not, wants to be interesting people in his own particular brand of goods all the time. If he is an artist, he will interest them by means of his art, and he will want to interest them outside of his art as well—by means of his opinions on every conceivable subject, by means of his personality and person, by means even of the fact that his telegraphic address is "Socialist, London." We may as well sum it all up by saying, as our subject has done, "I want to change the ideas of the people of this country." How that desire and aim consorts with artistic principles, how, indeed, it conditions them, we shall better understand when we have devoted a chapter to the æsthetics of our subject. But the difference between Mr. Shaw and, let us say, Mr. Conrad, is apparent; Mr. Conrad who, when his books have spoken for him, really has nothing else that he particularly wants to tell us, or Mr. James, who has no views at all, positively no views at all that any reader ever discovered, but only a view of the world. The first kind of artist (he who is not consciously a publicist) does not understand the second kind of artist; Mr. Conrad has expressed this mistrust in his ironic tale of The Informer. "Does a man of that—of that—persuasion still remain an anarchist when alone, quite alone and going to bed, for instance? Does he lay his head on the pillow, pull his bedclothes over him, and go to sleep with the necessity of the chambrement général, as the French slang has it, or the general blow-up, always present to his mind? And if so, how can he?" Our subject is not an anarchist—has he not pointed out, and explained, and generally and sufficiently cleared up, the impossibility of being one? But our subject is all for the chambrement général—oh yes, a purely intellectual blow-up, a change of ideas. For he is a humane man, who even though he wishes that the adult poor might be "inexorably" killed, is yet careful to explain that the thing should be "painless" done, and the orphans forcibly fattened. . . . That is the kind of thing we must conceive our subject as taking to bed with him, and giving voice to, with pathos, with humour, and with a variety of effective assertion, the next morning. He is a man "of that—of that—persuasion."

There is a penalty for being a publicist, and that penalty is the publicist's unreality. It would be perfectly easy to define the un-
reality of the publicist, to go on defining it (for that is what, if it amounts to anything, this chapter amounts to); but what is the use, since Hazlitt has done it already, far better than anyone else could possibly do it, in his character of Mr. Cobbett? That passage from On Knowledge of the World may well stand at the end of this chapter:

As I have brought Mr. Cobbett in here by the neck and shoulders [says Hazlitt], I may add that I do not think he belongs properly to the class, either of philosophical speculators, or men of the world. He is a political humorist. He is too much taken up with himself either to attend to right reason or to judge correctly of what passes around him. He mistakes strength of purpose and passion, not only for truth, but for success. Because he can give fifty good reasons for a thing, he thinks it not only ought to be, but must be. Because he is swayed so entirely by his wishes and humours, he believes others will be ready to give up their prejudices, interests and resentments to oblige him. He persuades himself that he is the fittest person to represent Westminster in Parliament, and he considers this point (once proved) tantamount to his return. He knows no more of the disposition or sentiments of the people of Westminster than of the inhabitants of the moon (except from what he himself chooses to say or write of them), and it is this want of sympathy which, as much as anything, prevents his being chosen. The exclusive force and bigotry of his opinions deprives them of half their influence and effect, by allowing no toleration to others, and consequently setting them against him.

A knowledge of mankind . . . is less an intellectual acquirement than a natural disposition.

I do not know whether that gave the picture of Mr. Cobbett to his contemporaries: it most certainly gave, and gives, the picture of one kind of man. It gives the picture of the publicist. One would not wish to make too much of the comparison; when one thinks of the subject of this study as a kind of social institution, as it were, one thinks of Godwin at least as often as one thinks of Cobbett. But perhaps he is, as near as we can get to him, the Mr. Cobbett of his age—that Mr. Cobbett of the pure and trenchant English style who wondered how Paradise Lost could have been tolerated by a people conversant with astronomy, navigation, and chemistry, and who found some things in Shakespeare to please him but much more that he did not like; that Mr. Cobbett who was as well known as any man in England, down to the minutest circumstances in his character, habits, and opinions, including the colour of his waistcoat. Mr. Shaw has never stood for Westminster, but he has stood for St. Pancras for the County Council. And if one searched one's mind and
heart for a phrase to cover those activities of our subject which this present chapter has feebly and hopelessly limped after, "political humorist" would be the phrase one would come back to. "Because he can give fifty good reasons for a thing, he thinks it not only ought to be, but must be."
DIXON SCOTT

1916

The Innocence of Bernard Shaw

“Let him beware of his damned century; his gifts of insane chivalry and animated narration are just those that might be slain and thrown out like an untimely birth by the Daemon of the Epoch.”—Robert Louis Stevenson, in a Letter.

“He is perhaps a ‘fraud,’ as the Americans put it; but the first victim of Bernard Shaw’s charlatanism is Bernard Shaw himself. Susceptible to impressions (as are all artists) and a philosopher at the same time, he cannot do otherwise than deceive himself.”—Auguste Rodin, in a Conversation.

When part of this impression first appeared (in a special number of The Bookman) it was hailed as “a brilliant attack.” I want to say at once that it is only a diffident defence. Quite simply and sincerely, with a strong sense of presumption, it comes forward to make excuses for our most mordant accuser; it is an honest attempt to discover the cause of the disparity between Mr. Shaw’s superb powers and his performances, between the work he might have done for us—the work he wanted to do for us—and the work he has actually done; and as it gropes and taps sympathetically it does come delightedly on evidence which seems to prove overwhelmingly that the real villain of the piece is—not the author of Androcles—but that wasteful, wanton mocker whose present alias is The Life Force, which actually completed its frustration of Mr. Shaw’s career by sardonically setting him to work to sing its praises. There is something positively conspiratorial in the cunning logic of events which drove this splendid Irishman astray; he was plucked about like a puppet—torn out of his true place—cramped when still young and

tender into an inappropriate mould, and held there while circumstances, with a diabolical deftness, screwed the die down on his features inefaceably; and his very air of arrogance, which makes this description sound absurd, was but one of the imprints received in that hour. That the man whose deepest desire is to heal and help humanity should have become a kind of byword for mockery; that his altruism should seem egotism, his earnestness insolence, his mysticism materialism, his refusal to have living creatures slaughtered for his food a symptom, not of warm-heartedness, but of cold-bloodedness; that the man whose only quarrel with Christianity is its acquired element of cruelty, and who has preached and practised constantly an absolutely saintly code of private conduct and the strictest obedience to the Church's hardest rules, should yet be regarded as a dangerous enemy of morals and reproved (as he was by The Times itself in a leader on Androcles and the Lion) for ribaldry and irreverence in regard to sacred things: all these and their hundred kindred contradictions are explained when we watch his career from the beginning and perceive the frightful dexterity with which fate has always employed his best qualities to drive him along a road that must distort them. We shall find the essential Shaw to be eager, idealistic, impulsive, romantic. We shall see him flung, at exactly the most impressionable hour of his life, into the peculiarly priggish and self-assertive little world of the intellectual London of the eighties. We shall see how his native eagerness and inexperience idealized that environment; and how his wit and his vividness and his love of picturesqueness urged and enabled him to reproduce all its elements in a single concentrated pose; and how the accent he then adopted, the attitudes he struck as he hectored the world from rebel platforms, ate back into his instincts and affected his habit of mind, until at length intolerance, arrogance, contentiousness, contradictiousness, became instinctively his imagination's weapons. And finally we shall see how his very earnestness and craving for consistency forced him on to the concoction of a philosophy which would justify his policy of pert exasperation; and how he gradually perfected a theory which represented irritation as the only open sesame to men's consciousness, and cold clear thinking as the weapon now most needed to cut us free from our pampering illusions, and which therefore laid on the man of genius as his deepest duty this thankless task of challenge and contempt. And we shall watch this adventitious creed drinking up vitality from his veins, dilating till at last it shut him in—trapped in a dense grove of ideas that slowly altered him until he matched them—as dungeon walls will do a captive. . . .
The whole thing, put abruptly, is another example of the tyranny of technique over temperament—of the way an instrument invented for too narrow a need will react on the fingers that use it, stiffening and striking back till it fatally deforms them, wrenching their special talent awry. The "tyranny of technique over temperament" may sound, indeed, just at first, a predicament as purely academic as the famous "deduction killed by a fact"; but really it is far fuller of ringing human comedy, of thrills, and alarums and poetry, than even the most dramatic of all the existing portraits of Shaw, the most exciting of the alternative estimates. The man's contradictions—his literary licentiousness and his personal restraint—his intellectual voracity and physical vegetarianism—the intense earnestness and benevolence of his real aims and ideals and the daft capers he cuts as he preaches them—have inspired any number of vivid interpretations, all of them with at least the life of paradox; but the best of them by far, much the noblest and the neatest, is the one which seizes all these contrasts—the austerity and the perversity, the inverted altruisms, the harangues and the humility, the general wild lack of all resemblance between reputation and reality—and thereupon presents him as a martyr who twice over and more has sacrificed the hard-won crown of martyrdom, its impressiveness, its reward of dignity—a prophet who has disguised himself as a jester to gain an audience for his message, staining his sackcloth to look like motley, only to find that his frantic jokes, invented so feverishly, simply exasperate his listeners instead of luring them—that they regard his levity as ill-timed, his solemn touches as sacrilegious, and the texts which they feel his pranks profane, and which they had hitherto accepted unsuspiciously, as being rendered henceforward and for ever quite unfit for respectable family consumption. This conception of his last martyrdom, as might be expected, is naturally the one Mr. Shaw favours himself. "My case is really that of Rabelais over again," he has said. "In order to gain a hearing it was necessary for me to attain the footing of a privileged lunatic, with the licence of a jester. My method has therefore been to take the utmost trouble to find the right thing to say and then say it with the utmost levity. And all the time the real joke is that I am in earnest."

But there is a realer joke than that, and a very much richer. That's the merest drop-scene: the true Comedy lies behind. Another second and we will ring the curtain up. Your deliberate martyr, after all, no matter how he fails, has a certain splendour that makes the Comic Spirit feel respectful; and the more undignified Shaw became for the sake of a high purpose, the more dignified would he actually
appear. It is not futility, it is fatuity, that legitimates laughter; and in Shaw’s case the fun only really begins when we see that this self-sacrifice was quite unintentional, that the martyrdom which he now mentions with such a brave lightness and sad pride was not only a mistaken policy, but actually quite a mistake. It was to cook his own dinner that he kindled the fire that turned and tortured him. He went to Smithfield because he thought it a good market-place. The entire proceeding was a practical joke lazily played on an overeager young innocent by the world he imagined he was taking firmly in hand. His “disguise” was a dress he slipped on as unsuspectingly as a man whose clothes have been changed overnight; and when he began to skip about in it like “a privileged lunatic” (a mad mixture of harlequin and hermit), it was he who was the dupe, not society....

And if someone suggests (as someone ought to do) that no practical joke fails so wretchedly as the one that entirely succeeds, we can still defend, with quiet dignity, our present proposal for a few minutes’ mirth. It is true, indeed, that the game has gone rather far—that the joke of Shaw thinking of himself as the joker when he was actually the victimized jokee, proves after all to have been made at our expense. If it had been merely a case of a mediocrity smirking self-satisfied when he ought to be feeling subdued, like an actor persuading himself that his involuntary tumble was a brilliant impromptu, then we might chuckle unchecked, undeterred by any danger of hurting the hero’s complacency, and thankfully accepting his absurdity as his real contribution to the play. But this performer is such a fine one, his powers are so extraordinary, that any illusion he may suffer from, any mistake he may make, is immeasurably our loss. Our damned century has tripped him up, as Stevenson foretold, and that is, no doubt, very clever of our century. But it is surely a pretty silly sort of cleverness that hoodwinks its own children, fooling the very cleverest of them all to show its strength.

True—but listen further; there is one thing more. How would it be if the benefits of Shaw’s work were actually increased by the discovery that their author was a dupe? That is precisely what happens. There are several reasons. It removes the venom from his virulence, for one thing, reduces our resentment, leaves him, immensely more likable, just a poor puzzled creature like ourselves. And it also provides the perfect complement and corrective to his contribution of ideas. There is only one way to give Shaw’s work any adequacy, to make his utility at all proportionate to his powers, and this is to see him as a gull. To watch the man who supremely prides himself on his freedom from illusions, and on the irresistible power of pure thought, being used as an idle toy by superior powers
at the very moment he is triumphantly proving their non-existence, is to be the spectator of something far more than a mere final farce to send us away in good humour; it is to watch an integral scene that entirely alters and immensely deepens the meaning of those that go before. Add Shaw himself to his dramatis personae, and the latter begin to kindle and grow human; make the story of his deception an extra act to all his plays, and they begin to teach a genial tolerance and to breathe a smiling wisdom which, it must be admitted, they do not otherwise exhale. They lose that bitterness and barrenness, that hard and cruel angularity and bleak glitter, which has led to their author being denounced for inhumanity. To the array of stabbing truths with which they bristle, thrusting out at us like spears, there is added yet another, perhaps the only one omitted, which transforms the fierce attack into a rescue. It sets them wavering and faltering, as in a blur of mist; and that was all they needed to make them noble and reliable. We can trust them after that, for they have lost the hard exactness which has hitherto always made them so unreal. All Shaw’s work hitherto has been too precise to be accurate; it has been too exact to be true.

One point more. A glance back at the quotations at the beginning of this article will show the reader that two other great minds have been before us in this suspicion of a stage behind the drop-scene. The fact will reassure some; but others it may damp: a word of comment will satisfy both. It is true that both Stevenson and Rodin pushed the curtain aside—saw the performance going on secretly behind it; but the old Frenchman went no further than that cryptic phrase about the “fraud,” and the young Scotsman was compelled to leave the house abruptly before his little forecast was fulfilled. We may therefore enjoy both the sense of their patronage and the prouder one of being pioneers. We still occupy the enviable position of first-nighters. And for my own part I confess that it is with a thrill of real excitement that I now stretch out my hand and press the prompter’s bell. . . .

II

And instantly there vanishes, whipped away forever, that striking picture of St. Bernard, the austere Irish hermite, staining his sack-cloth to make it look like motley, and turning his staff and scrip, sublimely sacrilegious, into a fool’s bladder and wand. It simply will not do. History won’t have it. Mr. Chesterton, to be sure, has spoken, with much pathos, of Mr. Shaw’s “narrow Puritan home”; Mr. Huneker, with pride, has enlarged on his “humble peasant birth”; and to listen to these phrases and then turn to any of the portraits
and caricatures, from Max's to Coburn's, from Rodin's to Elliott & Fry's—which have made his face more familiar to the average English reader than that of any personage alive—is really to feel that one discerns the harsh features of the fanatic, that one can recognize in the fierce eyebrows, the aggressive beard, and the scowl, the face of a merciless fanatic, austere as the stony soil from which he sprang, abaze with the bitter passion of the protestant. Sheer hallucination, I assure you! We are being hoaxed by the beard. It conceals a soft and charming chin. And Chesterton and Huneker are a pair of sentimental humbugs. For absolutely the first and most fundamental thing about Bernard Shaw biographically is—that he was the son of Lucrezia Borgia!

Of Lucrezia Borgia and of the Margaret of Faust, and of the Donna Anna of Don Giovanni. For Shaw's mother was a young and beautiful Irish opera-singer (she was only twenty years her son's senior), who carried on a "blameless ménage à trois" with a famous musical genius on the one hand and the feckless second cousin of a baronet (Bernard Shaw's father) on the other; and Lucrezia (Donizetti's), Donna Anna, and Margaret were her three favourite parts.

It is astonishing how adroitly these romantic facts have been mingled in all the current accounts of his life. "His family was a middle-class one," says one well-known critic, "with all the prejudices and habits of that class." "L'écrivain a peut-être évoqué des souvenirs d'enfance," writes M. Charles Cestre, "quand il a décrit, dans le Disciple au Diable, les affrangements et les indignations d'une famille puritaine dont le chef, le bonhomme Dudgeon, a conservé quelques faiblesses humaines au milieu de l'austérité aigre et hargneuse des siens," and goes on to speak impressively of the youth practising "sans effort une sorte d'ascétisme inné." "Austérité aigre et hargneuse" be hanged! The lad's life was a voluptuous revel. He dreamed and dwelled at school, where he was only a desultory day-boy, and where, as he has owned himself, he learned nothing whatever—not even (more's the pity) fives or footer; and at home, the less distracted, he simply soaked himself lusciously in the licensed orgies and ecstasies of music. Melody, grand opera melody, not only, for him, took the place of the prose of real life, he even dissolved all his books in it, making it a vehicle for absorbing Scott and Victor Hugo and Poe, in an absolutely sensuous physical form. "In music," he once wrote (in an article we ought to have reprinted—an early article describing these indulgences):

In music you will find the body of and reality of that feeling which the mere novelist could only describe to you; there will come home to
The Innocence of Bernard Shaw

your senses something in which you can actually experience the candour and gallant impulse of the hero, the grace and trouble of the heroine, and the extracted emotional quintessence of their love.

I gained penetrating experiences of Victor Hugo and Schiller from Donizetti, Verdi, and Beethoven, of the Bible from Handel, of Goethe from Schumann, of Beaumarchais and Molière from Mozart, and of Mérimée from Bizet, besides finding in Berlioz an unconscious interpreter of Edgar Allan Poe. When I was in the schoolboy adventure vein, I could range from Vincent Wallace to Meyerbeer; I could become quite maudlin over Mendelssohn and Gounod.

Enrich these orgies still further with emotions insatiably sought for in the Italian rooms of the Dublin Art Gallery—rooms which he admits he haunted hungrily, weeks at a time, all through his romantic adolescence, and you have a faithful impression of the way this young man began to “pratiquer” his “ascétisme inné.” When Oscar Wilde’s mother, in Merrion Square, was posing languishingly in her drawing-room as Speranza, Mrs. Shaw, in a Dublin theatre, a few streets away, was flinging herself passionately into the part of Azucena; and before the son of the latter was out of his teens he had drained dizzier delight from the coloured lines of the world’s greatest painters, and had absorbed far more heady music, than the son of the former did all the days of his life. Nor is the “narrow puritanism” of the picture very markedly increased if we complete it by putting in the figure of Shaw’s father—an amiable weak tippler and rather lovable snob, helplessly haughty about his kinsman the baronet; or if we extend it to include the figure of that favourite uncle who (as Mr. Shaw somewhere mentions) used to go about declaring that the revival of Lazarus was a pre-arranged job, done on the basis of a bribe.

No, no! London, a little later, may have partly cemented C.B.S., made a sterner and a sourer, and in some ways a stricter man of him; but, when he reached it, in his twenties, he was an out-and-out romantic—as little like a preacher as Bunyan before Bedford Gaol or St. Francis in the gallant days of his youth. Soaked in Gounod and Mendelssohn, dreaming of Mozart and Michelangelo, hugging a vague idea of becoming “a wicked baritone in opera,” he was still (as he has owned) “chronically ashamed and even miserable,” simply because “I felt I couldn’t do anything.” “What was wrong with me was the want of self-respect, the diffidence, the cowardice of the ignoramus and the duffer.” “My destiny was to educate London, but what I knew was exactly what the educated Englishman did not know, and what he knew I either didn’t know or didn’t believe.” He came up to London, in short, as young poets always have come;
with a knowledge of life, of human nature, including their own, limited to the information supplied by opera libretti and the hydrogenous prose of De Quincey and Shelley; agonized by their own awkwardness, shamed by their own innocence, desperately troubled by their unpreparedness for destiny, but beautifully upheld through it all by the dim, golden conviction that a Destiny of some distinction does await them, and that London, the wise alchemist, will know the very drop to add to send their dreams showering down in a shining precipitate of definite tasks and high resolutions.

In fact, just exactly the usual glorious mixture of prig, blushing schoolgirl, and god. And the year (this is very important indeed) the year was 1876.

III

Now let the game softly begin. London, deft, crimp, has one regulation ruse which she tries on all such shy new-comers: she feigns lethargy, indifference, a bored kind of nonchalance, a composure that looks exactly like incapacity—and so, with one stroke, restores the novice’s self-confidence and sets his indignation briskly sparkling. Apathy, a wasteful apathy—that is invariably the personal quality the place seems to present to the aspirant: a smooth, maddening indifference, not to his own entrance merely (that indeed might have proved his superiority—for that he was humbly prepared), but to her own powers and opportunities, her duties and beauties—to the general dazzling adventurousness and terrific irrevocableness and tormenting possibilities of Life. Actually, to be sure, this languor is merely a mask; it is the disguise adopted by good nature, good form; the quiet is that of wisdom, not woodenness—the composure is not of torpor, but of powers tested and serene because sure; but the debutant doesn’t find this out till much later on. What he does do is to compare this bland calm with his own keenness, and to feel that his prevision of a Destiny was sound. He is different from these people, with their small talk and trifling; excitedly he sets his teeth and squares his jaw. Reassured at the very moment he expected to be abashed, he buckles to with his book, picture, play. London has set him to work, very neatly, by pretending to be incapable of commands.

Nine times out of ten, therefore, the trick works to admiration. But Shaw happened to come tenth. Remember the hour; it was the eve of the eighties, when the arts joined the isms. And Carlyle begat Ruskin, and Ruskin begat Morris, and Morris begat Cunningham- Graham, and the Carpenters, and the Cranes and the Salts: instead of velvet packets and a slap-dash joviality, young artists took to
sexa indignatio and sandals. It was really very interesting. Just why poetry and proteids should suddenly seem natural affinities; just what there was in the atmosphere to make Jaeger and Ibsen and Esoteric Buddhism appear inevitable associates; and why to eat the leek, loudly declaring it to be the only pure and blameless form of food, should suddenly become the accepted sign of independence—these profound problems have never yet been adequately explained, for we are still doubtless too much involved in the traditions then set on foot to get the full effect of this fearsome abnormality. But though the origins were intricate, there was one plain and large result—the arts went over with a rush to their traditional enemy. They joined the majority. They made friends with the mob. Sculptors, painters, and poets, for the first time in English history, deserted the aristocrats and lined up with the proletariat. Instead of adoring the graces they began denouncing disgraces. In place of priding themselves on their immunity from the vulgar hobby known as politics, they began to boom and bleat like a lot of leading articles. And they had a thoroughly enjoyable time. For the new game gratified the vanity which is the curse of all their tribe by its flattering sense of putting everybody right; and it satisfied the disrespectfulness which is the chief of all their charms by giving them for target every rule, religion, creed, convention which had lent its countenance to civilization by forming part of it. They became infidels, atheists, anarchists, cosmogonists, vegetarians, anti-vivisectionists, anti-vaccinationists. They revelled in a fresh field of topics—they founded numberless societies to listen to their oratory and countless papers that would print their verse and prose: it was canvas and model combined. The big men liked the feeling of doing practical spadework at last; the little ones (and there seemed to be such a dreadful lot of these) simply loved being ranked as "intellectuals." It gave humble giants, like Morris, a chance to stoop and be chivalrous. It hoisted the pignies on to platforms where they could hector and strut. It was fine.

Now this was all very well in the case of a Morris, who had already given us his Guenevere; and it probably couldn't much damage even a Cunninghame-Graham—for he was a rebel in any case, a Highland rieve by birth, and all these isms were to him simply so many gauntlets which he could fling in the faces of the fat fools he despised: when he charged the ranked policemen in Trafalgar Square on Bloody Sunday, ostensibly in the cause of Democracy, he was really only giving expression, I am sure, to his eternal contempt for the canaille; he turned socialist because he was an aristocrat. But in the case of a youngling like Shaw, a tender emotionalist fed hitherto wholly on the sweet-stuff of opera and still viewing the
world in terms of Shelley and Wagner, it simply amounted to ravish-
ment. It mean thrusting all his soft faculties into a premature mould;
it meant emphasizing and petrifying and fixing for ever on his char-
acter just those quaint qualities of contemptuousness and ingenuous
disdain which in the ordinary way would just have been softly
erased by experience once their first task of setting him producing
was performed. It means that instead of prompting him to some
piece of self-vindication, some earnest proof of individual worth and
power, his boyish bumpitioussness began straightway to boast in its
own name and make an ambition of mere self-assertiveness.

For of course he was helpless. Face to face with such a force,
what could a poor romantic do? He yielded at a touch—fell like a
shot sea-bird—was culled like a slender wayside flower. With the
echoes of the hammer-song still hammering in his head, he saw him-
sel as a Sigurd among Alberies—and since everywhere about him
the old obvious evils spawned and sprawled, all the generous decen-
cies of youth joined with its egotisms to make him vow to have a
drive at London-Fafnir. "My destiny is to educate London," he as-
sured himself solemnly; and set about the job without delay. He
himself has described how the final vision descended and crystal-
lized all his vague cravings. Perceive him flutteringly approach the
fateful Webb. He has strayed into one of the meetings of the myriad
societies of that day, a body calling itself (doubtless for some per-
fectly adequate reason) the Zeletical Society—and this is the stirring
sight he beheld:—

The speaker was a young man, about twenty-one, with a profile that
suggested, on account of the nose and imperial, an improvement on
Napoleon the Third. He had a fine forehead, a long head, eyes that
were built on top of two highly developed organs of speech (according
to the phrenologists) and remarkably thick, strong, dark hair. He knew
all about the subject of the debate; knew more than the lecturer; had
read everything that had ever been written on the subject; and remem-
bered all the facts that bore on it. He used notes, read them, ticked
them off one by one, threw them away, and finished with a coolness and
clearness that to me, in my trembling state, seemed miraculous. This
young man was the ablest man in England—Sidney Webb.

And he was exactly Shaw's own age. The butterfly was caught.
He too would be a dictator, an authority, a liberator, a dogmatic and
precocious oracle. This was grand opera and literature and a noble
knightliness combined—De Reszke, Ruskin, and Sigurd in one. He
went at once into training. Nervous—unready—hypersensitive—naïve
—with subtlety of apprehension and a consuming fondness for fine-
ess the very first characteristics of all his faculties—he was prepos-
terously unfitted for the part; but (and this is specially interesting) the very susceptibility that ought to have saved him made him as wax to the suggestion—the very imagination which he ought to have carried far away from platforms to some place where it could work undisturbed now flushed the dreary planks with limelight—disguised and garlanded the prospect—deluded him into seeing the cheap and prosy game of demagoguing as the very embodiment of romance. “I vowed I would join Webb’s society, go every week, speak every week, and become a speaker or perish in the attempt. And I carried out this resolution. I suffered agonies no one suspected. During the speech of the debate I resolved to follow my heart used to beat as painfully as a recruit’s going under fire for the first time. I could not use my notes; when I looked at the paper in my hand I could not collect myself enough to decipher a word. And of the four or five wretched points which were my pretext for this ghastly practice of mine I invariably forget three—the best three.” Flaubert and Pater undergoing flagellation in the hope of being granted purity of prose underwent far less torment than did this equally fine artist to learn the tricks of Cockney repartee:

I attended the Hampstead Historic Club once a fortnight, and spent a night in the alternative weeks at a private circle of Economists. I made all my acquaintances think me madder than usual by the pertinacity with which I attended debating societies and haunted all sorts of hole-and-corner debates and public meetings and made speeches at them. I was President of the Local Government Board at “an amateur Parliament”

—and he even turned the very novels that might have proved his salvation (by giving his creative energy a path of escape) into mimic debating societies too—not only rising up in the name of each character in turn (Connolly, Lydia Carew, Cashel, Trefusis) to deliver a short address on some selected topic, but actually turning as many of the characters as possible into working models, draft sketches, of that omniscient, imperturbable Sigurd-Shelley-Wagner-Webb which he had resolved Bernard Shaw must become. “I am thoroughly well-satisfied with myself,” says Elinor McQuinch in The Irrational Knot. “At last I have come out of a scene without having forgotten the right thing to say.” Connolly, in the same book, is “concentrated and calm, making no tentative movements of any kind (even tying a white tie did not puzzle him into fumbling), but acting with a certainty of air, and consequent economy of force, dreadful to the irresolute.” These, it may be said, are simply self-reflections, involuntary mimmings of the artist in his picture. Looking back at Connolly now, when Shaw has grown so like him, it is natural to regard him as an uncon-
scious copy of his maker. But it is Shaw who is the consequence, Connolly the cause. These novels of G.B.S.'s nonage were indeed mirrors held up to his nature—but only in order to help him fix his make-up. "He looked at his programme and calculated how soon his time to sing would come. Then he unrolled his music and placed two copies ready to his hand upon the table. Having made these arrangements with a self-possession that quite disconcerted the clergyman, he turned to examine the rest of the company." This is the curious projection of an ideal, not unwitting self-portraiture; and "you cannot want a thing and have it too." Modelling these little mannequins—studying their gestures—perfecting their effectiveness with his pen—putting them into predicaments to learn how to behave and continually calling on them for impromptu speeches—"There, by the Grace of God," mutters our young author savagely, "will one day go George Bernard Shaw." Fate, when she began to fool him, hadn't reckoned on this solemnity. The joke was already going rather far.

IV

It went further very shortly. The result of these efforts, heroically sustained (our Sigurd being meanwhile financially supported, it is ironic but right to recall, by a radiant Mimmy in the person of that romantic young mother to whom he owed the imagination he was thwarting), the result of these pig-headed efforts, this topsy-turvy idealism, was the construction of one of the most remarkable verbal weapons ever forged by a literary craftsman. It was an instrument built expressly for cut-and-thrust platform work; and every irrelevant qualification or charm was ruthlessly threshed out of its texture. Now to get rid of these alloys and yet maintain the thing's temper meant the invention of a whole new range of prose devices; and it is the way he worked at these, the devouring adroitness he showed, the fresh formations and annealings and interlockings of language which he resourcefully invented and perfected, that really give us our first absolutely infuriating idea of the triumphs he would have brought us, the work he might have done, if only he had never been drugged and trepanned and wastefully sold into eternal slavery whilst asleep. Much has been written in praise of his work; but of his workmanship, I always feel, far too little; never yet, at any rate, have I seen any adequate acknowledgment of the extraordinary perfection and technical importance of his style. "More stiletto than style!" someone murmurs, a bit sourly—but that is only the peevishness of pedantry. Shaw's prose can be used to carve creatively as well as to kill—and in other hands than his it surely will be; whatever
else Shaw has done he has hung a glittering new and needed weapon in the armoury of the arts. Conditioned absolutely by the special character of the campaign he had in view—submitting to every limitation without shuffling, and taking advantage of every licence without shame—it is the very finest example in the whole range of English letters of prose written to be uttered with physical forcibleness on the rapid levels of man-to-man speech, and yet retaining, unsuspected, all those subtle powers of balance, of rhythm and picturesqueness, whose aid must be employed before all defences can be carried and which steal triumphantly into the citadel of the mind of the hearer through insidious emotional doorways whilst the colloquialisms keep the common sense engaged. Technically, that is certainly its supreme innovation—and that will always make it an essential part of the history of the development of our English prose. The hour of oratory was over; the peroration was punctured; purple passages, instead of being banners to kindle men’s hearts, had become mere red rags to rouse restiveness: for mutinous democrats and fierce vegetarian-anarchists wanted utterances that hit and looked like lumps of steel. And the problem, briefly, was therefore how to appear to be using this blunt life-preserver sort of language without really relinquishing the air of the subtler devices which had hitherto been looked on as the sole prerogative of rhetoric.

Well, Shaw found a way. His hearers wanted straight talk: so he cast periods like horizontal bars. But they were bars that worked like piston-rods: all built for thrust and drive, they displayed the splendid beauty of clean speed; and so, at the very moment when they seemed to be contumaciously discarding all merely emotional adjuncts, they were actually dizzying the audience with that supremely unusual excitement, the intoxicating ecstasy of pace. Shaw stripped all his sentences of those trailing wreaths and ropes of metaphor which Ruskin, his predecessor in these paths of sensual socialism, had elaborately wound round his message—and then he multiplied still further the effect of impetuosity thus obtained by devoting all the energy that might have gone to making garlands to the task of fitting clause into clause with such ingenious sockets that never a joint could be seen, and a long sentence really made up of many added items lay when finished as level as a spear, streaking past as though launched with one lunge. It is extraordinarily interesting to watch this process being perfected: first of all the studious assemblage of the parts, then the gradual speeding-up of the machine.

Mr. Reginald Harrington Lind, at the outset of his career, had no object in life save that of getting through it as easily as possible; and this he understood so little how to achieve that he suffered himself to
be married to a Lancashire cotton-spinner's heiress. She bore him three children, and then eloped with a professor of spiritualism, who deserted her on the eve of her fourth confinement, in the course of which she caught scarlet fever and died. Her child survived, but was sent to a baby farm and starved to death in the usual manner.

That is an early effort, from The Irrational Knot. Already, it will be seen, the desired effect of imperturbability is there, gained by that diligent maintenance of a monotone; and the crowded middle sentence does nearly take the listener’s breath away by telescoping four travails, two tragedies, and a comic professor of spiritualism into a couple of level lines. But there are still a few defects: the jolts at the commas break the pace rather badly, and the sentences, though they are still comparatively short ones, are only kept continuously making each clause cannon the next instead of plunking past like a rifle-bullet straight from stop to stop. Months of practice and experiment, on paper by day and on platforms each night, taught him how to overcome these conditions. The sentence that follows was one written for an actual speech (and written, it is interesting to note, in that last home of the old school of rhetoric, William Morris's Manor House at Kelmscott), and the reader will see how perfectly the sense of precipitancy is secured to it by the simple device of dropping its successive items into the slots of a kind of eternally expanding carrier which branches forward from a single steady verb:—

One can see that the Local Government Board of the future will be a tremendous affair; that foreign States will be deeply affected by the reaction of English progress; that international trade, always the really dominant factor in foreign policy, will have to be reconsidered from a new point of view when profit comes to be calculated in terms of net social welfare instead of individual pecuniary gain; that our present system of imperial aggression, in which, under pretext of exploration and colonization, the flag follows the filibuster and trade follows the flag, with the missionary bringing up the rear, must collapse when the control of our military forces passes from the capitalist classes to the people; that the disappearance of a variety of classes with a variety of what are now ridiculously called “public opinions” will be accompanied by the welding of society into one class with a public opinion of inconceivable weight; that this public opinion will make it for the first time possible effectively to control the population; that the economic independence of women, and the supplanting of the head of the household by the individual as the recognized unit of the State, will materially alter the status of children and the utility of the institution of the family; and that the inevitable reconstitution of the State Church on a democratic
basis may, for example, open up the possibility of the election of an avowed Free-thinker like Mr. John Morley or Mr. Bradlaugh to the deanery of Westminster.

It is nothing but a series of separate statements, but they are so socketed that the result is torrential: the sentence seems positively to go whipping through its supporting semicolons much as a telegraph wire does through the posts when you watch it racing past from a swift train. And additional practice still, the months stretching into years, enabled him to eliminate even slotted frames and posts: in the paragraph that follows, written at the height of his powers, those recurrent "thats" have been replaced by absolutely imperceptible piers, so that as the reader's mind is carried over it experiences a helpless vertigo—it clutches its guide giddily, yielding him a blank subjection, like the limp obedience paid a Blondin by the fellow on his back—a far completer surrender (at any rate till we touch solid ground again) than the reverence offered to a Fors-Clavigerating Ruskin:—

Therefore do not misunderstand my plain statement of the fundamental constitution of London society as an Irishman's reproach to your nation. From the day I first set foot on this foreign soil I knew the value of the prosaic qualities of which Irishmen teach Englishmen to be ashamed as well as I knew the vanity of the poetic qualities of which Englishmen teach Irishmen to be proud. For the Irishman instinctively disparages the quality which makes the Englishman dangerous to him; and the Englishman instinctively flatters the faults that make the Irishman harmless and amusing to him. What is wrong with the prosaic Englishman is what is wrong with the prosaic men of all countries: stupidity. The vitality which places nourishment and children first, heaven and hell a somewhat remote second, and the health of society as an organic whole nowhere, may muddle successfully through the comparatively tribal stages of gregariousness; but in nineteenth-century nations and twentieth-century empires the determination of every man to be rich at all costs and of every woman to be married at all costs must without a highly scientific social organization produce a ruinous development of poverty, celibacy, prostitution, infant mortality, adult degeneracy, and everything that wise men most dread. In short, there is no future for men, however brimming with crude vitality, who are neither intelligent nor politically educated enough to be Socialists. So do not misunderstand me in the other direction either: if I appreciate the vital qualities of the bee, I do not guarantee the Englishman against being, like the bee (or the Canaanite), smoked out and unloaded of his honey by beings inferior to himself in simple acquisitiveness, com-
Lightened of all adjectives, nimble with nouns, turning categories into keywords, he is wont to ripple us a run and, avoiding vowels in order to get the snap of consonants, it rattles past at a rate that makes the best of Swift seem slow, and pelts the brain with stinging drops like driving hail. It is deliberately cold and colourless, but it produces a kind of glow, an unusual warmth that almost melts the icy argument, almost turns it into something rich and wild. For rapidity, poignancy, unanimity, promptness, an exquisite timing and adjustment of its parts, there is no prose to be compared with it in English. And just as an athlete is more beautiful than an aesthete, so it grows more sensuous the more austere it becomes, positively practising a bodily seductiveness by seeming wholly to rely on an appeal to cold-blooded intelligence. It was very interesting, very curious virtuosity; with of course a fundamental justness in its paradox. For it was really Shaw’s joyous sense of picturesqueness that made him pick this sour pose of acid reasonableness and sustain it with such zest; it was a vivid, romantic imagination that enabled him to perfect it, living into the part with all his power; and so it was therefore profoundly logical that the result should be a romantic reputation—a name for remorseless common sense that had the goblin quality of legend, prevailing on men and artists to regard his gift of lightning logic with an uneasy twilight reverence and awe.

v

Then why bewail its acquisition? In face of all these merits, why pity the manufacturer of this pitiless prose and propound this dark theory about his being the dupe of a decoy? There are reasons in plenty. Hitherto we have spoken of this instrument of expression as though it were something solid and separable—as a sword, which he forged; as a flute, which he played on; a detachable piece of his equipment. That is one of the weaknesses of rhetoric. It was actually his own mind that he put on the anvil and altered; it was his own larynx that he fitted with patent stops. The sword cut both ways, carving the hand that controlled it; the flute was a magic flute that filled the mind of the player with all the tunes that flowed through it, compelling his thoughts to move in step with its piping. The parallel-bars of his prose have seemed to us thus far a firm apparatus on which he could perform acrobatically. We have now to face the fact that they were the bars of a cage, and that Shaw had shut himself and his capers inside it.
And by this self-restriction something much more malignant is meant than the mere hemming-in of his mind with wrong subjects. It is true, indeed, that the man who trains himself to speak without notes, of Rent, Interest, Profit, Wages, Toryism, Liberalism, Socialism, Communism, Anarchism, Trade-Unionism, Co-operation, Democracy, the Division of Society into Classes, and the suitability of Human Nature to Systems of Just Distribution

is building up his views rather badly—too hastily leaving the principal sites of his brain to a rabble of reach-me-down tenants. But if there had been nothing worse than this, Shaw would have pulled through, after a check; he had creative energy enough to make even Interest interesting, and to convert Rents into a human reality; he would have ultimately humanized these ill-conditioned aliens much as a rich soil will regenerate and civilize a top-dressing of undesirable settlers. No, the fatal thing was not the type of topic he discussed; it was the attitude he struck whilst discussing. It induced a spiritual deformity, a perpetual kink which he will carry to his grave; you might say (I, at any rate, would have no right to reprove you) that it produced a condition of permanent hump. We have seen how he slaved to acquire a tone of icy arrogance. Well, once found, it fairly froze to his tongue. The aesthetic fashion of the hour favoured contempt, tirades, antagonisms, an omniscient school-mastering of creation. Instead of wearing it a moment and then tossing it aside, this man hugged it to him till it became a second skin.

And the reason for this rueful permanence, like all the primary causes in this amazing comedy of errors, only make the result the more perverse. For it was exactly Shaw’s unsuitability for the rigid part of pedagogue that made him adopt the Doftheboys demeanour so exuberantly; it was exactly because he was an artist, wholly governed and swayed by the artist’s deep, controlling sense of consistency of form, that he refused to relinquish his rôle of bitterness and rancour and persisted in displays of conscious bad form. A weaker artist would have suffered less: our Cranes soon ceased their clamour, our Carpenters turned craftsmen, working happily at a bench instead of irascibly endeavouring to occupy one. All the genuine born propagandists too, on the other hand, changed their manner quite cheerily; the Salts of the earth, after acting as irritants for a time, sociably subsided later on into agreeable condiments—as Secretaries to the Humane Society, and so on.

But Shaw is utterly incapable of this carnalness. He is overwhelmingly consumed by the poet’s passion for unity and symmetry. He feels forced to adhere to all the attitudes of his salad-days—down even to
their devotion to salad; he is incapable of confessing sunnily that those early passions for rolled oats were really only another of youth's ways of sowing wild ones. That accusation of capriciousness so often brought against him—how heartily one wishes it were true! He lacks the courage to abandon his Convictions. Like his own Sergius, he "never withdraws." He may advance—that is another thing; but, even so, he always carries his old opinions carefully with him, no matter what the extravagant cost of carriage, ingeniously persuading himself, and us, as he does so, how absolutely essential they are to his equipment. He somewhere reminds us that we all die once each eight years—but in his own case the estate is strictly entailed; he takes these intimate ancestors of his with the most tremendous seriousness; he would sooner die than repudiate their pledges; and many of his apparently wildest and least forgivable extravagances have been simply due to his proud attempt to fulfill these contracts. There is perhaps a kind of cowardice here—but what I do want us to realize is that it is the cowardice that comes from an artist's horror of the disgracefulness of making or drawing a false stroke. Shaw wouldn't a bit mind giving himself away; what he cannot bear is the thought that he has involuntarily done so. It would seem so very careless. Taking life with the triple seriousness of Art, of Ireland, and of Youth, the idea of having wasted a drop of it would anguish him; and almost all his irresponsibilities have been the result of this terrifying sense of personal responsibility. It is this, for example, and not freakishness, that makes him dwell so disproportionately on apparent trivialities of dress and diet—on his way of eating and drinking, of spelling "cigarets" and not smoking them; and when he rages so fantastically over our refusal to agree, he is in reality just beating back desperately any private qualms as to his rightness, frantically justifying himself to himself. It is the same boyish fear that sets him eternally chattering explanations. He is often not so much trying to discover the truth as to find some further proof that he has told it. When he buttonholes us so officiously outside his own plays—prefacing, promising, assuring—for all the world like a Showman blarneying desperately away outside his booth before he dares let us in—he is really not so much trying to humbug us with his harangues as to reassure and satisfy himself. He uses all the vigour of his imagination to hypnotize that vigour; his wit never displays a more wonderful nimbleness than when trying to reconcile his own sallies. He will found a philosophy to escape admitting a jest was idle,\(^2\) and then write a play to prove the philosophy humanly

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\(^2\) See, for example, the solemn Note at the end of *Caesar and Cleopatra*, where Mr. Shaw desperately improvises a solemn theory about the Influence of Climate Upon Character and the Comparative Unimportance of Racial Influx, in order to
true, and then extend the philosophy to include clauses which declare a dramatist’s characters are free and independent personalities, quite uncontrolled by the conscious will of their creator, and that he himself is a dramatist in that sense. In brief, he is the kind of man who, rather than admit, even to himself, that he has got into a hole, would remorselessly chip corners off his own character till it fitted, no matter what the mutilation cost him.

And this, and even worse than this, is precisely the horrible practice we are now to see him engaged in. Worse, because his thrown thoroughness, the artist’s instinct perverted, made him mangle and carve his conception of the whole of the rest of mankind in order to make it fit into his own forced malformities. His instinct for harmony made him insist that disharmony was an essential condition of health. “In this world,” he declared, “if you do not say a thing in an irritating way, you might just as well not say it at all, since nobody will trouble themselves about anything that does not trouble them.” “The fact is,” he said again, “there is nothing the public despises so much as an attempt to please it. Torment is its natural element: it is only the saint who has any capacity for happiness.”

He actually persuaded himself that it is necessary to hurt in order heal; that the only way to encourage men is to discourage them, and that it is necessary to be thoroughly disagreeable in order to persuade them to agree. Simply to save himself from the agony of admitting to himself that his early attitude and insolences had been largely just juvenile egregiousness, he determined to agonize the rest of the world. He began a campaign of universal irritation, repeating feverishly, like a missionary muttering godless prayers, that taunts and intolerance were logically much the best of all methods of preaching and spreading the gospel of The Brotherhood of Man.

And of course it couldn’t end with that absurdity. The disguise had to get deeper, his voice had to rise louder, in order to deafen his own ears. Other arguments had to radiate, flung out to balance and support the first: once his creative energy got working in this acci-

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2 See *John Bull’s Other Island*, where that impromptu Britannus theory about the Influence of Climate Upon, etc., is dragged out again in order to be propped up, exhumed in order to be properly animated.

