

The SHEFFIELD CO-OPERATOR

THE CHOICE BEFORE THE NEW WOMAN VOTER. PAST RECORDS AND FUTURE POLICIES.

BY MISS TRIXIE ALEXANDER.

We asked Miss Trixie Alexander, daughter of Mr. A. V. Alexander, M.P., to give us her views on the new woman voter. Miss Alexander is at present studying at the London School of Economics, and is keenly interested in social and political matters.

Below we print her reply to this request.

AFTER a hard fight of over sixty years, women have come into their own at last. In the General Election of 1918, 5,000,000 newly enfranchised women will have the opportunity of expressing at the polls their open disapproval of the existing Conservative Government and of returning to power a party which can boast of idealism, and whose aim is progress and altruism. Many, no doubt, will be perplexed as to which party they should support. They will demand at first who is responsible for the distressing evils around them, and who is the best fitted to cope with these. Whatever share a government, either by negligence or by deliberate action, has had during the past thirty years in the propagation of misery in certain sections of the community, the ten-months' minority Labour Government can hardly be blamed. Let the Conservatives and Liberals look to their defence! The Labour Party at least has a clean record to offer.

Votes for Women: A Labour Problem.
The new woman voter will only be concerned with the past in so far as it is an indication of the future policy of the parties appealing for her franchise; that is, she will carefully consider the respective programmes for the future. The Tories, it will be noticed, for the first time on record are willing to promise the women anything in the world. They claim the credit of securing the franchise for women and men of twenty-one years of age, though this has been a definite part of the Labour programme since 1902. All previous efforts to pass a similar Bill have been frustrated by the Tories, until they could no longer face Labour at the polls without appealing on this issue. They were now forced to provide a special programme to deal with factors of peculiar interest to women, and they even made promises of extending the social services, though their traditional policy since of severe economy in the departments concerned. The Labour Party on the other hand has no need to change its programme in the slightest degree; its appeal to women is ever as potent.

An Immense Responsibility.
The Conservative Party is particularly concerned about the so-called "flapper" vote. One member of the "flappers" was called "irresponsibly frivolous," and the next "ardent socialist." They are, however, considered to be "irresponsible," and many of the Prime Minister's tea-parties arranged with the ulterior aim of convincing the flapper. Women are not so easily deceived, however; they are responsible for themselves and never was there more need to show it. Sufficient women will be at the polls this year to change the whole balance of voting. This is an immense responsibility, for it means that their decision will affect the history of England and to a great extent of the world during the coming generation.

Liberals.
It would not be worth while to consider the Liberal programme at this

point. Not that the Liberals have not made many excellent proposals; their failure, particularly under Mr. Lloyd George, has been in the non-fulfilment of their many promises. Further, there are only two alternative lobbies in the House of Commons, and it would be a waste of time to vote for a party which has no control over either. Let us, then, deliberate upon the policy of the Conservative and Labour parties.

Peace or War.

The promotion of international peace is an achievement claimed by the Tory Party, but they clamour in vain. Not

as hardware, cutlery, paper, buttons, and gas mantles.

Education.

The Tories have succeeded no better in educating the children. The chief word heard everywhere has been "economy." The number of classes of over fifty children has actually increased since 1916. They have made every effort to reduce expenditure on grants and scholarships and other facilities for the education of the poorer classes. Thus equality of opportunity in education, which should be the warcry of the workers, has been definitely ignored and even frustrated by the Tories in power.

Maternity.

Another subject which vitally concerns women is the treatment of necessitous mothers and children. The Labour Party considers our present maternal and infant death-rate to be a disgrace to our civilisation; but while it is proposing the extension of its grants from the national fund to help necessitous mothers and children, the Tories have been saving by reducing the expenditure on milk for mothers by £12,000 per year. This speaks for itself!

Housing.

With regard to housing, no real advance was made in the matter until the Labour Government of 1924 made their treaty with the building trades. "Wholesale" houses to the number of 227,643 have been built, but the Tory Government has reduced the subsidy granted to the building trade, so that the rate of building has fallen by over 50 per cent. The result has been a fruitless search for houses by thousands of families still living in one or two rooms, and an increase of unemployment in the building trades.

Unemployment.