3 See Preface to *Man and Superman*, p. xvi; Preface to *John Bull’s Other Island*, p. vii; and other amendments innumerable.

persuade himself that the pantomime fooling with Britannus is a piece of penetrating historical portraiture and a subtle psychological study. The gravely reproduced portraits of Caesar and General Burgoyne in the same volume and the solemn resurrection of a contemporary print of the Pharos of Alexandria are analogous devices for cunningly satisfying his conscience that he has been spending his powers on work of an adequate dignity. One sometimes feels Mr. Shaw must have less humour than levity—the latter seems so often to outrun the first.
not blacker than my conscience, which has been blackened by the knowledge (now available), which shows the process of the substitute with the accompanying expenditure. I proved it to be the formula by which the men of my party were utterly confounded. Offensive is it, which it was

and its very extreme effort of a system so defined by bludgeons to prevent that is beneath it, which is to miss miserable, fashionable, mere marvellous, the central tap-root of the crab of studied faces and chills them. That initial, unnatural

in our civilization, the most of evils and the worst of any other consideration should

more than a very brief taste. Miserliness is the most miserable of
other name for Sigurd-Ruskin-De Reszke) it achieved articulation, became conscious of its own desires, and delivered its commands and warnings brusquely to the unemerged remainder of its carcass:

The mysterious thing we call life organizes itself into all living shapes, bird, beast, beetle, and fish, rising to the human marvel in cunning dwarfs and in laborious muscular giants, capable, these last, of enduring toil, willing to buy love and life, not with suicidal curses and renunciations, but with patient manual drudgery in the service of higher powers. And these higher powers are called into existence by the same self-organization of life still more wonderfully into rare persons who may by comparison be called gods, creatures capable of thought, whose aims extend far beyond the satisfaction of their bodily appetites and personal affections, since they perceive it is only by the establishment of a social order founded on the common bonds of moral faith that the world can rise from mere savagery.⁴

“Men of genius are the men selected by Nature to carry on the work of building up an intellectual consciousness of her own instinctive purpose.” “The great man incarnates the philosophic consciousness of life.” “All his treatises and poems and scriptures are the struggle of Life to become divinely conscious of itself instead of stumbling blindly hither and thither in the line of least resistance.” This Life-force says:

I have done a thousand wonderful things unconsciously by merely willing to live and following the line of least resistance: now I want to know myself and my destination and choose my path; so I have made a special brain, a philosopher’s brain, to grasp this knowledge for me. “And this,” says the Life-force to the philosopher, “must thou strive to do for me until thou diest, when I will make another brain and another philosopher to carry on the work.”⁵

So were arrogance justified and self-suspicion stilled: our infatuated Don Quixote has a Dulcinea now—this stringy, sterile German spinster of a Life-force; and rides on solemnly enchanted. No lifting his hallucination now! “Metaphysic” is only “metaphor” spelt in four syllables; never yet was there a poet could resist one. Watch, now, how his conception forthwith clings and spreads—dilating organically, expanding spontaneously, exhibiting all the signs of true vitality, as all conceptions do, even the most damnatory, if ever they get a purchase in an artist’s generative consciousness, and suck at his divine but undiscriminating vigour. Dogma dovetails into dogma; pedant theories flower as plays; these scatter seeds that

⁴ The Perfect Wagnerite.
⁵ Man and Superman.
shoot up fresher saplings to support and screen the skinny parent crook. Thus, the Superman plainly needing some solid social backing if he were going to keep the Artist-Philosopher on his feet, there spontaneously sprang to support him the now familiar Shawian doctrine (so soon, alas, to grow sadly shop-soiled) declaring the healthiness of wealthiness and the heavenliness of worldliness and the crime of being crushed. This in turn disclosing dangers (we know the hands it played into—the greasy souls it fed with self-approval), up rose a fresh law to protect it—the law asserting that there is a safe Saturation-point to Human Sensuousness, that self-restraint follows indulgence, and licence observes limits, and “the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.” And when this too wavered dubiously (for what of our rakes in their muck?—and aren’t there indulgences that go on without deepening—blisses that keep step with life cunningly, feeding on it craftily, careful to keep their prey in condition?—and aren’t there satisfactions that dim the mind to soothe the body?)—when this, in turn, tottered, a last convulsive inspiration, the impulse of self-preservation hard at work, made it shoot out a further branch that caught and clung round a formula that made G.K. Sancho think Shaw an ascetic, that by a lucky loop led right back to the parent stem—the formula, namely, that men don’t like happiness, that bliss only bores them—thus perfectly completing the sinister circle by backing up the first defence of offensiveness, filially feeding into and fortifying the falsity by which it was primarily fed.

Oh yes, it was neat; and none the less because it turned its very neatness to account by declaring clear thinking the supreme effort of the Life-force. But those who know that the clearness of a system is a proof of incompleteness, that definition is only gained by blurring truth, mustn’t allow their possession of that knowledge to prevent them from perceiving the passion and glow that lie beneath these cold, clipped, charmless, lucid leaves. For to do that is to miss the real cause of the coldness, and to make the miserable, fashionable, unforgivable mistake of seeing Shaw as a mere marvellous mental machine. The thing to remember is the central tap-root of this rigid tree of thought—that accursed grafted crab of studied sourness. It is that which diverts the good juices and chills them with gall, embittering the ultimate fruit; it is that initial, unnatural

6 “The universal regard for money is the one hopeful fact in our civilization, the one sound spot in our social conscience.” “The greatest of evils and the worst of crimes is poverty; our first duty, a duty to which every other consideration should be sacrificed, is not to be poor.”

7 “Nobody wants bliss particularly or could stand more than a very brief taste of it, if it were attainable.” “The pursuit of happiness is the most miserable of human occupations.”
theory of the virtue of venom (as though a serpent's wisdom were communicated by its fangs!) that has governed the whole habit of the growth. It makes its pity appear pitiless, it curdles its kindliness, it forces the chivalry to emerge as contempt. The exasperating thing about all Shaw's utterances isn't their surface savagery or cynicism; it is the sight of the sweet sap being choked and changed behind; cut through the metallic coating that covers all his leaves with that glib, repellent, acrid shine, and you get generosity, wonder, wistfulness, awe, any amount of lovableness and love. His heart is in the right place; it is only his tongue that has gone wrong; it has taken a permanent twist into his cheek. When he tries to preach gentleness, it turns the words into jeers; it makes him malevolent in the cause of mercy, quarrelsome in the name of peace; and when he strives to shout friendly advice this interpreter, tutored too well, changes the message into a cold snarl of disdain. He sits down to write a play (called *Widowers' Houses*) pleading the cause of the oppressed; and the result makes the whole world howl him down as heartless and inhuman. He writes another (*Major Barbara*) to demonstrate "the central truth of Christianity—the vanity of revenge and punishment," and his hearers shiver at the sight of its ferocity. When he tries to stop the practice of cutting up live animals he can only do so by rending the character of doctors. He believes that "every man is a temple of the Holy Ghost" and promptly calls us "shirks, duffers, malingerers, weaklings, cowards." All his announcements are denouncements; he must attack to defend, his affirmations reach our ears as denials, all his most positive utterances seem harsh strings of no's.

And observe that always, like a prisoner tightening his knots by struggling, the curbed creativeness within him increases these grimaces, the cordial energy straining and jerking at the mask till it becomes a very nightmare of menace. For the choked delight in music and gaiety, in rhapsody and heartiness, bubbling up where it can, spends itself on ecstasies of insolence, wild arias of acrimony, arpeggios of contumely and spleen. For instance:

... the physician is still the credulous impostor and petulant scientific coxcomb whom Molière ridiculed; the schoolmaster remains at best a pedantic child-farmer and at worst a flagellomaniac; the philanthropist is still a parasite on misery as the doctor is on disease; the miracles of priestcraft are none the less fraudulent and mischievous because they are now called scientific experiments and conducted by professors; we shake our heads at the dirt of the Middle Ages in cities made grimy with soot and foul and disgusting with shameless tobacco-smoking, public health authorities deliberately go through incantations with burning sulphur (which they know to be useless) because the people believe in
it as devoutly as the Italian peasant believes in the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius; and straight-forward public lying has reached gigantic developments, there being nothing to choose in this respect between the pickpocket at the police-station and the minister on the Treasury bench, the editor in the newspaper office, the City magnate advertising bicycle tyres that do not side-slip, the clergyman subscribing the Thirty-nine Articles, and the vivisector who pledges his knightly honour that no animal operated on in the physiological laboratory suffers the slightest pain. Cowardice is universal: patriotism, public opinion, parental duty, discipline, religion, morality, are only fine names for intimidation, and cruelty, gluttony, and credulity keep cowardice in countenance. We cut the throat of a calf and hang it up by the heels to bleed to death so that our veal cutlet may be white; we nail geese to a board and cram them with food because we like the taste of liver disease; we tear birds to pieces to decorate women's hats; we mutilate domestic animals for no reason at all except to follow an instinctively cruel fashion; and we contrive at the most abominable tortures in the hope of discovering some magical cure for our own diseases by them.

Some people call that courage; it is really self-indulgence. It is poetry perverted, imagination amok, a pure love of harmony, gaiety, sufficiency, intoxicated by the rush of recitative and simply carried away out of joyfulness into a rising crescendo of wrath. Stifle a virtue and you always get a vice—and outbursts like these are simply the revenges taken by his temperament for being thwarted. And, regarded as revenges, their success is profound—for they utterly ruin the cause for which the sacrifice was made. No doubt at all about that. Exactly as in Ruskin's case, the piston-rod rhetoric sinks the ship it was invented to drive; the imaginations of both these men, turned into wrong channels, ruined the cases they were kidnapped to plead. Shavian rhapsodies like that either produce patronizing titters, as at the newest caper of our mountebank; or else an irritation that ends in opposition. Whilst poor humanity's humblest answer to such trouncings and tirades would after all be by far the most crushing: "You say I am a duffer, a weakling, a coward? My kindheartedness merely cowardice, my morals a mush, my honour a pitiably sham? Very well. You are wiser than I am; are indeed (if I take you aright) the very Universe become articulate and aware; I am therefore bound to believe what you say. Only, if these are my qualities, then they must also be your keyboard. It is upon them you must play in order to alter and guide me. Deftly adapting your message to my stupidity and cowardice, you will tactfully teach me the truth. Yet—you don't do this. I misunderstand you completely—you say so yourself. But to me, in my darkness, that seems simply a proof
that—you must have misunderstood me. You say you see all my weaknesses; I appoint you my teacher; five minutes later you start flogging me like a positive Squeers for my failure to comprehend your remarks. It doesn’t seem in keeping. Either there is something wrong with your voice, which you cannot possibly help; or there is something wrong with your estimate of my hearing. In either case—who is to be blamed? I feel there must be something wrong with your credentials. Perhaps your voice is not the voice of the Universe after all. Or perhaps you are not a very good judge of other people’s hearing. Myself, I favour both views. I don’t fancy a Universe talking falsetto; and I don’t think you are a good judge, not a particularly good judge of other people. These thoughts are meant kindly to you. A blind leader of the blind will probably bring about disaster—but at least he will consider his poor companion’s shortcomings. How much wickeder, wastefuller, more shameful and ludicrous, would be the case of the clear-sighted leader who broke his client’s neck because he couldn’t be bothered to remember his afflictions. Good-day, Mr. Shaw. Here’s your fee. We part friends.” So, in his humble way, says Everyman.

And his complaint brings up naturally to the culminating scene in our Comedy. We are now going to contemplate Mr. Shaw being compelled to proclaim and believe himself a dramatist, and, at the same time, by the self-same power and process, being carefully unfitted for the rôle.

PART II

I

The first half of this epitome, the way Shaw’s early pose of rebel insolence placed him on a track which propelled him implacably toward play-writing, is easily traced by simply jotting down some dates. Recapitulate rapidly the early facts of his life in a straightforward string, and you see chronology creeping up to this crisis. In 1876, twenty years old, he crosses from Ireland to London, knowing more and thinking more of pictures and music than of anything else in the world. A couple years later, entirely by accident, he hears a certain young Sidney Webb (exactly his own age) laying down the laws of life to an audience of awe-stricken adults; and resolves to become a platform speaker too. In pursuit of this fell purpose he permeates all the societies for scolding Society which were a feature of the London of that time, and by 1882 he has so out-woven Webb, has caught the trick of all-around truculence so perfectly, that even the most hardened and ferocious food-reformer, dress-reformer, land-reformer, reformer-reformer, et hoc genus omne, will bleench at
the mention of his name. And in 1885, at the age of twenty-nine (perhaps feeling that this fearless independence had depended on his mother long enough), he is looking out for some settled job in journalism.

Now, what would you expect to happen? Naturally, he was made a musical critic. "I have never had a programme," he once said, "I simply took the job that was given me and did it the best way I could"; but in those days of alert editors a man who knew more about pictures and music than anything else in the world, and who had learned to express himself imperiously, was journalistically a dedicated soul. He became art critic to The World in 1885, musical critic to the Star in 1888, and in 1895, following the course of nature, he was unhitched from the Star by Mr. Frank Harris and installed as dramatic critic to The Saturday.

The inevitability of all that is as evident as $2 \times 2 = 4$. What happens next has the same infernal neatness. It was a perfect repetition of his earlier innocent display among the societies and Socialists. He had taken rebelliousness more seriously than the rebels themselves, and played the part with an overpowering completeness. He now idolized the theatre in the same impulsive way, and was once more taken in by his own eloquence. For Shaw's besetting weakness is a certain stubborn pride of soul which cannot permit him to admit, even in a whisper to himself, that the cause he is engaged in is not crucial; and he now reacted exactly as such a character could be counted on to react, with results distinctly startling to the stage. For no sooner had Mr. Harris seen him settled in his stall than he sprang up declaring it a choir-stall in a cathedral. "The theatre," said he, "is a place where two or three are gathered together, with an apostolic succession as serious and as continuously inspired as that younger institution, the apostolic succession of the Christian Church." "The theatre," he said, "is as important as the Church was in the Middle Ages, and much more important than the Church in London now." It is "a factory of thought, a prompter of conscience, an elucidator of conduct, an armoury against despair and dullness, and a temple of the Ascent of Man." Its plays were "identical with a church service as a combination of artistic ritual, profession of faith and sermon"; and its players, to their own immense embarrassment, were hailed as "hierophants of a cult as eternal and sacred as any professed religion in the world." Our Don Quixote, dear romantic, was discomfiting the marionettes by taking them with unintended seriousness.

The completion of the operation will be plain. Mr. Shaw may never persuade us that the theatre exerts a power equal to that which established Inquisitions, and curdled Europe into Crusades,
and shot the great frozen fountains of Chartres and Rouen into mid-sky; but he quickly persuaded himself. Just as his first infatuation made his pride produce a theory which put the case for contentiousness so confoundedly convincingly that it enthusiastically endeared to him an attitude it was only intended to excuse, so now his heated declarations of the supreme importance of the drama burgeoned out into corollaries so credible that he had to believe in them himself. He became convinced that Drama was the thing best worth doing. It was therefore the work worthiest of his powers. He was already middle-aged—but no matter. In 1898 he stole away from his mere stall. Before the end of the year he was known to the world as the author of *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant*.

II

Nothing, then, could be clearer than that Mr. Shaw became a dramatist—not as a result of predilection—but simply because he was propelled into the part by circumstances. Once one realizes that, one also sees the huge unlikelihood of him turning out the born dramatist he claimed to be; and, indeed, it could easily be shown that even his power "of conjuring up imaginary people in imaginary places and finding pretexts for theatrical scenes between them" (on which he plumes himself in the Preface to *Plays Pleasant*) is much more the novelist's dramatic knack than the playwright's, that his mere sense of the physically dramatic, taking that alone, is far from being the true sense of the theatre. But these initial, native deficiencies wouldn't have mattered so much if it hadn't been for that other element; the grim fact that the very circumstances which had made him dramatist had simultaneously robbed him of his best right to be one. Be one, that is to say, in his own high sense of it—a maker of works of art depicting the daily life of the world, phials filled with essence of actuality. A man of his wit and force couldn't, of course, fail to contrive stage-pieces with a good deal more pith and picturesqueness about them than the majority of plays turned out by the class of brains the stage deserves; but anything bigger, anything adequate to his own definition, he had already forfeited the faculty to produce. He was trebly disqualified—and the first of these three handicaps stares out at us so brazenly from the record of his life that the wonder is it never warned him off; so plain is it indeed that it has visibly stamped itself into the framework of his house, making an ominous writing on the walls of his home. "They say. What say they? Let them say." These are the words (his biographer tells us) that Mr. Shaw has had carved above the fire-place in his study. They are sufficiently significant. Admirable enough as the
motto of a callow rebel, the old contemptuous Border battle-cry amounts to a surrender of his sword when heard on the lips of a dramatist. For, being interpreted, it really means that "I, the underseated, owner of this hygienic hearth, boast a deliberate lack of that imaginative sympathy which is the chief credential of the interpreter of character." And by sympathy, in this sense, one does not mean a slobbering pity; for pity can be as partial as contempt. By imaginative sympathy one simply means the jolly power of watching, with a chuckling absorption and delight, the doings of every sort and size of people; and of this happy gift, if ever he had it, Shaw by now had been wholly dispossessed. Sympathy is something hardly to be discerned in a man who has deliberately made disdain a working principle; who has learned to study human nature in the spirit of an opponent; and whose idea of "a generous passion" has become a "passion of hatred" for all the "accursed middle-class institutions that have starved, thwarted, misled and corrupted us from our cradles." Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner: you cannot cut your enemy and know him too. That is a sort of vivisection that is fruitless. And Shaw really admitted his own incapacity for play-writing when he affirmed that the average audience was a set of soapy stupids, "part of them nine-tenths chapelfoers by temperament, and the remainder ten-tenths blackguards." For the stage at its best is only a mirror held up before the face of the watching house. The big play is composed of little players; it must comprehend them even when they don't comprehend it.

That, then, is the first of Mr. Shaw's three acquired deficiencies; his socialism has made him unsociable: his confirmed habit of wiping somebody out, which he formed among the Fabians because it was so effective there, becomes here a disastrous obliteration of his model; he is like an archer (not William, though!) who has set up a target with care and then discovered it has used up all the wood meant for arrows. And now, on the top of it, driving it in further, comes acquired defect number two—one that limits still further his already narrowed range of subjects, and one that is all the more mischievous because it is masked by a quality that may have done much at the outset to convince him that drama was his line. All Shaw's early efforts as a writer were given, as we have seen, to the task of forming a medium of expression apt for physical utterance—a type of diction he could debate with and dictate with dogmatically, dealing it out from his hustings or stabbing it into his societies in successive sentences as pat and purposeful as neatly planted blows. Now, that meant good dialogue; and so, long before he had ever dreamt of turning dramatist, he had perfectly acquired the great trick which so many playwrights never do learn: the art of
making all his words fit live lips and leap alertly off the tongue, as
slick and natural as slang, fresh with the colours of actual inter-
course. But whilst his platform-work thus taught him the acoustics
of the stage and how to make his characters talk like human beings,
it also confirmed him in a foible which reacted on those characters
to make them human beings of one particular kind. For the essence
of his own speeches had been their slitting, pelting salience: it had
been his work to resolve the old vague rumblings of oratory into a
rattle of definite drops—and nothing, he found, sped a period so well
as a core of cute meaning, self-contained. With the result that a crisp
statement soon became essential to his sentences: he could no more
begin to write one without an assertion to maintain it than a cabby
could go a drive without a fare.

But though this confirmed inability to ask a question, or to sug-
gest, or appeal, or submit, or discriminate, or qualify, or use art as
a means of evocation, summoning a wisdom deeper than the artist
knew he controlled—although this limitation was an immense asset
on a platform, it obviously became a fatal barrier to completeness
when the habitual assater set to work to write a play. For it meant
that the stage-door of his theatre had to be shut in the faces of a
throne of very necessary characters; all the dim folk and foggy
folk, the puzzled and perturbed, the groping, hoping, helpless,
humble, unassertive humans, who act by instinct instead of by rea-
son and whose deeds speak so much more clearly than their words
—all these he was compelled to turn away. He couldn’t employ them,
for he couldn’t equip them with a part. His sympathies, we have
seen, were already limited—but even if he were filled with a pos-
tive affection for such characters he couldn’t take them on—no, not
even to take them off; for although he understood them they did not
understand themselves; and for people who don’t know their own
minds and can’t communicate the knowledge clearly, Shaw has no
form of speech that will do. He can write none but definite dialogue;
and definite dialogue entails definite minds; and the result is that all
the members of his cast seem members of one exclusive caste. A
specimen of the sensible, highly educated young Englishwoman;
prompt, strong, confident, self-possessed. . . . A man of cool tem-
perament and low but clear and keen intelligence, with the imper-
turbability of the accurate calculator who has no illusions. . . . A
vigorous, genial, popular man of forty with a sound voice which he
uses with the clean athletic articulation of the practised orator. . . .
A dignified man, a born chairman of directors. . . . A strong man,
with a watchful face. . . . Pass them in parade, from Vivie Warren to
Andrew Undershaft, and you find they have all had to be endowed
with this rare faculty—a power of quick, precise, and ruthless calculation and self-confidence, the necessary adjunct to the way they’ll have to speak. Each has a ready point of view, bright and finished as a rapier; and the drama has to resolve itself into the ring and rattle of these weapons, the multiplex duel we get when they all unsheathe their points and prettily proceed to cross opinions. What fun it is, how exciting it can be, we all, to our happiness, well know. But we have to admit that the mirror misses much. It is odd to reflect that his democracy is the cause of this exclusiveness.

III

Yet if these are serious handicaps I fear the third is even heavier. It was bad enough to be compelled to insist on his _dramatis personae_ all coming clearly provided with opinions; but what was worse was the fact that the exigencies of platform work had compelled him to add a pack of neat opinions to his own equipment, and that his haste and his innocence and the highly peculiar circle of his friends made the pack in many ways a faked one. "To be set too early," says Meredith, somewhere, "is to take the work out of the hands of the Sculptor who fashions men. A character that does not wait for circumstances to shape it is of less worth in the race that must be run." Well, Shaw set too soon. The pressure of those early days of gleeful mutiny, the need for being dogmatic, precipitated his young ideas in a premature philosophy, to which ever since he has elung; and at the same time the material out of which he had to get his ideas, the personal experience he turned into opinions, were quite unfairly lopsided, incomplete, artificial. The idiosyncrasy of his troupe he might to some extent have counterbalanced by picking their points of view with care and then arranging these so that they partly reproduced the pattern and poise of reality; but such ingenuity availed nothing whatever against the bias of his own point of view. He might (and he did) arrange his rapiers like spokes to look like a mimic Wheel of Life; but to no purpose, for the hub was out of truth. And it was out of truth because, quite literally, what he had taken as his centre was really eccentric, and what he had accepted in his innocence as a genuine axle was actually only a crank.

For remember, once more, where he was when he formed his views: remember the New Woman and _The Woman Who Did_, and the Ibsen Society and rational dress, and the general dank, indoor, stuffy, insincere atmosphere of devotees and defiance in which he formed his first impressions and made one. It was suburban in the worst sense—under the Town, shut in and overshadowed by its mass.
"I am a typical Irishman," he once said, "my family came from Yorkshire." Actually, he is a typical Cockney: he came from the country before he had learned that Middlesex wasn't the middle; and what he ought to have said was: "I am a true Metropolitan: my views are so very provincial." Shut up in one pigeon-hole, he felt he was surveying the whole room; he took it for granted that the highly specialized existence he shared was a fair sample of reality: he got his ideas of human society from the members of his societies; and innocently accepted the New Woman as woman. He knew nothing of the working North, nothing of pastoral England, nothing even of the genuine suburbs or the actual provinces, or the places where life does expand with some serenity, repeating its comeliest delights. Morris had had Kelmscott to use as a base, his grey manor with its immemorial beauties was his hub; and when he looked out from it he realized that Shaw's little London was a mere dirty splash on one of the spokes. But though Shaw took a Hertfordshire house many years later, and though a healthy Hibernian longing for the open has no doubt always been mixed with his motives, yet he never let that longing take him to his true kingdom; and his work has been far more a product of indoor dilettantism than that of Mr. Henry James. For Mr. James has travelled tirelessly, shedding old shibboleths and learning the non-existence of horizons; whereas Shaw has always remained complacently satisfied that his early contact with life was remarkably complete. He is constantly pluming himself on the breadth of his experience: "Like a greengrocer and unlike a minor poet, I have lived instead of dreaming and feeding myself with artistic confectionery." "Three times every week I could escape from artistic and literary stuff and talk seriously on serious subjects with serious people. For this reason—because I persisted in Socialist propaganda—I never once lost touch with the real world." So does he point proudly to the bars of his prison and boast of how they keep reality before him. He honestly believed that a brisk debate with Mr. Belfort Bax brought him very near to the simple heart of human nature. He felt that he understood the democracy because he knew so many democrats.

It was as a Fabian meeting multiplied, then, that Shaw first beheld the race of man; and his views of life were largely formed to fit this fascinating vision. Let me give one example of the way he generalized, of the way he accepted a suburban experience as a symbolic episode and framed a law on the strength of it which he promptly applied to the rest of creation. Let it be his theory of the relation of the sexes—of woman as the huntress and man as the prey. It reappears constantly, for it is one of the several steelyard rules
which he can handle easier than golden ones; but its first appearance is in The Philanderer. Now we have the assurance of Mr. Shaw's biographer that The Philanderer exhibits an attitude towards women induced in Shaw by "unpleasant personal relations with women prior to the time at which the play was written. . . . The first act is a more or less accurate replica of a scene in Mr. Shaw's own life." There you have it! The core of Man and Superman is simply a twisted point of view manufactured out of the shoddy and unreliable material circumstances brought him when he had to take what he got to make opinions. Not all the adroitness in Ireland could overcome that initial drawback. He may declare that "Ann is Everywoman" as loudly as he will, and swear that her demonstration, that the initiative in sex transactions remains with women, is a piece of pure impartial drama, the result of "a creative process over which I have no control." We know better. Falsified from the commencement, the piece had to be a fantasy. It is one of the most delightful variety entertainments ever witnessed on the stage, but it holds no mirror up to life. What it reflects is an impatient youth of genius being impeded by a pack of spinsterly girls who can't spin, the female intellectuals peculiar to a little patch of London (and a patch which has by now been ploughed and broken), and deciding that his predicament must be typical of Everyman's, that he has discovered a Universal Law which nobody before him has had the honesty to announce. . . .

IV

Then his plays are an imposture? Pardon me, I never said so: what I say indeed is that he has acted with perfect sincerity, that all the errors in the result must be attributed to our time. It is because they are not a fair indictment that they do become a grave one. But then, on the other hand, it is when we realize their vices that we discover his true virtues. For the fine thing is this—and this the only use of critics' efforts—that once the limitations of the plays are realized they cease to possess any; once you see that Shaw has done the best he could for us under the circumstances, then his effort is seen in relation to those circumstances and its errors instinctively allowed for. Recognize that a passion for purity, gentleness, truth, justice, and beauty is the force at the base of all his teaching, and you will find his message one of the most tonic of our time. Realize further how he has limited himself by the philosophy he has expounded, and you will escape all danger of being hurt by its deficiencies. And instead of the irritation, the bewilderment, or (what was worse)
the priggish complacency with which you regarded them, you find yourself turning to them with sympathy, with comradeship and eager friendliness, able to use all their strong medicine without being embittered by the taste. It is only when you regard them, in short (and this is the summary of the whole irony), it is only when you regard them with the very sympathy they doggedly deride that you receive the help which they hunger to offer.
Just as Synge makes the ordinary run of contemporary plays sound poor in speech, as Chekhov makes them look too tidily arranged, as Hauptmann shows up their author's failure to compose them with anything deeper than ingenuity, so Shaw makes them appear unintelligent, the work of specialists in theatricals, of men without ideas.

At the theatre, watching a farce, one often guesses that its point of departure was found by answering a question like this: In precisely what circumstances would an almost normal person refrain from telling something which even an idiot, were the circumstances ever so little different, would have stopped the play by telling at once?

Mr. Shaw needs none of these doctored situations to start his farces with. They get under way as simply as his comedies, move at the same pace, and pursue the same end. You cannot, in fact, divide his plays into comedy and farce. All of them, one with a thicker and another with a thinner veil over its serious purpose, seek to destroy illusion.

Of course all comedies try more or less to do this, and the better they succeed the better they satisfy the classic idea of comedy. But the scope of comedy is so wide that the illusions may be anything you please. In Miss Austen, for example, they are Emma's illusions as to the feeling of one individual towards another. The mistakes corrected by Molière are graver, more anti-social, matter more to the community. Yet Molière keeps always a faith in the old wisdom of the world. The self-deceptions he exposes are tried before judges assumed to be competent, before a society whose general good sense is taken for granted. Mr. Shaw denies the existence of any such common sense. He is forever telling contemporary society the bad news.

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that illusion is part of its structure. The self-deceiver he assaults and exposes is society itself.

No wonder such a radical fighter puzzled us all at first. His appearance in our meaningless theatre was more surprising than the first appearance, about eighteen-eighty-something, of grapefruit on our tables, many sizes larger than our familiar breakfast dishes, and how much more pungent. Nowadays all grapefruit tastes alike. So with Mr. Shaw’s plays. They are as pungent as ever, they are larger than of old, but they are no longer new. His late plays are not newer than his earliest. His originality is not a plant of slow growth. Seldom has an artist-philosopher, coming so early into his fortune of convictions, reached the age of sixty with fewer losses of conviction, fewer gains, so little change in the nature of his investments. He believes what he believed and feels what he felt. Hence his uniformity. None of his plays differs from another in tone so widely as The Master Builder differs from An Enemy of Society, or in doctrine so widely as Une Visite de Noces differs from La Femme de Claude. Shaw’s is the work of a witty and pugnacious demonstrator, never depressed by the brutality and injustice all about him, always impatient of the lying done in their defense, enjoying mightily his attacks on these lies.

Dumas fils had an even greater talent than Mr. Shaw’s for preaching from the stage, but his propaganda was immensely less important. In Une Visite de Noces, and everywhere else, his attention is fixed upon some variety of love. Mr. Shaw looks further afield, knows ever so much more, thinks ever so much more, pays attention to more parts of life. He has examined war, property, education, marriage, home life, romantic love, as they exist in the British world, and he sees that they are bad. His method of proceeding against them is not to turn a full stream of anger directly upon these institutions themselves. His weapon is not anger against things and facts. It is impatience with the romantic idealism which keeps evil alive by seeing things and facts as they are not and by telling lies about them. War, for example, is hateful to Mr. Shaw, but his way of getting rid of it is by exposing and ridiculing the stuff and nonsense talked about military glory. So strong is his preference for talking this way that sometimes one suspects him of detesting conventional notions of military glory more cordially than he detests the realities of war.

Pestilent arcaic institutions are the objects of his attack, but its method is such that he seems to be giving most of his attention to the flattering reflection of these institutions in the conventional idealizing mind. He is much less a realistic describer and exhibitor than a preacher of the realistic habit. Learn to see things realistically, great
things and small, and the future will be better than the present. Once the tribe of romantic liars has been exterminated there will be no war in the world, no profiteering, no parasites living in idleness. Home life will be better and there will be less of it.

Shaw the propagandist, the physician to an ailing society, is so effectively in earnest that everybody who can take his medicine at all comes sooner or later to take it seriously. Most of us pass through several stages. At first we are puzzled and amused by these plays, in which the speeches glitter like razors after a cakewalk, and the mots d'auteur are brilliant as poppies in the wheat. Then it disconcerts us to discover that this paradoxist means bodily harm to the existing order. Next we are exhilarated and stimulated and compelled almost to think for ourselves by his doctrine, so lucid and emphatic and cocksure. It is at a later stage, when we are trying to escape from the prison of Mr. Shaw's common sense, that we take him most seriously.

It is all very well, we say at this stage, to talk against illusions, but are not some illusions necessary? George Meredith has shown us

_Yonder midnight ocean's force,
Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior horse,
To throw that faint thin line upon the shore!

If the warrior horse were realists, if they foresaw the inevitable faintness and thinness of any line they could rationally hope to throw, with all their ramping, wouldn't they ramp less, and the line on the shore be even thinner and fainter? Illusions do harm, we admit, yet it is by illusion's help that the world does its work. Would not the sanest ambitions dwindle, and the highest hopes fail, if the extent of their future satisfaction could be accurately known?

That way of escaping Mr. Shaw's influence is possible, no doubt, but not for a convert whose mind he has ever thoroughly won. For Mr. Shaw believes the world can get along without any man's best if he be such a weakling that he cannot do his best without telling himself lies. One of these days the world will be manned by a tough-minded realistic crew, whose labor will be none the less diligent because they direct it to strictly attainable ends. And even after illusion has gone instinct and impulse will remain. At present married life is made worse than it need be by the romantic idealism of men and women who expect to find it better than it can be. But a more rational expectation, a clear foresight, will not weaken the instinct which brings men and women together. Expecting less happiness in marriage than they now foolishly expect, they will gain a soldier happiness than they can have now. The artistic impulse, again, is so inextinguishable that artists will keep pegging away after they have
scrapped all their illusions. A painter can stick to his work though he has no hope of beating Velasquez. He paints to make his picture represent what he has seen as he has seen it. So with "the instinct of workmanship" wherever found, and it will be found in abundance.

But if we yield the point, if we grant the truth of all that Mr. Shaw teaches us about illusions, if we concede that all are harmful, that none is necessary, are we condemned never to loosen his grip upon us? At least we can try. To see mankind as divisible into realists and romantic idealists, we may say, is only one way of seeing the world. Turn from Mr. Shaw, for whom it is the only way of seeing things as they are, to whatever life we happen to know. No attempt to separate people into realists and romantic idealists can long survive contact with miscellaneous experience. Most of the men and women one sees do not spend most of their time in realizing Mr. Shaw's ideals of realism or romantic idealism. They are quite as significantly classifiable upon other systems. They are not easily classifiable upon any. If we keep his classification in mind long enough, until it looks as strange as a familiar word repeated over and over, it will at last appear arbitrary. Imagine a sculptor who should begin each of his portrait busts with a determination to have the look of it tell us whether the sitter did or did not believe that land ought to be taxed to its full rental value. An exaggeration? Of course. But what of? Of just the impression left on me when I try to remember Mr. Shaw's plays as a whole.

A self-conscious passion for seeing things realistically, or as they are, is a blood relation of its caricature, the passion for seeing things as other people don't. And this, again, is no distant relative of the passion for denying what other people see, even when they see truly. Take physical courage, for example, which Mr. Shaw dislikes and denies because it is, after all, the one best bet of the romantic idealists who have invented the myth of military glory. This dislike appears again in his fondness for putting fear, physical fear, upon the stage. Take for another example love, the spring in which rivers of romantic lies have their source. Except as pure life-force, Mr. Shaw has a poor opinion of love. He would resent the behavior of Sir Samuel Romilly, whose wife's death drove him to suicide at the age of sixty-one, because such doings are evidence of a kind not, I admit, very abundant, but still evidence, that passionate love may survive twenty years of marriage. Friendship, too, with its irrational loyalties and its odor of good old times, has been the occasion of the Lord knows how much romantic idealism. Hence, in all Mr. Shaw's plays, so far as I can remember, no representation of friendship on the best terms, between equals. Together with human relations at their intensest and most disinterested, as in friendship and love, he excludes
human beings at the full tide of their energy. So much lying has been
done about great men that he is impatient of greatness. Julius Caesar
is not greater than John Tanner or Andrew Undershaft. Vivie War-
ren seems almost as great a man as Napoleon.
This denial of the exceptional, this dislike and distrust of it, what
are they in Mr. Shaw, but the other side of affirmation that society
must be turned into a happier place for average men and women?
He is at his most modern in his effort to overthrow all those institu-
tions which keep the poor dependent upon the idle or the active
rich, and in his warfare against the romantic lies which sicken and
divide all selves except the callous and the blind. His concern for
mankind, for a world exempt from tyranny, brutality, unearned
leisure, intimidation, for a world in which no man’s will is the slave
of another man’s, and which is filled with men and women who had
rather forfeit their respectability than their self-respect, who are
neither afraid without cause nor afraid, when there is cause, of being
afraid—all this progeny of aspirations is the issue of Mr. Shaw’s
modern democratic passion.
A modern passion he does not feel is the passion for observing
and representing the greatest possible amount of human nature, just
because it is human nature. He is almost a stranger to that omni-
vorous curiosity, so widespread nowadays among novelists, historians
and psychologists, which is eager to contradict or verify what our
fathers have told us about man, to make discoveries, to treat noth-
ing as negligible if it be human. Such a disinterested curiosity would
perhaps be an encumbrance to an artist as bent on changing our
minds as Mr. Shaw is. Accordingly we find his gift of sharp observa-
tion used for the most part upon men and women when they are in
contact with romantic idealism, either as its destroyers or its victims,
and especially at the moment of their conversion to realism. He has
some observation to spare for them at other moments, but unless
you remember his purpose, his central drive, you cannot help won-
dering why he has not more.
“Philosophy serves culture,” said Pater, “not by the fancied gift of
abstract or transcendental knowledge but by suggesting questions
which help one to detect the passion, and strangeness and dramatic
contrasts of life.” This is not the kind of philosophy people have in
mind when they excuse Mr. Shaw’s narrowed gaze by calling him an
artist-philosopher. Artist-reformer would be nearer the truth, and
the distinction between him and the mere artist would remain. The
mere artist, whom you may call either a convictionless or a disin-
terested artist, just as you please, is known by his eagerness to look
again and again at the world with fresh eyes. He values life more
for its variety and its capability of surprising him than for its con-
formity with his previous reports upon it. The artist is known by what he omits, the artist-philosopher by what he omits to observe. His subconscious tells him either that his philosophy would be different if he observed more, or else that he would have no end of trouble trying to squeeze his new material into his old system. In this his subconscious does the artist-philosopher a good turn. We forgive Mr. Shaw the hardness and fastness of his conclusions because we know he has observed nothing, literally nothing, that is inconsistent with them. We should never forgive him if he saw all life, and saw it merely as all raw premise for his finished conclusion-product.

It is by never forgetting Mr. Shaw is an artist-philosopher that we escape from his bondage. An artist-philosopher is a system-maker, and no system can be true. But even when we are equipped with this knowledge escape from him is not easy. His hold upon us is tenacious. He relaxes our will to get away. As a mere artist his power is not easy to resist. One of the greatest masters of clear statement that have ever lived, a humorist of the first rank, one of the great wits of the world, he knows how to use his wit and humor and clearness to serve his own will, the will to make us disbelieve. A while ago I spoke of his *mots d'auteur*, but really all his plays are *mots d'auteur*, spoken with a practical object. Will the next century read and see his plays? I have not the slightest idea. No words of mine, gentle reader, and a fortiori no words of yours, can tell how little we know about the tastes of our successors. But I am willing to bet, if they do read him, that they will find singularly little to skip.

Mr. Shaw's destiny is an odd one. All his articulate life he has been telling what he took to be subversive and unpleasant truths. His reward has been money, a reputation for brilliancy, few converts. Then the war came. He did as he had always done, said what he had always said, and with the same fresh wit and energy. This time, at last, he roused thousands and thousands to fury. So his chance has come for showing, now that he is about sixty years old, the courage he would have shown all along, if he had had the chance.
Bernard Shaw is sixty-five and in despair. The mad peace finished what the mad war had begun. We still live in a state of "boyish, cinema-fed romanticism"; we are governed by grown-up children and defectives. Strongly and naturally the doubt arises "whether the human animal, as he exists at present, is capable of solving the social problems raised by his own aggregation." So the human animal must be changed; we must transform the biological process from a process to a weapon and a tool. We must harness the Life Force; the *élan vital*, to our chariots and drive into a city of God which we ourselves have built. It is sheer mysticism; and that Shaw, like the aged Comte, has become a mystic is something like a tragic disaster. He accepts the full position of the mystic and glories in it. "When a man tells you that you are a product of Circumstantial Selection solely, you cannot finally disprove it. You can only tell him out of the depth of your inner consciousness that he is a fool and a liar." Alas, that sort of inner consciousness has borne witness to a flat earth and a wheeling sun, to virgin births and to transubstantiation, to the special creation of species, to the righteousness of human slavery and war and persecution. It is our old friend faith, the evidence of things unseen. It is beautiful and pathetic. But it has been the source of untold errors and miseries when not strictly limited to the forever unseeable. If the Neo-Darwinians are right, Shaw exclaims, "only fools and rascals could bear to live." That is what the bishops told Huxley; it is the cry of every timid sentimentalist whose world will not conform to his vision of what it should be. And this from Bernard Shaw!

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He builds his mystical structure upon a basis of apparently scientific reasoning. According to the modern followers of Lamarck, "organisms changed because they wanted to," and the chief factor in the transmutation of species was use and disuse. According to the followers of Darwin, the same process is accounted for by natural selection, that is, by the propagation of a species through those individuals which are best adapted to survive in a given environment. Shaw identifies the use and disuse of the Neo-Lamarckians with Schopenhauer's Will, with his own Life Force, with Bergson's *élan vital*, with the Holy Ghost. He plays ducks and drakes with the distinction between inherited and acquired biological characters and declares that creative evolution, "the genuinely scientific religion," means literally that we can shape the evolutionary process to our liking as we go along. The human animal will change when it wills to change.

How should it will to change? First in the direction of longevity. We die before experience has ripened into wisdom. We do not attain vision and so muddle intolerably the affairs of the world. If we lived three hundred years we would, at least, transcend the lower delusions of mortality. What these delusions include no close student of Shaw can doubt. That magnificent intellect has always been a little disembodied. His asceticism is icy and his fastidiousness not quite human. He regards sex as a nuisance and art as a bauble. He is offended not only by disorder and dirt; he is offended by the processes of procreation and metabolism. In a word, he hates the body. If he is something of a superman in clarity and fire of mental vision, he is also a super-Puritan in his anxiety to burn away the world and the flesh in the flames of that visionary fire. The three-hundred-year-old sages are not his goal. They are still born of woman and nourished by the fruits of the earth. Nor do the eerie, sleepless Ancients of the three-hundredth century satisfy him except through their ultimate aspirations. "But the day will come when there will be no people, only thought." On that day the goal will be reached—"the goal of redemption from the flesh to the vortex freed from matter to the whirlpool in pure intelligence." There is no variable-ness nor shadow of turning in Bernard Shaw. Relentlessly he follows the logic of his own nature. It takes him to the "vast edges drear and naked shingles of the world." But he does not stop. He has no eyes for the green earth or its poor, passionate, struggling inhabitants. He whirs his iron wings and sets out on his lonely quest into the intense inane.

The five dramatic books of the revelation of the new vitalist religion are less brilliant than Shaw's earlier works, less humanly sagacious in detail, and, despite several bravura passages, less eloquent.
But they have all his old energy and rapidity of intellectual movement and the last two, *The Tragedy of an Elderly Gentleman* and *As Far as Thought Can Reach*, are matchless exercises of a cold imaginative vigor building its structures out into the void. Yet so divorced from essential human feeling are these stupendous parables and legends that Shaw never suspects, for instance, the true character of his Ancients. He means them to inspire awe; they arouse pity and disgust like the Struldbrugs of Swift. Did he, by any chance, remember his great predecessor and draw the parallel? Swift, having castigated the follies and the crimes of mankind, holds up as a saving ideal the simplest goodness, gentleness, and innocence of soul. Shaw, suaver in gesture but in reality more terrible, finds no hope in any quality of human nature. It must be transcended; it must be obliterated; it must be remembered with loathing and contempt. Man must return “to the whirlpool in pure force” whence the world arose. Form itself has become an ache to Shaw. He thirsts for nothingness. He destroys the cosmos not like Faust with an imprecation, but with an argument. In no sense will mankind take his bleak parable to heart. It is the monument of a great despair. But men do not despair. They are sustained by the very things that Shaw holds to be negligible if not noxious—by love and art, food and wine, and even by a little warmth when, after darkness, the goodly sun returns.
GEORGE JEAN NATHAN
1931

Mr. Shaw and the Ogre

Observes H. G. Wells in *The Way the World Is Going*: "He (George Bernard Shaw) has made free use of the phrase, the Life-Force, but what meaning he attaches to these magic words is unknown. . . . He has an aversion from sex . . . which may be either Butler or temperamental, and he seems to want mankind to try laying parthenogenetic eggs, and coming out of them fully whiskered."

The notion thus somewhat facetiously expressed by the acute Wells restimulates a similar notion that for some time has been impertinently agitating my encephalon. That Shaw, as Wells says, appears not only to have an aversion to sex but also what amounts almost to a fear of it has not been lost upon those who have carefully pondered his writings. The reason for the peculiar aversion and for what seems to be even fear is difficult to make out, but the antipathy and distrust nevertheless remain clearly visible and often emphatic. Shaw's canon plainly betrays his dislike of sex and his evasion of it. In all his work from beginning to end I know of no instance where he has not deftly avoided self-commitment on the subject or has not indulged in equivocation of one sort or another in his treatment of it.

It is impossible, within the limits of the present essay, to go fully into Shaw's writings and draw from them a comprehensive catalogue of illustrations. But one may suggest the color of his intrinsic and general attitude by skimming through them and extracting a few sufficiently pointed and revelatory examples. That, when he laid hold of the incandescent Cleopatra, he chose to contemplate her at the age of sixteen and, in spite of the fact that sixteen was maturity in that gala era, insisted upon comfortably regarding her as a species. Reprinted from *Testament of a Critic* by George Jean Nathan. Copyright 1931 by the author. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

114
of pre-Mary Pickford flapper, that he presented the Caesar who had
a baby by her as an historical Crocker Harrington, and that he once
achieved the remarkable feat of writing sexlessly about the madam
of a bordello, are phenomena familiar to everyone. That, also, in the
series of interviews gathered by Archibald Henderson into "Table
Talk of C. B. S.," he orally betrayed an indifference, even antipathy,
to sex is as readily recalled. I quote a few passages: (a) "It is ad-
mitted that alleged rejuvenations (vide Steinach) do not prolong
life. And it is longevity which interests me and not the ghastly pros-
ppect of seeing all the moribund people bustling about and pretend-
ing to be gay young dogs"; (b) "There is never any real sex in
romance. What is more, there is very little, and that of a very crude
kind, in ninety-nine hundredths of our married life"; (c) "One man's
poetry is another man's prurience"; (d) "The novel which says no
more about sex than may be said in a lecture on the facts to a class
of school-girls of fifteen can be enormously more entertaining than
a novel wholly preoccupied with sexual symptoms"; (e) "I could not
write the words Mr. Joyce uses: my prudish hand would refuse to
form the letters"; and (f) "Is any treatment of sex in the interest of
public morals?" And where the interviewer shot embarrassingly
direct questions on sex to the interviewed, the latter is remembered
as having cleverly avoided direct answers in such circumlocutions
as "A playwright has no patience with novels," or in disquisitions
on economics, capitalism and what not.

Let us glance haphazardly through Shaw's work. Having pre-
sented us with a virginal Cleopatra and a Caesar whose amatory
exercises are confined to lifting her upon his knee and playing
horse, he presents us with the inflammable Great Catherine as one
of the Four Marx Brothers, and not Harpo either. He gives us a
Pygmalion who will have none of his perfected Galatea and who, to
use Shaw's own words, excuses his indifference to young women on
the ground that they have an irresistible rival in his mother. "If an
imaginative boy has a . . . mother who has intelligence, personal
grace, dignity of character without harshness, and a cultivated sense
of the best art, . . . she sets a standard for him against which very
few women can struggle, besides effecting for him a disengagement
of his affections, his sense of beauty and his idealism from spe-
cifically sexual impulses. This makes him a standing puzzle to the
huge number of uncultivated people . . . to whom literature, paint-
ing, sculpture, music and affectionate personal relations come as
modes of sex if they come at all." He gives us even a Don Juan who
moralistically announces, "I tell you that as long as I can conceive
something better than myself, I cannot be easy unless I am striving
to bring it into existence or clearing the way for it. That is the law
of my life!” His Larry, in John Bull's Other Island, prefers his friend Tom to the woman who implores his love. “I wish I could find a country to live in where the facts were not brutal and the dreams not unreal,” is the character’s oblique anatomical lament. His Dick Dudgeon, in The Devil’s Disciple, pronounces the word love, “with true Puritan scorn.” His Lady Britomart, in Major Barbara, “really cannot bear an immoral man.” And his Eugene, in Candida, romanticizes his emotions out of sex.

“Moral passion is the only real passion,” announces Tanner, in Man and Superman. “All the other passions were in me before; but they were idle and aimless—mere childish greediness and cruelties, curiosities and fancies, habits and superstitions, grotesque and ridiculous to the mature intelligence. When they suddenly began to shine like newly lit flames it was by no light of their own, but by the radiance of the dawning moral passion. That passion dignified them, gave them conscience and meaning, found them a mob of appetites and organized them into an army of purposes and principles.” “Virtue,” Shaw notes in The Revolutionist’s Handbook, “consists not in abstaining from vice but in not desiring it.” Charteris, in The Philanderer, accused of philandering, states that he is not guilty of any such low thing. “I hate it; it bores me to distraction!” Praed observes to Crofts of Mrs. Warren, apropos of a hint of sexual intimacy, “Your delicacy will tell you that a handsome woman needs some friends who are not—well, not on that footing with her.” And Mrs. Warren repentantly thus: “Do you think I was brought up like you—able to pick and choose my own way of life? Do you think I did what I did because I liked it, or thought it right, or wouldn’t rather have gone to college and been a lady if I’d had the chance?”

Speaking of the marriage contract in one of his prefaces, Shaw alludes to sex stimulation as “the most violent, most insane, most delusive and most transient of passions,” expresses his disbelief that married people as a rule really live together, and says that “a man as intimate with his own wife as a magistrate is with his clerk . . . is a man in ten thousand.” In response to the General’s timid “But there are calls of nature—” in Getting Married, Shaw makes Lesbia reply, “Don’t be ridiculous.” And when the General is so much as allowed to venture on another occasion the word assignation, the Shavian get-out is accomplished thus: “Oh yes; she began the correspondence by making a very curious but very natural assignation. She wants me to meet her in Heaven”—the while Mrs. Bridgenorth comments on the “everyday vulgarities of earthly love.” “I sinned in intention,” says Juno in Overruled. “I’m as guilty as if I had actually sinned.” Lina, in Misalliance, takes out her surplus energy
on a flying trapeze and recommends the same diet to her adoring Tarleton. And in *Arms and the Man*, we find the Shavian protagonist not too proud for sexual dalliance, but too tired.

The point is not that Shaw’s imaginative writing is sexless—that is a fact too well known to call for repetition; the point is that the body of his work as a whole reveals a man to whom sex, in the sense that the word is commonly used, is at once unpleasant, deplorable and disgusting. There are times, true enough, when he seems to advance the opposite point of view, but it will be found that, when he does so, he does so only subsequently to refute and demolish it. Nor is his argument of the other point of view even momentarily persuasive; it hasn’t the ring of sincerity; it is a dummy set up merely for tackling purposes. Among conspicuous modern English men of letters and English critics of life, he alone is indefatigable in waving the white banner of biological asceticism. One of the cleverest dialecticians of our time, he is sometimes successful in concealing his true attitude for a moment, in masking his ferocious personal convictions and in giving a bland performance in the rôle of a hell of a fellow, but it fools no one. Chesterton once observed that it is the weak man who always, when taking a walk, most vigorously thwacks the bushes along the roadside with his cane. A mistrust of his own philosophical attitude toward sex may similarly account for Shaw’s disputatious thwacking of it.

After reading *Cathedral Byron’s Profession*, Stevenson wrote to William Archer: “If Mr. Shaw is below five-and-twenty, let him go his path; if he is thirty, he had best be told that he is a romantic, and pursue romance with his eyes open. Perhaps he knows it.” Shaw is still the romantic that he was when a boy. And his romanticism is no more clearly to be detected than in his animadversions on sex. He declines to see it for what it is; he cannot bring himself to regard it save in terms of sentiment, love, the Indian policy, Marxist socialism or the League of Nations. And all the fine irony and rich humor which he occasionally has visited upon the subject cannot conceal the romanticist hiding behind them and seeking to protect himself through them from the charge of romanticism. Shaw has always set up smoke-screens or avoidances of the issue to protect himself from himself. The hero of his early novel, *The Irrational Knot*, in answer to the query as to what he is going to do about his wife’s elopement with a former lover, says, “Eat my supper. I am as hungry as a bear.” His charming Szczypimlica, in *Love Among the Artists*, is in her potentially most romantic moments restrained by the “soul commercial” that Shaw, with a cannily masked apprehensiveness, injects into her. Lydia Carew, whose “body is frail and brain morbidly
active," is made to think coldly of the splendid Cashel Byron in terms of eugenical science. In An Unsocial Socialist, Shaw smears his inborn convictions with grease-paint and tries to make us believe that he believes the seven deadly sins, as Prof. Henderson notes them, are respectability, conventional virtue, filial affection, modesty, sentiment, devotion to women, and romance.

We have Shaw speaking of the wickedness and abandonedness of Offenbach's music and of the morals of Händel's. We find him waxing impatient with "the female figure free from the defect known to photographers as under-exposure" that he encounters on the statues and fountains in Paris. He writes, "What Hofmannsthall and Strauss have done is to take Clytemnestra and Aegistheus and by identifying them with everything that is evil . . . with the murderous rage in which the lust for a lifetime of orgiastic pleasure turns on its slaves in the torture of its disappointment and the sleepless horror and misery of its neurasthenia, to so rouse in us an overwhelming flood of wrath against it . . . that Elektra's vengeance becomes holy to us . . ." "In our sexual natures," he states in the preface to Androcles and the Lion, "we are torn by an irresistible attraction and an overwhelming repugnance and disgust." Again, "Marriage turns vagabonds into steady citizens; men and women will . . . practice virtues that unattached individuals are incapable of." In the preface to Overruled, thus: "That jealousy is independent of sex is shown by its intensity in children." Again, "Adultery is the dullest of themes on the stage, and from Francesca and Paolo down to the latest guilty couple . . . the romantic adulterers have been bores." Yet again, "It is ridiculous to say . . . that art has nothing to do with morality."

"If a young woman, in a mood of strong reaction . . . were to tell Mr. Herbert Spencer that she was determined not to murder her own instincts and throw away her life in obedience to a mouthful of empty phrases," he once said, "I suspect he would recommend the Data of Ethics to her as a trustworthy and conclusive guide to conduct. Under similar circumstances I should unhesitatingly say to the young woman: 'By all means do as you propose. Try how wicked you can be. . . . At worst, you will only find out the sort of person you really are. At best, you will find that your passions, if you really and honestly let them all loose impartially, will discipline you with a severity your conventional friends . . . could not stand for a day.'" In the preface to Getting Married, we come upon this: "The assumption that the specific relation which marriage authorizes between the parties is the most intimate and personal of human relations . . . is violently untrue." In The Apple Cart, we engage the anatomically
paradoxical spectacle of a King's platonic mistress. And, by way of a climax, we have a Garden of Eden in *Back to Methuselah* in which, when Shaw's Eve learns the secret of sex, "an expression of overwhelming repugnance" crosses her features and she "buries her face in her hands"!
I have previously suggested that a number of the plays written in America during the last ten or twelve years were not without a certain literary significance, even though they might seem to lack the definite socio-political implications characteristic of both the older "problem play" and the newer "revolutionary drama." It seems obvious enough that much less can be said in favor of the Victorian theater against which Bernard Shaw conducted his relentless campaign. Notoriously it depended upon adaptations from the French for even semi-serious plays, and the literary as well as the sociological significance of the native drama was very nearly nil. There have been, as a matter of fact, only two or three periods during which the history of the English drama became a part of the history of English literature and this was decidedly not one of them.

Broadly speaking it may be said that between Sheridan and Oscar Wilde no successful writer for the English stage deserves to be ranked as a man of letters. It is true that the names of a few plays—Richelieu and The Lady of Lyons, The Two Orphans and The Bells—are dimly remembered. It is also true of course that Byron and Shelley and Tennyson and Browning wrote sometimes in the dramatic form. But their plays either were not intended for the stage or were unsuccessful when acted, and one may safely make a sweeping generalization: during most of the nineteenth century in England the men of letters were not successful playwrights and the successful playwrights were not men of letters.

Of all the literary forms the acting drama is undoubtedly the one which seems to have the greatest difficulty in maintaining a connec-

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120
tion with serious literature, and the lamentable unsuccess of the few eminent Victorians who attempted to reestablish the connection merely indicates how completely it has been broken.

In a sense, the theater flourished. It boasted actors who were reputed to be great and who with apparent insouciance alternated their interpretations of Shakespeare with declamations of the most dreadful drivel. It was also popular as a peculiar sort of diversion apparently relished by people who took for granted that they would not find in it any pretense at the intelligence or integrity which they expected in poetry or the novel. Through the Victorian novel runs the current of the best thought and the most acute sensibility of the time. But the age which produced and enjoyed Dickens, George Eliot, Thackeray, and Meredith seemed ready to assume that no attempt to reach a comparable level was to be expected in the theater.

The only explanation of both the barrenness of the Victorian theater and the complacency with which it was accepted seems to be that the drama had been completely given up as a form of serious expression. Though Tennyson, like Henry James somewhat later, happened to be taken with an odd ambition to write plays, the general feeling seems to have been that the acting drama was lost to literature and that it could no longer be used by the serious literary artist.

From this situation it could be rescued only by a kind of revolution, and that revolution—astonishingly successful in the end—was, of course, the one inspired by Ibsen and, in England, generated by Shaw. The revolution was, moreover, carried out by the boldest of possible methods, since it proposed to emphasize in dramatic writing the very virtues which had been the most completely nonexistent in the current tradition, namely, the intellectual. The Victorian drama was unusually bad from almost every standpoint except, perhaps, that of pure mechanics. It made little effort in the direction of either any valid representation of character or the utilization of any except a distinctly sub-literary style. But in no respect was its lag more conspicuous than in the staleness of its moral and social ideas, which were not merely vulgar but also vulgar in a fashion distinctly behind the time. Yet “the new drama” as championed—and, as he himself admitted, to some extent merely imagined—by Shaw, was to be primarily intellectual. The drama was not merely to catch up with the best of current thought; it was to be ahead of it, and from having constituted a stagnant backwater it was to become a roaring torrent in which the most advanced and vertiginous ideas were to sweep onward.
To an amazing degree these ambitions were actually realized. Shaw himself might contemptuously announce that there was nothing original in his plays. His startled readers need not go even so far afield as Ibsen and Nietzsche. They could find it all in their own neglected genius, Samuel Butler. And yet, though there is a good deal of truth in this, the fact remains that it was largely through the “new drama” that these “modern” and “advanced” ideas were actually popularized, that the premises of an Ibsen or a Shaw ceased to be the esoteric possession of a few and gradually came to constitute the general background of early twentieth-century thought.

It is true of course that the drama had no exclusive right to them; they passed either from the drama or from other original sources into general literature. It is also true that the drama as reading exercised far more influence than could have been exercised by the relatively infrequent performances of the best of the new plays. On the whole, moreover, printed volumes of Shaw and Ibsen and Strindberg and Hauptmann and the rest were read for the most part less because their audience was interested in the theater than because it was interested in ideas. The importance of the plays was only secondarily their importance as dramatic literature, and to that extent the intention to intellectualize the drama may be said to have overstepped itself. But however one may think of Ibsen and Shaw, the fact remains that their plays present in compact and vivid form the convictions and attitudes which were revolutionizing the intellectual background against which the literature of the whole of one generation was to be written. The drama had come back with a vengeance.

The peculiar, almost unique character of the plays consists in the fact that, to a degree nearly unprecedented in dramatic literature, their authors were fighting their audience. Shaw’s central criticism of Shakespeare—that his point of view was merely that of the Elizabethan man in the street—is based upon an accurate observation. But, speaking broadly, much the same thing might be said of Sophocles or of Molière. That directness and simplicity which marks all the great works of literature and which gives them the air which is vaguely called “classic” is possible only when the author can take for granted the whole substratum of knowledge and belief, the whole system of values, by reference to which the story achieves its meaning. Such works are, in other words, the final flowers of an established and flourishing culture. Even when, as in the case of Molière, they included important critical elements, the criticism is rather corrective than revolutionary. It involves no fundamental readjustment of standards, and the determination to “transvalue values” is
so completely alien to the classic spirit that it is incompatible with the creation of a classic work.¹

Much of the awkwardness, as well as much of the characteristic quality, of the drama stemming from Ibsen arises out of the fact that its authors were trying to tell stories the intended significance of which could not emerge unless the auditor could be made to revolutionize his moral and intellectual equipment. Ibsen, being somewhat more of an artist and somewhat less of a teacher than most of the rest, was content to leave in his plays a certain ambiguity inevitable in a story whose premises remained not wholly comprehended. Shaw, being the most voluble as well as, in certain respects, the most prosy of the lot, tried to get around the difficulty by the long prefatory sermons whose purpose was to implant in the mind of the prospective reader those ideas necessary for the correct comprehension of the play. But neither Ibsen’s willingness to remain provocatively puzzling nor Shaw’s interminable preliminary discourses relieved either of the necessity of a great deal of explanation and argumentation as he went along.

*Ghosts,* to take a familiar example, is in its most “classic” aspect a tragedy of ineluctable fate taking the form of hereditary disease. On a different level it is also a story whose theme is the evil wrought by hypocrisy and concealment. But that is not all. When Molière wrote *Tartuffe* he could safely assume that his audience would recognize the hypocrisy of the central character as precisely that. Ibsen on the other hand knew that, to at least many in his audience, the hypocrisy of Parson Manders would appear not as hypocrisy at all but only as a form of decency which shrank from mentioning the unmentionable. He knew also that the parson’s refusal to tell Oswald the truth about his disreputable father was based upon the conviction that children should be encouraged to follow the Biblical injunction, “Honor thy father and thy mother.” On the whole, the audience would tend to agree rather with Parson Manders than with Ibsen, and it was accordingly necessary to introduce various debates upon this and other subjects, which debates—and this is the important point—were relevant not to the action but to the premises in terms of which the action could become meaningful.

One result of all this is that even such a play as *Ghosts,* certainly one of the best of the school, must always have seemed slightly awkward. It could not move forward with the swift decisiveness of the popular melodrama, which takes for granted everything except

¹ I am not, of course, forgetting that *Tartuffe* was the occasion of a scandal, but the scandal was not the result of any revolutionary definition of morality. It was due solely to the fact that the villain was a priest.
the particular action itself, or of, say, a tragedy by Shakespeare, who could at least take for granted that his purely intellectual premises were near enough those of the Elizabethan man in the street to require no defense. Another result is that for us, some half a century later, most of the arguments have become mere boresome excrescences, for the simple reason that the issues with which they deal are no longer living.

Thus both Ibsen and Shaw have suffered from the fact that they argued too well. Their paradoxes have turned into platitudes, and it does little good to remind ourselves that it was they who made them platitudinous. Parson Manders asks Mrs. Alving if she feels any better for having read certain shocking books on her table, and when Mrs. Alving replies that she feels not better but “safer,” she sounds uncomfortably like Mr. Marquis’s Hermione, because Hermione is exactly a person who goes on repeating “advanced ideas” which are no longer advanced.

At its flattest—for example, in the plays of Brieux—“the new drama” was no more than a pamphlet in dialogue form upon some very limited and concrete topic. At its best—say, in Hedda Gabler—it very nearly transcends its own limitations. The problem there is a problem of character and cannot become platitudinous for the reason that a platitude must necessarily be statable as a simple proposition. In general, the most lasting work of the best “new dramatists” is that which is least specific, and plays like A Doll’s House and Widowers’ Houses are almost completely dead, while The Wild Duck and Man and Superman are still interesting, precisely because the two first prove a point which can be equally well argued in abstract intellectual terms.

To say this is by no means to say that these dramatists should have written otherwise. The only culture or “ideology” which they could have taken for granted was one whose vitality was already exhausted, and their choice was probably limited to a choice between mere conventionality and the sort of pioneering work which they chose to do. The time was out of joint; but, as an artist, any one of them might have been forgiven for exclaiming, “Oh, cursed spite, that ever I was born to set it right.” It was the necessity for doing just that which made it necessary for even Ibsen, surely the greatest of the group, to spend much of his time either in the effort to establish his premises or in the composition of works bound to lose their interest as soon as they should have accomplished their purpose.

Though he never, as far as I know, made any public profession of the fact, it is evident that Shaw came to realize at last that his pioneering work had been dead. However backward society may have continued superficial the acceptance of
“advanced ideas” may have remained, audiences were, nevertheless, ready to accept plays written from the Shavian point of view. The next step was obviously to abandon the effort to propagandize these ideas and actually to write the plays which their acceptance made possible. To Shaw’s credit it must be said that from *Saint Joan* on that is exactly what he attempted to do. Perhaps most of the later plays were not very good. Perhaps they were conspicuously less successful in achieving their purpose than the early ones had been in achieving a different purpose. But the intention was admirable. The premises of a newer drama had been established and, logically, the next task of the dramatist was to create that drama.
Time has shifted our point of view on Bernard Shaw, yet he is still worth our contemplation. Let us cast a look back over his career.

George Bernard Shaw was born in Dublin, July 26, 1856, the son of shabby-genteel parents who had connections with the Irish nobility. The elder Shaw became an alcoholic, and the boy had to go to work as a clerk at the age of fifteen. Mrs. Shaw finally left her husband and went to London, where she made a living by teaching music. Her son came to live with her when he was twenty and wrote novels which he was unable to sell and picked up through journalism such money as he could. He remained with his mother till he was forty-two.

In the fall of 1882 he happened to attend a lecture on land nationalization delivered by Henry George in London. The result was a revelation: “It flashed on me,” he writes, “that ‘the conflict between religion and science’ . . . the overthrow of the Bible, the higher education of women, Mill on Liberty and all the rest of the storm that raged around Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley, Spencer and the rest, on which I had brought myself up intellectually, was a mere middle-class business . . . The importance of the economic basis dawned on me.” He read George’s Progress and Poverty—then someone told him to read Das Kapital. “Karl Marx,” he once said, “made a man of me.”

The result of the depression of the eighties was a revival of socialist agitation. Bernard Shaw became a socialist and spoke in halls, on street corners, in Hyde Park. The “insurrectionism” of the period reached a climax in the “Bloody Sunday” of November 1887, when the socialists, at the head of a working-class demonstration, invaded Trafalgar Square and were routed by the police. After this, business

revived and took up the slack of unemployment, and the agitation quieted down.

In the meantime, Shaw had attached himself to the socialist statistician, Sidney Webb, and with others they had founded the Fabian Society, which had "agreed to give up the delightful ease of revolutionary heroics and take to the hard work of practical reform on ordinary parliamentary lines." Webb was a civil servant with a post in the colonial office and later a member of the London County Council; Shaw became a vestryman, then a borough councilor. The Fabians continued to treat Marx with respect, but the polite and reasonable criticism to which they subjected him was designed to discredit some of his main assumptions. Marx had asserted that the value of commodities was derived from the labor which had gone to produce them; and the Fabians, by elaborating a counter-theory that made value depend on demand, shifted the emphasis from the working class to the "consumer." They also repudiated the class war, showed that it would never occur. Socialist nationalization was to be accomplished by a corps of experts who should "permeate" government and business, quietly invading Whitehall and setting up state departments which, unassisted by the action of the masses, should put socialist ideas into effect. Shaw boasted that the Fabians had made socialism respectable.

This variation of Marxism in England was natural to the place and time. A period of prosperity during the seventies had deflated the Chartist agitation (I am indebted to Mr. Mark Starr for a Marxist analysis of Fabian Marxism); and it was not until the eighties, when British commercial domination was being challenged by the United States and Germany, that the dangers of the capitalist system began to become generally plain. But now attention was principally directed toward the evils of competition. The development of large-scale industry was eliminating competition and making municipal ownership seem desirable, not only to the lower layers of the middle class, but even to private enterprise itself, which benefited from good housing and cheap tram-lines. The professional middle class were in a position to see the value of nationalization, and the working class had not yet discovered that for them there was not very much difference between being exploited by a private employer and being exploited by a government that was controlled by the propertied classes. The Fabians looked no further than their reforms.

In Bernard Shaw's case, this compromise Marxism played in with the elements of his character and influenced its subsequent development. Coming to London, as he has recently told us, with a conviction of his own superiority and a snobbish family tradition, but with
no money and no social experience, Shaw was himself one of the dispossessed, and the socialist criticism of the class system based on property strongly recommended itself to him. Yet at the same time that in all good faith he was working to destroy that system, there is apparent in his career a tendency in the inverse direction to this. At the same time that he was spurred by a moral need to work for a future society consistent with his sense of justice, he was spurred, also, by a social need to vindicate his rightful position in the society in which he lived. He has told us that his father's bad habits had caused his family to be dropped socially in Dublin and that when he first came to London he was so shy that he would not accept dinner invitations and would "sometimes walk up and down the Embankment for twenty minutes or more before venturing to knock at the door" of a house to which he had been asked. He goes on to say, "The house and its artistic atmosphere were most congenial to me; and I liked all the Lawsons; but I had not mastered the art of society at that time and could not bear making an inartistic exhibition of myself; so I soon ceased to plague them." There has always been thus in Shaw a certain amount of social snobbery mixed up with his intellectual snobbery.

The confusion produced in his thought by these two conflicting tendencies is curiously illustrated in a passage from his autobiographical preface to the collected edition of his works: "Finding one's place may be made very puzzling," he writes, "by the fact that there is no place in ordinary society for extraordinary individuals. For the worldly wiseman, with common ambitions, the matter is simple enough: money, title, precedence, a seat in parliament, a portfolio in the cabinet, will mean success both to him and to his circle. But what about people like St. Francis and St. Clare? Of what use to them are the means to live the life of the country house and the West End mansion? They have literally no business in them, and must necessarily cut an unhappy and ridiculous figure there. They have to make a society of Franciscans and Poor Clares for themselves before they can work or live socially. It is true that those who are called saints are not saintly all the time and in everything. In eating and drinking, lodging and sleeping, chatting and playing: in short, in everything but working out their destiny as saints, what is good enough for a plowman is good enough for a poet, a philosopher, a saint or a higher mathematician. But Hodge's work is not good enough for Newton, nor Falstaff's conversation holy enough for Shelley. Christ adapted himself so amicably to the fashionable life of his time in his leisure that he was reproached for being a gluttonous man and a winebibber, and for frequenting frivolous and worthless sets. But he did not work where he feasted, nor flatter the
Pharisees, nor ask the Romans to buy him with a sinecure. He knew when he was being entertained, well treated, lionized: not an unpleasant adventure for once in a way; and he did not quarrel with the people who were so nice to him. Besides, to sample society is part of a prophet’s business: he must sample the governing class above all, because his inborn knowledge of human nature will not explain the anomalies produced in it by Capitalism and Sacerdotalism. But he can never feel at home in it.”

But which is true: that the St. Francis or the St. Clare can’t “live socially” till they have “made a society of Franciscans and Poor Clares” or that “in eating and drinking, lodging and sleeping, chatting and playing,” “what is good enough for a plowman is good enough for a saint?” And as for Shaw’s description of Christ, it evokes an incongruous picture: what one sees is the preacher of the Sermon on the Mount very much pleased with himself on the beach at the Riviera or playing Santa Claus at Lady Astor’s Christmas party.

And other influences, from his early education, came to deflect the straight line of his socialism.

The escapades of the romantic hero, from Childe Harold through Don César de Bazan, with his “Tant pis! C’est moi!” to Siegfried, had been a protest against the meanness and dullness of the commercial bourgeois world; but this revolt was itself merely a further phase of the tradition of individual assertion which, deriving from the Protestant conscience, had produced the anarchic individualism of the competitive commercial system. The romantic, like the old-fashioned capitalist, proclaimed the power of the personal will in defiance of society and God.

William Archer tells us that the first time he ever saw Shaw, the latter was sitting in the British Museum studying alternately the French translation of Das Kapital and the score of Tristan und Isolde. When Shaw first came before the public, he fell instinctively into dramatizing himself as a semi-romantic character—and this in spite of the fact that he was managing to figure at the same time as the arch-enemy and blasphemer of romanticism. The impulse to satirize romanticism implies, as in the case of Flaubert, a strong predisposition toward it; and the exploded romantic, Captain Brassbound, is offset by the Devil’s Disciple. It is true that Shaw’s conscious intention was to ridicule and shame his audience out of exclusive preoccupation with the emotions of their personal lives—especially, with romantic love—and to interest them in the problems of society. Here is the fine and well-known passage from Man and Superman, in which he defends what he calls the “artist-philosophers” against the “mere artist”: “This is the true joy in life, the
being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy." Yet is this not, too, a kind of romanticism—romanticism par excellence? The ego has now, to be sure, identified itself with a force of Nature, but this simply makes the ego seem godlike. There is nothing to guarantee that it will respect either the feelings or the interests of others. The ideal artist-philosopher of Bernard Shaw has always a strong social conscience, and his heroes are likely to be philosopher-statesmen or social prophets or saviors of society; but there is nothing to guarantee that they shall be, in the socialist sense, genuine popular leaders, deriving their power from, as well as guiding, the dispossessed: they may be simply despot-heroes—as Shaw's Julius Caesar actually is—acting in the right of their own superiority and giving people what they know to be good for them.

And finally, of course, Bernard Shaw was not only a political prophet struggling for socialist ideas, but an artist trying to realize himself through art. There was a poet in Shaw, still partly suppressed, or at any rate terribly overtaxed, by the round of political meetings, the functions of vestryman and borough councilor, and the years of theater-going and weekly article-writing about the theater, which he had come to judge almost exclusively in terms of the sort of thing that he wanted to do himself. His own plays he had been writing in note-books while traveling on the tops of buses between one engagement and another. Now in 1898, when he was forty-two, he had what seems to have been a general collapse as the result of a bad fall and a serious injury to his foot. When he recovered, he married an Irish lady, well-to-do but belonging like Shaw to the general "advanced" movement, who gave him for apparently the first time in his life a comfortable place to live and took the most excellent care of him. Thereafter, he was able to give up the journalism on which he had depended for a living and to devote all his best energies to his plays. He remained a public man, but he spoke no more at dockers' strikes.

By 1905 he was writing Major Barbara, in which the type of Christian sainthood, an aristocratic Salvation Army worker, is confronted with a self-made munitions manufacturer, the type of successful capitalism; and ending the play with an alliance between them. In his preface, he made out a ringing case for the man who recognizes poverty as the worst of all the evils and consequently the worst of all the sins, and who saves himself from it at any cost. Major Barbara contains one of the best expositions of the capitalist
point of view ever written. Bernard Shaw, like his hero, Andrew
Undershaft, had come by that time to know what it was to make
one's way in capitalist society and to occupy a position of power.
He had himself become the type of the critic, who, by scolding the
bourgeoisie, makes good with it and becomes one of its idols. He
was gradually, for all the scandal of his début, turning into a de-
pendable member of the British propertied classes; and he was to
end as an esteemed public figure in a country where an aristocratic
governing class was still able to contribute to public life a certain
distinction and glamor.

II

The real Shaw has thus never been the single-minded crusader
that people at one time used to think him. Except for a limited
period during the eighties and early nineties—when he wrote his
only straight socialist plays, Widowers' Houses and Mrs. Warren's
Profession—he has never really been a practicing socialist. And I
am inclined to believe that the future will exactly reverse the op-
inion which his contemporaries have usually had of him. It used al-
tways to be said of Shaw that he was primarily not an artist, but a
promulgator of certain ideas. The truth is, I think, that he is a con-
siderable artist, but that his ideas—that is, his social philosophy
proper—have always been confused and uncertain. As he has grown
older and as the world has been shaken out of the pattern to which
he had adapted his attitudes, the inadequacy of those attitudes has
been exposed.

One is struck, as one goes through the volumes of the collected
edition of Shaw, which includes a good deal of his journalism, by
the fact that, though his writing on musical and theatrical and liter-
ary subjects remains remarkably fresh, the pieces on public affairs
and on social questions in general prove very much less satisfactory
than one had remembered their seeming when they first came out.
There are passages of admirable exposition and passages of won-
derful eloquence—some of which, such as the peroration to The
Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism, will prob-
ably always stand among the classics of socialist literature. But the
political writing of Shaw does not drive you into taking up a posi-
tion as the greatest socialist writing does: indeed, before he has
finished—and he is likely to go on talking too long—he has often
seemed to compromise the points which you had imagined he was
trying to make, and has produced, with much earnestness and em-
phasis, an impression rather blurred by rhetoric. Both his intelli-
gence and his sense of justice have prevented him from assailing the
capitalist system with such intolerant resentment and unscrupulous methods as Voltaire trained on the Church. With Voltaire, it is the crusader that counts; with Shaw, it is the dramatic poet.

The volume which covers the wartime exposes Bernard Shaw’s contradictions in a particularly striking manner. Though he was perfectly familiar with the Marxist theory of capitalist expansion and aggression, and had expounded it on many occasions, he had always been liable to fits of admiration for the exploits of the British Empire. Irishman though he was, he had never been an Irish patriot; and, critical though he was of the English, he had in *John Bull’s Other Island*—which was written for but declined by the Abbey Theater—backed them against the Irish on account of what he regarded as their superior enterprise and practicality. And though he denounced the Denshawai massacre in Egypt, he supported the British against the Boers at the time of the South African war, because the Boers represented for him a backward civilization and the British a progressive one. When the civilizing forces of the various nations had finally collided in 1914, it was Lenin, the revolutionary exile, not Shaw, the successful British citizen, who wrote *Imperialism: The Last Stage of Capitalism*.

What Bernard Shaw did write was *Common Sense about the War*, which, although it raised a terrible outcry in the fall of 1914 on the part of certain elements of the British public who thought that Shaw ought to be put in the Tower, seems today rather a double-facing document. Shaw, to be sure, makes a certain amount of effort still to keep before the minds of his readers the socialist interpretation of the War. “Will you,” he writes, “now at last believe, O stupid British, German and French patriots, what the Socialists have been telling you for so many years: that your Union Jacks and tricolors and Imperial Eagles (‘where the carcass is, there will be eagles be gathered’) are only toys to keep you amused, and that there are only two real flags in the world henceforth: the red flag of Democratic Socialism and the black flag of Capitalism, the flag of God and the flag of Mammon? What earthly or heavenly good is done when Tom Fool shoots Hans Narr? The plain fact is that if we leave our capital to be dealt with according to the selfishness of the private man he will send it where wages are low and workers enslaved and docile: that is, as many thousand miles as possible from the Trade Unions and Trade Union rates and parliamentary Labour parties of civilization; and Germany, at his sordid behest, will plunge the world into war for the sake of disgracing herself with a few rubber plantations, poetically described by her orators and journalists as ‘a place in the sun.’ When you do what the Socialists tell you by keeping your capital jealously under national control and reserving
your shrapnel for the wasters who not only shirk their share of the industrial service of their country, but intend that their children and children's children shall be idle wasters like themselves, you will find that not a farthing of our capital will go abroad as long as there is a British slum to be cleared and rebuilt or a hungry, ragged and ignorant British child to be fed, clothed and educated."

This sounds spirited enough by itself, yet the burden of Common Sense about the War is that the war must be supported and vigorously prosecuted. Shaw afterwards visited and wrote about the front at the invitation of Sir Douglas Haig and even did some work for the propaganda department of the government. In his discussion of compulsory military service in Common Sense about the War, he defends his position as follows: "In my own case, the question of conscientious objection did not arise: I was past military age. I did not counsel others to object, and should not have objected myself if I had been liable to serve: for intensely as I loathed the war, and free as I was from any illusion as to its character, and from the patriotic urge (patriotism in my native country taking the form of an implacable hostility to England), I knew that when war is once let loose, and it becomes a question of kill or be killed, there is no stopping to argue about it: one must just stand by one's neighbors and take a hand with the rest. If England had adopted me, as some of my critics alleged in their attempts to convict me of gross ingratitude, I could have pleaded that she must take the consequences without claiming any return; but as I had practically adopted England by thrusting myself and my opinions on her in the face of every possible rebuff, it was for me to take the consequences, which certainly included an obligation to help my reluctant ward in her extremity as far as my means allowed."

Frank Harris, in his book about Shaw, reproached him for supporting the war; and Shaw retorted in a postscript that Harris "could not stop to ask himself the first question . . . of the intellectually honest judicious critic, 'What else could I have done had it been my own case?'" Yet surely there were other courses open to a man of Shaw's opinions. He could have expressed his disapproval and shut up, as John Morley and others did. But it is impossible for Shaw to shut up, and he went on talking incessantly through the whole four years of slaughter. Much of what he had to say was intelligent, and it required some courage to say it. Compared with most of the British writers, he seemed at the time to an American remarkably cool and sagacious. The atmosphere was feverish with panic and stupefying with the fumes of propaganda, and Shaw did do something to clear the air for a discussion of the origin and aims of the war. But when we reread what he wrote today, he looks a little
foolish. The old socialist has gone down into the mêlée and sacrificed something of his moral dignity: we hear him remonstrating, scolding, exhorting, making fun of the politicians and at the same time lending a hand to the government, pleading for the conscientious objectors and at the same time “joy-riding at the front”—and doing everything with equal cocksureness.

Before the Peace Conference, he had great hopes of Wilson. Before the Washington Disarmament Conference, he was cynical. Later, he spoke a kind word for the League of Nations. And in the meantime the Russian Revolution had set him off on a different tack. He would alternately lecture Lenin and Trotsky on the futility of what they were trying to do and applaud them for succeeding in doing it: he was alternately a middle-class socialist using Fabianism against the Marxists and a Marxist using Lenin and Trotsky against the British governing class. (It is interesting to note that Lenin characterized him as “a good man fallen among Fabians,” and that Trotsky, of whom Shaw wrote enthusiastically as “the Prince of Pamphleteers,” expressed the wish, apropos of his own exclusion from England, that “the Fabian fluid that ran in [Bernard Shaw’s] veins” might have “been strengthened by even so much as five per cent of the blood of Jonathan Swift.” It is amusing to see Trotsky’s indignation in his Where Is Britain Going? over Shaw’s cavalier suggestion that Marx had been superseded by H. G. Wells’s Outline of History: Trotsky had gone to the trouble of procuring and looking into Wells.)

In his political utterances since the war, it is hardly too much to say that Bernard Shaw has behaved like a jackass. In the autumn of 1927, he was staying in Italy on the Lago Maggiore and throwing bouquets at Mussolini. It was his old admiration for the romantic hero, his old idealization—which was as likely to be set off by an imperialist as a Marxist theme—of the practical Caesarean statesman who makes people stand around. Mussolini had, according to Shaw, “achieved a dictatorship in a great modern state without a single advantage, social, official or academic, to assist him, after marching to Rome with a force of Black Shirts which a single disciplined regiment backed by a competent government could have routed at any moment... After the war the government of Italy” had been “so feeble that silly Syndicalists were seizing factories, and fanatical devotees of that curious attempt at a new Catholic church called the Third International were preaching a coup d’état and a Crusade in all directions, and imagining that this sort of thing was Socialism and Communism. Mussolini, without any of Napoleon’s prestige, has done for Italy what Napoleon did for France, except that for the Duc d’Enghien you must read Matteotti.” When Gaetano Salvemini
reminded Shaw that, so far from being "without a single advantage," Mussolini had had behind him "the money of the banks, the big industrialists and the landowners," and that his Black Shirts had been "equipped with rifles, bombs, machine-guns, and motor-lorries by the military authorities, and assured of impunity by the police and the magistracy, while their adversaries were disarmed and severely punished if they attempted resistance," Shaw's rebuttal was almost unbelievable: Why, he demanded, had Mussolini been able to command the support of the army officers and capitalists "instead of Signors Salvemini, Giolitti, Turati, Matteotti and their friends, in spite of the fact that he was farther to the Left in his political opinions than any of them? The answer, as it seems to me, is that he combined with extreme opinions the knowledge that the first duty of any Government, no matter what its opinions are, is to carry on, and make its citizens carry on, liberty or no liberty, democracy or no democracy, socialism or no socialism, capitalism or no capitalism. Until Salvemini and his friends convince Italy that they understand this necessity as well as Mussolini does they will never shake his hold on the situation. To rail at him as Shelley railed at Castlereagh and Eldon, Marx at Napoleon III and Thiers, Kautsky at Lenin, is to play the amusing but inglorious part of Thersites." Now a dramatist in his capacity of dramatist may make out a very interesting case for a Castlereagh or a Napoleon III; but why should Shaw in his capacity as a political writer take the part of such politicians against their philosophical opponents? He is himself of the company of Shelley and Marx—the company of the poets and prophets; and railing at the Castlereaghs and Napoleons—of which Shaw himself has done plenty on occasion—is by no means the least valuable of their functions. The analogy between these other cases and Kautsky complaining of Lenin is certainly a silly and dishonest one.

That spring he had finished a long treatise—*The Intelligent Woman's Guide*—in which he had made a more comprehensive effort than he had ever done in his socialist days in the eighties to analyze capitalist society and to argue the case for socialism. Perhaps the book should have been written in the eighties. Ramsay Macdonald and Sidney Webb had come to power with the Labour Government in 1924, and Macdonald had not yet definitely sold out; and the whole story is repeated in general in the familiar Fabian terms—to which Shaw, without Fabian sanction, had added equality of income as a prime item of his socialist program. Through many pages of swift exposition, perhaps Shaw's most precise and limpid writing, which, together with the magnificent close, give the book an enduring value, he makes his way to conclusions that perplex us in proportion as the reasoning becomes more fine-spun and that do not seem
finally to land us in any very realistic relation to the England of after the war. "A series of properly prepared nationalizations may not only be understood and voted for by people who would be quite shocked if they were called Socialists, but would fit in perfectly with the habits of the masses who take their bread as it comes and never think about anything of a public nature." And in the meantime the road to socialism remains for a good part of the way—through "nationalizations, expropriative taxation and all the constructive political machinery"—identical with the road to state capitalism. So that Lenin, says Shaw, had been quite in the wrong when he had denounced the methods of the Fabians as state capitalism.

But Lenin had been aware of the psychological pitfalls in the approach of the Fabians toward socialism—pitfalls which no amount of lucid explanation was able to get them over and which Shaw continued to stumble into himself. From the moment that you propose to benefit people from the point of view of imposing upon them what is best for them rather than of showing them the way to what they ought to have and awaiting the moment when they will know that they must have it, what is to prevent your slipping—the post-Lenin period in Russia has proved it as much as the Ramsay Macdonald Labour Government—into imposing upon the people something which will benefit you yourself?

I shall not here pursue the story of the subsequent career of the Fabians, as I want to show further on how it was reflected in Bernard Shaw's later plays. But I will note here that in 1931 he visited Soviet Russia in company with the Tory Lady Astor and with the liberal Marquess of Lothian, had an audience with Stalin, at which, as he said, they treated Stalin like "a friendly emperor," and, on his return, began loudly endorsing Russia and especially scolding the United States for not following the Soviet example. Later, in his Preface on Bosses in his volume of plays of 1936, he was back praising Mussolini again and even throwing a few kind words to Hitler, whom he described as "not a stupid German" (did Bernard Shaw prefer a crazy Austrian?) and whose persecution of the Jews he characterized considerably as "a craze, a complex, a bee in his bonnet, a hole in his armour, a hitch in his statesmanship, one of those lesions which sometimes prove fatal." Of the systematic persecution by the Nazis of Communists, Socialists and Pacifists, of everybody—including critics and artists—who belonged to Bernard Shaw's own camp, he had nothing whatever to say save to mention it and minimize it in passing as "plundering raids and coups d'état against inconvenient Liberals or Marxists." At the time of the Ethiopian War, he came out strongly for Mussolini on the same grounds on which he had formerly defended the behavior of the British in South Africa, and
insisted that the League of Nations, on behalf of which in 1928 he had written a Fabian pamphlet, should never have tried to interfere.

Thus in this period of disastrous dictatorships, when it was very important for a socialist to keep clear in the eyes of the public the difference between the backing and aims of Lenin and the backing and aims of Mussolini, Bernard Shaw has done a good deal to confuse them and, parliamentary socialist though he claims to be, to exalt the ideal of the dictator. When the socialist dictatorship of Lenin gave way to the despotism of Stalin, Shaw did not seem to know the difference, but applauded the suppression of the old Leninists, on the ground that most professional revolutionists ought to be shot the morning after the revolution, and, on the principle that the socially harmful had to be got out of the way, gave his blessing to the Russian concentration camps, with their millions of political prisoners.

All this he has handled, of course, with his marvelous cleverness and style. Analyzing everybody perpetually, he is a great master of the smoke-screen against criticism. It is done partly by sheer personal hypnotism and Irish gift of gab. Before you arrive at any book of Bernard Shaw's—from What I Really Wrote About the War to his correspondence with Ellen Terry—you have almost invariably been told what to think of it in a preface by which Shaw has protected himself against your possible perception of his weakness. If you submit to his spell, you will allow him to manipulate the lights in such a way that, by the time the curtain goes up, you find Shaw looking noble in the center of the stage with everything else left in semi-obscenity, and yourself with your discriminatory powers in a temporary state of suspension, under the illusion that you must either accept or reject him. (Of late the exhibitionistic vanity which seemed dashing in his early days when he was assailing the philistines with such spirit has come to be tiresome and even repellent—as, for example, when his comment on the death of one of his distinguished contemporaries takes the form of the irrelevant reflection, "I'll be dead very soon myself!")

But there has been also an odd kind of trickery involved in the whole of Bernard Shaw's career. It depends on a technique which he has mastered of functioning on three distinct planes and of shifting from one to another. His air of certainty, his moralist's tone, his well-drilled sentences, his regular emphasis, all go to create an impression of straightforwardness. But actually the mind of Shaw is always fluctuating between various emotions which give rise to various points of view.

The mechanics seem to be somewhat as follows: At the bottom of Shaw is a commonsense sphere of practical considerations; above
this is a plane of socialism, of the anticipated reorganization of society in the interest of ideal values; and above this, a poet-philosopher's ether from which he commands a longer view of life sub specie aeternitatis and where the poet allows himself many doubts which neither the socialist nor the bourgeois citizen can admit. Shaw has never really taken up his residence for any great length of time on any one of these three planes of thinking. The socialist, for example, denounces war; but when England actually goes to war, the respectable householder backs her. The moralist denounces marriage; but the conventional married man always advises young people to get married. The socialist takes sword in hand to battle for a sounder society based on a redistribution of income; and the long-view philosopher-poet comes to sap the socialist's faith with misgivings as to the capacity for intellect and virtue of the material of common humanity as contrasted with philosopher-poets. The poet gets a good way above the earth in the ecstasy of imaginative vision; but the socialist reminds him that it is the duty of art to teach a useful social lesson, and the householder damps the fires of both by admonishing them that the young people in the audience oughtn't to be told anything that will get them into trouble. The result is that reading Shaw is like looking through a pair of field glasses of which the focus is always equally sharp and clear but the range may be changed without warning.

So adroit are Shaw's transitions that we are usually unaware of what has happened; and when we have come to be conscious of them, we wonder how much Shaw is aware. It is curious to go back over his work and see him juggling with his various impersonations: the socialist, the fascist, the saint, the shrewd businessman, the world genius, the human being, the clever journalist who knows how to be politic, the popular speaker who knows how to be tactful. It is quite as if they were the characters in a comedy, each of whom he can pick up where he has dropped him and have him go on with his part.

But comedies are best presented in the theater; and in the theater Shaw's conflicts of impulse, his intellectual flexibility and his genius for legerdemain—all the qualities that have had the effect of weakening his work as a publicist—have contributed to his success as an artist.

One of the prime errors of recent radical criticism has been the assumption that great novels and plays must necessarily be written by people who have everything clear in their minds. People who
have everything clear in their minds, who are not capable of identi-
fying themselves imaginatively with, who do not actually embody
in themselves, contrary emotions and points of view, do not write
novels or plays at all—do not, at any rate, write good ones. And—
given genius—the more violent the contraries, the greater the works
of art.

Let us consider Shaw as an artist.

Bernard Shaw’s great role in the theater has been to exploit the
full possibilities of a type of English comedy which had first been
given its characteristic form during the seventies of the nineteenth
century in the comedies of W. S. Gilbert. The comedy of the Rest-
oration, which had culminated in Congreve, had been the product
of an aristocratic society, which depended for its ironic effects on
the contrast between artificial social conventions and natural ani-
mal instincts, between fine manners and fine intelligence, on the one
hand, and the crudest carnal appetites, on the other. The comedy of
the nineteenth century—setting aside Oscar Wilde—depended on the
contrast between the respectable conventions of a pious middle-class
society and the mean practical realities behind them, between the
pretension to high moral principles and the cold complacency which
underlay it. As with the dramatists of the Restoration, it was always
the pursuit of pleasure that emerged from behind the formalities, so,
in the comedies of Gilbert which preceded his Savoy operas and
of which the most famous and successful was Engaged (1877), it is
always the greed for money that extrudes from behind the screen of
noble words and discreet behavior. “Dear papa,” says the Victorian
young lady in one of the scenes of Engaged, when she has just heard
of the failure of a bank in which the fortune of her fiancé was in-
vested, “I am very sorry to disappoint you, but unless your tomtit
is very much mistaken, the Indestructible was registered under the
Joint Stock Companies Act of ’62 and in that case the stockholders
are jointly and severally liable to the whole extent of their available
capital. Poor little Minnie don’t pretend to have a business head; but
she is not quite such a little donkey as that, dear papa’” The char-
acters of Gilbert’s comedies, who talk the language of Victorian
fiction, are never for a moment betrayed by emotion into allowing
themselves to be diverted from the main chance; and the young men
are perfectly ready, not from appetite but from sheer indifference,
to make equally passionate professions to any number of young ladies
at the same time. It is not far from the Symperson family and
Cheviot Hill of Engaged to Shaw’s The Philanderer and Widowers’
Houses.

But neither Gilbert nor Dickens nor Samuel Butler—those two
other great satirists of the money-minded English, to whom, also,
Shaw is indebted—could teach him to analyze society in terms of economic motivation or to understand and criticize the profit system. This he learned to do from Karl Marx, whose work during his English residence, the period when *Das Kapital* was written, was itself of course a product of and an ironical protest against English nineteenth-century civilization. Bernard Shaw thus brought something quite new into English imaginative literature. His study of economics had served him, as he said, for his plays as the study of anatomy had served Michael Angelo. And with economic insight and training he joined literary qualities of a kind that had never yet appeared in combination with them—qualities, in fact, that, since the century before, had been absent from English literature entirely.

The Irish of Bernard Shaw’s period enjoyed, in the field of literature, certain special advantages over the English, due to the fact that, since Irish society was still mainly in the pre-industrial stage, they were closer to eighteenth-century standards. If we compare Shaw, Yeats and Joyce to, say, Galsworthy, Wells and Bennett, we are struck at once by the extent to which these latter writers have suffered from their submergence in the commercial world. In their worst phases of sentimentality and philistinism, there is almost nothing to choose between them and the frankly trashy popular novelist; whereas the Irish have preserved for English literature classical qualities of hardness and elegance.