Perhaps the most obvious omission in the Tory policy has been any real effort to deal with unemployment. This is the most running sore of capitalist society, and must be dealt with drastically. Here they have utterly failed! The Labour Party proposes the development of schemes for improving natural resources by land drainage, roads, prevention of erosion, afforestation, &c. It desires to cut off supplies to the labour market at both ends by raising the school leaving age and by giving more ample old-age pensions to men and women of sixty-five and, if possible, of sixty years of age. It also favours the development of co-operative schemes, and would endeavour to provide for decent maintenance and training schemes for those already unemployed.

The Future of the Nation.

Our State as yet is only in its infancy; it

its future stretches before it waiting to be moulded. Stagnation in politics will never achieve anything. Modern Conservative politics portray a sort of collective self-satisfaction and laissez-faire which is worse than useless. A steady, peaceful progress is essential to the country at present, and the only party who can give it this is the Labour Party. It looks to the women to give it full powers to act as it would like to act, according to the ideals of socialism and democracy, in the best interests of every section of the community.

BARONET'S BEQUEST TO YOUNG STUDENTS.

HOW PARLIAMENT NEARLY LOST ITS "BABY."

Now that young women between twenty-one and thirty are voters, there is added interest to the forthcoming award of the recently established Acland Travelling Scholarships, which, namely, young men and women over twenty and under thirty years of age. The scholarships, which are of a value of £200, were provided by the late Sir Arthur Acland, Bart., who bequeathed £10,000 for the purpose of enabling young men or women to undertake independent research into Labour and Co-operative problems abroad. No stereotyped examination is set and academic qualifications are not the first consideration in determining the choice of students by the Trustees. Students will spend about nine months abroad, and they choose any country on the Continent of Europe for their study.

This year, applications are invited for one scholarship. All persons of the ages stated above, connected with the Labour and Trade Union or Co-operative movements, may secure application forms from the Secretary of the Trustees, Mr. R. A. Palmer, The Co-operative Union Limited, Holovose House, Manchester, 1, Manchester. The four Trustees are appointed jointly by the Co-operative Union and the Labour Party.

As a matter of fact the Acland Scholarship nearly robbed the House of Commons of its youngest Member of Parliament. Miss Jenny Lee, the new M.P. for North Lanark, was in the final few from whom the election was made last year. Had she been successful she might have been a student in Europe instead of the "Baby" of the House of Commons.

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MISS TRIXIE ALEXANDER.

only has the hopeful international situation created by the Labour Government of 1924 been destroyed by the overthrow of the Geneva Protocol, but the development of trade with Russia has been stopped; and though the budget for armaments still stands at £14,000,000 per year, a reduction of a comparatively tiny £4,000 in the budget of the League of Nations was moved by the Conservative Government.

Why Food is Dear.

Mr. Baldwin pledged himself to reduce food prices, but he only succeeded in establishing a Food Council with powers to talk and not to act. It is the co-operative movement which is the chief friend of the housewife against high prices. Private traders have very often been forced to follow the lead of co-operative societies in honest trading in bread, milk, meat, tea, and other commodities. While prices have been kept up by the super-tax and taxes paid in the tea and silk trades, are profitters paying enormous dividends, have been imposed upon certain commodities, thus raising the price of the imported and home supplies; and many household necessities have been taxed, such

AT THE CITY COUNCIL.

BY COUNCILLOR A. BARTON.

BUDGET DAY.

The City Council meeting on March 6th was, in some respects, the most important day of the year. It was the day on which the various committees put forward their estimates for the coming year, on which the future rate depends. It was especially important this year on account of the new assessment which has been carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Rating Act of 1915.

Please note that the recent assessment was forced upon the City Council by a Tury Act of Parliament under regulations by a Tory Ministry of Health, and that any complaints should be directed not to the Labour Party but to the Conservatives who imposed it.

There is, however, one advantage of the Act. Hitherto one could not control the rate of one town with another, because the higher the assessment the lower the rate, and vice versa; and the assessments of different towns varied considerably, whereas under the new arrangement they are all based on the same principle. This will be an advantage from a business point of view, for towns which were formerly away from Sheffield on account of the apparently very high rates, will now realise there is little difference as compared with Leeds, Bradford, and other cities.

ALDERMAN WATKINS TOES THE LINE.