Bernard Shaw has had the further advantage of a musical education. “Do not suppose for a moment,” he writes, “that I learnt my art from English men of letters. True, they showed me how to handle English words; but if I had known no more than that, my works would never have crossed the Channel. My masters were the masters of a universal language; they were, to go from summit to summit, Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Wagner... For their sakes, Germany stands consecrated as the Holy Land of the capitalistic age.” Einstein has said that Shaw’s plays remind him of Mozart’s music: every word has its place in the development. And if we allow for some nineteenth-century prolixity, we can see in Shaw’s dramatic work a logic and grace, a formal precision, like that of the eighteenth-century composers.

Take *The Apple Cart*, for example. The fact that Shaw is here working exclusively with economic and political materials has caused its art to be insufficiently appreciated. If it had been a sentimental comedy by Molnar, the critics would have applauded its deftness; yet Shaw is a finer artist than any of the Molnars or Schnitzlers. The first act of *The Apple Cart* is an exercise in the scoring for small orchestra at which Shaw is particularly skillful. After what he has himself called the overture before the curtain of the conversation
between the two secretaries, in which the music of King Magnus is foreshadowed, the urbane and intelligent King and the "bull-roarer Boanerges" play a duet against one another. Then the King plays a single instrument against the whole nine of the cabinet. The themes emerge: the King's disinterestedness and the labor government's sordid self-interest. The development is lively: the music is tossed from one instrument to another, with, to use the old cliché, a combination of inevitableness and surprise. Finally, the King's theme gets a full and splendid statement in the long speech in which he declares his principles: "I stand for the great abstractions: for conscience and virtue; for the eternal against the expedient; for the evolutionary appetite against the day's gluttony," etc. This silver voice of the King lifts the movement to a poignant climax; and now a dramatic reversal carries the climax further and rounds out and balances the harmony. Unexpectedly, one of the brasses of the ministry takes up the theme of the King and repeats it more passionately and loudly: "Just so... Listen to me, sir," bursts out the Powermistress, "and judge whether I have not reason to feel everything you have just said to the very marrow of my bones. Here am I, the Powermistress Royal. I have to organize and administer all the motor power in the country for the good of the country. I have to harness the winds and the tides, the oils and the coal seams." And she launches into an extraordinary tirade in which the idea of political disinterestedness is taken out of the realm of elegant abstraction in which it has hitherto remained with the King and reiterated in terms of engineering: "every little sewing machine in the Hebrides, every dentist's drill in Shetland, every carpet sweeper in Margate," etc. This ends on crashing chords, but immediately the music of the cabinet snarlingly reasserts itself. The act ends on the light note of the secretaries.

This music is a music of ideas—or rather, perhaps, it is a music of moralities. Bernard Shaw is a writer of the same kind as Plato. There are not many such writers in literature—the Drames philosophiques of Renan would supply another example—and they are likely to puzzle the critics. Shaw, like Plato, repudiates as a dangerous form of drunkenness the indulgence in literature for its own sake; but, like Plato, he then proceeds, not simply to expound a useful morality, but himself to indulge in an art in which moralities are used as the motifs. It is partly on this account, certainly, that Bernard Shaw has been underrated as an artist. Whether people admire or dislike him, whether they find his plays didactically boring or morally stimulating, they fail to take account of the fact that it is the enchantment of a highly accomplished art which has brought them to and kept them in the playhouse. It is an art that has even had the power
to preserve such pieces as Getting Married, of which the 1908 heresies already seemed out of date twenty or thirty years later but of which the symphonic development still remains brilliant and fresh. So far from being relentlessly didactic, Shaw's mind has reflected in all its complexity the intellectual life of his time; and his great achievement is to have reflected it with remarkable fidelity. He has not imposed a cogent system, but he has worked out a vivid picture. It is, to be sure, not a passive picture, like that of Santayana or Proust: it is a picture in which action plays a prominent part. But it does not play a consistent part: the dynamic principle in Shaw is made to animate a variety of forces.

Let us see what these forces are and to what purpose they interact.

IV

What are the real themes of Bernard Shaw's plays?

He has not been a socialist dramatist in the sense that, say, Upton Sinclair has been a socialist novelist. His economics have served him, it is true, as anatomy served Michael Angelo; but to say that is to give as little idea of what kind of characters he creates and what his plays are about as it would of the figures of the sculptor to say that they were produced by an artist who understood the skeleton and the muscles. It is quite wrong to assume, as has sometimes been done, that the possession of the social-economic intelligence must imply that the writer who has it writes tracts for social reform.

Shaw is himself partly responsible for this assumption. In his early days, when he was a social reformer, he wrote books about Wagner and Ibsen which introduced them to the English-speaking public as primarily social reformers, too. There is of course a social revolutionist, a man of 1848, in Wagner, and a critic of bourgeois institutions in Ibsen. But Bernard Shaw, in his brilliant little books, by emphasizing these aspects of their work at the expense of everything else, seriously misrepresents them. He appreciates Siegfried and Brunhilde in their heroic and rebellious phases; but Wagner's tragedies of love he pooh-poohs; and it is sometimes just when Ibsen is at his strongest—as in Brand or Rosmersholm—that Bernard Shaw is least satisfactory on him, because the tragic spirit of Ibsen does not fit into Shaw's preconception. In Ibsen's case, Shaw is particularly misleading, because Ibsen disclaimed again and again any social-reforming intentions. His great theme, characteristic though it is of nineteenth-century society, is not a doctrine of social salvation: it is the conflict between one's duty to society as a unit in the social organism and the individual's duty to himself. Ibsen treats this
theme over and over but in a number of different ways, sometimes emphasizing the validity of social claims as opposed to the will of the individual (Little Eyolf), sometimes showing them as unjustified and oppressive (Ghosts); sometimes showing the individual undone by self-indulgence or perverse self-assertion (Peer Gynt and Brand), sometimes showing him as noble and sympathetic (the hero and heroine of Rosmersholm); sometimes dramatizing the two poles of conduct in the career of a single individual, like Dr. Stockman in An Enemy of the People, who begins by trying to save society but who later, when society turns against him, is driven back into an individualistic vindication of the social conscience itself with the realization that “the strongest man is he who stands most alone.” But the conflict is always serious; and it usually ends in disaster. Rarely—a Doll’s House is the principal example—does it result in a liberation. Ibsen is hardly ever a social philosopher: he goes no further than the conflict itself.

Now is there any such basic theme in Bernard Shaw? Has he been creating a false impression not only about Ibsen but also about himself? Certainly the prefaces he prefixes to his plays do not really explain them any more than The Quintessence of Ibsenism really explains Ibsen.

The principal pattern which recurs in Bernard Shaw—aside from the duel between male and female, which seems to me of much less importance—is the polar opposition between the type of the saint and the type of the successful practical man. This conflict, when it is present in his other writing, has a blurring, a demoralizing effect, as in the passage on Saint Francis et al. which I quoted at the beginning of this essay; but it is the principle of life of his plays. We find it in its clearest presentation in the opposition between Father Keegan and Tom Broadbent in John Bull’s Other Island and between Major Barbara and Undershaw—where the moral scales are pretty evenly weighted and where the actual predominance of the practical man, far from carrying ominous implications, produces a certain effect of reassurance: this was apparently the period—when Bernard Shaw had outgrown his early battles and struggles and before the war had come to disturb him—of his most comfortable and self-confident exercise of powers which had fully matured. But these opposites have also a tendency to dissociate themselves from one another and to feature themselves sometimes, not correlativelly, but alternatively in successive plays. In The Devil’s Disciple and The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet, the heroes are dashing fellows who have melodramatic flashes of saintliness; their opponents are made comic or base. Caesar and Cleopatra is a play that glorifies the practical man; Androcles and the Lion is a play that glorifies the
saint. So is Saint Joan, with the difference that here the worldly antagonists of the saint are presented as intelligent and effective.

Certainly it is this theme of the saint and the world which has inspired those scenes of Shaw's plays which are most moving and most real on the stage—which are able to shock us for the moment, as even the "Life Force" passages hardly do, out of the amiable and objective attention which has been induced by the bright play of the intelligence. It is the moment when Major Barbara, brought at last to the realization of the power of the capitalist's money and of her own weakness when she hasn't it to back her, is left alone on the stage with the unregenerate bums whose souls she has been trying to save; the moment when Androcles is sent into the arena with the lion; the moment in the emptied courtroom when Joan has been taken out to be burned and the Bishop and the Earl of Warwick are trying each to pin the responsibility on the other. It is the scene in Heartbreak House between Captain Shotover and Hector, when they give voice to their common antagonism toward the forces that seem to have them at their mercy: "We must win powers of life and death over them. . . There is enmity between our seed and their seed. They know it and act on it, strangling our souls. They believe in themselves. When we believe in ourselves, we shall kill them. . . We kill the better half of ourselves every day to propitiate them." It is the scene in Back to Methuselah when the Elderly Gentleman declares to the Oracle: "They have gone back to lie about your answer [the political delegation with whom he has come]. I cannot go with them. I cannot live among people to whom nothing is real!"—and when she shows him her face and strikes him dead.

But now let us note—for the light they throw on Bernard Shaw in his various phases—the upshots of these several situations. In Major Barbara, the Christian saint, the man of learning, and the industrial superman form an alliance from which much is to be hoped. In Androcles and the Lion, written in 1913, in Shaw's amusing but least earnest middle period, just before the war, Androcles and the lion form an alliance, too, of which something is also to be hoped, but go out arm in arm after a harlequinade on the level of a Christmas pantomime. In Heartbreak House, which was begun in 1913 and not finished till 1916, the declaration of war by the unworldlings takes place in the midst of confusion and does not lead to any action on their part.

In Back to Methuselah, of the postwar period, the Elderly Gentleman is blasted by the Oracle in a strange scene the implications of which we must stop to examine a moment. The fate of the Elderly Gentleman is evidently intended by Shaw to have some sort of application to himself: though a member of a backward community in
which people have not yet achieved the Methuselah-span of life, he differs from his fellows at least in this: that he finds he cannot bear any longer to live among people to whom nothing is real. So the Oracle shrivels him up with her glance.

But what is this supposed to mean? What is this higher wisdom which the Elderly Gentleman cannot contemplate and live? So far as the reader is concerned, the revelation of the Oracle is a blank. The old system of Bernard Shaw, which was plausible enough to pass before the war, has just taken a terrible blow, and its grotesque and gruesome efforts to pull itself together and function give the effect of an umbrella, wrecked in a storm, which, when the owner tries to open it up, shows several long ribs of steel sticking out. The Life Force of the man and woman in Man and Superman no longer leads either to human procreation or to social-revolutionary activity. The Life Force has been finally detached from socialism altogether. In the Intelligent Woman’s Guide, Shaw will reject the Marxist dialectic as a false religion of social salvation; but the Life Force is also a religious idea, which we have always supposed in the past to be directed toward social betterment, and now, in Back to Methuselah, we find that it has misfired with socialism. Socialism has come and gone; the planet has been laid waste by wars; the ordinary people have all perished, and there is nobody left on earth but a race of selected supermen. And now the race of superior human beings, which was invoked in Man and Superman as the prime indispensable condition for any kind of progress whatever but which was regarded by Shaw at that time as producible through eugenic breeding, has taken here a most unearthly turn. It has always been through the superman idea that Shaw has found it possible to escape from the implications of his socialism; and he now no longer even imagines that the superior being can be created by human idealism through human science. The superior beings of Back to Methuselah are people who live forever; but they have achieved this superiority through an unconscious act of the will. When they have achieved it, what the Life Force turns out to have had in store for them is the mastery of abstruse branches of knowledge and the extra-uterine development of embryos. Beyond this, there is still to be attained the liberation of the spirit from the flesh, existence as a “whirlpool in pure force.” “And for what may be beyond, the eyesight of Lilith is too short. It is enough that there is a beyond.”

Humanity, in Back to Methuselah, has dropped out for the moment altogether. The long-livers of the period of progress contemporary with the Elderly Gentleman are not the more “complete” human beings, with lives richer and better rounded, which Marx and Engels and Lenin imagined for the “classless society”; they are
Shavian super-prigs who say the cutting and dampening things which the people have always said in Shaw's plays but who have been abstracted here from the well-observed social setting in which Shaw has always hitherto presented them. And the beings of the later epoch are young people playing in an Arcadia and ancients immersed in cogitations, alike—both cogitations and Arcadia—of the bleakest and most desolating description. There is in *Back to Methuselah* nothing burning or touching, and there is nothing genuinely thrilling except the cry of the Elderly Gentleman; and that, for all the pretense of revelation, is answered by a simple extinction. In the *Tragedy of an Elderly Gentleman*, the Elderly Gentleman is frightened, but his tragedy is not a real tragedy. *Saint Joan* (1924) is an even more frightened play, and, softened though it is by the historical perspective into which Shaw manages to throw it through his epilogue, it was the first genuine tragedy that Shaw had written. The horror of *Back to Methuselah* is a lunar horror; the horror of *Saint Joan* is human. The saint is suppressed by the practical man; and even when she comes back to earth, though all those who exploited or destroyed her are now obliged to acknowledge her holiness, none wants her to remain among them: each would do the same thing again. Only the soldier who had handed her the cross at the stake is willing to accept her now, but he is only a poor helpless clown condemned to the dungeon of the flesh.

*Back to Methuselah* is a flight into the future; *Saint Joan* is a flight into the past. But with *Heartbreak House* Bernard Shaw had already begun a series of plays in which he was to deal with the post-war world and his own relation to it in terms of contemporary England—a section of his work which, it seems to me, has had too little appreciation or comprehension.

*Heartbreak House* has the same sort of setting and more or less the same form as such Shawian conversations as *Getting Married* and *Misalliance*; but it is really something new for Shaw. There is no diagram of social relations, no tying-up of threads at the end. *Heartbreak House*, Shaw says in his preface, is "cultured i.e., leisureed Europe before the War"; but the play, he told Archibald Henderson, "began with an atmosphere and does not contain a word that was foreseen before it was written," and it is the only one of his plays which he has persistently refused to explain. "How should I know?" he replied, when he was asked by his actors what it meant. "I am only the author." *Heartbreak House*, built like a ship, with its old drunken and half-crazy master, the retired adventurer Captain Shot-
over, is cultured and leisured England; but the characters are no
longer pinned down and examined as social specimens: in an atmos-
phere heavily charged, through a progression of contacts and col-
lisions, they give out thunder and lightning like storm-clouds.
Brooding frustrations and disillusion, child-like hurts and furious
resentments, which have dropped the old Shavian masks, rush sud-
denly into an utterance which for the moment has burst out of the
old rationalistic wit. For once, where Bernard Shaw has so often
reduced historical myths to the sharp focus of contemporary satire,
he now raises contemporary figures to the heroic proportions of
myth.—An air-raid brings down the final curtain: Heartbreak House
has at last been split wide. The capitalist Mangan gets killed, and
there is a suggestion that they may all be the better for it.

But in 1924 the Labour Party came to power, with Ramsay Mac-
donald as Prime Minister. Macdonald had been a member of the
Executive Committee of the Fabian Society, and he brought with
him two other Fabians, Sidney Webb and Sidney Olivier, who took
the portfolios of Minister of Labour and Secretary of State for India.
When Macdonald was re-elected in 1929, he was accompanied by
no less than twenty Fabians, of whom eight were cabinet members.
The Fabians had now achieved the aim which was to have been the
condition for the success of their ideas: they had “interpenetrated”
the government. But in the meantime the competition of the British
Empire with the German had culminated in a four years’ war; and
in England of after the war, with the top manhood of her society
slaughtered and the lower classes laid off from their wartime jobs,
and with English commercial domination further damaged by the
United States, the influence of the Fabians could do little to bridge
over the abyss which had been blasted between the extremes of the
British class society. The best measures of the Labour Government
were able to accomplish no more than just to keep the unemployed
alive; and when the capitalists began to feel the pinch, they openly
took over control. Ramsay Macdonald, in 1931, became Prime Min-
ister in a Nationalist government and cleared his socialists out of
office.

At the moment of the second accession of the Labour Party to
power, Shaw had written The Apple Cart, in which Macdonald is
caricatured as Proteus, the Prime Minister of a labor government.
This government is represented as really controlled by Breakages,
Limited, a great monopoly which opposes industrial progress for
the reason that it has an interest in perpetuating the inferior and less
durable machinery that requires more frequent repairs. But one
finds in The Apple Cart no comment on the Fabianism, which, after
all, has been partly responsible for Proteus: the blame is laid at the
do not of that socialism by interpenetration which has ended by itself being interpenetrated, but of something which Shaw calls "democracy"; and what is opposed to the corrupt socialism of Proteus is not socialism of a more thoroughgoing kind, but the super-constitutional-monarch, King Magnus. Again, Shaw has given the slip to his problems through recourse to the cult of the superior person.

Yet in 1931, after the final collapse of the Labour Government, Bernard Shaw visited Russia and, by applauding the Soviet system, incurred unpopularity in England for the first time since the war. In the same year, he wrote *Too True to Be Good*, a curious "political extravaganza," in which he turns back upon and criticizes his own career. Here the theme of the bourgeois radical of the eighties, disillusioned with himself under stress of the disasters of the twentieth century, is treated in the same vein, with the same kind of idealist poetry, now grown frankly elegiac and despairing, which Shaw had opened in *Heartbreak House* and which had made the real beauty of *The Apple Cart*.

A rich young English girl of the upper middle class is languishing with an imaginary illness in a gloomy Victorian chamber, fussèd over by a Victorian mother. Into this sickroom erupt two rebels: a young preacher and a former chambermaid, who is an illegitimate child of the aristocracy. The chambermaid has been masquerading as the heiress's trained nurse, and she and the preacher have a plot to steal the heiress's pearl necklace. The girl comes to from her nigrims and puts up an unexpected struggle. The preacher becomes interested in his victim and says that he has always wondered why she does not steal the necklace herself. Why doesn't she take it and go and do what she pleases, instead of staying home with her mother, moping and fancying herself sick? Why doesn't she let him and his accomplice sell the necklace for her, taking 25 per cent of the price apiece and giving her the other 50? The girl enthusiastically agrees, and while she is getting dressed to go with them, the preacher jumps up on the bed and delivers one of those live-your-own-life sermons with which Shaw, in the nineties, made his first success. Then he is off—in the excitement of his rhetoric, at first forgetting the necklace, which the heiress has to remind him they need.

All three sail away together to an imaginary Balkan country reminiscent of *Arms and the Man*, where they are able to do whatever they like but where their revolt turns out to lead to nothing and eventually to bore them to death. Shaw has evidently put into *Too True to Be Good* a sort of recapitulation of his earlier themes, the shams of bourgeois society: the capitalistic doctor of *The Doctor's Dilemma* is as much a fraud as ever; the pompous British military
officer, though retaining an air of authority, has practically ceased even to pretend to be anything other than a fraud and is quite willing to leave the command to a private (drawn from Lawrence of Arabia), if he can only be left in peace with his water-colors; the old-fashioned materialist-atheist who is also the most rigorous of moralists, of the type of Roebeck Ramsden in _Man and Superman_, has lived through into a world where his morality has no power to prevent his son's turning thief, etc. Finally everyone except the preacher sets out for the "Union of Sensible Republics."

The preacher is left alone on the shore, abandoned between two worlds. He had come too late for the old and too early for the new. He had had the courage once to steal a necklace but he hadn't carried through his idea. He had given it back to the owner and they had made common cause together: the liberated bourgeois girl had gotten 50 per cent of the price, the radicals only 25 apiece. In this last scene, the darkness comes, the clouds gather; the morale of the preacher breaks down. He can only go on explaining and exhorting, whether or not he has anything to say. A keen wind is blowing in, and it may be the breath of life, but it is too fierce for him to bear.

This, Shaw tells us, is a political fable; and now he is to return to politics proper. In _On the Rocks_ (1933), he appears to drive himself into a corner as he has never before done and then comes out with a political position which still manages to be somewhat equivocal.

The first act shows a liberal Prime Minister, hard beset during a period of depression. Pall Mall and Trafalgar Square are full of excited crowds. The Prime Minister, on the verge of a breakdown, can think of nothing to do except to call out the police against them, but he is dissuaded by the Police Commissioner himself and finally induced to go away for a rest. He has just been visited by a labor delegation who have impressed him with the importance of Marxism, and he takes volumes of Marx and Lenin away with him.

When the curtain goes up on the second act, the Prime Minister has read Marx and Lenin; but the effect upon him is unexpected. He has gained an insight into economic motivation, an understanding of the technique of making use of it; but he has not been converted to socialism: he has worked out, on the contrary, an exceedingly clever scheme for preserving the capitalist state through a program, essentially fascist, of partial nationalization and taxation of unearned incomes. He will conciliate the various social groups which would normally be antagonistic by promising a concession to each. The plan seems bidding fair to succeed when it runs aground on Sir Dexter Rightside, the Liberal Prime Minister's Tory colleague in a coalition National Government. Sir Dexter represents the blind
conservatism which sticks to the *status quo* through sheer obstinacy and inability to imagine anything else: he threatens to put colored shirts on "fifty thousand patriotic young Londoners" and to call them into the streets against the proposed program of the government. The Prime Minister has to give up his attempt, but he is now forced to face his situation: "Do you think I didn't know," he confesses to his wife, "in the days of my great speeches and my roaring popularity, that I was only whitewashing the slums? I couldn't help knowing as well as any of those damned Socialists that though the West End of London was chockful of money and nice people all calling one another by their Christian names, the lives of the millions of people whose labor was keeping the whole show going were not worth living; but I was able to put it out of my mind because I thought it couldn't be helped and I was doing the best that could be done. I know better now! I know that it can be helped, and how it can be helped. And rather than go back to the old whitewashing job, I'd seize you tight around the waist and make a hole in the river with you... Why don't I lead the revolt against it all? Because I'm not the man for the job, darling... And I shall hate the man who will carry it through for his cruelty and the desolation he will bring on us and our like."

The shouting of the crowd and the crash of glass is suddenly heard outside. The people have broken into Downing Street. The police begin to club them and ride them down. The people sing, "England, arise!"

Sir Arthur Chavender's more or less liberal fascism has been defeated by the reactionary fascism of his Tory colleague in the National Government, with whom he is indissolubly united. (There is no question any longer of the superior man: King Magnus has disappeared from the scene.) There is a third point of view, opposed to both, but this, also, sounds rather fascist. Old Hipney, the disillusioned labor veteran, who speaks for the dissatisfied classes, seems to be looking for a Man on Horseback, too: "Adult suffrage: that was what was to save us all. My God! It delivered us into the hands of our spoilers and oppressors, bound hand and foot by our own folly and ignorance. It took the heart out of old Hipney; and now I'm for any Napoleon or Mussolini or Lenin or Chavender that has the stuff in him to take both the people and the spoilers and oppressors by the scruffs of their silly necks and just sling them into the way they should go with as many kicks as may be needful to make a thorough job of it." But Chavender declines the job; and the people begin throwing bricks.

The conclusion we are apparently to draw is that parliamentary fascism must fail; and that we may then get either a Lenin or a Mus-
solini. Is this also a final confession of the failure of Fabianism, which depended on parliament, too?

In any case, at the end of this play, we have come in a sense to the end of Shaw. With the eruption of the uprising, we should be plunged into a situation which could no longer be appropriately handled by the characteristic methods of his comedy. He is still splendid when he is showing the bewilderment of the liberal governing-class prime minister: it is surprising how he is still able to summon his old flickering and piercing wit, his old skill at juggling points of view, to illuminate a new social situation—how quick and skillful he is at describing a new social type: the communist viscount, with his brutal language, which shocks his proletarian allies. But with the shouts and the broken glass, we are made to take account of the fact that Shaw’s comedy, for all its greater freedom in dealing with social conditions, is almost as much dependent on a cultivated and stable society as the comedy of Molière, who had his place in the royal dining-room and depended on Louis’s favor for the permission to produce his plays. Shaw, as much as Molière, must speak the same language as his audience; he must observe the same conventions of manners. And further than On the Rocks—in depicting the realities of the present—we feel that he cannot go.

Then we realize that, after a detour of the better part of half a century, of almost the whole of his artistic career, Shaw has only returned to that Bloody Sunday of 1887 when the Socialists had headed a demonstration and been driven away by the police; and we remember, apropos of Molière, that the most celebrated of British dramatists for a long time found it impossible to get a theater in London for On the Rocks.

Shaw’s most recent pieces are weaker. The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles (1934) is the only play of the author’s which has ever struck me as silly. In it, the Day of Judgment comes to the British Empire, and the privilege of surviving on earth is made to depend upon social utility. But, by setting up a purely theocratic tribunal, Shaw deprives this scene of social point: the principle of selection is so general that it might be applied by the fascists as readily as by the socialists, at the same time that the policy of wholesale extinction seems inspired by an admiration for the repressive tactics of both. The play ends with a salute to the unknown future, which, like the vision of infinity of Back to Methuselah, seems perfectly directionless. The Millionaireess (1936) makes a farce out of the notion that a natural boss, deprived of adventitious authority, will inevitably gravitate again to a position where he can bully and control people, and sounds as if it had been suggested by the later phases of Stalin.
Here it cannot be denied that Bernard Shaw begins to show signs of old age. As the pace of his mind slackens and the texture of his work grows looser, the contradictory impulses and principles which have hitherto provided him with drama begin to show gaping rifts. In his Preface on Bosses to The Millionaireess, he talks about “beginning a Reformation well to the left of Russia,” but composes the panegyricon Mussolini, with the respectful compliments to Hitler, to which I have already referred.

Yet the openings—the prologue to The Simpleton, with its skit on the decay of the British Empire and the knockabout domestic agonies of the first act or two of The Millionaireess—still explode their comic situations with something of the old energy and wit; and the one-acter, The Six of Calais, though it does not crackle quite with the old spark, is not so very far inferior to such an earlier trifle as How He Lied to Her Husband. It is interesting to note—what bears out the idea that Shaw is at his best as an artist—that the last thing he is to lose, apparently, is his gift for pure comic invention, which has survived, not much dimmed, though we may tire of it, since the days of You Never Can Tell.

And he has also maintained his integrity as a reporter of the processes at work in his time—in regard to which his point of view has never been doctrinaire but always based on observation and feeling. He has not acted a straight role as a socialist; a lot of his writing on public affairs has been nonsense. But his plays down to the very end have been a truthful and continually developing chronicle of a soul in relation to society. Professionally as well as physically—he has just turned eighty-one as I write—he is outliving all the rest of his generation.

Nor can it be said that the confusions of his politics have invalidated his social criticism. Of his educative and stimulative influence it is not necessary today to speak. The very methods we use to check him have partly been learned in his school.
If biographies of writers are justifiable—and there is much to be said for the view that their own works contain all that is relevant—it is because, in their case, the ways in which they accept and revolt against their immediate situation are peculiarly easy to watch, and the acceptance of and revolt against the immediate is the central human problem of free will.

The sin of the popular writer is an accidie that accepts the social values of his day as absolute; the sin of most good modern writers is a pride that perceives their imperfections in these values and revolts against them, but in so doing, adopts as final values which are opposite but also partial, the mirror image of what it attacks. A writer is great—there are no perfect writers—in the degree to which he transcends both simple acceptance and simple revolt, so that later generations are conscious in reading him less of his relevance to his age and more of his relevance to themselves. In the speech of the Inquisitor in Saint Joan, for example, Shaw is a great writer; in As Far as Thought Can Reach he is only an interesting example of liberal thought at the beginning of the twentieth century. In both cases he is concerned with religion and politics, which he has declared to be the two proper concerns for an adult (his deliberate omission of love makes his adult religion and politics a little strange), and his success in the one and his failure in the other may serve as a starting point from which to consider his life and work.

If we do not know it already, Mr. Hesketh Pearson’s account* of his childhood would make it very clear that what was presented to Shaw as the Christian faith was not Christian but unitarian, the eternal religion of this world. The greater the social prestige and

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* G. B. S., A Full Length Portrait, Hesketh Pearson.
political and economic power of the Church, the greater must always be her temptation to "confound the Persons and divide the Substance," i.e., to make God the purely transcendent First Cause of the Greek philosophers, the absentee landlord of the universe, and herself His bailiff. The Word made Flesh must then be either safely imprisoned, like the Emperor of Japan, within the ecclesiastical organization—the danger for Catholicism—or safely "humanized" and turned into a good boy scout—the danger for Protestantism. In either case the Christian faith has been abandoned for a political religion, more agreeable to the bourgeois Haves in society. Unfortunately, in attacking this heresy, the bohemian Have-nots are tempted to make God purely immanent, in a Great Man, a race, or a class, to deny the Father in the name of the Son.

But this too is a political religion and, moreover, only tenable so long as one is the opposition and therefore without positive political responsibility for human suffering, so long as one is not in a position to make good one's promise of creating a heaven on and out of earth.

As the leader of the English opposition from a time when Darwin was still shocking until Hitler's Blitzkrieg over London, Shaw as a man and as a writer, his highly personal formulation of the Have-not religion, his quirks and biases, his insights and blind spots, deserve the closest consideration.

The Fairy Godmother never bestows her favors singly but always in contrasted pairs: if she gives a power, she also gives a weakness; if she provides a source of happiness, she never fails to add a source of suffering. This has led some psychologists to diagnose the weakness as the cause, and the power as its neurotic effect. This, of course, is rubbish. Suffering is not the cause of genius but its guardian angel, the means by which its possessor is compelled to make the use of his talent a serious matter, the limits which make his freedom a reality.

The fact that Shaw's father was a poor, conscience-stricken drunk and that his genteel mother showed him little affection did not make him imaginative, but they certainly helped to turn his imagination into a moral passion. On the other hand the same situation might have driven a child with a different hereditary make-up in quite other directions. The young Shaw was lucky enough to have the inclination to make the family skeleton dance and not in despair to seek all his life for someone to care for him. Yet the very intense vitality, intellectual curiosity and freedom from the common temptations of sex, money and a Good Time, which have been his greatest strength, have at the same time been his greatest danger.

They almost prevented him from seeing that if he was right in
regarding, like Plato, carnal passion as a limitation upon intellectual contemplation which could and should be removed, then, if one were, not Shaw, but only un homme moyen sensuel, one’s only road to salvation must lie in practicing that morbid “Crosstianity” which he attacked in the preface to Androcles and the Lion. They almost turned him into one of those stoics who, as Pascal says, “conclude that what has been done once can be done always, and that since the desire of glory imparts some power to those whom it possesses, others can do likewise . . . that all those who are not at the high degree of wisdom are equally foolish and vicious, as those who are two inches under water.”

And they almost turned him into an apologist for fascism. His criticism of a Darwinism and a behaviorism which allow no free-will to anyone but History and make evil the necessary present ground for future good—God moves in a malicious way—is brilliant and acute, but his own Lamarckism, which in theory sets no limits to human free-will and makes evil an accidental product of ignorance—my boy, you can be good if you only try sensibly—is in fact quite as pessimistic. For the worship of Universal Necessity, it substitutes the worship of Individual Virtue, the Hero, Hercules-Prometheus who defies the evolutionary Zeus on the grounds that he knows the Creator’s mind better than he does himself.

But where did the hero obtain his virtue if not from a Zeus of Necessity who supervised the exceptional mutation of germ-plasm which made him what he is, or from a Zeus of Chance who allotted him a social and economic position in which he was less limited than the churlish mass of mankind? (It is noteworthy that Shaw’s English predecessor, Samuel Butler, declared a private income to be a sine qua non for the Good Life.) Moreover, if great men are the only hope of the Evolutionary Process, they are morally bound to rule the masses for their own good—we are all here on earth to help others: what on earth the others are here for, I don’t know—and the masses have no right whatsoever to resist them. The logical consequence of both the Darwinian and the Lamarckian premise is dictatorship as Hobbes and Plato respectively perceived.

Yes, his gifts almost deceived Shaw; but not quite. For he really is a great man, too intelligent not to know what conclusions would follow, but also too good-hearted and too humble to accept them. Hence, perhaps, the famous Shavian humor, for at the bottom of everything comic lies a contradiction.

He cannot, thank God, be serious for very long: the more logical his argument, the more certain he is to accompany it with a wink. Indeed his only insufferable characters are his good people (using “good” in the Shavian sense); like Candida who is a dreadful
woman or Joan who talks like a lady novelist, and his most lovable characters are rogues like Candida's father.

For the same reason, perhaps, while no playwright has ever equalled Shaw in his insight into the effect of occupation upon character—he is the only writer who has read Karl Marx with real profit and most of his plays might be called studies in occupational diseases—yet the occupational type which he cannot draw is his own, the artist: Marchbanks and Dubedat are the mostiost of theatrical props. His most first-hand, realistically unheroic observation is of the political hero, the stoic in a high position. (More Shavian than Shaw, Mr. Hesketh Pearson calls this "the religious temperament!"

Reading this biography, one is shown over and over again how Shaw's instinct has consistently prevented him from becoming what for one of his extraordinary gifts was always tempting and easy, a great man of this world, a politician, and insisted upon his remaining an artist, the one worldly calling which by its nature can force its help on no one, for whatever pleasure and profit one derives from a work of art depends upon what one brings to it.

Is he in danger of becoming successful in business, something makes him walk out; is he in danger of becoming an M.P., something makes him deliver speeches which are bound to infuriate all the voters; is he in danger of leading a crusade, something makes him politely decline the honor by being too funny.

For this, both he and we may be very grateful. His plays are a joy to watch, not because they purport to be concerned with serious problems, but because they are such wonderful displays of conspicuous waste, because the energy shown by any of his characters is so wildly in excess of what their situation practically requires that if it were to be devoted to anything "worthwhile," they would wreck the world in five minutes.

All his life Shaw has been devoted to music (he was probably the best music critic who ever lived) and, as he tells us, it was from Mozart's Don Giovanni that he learned "how to write seriously without being dull"; and this devotion is, perhaps, the clue to his work. For all his theater about propaganda, his writing has an effect nearer to that of music than the work of any of the so-called pure writers.

The Mozart of English Letters he is not—the music of the Marble Statue is beyond him—the Rossini, yes. He has all the brio, the humor, the tunes, the clarity, and the virtuosity of that great master of Opera Bouffe.

And this is a very great deal. If now we see errors in his doctrines,
the credit must go to Hitler, not to our own acumen; and the present generation, if it is honest, will have to admit that in comparison with its own spokesmen, the “vulgar old buffer” not only had nicer manners, a kinder heart, and a more courageous will, but also wrote a lot better.
Not long ago, I was part of a gathering at which someone, seeing Hesketh Pearson's recent biography on a table, turned the general conversation to the subject of Shaw. "Does anybody," he asked, "know what Shaw's doing?"

"He's taking liver extract for his anemia," answered the doctor with malicious pleasure. "For a vegetarian," he explained, "it is a fitting end."

Before I could remark that his facts were out of date, the others took up in a sort of chorus the refrain of current opinion concerning Shaw. Shaw was virtually a fascist, said one; he never spoke a responsible word, said another. A third proved he was no artist and thought that his reputation was but a bubble blown on the breath of postwar cynicism. Only a spinster with a long memory had the courage to declare that she would not take back an ounce of her gratitude to Shaw for many evenings of high entertainment twenty years ago at the Theatre Guild. But she was promptly faced with the badness of the later plays; the doctor broke in again to say that Shaw's modes of thought were hopelessly unscientific; and talk petered out on the note that Pearson's biography was an anachronism, a superfluous and boring book.

Though unfair to a very workmanlike effort, this last note has a shadow of justification. Even when he is not quoting, Mr. Pearson relies heavily on Shaw's own words, and these now seem to lack freshness and authority. They strike up as echoes, but they are far from ringing impressively down the corridors of Time. The fact is that though Shaw is alive, he no longer has a living reputation. He is not even a deified and decrepit Grand Old Man of English


Letters. There seems to be no name for his position, which, nevertheless, he is not the first to occupy. Meanwhile, he eludes our grasp and measure like a man in a fog.

He is wrapped in darkness in an even more direct sense. As always happens with men who are famous while alive, what Shaw stands for, or rather a pot-pourri of his supposed opinions, has ended by obscuring the character of his thought. His interpreters and critics have succeeded too well. They have made him accessible, whether in attractive or repulsive guise, and he has been played up and played down to the point of being played out. It is perhaps significant that the last two books on Shaw are by onetime actors of his works, who conceived their task in much the same spirit. In “The Real Bernard Shaw,” Mr. Maurice Colbourne told us that Shaw’s invaluable doctrine being spread over four million words, it needed boiling down. In the present “portrait,” Mr. Pearson tells us that Shaw is the greatest English dramatist since Shakespeare, but that apart from inventing the modern breezy historical play, Shaw’s few objective creations merely reproduce on the stage his own temperament, that of the religious leader.

Clearly there is a gap between the claims made on Shaw’s behalf by his attorneys and the need of critical charity in which they make him stand. What is a non-objective dramatist and how can his limited competence deserve pairing with Shakespeare’s? What kind of literary master mind is he whose doctrine uses too many words and improves with reduction? Do the attorneys themselves lack faith in their client, or are they insensitive to self-contradiction? They remind us, at any rate, of certain reviewers of Mr. Pearson who, while complaining that Shaw’s secret was still unrevealed, intimated that its discovery would not repay the racking of one’s wits.

II

By the secret of a man’s life, I suppose we mean simply an explanation of his motives. This may take the form of matching his intimate ways with his public acts, but a secret in the vulgar sense of hidden and hideous facts seldom means as much as a titillated public thinks. Anyhow, Shaw’s mature life has been too public to hide secrets, and knowing our modern biographers’ prurience, he forestalled us with the information that his father was a drunkard. We also learned from him how in his early London years he lived on his mother and wrote five unsalable novels, when by common standards of decency he should have helped to support her. The letters to Ellen Terry, the love affairs, the strife of sixty years have
all been aired. So we need not expect any sudden light from an unknown past. Even the cousin from Australia has turned up and told us nothing but jokes and irrelevancies. The facts are all before us, they are abundant, and all the interpreting they need suggests itself the moment one goes beyond first impressions.

Strangers who have seen Shaw face to face are wont to report their surprise at his gentleness and consideration, his willingness to listen and his complete lack of pose. Clearly what irritates and baffles the anti-Shavian is that Shaw writes about himself in the same tone and with the same passionate interest as he writes about socialism or evolution. "He is an intolerable egotist." The complaint really means that Shaw does not divide himself into man, author, wit, politician and playwright, striking an appropriate attitude for each. He does not manifest himself in institutional forms, but appears rather as a one-man Ministry of All the Talents, a superior organism with more feelers, limbs, and senses than normal manhood affords.

It is in this Supermanner and not in any assignable vice or virtue, that we can discover the fairly open secret of Shaw's personality. His distinguishing trait is to be at once self-aware and facing outwards. Shaw knows at any moment, on any subject, what he thinks, what you will think, what others have thought, what all this thinking entails; and he takes the most elaborate pains to bring these thoughts to light in a form which is by turns abstract and familiar, conciliatory and aggressive, obvious and inferential, comic and puzzling. In a word, Shaw is perhaps the most consciously conscious mind that has ever thought—certainly the most conscious since Rousseau; which may be why both of them often create the same impression of insincerity amounting to charlatanism.

Yet it is by excess of honesty that Shaw has himself lent color to his representation as an inconsequential buffoon bent on monopolizing the spotlight. The very precise intent of his "Better than Shakespeare," his care in discrediting his own newspaper boutades, his insistence on the exact limits of his knowledge, his signalizing his own artistic decline, have all been taken by the public as disingenuous fictions, clever publicity stunts. In the beginning, when Shaw's simple shamelessness was new, it compelled an irritated and incredulous attention. Having become an expected stimulant, and sometimes a feeble formula (witness the letter certifying Hesketh Pearson as a biographer) Shaw's self-acceptance now breeds only a protective apathy.

This being in brief the history of Shaw's popularity and present neglect, the profound misunderstanding of his thought and art

follows necessarily. It is not that we have ceased to care and understand, but that we never did care or understand. We were shocked, tickled, stunned; we were too amused. But in a more settled mood we can see that for the uses of the common reader, Shaw always supplied an overdose. It is not the number of his words but the load they carry that is staggering. If a normally well-trained mind had as many perceptions instantly radiating towards him from a single core as Shaw requires of him, he would be dazzled and paralyzed by the illumination. Hence such a person cannot see—least of all in the playhouse—what Shaw is getting at. The one impression he does get is that the man is showing off again. Between him and Shaw the barrier is not profundity or obscurity, but intensity and extent of thought. Let any doubter reread the 80-page Preface to *Blanco Posnet* on the Censorship of Plays and simply count the subjects. There has been no tour de force like it since Macaulay's Parliamentary speeches, where thirty historical allusions flash in a paragraph. Yet there is this difference, that Shaw does not merely decorate a proposition, but makes his way from point to point through new and difficult territory.

This explains why Shaw must either be taken whole or left alone. He must be disassembled and put together again with nothing left out, under pain of incomprehension; for his politics, his art, and his religion—to say nothing of the shape of his sentences—are unique expressions of this enormously enlarged and yet concentrated consciousness.

How he came by it is not entirely a mystery. First of all, Shaw reached intellectual maturity in the late seventies, when political democracy, industry, the new imperialism and the new journalism were furnishing to open-eyed youth direct evidence that the world was a cacophonous whole. It was no longer a world projecting its main events in succession on the screen of time and local intelligence, but a simultaneous world—so to speak—with groups, parties, classes, peoples, empires, and religions in unceasing orchestral chaos. The universal relevance of anything to all other things, which had always been theoretically recognized, was now grossly palpable, not indeed to the routine mind or the academically brilliant one, but to the naive and imaginative observer.

Because of his somewhat unusual family history, Shaw was just such an observer. As a child, he tells us, he lived largely in a world of vivid imaginings stimulated by books and music; his schooling was meager, and therefore harmless; his relatives were eccentric and his social life was non-existent. No better circumstances could be found for developing a dramatic and un-institutionalized mind. The head of the family being incompetent and rather disgraceful, and
the mutual affection of its members being taken for granted, Shaw became in due course an abnormally shy, sensitive, untutored youth, belonging to no class, lacking gumption, though intelligent enough to know that nothing but his own will and wits could extricate him from his discomfort. Even the one pretense he had been brought up to—that of "the Shaws'" abstract eminence—he could both share and see through, since it emanated from his amiable father and was contradicted by his mother's enforced drudging.

To the boy who could make up endless stories resembling those in novels and operas, all the world was undoubtedly a stage, but to the cruelly miserable adolescent without any footing or skill, there was no possibility of self-forgetfulness as a mere spectator. He must act, and he must first learn how by taking thought. As need or curiosity prompted, Shaw taught himself shorthand and bookkeeping, penmanship and public speaking, economics and etiquette, score-reading and dialogue writing—most of it solitary work spurred on by a kind of otherworldly ambition. For like Rousseau, whom he resembles even more than he resembles Voltaire, Shaw never gave social form to his assertiveness, never desired to arrive and assimilate himself, or wield authority as of right. In this respect, he is the antithesis of H. G. Wells, who rose with the tide of scientism, prospered with the new press, and always found himself at the head of the "advanced people" as the expounder of their changing ideas. Shaw never had disciples, and, after his first emancipation, never budged. He added to his information or shifted his batteries, but his faith has been the same since its first stilted expression in the five novels.

Seeing clearly within himself and always able to dodge around the ends of any position, including his own, Shaw assumed from the start the dual role of prophet and gadfly. To his contemporaries it appeared frivolous and contradictory to perform as both superman and socialist, sceptic and believer, legalist and heretic, high-brow and mob-orator. But feeling the duty to teach as well as to mirror mankind, Shaw did not accept himself as a contradictory being. His reproach to Shakespeare is precisely this acceptance, which leads to pessimism. Instead, Shaw prepared himself, with more facts and more experience, to transcend the contradictions and repel the world's inevitable counter-attacks.

These attacks never came, of course, except in the form of commonplace insults and denials, which left Shaw building out of his enormous insecurity impregnable bastions of knowledge, logic, and wit. Critics with a psychoanalytic turn of mind will be ready to say that the natural craving for affection, denied in Shaw's infancy, is at the root of this Titanic effort. Assign what cause you will, the
results are so far out of proportion with ordinary causes that it is best to go on describing effects. And as William James pointed out, the genius does not lie in the emotional abnormality but in the caliber of the mind which the damned-up emotion propels toward its chosen goal.

Shaw's emotional development was one with his intellectual strength. His path led him into the thick of the scrimmage, where more spontaneous natures defend themselves with the usual weapons of malice, humility, bad temper or conceit. But Shaw used the death ray of imperturbability. His feelings were never hurt, his envy was never aroused, his conceit was a transparent fiction, he never quarreled. There is something Christlike about his innumerable acts of generosity and unassuming forgiveness. He would secretly obtain a knighthood for a rival playwright who openly detested him, he would patiently dissolve the rancor of plotting opponents; he would warmly praise others' work behind their backs. If we except Sir Henry Irving as his one failure, Shaw deliberately and successfully held up his friends and associates to their highest level of performance and good behavior. This is what Chesterton meant when he said after twenty years of combat with Shaw on "the most sacred and delicate essentials of existence . . . I never read a reply by Bernard Shaw that did not leave me in a better and not a worse temper or frame of mind; which did not seem to come out of inexhaustible fountains of fairmindedness and intellectual geniality, which did not savor somehow of that native largeness which the philosophers attributed to the Magnanimous Man."

Nor was this achievement the result of Socratic moderation. Everywhere, in politics, the theater, and private life, Shaw lectured and bossed those around him to within an inch of their sanity, inditing inspired diatribes which make much better reading for us than they can have made for their recipients. Yet the effect was magical. Those who laughed were won over; those who resisted or hit back were treated as if nothing had happened. Shaw's personal criticism violated all the rules of good taste in general, no doubt because he was always criticizing somebody in particular. But through it shone a loyalty and friendliness, a combination of righteous wrath and superior tact, as if a highly effectual angel were beating his wings at once to chastise and to cool the air.

The angelic strain may explain Shaw's fondness for Shelley, which seems to rest on something more than a common love of reform and vegetable diet. It implies a temperamental kinship, a disembodied quality in both men, which leads certain critics to find their art equally thin and bloodless. Aptly enough, the epithet that recurs most often in Pearson's biography is "fastidious," which con-
notes passion without sensuality. Remembering Byron's dictum that compared to Shelley every other man was a beast, we are not surprised to find Beatrice Webb in the early Fabian years nicknaming her friend Shaw, "the Sprite."

III

Those who dispute Shaw's claim to the title of artist, discredit equally his technique and substance. "He never created a character," says the critic; "his plays are formless conversations." "All head and no heart," echoes the man in row F, outraged by a sermon on socialism in the midst of comedy.

The technical complaint is fairly easily disposed of. Indeed, three or four lines of defense are possible. The first is that leaving aside the plays, there is such a thing as Shavian prose, which as a distinct creation assures its creator an immortality coterminal with the English tongue. The first critic to assess it justly was Dixon Scott, who died at Gallipoli twenty-eight years ago. He showed how the Shavian sentence, by obliterating connectives, becomes a sort of lash made up of fused ideas, written for ear and mind, and barbed to suit the occasion. Here is a sample taken at random, which makes it clear, incidentally, that the "lash" metaphor refers to form and not to punitive intent:

In all emergencies the neighborly man must be before all things helpful; and to be in the thick of the mess and yet behave as if one were safe in a philosophic heaven out of range of the aircraft guns seemed to me not only sublimely selfish (which is not fundamentally an objection to it when its exponents are persons of genuinely exalted character) but liable at any moment to be reduced to absurdity by the crashing of a bomb through one's study roof. So I kept on the ground and appealed to every morality in turn to carry my points.

Like all good prose this is not identical with the spoken word—those who heard Shaw speak in New York may recall the difference—but it gives the impression of speech. It is in fact made for delivery, as Shaw's actors found out as soon as they opened their mouths instead of measuring the length of the sentence with the eye.

Mr. Herbert Read truly says that in the undecorated English style, Shaw's prose ranks next to Swift's: it is limpid, passionate and tireless, never falling much below its own standard of perfection. The Shavian matter may be dull, the medium is invariably a polished work of art. Perhaps some day a detailed study of Shaw's diction will be made, which will include a guess at its lineal ancestors. It has affinities with Dickens at his best, exhibiting the same
rapid variation of purpose and device, from colloquialism to a high abstraction which by some miracle makes itself concrete as it goes; and the same humor of words, which is something else than wit. The lashing effect owes something to Ruskin and the simpler mood to the Book of Common Prayer, but the pace and pointedness are Shaw’s own, and happily inimitable.

Such an achievement is quite enough to stamp a man as an artist, whether he uses it to draft resolutions or write letters to his housekeeper. But Shaw, we must remember, made his reputation as a critic. Had he died at forty, we should know him today merely as one of the great judges of the drama with Hazlitt, Lamb, and Coleridge, and as the only critic of music to put beside Berlioz.

Whether a critic is an artist is a matter of definition. Those who say so have in mind the fact that criticism has a distinct form and speech, which not everyone masters at will, despite editors’ necessary assumption to the contrary. Shaw was obviously fitted to become a critic of the first rank, for in addition to the indispensable gift of awareness, he had conscience. He could separate what he felt from what he ought to feel, what was actually given from what he might expect or like to be given. More than that, he was indefatigable in acquiring information, knowing that to compare justly, the critic must know everything that has been said, composed or painted since the beginning of time. Lastly comes the ability to convey all this and develop its meaning. Shaw’s music criticism, still instructive and enjoyable after 50 years, is a measure not only of his critical genius, but of the difference between the art of criticism and the trade of reviewing—who now reads Chorley or Dr. Franz Hueffer?

What we value in Shaw’s work is his power to extract principles from the most unlikely materials, and to light up the confusion of intent and execution which affects particularly the arts of music and drama. He has, besides, a knack for touching off people, situations, sensations, merits and faults; a readiness in illustration, a sensitivity to talents of all kinds—was he not the only London critic to praise Henry James’s unlucky Guy Domville and to see that Wilde’s plays were not pure jeux d’esprit?—above all, he has an incorruptible equity and courage; all of which taken together make him the critical intelligence personified.

His failures merely prove that though his consciousness was extended it was not infinite. But if anyone thinks that Shaw plumped too hard for Ibsen and Wagner,* let him read the critic’s actual

* Mr. Pearson gives no inkling of Shaw’s increasing preference, of late years, for the music of Rossini and his contemporaries as against that of Wagner. See Slonimsky, Music Since 1900.
words once again. True, he had a prejudice against Gilbert's comic operas; he railed at the Elizabethans and excoriated Marlowe; he had an unfortunate way of abusing "romanticism" while exemplifying or praising its representative figures; but in none of this is it hard to find the ulterior tactical purpose, personal but principled, that animated him. The man had, after all, a stake in his own ideas, a creative bias, which kept him from being a flawless instrument. Even so, in the long-drawn-out Shakespeare controversy, Shaw turned out to know the plays better than their professed devotees, insisted on their performance in full, and strove harder than anyone to found a national theater for the Shakespeare repertory.

This brings us at last to Shaw as playwright. We have so often been told that Shavian comedy lacks form and is un lifelike, that any description of its special merits almost seems like conceding the faults and offering compensation. But if we begin by asking, What is the form of the comic play? tradition gives no single answer. Shaw himself does not use one unvarying pattern: he has written farces, high comedies, tragi-comedies, melodramatic comedies, comedies of manners, of situation, and of ideas. The fact that we can distinguish them argues at least a sense of tone in their maker. True, he teased his critics by calling his plays Discussions, Conversations, and the like, but when it came to the test of production under existing theatrical rules, the lines spoke well, the business could be set, and all quibbles disappeared in the great fact that the audience stayed and laughed. Molière himself desired no higher success.

Consider now the possibility of grouping Shaw's plays, not according to ideal form, but according to easily recognizable design—length, plot, climax, distribution of parts, balance of interest, and so on. This done, who can doubt that Shaw has again and again proved his ability to work within accepted late nineteenth century formulas, that he has, indeed, repeatedly worked them for all they were worth? I need only mention You Never Can Tell, Pygmalion, The Philanderer, Widowers' Houses, Arms and the Man, Village Wooing, Fanny's First Play, Passion, Poison and Petrification, Overruled, Augustus Does His Bit and a half-dozen other titles. Empty out the Shavian vocabulary and attitudes and you will have receptacles in 1, 2, 3, or 4 acts fit for any kind of romantic comedy or thesis drama you may like.

Let us then have no more of the irritating commonplace that Candida shows its author could have written "real plays" had he wanted to. Candida appeals to the anti-Shavian not because its form is more playlike, but because its subject is more like that of other plays: the woman choosing between two men. For a kindred reason Saint Joan has earned general approval, again not in virtue
of superior form, but because of common familiarity with a story and a haircut.

Moreover when we say that *Candida* is more like other plays, we mean only more like other contemporary plays. If we extend the range of comparison and take in Aristophanes and Molière, we see at once that their subjects and technique no more resemble George Kaufman’s or Noel Coward’s than Shaw’s do, and we find by the same token that Shaw is often closer to his great forerunners than he is even to his imitators Molnár and Behrman. One of the principal features of Aristophanic comedy is the *parabasis*, an address to the audience conveying the author’s sentiments upon his theme. This device, though Greek, is not necessarily sublime; but it is respectable and convenient and Shaw should be congratulated rather than abused for reviving it in the form of the long didactic speech. Nothing then, could be more classical than the Frenchman’s tirade in *Fanny’s First Play*, the final monologue in *Too True to Be Good* and the epiloguing in *Saint Joan*.

Sometimes we get double measure, in a second or third harangue by the same or other characters. This is chorus work, and I shall take up in a moment its good or bad effect on characterization. Meanwhile it is certain that the whole tradition of great modern drama is behind Shaw in this usage. Molière in *Tartuffe* and the *Misanthrope*, in the two *Schools*, in the *Learned Ladies*, and in the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*; Shakespeare in the soliloquies scattered through his plays; Racine in the great *tirades*, which the French romantic drama maintained and even extended—all of them substitute for the chorus of the ancients one or more interpolated monologues which stall the action but ballast the play. The enthusiastic actress who called Shaw’s work “Italian Opera” did not know how accurately she was linking him to the continuous tradition of lyric drama.

In ancient comedy, furthermore, and in Molière to a marked extent, the abstract form is never allowed to choke off a good opportunity for laughter or propaganda, for horseplay, music or dancing. There are limits to the advisable distension of any framework, but each case must be judged on its merits. In plays like *Getting Married*, *Misalliance*, and *Heartbreak House*, which seem formless, the virtuosity with which Shaw digresses while maintaining the classic unities should have earned him medals from all the academies in the universe instead of the ignorant scorn of playgoing critics of the school of Mr. Curdle.

What is true of his dexterity with form applies equally to his action. Assuming that dramatic action is not physical motion, but psychological conflict which may occasionally turn into violence,
Shaw is lavish in both kinds: people slap each other, pull guns, raise pokers, hurl slippers, throw down vases in their rage, roll on the floor, besides doing the usual amount of direct name-calling. But what really counts for both action and comedy is that each speech shall amount to a twisting and turning over of the previous one—a rebuke or contradiction or misunderstanding of the interlocutor—with a view to building up in a few minutes a recognizable human situation. Every step must be swift, unforced, and in itself worth hearing. Now at this sort of skill, Shaw has no rivals but Shakespeare and Molière. An excellent test is to open a Shaw play at random and feel the tenseness generated as you read. No need to remember the story or the background of the characters. Each person is fighting all the time, making drama as he goes: only recall the crowd under the rain at the opening of Pygmalion or the man buying apples at the grocery in Act II of Village Wooing.

The question now arises whether in sustaining this tension, Shaw is “objective” and displays human feelings in their fullness and variety. Does he, in short, create characters? Mr. Pearson virtually denies it and the majority are with him when they describe a performance as “twenty people spouting Shaw.” Without entering the labyrinth of distinctions between characters and types, reality and lifelikeness, individuals and ideas, I must point out that our modern views of the subject apply to a very narrow range of literature. In the sense of detailed psychological studies there are no characters whatsoever in ancient drama, in epic poetry, or in such fictions as Cervantes’, Swift’s, or Rabelais’. And when we come down to modern times, no two people agree on whether Scott, Dickens or Zola depict “real” characters.

The only way to settle the debate is to admit that the truth of a character does not depend on any particular substance or mode of presentation, but on his fitting the purpose and the environment provided by his creator. If you take an interest, any interest, in Lysistrata or Gulliver, they are real to that extent and for that purpose. Panurge is real in Rabelais and would be false in Meredith, and the converse is true about a Meredithian figure. As for “real life,” it is impossible to say whether it furnishes Meredithian or Rabelaisian or Shavian characters in the raw. Fictional life is so much harder to live than actual life that most people would wither away in the rich atmosphere of Hamlet or Mr. Pickwick.

This suggests one reason why it has been fashionable to impugn Shaw’s dramatis personae: they are highly articulate and self-conscious. Another is that they talk about high matters. A third, as we have seen before, is that they occasionally take on the function of a chorus speaking for the author. Listening to Shaw thus calls for
constant interpretation; his dialogue may branch out in three directions. This is equally true of Shakespeare or Molière, but the passage of time has made us think that whatever they do is perfectly natural; that Alceste would of course know himself as thoroughly as Molière knows him; that a Scotch ruffian like Macbeth would examine his motives and generalize about murder; that a cowardly buffoon like Falstaff would be a wit and a poet in prose. As I say, time has helped, as well as the King-and-Queen tradition, but a time will come when the well-known spiritual eminence of the twentieth century will make it seem equally natural for a Shaw personage to combine recognizable traits with self-knowledge and philosophic reflectiveness.

This is not to say that all Shaw's creations are equally successful, but that testing their worth is not simply a matter of comparing them with our friends. In any fiction not exclusively devoted to psychology, character comes in touches. These must be abundant, fresh, and in the key of the subject. From this point of view, the persons in The Devil's Disciple are far inferior to the several doctors in The Doctor's Dilemma; yet most critics will think the former a better play and will call the second act of the latter a characterless conversation, merely because the action of The Devil's Disciple is more physical and exciting. As a matter of fact, in Shaw at large the scenes of pure talk are triumphs of dramatic characterization: everybody, to use Hebbel's test of real drama, "is in the right." Think of the Cabinet meeting in The Apple Cart, the visit in Pygmalion, the deputation in On the Rocks, the tea-party in Fanny's First Play and that feat of dramatized idleness, Heartbreak House.

But peopling the stage and keeping things going is not enough. A character has the right, in fact he has the duty, to become self-aware if it will create comedy. Likelihood may be violated when Mr. Juno in Overruled says to the wife who condones his flirtation:

Pardon me. I may be doing wrong: but I'm doing it in a proper and customary manner. You may be doing all right: but you're doing it in an unusual and questionable manner. I am not prepared to put up with that. I can stand being badly treated: I'm no baby, and can take care of myself with anybody. And of course I can stand being well treated. But the thing I can't stand is being unexpectedly treated.

Yet just as we treasure M. Jourdain's comments on his education we would not miss Juno's words for any likelihood in the world.

Lastly a character is privileged to spout Shaw (or Molière or Shakespeare) when the observations refer to someone else or to the general situation—flashes of insight struck off by the dramatic conflict itself. A good example is Boxer, the General, in Getting
*Married*, whose words and by-play in relation to the frigid Lesbia are perfectly within his limitations. He oversteps them only in anger or indignation at the public state of affairs, and his periodic awakenings add to the fun while establishing a result.

The objection remains that all this is brainwork. "Shaw is heartless and intellectualizes all he sees." At the risk of paradox, one must reverse the proposition and say that Shaw is passionate and makes emotion out of all he conceives. What is usually called "heart" is simply the accepted sentiments of the age. Mother love, demon rum, guilty passion, honest poverty, the equality of man, secret remorse—these things have been, still are, or may again be the objects of strong feeling for stage portrayal. But this does not mean that fears and hopes attached to other ideas do not also belong to the heart. Everyone understands Saint Joan's patriotism and her horror at the sentence passed upon her, but why suppose that in Sir Jafna's speech in *On the Rocks* we only hear Shaw lecturing? The outburst is in fact India's grievance against Britain and the white man; it is political passion personalized. What keeps us from recognizing this as legitimate emotion, and its dramatizer as a man with a heart fully as large as his mind, can only be the fact that Sir Jafna's motives are unusual, contemporary, and stripped of official façade. In this and other Shavian scenes, we should prefer more pomp and greater use of clearly labeled attitudes. We would then say "What a realist! How well he knows human beings!" for in stage dealings with history, ideas, or religion, we have come to want only the ritual hollowed by a thousand mediocre representations. We want sham Shakespeare or genuine Bulwer-Lytton.*

This preference incidentally explains why going to the theater becomes intolerable to many people after the first novelty and excitement have worn off, and why the world's great dramatic literature soon becomes unplayable. Most productions of Shakespeare, the traditional Molière at the Comédie, and the Greeks in purpledged nightgowns are unbearable travesties, because "the stage" at any time reduces them to its own limits by a set of taboos destructive of all meaning and pleasure. Acting is no doubt a great art which adds to the written word, but it is only when a Shakespeare or a Molière or a Shaw is at work producing parts and plays for chosen performers under his own eye, that we have any sense of what the theater can do. It is while using and stretching the con-

*Shaw's creation of the informal historical play was a breaking through to liveliness comparable to Shakespeare's "anachronisms" in dealing with the old Romans. But just as Shakespeare's example led to a false archaic convention, so Shaw has already led to routine imitation, in which fun is made simply by having historical personages use nicknames and slang phrases, in a perfect void of dramatic or historical thinking.
ventions—as Shaw successfully did for nearly half a century—that
drama takes its place with the other arts. The rest of the time we
may be seeing chromos or caricatures based on great portrayals of
action, but we are hardly seeing the masterpieces themselves, and
perhaps only pretending to enjoy them.

Shaw's position in the history of drama is therefore traditional
in the very act of flouting the limited canons of the current stage.
He is in the great tradition, not in the little routine. Using every-
thing in the theatrical shop, past and present, and holding in solu-
tion all that was stirring in the wide world of the author's mind,
Shaw's plays constitute a dramatic legacy of the first magnitude.
Approval of its characteristic tone and intellectual tendencies be-
longs to another order of consideration.

IV

Ideally, the wide world in the artist's mind is not to be inven-
toried, even when the mind is a far narrower one than Shaw's. The
best record of it is in the author's own hand, and there we may leave
it. But in view of Shaw's blurred reputation, a word or two are
needed about his doctrines and public life.

As a moralist, Shaw is known for championing Ibsen, and as a
socialist, for preaching Marx. More recently he has been suspected
of sympathy with fascism. Plotting Shaw's course along the line
joining these three points has led hasty observers to conclude that
Shaw was once a rationalist who has since thrown over his early
beliefs. To correct this error, it is only necessary to remember the
global reach of Shaw's mind, which made him first a critic, then a
dramatist, and which has inevitably conditioned his politics and re-
ligion. This is only another way of saying that his point of view has
never been simple. He has never been a party-man, neither a Marxist
nor a fascist, an Ibsenite nor a Wagnerite. Though he has used these
isms to drive certain points home, he has never had the single-
mindedness which makes the good disciple or the founder of a new
religion.

Unoriginal in a sense, his rôle has been to sharpen, revivify, and
reorganize the leading ideas of the first half of the nineteenth cen-
tury and fill them with the contents of his own limited epoch. The
best proof of this lies in the fact that his amazing awareness is in the
highest degree an awareness of history. No one has ever used histori-
cal examples, near or remote, with the detail, precision, and direct-
ness to be found on every page of Shaw. From Edward the Fourth's
taste in women to Rousseau's opinion on miracles, from Fielding's
theatrical ventures to Marshal de Saxe's military career, he has the
Bernard Shaw in Twilight

telling instance at his fingertips—a dozen, if need be, for the routing of incredulity. Nor does he simply illustrate or argue from history; he assimilates it and thinks always under the corrective of historical relativity. In this regard, Shaw is a match for Montaigne, Rousseau, and Voltaire, modern times being to him what classical antiquity was to them.

As for the century of his birth Shaw possesses it entire. Like Nietzsche, he rails at romanticism, but it is evident that what they both mean by the word is the clichés of second-hand romance. Historic romanticism is in fact the ground-work of their philosophy. The quality of drama, of many-sidedness, of antithesis, in Shaw’s thought is of the highest and best romantic strain: witness his fusion of scientific scepticism with religious faith, of individualism with the sense of collective discipline, of the primacy of the will with the use of reason, of a taste for heresy with a taste for legalism—dialectical oppositions which are the mainspring of his intellectual energy as well as the source of the misunderstandings he has suffered. Taken piecemeal, his opinions are easily misfiled; but there can be no doubt that Shaw himself belongs to the neo-romantic revolt against mid-century materialism, realism, and determinism, not to the revolt against the generation preceding these. He is with Samuel Butler, William James, Nietzsche, Tolstoy and Henri Poincaré, not with Spencer, Darwin, Huxley, Wagner, and Marx. And his robust strain of aestheticism constantly pulls him back to the visions of Shelley, Beethoven, Turner, and Blake.

Because he was a man of action, Shaw worked for the “new ideas” of the nineties. But he criticized from within what he stood for without. He never invested his whole moral capital in a man, a book, or a cause, but treasured up wisdom wherever it could be picked up, always with scrupulous acknowledgment: Henry George, Dickens, Stuart Glennie, Proudhon, Samuel Butler, Philip Wicksteed, Mommsen—the full list would be as long as it is unusual. His eclecticism saving him from the cycle of hope-disillusion-despair, his highest effectiveness was as a skirmisher in the daily battle for light and justice, as a critic of new doctrine and refurbisher of old, as a voice of warning and encouragement. That his action has not been in vain, we can measure by noting how little Shaw’s iconoclast stirs our blood: we no longer remember what he destroyed that was blocking our view.

Perhaps an iconoclast is always a man who destroys cheap images rather than old ones. At any rate, it is one of the oldest of all western ideas—the idea of Christianity—which is in Shaw the basic and lasting one. For Shaw is a fundamentalist Christian; only, he in-
sists that the traditional words be compelled to carry an active meaning. For him Sin, Revelation, the Communion of Saints, the Life Everlasting, the necessity of Gospel Love, are truths of experience. But they must be kept empirically true by constant re-embodiment, as time buries the live meaning under the crust of habit. Charity, for example, can no longer mean giving coins to beggars; it must mean making war on poverty. Finding the means to the end is the task of live brains, and to attempt it is to do God’s work.

It is a divine mission, first, because God is not omnipotent and needs help, and second, because men can only fulfill the soul’s desire through devotion to something greater than their present wants. Hence Shaw’s personal puritanism—or what passes for such—his invectives against drink, meat, idleness, and sexual indulgence. He does not forbid these, he grades them, and makes his own choices accordingly. Hence also his war against scientific materialism, which, he argues, leads to moral determinism if logically pursued, and to casual hedonism if not.

When asked why man should resist determinism and refuse to soften an evil lot through reasonable sensuality, Shaw appeals to intuition and will against pessimism and the demoralizing counsels of reason. For Shaw as for Goethe, the obligation to strive is a primary feeling: reason initiates nothing and would stop everything. Its use is to come after the fact and devise helpful justification of action. Culture, humaneness, spiritual grace, are not forced on us by logic: they are either self-evident goods or pointless. There is, Shaw reminds us, no argument in behalf of moral conduct which will not equally well support immoral. But it is clearly impossible (and immoral) to exact moral conduct, cultivation, and grace from those whom circumstances force to lead sub-human animal lives. Therefore society must be reformed.

Reform, to Shaw, means socialism, but as one might expect, his socialism is not of the textbook, or even of the orthodox Marxist, brand. It springs from the steady view of two opposite needs to which he referred ten years ago as the Paradox of Government. On the one hand, society needs a common faith and vigorous institutions with the power to coerce; and on the other, the individual as a human soul or as the bearer of a new and possibly saving heresy, must be free. It is difficult enough to reconcile these two needs, but the problem holds still another hazard: the need of action under the pressure of time. A quarter of a century before anyone had heard of Mussolini, Shaw was discrediting “sham democracy” by pointing out that government being meant for ruling, no regime could long subsist as a postponing-machine. He warned us that since in-
stitutions must first of all serve the daily bodily needs of men, obsolescence, inaction and delay were sure to bring about revolution and dictatorships, the dictators acting as responsible rulers in a sense forgotten by the King or Parliament they displaced. Shaw could also foresee that peoples faced with the choice of drifting or accepting martial law would always choose the latter; and rightly, since anarchy and starvation are no choices for the sane. This is the origin, extent and meaning of Shaw’s “postwar conversion” to fascism, as well as the reason for his later praise of strong men. Impatient to make his point, he was nevertheless careful to include among them Stalin, Ataturk, and Franklin Roosevelt.

But martial law, as Shaw pointed out in re-editing the Fabian Essays forty years later, can only be a temporary measure, being in truth no law at all. No society can endure without a constitution, just as no government can find stability by prolonging arbitrary power. Now the constitutive principles which Shaw has never departed from in his half century of political theorizing are two: equal incomes and free criticism. In the Preface to On the Rocks, which like all his plays properly suggests more diverse “lessons” than its preface, occurs that remarkable dialogue of Jesus with Pilate in defence of “the new idea that may save the Empire.” Free criticism is indispensable to the life of civilization, and persecutions mean death for both. This is no mere lip-service to the worth of the individual soul, for it is re-enforced by Shaw’s almost maniacal hatred of cruelty. Like his own Androcles, as soon as he hears of man or beast being abused, he sees red and rushes to the defense. A second Voltaire, Shaw could point to a long list of verbal duels he has fought to uphold the creature against the state, from the escaped convict put in chains, to Sir Roger Casement tried on irrelevant grounds, or caned boys, flogged sailors, and vivisected animals.

It is with precisely the same political motive that Shaw wants absolute equality of income: to bring about that identity of treatment without which no society, whether a club or a nation, is worth living in. The religious reason for it, namely that we are members one of another, is supported by the economic reason that modern industry has destroyed the meaning of property in one’s own labor; and both together suggest the necessity of common enterprise, common sharing, and a common faith. Shaw thus arrives with very different facts at the conclusions of Rousseau’s Social Contract, which seems, exactly like Shaw’s thinking, to favor alike extreme individualism and complete communism.

The true interpretation would seem to lie in a pragmatic syn-
thesis of the two, which Shaw has tried to expound in his remarks on the observance of law. As individual and critic, said Shaw, Karl Marx has the right to urge the abolition of private property. As a responsible citizen who cannot be allowed to endanger going institutions, Marx must continue paying rent to his landlord and must not instead send in his check to the Treasury. It is characteristic of Shaw to put his problems in legal terms: “the case for the critic-dramatist,” “the case for group extermination,” “the case for Jesus,” and so on. Before the court of intellect everything is arguable, Shaw being too practical a committeeman to suppose that all the good reasons are on one side.

But the weakness of this distinction between legal protest and anti-social agitation, appears as soon as we consult history. Corrupt and antiquated governments can be very tolerant of argumentative critics without ever yielding to their reasons, and there comes a point where violence is the only language intelligible to those who will not hear. History then takes another plunge into the chaos of revolution, civil war and tyranny. If this expresses the nature of human beings as we find them, we must radically change that nature or, trusting in evolution, hope that it will change itself.

These reflections define Shaw’s Utopia: a society in which a common faith would inculcate common aims, in which equality of status and income would not blot out the recognition of special talents and higher natures, in which new ideas would be tolerated in the teeth of resentment, but not carried out to the destruction of order; in which, finally, the strivings of the soul of man would be not toward greater comforts but toward more abundant life. Like all Utopias, it is drawn to suit its maker, but unlike Plato’s, there is a word in it about the means of bringing it about. On the immediate practical plane, Shaw leaves us with the now familiar schemes of planned economy and the new notion of “eclectic democracy,” or the popular choice of certified leaders. For the longer run, as we all know from his longest and worst play, he sees the need of a greatly extended lifespan. He and Swift share the vision of the moral realist: Yahoons call forth Struldbrugs, both equally inhuman. For middling mankind has not yet solved the basic political riddle of how to make the good become the powerful.

The fact that Shaw’s indefatigable political thinking on national and international questions has had no perceptible results, coupled with the fact that public opinion has been content to dismiss his views as comically irresponsible, is a measure of his distance from what we are pleased to call the thoughtful man. It can only be small comfort to him that as he approaches the century mark like another
Fontenelle he finds the world living up to the warning predictions he began to utter in early manhood.

A fair conclusion from these remarks would be that Shaw is classic in the making. But it is clear that the bogus prince Posterny will not accord Shaw or anybody else the close and catholic attention that a few contemporaries have been giving him for fifty years. Only a disciple or an enemy can keep up his enthusiasm as far as the four millionth word. Yet we can reassure ourselves with the thought that Swift and Voltaire, equally prolific, live in the public mind by one short fiction apiece. A reputation rests on a fisherman’s float, not on the Complete Works sunk at the bottom. What will future ages choose from Shaw? It would be rash to guess, and perhaps even worse to assume that he will be known for all time by only one work and always by the same.

This much can be said: so long as there is an art of criticism, it is certain that some of Shaw’s eight solid volumes will be read. So long as the broad forms of western society endure, some of Shaw’s comedies will survive. Understanding does not require that present conditions of life and those portrayed on the stage be identical. Do we not still enjoy Figaro and the Précieuses Ridicules? The salt of satire is a great preservative but even a simple piece such as You Never Can Tell can hold its own by the magic of sparkling words and spectacle. And with the historical plays, Shaw has got a grip on the imagination of future ages for as long as the memory of Caesar, Saint Joan and the rest continues unbroken.

Dramatic reputations rely, in any case, on a very few samples. Congreve, Farquhar and Goldsmith live by one play each, Dryden, Sheridan and Beaumarchais by two; even in Shakespeare’s abnormal position nearly two-thirds of his thirty-seven plays rarely occupy the public. Shaw’s hand seems quite full enough. As to the rest of his output, one can confidently rely on the variety of his interests and the vigor of his prose to enlist among our descendants small groups of devoted readers. If we are only now properly editing Swift’s pamphlets and discovering consistency in Voltaire’s thought, we may safely leave to the historical scholars of the twenty-third century the pleasant task of rediscovering Doctors’ Delusions, On Going to Church and Common Sense About the War.

Meanwhile the thick shades of careless contempt and reasoned scorn will doubtless close in upon the sinewy, diabolonian figure so long familiar to the literate world. Already the tale of Shaw’s popularity seems a legend and the profundity of his “gay science”
an untenable paradox. His plays, like *Hamlet* to Pepys, are poor things. It is of course a fitting destiny that Shaw should not weather oblivion “better than Shakespeare.” But the works are there, glowing faintly under the falling darkness and dust of the century. It is the first twilight; night and morning are still to come.
For the spectator who is interested in poetry and drama and theatre in their interfusion Shaw is embarrassing. "The poet in Shaw was still-born," writes Eliot. We have all felt again and again an extraordinary deflation as soon as the curtain has fallen. The agility and wit of Shaw’s social criticism holds his plays together and casts his spell into the auditorium. The plays do not live as plays beyond the fall of the curtain. As they draw to a close they do not give the feeling of a building being completed; the forces which propel them are indeed bent all the other way, towards demolition. These works do not, after their emergence in time, solidify, as the great dramas do, into a shape for the memory; they leave us without the retrospective vision of form achieved. And yet Shaw cannot be thought out of the theatre by a theory of drama and poetry. It is not so much that he has simply conquered the stage and made it serve his own purposes; he has also, in spite of our reservations, served some of its purposes; of that there is as little doubt as of the fact that he has not served all its purposes or its greatest, as Jonson and Molière did.

There is a certain quality of calculation in Shaw’s approach to comedy. It may be a wonderful calculation, of which the pleasantest thing to say would be that it is the “instinct of his genius.” He has never hidden the fact that he is at heart an evangelist; and he has thirsted for more souls than the pamphlet—“his” form if ever there was one—could procure. He tried the novel. But he is essentially a man of ideas, of agile intellectual criticisms, and the novel, with all its apparatus of description and report, is a bore to him. Moreover, the audience of the novel is the individual; and the object of Shaw’s criticism is society. In the theatre he catches three large groups who

together make up the whole of mankind except its eccentricities: those interested in entertainment, those interested in ideas, and those interested in art. He catches them, moreover, in their social agglomeration and cohesiveness—his address is to society, and there it is assembled before the stage.

Having turned to the theatre, it was undoubtedly a stroke of personal genius to choose comedy for his form in the conditions obtaining in the theatre and intellectual life generally at the turn of this century. Comedy carries didacticism with a better grace than other kinds of drama. If there are to be ideas and debate in plays, then they offend the intellectual nature of comedy less than the emotional nature of tragedy or "serious" drama. There are reasons for Shaw's eminence that have less to do with the theatre proper than with his person and his ideas; but here is a reason for his eminence that springs from the very conditions of theatre and drama at that time. In an age of "problem plays" comedy, as a form, even though it does lose something, loses less than other forms. Shaw therefore appears as the culmination of an epoch that was opened by Ibsen (Dumas fils was of course a harbinger). He may dominate in part by qualities that would have given him eminence outside the theatre; but he also dominates on grounds of drama alone, in the age in which he wrote. It is a culmination, viewed broadly, of three things: social thought, its application in the theatre, and Shaw's own conviction, aggressively held, that art should always be parable. His work is the best effort of all the drama that was inspired by social criticism. It is even superior to Ibsen's, where Ibsen's implications are social.

The novelty of Shaw's comedy called forth inevitably protagonists and antagonists, and it has been defended mainly as a comedy of ideas in contrast to one of manners or situation. That battle is won. We know now that in Shaw's "pamphlets in dramatic form" we have to watch the drama of ideas, of which persons and events are the diagrammatic illustration.

As an iconographer, he has with consistent conscientiousness always given us both the theory and the example, the thought and the illustration, the preface and the play. And no doubt the only proper way of judging his work finally is one that takes account of the unity of preface and play.

This is the tribute that Shaw wrests from us; compelling us to ask the question that has always been asked since romantic criticism taught us to put it: what unique quality of personal experience is he endeavouring to convey?—before we judge his work. Yet matters do not end with this romantic interest in personal messages, and unique ways of stating them. Shaw claims to be an artist and he works in a
well-recognized form; and so it is fitting to recall that art may depend on artists, but artists also depend on art. Artists may revolt; they also submit. Forms—lyric, dramatic, narrative—admit of extensive variation, they are developed and modified. Yet they are not without a certain constancy of character, and impose, sometimes when we are least aware of it, an authority of their own which is above the single worker. Shaw does not escape. One could write a lot about him with the merest reference to comedy as an art with traditions. But he did not create his form out of the void; he selected it from amongst others for his use, and he owes something to it. Again, at the moment he entered the theatre, drama had been given a powerful direction by Ibsen; he owes something to this too. In the relation between what he owes and what he gives criticism discovers something both about drama and about Shaw.

Within the limits of the art of comedy he has displayed a striking originality in two principal directions; first in the point of view he adopts for his critical attack, and secondly in his adaptation of comedy to the naturalist technique.

Regarding the first point, Shaw conforms to tradition in the sense that you must have a fixed point from which to work, to launch your criticism. In Molière, for instance, the established position is generally interpreted as the rule of the golden mean of reason. Shaw is also devoted to reason. But whilst Molière takes his fixed point from the general experience of men as rational and social beings, Shaw takes his from a rational philosophy of his own. Hence he inverts the usual method. Instead of isolating the unreasonable character, he isolates the reasonable one. Molière gives us a series of characters who offend our idea of rational behaviour: Harpagon, Alceste, Arnolphe, Argan, Tartuffe are examples. Shaw, on the other hand, gives us a series that illustrates his own idea of rational behaviour: Dudgeon, Caesar, Tanner, Dubedat, Undershaft, Shotover, Magnus, Joan and so on—all characters with a head, with their eye on the point, piercing illusions and grasping reality.

The difference is accounted for by a difference of interest. Molière—and we can say Jonson too—feeding on the thought of the Renaissance, was interested in a conception of man; Shaw, under the influence of the thought of the late nineteenth century, in a conception of society. His main attack being on society, his transformation of traditional comic method is brilliant. Taking an unconventional character, a person with the gift of insight and freedom, he impinges it upon a group of conventional social animals, and the impact reveals at every turn stock notions and reactions, prejudices and dishonesties, in short the illusionary, the unreal, the irrational. Molière exposes one character in turn; Shaw the social herd, all together.
And these characters of his are most certainly dramatic conceptions, because they create, by being what they are, startling situations.

It is not necessary to dwell on the remarkable efficacy of this transformation for Shaw's purpose. It shows itself all of a piece with the man, his temperament, his challenge, his message. We accept it as an instrument supremely adapted to its use, and acknowledge the immense talent that could make such an adaptation of a comedic method. But this is the point where, if we cannot detract from the personal genius of Shaw, we can arraign the artist, for the cunning of the method cannot cover the inadequacy of the result, when we apply the standards set by the highest imaginative comedy. Molière's Harpagon and Alceste, Jonson's Volpone and Sir Epicure Mammon, are imaginative creations. You cannot agree or disagree with them; in their simplicity and ideality they are. They have an existence and a permanence that are unassailable; and they are, moreover, centres from which moral energy radiates with an operation that cannot be limited by the fall of a curtain. Shaw's principals are not products of this kind of imaginative power. At the most it can be said that his series has a certain force and solidity because each member of it is a reflection of Shaw's own intelligence, and their effect is cumulative. The core of each one of them lies in their critical penetration, a quality of their creator. It is their only real vitality. They are without the vitality of instinct that makes a total living creature and on which the characters of Molière are based. For this reason we remember less what they are than how they talked; and every time we disagree with their opinions they lose some of their power. Each one of Molière's great creations is an image of a human folly, and he leaves us a whole gallery of them. Shaw gives us but one image: of the critical mind acting as a solvent. There is a point outside the drama where the two authors meet, on the ground of philosophy and practical wisdom, or the effort towards it. It would be difficult to decide which is the greater intellect. But it is easy to judge Molière the greater artist, because he gives us forms, against which Shaw can only put a perpetuum mobile of critical comment.

The second point about the mutual relations between Shaw's personal aim and the dramatic form concerns the realist convention in which he works. His comedy flowing from his criticism of society, he needs for his purposes the ordinary social milieu, with the sort of crisis that arises from typical bourgeois circumstances. In this milieu he lets his unconventional characters challenge the creatures of habit by word and action, and the rest follows. His material is that of all bourgeois drama since the middle of the nineteenth century, more particularly since Ibsen. One of the things he admired most in the latter was the way he made his audience feel that what they
saw on the stage was what went on in their own homes. The direct attack is of the essence of Shaw’s intention. His method in fact is to give us a comic version of Ibsen’s principal theme, the rebel against society, the true man against the false. Ibsen being swayed on the whole by the Germanic seriousness, by some deep-seated emotional need for tragic crisis, his subjects and treatments were generally the reverse of comic. Here and there, however, he explores this latter vein, and An Enemy of the People appears as the embryo of Shaw’s comic method. In developing his work from this position Shaw achieves a remarkable feat. For in the first place comedy and wit introduce a compensating element of imagination into the lamentably prosaic waste of bourgeois realist drama; Shaw avoids the mistake of other imitators of Ibsen. And in the second place he liberates comedy from the cruder forms of its long-accustomed artificialities and tricks—the disguises, the eavesdroppings, the mistaken identities, the stock characters and so on. They have been the properties of comedy since Plautus and were made necessary by the demands for concentration and sustained liveliness of situation in the theatre. Having found another source of vivacious movement in his unflagging r Gillery, Shaw dispenses with the traditional tricks as the main tools of construction, and uses the “realistic” social scheme. Not that he foregoes altogether the prerogative of comedy in the matter of fantastic incident and improbable dénouement. In fact he gains here another advantage over the “serious” social problem dramatist, because he can treat more cavalierly the difficulty of contriving a probable end as well as a probable situation. He may use far-fetched incidents and dénouements, but they are not the part of his material that really counts. For example, the arrival from the air of Percival and Lina Shchepanowska in Misalliance is quite fantastic, and so is Lina herself in the circumstances of the play; but the basic situation had become a commonplace one of contemporary social life. The incident in itself adds superficially to the entertainment; no writer of stage comedy, not even Molière, can afford to neglect any source of amusement, and Shaw has the good sense to be as small on occasion as his greatest predecessor. But even so, the real Shavian comedy is independent of the bit of fantasy; for it follows when we see the impact of Lina, an original character, a free woman and true to herself, on the convention-drenched people around her.

These are the two principal features of Shaw’s work which make a mutual relationship between him and his form clear. Our first impulse is to say: this is not comedy as it ought to be. Our second is to justify it as the proper mode for Shaw’s idea. With our third impulse we look more closely at work that seems to owe no obligation except to its own law, its own subject-matter, and we discover that it does
owe something to its genre, to its predecessors, to pre-existent authorities. It illustrates a continuity, not a break. Shaw adheres first to the principle that comedy must have a fixed vantage-point, though he transforms it to suit his own purpose. He retains, too, the prerogatives and tricks of comedy, without, however, the necessity of being chained to them. He also keeps to stock types for comic purposes, but his new social philosophy gives him a new set of types. Even in incidentals he can follow well-worn grooves of the art; the Straker-Tanner relationship in *Man and Superman* rests on the conventional master-valet set-up, given a completely new vitality from the new social background. And his second great obligation is to the dramatic developments that immediately preceded him and in which he was caught up. He uses the natural probable situation of bourgeois life, public or domestic, that focuses a problem of social behaviour. And he acknowledges the debt by originality of treatment; that is, he gives us what no one else gave and Ibsen had only hinted at, comedy.
NATURE AND SOURCES OF SHAW'S PHILOSOPHY

There are two senses in which a man can be said to have a philosophy or to be a philosopher. First, there is the sense in which a man may seek to present a coherent and comprehensive view of the universe as a whole, of the status of human life within it and of the way in which in the light of that view and granted that status human life ought to be lived.

Secondly, there is the sense in which a man may be the dispenser of wisdom in memorable thoughts and sayings on a vast number of topics of secular importance—on money, God, love, marriage, desire, death, ambition—wisdom which may, as in Shaw’s case, spring from and be informed by the coherent and comprehensive view; or, as in that of Dr. Johnson, be unpervaded by any synthesizing conception of the meaning and purpose of life as a whole. (I don’t mean that Johnson did not advance such a conception, merely that it has little to do with what he has to say on money, marriage, the navy and so on.) Shaw is a philosopher and has a philosophy in both these senses. In this chapter I shall be concerned only with the first of them, the sense in which he is the exponent and part originator of the philosophical doctrine called Creative Evolution.

Although this philosophy outcrops sporadically throughout the plays, its main deposits are to be found in two places; in the Preface to and the Hell Scene in Man and Superman; and in the Preface to and the five plays of the Back to Methuselah Pentateuch. Of these the latter is the more important, not only because when it appeared Reprinted from G.B.S. 90, edited by S. Wisten. Copyright 1946 by Dodd, Mead and Company. Used by permission of the author.
in 1921, Shaw’s thought had undergone considerable development since the *Man and Superman* (1903) stage, but also because, as Shaw himself at the end of the *Back to Methuselah* Preface says of the 1903 presentation of his philosophy, “being then at the height of my invention and comedic talent, I decorated it too brilliantly and lavishly. I surrounded it with a comedy of which it formed only one act and that act was so completely episodical... that the comedy could be detached and played by itself. . . . The effect was so vertiginous apparently that nobody noticed the new religion in the centre of the intellectual whirlpool.”

In what follows I shall rely chiefly on the exposition in *Back to Methuselah*, reinforced by reference on subsidiary points to *Man and Superman*.

**THE MATERIALIST SCHEME**

I will first say something of the background and sources of Shaw’s theory of Creative Evolution. Shaw’s thought runs back through Samuel Butler to Lamarck. The view that Butler expounded can best be understood in relation to the doctrine of Darwin. Darwin’s doctrine was essentially biological, but it formed an essential part of the comprehensive materialist scheme of the universe which held the field in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Under this scheme the universe was envisaged after the model of a gigantic clock; somebody at some time or other had, so to speak, wound the clock up; in other words the universe had at some time got itself started—the materialist could not, of course, explain how but as nobody else was in this respect in any better position his inability was not a distinctive objection to materialism—and thereafter it functioned indefinitely through the automatic interaction of its parts. Life was one of the parts, a product of the operation of the same physical and chemical laws as governed the behaviour of non-living matter.

Under the influence of certain rather rare physical conditions—materialists were never tired of emphasizing the paucity of the areas of the cosmos in which the conditions favourable to life obtained—matter had become conscious, conscious as it was sometimes put, of itself. Matter’s consciousness of itself was life, and life’s subsequent development was governed by the same material conditions as had given it birth. One day when these conditions no longer obtained, life would finish its pointless journey with as little significance as in the person of the amœba it began in. Meanwhile, its status in the universe was that of an outside passenger travelling across a fundamentally alien and hostile environment in which what was mindless
and brutal conditioned and determined what was spiritual and akin. Causation in other words operated universally from the less living as cause to the more living as effect; within the living organism from the body to the mind and within the mind from the less to the more conscious part of it.

This was the scheme in which Darwin’s discovery of evolution, or, more precisely, of the laws of natural selection and the survival of the fittest through which evolution operated, played an integral part; integral, because in the attitude which it adopted to the phenomenon of life, in the explanation which it offered to the elaborate and varied process which beginning with the amoeba had culminated in ourselves, Darwin’s account postulated the intervention of no spiritual force or agency, no mind, no life and no god, but was content to rely upon the operation of those same material forces as had governed the planet prior to life’s appearance.

More particularly, variations in species occurred. Either they were adapted to their environment or they were not. If they were not, they were eliminated; if they were, the variation in respect of which they were adapted and by reason of the adaptation obtained an advantage in the struggle for existence was handed on to their offspring and became stamped into the life history of the species, where it developed and intensified, until at last it represented a degree of differentiation which entitled biologists to say that a new species had emerged. So far, so good; but why did the variations occur? Darwin professed agnosticism; he did not know, although sometimes he attributed them to chance. But the question was, it was obvious, of crucial importance. If there were no variations, if no changes in species occurred, then each generation would be an exact replica of the preceding one and, short of new creations, the amoeba and his contemporaries would still be the sole forms of life upon the planet. Variations, then, played an essential part in the machinery of evolution; they were necessary to get it started. Why, then, did they occur? It was here that the followers of Lamarck took the field.

LAMARCKIANISM

Variations in species, they urged, were due to the effects of environment. When the environment changed, living organisms must either adapt themselves to it or disappear. Those who were successful in effecting the adaptation survived and transmitted the adaptation in virtue of which they had survived to their descendants. These adaptations were mainly envisaged by Lamarck in terms of the growth of new organs and the gradual lapsing of old ones. Changes in environment led to new wants, new wants to new habits and new habits to
new organs which were formed to minister to the habits. In point of fact, the difference between Lamarck's doctrine, so far as I have stated it hitherto, and Darwin's was not very striking. Why, it was asked, in the contemporary controversies, did the giraffe grow his long neck? According to Darwin's followers long-necked giraffes were born by chance much as children with freckles are born by chance. They enjoyed a natural advantage in the struggle for food—they could nibble the leaves on the higher branches—and, therefore, were better placed in the struggle for existence than their shorter-necked contemporaries. Thus, the fittest survived but they were the fittest by chance; they had not become the fittest by design. According to Lamarck, the giraffes at a certain stage of their history, finding that most of the leaves on the lower branches on the available trees had been eaten, were under the necessity of either growing longer necks in order to reach the higher leaves, or of perishing of hunger. Those who successfully adapted themselves to the changed conditions by growing longer necks survived and transmitted the characteristic of long-neckedness to their offspring. Once again in the struggle for existence the fittest survived, but they were the fittest not by chance but by reason of their success in adapting themselves. But the process was, in Lamarck's view, no less automatic, no less determined than in Darwin's; in fact, it was more so. A change in the external environment, a change, it might be, in the climate determined a change in the living organisms which were exposed to it, or it did not. If it did not, the organisms died out. The scheme was thus far at one with Darwin's in that it, too, abstained from postulating the action of any informing purpose of plan to account for the changes in and development of species; up to this point it fitted equally well into the prevalent materialistic scheme.

**BUTLER'S CONTRIBUTION**

But suppose that the changes in living organisms by means of which they adapted themselves to changes in their environment were purposive, in the sense that somebody or something operating independently of the living organism, or perhaps developing in and through it, willed them; suppose, in fact, that changes in living things were not always the by-products of prior changes in dead things, but that at least sometimes they occurred independently, as the result of living things' desire to adapt themselves better to dead things and possibly to use dead things for their own purposes. If this were so, causation might sometimes at least operate from the animate to the inanimate, and the vital, in virtue of which animate matter was animated, instead of being merely a by-product of the
material, might be in some sense independent of it, and, being independent, might be able to act upon it, use it, even enter into and inform it. Such, in effect, was the assertion of Samuel Butler, an assertion which he proceeded to work up into the sketch of a philosophy. It was of this sketch that Shaw proceeded to fill in the outlines, fully acknowledging his debt to Butler “in his own department the greatest English writer of the latter half of the nineteenth century,”—“when,” Shaw wrote in the preface to *Major Barbara*, “I produce plays in which Butler’s extremely fresh, free and future piercing suggestions have an obvious share, I am met with nothing but vague cacklings about Ibsen and Nietzsche,”—and developed into the fully fledged philosophy of *Back to Methuselah*.

So much for a sketch of the background; let me now try and outline the philosophy, as it appears in its fully developed form.