The great wealth of facts and figures placed before the Council by Alderman Watkins proved the mastery and lucid way in which our Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer is able to deal with the highly technical and difficult problems of city finance. I only propose to deal with a few outstanding points.

The first was that in consequence of the increase of assessments, the rates will go down in the City of Sheffield by 15. 10d. This does not mean, of course, any reduction in the rate paid in many cases; but so far as the ordinary householder is concerned, there will be little or no increase of rates. If the shopkeeper or better-class householder is inclined to object to having to bear an increase, he should refer to the Conservative Government, which has laid down very strict conditions for valuation; the City Council has no responsibility in the matter.

The chief argument used by the opponents was that there was an increase in expenditure of £117,428, and that this was a proof of extravagance. Alderman Watkins showed that the actual increased expenditure was £108,525, and the balance was due to the fact that there was no special income, and that the electric supply and the tramways, instead of using their surplus for the reduction of the rates, were using them to pay off their debts and for developing their undertakings, thus securing benefits to the citizens in other directions.

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As regards the increased expenditure, practically the whole of it was on education, health, and housing. The Education Committee is continuing through its educational programme, which was rendered necessary by the fact that the committee, under the old regime, was threatened by the loss of grant from the Government if they did not bring the schools up to a more efficient pitch. In regard to health, as Councillor Asbury pointed out lately, there was not a single blind man who had had to be on the streets of Sheffield, and that while there had been a waiting list of 125 tubercular patients, there was now not a single one.

Alderman Watkins also showed the result of the cutting down of the housing subsidy by the Government. The Government granted £7 10s. per house on condition that the loss on the rates was not less than £3 15s. per house, so that the cost of housing on the rates is continually growing. No less than £1,000,000 will be spent on housing in the coming year, yet this will scarcely touch the immense demand.

GOVERNMENT MAKES US PAY RATES OF MACHINERY OWNERS.

Perhaps the worst feature of the Rating Act is that it takes rates out of machinery and plant. In some towns this makes a little difference, but in industrial cities like Sheffield it means that a new burden is placed on the other ratepayers. The extent of this may be gathered from the fact that the cost of housing of machinery by the Government means an additional rate of 9d. in the pound.

Naturally the statement of Alderman Watkins was energetically discussed, but the criticism was futile in the extreme. In no single case could Alderman Blanchard, Councillor Harold Jackson, or Councillor Hunter bear out their charge of extravagance or show us items which could be legitimately reduced. In fact, Councillor Jackson stultified himself by asking for more expenditure (on cemeteries!). And Alderman Blanchard had the colossal nerve of asking for a reduction of £100,000, which, if carried, would have meant less employment for hundreds of men, to assert that there was not a single item for relief works for the unemployed. Councillor Rowlinson pointed out that the Government, which had spent £28,000,000 in 1915 as a consequence of the action of the Labour Government in 1914, had now whittled their grants down to nothing, and that to reduce expenditure on public services was to increase the number of unemployed. The estimates were carried by 39 to 22.

OTHER MATTERS.

Councillor Asbury accepted an amendment to take back the matter to the charge for dustbins for consideration. He pointed out, however, that they had no intention of waiving their legal rights, but he went on to say that there never was the least intention of making profit for the corporation out of the dustbins, and if there was a surplus in hand the charge would be reduced or abolished. Councillor Hunter objected to the leaders of the Labour Party not having taken them into confidence in connection with the purchase of the property opposite the Town Hall on the other side of Norfolk-street. He admitted, however, that it was remarkably cheap at £19,000, which it probably would not have been had the vendors known the corporation were in the market.

PRINTING.

The Finance Committee recommended that in future the printing business should be charged at cost, plus an additional 2½ per cent., which would be applied to secure proper premises and adequate plant. Councillor Turner described it as juggling with figures, but the fact remains that thousands of pounds formerly paid to private traders now help the rates of the city. Councillor Barton called attention to the beautiful new picture presented by Mr. Kulnrich to the Mappin Art Gallery.

GENEROUS TRIBUTE

to the work of the Co-operative Union for peace is made by the Right Hon. Viscount Cecil Chelwood, K.C., in a letter to the "Co-operative Review."