**OUTLINE OF SHAW’S THEORY OF CREATIVE EVOLUTION**

Shaw postulates a universe containing or consisting of two factors, Life and matter. Admittedly he sometimes speaks of Life as creating matter as when, by willing to use our arms in a certain way, we bring into existence a roll of muscle, but the general view is that matter is, as it were, there to begin with. Thus, matter is spoken of as Life’s “enemy.” “I brought life into the whirlpool of force, and compelled my enemy, Matter, to obey a living soul,” says Lilith at the end of *Back to Methuselah*. Regarding matter in the light of an enemy, Life seeks to dominate and subdue it. Partly to this end, partly because of its innate drive to self-expression, Life enters into and animates matter. The product of this animation of matter by Life is a living organism. A living organism, then, derives from and bears witness to the presence of both the two fundamental constituents of which the universe is composed; it is Life expressed in matter. Shaw suggests rather than explicitly states that Life cannot evolve or develop *unless* it enters into matter to create organisms; they are, in fact, the indispensable tools therewith it promotes its own development. To put the point in another way, by means of the device of expressing itself in and through matter Life is enabled to enjoy a greater variety of experience, to accumulate more knowledge and greater intelligence and to develop a more intense power of awareness. To develop these faculties, to make these acquisitions may be described as Life’s immediate purpose since they facilitate, indeed they constitute, the process of Life’s development. Living organisms, then, are the instruments which Life creates to facilitate the process of its own development, and matter, though Life’s
enemy, is also, as it were, the whetstone upon which Life sharpens itself in order to further its own evolution. This office matter performs by reason of the limitations which it imposes upon Life’s powers, thus forcing Life to make efforts to overcome the limitation and so to develop itself by the acquisition of new powers.

Yet the object of Life is to pass beyond matter: to pass, that is to say, beyond the necessity for incarnating itself in and concerning itself with matter. Until this consummation is reached, matter will continue to obstruct and limit life.

Life is also dependent on matter in the sense that each individual expression of Life, being dependent upon the body in which Life incarnates itself to constitute a living organism, terminates its separate existence as an individual expression with the death of the body, and, presumably, reverts to the main stream.

When the need for incarnation in matter has been transcended, Life’s individualized expressions being no longer dependent upon incorporation in a body for their individuality will, we may suppose, become permanently individualized; will, in fact, be immortal. This conclusion is indicated in the dialogue between the Ancients and the Newly Born in the last play of Back to Methuselah.

The He-Ancient: For whilst we are tied to this tyrannous body we are subject to its death, and our destiny is not achieved.

The Newly Born: What is your destiny?

The He-Ancient: To be immortal.

The She-Ancient: The day will come when there will be no people, only thought.

The He-Ancient: And that will be life eternal.

This, perhaps, is not as clear as could be wished, since it leaves it uncertain whether the immortality looked forward to will be the personal immortality of separate individual units of life, or will be merely the immortality of Life as a whole. If it means the latter—and this is, I think, Shaw’s general view—then individuality, the individuality of the living organism, is a function of matter.

THE METHOD OF EVOLUTION

What is the nature of the force or activity which is spoken of sometimes as driving the evolutionary process forward, sometimes as identical with it? We cannot say or, rather, we can define it only in terms of its own activity. It is, to use an expression of Shaw’s, “vitality with a direction,” expressing itself in the will to create matter or to mould the matter which it finds but has not created. “The will to do anything,” he writes, “can and does, at a certain pitch of intensity
set up by conviction of its necessity, create and organize new tissue to do it with. . . . If the weight lifter, under the trivial stimulus of an athletic competition, can ‘put up a muscle,’ it seems reasonable to believe that an equally earnest and convinced philosopher could ‘put up a brain.’ Both are directions of vitality to a certain end. Evolution shows us this direction of vitality doing all sorts of things."

Now, the need for new tissue to carry out the will and to further the development of the vital impulse leads to the development of new organs in existing species and ultimately to the development of new species of living things. Shaw is here taking over from Butler and the Lamarckians, the view that Life’s need for something sooner or later produces that for which the need is felt.

How, to revert to the classical example, does the giraffe get his long neck? “By wanting to get at the tender leaves high up on the tree, and trying until he succeeded in wishing the necessary length of neck into existence.” In this quotation Shaw summarizes what he takes to be the doctrine of Lamarck. He proceeds to add in his own right: “You want, consequently, additional organs, or additional uses of your existing organs: that is, additional habits. You get them because you want them badly enough to keep trying for them until they come. Nobody knows how: nobody knows why: all we know is that the thing actually takes place. We relapse miserably from effort to effort until the old organ is modified or the new one created, when suddenly the impossible becomes possible and the habit is formed.” The new habit and the new organ to be the vehicle of the new habit, are evolved because in the long run we need them or--for Shaw uses both modes of expression--because Life needs them in us. “If you have no eyes and want to see and keep on trying to see you will finally get eyes.”

This, the method of evolution at the pre-conscious level, is still its method at the conscious, is still, in other words, the method of evolving humanity. Man feels a need and gradually wills into existence the faculty or organ which will enable him to satisfy it. The formula for this process is described in the first play of Back to Methuselah, as first desire, then imagination, then will, then creation. Here is a summary statement of it from that wonderful dialogue between Eve and the Serpent at the beginning of the first play:

"The Serpent: . . . imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire; you will what you imagine; and at last you create what you will.

*I heard Shaw read this aloud--he had written it during the day--on two successive evenings at a Fabian Summer School--beyond comparison the most impressive, dramatic occasion at which I have been privileged to be present.
Eve: How can I create out of nothing?

The Serpent: Everything must have been created out of nothing. Look at that thick roll of hard flesh on your strong arm! That was not always there; you could not climb a tree when I first saw you. But you willed and tried and willed and tried; and your will created out of nothing the roll on your arm until you had your desire, and could drag yourself up with one hand, and seat yourself on the bough that was above your head.

A point which Shaw stresses is the *abruptness* of the appearance of the acquisition, whether it takes the form of organ or faculty or awareness, in which the new evolutionary advance consists. There is a definite jump from the old level of behaviour and thinking to the new one: “The process is not continuous, as it would be if mere practice had anything to do with it; for though you may improve at each bicycling lesson *during* the lesson, when you begin your next lesson you do not begin at the point at which you left off; you relapse apparently to the beginning. Finally, you succeed quite suddenly, and do not relapse again. More miraculous still, you at once exercise the new power unconsciously.”

The process of Life’s development, as hitherto described, expresses itself mainly in the acquisition of new bodily habits and physical traits. But the same process continues at the level of thought. We develop new powers not only of the body but of the mind, powers of insight, vision and intelligence because we want them, or because Life wants to develop them in us that we may more effectively implement Life’s purpose as it is, or conceive for Life new purposes which it has not yet itself conceived.

Later, however, it appears that Life’s entry in and concern with matter is a mere temporary phase of Life’s development. Matter is entered into, only that it may be transcended; it is a ladder which must be scaled in order that, having arrived at the top, Life may pass on to something else. Thus, though the Ancients in the last play in *Back to Methuselah* have complete mastery over their bodies, and can create surplus arms and legs at will, though they also possess power over other bodies and can apparently kill with a glance, the exercise of these powers does not interest them. They are bored with the knowledge of matter, bored even with the manipulation of matter. Their attention is directed elsewhere, their interests lie in something else. In what else? Before I attempt to answer this question, there are one or two subsidiary developments of the main evolutionary theme about which something must be said.
DIGRESSION: (1) ON THE RIGHT CONDUCT OF LIFE

As I hinted at the beginning, Shaw is a philosopher in both the senses of the word which I there distinguished. In his capacity as a dispenser of wisdom, he has contrived to let fall a great number of pregnant observations on the secular topics of human interest and concern from Marriage to Moderation and from Greatness to Gambling.

Many of these are collected in the Revolutionist’s Hand-Book which is printed at the end of Man and Superman. All are more or less informed by the underlying philosophy—in the first sense of the word “philosophy”—of which they are the directly deduced corollaries. I have space here to mention only three topics which are of such importance both to the preacher and to his congregation that though, as I have hinted, Shaw’s treatment of them is a corollary from his general position and could, therefore, with sufficient insight presumably be deduced from it, what he has to say on them may deservedly rank as an integral part of the Shavian philosophy.

These three topics are, first, the right conduct of life; secondly, women and genius, and, thirdly, art.

If we are instruments created by Life for the furtherance of Life’s instinctive purpose, our raison d’être will be found in the fulfilment of Life’s intentions in regard to us; not, then, in the pursuit of our own purposes. The furtherance of Life’s purpose will consist in the being used up to the last ounce of one’s energy and capacity in work that seems to one to be worth while for its own sake. Shaw’s own talents and energies have been remorselessly used in the spreading of Socialism and the writing of plays. It is by the maximum expenditure of effort in the arduous and endurances of living and thinking that one will develop and improve one’s initial endowment of faculty and accomplishment, thus returning them at death with interest—an interest which is to be measured by the degree of the realised improvement upon the initially given potentiality—to the general stream of Life of which we are the individualized expressions, with the result that when Life expresses itself in the next generation of living organisms, it will do so at a slightly higher level than it did before, because of the enrichments of acquisition and accomplishment that we have brought to it.

Now happiness will be found in the furtherance of the purpose for which we were created. Not unnaturally, since life will do its best to ensure the donkey’s activity by dangling the carrot of happiness be-
fore its nose. Effort and endeavour, then, are the means to the happy and successful life and we shall find the recipe for happiness in not having enough leisure to wonder whether we are miserable or not. It is in the same vein that Shaw bids us “get what you like or else you will grow to like what you get.”

Shaw’s philosophy enables him to provide a new basis for the moral philosopher’s traditional criticism of the life of pleasure-seeking. This, for Shaw, is a perversion of function, since it entails a diversion of effort to the pursuit of one’s own concerns, and in the indulgence in one’s own gratifications, when we should be engaged about Life’s business. The life of the epicure, the hedonist and the egotist, is, then, a kind of playing truant when we should be at school and Life pays us out for our apostasy by ensuring that, as the direct pursuers of pleasure, we shall miss the pleasure that we pursue. Hence, the aphorism, “Folly is the direct pursuit of Happiness and Beauty.”

DIGRESSION: (II) ON WOMEN AND GENIUS

I do not wish to suggest by this sub-heading that women are geniuses or even that women have genius. The intention is to present the genius whom Shaw assumes, by implication, to be essentially male in relation, a relation which is usually one of opposition to women. (Shaw does, incidentally, speak in connection with George Sand of the comedy afforded by the accident of the genius being “himself a woman”).

Femaleness, in the creative evolutionary philosophy, is represented as being more primitive, in the sense of being more fundamental, than maleness. Shaw even goes to the length of suggesting that the initial form of life was female. Lilith in Back to Methuselah is represented as producing Adam from within herself. In the beginning, Lilith “who came before Adam and Eve . . . was alone: there was no man with her.” She “sunders herself in twain” to give birth and is left at the end of the Fifth Play wondering whether in order to supersede human beings she must needs give birth again.

Already latent in the dialogue between Gloria and Valentine in You Never Can Tell, this conception is developed in the Hell scene in Man and Superman. Here Shaw conceives Life as working through woman to create man to carry Life to higher levels. “Sexually, Woman is Nature’s contrivance for perpetuating Nature’s highest achievement. Sexually, Man is Woman’s contrivance for fulfilling Nature’s behest in the most economical way. She knows by
instinct that far back in the evolutionary process she invented him, differentiated him, created him, in order to produce something better than the single-sexed process can produce."

So far, so good; but unfortunately (for woman) in giving man so small a part in the process of reproduction, she set free his energies for developing his vital inheritance by making acquisitions of which she had no prevision; as, for example, by thinking thoughts that she could not follow, by whoring after beauty that she could not understand, by desiring and pursuing things disinterestedly in and for themselves. For "how rash and dangerous it was to invent a separate creature whose sole function was her own impregnation! For mark what has happened. First, Man has multiplied on her hands until there are as many men as women; so that she has been unable to employ for her purposes more than a fraction of the immense energy she has left at his disposal by saving him the exhausting labour of gestation. This superfluous energy has gone to his brain and to his muscle. He has become too strong to be controlled by her bodily, and too imaginative and mentally vigorous to be content with mere self-production. He has created civilization without consulting her, taking her domestic labour for granted as the foundation of it."

Man also invents "dreams, follies, ideals, heroisms" and, we may add, creeds and causes with which both to amuse and develop himself, thus further diverting his energy and attention from the performance of the purely biological purpose for which woman created him. But since woman is the vehicle of a more direct inheritance from Life, since she is biologically primary and man biologically secondary, woman succeeds in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred in bringing him to heel by turning him back to his specifically biological function, which means turning him from adventurer or visionary first, into the worshipper of herself—hence romance—and, secondly, when the hook of family maintenance has been swallowed with the bait of sexual attraction, into a bread-winner for herself and children. And since getting a job means doing the work which the world is prepared to offer you and to pay you for doing, instead of the work which you want to do, the subsidence of the artist, the idealist, the revolutionary or the scholar into the breadwinner involves a struggle, a struggle between creativity and the thrill of beauty, curiosity and the pull of knowledge and, it may be, the vision of God on the one hand and the power of woman, symbolizing security, conservatism, common sense and earthiness in the interests of keeping the family together and the Life Force's pot boiling on the other. Thus, we are told that for a man "marriage is a heavy chain to rivet on himself." Woman "is born with the chain attached to her, and marriage is the only way open to her of riveting
the other end of it into a man.” In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred she succeeds. Woman is endowed by the Life Force with the faculty, or rather with the appearance of the faculty, of being able to share man’s enthusiasms, respond to his ideals, echo his thoughts. But this apparent sympathy is only the bait on woman’s hook. Once it is swallowed the feminine enthusiasms, the shared ideals, the “disinterested” interests, are discarded like a worn-out glove and the young man who would reform society, see visions, talk with God, finds himself reduced by his triumphant mate to the role of a breadwinner for herself and her children.

And so it goes for ninety-nine cases out of a hundred; but the hundredth case is the case of the genius. The genius is the repository of a special “potential” of Life expressly created for the specific purpose of carrying Life to higher levels by giving man a new insight into truth, a new concept of political association and moral obligation, a new vision of beauty, or a new refinement and subtlety of personal relationship. As Shaw puts it, a genius is a man “selected by Nature to carry on the work of building up an intellectual consciousness of her own instinctive purpose.” He is, accordingly, the vehicle of as direct and purposeful an inheritance from Life as the woman herself, and will sacrifice woman in pursuance of his purpose as ruthlessly as she sacrifices the ordinary man in the pursuance of hers.

Since the genius is by definition in advance of the existing level of evolutionary consciousness, being, in fact, a biological “sport” on the spiritual and intellectual planes, the work which he feels impelled to do is ex hypothesi work for which the world is not yet ready; for which, therefore, it is not prepared to pay. If he is a “sport” in the aesthetic field, if he is a Schubert or a Cézanne, he is usually allowed to starve to death in a garret in the usual way. If he is a “sport” on the moral or political plane, if he is a Blake, a Tolstoy, a Swedenborg, a Servetus or a Bunyan, or, Shaw would add, a Christ, he is usually persecuted with all the rigour of the law. In either event he is not a good husband, precisely because he is not “making good.” What is more, he will be prepared without scruple to put his wife to the job of earning for himself and family the money which he is too preoccupied to earn himself. He will risk the stake and the cross; starve, when necessary, in a garret all his life; work his nerves into rags without payment; study women and live on their work and care as Darwin studied worms or Ehrlich bacteria; a sublime altruist in his disregard of himself, an atrocious egotist in his disregard of others. Here woman meets a purpose as impersonal, as irresistible as her own; and the clash is sometimes tragic.

Hence the clash between woman and the genius arises from the
directness of the inheritance which each has from Life; or, if the phrase be preferred, the strength of the respective "potentials" at which Life is manifested in them. In the genius, Life's purpose is to lift itself to heights of consciousness not previously achieved; in the woman, to safeguard and maintain the level which has already been attained.

DIGRESSION: (III) ON ART AND THE ARTIST

Shaw's view of art has already, by implication, been touched upon. Art is a device by means of which Life achieves its purpose of lifting itself to a higher level of conscious awareness and the great artist is the instrument which it creates for the fulfilment of that purpose.

The method of Life's advance is envisaged in two stages; first, the great artist appears—an original thinker from this point of view is a special case of the artist—the representative of a new and original inspiration from Life. He embodies his vision in paint or sound or stone or words. Now, precisely because it is an original vision, the work of art in which it is embodied breaks the rules of composition, outrages the accepted concepts of form and style and taste, discards the hitherto accepted recipes for the catching and embalming of beauty and is, therefore, held to be a monstrosity of ugliness and disharmony. (Beethoven's Third Symphony, the music of Wagner, and the paintings of the Impressionists are examples especially cited by Shaw.) It challenges prevalent notions, flouts current prejudices, startles, shocks and flies in the face of popular morality. Hence, the life of the genius is usually poor, solitary and brutish and, since he is a genius in respect of only the hundredth part of himself, the remaining ninety-nine hundredths being an ordinary chap with a craving for human sympathy and affection, and a natural desire to win the world's esteem and to bask in the sunshine of popular favour and his wife's approval, the genius is usually the most wretched of men. If, however, his vision does, indeed, embody a new and original impression from Life, others will presently come to see things in the colours of the spectacles which he has tinted for them. The outrageous symphony or painting will be adopted as the accepted standard of orthodoxy and good taste and the heterodoxies of today will be enshrined in the Home Notes of tomorrow. This is the second stage, the stage in which the common consciousness of civilised mankind moves up to the level of insight at which the original genius first appeared. Thus, the genius is beauty's midwife. He does not create beauty but he brings to birth in sound or paint or
stone the beauty which he has first discerned, so that ordinary men with their duller and grosser senses may presently apprehend for themselves the beauty which the work of art throws, as it were, into high relief. He makes wide and straight for the many the narrow path which he has been the first to follow.

Such, then, is the distinctive Shavian attitude to art and its function. It is a device, one of the most important, for refining and enlarging the awareness of men and women and so lifting Life itself to a higher level of consciousness.

This is a high function and Shaw’s attack on romantic art, by which he usually means art directed to the glorification of woman, is the expression of his indignation at its perversion. Art, as Shaw conceives it, is very largely a male preserve. It is, of course, natural that woman should seek to induce the artist to be content to glorify her, instead of going about his proper business of raising the general level of Life’s awareness and deepening and refining Life’s power of insight. But to do this is, in effect, to use the power of art to stabilise life at the level which it has already reached, instead of raising it to higher levels. It is as if the artist were to rest on the oars of his predecessors’ achievements, instead of striking out for himself. Rightly regarded, art should supersede sex and not glorify it. In this sense, ne cherchez pas la femme, Shaw tells us, is the clue to the motivation of great art.

But there another attitude is discernible in Shaw’s work in respect of which, and in respect of the manner of his advance to it, Shaw’s thought curiously reproduces Plato’s.

Plato has a twofold attitude to art. He suspects it because it rouses the sleeping dogs of emotion which were better left to lie, strengthens the irrational part of the soul, and makes images of the things of the sensible world and so directs soul’s attention away from instead of towards reality. But there is another strain in Plato’s thought, a strain that comes out more particularly in the Phaedrus and the Symposium, which represents art as the medium in which the Form of Beauty is manifested and, therefore, as a window, one of the clearest, through which man’s soul may obtain a glimpse of reality.

Whilst Plato tends to move from the first position to the second, the development of Shaw’s thought seems rather to have been from the second to the first. In the last play of Back to Methuselah we find a comparatively lowly place assigned to art. With love, it is regarded as the staple occupation of the very young; the Festival of the Artists, staged at the beginning of the last play of the Pentateuch is, apparently, supported entirely by the “under fives.” “Soon,”
says the Ancient, “you will give up all these toys and games and
sweets.”

The He-Ancient belittles art, very much as Plato might have done
when advocating the expulsion of artists from the ideal State. “As
you grow up,” he says, “you make images and paint pictures. Those
of you who cannot do that make stories about imaginary dolls.” But
who, he presently asks, would make statues and images if he could
apprehend the originals? Who would want stories if he knew the
facts? This thought is developed by the She-Ancient: “Art is the
magic mirror you make to reflect your invisible dreams in visible
pictures. You use a glass mirror to see your face: you use works of
art to see your soul. But we who are older use neither glass mirrors
nor works of art. We have a direct sense of life. When you gain that
you will put aside your mirrors and statues, your toys and your
dolls.” Shaw does not here go to Plato’s length and treat art as a
will-o’-the-wisp leading men away from reality. It is, for him, rather
a substitute for reality, a substitute accepted perforce by those in
whom Life has not yet sufficiently developed to be able to achieve
and sustain a direct view of reality itself.

The suggestion might be ventured that the artist may be regarded
as one who has had the vision of the soul but been unable to sustain
it, and so makes the work of art to serve as a memento of the
original, which his vision once glimpsed, but can glimpse no longer.
If this were true, the work of art would be an expression not of the
inspiration which the artist has, but the inspiration that he had once
but has failed to maintain. I cannot find any evidence for this sug-
gestion in Shaw, although it seems a logical corollary of his view
of art.

RETURN FROM DIGRESSION. THE PURPOSE
OF LIFE

What, then, is the reality of which the artist makes copies, but which
the Ancients directly apprehend? Shaw never seems to have made
up his mind. His philosophy envisages Life’s evolution as the de-
velopment of an ever more intense and penetrating power of aware-
ness. Now, awareness must be directed upon something, this
something being other than itself, and Shaw’s thought seems to me
to demand the inclusion in the universe of an element of static and
perfect perfection upon which the consciousness of a fully de-
formed might come to rest. Such an element is, indeed,
her philosophical systems with which Shaw’s has
thetic philosophers attain to a vision of the timeless
Forms which, thereafter, they contemplate. Aristotle’s God is engaged, at least in part, in working out mathematical problems, engaged, that is to say, in contemplating the static perfection of mathematical quantities and their relations. The reason for this demand is obvious; thought by its very nature demands an object; there must be something for thought to think about. This something must be other than the thought itself and, since the factor of change in the universe has been appropriated for the developing consciousness of the thinker in whom the ever-changing Life Force is expressed, the object, the thing thought about, must, one would have supposed, be represented as exempt from the changes by which the evolutionary process is itself pervaded.

Shaw comes within striking distance of this position without ever explicitly adopting it. It will be noted that in the quotation cited above, the She-Ancient speaks of a “direct sense” not of reality, but “of life,” which suggests that Life’s power of cognition in its latest and fullest development is directed upon itself. The speech of Lilith with which the play concludes, while contriving to give a fairly full exposition of Shaw’s general view is, on this particular point, singularly uninformative.

What, we want to know, do the Ancients do with their developed consciousness? What does their thought busy itself about? What is it that it is the ultimate purpose of Life to know?

Such answer as Shaw gives is contained in the two following passages from Lilith’s last speech:

After passing a million goals they press on to the goal of redemption from the flesh, to the vortex freed from matter, to the whirlpool in pure intelligence that, when the world began, was a whirlpool in pure force. And though all that they have done seems but the first hour of the infinite work of creation, yet I will not supersede them until they have forded this last stream that lies between flesh and spirit, and disentangled their life from the matter that has always mocked it.

I brought Life into the whirlpool of force, and compelled my enemy, Matter, to obey a living soul. But in enslaving Life’s enemy I made him Life’s master; for that is the end of all slavery; and now I shall see the slave set free and the enemy reconciled, the whirlpool become all Life and no matter.

These passages embody the following propositions:
(1) That Life was originally a whirlpool in pure force;
(2) that it entered into matter, used matter and compelled matter to obey it;
(3) that by so doing it became matter’s slave;
(4) that the object of Life's development is to put an end to this slavery by winning free of or conquering matter. It is not clear whether matter still remains, Life having, as it were, merely disentangled itself from it, or whether matter is ultimately eliminated by Life, so that it ceases to be;

(5) that redemption from the flesh having been achieved, Life will become pure thought.

But if, insisting once again that thought must surely be of something and that that something must be other than the thinking about it, we repeat the question, what, then, does Life in its ultimate expression think about, there is no answer. The system, in fact, in its ultimate consummation seems to deny the truth upon which Shaw has so often insisted in the course of its development. We are told that we must not think about and concern ourselves with ourselves but lose ourselves in what is greater than and external to the self. But if we are Ancients these admonitions no longer apparently apply, for in the case of the Ancients thought, so far as one can see, is directed only upon itself. To postulate that it should be directed upon anything else would be tantamount to introducing into the Shavian universe a timeless, static element whether conceived as God, as Forms, as the Absolute or, even, as mathematical relations, which Shaw's thought, dominated by the conviction that the evolutionary process is all that there is, can never quite bring itself explicitly to admit.

I propose to conclude by indicating first, the respects in which the Shavian philosophy carries the doctrine of Creative Evolution beyond the point at which it was left by his predecessor, Butler, and, secondly, some of its more obvious weaknesses.

LIKENESSSES OF AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SHAVIAN AND BUTLERIAN PHILOSOPHIES

A conscious, creative, immaterial force expressing itself in matter and using and moulding matter in the pursuit of its own purposes is the premise taken as the starting point of both Shaw's and Butler's philosophies. They show a common outlook on many subsidiary matters, for example, each writer is a great adherent of practical intelligence; each sings the praises of common sense. Shaw, like Butler, hates professionals, especially doctors, and tends to look at people from a biological point of view, recognizing in those organisms which are best adapted to the purposes of living the most valu-
able products of evolution. Moreover, for Shaw as for Butler, such persons are those who, while possessing no culture and few intellectual attainments, nevertheless exhibit a store of instinctive rule-of-thumb philosophy. 'Enry Straker and Alfred Doolittle are the lineal descendants of Mrs. Jupp in The Way of All Flesh, and Yram in Erewhon. All these very pleasant and amusing people know what to do on all ordinary and extraordinary occasions, but none of them could tell you how they know it or why they ought to do it. Like some fortunate bridge players, they play the right card instinctively, while others after much thought and travail as often as not produce the wrong one.

So far the outlook of the two thinkers is the same; but when we push our inquiries a stage further, a marked difference reveals itself. Butler regards the operations of the speculative intellect as a pedantic futility, and appears to look forward with equanimity to the merging of the practical intellect in unconscious instinct. There is nothing in his writings to show that he does not think man would be better off without the intellect altogether, and that its gradual supersession may be expected as the next stage in human progress towards the goal of evolution. For Shaw, on the other hand, the operations of the intellect are the goal of evolution. While for both the Force that animates the universe is a single, unified, unconscious urge, it is, in Shaw, an unconscious urge struggling for consciousness. He admires the instinctively successful and practical man, but only because it is in such as he that Life, by achieving a momentary equilibrium in the present, prepares itself for new achievements in the future. Shaw glories in life; he glories in it to the extent of maintaining that if we are to live properly we must live longer; but he only wants us to live longer, in order that we may think more. Thus the Ancients in the last play of the Back to Methuselah Pentateuch, having achieved a relative emancipation from the needs and exigencies of material existence employ their freedom in the unfettered activity of the intellect. What does the intellect do? It contemplates. It is this contemplation, the occupation and the delight of mystics in all ages, that Shaw seems to regard as the object of evolution; it is for this that the whole experiment of life was undertaken. Butler prepared the way for this conception, but he did not share it. He divined the meaning and described the method of evolution, but he gave no hint of its ultimate purpose. The system with which Shaw presents us in Back to Methuselah is thus a definite advance on Butler's work. It embodies a constructive essay in philosophy, which was probably beyond the reach of Butler's more negative mind; though it may be doubted whether, if Butler had not lived, such an
essay could have been made. In this, as in so much else, Butler was Socrates to Shaw’s Plato.

RECEPTION OF SHAW’S PHILOSOPHY

It cannot be said that Shaw’s philosophy has won wide acceptance. For this his eminence in other fields is, no doubt, in part responsible. The English find it hard to forgive a man for making more than one reputation, and Shaw has made at least half a dozen. It is easy, then, to play down his claims as a philosopher on the ground that the man who was a great prose-writer, playwright, orator, wit, political thinker and public figure could not also be endowed with the profundity of the original philosopher, apart altogether from the time, energy and industry which the pursuit of philosophy demands. This criticism, the fruit of sour grapes, is, I think, negligible. Shaw’s eminence in each of the various departments I have mentioned enhances and does not detract from his eminence in the others; for his thought, as I have tried to show, is remarkably coherent and the doctrine of Creative Evolution informs and unifies his doctrines on every other topic. Another reason for the comparative neglect of the more philosophical aspect of Shaw’s work is the contemporary appearance of two divergent developments of the creative evolutionary view, that of Bergson in *Creative Evolution* and that of S. Alexander in *Space, Time and Deity*, which, though they postulate the same metaphysical background as Shaw does, depart in their development of this background in radical particulars from Shaw’s. As they were presented to the world in the more orthodox trappings of formal philosophical writings, they tended to occupy the spotlight of philosophical scrutiny and criticism to the exclusion of Shaw. As one who has endeavoured, not very successfully, to provide a formal philosophical setting for Shaw’s doctrines, I can vouch from personal experience for the comparative absence of serious attention which they have evoked. So much having been said by way of explanation and extenuation, it must be pointed out that there are manifest points of weakness upon which serious criticism, if it had, in fact, been accorded, could have fastened.

THE DIFFICULTY OF END OR GOAL

Of these the most important are: (1) The neglect, to which attention has already been drawn, to make provision for any end or goal upon which the developed consciousness of the evolving Life Force

*In *Matter, Life and Value* (Oxford University Press).*
could be directed. Shaw presents us with a dualistic universe which contains Life and matter in which Life incarnates itself and through which Life develops. But if we ask, to what end does it develop, there is no answer. There is, that is to say, no element of perfect or changeless reality in Shaw's scheme, the apprehension and realization of which might be regarded as forming the purpose and goal of the evolutionary process. Shaw's cosmic scheme would seem to demand the inclusion of precisely such an element, an element of absolute value. Shaw might have said that Life evolved in matter, through matter and beyond matter to a knowledge of value. He hints as much, but never explicitly says it.

THE DIFFICULTY OF THE RELATION BETWEEN LIFE AND MATTER

(2) No satisfactory account is given of the relation between Life and matter. Life enters into matter, uses and moulds it. But how? We are not told. The traditional problem of the relation of Life to matter, of the spaceless to the spatial, of the animating spirit to the animated medium is not so much solved as begged. Sometimes Shaw speaks of matter as attracting Life. "What was wrong," says Pygmalion in the last play of Back to Methuselah "with the synthetic protoplasm was that it could not fix and conduct the Life Force. It was like a wooden magnet or a lightning conductor made of silk; it would not take the current." The metaphor here is that of an electric current running down a wire; different kinds of wire can, presumably, take different potentials of current. More often we are simply told that Life or evolution "must meanwhile struggle with matter and circumstance by the method of trial and error," in order to rise above "matter and circumstance." It may, of course, be the case that the relation is ineffable and can only be prefigured in the language of metaphor and myth; but to many this fact, if fact it be, would seem so intractable and the relation which it conceals so unthinkable, that they would insist on demanding the abandonment of the dualistic scheme which requires it and substitute a monistic explanation either, like the materialist in terms of matter alone or, like the idealist in terms of Life or mind alone. The reflection that the unexplained relationship between Life and matter entails and includes the vexed question of the relationship within the living organism between mind and body, only serves to throw into high relief the enormity of the assumption that Shaw leaves as it were ungrounded. The two loose ends, mind and body, are never tied together, but are left dangling.
THE DIFFICULTY OF FREE WILL

(3) It is never clear how far, for Shaw, the individual is free. Is he merely a vehicle for the canalisation and subsequent development of the Life Force, or can he win some measure of freedom from Life's promptings? In the first event, he is a mere fountain-pen for conveying the stream of Life, no more responsible for what he does than is the pen for what it writes. It is fairly clear that Shaw does not mean this. For if the individual were not in some sense free, the admonitions and exhortations and injunctions of which Shaw's practical philosophy consists would be beside the point. To be told, for example, that success in life consists in being used in pursuit of its purposes by the power that made you, clearly implies that it is open to you to resist being used in this way, open to you to follow your own purposes, in fact, to fail.

This, I have no doubt, is Shaw's view. We are, at best, imperfect instruments of Life's purpose. In particular, we busy ourselves with our own concerns instead of using ourselves up in Life's service, and although Life does its best to point out to us through the instrumentality of Shaw and other wise men, whom it sends into the world "to give conscious expression to its instinctive purpose," the way it would have us go, and encourages us to follow it by contriving that the life of direct pleasure-seeking will be unrewarding even in terms of pleasure, nevertheless, we do in fact all too frequently go astray.

Assuming, then, that we do have freedom, three difficulties arise. (a) First, is our freedom only a freedom to go wrong? Are we, when we go right, when, that is to say, we go about Life's business, mere automata, responding to the promptings and impulses that reach us from Life, whereas when we assert our own wills and go our own ways, when, in fact, we thwart Life's purposes, we are acting as self-determining individuals? This is a depressing view to take of human free will.

(b) If we are free, whence do we derive the energy which enables us to pursue a course divergent from Life's purpose in regard to us? Granted that we are instruments of life, how can the instrument turn against the hand that wields it? Is it, perhaps, the interposition of matter between the main stream of Life and its individual expressions that confers a measure of freedom upon the latter, much as a line of rocks lying athwart a river will diversify it into a number of different streamlets, each of which may pursue its own course, though the energy with which it pursues is that of the parent river. This suggestion, perhaps, is not unpleasible; but besides making use of a metaphor which may well be inadmissible, it derives the fact of
freedom from the interposition of matter which limits the power of Life over its individual expressions. Shaw himself never, so far as I know, tackles this difficulty.

(c) It may and has been urged that Shaw's theory provides a pitiably inadequate expression of the facts of moral experience.
ERIC BENTLEY
1947

Shaw's Political Economy

I

"The love of economy is the root of all virtue."
—JOHN TANNER, M.I.B.C.

Of the fifteen reputations which Shaw has laid claim to, his reputation as a socialist is perhaps the most familiar. Shaw has been expounding socialism for over sixty years, and there would be no excuse for expounding it for him, were it not that ignorance of it is displayed in nearly everything that is said on the subject. Before giving Shaw a careful reading I myself had heard only two things about his politics: that when he was young he belonged to a dreary group of half-hearted socialists who imagined that capitalism could be overthrown by wire-pulling and talk; and that when he grew old he came to admire tyranny and condone violence. I was not the only one to hear things of that sort. Most of Shaw's biographers re-affirm the cliché about the Fabian Society. Perhaps the biographers have read H. G. Wells, who, when the Fabians threw him out, wrote: "If they had the universe in hand, I know they would take down all the trees and put up stamped tin green shades and sunlight accumulators." Shaw's political philosophy is buried as deep as, say, William Godwin's. Digging Shaw up again, as if he were one of those writers whose chief glory is to be rediscovered in academic theses, I propose to discuss three questions: first, what is Shaw's "Fabianism"? second, what are Shaw's views on the prime problems of political philosophy, the problems of the state and revolution, authority and liberty? third, what is the pedigree and status of Shaw's political


206
philosophy? where does he stand in the tradition of European socialism?

The attack on Shaw’s politics has taken several different lines: that he has betrayed his earlier Fabianism, that Fabianism was not worth betraying, and even that he never was a real Fabian. Evidently we need light on Fabianism as well as on Shaw. The Fabian Society, founded in 1884, and after a few months opening its doors to Sidney Webb and Bernard Shaw, was a club of Victorian intellectuals whose plan was never either more or less than to influence the public life of their country as much as a club of intellectuals can. Even today, when the Society is larger than ever before, it has not more than 5000 members. It is idle, then, to complain that it is not a proletarian party and it is impossible to sneer at it as a group of intellectuals unless one thinks groups of intellectuals have no right to exist. The Fabian Society differed from a political party not only in its sheer lack of party organization but also in not being bound to have a “party line.”* There was in fact wide divergence of opinion on many things. Agreement limited itself to the socialist goal and to certain attitudes concerning ways and means, attitudes which gradually defined themselves in the struggle against capitalism and, perhaps even more, in the struggle with other kinds of socialism, especially Marxism. Not that Shaw, for one, ever concealed his debt to Marx. His socialism began with Marx and Henry George in 1882. The economic basis of history “dawned on” Shaw when he heard George speak; it was clinched by his reading of the first volume of Kapital. In later years Shaw would call himself an “old Marxist.” Nevertheless, when he declares (Fabian Quarterly, April 1944) that “Socialists who are not essentially Marxist are not Socialists at all” he apparently understands by Marxism solely the economic interpretation of history and the uncompromising collectivist stand. It does not appear that Shaw read anything in Marxist literature except the Communist Manifesto and Kapital I and II. For their part the Marxists denounced Shaw and the Fabians. It is to them even more perhaps than to reactionaries that we owe the legend that Fabianism was academic and futile. Even so moderate a liberal as Mr. Edmund Wilson confesses to having derived his damaging critique of Bernard Shaw’s Fabianism from a Marxist source.

Marxist socialism claims to be, not a sentiment of indignation at injustice, but a scientific demonstration that capitalism will give way to socialism. Fabianism begins and ends as an appeal—emotionally

* See Fabian Tract No. 70 (1896): “It [the Society] has no distinctive opinions on the Marriage Question, Religion, Art, abstract Economics, historic Evolution, Currency, or any other subject than its own special business of practical Democracy and Socialism.”
based—for social justice. Negatively stated, it is a protest against social inequality. Though the Fabians were far from knowing it their attitude reached its most highly articulated expression in Shaw’s *Intelligent Woman’s Guide* in which exact economic equality is called for to provide a basis for the natural diversity—or inequality of men. How such conceptions differ from Marxism became clear in lengthy disputes between the two schools of thought.

The Fabian quarrel with the early Marxists was over two closely connected parts of Marxist doctrine: the labor theory of value and the class struggle. Shaw himself led the Fabians in both disputes. The technical side of his critique of the labor theory of value he derived from the British economist Stanley Jevons who advanced a theory of “marginal utility” identical with that which was independently advanced on the continent in the ’seventies and ’eighties. Following Jevons, Shaw denied that the exchange value of a commodity depended primarily on the amount of socially necessary labor put into it and argued that the value of any commodity is a function of the quantity available. Fearing that this argument would take the teeth out of socialism by denying that the capitalist’s profits were stolen from the workmen’s earnings, in the sense that the product of labor is in excess of its price, the Marxists clung to Ricardo’s labor theory of value. Shaw was more impressed by another side of the Ricardian economics: its description of rent. In rent he finds the diagnostic of capitalism. And in *Fabian Essays* (1889), written before the advent of inductive, historical economics (it was Beatrice Webb who would lead the Fabians into this path later), Shaw proceeds on time-honored Ricardian lines. His account of rent may be read as a parable.

Mr. A seizes the best piece of land in a virgin region and makes $1000 with its products. Mr. B, the next man to turn up, gets inferior land which yields, say, $500. Mr. A may now rent his land to Mr. B for $500, for the latter could not make a higher rate of profit anyway. Mr. A can now retire and live as an idler on rent. So much for the parable. Shaw now extends the use of the term “rent” to the whole area of private profit making. The remedy for the injustice it involves is socialism:

What the achievement of socialism involves economically is the transfer of rent from the class which now appropriates it to the whole people. Rent being that part of the produce which is individually unearned, this is the only equitable method of disposing of it.

In other words Shaw agrees with Proudhon that “property is theft.” Shaw’s “rent” is much the same as Marx’s “surplus value,” but the injustice of the capitalist system is to Shaw all the greater because
commodities do not exchange according to the labor that has gone into them:

Commodities produced in the most favorable situations, well inside the margin of cultivation, with the minimum of labor, will fetch as high a price as commodities produced at the margin with the maximum of labor. And all the difference between the two goes to the landlord.

Thus from the Ricardian parable follows the Jevonian principle that "the exchange of the least useful part of the supply fixes the exchange value of all the rest." From this principle follows the Shavian definition of humanity under capitalism.

In a society of buying and selling the vast mass of the population has nothing to sell but itself. If there were only one workman in their settlement, Mr. A and Mr. B would have to pay a good deal for his services. But, the supply of workmen being in excess of the need, their value falls to nothing. To nothing, not to their wage level. For a wage is only the feeding and stabling of the animal. Wherever horses are to be had for the asking, at no cost save their maintenance, their value is not the cost of maintenance: it is nil. Capitalism ought thus, says Shaw, to be called proletarianism, which again is but a polite word for prostitution. Mrs. Warren's profession is only the most dramatic example of proletarianism. That is why Shaw, the dramatist, chose it to illustrate the nature of modern society.

Shaw's theory of value, then, was, like Marx's, the hub of an analysis of capitalism. Where it differed from Marx, other than verbally, it differed in being less of a "scientific" demonstration on the one hand and less of a metaphysic on the other. And this meant not only that Shaw's economic essays are infinitely smaller things in intention and effect than Marx's but that Shaw is much less of a believer in fixed laws both in economics and nature. He seized on Jevons because the latter seemed to leave a loophole for human will and effort. In Jevons there was no "law of motion of capitalism," no historical inevitability. Shaw fought the Marxists whenever, like the Darwinists, they seemed to be determinists.

The discussion of value was opened and closed in the 'eighties. The matter of the class struggle needed a lengthier airing. (Again Shaw's chief antagonist was the contemporary English champion of Marx, H. M. Hyndman.) Shaw's argument in this battle was not in the least the argument of classical economy—that there is a harmony of interests as between capital and labor. He fully agreed with Marx that there was no such harmony. He fully shared Marx's wish for a classless society. He did not agree however that present antagonisms of interest would automatically induce the proletariat to struggle for
power. Again it is the law of history, the historical necessity, the inevi-
tability, that Shaw objects to. He fears that reliance on them is as
futile as reliance on God and that to wait for History to produce
socialism is to wait forever. When the Marxist replies that if the
workers are not class-conscious they must be made so he is of course
appealing from historical necessity to the will of a minority. Shaw is
not averse to this. He merely concludes that, so prompted, the
struggle for socialism will have lower and upper class people on
both sides and is therefore not accurately described as a class
struggle.

The present absence of class consciousness is not the only thing.
There always will be an absence of proletarian class consciousness
on the part of those whose customers are the rich:

The line that separates those who live on rich customers from those who
live on poor customers: in other words, which separates those interested
in the maintenance of Capitalism from those interested in its replace-
ment by Socialism, is a line drawn not between rich and poor, capitalist
and proletarian, but right down the middle of the proletariat to the
bottom of the very poorest section.

Thus the class struggle of the Marxists—the struggle between
those who pay and receive wages—is cut across by another strug-
gle—the struggle between those whose customers live on interest
and those whose customers live on wages.

To the Marxist all this is ineffably bourgeois: the Fabians fail to
see the historic mission of the working class. Naturally. For the
Fabians deny that such things as historic missions exist. And—it is
true—they are unique as post-Marxist socialists in putting no more
faith in the proletariat as such than in any other group. Less, if any-
thing. Shaw has always held that if the poor were already wiser and
better than anybody else that would be a reason for keeping them
poor. His socialism resembles D. H. Lawrence’s in that he wishes to
do nothing with the proletariat except abolish it. At this point the
Marxist abandons his argument of necessity and appeals to pure
sentiment, to that praise of the poor as poor which is the essence of
demagogy. Theoretically the Marxist should not believe in the
superiority of the poor or in the villainy of the rich. Actually very
much Marxist propaganda does posit these things. The Fabians
offered a much less dramatic program: that of permeating the
liberals, of using parliamentary methods, of gradualness. What
could be more disgusting to the political salvationist? To this day
our scorn for the Fabians unconsciously echoes the indignation of
the outraged revolutionaries. The defense of the Fabian position
should be two-fold. First, sanity is often less exciting than insanity.
Second, permeation and gradualness were the beginning, not the end, of Fabian policy.

That Fabian policy was sane is shown by the astonishing measure of success which attended it. No group of philosophes since the Benthamites had known so well how to get results. It would be impossible to account for the social legislation of England in the twentieth century without the work of preparation performed by such people as the Webbs. That most of it was enacted by Liberal and Conservative regimes is a tribute to the policy of permeation. Meanwhile the Fabians themselves had taken a new stand. They were one of the most solid bodies of informed support that went to the making of the Labour Party (1900–1906). The reconstitution of the Labour Party in 1918 was the work of Sidney Webb as much as any one man. At this date the kind of people who earlier mocked at the Fabians for their academicism and remoteness from the political struggle began to shift their ground. They noted with glee how the purities of theory are contaminated by the impurities of practice. They pointed to the number of Fabians in the Labour governments of 1924 and 1929 not to show the success but the failure of Fabianism. But can the vacillation and pusillanimity of Ramsay MacDonald’s cabinets be blamed upon the doctrines of Fabianism? One should recall that Sidney Webb was the first to denounce MacDonald’s treachery, that Beatrice Webb was at this time proposing a new Reform Act more revolutionary than that of a century earlier, that Shaw was suggesting a new set of Fabian Essays to bring Fabianism up to date with schemes for a new kind of government.

Mention the Fabians and someone will bring up “the inevitability of gradualness.” It can be brought up here, however, only to be dismissed. Coined as late as 1923 by Sidney Webb, deplored by Beatrice as early as 1932, the phrase was never a summary of the Fabian mentality and never meant what it is generally supposed to mean. It meant, not that gradual socialism possessed the same kind of historic inevitability as is claimed by Marxist communism, but only that deep social changes take time. In the first flush of youth the Fabians had believed that socialism could take effect in a fortnight. Later, as Shaw put it, they realized that though you may nationalize the railways in an afternoon, it will be a long time before all your first-class and third-class carriages become second-class carriages. Thus in reviewing Russian history between 1917 and 1924 Shaw rebukes Lenin for being insufficiently Fabian; the latter, trying to introduce communism at a stroke, had subsequently to acknowledge the “inevitability of gradualness,” and beat a retreat. Webb’s famous phrase is therefore no blanket endorsement of parliamentary methods.

In fact, the anti-parliamentary animus was nothing new to British
collectivism, as readers of Carlyle and Dickens can testify. If the Fabians were willing to make use of parliament it was never because they were all parliamentarians on principle but because they could see no other practical path to reform. They were not pacifists. Their difference with the advocates of violent revolution was based on the conviction, not that violence was wrong, but that it was inappropriate at the time. Fabius was chosen as their patron not because he waited but because he waited before he struck. H. G. Wells’s taunting observation that Fabius waited and never struck may have been pertinent as applied to some of the Fabians—but it was especially inapplicable to the socialism of his chief antagonist, Bernard Shaw, who in The Clarion (21 October 1904) had already protested against the idea

that there are two courses open to us: parliamentary action and physical force, each of which excludes the other. That is not so: Parliamentary action is usually the first stage of civil war. It brings the issues before the man in the street; it works up public feeling; and when the reactionary party is not prepared to fight, and the advancing party is, it settles the question without bloodshed. It is of course possible that Capitalism will go under without a fight; but I confess I should regard any statesman who calculated on that as an extremely sanguine man. The mistake made by our wildcat barricaders is not in believing that the revolution will be effected by force, but in putting the fighting at the wrong end of the process. It will take many more years to make the questions burning ones; and it will take more years still before the burning works up a single Englishman to the point of firing on any other Englishman—if necessary—sooner than tolerate the status quo.

The Marxists believe that the whole thing will be done by “historical development,” which the Liberals (Marxism being only an intellectually pretentious form of proletarian Liberalism) call Progress with a large P.

Passages like this have been forgotten by those who think that Shaw began to talk this way only under the influence of Stalin. But we must not pretend that Shaw and Fabianism never changed with the times. They would have been stupid not to. The changes, however, were adaptations and adjustments, not betrayals and conversions. The major adjustment concerned this very question of violence. The First World War and the Russian Revolution opened Shaw’s eyes to many things. Perhaps now he fully realized what Engels had meant by describing war as the midwife of social change. In 1904 he had said that the situation was not yet revolutionary. From the ’twenties on he was not so sure. He began to think it high time the Englishman was ready to shoot:
I am afraid our property system will not be settled without violence unless you make up your minds that, if it is defended by violence, it will be overthrown by violence.

These words were spoken a few months before the Nazis defended property by violence and were met, not by counter-violence, but by a disunited left weakened by years of propaganda against the use of force—weakened, many Marxists said, by the German equivalent of Fabianism, recalling how Eduard Bernstein had Fabianised the Social Democrats after his association with the Fabians in London. But I hope I have shown with what doubtful propriety one equates Fabianism with the perennial wishy-washiness of labor’s right wing.

"Shaw, then, began by attacking the non-Fabian socialists for their bellicosity and ended by attacking them for their pacifism"—so say his critics. There is no inconsistency in Shaw’s two positions. In each case he was opposing a strategy that could not succeed. An armed insurrection led by Hyndman would simply have shocked the British gentleman without doing socialism any good. Was it not preferable, so long as no more drastic action was feasible, to win the sympathies of as many British gentlemen as possible? After 1919, however, came a change. A peaceful Social Democracy led by Ramsay MacDonald would inveigh against capitalism in vain. The time for drastic action had come. In the earlier situation Shaw believed that a “showdown” would be premature: the socialists would get more by asking for less. In the later situation Shaw believed the avoidance of a “showdown” would be missing a chance of socialist victory and giving capitalism a new lease of life: asking for a little at this stage would be to get nothing at all. As for militarism and pacifism they are abstractions and superstitions. In politics there are only ends and the means—now “militaristic,” now “pacifistic”—by which ends are reached.

Probably few of the Fabians were as clear-headed as Shaw about all this. The Webbs seem to have harbored for a long time the un-Shavian illusion that capitalists can be talked into socialism. But we should not imagine that the Webbs always led the way in Fabian thinking. In this matter of violence it was Shaw who led, and the Webbs who came to his conclusion much later. It is the same in the related question of leadership. The Webbs had always believed in the expert but they had imagined him wholly as servant (the servant, they said, is our noblest functionary) and not as leader. Shaw did not leave it to Lenin or Stalin to give him a belief in the active leader who does much more than merely carry out the expressed will of the masses. One need hardly cite his Caesar and Cleopatra,
his prefatorial praise of the Bismarckian man of action who will sweep away all humbug, or his doctrine of Superman. The most acute analyst of Shaw's socialism in the early days, Max Beer, saw in it all the things that would later offend the liberals. Writing in 1904 from the Marxist standpoint, Beer said Shaw was the victim of relativism:

Having no objective guide, no leading principle to go by, Shaw necessarily arrives at hero-worship—at the hankering after a Superman to guide mankind. I have noticed the same mental development in several continental critics like Harden, Bahr, Ernst, etc. They began with Social Democracy, passed through the Ibsen period, worshipped The Enemy of the People, finally becoming adherents of Nietzsche in theory and of Bismarck or some other social imperialist in practice. Marxism is the antithesis of all that. It has a body of doctrines; it regards theory as the guide in practical life; and it destroys all heroism in history. In the place of the heroic factor it sets material and economic factors as the motor power of historical development. ... The Revisionists, or Fabians, say: "Socialism is, before all, an administrative problem; it is not a class struggle, but a clever management of public affairs! It is the Superman in local government."

Discount the weighing of certain words with Marxist emotion and what Beer says is perfectly acceptable. Once dispute the adequacy of "material and economic factors" to make revolutions on their own, and you do have to appeal to human will and hence to "heroism." Max Beer makes the alternatives very clear and surely his position is more convincing than that of liberals who too lightly assume that we can do without the assistance alike of History and the Superman.

Beer is also right in his assertion—however sarcastic—that the Superman doctrine is implicit in the Fabian expert. He saw deeper than those who found in the latter nothing more than a dreary bureaucratic mediocrity. And he saw it long before the Webbs did. The first inkling that the Webbs had of the real needs of leadership seems to have been in the 'twenties when Beatrice called for a "dedicated Order of Socialists" resembling the Society of Jesus. At the time she was anti-soviet. A decade later, after visiting the country which Shaw was already overenthusiastic about, she was to praise Soviet Russia for having—so she alleged—made leadership a voca-

The Webbs learnt from Shaw, and Shaw learnt from the Webbs. It is impossible to make out, as some have tried to do, that they made a merely freakish trio. They were complementary. The Webbs' weakness was an oversimplification of human nature. They regarded people as more tractable than they really are. Shaw, on the
other hand, was an artist and therefore, as he said, "a specialist in human nature." The Webbs had much to learn from him about the intractability of the human animal, about the necessity of conflict and of leadership. Shaw had to learn from the Webbs the large-scale facts, the statistics, the manifold particulars of sociology. In a sense the combination of the Webbs and Shaw is Fabianism. This combination gave us the Fabianism of the early tracts and of the Fabian Essays (1889); it gave us also the Fabianism of the Minority Report and the standard history of trade-unionism. It gave us the Fabianism that "permeated the Liberals"; it gave us also the Fabianism that helped to shape and guide the Labour Party.

Between wars (1919–1939) the Fabian Society was relatively dormant; and when it woke up—how impressively!—with the outbreak of the Second World War it was in younger hands. The intermediate years, however, had a special importance in the unfolding of Fabian theory and in the development of the remarkable collaboration of Shaw and the Webbs. That the "Old Guard" did not intend to rest content with their very successful permeation of the Liberal Party, or even with the Labour Party which they had done so much to create, is already clear from a letter of Shaw's dating from before the First World War. He wrote to his French translator that the earlier objectives of the Fabian Society were now achieved: the notion that socialist societies can reform the world by enlarging their membership had been killed; a large part of socialism had been translated into parliamentary measures so that respectable Englishmen could now be socialists as easily as Liberals or Conservatives; and, finally, the working class had been detached from the Liberal Party by the founding of the Labour Party. As for the future, the important thing, says Shaw, is to realize that the Labour Party is not a socialist party but only a radical wing of the trade unions:

The Labour Party is good in that it represents labour but bad in that it represents poverty and ignorance, and it is anti-social in that it supports the producer against the consumer and the worker against the employer instead of supporting the workers against the idlers. The Labour Party is also bad on account of its false democracy, which substitutes the mistrust, fear, and political incapacity of the masses for genuine political talent, and which would make the people legislators instead of leaving them what they are at present, the judges of the legislators.

Fabian policy, Shaw suggests, must be to "detach the socialists from the Labour Party" and make them into a compact group of experts and leaders which will show the way to all radical parties. This last suggestion is either merely a proposal to continue the
Fabian Society or a proposal to found the kind of political party which would never succeed in getting into parliament. One is not surprised therefore that after the war Sidney Webb preferred to put his energies to reorganizing the Labour Party itself as a socialist party. It was of course a hazardous task. Even today it is not clear how far the Labour Party's socialism goes. In 1924 and 1931 it scarcely seemed socialist at all.

The most pertinent criticism of the earlier Fabians was that they left too many things out of account. Shaw himself has complained that they shared too many of the prejudices of Victorian “advanced” people such as anti-clericalism and anti-militarism. Consequently they neglected to study—to give three outstanding examples—trade unionism, foreign affairs, and much of the machinery of government.

Gradually the leading Fabians managed to cover the neglected areas. Beatrice Webb was the great pioneer in the first. She and her husband became the historians of trade unions and cooperatives, thus not only filling a gap in their knowledge, but establishing a new empirical approach to sociology. What Shaw derived from their study was, as might be expected, an idea, an interpretation. Trade Unionism was, he declared, the “capitalism of the proletariat.” When the workers banded together to defend the principle of selling in the highest market and giving as little as possible for their money, “Proletarianism was complete. Since, moreover, the union leader’s ideal was capitalism with himself getting the profits Shaw saw that the unionists were joining with the capitalists to form what the Fabians had not seen the possibility of: State Capitalism, Moralised Capitalism, a “socialism” of production, not distribution. Against this trend Shaw puts a case which is now termed “Stalinist” but which he probably derived from the American radical Edward Bellamy: one should fight, not for a “right to strike,” but for the nationalization of unions (as of all other concerns) and compulsory labor for all “with death as the final penalty.”

It was Shaw who first induced the Fabians to work out a more intelligent attitude to foreign affairs. When war was declared against the Boers, British liberalism, led by the young Lloyd George, was pacifist. To Shaw the pacifist position has never been convincing and, since nowadays he is accused of jingoism or muddle-headedness, it may be well to explain why. As a matter of fact Shaw himself explained why in the pamphlet “Fabianism and the Empire” and, more directly perhaps, in a letter he wrote to Hyndman at the time. Shaw’s position is that once a war has begun, there being only usually advisable to back the lesser evil against the

during the First World War, he went so far as to
argue that you fight even for a pirate ship if you happen to be on board when it is attacked; in the letter to Hyndman he more moderately argues that the pacifism of the liberals helps the Boers to win and that this is undesirable because the Boers are less likely to do good in South Africa than the British. True, he concedes, the British Empire stands for sheer Mammonism. But it is easier for the British to pass from Mammonism to a socialist transformation than for the Boers to pass from Kruger’s Old Testament fanaticism to any good thing whatsoever.

Whether Shaw’s view of the Boer War was correct or not, it should be clear that his analysis was much more hardheaded than that of other radicals of the day. He saw the futility of war. He also saw the futility of liberal pacifism. In the First World War he proclaimed that he found no more ethical content than in the collision of two trains, yet once the war started he thought British victory much preferable to the alternative. He was therefore equally abhorred by reactionaries and pacifists. Both groups laughed at Shaw after the war too when he consistently supported the League of Nations, which he and the Fabian Society had done not a little to start. It is characteristic that Shaw, who clearly saw that a League without power would never stop war, supported the League faute de mieux, and advertised its less spectacular functions. One might sum up his attitude to foreign affairs as a passionate desire to end the international anarchy linked to a sharp awareness of the power factors, political, economic, military, and psychological that stand in the way. Beside, say, H. G. Wells’s proposals, Shaw’s statements on international relations are tentative and few. They are also more realistic. Wells, the “scientist,” generated vast, windy schemes as a boiler generates steam. Wells’s thinking was nothing if not cosmic. Shaw, the artist, is more easily affected by hard facts, by brute obstacles, like nationalism, like capitalism, like the human love of dangerous illusions.

As to the third great omission in Fabian thought—the omission of a theory of government—Shaw and the Webbs have devoted a large part of their later careers to it. At the same time as they were supporting every actual and immediate step towards socialism, they were working out on paper their most systematic critique of the present system and their most sweeping proposals for reform. After the First World War the Webbs wrote (and Shaw revised) their only full-length analysis of modern life: The Decay of Capitalist Civilization. They also published a plan which went far beyond the mere demand for socialism: A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain. This book was the starting point for all
those suggestions for a new kind of government which have filled Shaw’s political essays since the twenties. It is an attempt to sketch the institutions of a socialist society.

In her very fair-minded biography of Beatrice Webb, Mrs. Margaret Cole pooh-poohs the Constitution as badly written and impractical. Badly written it is. But let us hope it will not always seem impractical. Socialist literature is weak on the institutional side because socialists have too often assumed that such things will take care of themselves. The Webbs’ book is important because it tries to give the socialist idea the solid content it so often lacks. It is based, like all the later books of the Fabian Trio, on the assumption that twentieth-century civilization is beyond repair, and that socialist reconstruction will have to cover every institution, economic and political. Like Shaw, the Webbs when young were thought very mild and conservative socialists; like him they are thought impractical extremists, even renegades, in their age. Yet there was no reversal of former principles. The whole development was summed up in advance in Man and Superman:

All who achieve real distinction in life begin as revolutionists. The most distinguished persons become more revolutionary as they grow older, though they are commonly supposed to become more conservative owing to their loss of faith in conventional methods of reform.

II

A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain is nowhere lengthily quoted by Shaw or even paraphrased. He endorses its main proposal—that the British government should be replaced by a new bicameral system consisting of a Political and a Social Parliament—and adds to this his own ideas. Sometimes what is peripheral for the Webbs is central for Shaw. The abolition of the Party System, cautiously hinted at by the Webbs in a footnote, is a main plank in Shaw’s platform. (Perhaps he has been to school to his debating antagonist, Hilaire Belloc.) Instead of nineteenth-century parliamentarism Shaw wants occupational franchise and the building of a vast hierarchical state.

The Shavian state differs from most hierarchical schemes in that power proceeds from below. It is “in touch with the people and must satisfy them.” It differs from most democratic schemes in removing the higher functions of government from direct popular control. Shaw has sometimes advocated making the franchise dependent on passing tests in political science and public affairs, the tests to be harder for each level of the hierarchy; but it seems
that even those who have passed no tests will be able periodically to pass judgment on the government as a whole. The public is like the purchaser who can tell whether the shoe pinches though he would not be able to make shoes himself. The doctrine that he can make his own shoes Shaw calls the “mock democratic folly of pretending that the intellectual and technical work of Government can be dictated, or its ministers directly chosen, by mobs of voters.” That democracy needs leadership every bit as much as any other system of government is presupposed in the following plan:

You can conceive the new state getting a basic representative Congress to keep it in touch with its subjects. This Congress would have sufficient local knowledge to elect the local chiefs of industry throughout the country. These local chiefs can elect provincial chiefs who can elect national chiefs. These national chiefs—you may call them if you like a Cabinet—in their turn have to elect the national thinkers, for a nation needs two cabinets: an administrative Cabinet and a thinking Cabinet.

Although this plan is designed, Platonically, to make the philosopher a king and the king a philosopher, it is unPlatonic in that the base of the pyramid is a democratic franchise. It is in fact radically different from any form of aristocracy or democracy (the only two forms of government Shaw respects) that has ever existed. Only those who prefer mud-slinging to meaning could call it fascist.

Indeed it should provide the context for a more accurate account of Shaw’s attitude to Mussolini and Hitler. A touchy subject, but one that should be faced: to say it should not be taken seriously is to make too large a concession to those who always laugh Shaw off. Shaw should always be taken to mean something even if he cannot always be taken to mean simply what he says. He can always be taken seriously; he cannot always be taken literally. People with no sense of humor find him a Mass of Contradictions. And before even the best-disposed of us can appraise Shaw’s approach to fascism we must take note of the special nature of his approach to politics in general.

Shaw has never really set out to be a systematic and objective political scientist. That was the Webbs’ job. Shaw’s function—there is no accurate name for it—was to prod, to irritate, to enliven, to push and pull in this direction or that as the situation demanded. He was a special sort of propagandist: an artist in propaganda. He converted the trade of the Northcliffes and the Hearsts into a special craft or mission. He was not providing blueprints. Even his lengthiest political work purports only to bring out points which the political scientists have neglected, not to state an alternative political
philosophy. And Shaw was entirely selfless. He didn’t care if you thought him a fool provided his barbs shot home. He didn’t care if you thought him a fascist if only he had undermined your own liberal complacency. The important thing was not the reputation of Shaw but the history of the world.

All Shaw’s statements are “slanted.” What he says is always determined by the thought: what can I do to this audience? not by the thought: what is the most objective statement about this subject? In political discussion Shaw’s audience—since he became famous—has been a very large part of the British public. Consequently one can scarcely exaggerate his preoccupation with the British. Certainly his most notable limitation is his ignorance of other peoples. Certainly his most noble characteristic is his passionate and lifelong attempt to reform the country in which he pretends to be an aloof foreigner. If Shaw finds something to admire in one of his quick trips abroad (Russia is the obvious example) he uses it as a stick to beat England with. If he finds something in a foreign country to dislike he is quick to add that you mustn’t imagine England is any better: for British publication he changed the title of The Future of Political Science in America to The Political Madhouse in America and Nearer Home, adding a preface to rub in the last phrase. “The Inquisition,” Shaw tells us elsewhere, “was a liberal institution compared to the [British] General Medical Council. The Inquisitor who condemned Joan was bad but he was “far more self-disciplined and conscientious both as priest and lawyer than any English judge ever dreams of being in a political case in which his party and class prejudices are involved.” And so on. The formula has been exploited ad nauseam. In any hands but Shaw’s it would always have seemed callow, and even in his it has become trite. It is the formula of an exasperated idealist. And it is exasperation that has driven Shaw into his most dubious declarations.

Twenty years ago Shaw entered into controversy with the eminent liberal professor, already a refugee, Gaetano Salvemini. In many ways Shaw got the worst of it. Salvemini knew Italy and Shaw did not. I doubt if he really knows any country except England. In the whole tiresome dispute he made only one good point—surely his lowest score in any controversy—but since it was his main point, for the sake of which he had provoked the whole discussion, and since none of his liberal opponents has ever tried to understand it, one may be excused for re-iterating it here. The point was that nineteenth-century liberalism was bankrupt, and that British socialists might wake up to that fact, if only they could lose their inferiority complex, if only they could stop talking as men in perpetual opposition. Shaw seems to anticipate the outsmarting of the Labour leaders at
the hands of Baldwin and Simon in 1926 and of Baldwin and King George in 1931:

Of course if you compare Italy with a Mazzinian Utopia, it is full of abuse and tyrannies. So is America, so is France, so is England, so is Russia. . . . Because I face the facts in the full knowledge that the democratic idealism of the 19th Century is as dead as a doornail, you say that I come dangerously near to the point of view of the British ruling class. But are you not delighted to find at last a Socialist who speaks and thinks as responsible rulers do and not as resentful slaves do? Of what use are Socialists who can neither rule nor understand what ruling means?

Of course anyone who represents Mussolini as relatively good and British Labour as relatively bad will simply remind American liberals of Charles Lindbergh and the isolationists, for whom the moral was: leave Britain to be trampled on by the fascists. For Shaw, however, the moral was: let Britain wake up, let Britain take thought, and let Britain do what he has spent his life urging her to do—adopt a socialism without Ramsay MacDonals.

It should by now be plain that people who know nothing about Shaw except that he several times complimented Mussolini, and with so many liberals, never regarded Hitler as a moron, must have a very eccentric picture of Shaw’s politics. The Shaw the public knows and the Shaw the critics know is always the man who says outrageous things in the press, never the man who writes solid books. What Shaw actually says about fascism when not playing advocate to Mussolini’s devil has been much less heeded. Here is an extract from his *Everybody’s Political What’s What*:

Nowadays the Capitalist cry is: “Nationalize what you like; municipalize all you can; tum the courts of justice into courts martial and your parliaments and corporations into boards of directors with your most popular mob orators in the chair, provided the rent, the interest, and the profits come to us as before, and the proletariat still gets nothing but its keep.”

This is the great corruption of Socialism which threatens us at present. It calls itself Fascism in Italy, National Socialism (Nazi for short) in Germany, New Deal in the United States, and is clever enough to remain nameless in England; but everywhere it means the same thing: Socialist production and Unsocialist distribution. So far, out of the frying pan into the fire.

Shaw adds that Fascism is a short name for State Capitalism, that it has produced a world war, that in this war the issue was confused because Russia fought alongside “the western fascists,” but that in the end the belligerents will “fight for their own sides, plutocracy against democracy, Fascism against Communism.” This analysis
may oversimplify the issues by identifying Stalin's regime with democracy and communism. It can scarcely be taken to be favorable to fascism.

To some extent the Shavian analysis of fascism is Marxist—in its description of fascism as State Capitalism, for instance. Where Shaw parts company with the Marxists is in his assumption that fascism—in Italy and Germany—was supported by the masses. This assumption does not seem as unwarranted to many of us today as it did to the optimistic zealots of the 'thirties who told us that the majority of Germans (they scarcely dared say of Italians) were hostile to their Leader. No less than the opinion of the zealots, Shaw's opinion was based, not on information alone, but on a presupposition about human nature. "The average citizen," the optimists said to themselves, "is a liberal." "The average citizen," says Shaw, out loud, "is a fascist."

This was no quip. Shaw has always contended that the evils of capitalism must be blamed not on the capitalists who only do what everybody would like to do but on the workers, who through ignorance, stupidity, or cowardice, let the capitalists get way with it. This acquiescence is the most fatal failure in all modern civilization. Now fascism is only a capitalism further consolidated, and further acquiesced in. The tendency of the average man to hand over responsibility to others was never more fully pandered to. It is with bitter irony that Shaw describes fascism as typically democratic, and that he says: "I do not believe in democracy."

Shaw is against fascism for the same reason he is against nineteenth-century liberalism: both are doctrines which relieve us of responsibility, of controlling and planning our own communal life. That is to say, they are anti-socialist doctrines. Fascism pretends to be socialist. It introduces some measure of socialist production but cannot practice socialist distribution without removing its lynchpin: capitalism. The nineteenth-century liberal prides himself on the equation: liberty = free enterprise. In short, says Shaw, liberalism and fascism are rival masks of capitalism, and fascism is in some ways the better of the two. It sometimes benefited the proletariat, it gave bureaucratic status to functionaries who were formerly only casual employees, it tightened up the public services, it assailed individualism and preached putting the community first. To that extent it prepared the way for genuine socialism. Liberalism seems less apposite in the present world. It has discredited itself by preaching an abstract and negative liberty. Its characteristic modern forms are the economic doctrine of free enterprise and the political doctrine of anarchism:
The cry of Liberty is always on the lips of the propertied classes who own the lion’s share of land and capital and have nothing to fear but nationalization of these resources, because it implies that the less government activity there is the more free the people are, and because it helps to elect the thoughtless who always support the status quo because anything unusual shocks them.

Liberalism can only cease to be mockery when Liberty is a concrete possibility for the masses, that is, under socialism. Liberalism was born too early. It is really “a post-Communist and not a pre-Communist doctrine and therefore it has a great future before it when the world is full of Communists who will be at leisure for the greater part of their lives.” For there is no liberty without leisure.

All of this is rubbing the liberal cat the wrong way. Shaw has always taken it as his role to do precisely that. “He is never so happy,” Hyndman wrote over forty years ago, “as when he is running a tilt at the party with which he is, at least nominally, associated.” All the most ridiculous people in his early plays, as in his late ones, are the advanced people, liberals like Roebuck Ramsden, suffragettes like Mrs. Clandon and Gloria, “disciples of Bernard Shaw” like Dubedat, whereas the capitalist and the conqueror are shown to be comparatively sane. One of Shaw’s best essays is called “The Illusions of Socialism.” In it he shows that socialists have carried liberal illusions to an extreme. It is not only Marxism proper but almost all forms of non-Fabian socialism that Shaw regards as “intellectually pretentious forms of proletarian Liberalism.” In the course of his essay Shaw specified two major socialist illusions: the religious illusion of the day of revolution as a millennium and the dramatic illusion, “the crude Marxist melodrama of The Class War: or the Virtuous Worker and the Brutal Capitalist.”

It may be that the trick of showing the enemy to be a much more sensible person than your friends is less appropriate when the enemy is Hitler than when he was Wilhelm II. (At least it is easy for us to say so, overlooking the fact that, in America and England at least, the hatred of “the Kaiser” was much more virulent than hatred of Hitler ever was.) To stress the dangers of liberalism when civilization is threatened by illiberalism is perhaps the most suspicious item in Shaw’s long political career. If we cannot quite agree with Max Beer who long ago classed Shaw with the continental intelligentsia which in such large numbers turned from Marx to Nietzsche and from Nietzsche to simple imperialism, we can see that he cast at least one look in that direction. A constant danger for the radical is that he may come to hate his rivals so much that he will join with the enemy to op-
pose them. In recent years we have been confronted with the spectacle of communists hating Hitler less than Churchill, and of liberals hating Hitler less than Stalin. I do not think Shaw was deeply involved in these ignominies. His championing of the rightist against the liberal is the old-fashioned devil's advocacy of a Victorian debater rather than the real diabolism that is so common today. Moreover, if Shaw's solution of the problem of power seems too Machiavellian, it is at least a resolute attempt to escape pious liberal platitude. His leftist opponents are still where they were sixty years ago—appealing either to historical necessity or to the assumed political superiority of the masses.

Actually Shaw is closer to Rousseau than to Machiavelli. Like Rousseau, Shaw seems to the casual modern reader an anarchist, a sheer rebel. Like Rousseau, Shaw seems to the more knowing reader precisely the opposite—an authoritarian. We do not really understand either Rousseau or Shaw until we see that for them liberty is a paradox, since it is achieved through its opposite, restriction. Both philosophers would agree with present-day American Republicans that a government interference means nothing if not interference with someone's liberty. Only they would add that liberty is in general achieved after this contradictory fashion.

III

Doubtless the both/and approach of a Shaw, no less than of a Rousseau, is alien to the either/or thinkers of today. Yes. Although Shaw has offered a brilliant analysis of fascism, upon the whole he is very old-fashioned. His Victorian education has limited his understanding of the twentieth century. So little has he tried to know as much about us as he knew about our grandfathers that, when he speaks of "today," we sometimes have the impression that he means 1910. He sometimes seems remote to those of us who were born into the twentieth-century melee because almost everything he knows was learnt in the nineteenth century. Yet the old-fashionedness is in most contexts less of a limitation than a merit, and we can go back to Shaw with as much pleasure and profit as to any other Victorian. He is old-fashioned but he is not obsolete. His knowledge of particular areas of contemporary fact may be faulty but his analysis of the modern world in general is valid now if it was ever valid; for the twentieth century amount to turmoil much more than ever before. The classic analyses of our age are still useless. Aside from the Webbs his political analysts, Karl Marx, Stanley Jevons, and
Edward Bellamy. They at least are the giants. If we were to watch Shaw learning a fact here, acquiring an attitude there, picking up an idea in another place, we would have to list a score of other Victorian socialists—most important among them William Morris and Belfort Bax, Stuart-Glennie and Henry Salt. Insofar as Shavian socialism is in a broad tradition that goes back beyond the Fabians I would say it is neither in the French “Utopian” line nor the German “scientific” line nor the Russian “anarchist” line but in the British “aristocratic” line. Behind Shaw is Ruskin, and behind Ruskin is Carlyle.

Calling himself a communist, “reddest also of the red,” Ruskin preached order, reverence, and authority. He believed in some such hierarchy as Shaw was to advocate (though he was not so sure it could not be hereditary). It was Ruskin who before Jevons—and by a much simpler reasoning—argued that economics is not a realm of impersonal laws but a realm of human regulation, potentially a branch of human welfare. It was Ruskin who taught Shaw that there are only three ways of procuring wealth—working, begging, and stealing—and that capitalism condemns many to beg by allowing a few to steal. The corollary—that the good social order is one in which everyone works—is a cornerstone of Shavianism. The point is for Shaw not only good economics (his kind of socialism, as we have seen, finds the essential contradiction of capitalism in the coexistence of worker and idler, not worker and capitalist), it is also good philosophy. It is the philosophy of Goethe and Carlyle, summed up by Nietzsche’s Zarathustra: “I labor not for my happiness, I labor for my work.” Ruskin has it: “Life without work is robbery. Work without art is brutality.” And the whole body of Shaw’s political writings might be regarded as an expansion of the best of Ruskin’s dicta: “Government and cooperation are in all things the laws of life; anarchy and competition the laws of death.”

What Shaw has in common with Carlyle is no less extensive than the main theme of Sartor Resartus: human ideals, not being eternal, must, like other kinds of clothing, be constantly discarded and replaced. Even the ideal-monger, the philosopher himself—that tailor of idealists—must be re-tailored if the dignity of man is to be assured, if the purpose of human life is to be unfolded. In the specifically social sphere Carlyle prepared the way for the Fabians in two ways. In Sidney Webb’s words he was “the first man who really made a dent in the individualist shield” by subjecting his age to a point by point attack. Second, he looked forward to a collectivism which would be produced neither by historic inevitability nor by the wisdom of the populace.

The socialism of Carlyle, Ruskin, Shaw, of what I have called the
deception, meaning that people are called equal but are not treated equally—begins to bear fruit when natural authority and subordination take the place of the caste and spoils systems. The democratic paradox of Liberty begins to bear fruit when equal pay guarantees to all that sufficient subsistence without which there can be no free behavior and when universal compulsory labor shortens the workman’s hours, leaving him with the time in which to behave freely. The democratic paradox of Fraternity begins to bear fruit when one man’s gain is not necessarily another’s loss, when, though you may have “superiors” at your job, you have no “betters” in society, when human unity means, not that you confer your unwanted love upon your neighbor while pushing his face in the mud, but that you and your neighbor are at one in a common enterprise. (“You are your neighbor,” says Shaw, observing that the murder of Marat by Charlotte Corday was really suicide: Marat killed by the spirit of Marat.)

It may seem from all this that Equality is Shaw’s maid-of-all-work, one of those emotive words which enable the reformer to substitute spell-binding for sense. Yet, on the contrary, Shaw is one of the very few socialists who are candid about the limitations of socialism. “A socialist state,” he says, “can be just as wicked as any other sort of state”—a remark of a very different temper from the Marxist account of the disappearance of the class struggle, the sudden cessation of dialectical conflict (unless on a purely spiritual plane), the withering of the state, and the advent of the stateless society of the free and equal. Shaw makes no promise that the state will ever wither. He knows that the socialist state will be very powerful and that all power is for evil as well as good. This is no reason for preferring irresponsibility. We must simply stop thinking of socialism as an endless good time, as unqualified freedom, an escape from the human condition. It will not change human nature overnight; there is probably a large part of human nature that it will not change at all. In some ways the capitalist’s idea of socialism as a system of bureaucracy, regimentation, and tyranny is more realistic than the socialist’s, always granting that by bureaucracy the capitalist means state control, by regimentation order, and by tyranny that responsibility without which there can be no real freedom.

Much of the liberal yearning of the past two hundred years has been a yearning for more freedom and more happiness than the human creature is capable of. And democracy and socialism are the causes the liberals chose for the attainment of their impossible

<. In this sense Shaw is not a liberal. He believes in socialism
havior and will encourage social impulses which under capitalism have existed only in spite of the system. Thus socialism offers some opportunity to men to bridge the gap which they have created between their real and their imagined world, between Pragma and Dogma. Under socialism they should be able to regulate their affairs better. They should be able to create a finer and more honorable way of life.

When Shaw is told that the poor are happy poor he need not, like other socialists, deny it. He can reply that he wants to make them, not happier, like contented pigs, but better, like the discontented Socrates. And when the idyllic picture of the withering of the state is dangled before his eyes he is not more impressed than by the “capitalist utopia” that is supposed to come from letting things slide—laisser faire, laisser aller. Anarchism and Capitalism are dreams of irresponsible bliss. Shaw prefers to admit that socialism will not bring as much freedom as many would like or even as much as a few people already have under capitalism. The liberal who thinks Shaw’s socialism goes too far in asking equality of income is likely to think it does not go far enough in the direction of freedom and democracy. Yet we have seen that, according to Shaw, liberalism has a future. In fact the function of socialism is precisely that it allows liberalism to come into being as something other than a dream. But while the socialization of an economy is a relatively speedy affair, the progress of liberalism is necessarily slow, since it involves a radical change in the general attitude to life, a change from apathy to responsibility, which includes a change from ignorance to knowledge.

You do not have democracy until the whole population understands politics and accepts responsibility for them. In this sense no population has as yet come anywhere near to democracy. Compared with us, the first generation that attains to democracy will be a race of Supermen: and this was always the chief application which Shaw made of Nietzsche’s term. The creation of Supermen is the greatest task that lies ahead of us, a longer and more arduous task than the socialist revolution. For, though the natural aristocracy of Shaw’s socialist state will solve many problems, the awful problem of power before which we all tremble today can be adequately solved only by a moral improvement in the whole race. Words which Shaw wrote thirty years ago have been rendered more impressive by the invention of the atomic bomb:

The one danger before us that nothing can avert but a general raising of human character through the deliberate cultivation and endowment of
democratic virtue without consideration of property or class is the
danger created by inventing weapons capable of destroying civilization
faster than we produce men who can be trusted to use them wisely.

Democratic idealism with a vengeance! Shaw has no belief that
any social upheaval, even socialist revolution, is enough. There is
nothing for it, as he said fifty years ago (and repeated with a sinking
heart in Geneva), but "to convince men of the immorality of
abusing the majority power and then to make them moral enough to
refrain from doing it on that account." There is no hope, that is to
say, but that the passion for social justice which has always been at
the root of British aristocratic socialism should spread to the whole
population.

If Shaw believes in nobility, it is chiefly because noblesse oblige.
The cardinal virtue in the Shavian scale, as perhaps we have already
gathered, is responsibility. Every creed Shaw has attacked he has
attacked on grounds of irresponsibility. The liberal economists shift
the responsibility on to laws of supply and demand, the Marxists on
to laws of history, the anarchists on to laws of nature. The Darwinists—we shall find Shaw maintaining—assign responsibility to
mechanical causes, that is, to pure luck. The Christians—or many
who regard themselves as such—get God to bear the burden. And
when it comes to making a whipping-boy of Jesus, Shaw says:

You will never get a high morality from people who conceive that their
misdeeds are revocable and pardonable, or in a society where absolution
and expiation are officially provided for us all. If there is to be no punish-
ment there can be no forgiveness. We shall never have real moral re-
sponsibility until every one knows that his deeds are irrevocable and
that his life depends on his usefulness.

This stern doctrine is something more than the "protestantism" and
"puritanism" which so many have found in Shaw. It is a tough,
lean naturalism without illusions. If, as Chesterton said, Shaw is the
first idealist who is not also a sentimentalist, might one not add that
he is the first unsentimental naturalist? For him life is a Promethean
adventure which may entail Prometheus tortures to be borne with
Promethean fortitude.

Shaw's politics lead us to Shaw's philosophy. Indeed everything in
Shaw leads to everything else: we have had many vaster and many
more scientific thinkers but few whose thinking was at the same time
so many-sided and so much of a piece. Shaw's views are all firmly
based on a Baconian faith in human control. Like Bacon, and unlike
Iconians, Shaw includes control of the human as well as of
external world. Eschewing alike the supernaturalist myth of a
l who will shield us from responsibility and the materialist myth
aws which will shield us from responsibility, man must take the
den upon his own shoulders. A perilous enterprise, rendering
ry problem infinitely more difficult than it is to panaceists!
I remember how Mr. Edmund Wilson and I, some years ago in a convivial literary moment, agreed that *Heartbreak House* was probably the best of the Shaw plays. We wondered, I remember, whether in twenty years it might not be the shining light among them. Through the removal of limitations in probability, and through the opening thereby for extravagance, *Heartbreak House* is farce rather than comedy. Nor is that anything against it unless you object to the possibility that farce allows for the poetic or fantastic. The question was whether or not we had begun to be impatient with this larding of social theory and significance on to what essentially was farce, however talented, and would remain so. Mr. Wilson and I must have been thinking that *Heartbreak House* offered a more complete unity of tone than most of Mr. Shaw's plays, and that perhaps the constant effect of assertiveness which was so peculiar to Shaw, and which could get very tiresome elsewhere in his other work, was especially suited to the tone of this particular play. In *Heartbreak House* perhaps this general tone in itself effectively expressed the theme, which is the state of things that was "the cultured, leisured Europe before the War."

It must have been an impression of some different sort that had done the work, for all these reflections went flat on me when I saw *Heartbreak House* produced again these many years after. I had looked forward to seeing the play again not only from curiosity about a work of art, but also, in a way, autobiographically—which is to say curiosity about myself, as to what my state of mind and change might be. For a while, on thus revisiting this drama I took it to be the production at the Mercury Theatre that was at fault. Presently

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I saw that the production was fair enough—if slightly blurred—with some good performances, especially Miss Phyllis Joyce as Lady Utterwood, but that the play itself was garrulous, unfelt and tiresome.

Evidently the impression from the Theatre Guild production of *Heartbreak House* that had remained so strongly in my mind as the years went by came from the terrace scene and the company talking there in the moonless blue night. It was a long time ago and I had forgotten nearly all they said, but not that haunting tone composed of the scene, the voices, the vibration of characters, the impending blind ruin. And presently there at the Mercury I saw that I had lost even such a response. I was sufficiently concerned to take the book down afterward and read the whole play again, the long preface included. Very likely Mr. Welles’ production lacked emphasis to some extent, parts of the play needing to be speeded up, parts slowed down, the pressure lightened here, increased there, for the sake of a more distinct pattern. But at that, the design of *Heartbreak House* proved on this rereading to be no more marked than it is in the production, if as much. Gradually I concluded that there was something very amiable about the willingness of a theatre company to memorize so many lines, and to heed, or seem to heed, so much rather wilted opinion, half point and half patter. An astonishing sort of inner monotony, as it were, was apparent, and had to be coped with. Except for the different voices, you could have shut your eyes and believed not that several people were there, created and expressing themselves, but that one person was describing several people.

Since Mr. Shaw himself goes to some length in the preface to invite more or less comparison of *Heartbreak House* with Chekhov’s plays, we may sketch at least the beginning of such a comparison. Chekhov, he says, had produced four dramatic studies of *Heartbreak House*, of which three, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Uncle Vanya* and *The Sea Gull*, so far as England went, had got as far as a couple of performances by the Stage Society. The audiences had stared and said “How Russian!” To Mr. Shaw on the contrary it seemed that these intensely Russian plays fitted all the country houses in Europe in which . . . et cetera. Such a remark as that seems to me incredibly wilful and silly. The thesis of blind chaos and selfishness and of following the part of comfortable income and securities is a definite thesis. It may readily fit into the motif of a rotting Europe. But Chekhov would have been surprised to learn that his plays were a declaration in advance of all this. The Russian world of Chekhov can be only partially compared to the England that Mr. Shaw has diagrammed in *Heartbreak House*. A great difference arises from the fact that the expressiveness of the Russian temperament, with its
gift and power of outpouring the far recesses of the heart, is a far more difficult matter for the English. This is not to say that either one or the other is better, but only that they are different. Where Tolstoy, Mr. Shaw says, was no pessimist and believed in the efficacy of violent measures, Chekhov, "more of a fatalist, had no faith in these charming people extricating themselves. They would, he thought, be sold up and set adrift by the bailiff; and he therefore had no scruple in exploiting and even flattering their charm."

What a patness and charm of persuasion this Mr. Shaw has! But the mere use of the words "flatter" and "charm" give away the British rubbish, or Teutonic conception, behind the idea. The references here are plainly to The Cherry Orchard. But no person in it wants to be flattered as to his special idiosyncrasy, nobody in this play is talking with that self-consciousness and varying degrees of egotism or no egotism so common to modest Englishmen. The charm of these people in The Cherry Orchard, and often of the Russians we meet is that nobody is thinking at all about being charming; nobody is self-conscious, nobody is affected. That sentence of Mr. Shaw's is a whole commentary on the difference between Chekhov's world and that British world which Mr. Shaw so pugnaciously caters to, rebukes so entertainingly, severely and sincerely, and makes a fortune out of.

The more you know of Chekhov's writing and of him and his life and friends, the more absurd Mr. Shaw becomes on the subject. It is all very well to use a man or a work of art to hit something or somebody over the head with; and certainly the sport is an old one. But nobody could be more astonished than Chekhov would have been to hear of his having no scruples about exploiting the people whose words and little ironic, tender or mad acts, and droll or dark life-patterns he put into plays and stories or left jotted down in his notebook. To "flatter" anything about them would not fit anything in him. What he did with his people was to turn them into theatre, just as Mr. Shaw in Heartbreak House turns Chekhov into a sort of literary Hyde Park soapbox dialectic for the theatre.

That such a man as Mr. Shaw could use the life that is presented in Chekhov's plays in Chekhov's way, and even some of Chekhov's ideas and attitudes, is obvious. In spite of the unsuccessful translations of the Chekhov plays into English, a great deal of him comes through; and I should think it possible enough that Mr. Shaw regards his own Heartbreak House as being technically related to the three Chekhov plays that he mentions, The Cherry Orchard especially. Whether he does so or not, the comparison is inevitable and the relationship plain. On that subject we should have to say that either he boldly exercised his usual independence in the way of
doing things, or else he was blind as a bat to Chekhov's technique, stage-effects and spirit. We should be brow-beaten indeed to accept the idea that in *Heartbreak House* there is more than the merest hint or tiny reflection of Chekhov's true method, none of that pure, painstaking economy and drawing, none of that humility of vision, none of that shy certainty of intuition. And Mr. Shaw's play has none of the variety in emotional rhythm that Chekhov's has, either in tone or in profound self-revelation among the characters.

Chekhov sees his people as rooted in something, which means that he begins with what they are, their quality, and from this he derives what they will express. Mr. Shaw, for all his prattle about their class, clichés, bogies, culture and complacent, urgent or ironic circumstance, sees his people in the light of their opinions. Such a course makes for certain effective dramatic patterns, for distinct *dramatis personae*, real or not real, and for straw men, to be set up or knocked over at will. But it is, I think, his greatest and his final weakness as a creative artist. And it provides the reason why no intelligent member of the traditional British ruling class has ever needed to fear Mr. Shaw very greatly. Nobody could ever take one of Mr. Shaw's magnates or autocratic ruling class characters as the real thing. They may be arresting or provocative, but—for a while at least—it is their author, not themselves, that is so articulate. The portrayal, however, could be dangerous only when it came from the centre of the character himself. It is this quality of the centrifugal that makes Chekhov different from Mr. Shaw, though centrifugal seems a word too strong for that delicate, moving security and expressive freedom that Chekhov achieves for his people, and the matrix of gentle humor, like that of a wise doctor, within which he sees what they say or do, and for which he brings no compelling benefit or reform.

Taking a work of art as a kind of biological whole, which is the only way it makes any sense, I should say that nothing Mr. Shaw presents in *Heartbreak House* to prove his case could be a better evidence of the decay, if you like, of the English scene than this play itself is, with its lack of any organic unity or exciting technique, its fuzzy lack of power, its exhibitionistic self-assertion, its futile chatter in coquettish monotone about what the first bomb could obliterate or the first ism could make stale.
STEPHEN SPENDER
1949

The Riddle of Shaw

When I was a child, we had a cook who was strongly opposed to our not finishing a pudding. Whatever we left on our plates she would serve up the next day, but frozen, under the pretext that it was ice cream. Two recent books* of Bernard Shaw’s opinions in his extreme old age inevitably give the impression of frozen left-overs.

16 Self Sketches are mostly remnants rescued from the past, written at various periods over the last thirty years. Days with Bernard Shaw† is a volume of carefully recorded conversations with him, written down by his neighbor Stephen Winsten, during the last years of the war and the first year of the peace.

Shaw is certainly one of the most puzzling case histories in modern literature. He evidently considers himself, and he may well be, the greatest living reputation. Yet his works have scarcely been discussed by modern critics. The various essays devoted to him have been by enthusiasts of his biography and his personality rather than of his works. Apart from one interesting essay by Edmund Wilson, I can think of no serious criticism of his many volumes. The aggressive Shavian self-assertiveness has perhaps frightened off the critics, who like to get their teeth into something massive, soft, and yielding, like Henry James.

These two volumes emphasize that Shaw considers himself a poetic dramatist, a social reformer, a Socialist who has revolutionized the social conditions of his age. He admits though to being an “irrepressible mountebank,” so perhaps these claims are not altogether serious. Yet they must in some sense be serious, or they would not be funny: it would be merely silly for anyone except Shaw to

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* 16 Self Sketches. Bernard Shaw.
† Days with Bernard Shaw. Stephen Winsten.
make them. Rather magnificent in Wisten's book, is the portrait of
the vain old man. The fear that he will be forgotten, that the young
do not read him, that, after all, history has passed him by is grandio-
se and defiant, like Shaw's passion for money. At times he takes his
place beside Yeats in his old age, or beside the magnificent last
pages of Finnegans Wake. Only the Irish are capable of such a
glittering ruinous splendor. This makes it all the odder that Shaw
seems to have regarded Yeats as a poet who "went wrong" because
he "could not spell and had no sense of number"; and James Joyce
as a writer of pornographic plays. (What plays does he mean, in-
cidentally?)

The only contemporary poet whom Shaw admired was W. H.
Davies, unless one counts also Gilbert Murray, whose translations
of Aeschylus and Euripides Shaw regards as masterpieces.

Perhaps Shaw is a two-dimensional giant moving in his own two-
dimensional world. According to the rules of this two-dimensional
existence, he never errs. In public life, he believes that it is far more
important that men should change society than that they should
improve themselves. For to Shaw the individual is like a sentence
within the book which is written by social conditions. For him, in
literature, the difference between poetry and prose is that poetry
rhymes and has "number," prose doesn't. He found rhyming tedious;
so he wrote his plays in prose. In private life, every problem should
be solved by the kind of good sense which operates on the heart of
the problem, reducing it to an abstraction dealt with by the intel-
lectual will. Thus sex is the problem in marriage: all right, marriage
must be without sex. This precept might seem to be Shaw at his
least serious, but apparently it is the one which he acted upon in his
own marriage. Meals must be without meat, and clothes without
linings, not for the kind of reasons which would move Christ or
Gandhi, but in order to reduce these problems of actuality to levels
of theory.

In his plays Shaw develops artistically in the same two-dimen-
sional way. Edmund Wilson has pointed out—what Shaw himself
draws attention to—that there is musical art, borrowed largely from
Mozart, in Shaw's plays. That is to say, he has learned from music
the secret of external form and progression and sequence: move-
ment of pattern within a mood which could be determined by a
musical direction; the art of instrumentation by which dialogue is
interwoven, like wood wind with strings. But while Shaw has
learned the external tact of musicianship and applied it to drama,
he has not learned the inwardness of Mozart. His art is the direction
of dialogue from the outside, not the creating of character from
within. When he tries (as in Heartbreak House) to model a play on
Chekhov’s “inside” creation of character, he becomes, as when he tries (in Saint Joan) to be poetic, self-conscious and almost embarrassing.

Thus Shaw’s great achievement has been to stand outside and above the struggle with words, the struggle with the “blood and mire” of personal experience, which is the lot of other contemporary writers. He has conducted brilliant arguments with his generation in which his dialectical method has consisted in shifting the argument, constantly and with great skill, so that his opponent is left with the feeling that the ground, changed so often, has been cut from under his feet. Shaw all his life has defended socialism and even called himself a Communist. At the same time he has fought against all direct taxation of his own earnings, and is proud today to call himself a millionaire. One wonders what ground Shaw stands on in his fight for socialism. The answer seems to be contained in a recent letter to the New Statesman and Nation in which he explains that while he has always believed in complete equality of income he has always assumed that this income should be raised to five thousand pounds a year for everyone. To have an income below this is, apparently, not to be a Socialist but to indulge in the crime of poverty.

Shaw, of course, can be forgiven everything, because he is a great entertainer. To my mind, entertainers are the only people entitled to claim as much as they want of everything from their contemporaries, because they are the only ones who have an immediate and obvious public value. Politicians, inventors, and saints do at least as much harm as they do good, and poets and philosophers must wait on posterity to decide their worth. But the entertainer has immediate worth and therefore should be immediately accepted and rewarded. Shaw deserves to be a millionaire.

However, Shaw is more than entertainer, and this is where the difficulty for the critic arises. What is the central passion of his work? The answer is, I think, a kind of fanatical good sense, prepared to sacrifice feeling and enjoyment to good sense, and therefore sometimes fraying at the edges into vegetarian and anti-vivisectionist nonsense. Here, in conversation with Winsten, is an example of this passion:

When things look very black, G. B. S. said, it is well to remember that public evils are not millionfold evils. What you yourself suffer is the utmost that can be suffered on earth. If you starve to death, you experience all the starvation that has ever been or ever can be. If ten thousand others starve with you, their suffering is not increased by a single pang; their share in your fate does not make you ten thousand times as hungry
nor prolong your suffering ten thousand times. You should not therefore be oppressed by the frightful sum of human suffering. There is no sum. Two lean women are not twice as lean as one nor two fat women twice as fat as one. Poverty and pain are not cumulative, and you must not let your spirit be crushed by the fancy that it is. . . . Do not let your mind be disabled by excessive sympathy. At present nobody can be healthy or happy or honorable; our standards are low, so that when we call ourselves so, we mean only that we are not sick, nor crying, nor lying, nor stealing.

This is a noble message, merciful both to those who suffer and to those who are oppressed by the thought of their suffering, and justifying happiness. It contains the best of Shaw, a kind of serious laughter, a refusal to be discouraged, and at the same time a refusal to adopt the aesthetic pose of the creative artist, of Yeats for instance, dancing over the destruction of a civilization.

Shaw reveals in the Self Sketches, and again in his conversation, what he plainly considers the biographical clue to his own psychology. His father was a drunkard, a fact which must have frustrated his relationship with his children long before they became conscious of it. His mother resolved the problem of living with her husband by living according to a program of determined good sense, at the price of completely destroying all affection and need of affection in herself. She took into her home her singing teacher Lee, who was not, Shaw insists, her lover, but who became a substitute father to the Shaw children. In short, the key to Shaw is that he feels himself to have been unloved when he was a child. His life and work have been a heroic, intellectually willed solution, a compensation for this psychological lack. That its effects have always persisted in him is curiously shown, I think, by the examples quoted in these books of his extreme imperturbability in the presence of the deaths of those very close to him. To be completely "reasonable" about the deaths of others shows, I think, a very deep repression of feeling and also a reliance on the force of one's own separate life which arises from a lack of confidence in affection.

Shaw's vanity is obvious, but there is also humility in the way he reveals the lovelessness which is the source of his deepest self-reliance and also of a certain weakness. Our own generation has many reasons to be grateful to him. Future generations will judge whether or not his best work triumphs over the lovelessness in his nature and attains that charity without which literature cannot survive.
V. S. PRITCHETT
1950

G.B.S: 1856–1950

Methuselah is dead. In Shaw goes the last of the Victorian prophets, the last of the long line of young beards who became the great, bearded old gentlemen. Yet, in important ways, Shaw had no connection with the nineteenth century at all. He was really a man of the eighteenth century, closer to Voltaire and Swift than to Marx and Morris. The Anglo-Ireland of 1856, when he was born, was an ossified eighteenth century society. It was elegant yet genteel; it was ruled by the blistering aristocratic candor and the simple aristocratic naivety; it was naturally irreverent, as aristocratic societies are; it was libertine in word, but preserved the trite, conventional and charming copybook morality of the eighteenth century in action. When he died, Shaw was really a hundred years older than his admitted age, as sweet and prim and gentle as anyone out of Goldsmith.

Inside this prosaic moral crust, the Anglo-Irish have always carried a defiant spirit. The high point of the Irish genius is reached in pure, disinterested destructiveness, and of that Shaw was the supreme intellectual embodiment in his time and the eager heir of Swift. It is important to note, however, that this destructiveness is mainly directed at sitting birds; the war of 1914 may have come at an awkward time in Shaw’s life as an artist—he was fifty-eight—but once the world began to destroy itself, Shaw’s destructiveness was outdone, he made crazy and unhappy attempts to outpace it, and as an artist or teacher ceased to have much to say. Assimilated by the middle-aged, he had no spell for the young in politics and as an artist he influenced no one. There remained only his réclame, perhaps his most remarkable achievement—his unique stage personal-

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240
ity remained sharp, sagacious and dazzling; the delightful vanity of his genius kept the limelight till the last.

Shaw had an inspired instinct for success; innate prudence combined shrewdly with presumption in getting it. Emigration to a duller and richer civilization than his own he saw was the only safe thing for a man who found destructiveness so exhilarating. It was the only sure escape from Irish melancholy and cynicism. In Victorian England, the young Shaw found enough to last him a lifetime. As a middle-class individualist of the highest power, who believed that poverty was a crime, who married a rich and intelligent wife and made a fortune which could be compared with that of any Undershaft, Shaw was an ambiguous socialist: his intellect was totally engaged; his whole life (as Trotsky suspected) was not. The device of the Superman, the super-intellect, the Life Force, was his escape from the determinism of Marx and it coincided with his native, eighteenth century taste for despots.

The charm of it all for Shaw himself was that the English always survived his attacks and came back for more. They earned his lasting respect by paying him handsomely for it and then, by turning Fabian as he had urged, diddling him out of his savings and earnings at the rate of 19/6 in the £, plus the Death Duties. In Ireland, he might have been reduced to the alcoholism which had frightened him as a child in the life of his father. And there was a second strain of Irish genius which can be developed to a higher pitch outside that country: the role of the stage-Irishman. Whenever that genius has submitted to the discipline of the theater, it has been irresistible. Behind Shaw the dramatist were Goldsmith, Sheridan and Wilde.

The early danger in Shaw’s career was that he would become a dilettante—the famous jaeger suit, the Norfolk jacket and knickerbockers, the diabolical twist to the eyebrows and, later on, the dinner jacket into which he changed every evening during the war, when no one wore such a garment, are obdurate vestiges of dandyism. But the shocking London of the ’seventies was too much for the genteel and moral Irish Protestant, who had worked as an accountant and claimed to be a kin to a baronet. He heard the Biblical and warlike voice of Marx. Its despotic sound, its subversiveness, its talk of the continuous war of classes, its protest against poverty, the passion of its economics, lastingly moved Shaw, for he was poor, came from an oppressed nation, had lost his religious faith, and was in need of a weapon and a role.

The great Irish evil, which all Irishmen fear, is romanticism; Shaw’s conversion was real enough, but common sense, sanity, shrewdness, the practical were the Shavian aims. He was neither a
visionary nor a crank; but rather, in the manner of Swift—though far more successful in his mission to the English—a negotiator. By eloquent attack, irony, laughter, bounce, by the intrigue of words and a wit that cut everything to ribbons, in a prose so clear, fast and pure that it was like a charmer’s music to the snake, Shaw hypnotized England. People became Socialists without knowing it even while they were denouncing Shaw as a mountebank and a playboy. Trotsky lamented that Shaw was a good man fallen among Fabians. But Shaw knew his Englishman and loved him, as the stinging fly loves the thick hide it farsightedly chooses as a safe home for its eggs.

What Trotsky really lamented was that Shaw was not a crusader or a fanatic. Others have complained that he was neither a philosopher nor a political thinker of any substance. Shaw’s great vanity as an artist—and he was an artist above all—enabled him to agree with double-edged modesty with his critics. He often spoke, truly, of his poor education. He observed with real humility the learning and the passion of the Webbs, whom he worshipped. It was a kind of modesty when he boasted of his brilliance and genius; because (if it can be put this way) brilliance and genius were all he had. And he knew their nature: he had the penetrating comic genius. He was expert, as the comic genius is, in absurd juxtapositions and non sequiturs. His prose is made of sentences which have less and less to do with the preceding ones; each is a fresh beginning, fresh with new, vivid effrontery and traveling away from the point, like the words of an incurable but dazzling talker who is intoxicated by his own flow.

The result is that the reader or audience sooner or later falls into the boredom of the over-stimulated. If *Arms and the Man, Candida, The Man of Destiny, John Bull’s Other Island, Major Barbara, Pygmalion* and possibly *You Never Can Tell* are excepted, the law of diminishing returns begins to work halfway through his plays. There are wonderful moments in *Man and Superman* and St. Joan, but comedy, or in the last case, tragedy, degenerate into the longueurs of debate; farce becomes crude. Devastating in his ability to talk on both sides of the question and to cap or sink his own arguments, Shaw damps us because he talks his way back to the status quo, and leaves the impression that all he has had to say has only verbal importance. We are back where we started.

The failure in feeling was noticed by the earliest critics of Shaw. William Archer said of *Man and Superman* that instead of blood “a kind of sour whey” flowed on the stage. The fact is that anger and indignation—the most powerful of all emotions—are alone portrayed successfully.
taire's. The brief poetical passages in *John Bull's Other Island* are the poorest sentimentality; even the saintly figure of Father Keegan in that play occasionally arouses shyness. In *St. Joan* the pathos is commonplace and the mysticism embarrassing. Shaw hardly goes deeper than the sentiment—pure though it is with the curious Irish purity—of the philanderer; and philanderers of either sex make the mistake of crediting the opposite sex with their own characteristics. Shaw's lovers do not test each other's hearts, but only their wills. They are adroit in the campaigns worked up by the mental affections; they are trained in that military sense of love one sees also in Sheridan, in seeking out the strategy of character. There is no hate in this love and no fear either; it is neutral.

All this was a brilliant device for dramatizing feminism and the new women—one might say Shaw emancipated women and Wells emancipated men—but the emancipation soon appeared to cover a superficial part of life; the doctrine was to lead to a serious nutritional deficiency when he described the spiritual passions, as in *St. Joan* and in his religious theorizing. On these he is as dry and flat as a biscuit.

Chesterton accused Shaw of the gloom of a general Puritanism, and this naturally rankled. The weakness of the Puritan, especially of the Shavian kind, is his dangerous levity and cheerfulness, the merry, practical streak which evades the ungovernable tumult of feeling. The theory that the Life Force was driving on and on was felt by his audiences to be an escape from the crucifying emotional matter of the gains and losses. One more dazzling Irishman had talked himself out of life into the heavens like a whizzing rocket and had come down dead and extinct like the stick. One more superbly agile lizard had lived off its own tail, consumed itself and come back to exactly what it was before.

Exasperated critics frequently took the failure of feeling further and said that Shaw's characters were unreal, that they were no more than walking arguments. This is a half-truth, though it is a fact that Shaw did not believe in character for its own sake. Few Victorian writers did. His eye for the middle-class milieu was perfect. He knew exactly the values beneath the humbug and was only rash in assuming that men and women can live without it. *Candida* is an excellent portrait of a woman and so is the delightful Major Barbara. The theater, and comedy above all, has always dealt in types; the sentimental Englishman and the disillusioned Irishman in *John Bull's* are brilliantly observed. The political characters in *St. Joan* are a triumph of irreverent dialectic and penetrating under-

view was as rewarding an approach to the anatomy
of character itself as the now fashionable psychological approach. His young men have the assertiveness of youth itself, their vanity is perfect. His masterful or stupid middle-aged women are a special excellence, and so are his pompous fathers. Undershelf is convincing as a human being. A very vain man, Shaw was a connoisseur of vanities and his collection is not wounding or disheartening—as it is, say, in smaller writers like Maugham—largely because Shaw is warmed by the fire of a natural affinity. Only a clumsiness of plot—Shaw was not a natural plot-maker, but a reckless piler on of the grotesque for satirical reasons—distorts the focus in which character is seen. The clear failures are his Cockneys; they are a Dubliner’s caricatures of a character too subtle for him.

In his public career Shaw continued the art of saying the last word, which was his making as a supreme pamphleteer. As a music critic he was called maddened and refreshed. In dramatic criticism he was more solid, went down to fundamentals, and this part of his work, dense with experience, is bound to survive, however fashion affects the plays.

The 1914 war was a profound shock to Shaw’s comic genius and his optimism. Heartbreak House appeared to many as a confusion. The disillusion with the failures of the Labor government, in which the Webbs and many of his Fabian friends served, turned Shaw back to his own inherited responses. The old eighteenth century taste for autocrats revived. So Mussolini was admired, Hitler was given a hand and Stalin was exalted. Their virtue was that they were practical. Shaw appeared to agree with the scientists that what succeeds is good and he had been careful, as a Marxist, to say that capitalism had been good in the days when it succeeded. Failure, like poverty, had always been the Shavian crime. The only failure he seems to have been proud of was his own failure to earn more than £6 by novels and casual writing before he was forty. To the hostile, Shaw’s trotting to Moscow and his defense of tyrants seemed a mixture of cynicism, contemptible prudence, and an old mountebank’s determination to keep in the limelight; a degeneration from the noble pages of The Intelligent Woman’s Guide.

More virtuous than Voltaire—he was the good man’s Voltaire—Shaw was no more free than the Frenchman from the irresponsibility of a chaotically lucid mind which changed the focus too fast for his own eye. The age of Swift, to which Shaw historically and spiritually belonged, believed in authority; it believed that the moral was the practical; it was worldly, though without huge wealth; it believed in the beatitude of the conventional. It managed to believe in these things and at the same time to preach revolution in the name of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Victorian practicality meant the
practical man's ruthless advantage; Shaw's was the older practicality of a fundamental fairness and goodness. Romanticism made him believe that autocrats could distribute this. He believed, like Wells, like everyone who matured before 1914, in the superior person. Shaw romantically imagined in his heart that the new despots, like the old, had both the good sense and the sense of honor of the old kind of gentleman. But those died with the machine.

It has been truly said that Shaw's anger never made enemies. Irish evasiveness, sociability and energy made him wish resolutely to cut the best figure on the thinnest ice. He kept up his stage role to the last. He was sometimes petulant in the publicity he delighted in. His great age was his last great turn, which could hardly conceal an appalling loneliness. All his contemporaries were dead. His wife had gone. He recognized how poor his contacts with human beings were, now he was without intermediaries. He was, in a sense, unhuman. He depended on servants whom he hardly knew. He came close at times to that terrible condition of the old in contemporary England, who discover that there is no one to depend on and for whom the mere mechanics of living have become tragically difficult. At the illness of a servant during the blitz, he and his sick wife had been obliged to leave the famous, ugly old Rectory at Ayot St. Lawrence and live among the bombs in London.

He was not friendless, but he was manifestly apart from his friends, a lonely figure with bright eyes and ceaseless tongue, going for walks. The handwriting was still firm and bold and beautifully formed on the famous postcards; the soft and beautiful voice was still firm and ready when he spoke on the telephone. His mind was still large and showed only the normal sense of persecution felt by those in contemporary England who have been relieved of so much of their property by the State. With the shrewdness of an afflicted banker he protested against the threat of capital levy. Like Samuel Butler he had a profound respect for capital.

The brain still worked fast and though frail the body was resistant. Only his legs weakened. His laughter still rescued him from the melancholy of his race. He ended as a testimonial to the value of his famous quirks: teetotalism, vegetarianism, his theories about health and hygiene. He ended as a kind of saint of prudence, a saint known for his good sense rather than his sufferings, for his chronically topsy-turvy advice rather than his visions. He became the Gandhi of economics.

The vein of compromise, the failure to carry anger for very long, the tendency to become too clever for wrath, weakens him when he is compared with Swift. Compared with Voltaire's, his imagination is drier, lacks picture and lacks nature too. A kind of middle-class
Gentility preserved him from the great disgusts, the unspeakable
horrors which greater imaginations could grasp. The prose is, how-
ever, a superb vehicle for the pamphleteer and any page of it is a
model of the art of conducting unfair arguments. He was a highly
original artist and the art lay in the transmuting of disruptive de-
bate into a kind of classical Mozartian music. The plays date mos-
siously when they are debates, yet the verbal wit is perennially
irresistible. There is no writer who so conspicuously and largely hold-
the whole social and political and intellectual life of a long, rich
period of heresy and revolt in his hands, a revolt against everything
from marriage to God—and back.

From William Morris until the dictators, he holds everything. The
England which gave him little recognition until he was known on
the Continent and in America—which for years he refused to visit—
has dropped him again; even the revolutions of the last thirty yea-
rs have been made by war, not by Shawian gradualism, even in En-

land. But he was the indefatigable showman at the door for mo-
re than half a century who, until the wars came, stole the show. It was
war which established the final Fabian victory.
When in 1898 Shaw decided to invade Egypt, to come to grips with the mighty Julius, and as a vegetable-fed Puritan to run the risks of Cleopatra, he had something very much his own to say, which, as usual, he managed to get said in his own way. He was the first to admit the value of what he had written. The fact that Walkley and the critics who originally reviewed *Caesar and Cleopatra* had described it as *opéra bouffe* did not depress Shaw. To him prophecy is routine employment. “In 1920 Caesar will be a masterpiece,” he wrote in 1908. Readers have long since agreed with him.

Shaw, being Shaw, did not hesitate to offer *Caesar and Cleopatra* to the public as an improvement on Shakespeare. “Better than Shakespeare” was the title he chose for his preface. By this, he pointed out with surprising modesty, he did not mean that he professed to write better plays than Shakespeare. He did, however, claim the right to criticize Shakespeare, to discard and discredit his romantic notions of passion and history, and to substitute new ideas and a new approach born of a new age.

The first change, an inevitable one in Shaw’s case, was that where Shakespeare had written a tragedy Shaw wrote a comedy. The side of Shaw which is John Bunyan pretended to be shocked by Shakespeare’s Cleopatra. He dismissed her as a Circe who, instead of turning heroes into hogs, turned hogs into heroes. He would have nothing to do with the mature woman, a tawdry wanton as he saw her, whose lustfulness had transformed a world leader into a strumpet’s fool. For that matter, he would have nothing to do with the youthful Cleopatra who, according to history, had a child by Caesar. In her place he preferred to draw, and drew delectably, the portrait of a

kittenish girl who under Caesar’s tutelage flowered into a queen. His Cleopatra’s youth was more than a puritanic evasion. It was a Shavian device by means of which superstitions could be mocked and Caesar, the conqueror, humanized by being seen through the irreverent eyes of a child. In other words, it was Shaw’s characteristic way of taking the starch out of the stuffed-shirt approach to history.

As for Shakespeare’s Caesar, Shaw had only contempt for him. His contention was that Shakespeare, who knew human weakness so well, never knew human strength of the Caesarian type. Just why Shaw, also a man of words, felt that he had a greater claim to understanding the inner workings of a man of action, is something he did not bother to explain. But that he succeeded with his Caesar where Shakespeare failed with his, few would deny.

In his preface to Caesar and Cleopatra G. B. S. described himself as a crow who has followed many plows. Surely none of these had led him down stranger furrows than his flirtations with the dictator principle. The champion of the superman, who was fascinated by Napoleon and who has had kind words to say about Stalin and even Mussolini, was bound sooner or later to be drawn to Caesar.

The major source of his Julius was not Plutarch. As he confessed, it was Mommsen, the nineteenth-century German historian. He liked Mommsen’s account of the Egyptian visit and agreed with his estimate of Caesar. Shaw also admitted his debt to Carlyle for his concept of the historical hero capable of bearing “the weight of life” realistically rather than suffering from a passion to die gallantly.

The Caesar Shaw drew would not have been recognized by Suetonius or Plutarch, neither of whom liked him. But the man who wrote The Gallic War would have recognized this Shavian Julius—with gratitude and relief. The clemency and statesmanship, the largeness of mind and spirit, which for the sake of the record he had been careful to establish as his, are qualities that shine in Shaw’s Caesar. Caesar’s self-love could not have been greater than Shaw’s almost romantic infatuation with the benevolent despot he depicted.

But there was a difference—an immeasurable difference. Where Plutarch was dignified, Suetonius scurrilous, Caesar determinedly official, and Shakespeare rhetorically athletic, Shaw was Shavian. This in itself represented a complete abandonment of the orthodox ways of writing not only history but historical plays. It meant that, more than upsetting an apple-cart, Shaw had brought about a one-man revolution in the theatre and in literature.

He approached the past unawed, anxious to see it in contemporary terms, eager for a laugh, and with a wit which, though impudent, was wonderfully humanizing. The effects of his innovations
are still with us, though in lesser hands they have never achieved the same dimensions and have sometimes been downright sophomoric. Quite rightly, it has been pointed out that what is widely thought of as Lytton Strachey’s method was something for which Shaw prepared the way. But what is often overlooked is that G. B. S., regardless of his impertinences, was never a debunker. His spirit was always too positive for that, his intellect too superior.

_Caesar and Cleopatra_ is a proof of this. However flippant or hilarious its means may be, its concerns are serious and sizable. For Shaw’s real interest, so gaily presented in a very funny play, is nothing less than a study of the anatomy of earthly power and greatness. Although his Caesar may laugh and be laughed at, he is palpably a great man misunderstood by those around him and even by the Cleopatra he has instructed in queenship. If in delineating this greatness Shaw deliberately substitutes colloquial prose for what he had once condemned as the melodious fustian and mechanical lil of Shakespeare’s blank verse, he is nonetheless able in speech after speech to rise to a glorious eloquence of his own.

Caesar’s apostrophe to the Sphinx is a sample. Other samples are the wisdom of Caesar’s “He who has never hoped can never despair” and his “One year of Rome is like another, except that I grow older whilst the crowd in the Appian Way is always the same age.” Or the beauty of his leave-taking of Cleopatra, when he describes Mark Antony to her in these words, “Come, Cleopatra: forgive me and bid me farewell; and I will send you a man, Roman from head to heel and Roman of the noblest; not old and ripe for the knife; not lean in the arms and cold in the heart; not hiding a bald head under his conqueror’s laurels; not stooped with the weight of the world on his shoulders; but brisk and fresh, strong and young, hoping in the morning, fighting in the day, and reveling in the evening.” In almost every instance the organ plays full and strong, only to be interrupted by a jest. Even so, the sense of greatness is not lost. _Caesar and Cleopatra_ makes the past provocative, history human, and greatness gay.
Les Dieux s'en vont—"The Gods pass." With George Bernard Shaw another of Europe's old guard has departed, the Nestor of that great statured generation, gifted with enduring vitality, productive to the last, leaving behind what must be called in comparison, a race, not without interest but frail, sombre, endangered and withered before its time. He was preceded in death by Gerhart Hauptmann, of whom G. B. S. scarcely took note, though plays like The Weavers and The Rats should have greatly pleased him, and by Richard Strauss, whom he knew quite well and in whom he admired the great tradition as well as the brash, revolutionary efficiency of a man born under a lucky star.

Still among us are the octogenarians André Gide, Shaw's kinsman in capricious genius and protestant morality, and the aged Knut Hamsun, now merely vegetating, a man broken by politics, though still the quondam creator of highly discriminate narrative works that yield nothing in richness and charm to Shaw's dramatic works. Shaw, judging by his writings, was sublimely unconcerned with this compeer and it is true that in many respects the two of them were counter-poets, especially in the matter of socialism. The brunt between them in the personal sphere was a sense of obligation towards Germany, well founded in either case, though it spelt Hamsun's political doom, while in the more intelligent Shaw it maintained the character of a well-tempered gratefulness, which, for the rest, laid little claim to any very extensive intimacy.

There is a certain meaningfulness in allowing a German to speak in Shaw's honour, for Germany—and more particularly the Austrian cultural dependency of Germany, in the person of Siegfried Trebitsch, who, with curiously unerring instinct, staked his cards on Reprinted from The Listener, January 18, 1951. Used by permission of the author.
translating Shaw’s plays into German—Germany recognised his importance to the modern stage, indeed to modern intellectual life as a whole, earlier than the English-speaking world. His fame actually reached England only by way of Germany, just as Ibsen and Hansun conquered Norway, and Strindberg Sweden, by the same round-about route, for London’s independent theatre fell short of doing for Shaw’s reputation—soon to grow to world-wide dimensions—what men like Otto Brahm and Max Reinhardt and their actors, and with them Berlin’s dramatic criticism, were able to accomplish, for the simple reason that at that time the German stage was ahead of its British counterpart. Moreover, less frozen in the bourgeois mould, more receptive to new things, better prepared to view the Anglo-Celt as the new spear-shaker, the great dramatic, intellectual and mischief-maker, the mighty wielder of words, twinkling with exuberance, the creative critic and dialectician of the theatre of our age. He never denied his indebtedness to Germany, and repaid it in a highly amusing essay, What I Owe to German Culture, going so far as to declare that his own culture was to a very considerable degree German. This is a vast exaggeration, at least regarding the influence of German literature on him, which was meaningless. He himself very humorously described the fragmentary and casual nature of his knowledge of this sphere, which indeed enjoys a great popularity anywhere. In his childhood, he relates, he had once read a story by a certain Jean-Paul Richter and Grimm’s Fairy Tales as well, adding that he still regarded Grimm as the most entertaining German author. Strange that he should not have mentioned Heine or Hoffmann, usually accounted the most entertaining Germans. Stranger still that he should have regarded Grimm as a single individual, possessed of the unGerman quality of being entertaining. He seems to have been unaware that this Grimm consisted of two persons—the brothers Jakob and Wilhelm, romantically inspired lovers of German antiquity, who listened to their fairy tales from the lips of the people, and collected them conscientiously. This, apart from the fact that the two planned a gigantic etymological dictionary of the German language, with which they were never done, and which German scholars are now again engaged in rounding out. In point of fact, this work of many volumes makes the most entertaining reading in the world for anyone as interested in the German tongue as Shaw was in the English.

“Everyone ought to learn German,” Shaw said, and he himself was determined to do so. But since he was only fifty-five there was no hurry. He never did learn it, and when Germans who knew no English visited him he would let them talk until they ran out of breath. Then he would put his hand to his heart and say, “ausge-
heit." He did not quite know what this word meant, he said, tongue in cheek, but it always made the Germans happy. I myself would have been quite apt to speak a little English with him, but I never visited him, for purely humanitarian reasons, for I am convinced that he never read a line of mine and this might well have been a source of some embarrassment to him. True, we might have avoided that plight by shunning literature altogether and turning at once to a subject that concerned us equally—music. It was German music Shaw had in mind, and nothing else, when he spoke of German culture and his debt to it. He made that very plain, and declared frankly that all the western culture he had acquired was as nothing compared to his intuitive grasp of German music from its birth to its maturity.

Shaw, the son of a mother who was a singer and singing teacher, left a body of dramatic writing that is the epitome of intellectuality. Yet the music of words is part and parcel of it, and he himself stressed that it was constructed on the model of thematic development in music. For all its sober brilliance, its alert and derisive critical judgment, it strives deliberately for musical effect. No reaction to it pleased the author more than that of a British colleague whom he held in high esteem—Harley Granville-Barker—who exhorted the actors at a Shaw rehearsal: "For God's sake bear in mind that this is not a play but an opera—deliver every speech as though you expected to give an encore." In truth, Shaw, like every important dramatist before him, created his own idiom. The language of the theatre at bottom, as unrealistic as the chanted passion of the opera—exalted, exaggerated, pointed, terse and striking, no wit less rhetorical than Corneille's verses or Schiller's iambic measures, and, strange as it may sound, no less pervaded with pathos, a term not here meant to imply uncouthness and bombast, but the ultimate in expression—an eccentricity of speech, steeped for the most part in humour, full of esprit, challenge, effrontery, the reigning paradox.

In his preface to Saint Joan, which is so good that it almost makes the play superfluous, he stripped bare the scientific superstition of our times, insisting that the theories of our physicists and astronomers and the credulity with which we accept them would have dissolved the Middle Ages in a roar of sceptical merriment. That sets the style. Yet not only does Shaw, the essayist, speak in this way. He often, indeed for the most part, has his characters speak in similar fashion, and it should be noticed in passing that his figure of speech about "dissolving an audience in a roar of sceptical merriment" precisely describes his own effect on his spectators.
RADICAL SOCIALIST—AND APOSTLE OF WAGNER

When William Archer, in 1885, first met the young Dubliner, only recently come to London, in the library of the British Museum, he found Shaw preoccupied with two works which he studied in turn for weeks on end. They were Das Kapital by Marx, and the score of Wagner’s Tristan und Isolde. Here you have the whole of Shaw—here is Shaw, the radical socialist, zealously addressing meetings, going beyond the teachings of Henry George, who aimed only at the reform of land holding, demanding the nationalisation of capital in every form; Shaw, the guiding spirit of the Fabian Society, who wrote The Intelligent Woman’s Guide to Socialism and Capitalism, a book Ramsay MacDonald went so far as to call “the world’s most valuable next to the Bible”; Shaw, beginning his career as a playwright with Widowers’ Houses, a tract about middle-class pseudo-respectability, about the social evils of slum ownership; Shaw, who remained forever a man of social contentions, who called his plays, sometimes a little condescendingly, “dramatic conferences,” and Shaw, the born Thesian utterly lacking Wagner’s sultry eroticism, with its out-heavening of Heaven, yet Wagner’s true pupil as a maker of intellectual music and also as his own apostle and tireless commentator. He wrote a book about Wagner, The Perfect Wagnerite, a work of shrewd lucidity that compares most favourably with the burrowing film-flam of German Wagner exegetists, nor is it mere coincidence that close beside this book stands another treatise of critical gratitude and homage, The Quintessence of Ibsenism, for Ibsen, about whose trait, his kinship to Wagner, I once attempted to write, was Shaw’s other teacher and his case is an interesting demonstration of the extent to which an altogether different temperament can utilise, for its own purposes, like-minded experiences, once they had been fully encompassed; creatively melting them down into something totally new and personal.

Ibsen is supposed to have said once that each of his plays might just as well have become an essay. Shaw, for one, never forwent the essay, which inhere in his every play—letting it stand beside the play, or rather embodying it in a preface often as long and as eloquent as the play itself, calling things by their names with a critical directness unfitting in the play proper. I, for one, find fault, for example, with the unhappy scrambling of essay and drama that allows Cauchon and Warwick, in the fourth scene of Saint Joan, to concoct the terms “protestantism” and “nationalism,” in definition of Joan’s heresy and of heresy in general. Factually, these terms may
not have been anachronisms in the fifteenth century, but as formul-
ations they have an anachronistic effect which breaks up form and
style. They belong to the essay, where indeed they are to be found.
The play should have shunned them, should have been content with
an interpretative formulation. Neither this, nor even the fact that in
Saint Joan, as in other plays of Shaw, the aria sometimes turns into
an editorial, can keep this dramatic chronicle from remaining the
most fervent thing Shaw ever wrote—the play that is poetically the
most moving, that comes closest to high tragedy, a work inspired
with a truly elating sense of justice; a work in which the mature
rationality of an esprit fort that has outgrown the confines of the
eighteenth and even the nineteenth century, bows before sanctity; a
work fully deserving its world fame.

There is but one other play I would put beside it, or perhaps even
ahead of it. That is Heartbreak House—creative fruit of the first
world war—a play of which neither Aristophanes nor Molière nor
Ibsen need have been ashamed; a play that belongs in the fore-
ground of comedy, a play of sparkling dialogue and a fanciful cast
of characters, supremely humorous, yet filled with things cursed and
condemned, pitched in the mood of a doomed society. When all the
one-act plays are included—enter among them such as Great Cath-
erine and Shewing Up of Blanco Posnet—it turns out that Shaw
wrote more plays than Shakespeare, and if they are of uneven
weight, like those of his great predecessor, against whom he liked
to match himself so gaily, if some of them have withered, their prob-
lems growing outdated, as he foresaw, they do include, beside those
already named and singled out for praise, such things as Caesar and
Cleopatra; Man and Superman; Androcles and the Lion, and the
stunningly clairvoyant political satire The Apple Cart, things that
have withstood and will long continue to withstand the onslaught of
time, in part because of their wisdom and their profoundly edifying
message; in part because of the winged wit of their poetic idiom.
When we add the floodtide of essays, commentary, and amplifying
criticism, embodying an all-embracing encyclopaedic knowledge
that draws equally on the natural sciences, theology, religious and
general history, and especially the social economic sphere, always
artistically leavened, full of aesthetic charm and unfailingly enter-
taining—when we add all this we find ourselves face to face with a
lifework of astonishing scope, apparently the fruit of continued
inspiration, unceasing merriness, and of an indefatigable will to

was first and last a hard worker. In
was not his happiness, but his
ill, a crime against society and
utterly foreign to his nature. He said once that he had never been young in the sense that the average person sows his wild oats. For that very reason he remained everlastingly youthful in his work, frisky as a colt, even in his old age. Anti-bourgeois to the core, a Marxist fond of a revolutionary slogan, “Enemies of the bourgeoisie—unite,” he was yet in his own moral convictions and mode of life middle-class through and through, indeed puritanical. He could have retired from literature tomorrow, he said, and become a respectable cheesemonger, without changing one iota of his domestic habits. For him, the counterpart of the bourgeois was not the bohemian, but the socialist. The world of people, he said, who spent their evenings over champagne suppers, with actresses, models and dancers—that world was unknown to him, and he wondered how its hapless victims endured it, indeed, he often doubted that it actually existed, for all the actresses and dancers he had known were decent, hard-working women. He himself was a man of rigorous and sensible work habits. He did not burn the midnight oil, tossing off his plays on the spur of inspiration; he performed his intelligently planned literary labours between breakfast and the noonday meal, and he went to bed regularly before midnight, so that he might tackle them in the morning with freshness, lucidity and poise.

NO USE FOR DISSOLUTE BOHEMIANISM

Dissolute bohemianism revolted him—he simply had no practical use for it. Vice bored him, and as for intoxication, he put these words into the mouth of the old captain in *Heartbreak House*: “I dread being drunk more than anything in the world. To be drunk means to have dreams; to go soft; to be easily pleased and deceived; to fall into the clutches of women.” Clearly, intoxication was meant to include pre-eminently erotic ecstasy, an experience unknown to Shaw. This does not mean that he was a misogynist. On the contrary, like Ibsen, he may well be described as an extoller of women. The women in his plays are generally superior to the men, in common sense, and sense of humour, usually at the expense of the men. But he was fond of quoting Napoleon, who said that women were the business of idlers; adding, on his own, that no man with any serious mission in the world could spare time and money for affairs with women. St. Anthony he was not, for that saint was beset by temptations, while Shaw, with his vitreous nature, evidently found continence of the flesh as easy as abstention from meat. He made no dogma of vegetarianism; one man’s meat, he said simply, was another man’s poison. But, the rebellion against the tyranny of sex—his own expression—was part of his social, moral and aesthetic credo,
and there is nothing in his plays of passion, infatuation, sensual abandon, that Come può esser ch’io non sia più mio of Michelangelo, and indeed these qualities would seem strangely out of place there.

One is tempted to ask him, as the prince importunes the queen in Schiller’s Don Carlos, Sie haben nie geliebt? (“Have you then never loved?”). The answer would probably have been a laughing “No”—laughing, but a “No,” none the less. Of that same vitreous character, a Marienbad elegy, with its passion-brimmed sorrow—indeed, anything like the experience of the septuagenarian Goethe underwent with Ulrike von Levetzow would have been unimaginable in the case of Shaw, and he prided himself more on it than do we on his behalf. His was a magnificent durability, yet it somehow lacked full-bloodedness, so much so that, despite the grandeur of his life, it detracted from his stature.

I am quite fond of the massive meals that delighted Luther, Goethe and Bismarck, and I rather fancy Churchill’s drinking and smoking as well. In the picture of Shaw, not merely his physical presence, but also his intellectual stature, I find a certain quality of gauntness, vegetarianism and frigidity that somehow does not quite seem to fit my idea of greatness. That idea implies a degree of human tragedy, of suffering and sacrifice. The knotted muscles of Tolstoy bearing up the full burden of morality, Atlas-like. Strindberg who was in hell; the martyr’s death Nietzsche died on the cross of thought; it is these that inspire us with the reverence of tragedy; but in Shaw there was nothing of all this. Was he beyond such things, or were they beyond him? He called one of his own plays A Light Play about Difficult Things—he might well have given that title to all of his writings, and I am not so certain whether this very definition will not apply to all art to come, and whether Shaw may not turn out to have been the smiling prophet of generations, emancipated from tragedy and gloom. Yet I ask myself whether his facility was perhaps not a little too facile; whether he was ever the man to take grave matters with their full gravity. Let the future determine his weight in the scales to the last ounce. This much is certain—his sobriety, like his diet of greens, was necessary to his particular brand of clear-headedness and constraint and liberating ebullience, and nothing could be more erroneous than to mistake his coolness for an actual incapacity for love. He may have laughed at everyone and everything, but he was anything but a Mephistophelian nihilist—thrusting the Devil’s chill fist in the face of the powers of creation.

Again, it is his Captain Shotover in Heartbreak House to whom he gives these words to say: “Old men are dangerous: it doesn’t matter to them what is going to happen to the world.” Shaw did care what was to become of the world, right down to the age of ninety-
four. The clergyman who intoned the prayers at his death-bed was quite right when he said, "This man was surely no atheist." He was no atheist, for he reverenced the vital force that is conducting so noble an experiment with man on earth, and was sincerely concerned lest God's experiment become a failure.

Convinced that the aesthetic element, creative joy, is the most effective instrument of enlightened teaching, he tirelessly wielded the shining sword of his word and wit against the most appalling power threatening the triumph of the experiment—stupidity. He did his best in redressing the fateful unbalance between truth and reality, in lifting mankind to a higher rung of social maturity. He often pointed a scornful finger at human frailty, but his jests were never at the expense of humanity. He was mankind's friend, and it is in this role that he will live in the hearts and memories of men.
INDEX

's Bashville, or Constancy Un-led, The, 24
'ses of the Black Girl in Her
for God, The, viii
viii, 25
m, 69
s and the Lion, viii, 72, 73.
33, 144, 155, 174, 254
art, The, viii, 118, 140, 147,
9, 254
William, 19, 24, 26, 29, 34.
42, 253
i the Man, viii, 14, 117, 148,
42
Matthew, 6
196-198
s Thought Can Reach, 113,
udy, 136
174
s Does His Bit, 166
Lawrence, viii
ethuselah, viii, 111, 119, 144-
51, 184, 185, 188-191, 193,
01, 203
ford, 102
chais, 78
t, 214, 223
m, 78, 196
, 167
Edward, 216
Iliaire, 218
78, 165
r, 132, 216-217
3
John, 32
samuel, 122, 188, 200-202
and Cleopatra, viii, 7, 14, 15,
5, 143, 213, 247-249, 254
, viii, 14-19, 24, 116, 155-158,
67, 242, 243
m, 206, 209, 222
Brassbound's Conversion, viii,
9
248
Case for Equality, The, 63, 66
Cashel Byron's Profession, viii, 3-6, 10,
11, 24, 29, 117
Cestry, Charles, 77
Chekhov, 233-235
Chesterton, 68, 67, 76, 163, 230, 243
Christianity, 73, 128, 172
Clarion, The, 212
Coburn, Alvin Langdon, 38
Colbourne, Maurice, 159
Cole, Margaret, 218
Collected Prefaces, viii, 20, 41-43, 54,
64-65, 90, 98, 118, 128, 136, 139,
152, 155, 161, 174, 184, 185, 188,
220, 252
Common Sense About the War, viii,
51, 57, 58, 132, 133, 176
Common Sense of Municipal Trading,
The, 63, 67
Conduct, 192-193
Constitution of the Socialist Common-
wealth of Great Britain, 218
Corno di Bassetto, vii, 49
Correspondence, A, viii
Cousin, 160
Creative Evolution (see also Life
Force), 184, 186-191, 200-205
Criticism, 46, 50, 51, 165
Daly, Arnold, 25
Darwinism, 155
Davies, W. H., 237
Days with Bernard Shaw, 236
Degas, 12
Democracy, 222
Devil, the, 21, 22
Devil's Disciple, The, viii, 14, 43, 77,
116, 129, 143, 169
Divorce, 47
Doctor's Dilemma, The, viii, 44, 148,
169
Doctors' Delusions, 176
Don Giovanni, 156
Don Juan, 7, 20, 22, 115
Donizetti, 78
Dublin Art Gallery, 78
Einstein, 140
Eliot, 178

259
George Bernard Shaw

Impressionists, 196
In Good King Charles’s Golden Days, viii
Informers, The, 69
Intelligent Woman’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism, The, viii, 131,
135, 145, 208, 244, 253
Irrational Knot, The, viii, 85, 117
Irving, Sir Henry, 163
James, Henry, 20, 165
Jesus, 128, 129, 174
Jevons, Stanley, 63, 208
Joan of Arc (see Saint Joan)
John Bull’s Other Island, viii, 25, 50,
90, 116, 132, 143, 242, 243
Joyce, James, 115, 237
Labour Party, 215–216
Lamarck, 190
League of Nations, 217
Lee, 239
Lenin, 124, 136, 137, 211
Life Force (see also Creative Evolution), 33, 72, 91–93, 111–114, 145,
194–195, 198–199, 202–204, 241,
243
Light Play about Difficult Things, A, 256
London County Council, viii, 127
Longevity, 112, 115
Lothian, Marquess of, 136
Love Among the Artists, vii, 10, 11, 117
MacDonald, Ramsay, 147, 253
—Major Barbara, viii, 50, 64, 66, 68, 94,
116, 130, 143, 144, 188, 243
—Man and Superman, viii, 19–24, 39, 45,
54, 90, 92, 103, 116, 124, 129, 145,
149, 183–185, 192, 193, 218, 241,
254
Man of Destiny, The, vii, 14, 243
Manet, 12
Marlowe, 166
Marriage, viii, 16–17, 115–119, 139,
237
Marx, Karl, 63, 126, 140, 171, 207, 241,
253
Masterbuilder, The, 106
Mendelssohn, 78
Meredith, George, 11, 19
Mérimée, 78
Meyerbeer, 78
Mill, S. J., 16
Millionaire, The, 151, 152
Misalliance, viii, 116, 146, 167, 182
Molière, 78
Molnar, 167
Mommers, 248
Moore, George, 8
INDEX

Roman Catholicism, 30, 33
Romanticism, 172, 245
Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, 174
Rossini, 165
Ruskin, 225
Russell, Bertrand, xiii

Saint Joan, viii, xv, 125, 144, 146, 153, 156, 166, 170, 238, 242, 243, 252–254
Salvation Army, 130
Salvemini, Gaetano, 220
Sanity of Art, The, 48
Saturday Review, vii, 31, 34, 35, 97
Schiller, 78
Schopenhauer, 33
Schumann, 78
Scott, Dixon, 164
Sex, 103, 112, 115–119, 173, 237, 255
Shakespeare, William, x, 29, 31–32, 51, 162, 166, 247, 248, 254
Shaw, C. M., 160
Shelley, 163
Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet, The, viii, 143, 161, 254
Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles, The, 151
Six of Calais, The, 152
Sixteen Self Sketches, 236, 239
Slonimsky, 165
Smith, Aubrey, 25
Smith, Winchell, 25
Socialism, 55, 66, 102, 126, 173, 192, 206ff., 222, 227, 228, 238, 253–255
Socialism and Superior Brains, 53, 63, 66
Socialism for Millionaires, 63
South Africa, 63, 217
Spencer, Herbert, 118
Stage Society, 24, 25
Stalin, 136, 137, 174, 244
Star, The, vii, 97
Stevenson, Robert Louis, 29, 72, 75, 117
Strauss, Richard, 118, 250
Strindberg, 13
Sully, James, 24
Table Talk of G. B. S., 115
Teetotaller, 9, 10
Terry, Ellen, vii, 137, 159
Theatre Guild, 233
Times Book Club, 63
Titanic, 56
Tolstoy, 234
Too True to be Good, 148, 167
Tragedy of an Elderly Gentleman, The, 113, 146

.5, 78, 156, 237, 246
Warren's Profession, vii, 13, 24,

y, Gilbert, 237
.30, 49, 77–78, 97, 118, 140, 156,
-156, 237, 246, 252

ilini, 134–135, 152, 219, 221

allon, 255
al Liberal Club, 226
hajew, 24
Statesman and Nation, 238
from Nowhere, 61
ische, 7, 9, 122, 188
l Prize, viii
in, Max, 12
bach, 118
jing to Church, 176
o Rocks, 149, 151, 169, 170, 174
Theatres in the Nineties, viii
uled, 116, 118, 166, 169
sm, 216–217
its, 77, 78, 126, 154, 159, 161–
2, 239, 252
m, 166
e-Townshend, Charlotte, viii
on, Hesketh, 153, 156, 158, 160,
5
Wagnerite, The, viii, 12, 30,
, 253
nderer, The, vii, 9, 10, 13, 103,
6, 139, 166
ophical Examination of Property
Theft, 23
ophy, 184ff.
for Puritans, 42
l Pleasant and Unpleasant, 98
Edgar Allan, 78
and Petrifaction, 166
al Economy, 61, 206ff.
nal Madhouse in America and
ar Home, The, 220
ce on Bosses, 136, 152
ces (see Collected Prefaces)
nism, 173, 243
ation, viii, 44, 115, 166, 168, 169,
12
essence of Ibsenism, The, vii, 12,
, 35, 143, 253
l, Herbert, 164
ion, 153–154, 172–173, 257
, 208
volutionists' Handbook and Pocket
panion, The, 23
in, Auguste, 72

261
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

By a strange coincidence, Louis Kronenberger, author, anthologist and drama critic, was born in 1904, the year in which George Bernard Shaw scored his first playwriting success with *John Bull's Other Island*. Mr. Kronenberger entered the University of Cincinnati in 1921. He had already decided to become a writer, and in 1924 he went to New York where he landed a minor job on the *New York Times*. In 1926 he got an editorial job with a publishing house and remained in book publishing until 1934, when he went abroad and afterwards to work for *Fortune* magazine. In 1938 he became drama critic of *Time* magazine, a position which he holds at present. During this period he has also written drama criticism for other publications.


He lives with his wife and two children in New York City.