The Lord Cecil, who is President of the League of Nations' Union, writes—
"So far as any success has been attained by the League of Nations in any one of its activities, it has been through a triumph of the co-operative principle. Not is there any body of the League should naturally be more dear than the active workers and organisers of the Co-operative Union."

"If it is true of the League's work as a whole, it is doubly true of the undertaking in which members of the League and the United States are alike committed by the Covenant, and by the Pact of Paris for the renunciation of war."

"If war is really to be ruled out of international life, and a stop put to that rivalry and competition in preparations for war which are the chief curse of our generation, it can only be the result of convinced and unrelenting effort by all who believe that peace is based upon co-operation."

"The League of Nations' Union in Great Britain already owes an immense debt of gratitude to co-operators for their help. It is my most earnest hope that this assistance, which I value so greatly, will continue and increase in the years to come."

The truth is, of course, that our Co-operative Movement is built up on trade and fellowship. War is the great enemy of both trade and fellowship; and unless war is placed outside our world, it is an ever-present menace to the very existence of co-operation. The co-operative work for peace is as vital as any other phase of its work.

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Taxation Reduced for Parents. Income Tax Relief for Industry and Agriculture.

Safeguarding to Increase Employment and Wages. Relief to Help Industry and Agriculture.

Peace at Home and Abroad.

Eight Hundred Thousand Houses in Four Years.

That there have been 800,000 houses built in the last four years is perfectly true, but it is pure bunkum to argue that this is due to the Tories. Over 500,000 of the houses built have been non-subsidised houses, and have nothing to do with any of the Housing Acts.

Another 200,000 were built under the Wheatley scheme, for which the Tories have no responsibility. On the contrary, they have done their utmost to obstruct. These are practically the only houses to let which have been built during this period. The rest have been mainly for sale.

Had the Wheatley Act been carried out to its full effect, at the rate of 25,000 per year, 900,000 houses to let would have been built during the lifetime of the present Government.

Pensions for Widows and Orphans.

In plain language, the Tories introduced a new contributory pensions scheme under which the workers pay for what they get out of deductions from their wages. Mr. Baldwin's Government did not give pensions to widows and orphans all it did was to institute a compulsory insurance scheme. Even then—

50,000 widows have been refused any pensions at all.

45,000 aged women between sixty-five and seventy have been debarred from pensions because their husbands were over seventy when the old-age pensions came into operation at the beginning of 1918.

Pensions for Men and Women at Sixty-Five.

Under this part of the scheme, the Tories generously granted pensions to insured men and women at sixty-five with one hand. With the other they took away from thousands the unemployment benefit they were already getting. The Government attorney admitted that there were 300,000 old people over the age of sixty-five whose right to unemployment benefit was taken away. Many men have lost this a week as unemployment pay in return for which they are given a pension of 70s. a week.

As a result of depriving these old people of their unemployment benefit, the Government made a profit on the Insurance Fund of nearly £1,000,000 a year. Further, the old people who received these pensions were deprived of their sickness and disablement benefits under the National Health Insurance Act. This saved the Government an additional £1,800,000.

Profit and Loss Tory Government.

During the first two-and-a-quarter years of the operation of the Tory pensions scheme a surplus of £2,500,000 has accumulated in the fund. Despite this, the Tories have persistently refused to grant more generous benefits. Mr. Baldwin's state of mind is disclosed in his speech of October 5th, 1914:—

"My own view is this—that with regard to further assistance to the people of this country by means of old-age pensions or unemployment benefit, or anything else, are have

reached the maximum that the State is able to do."
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worlds—to economise and at the same time to earn praise for assisting those in need.

Helping the Rich, Penalising the Poor. "Taxation reduced," reads the poster. The fact is that the Tory Government has added more new taxes in its four years of office than any Government since the war. True, it has relieved the super-tax and income-tax payer, but it has added enormously to the taxation of common necessities. It has placed new or increased taxes on tobacco, matches, petrol, films, motors, clocks, gas mantles, crockery, cutlery, silk and artificial silk, stockings, lace, wrapping paper, butter, gloves, and enamel hollow ware.

True, it has given rebates for the children of well-to-do and decency of parents, but unemployed allowances, Poor-Law relief, and social services for the poor have been decreased.

Safeguarding the Rich, Improving the Poor.

The claim that Safeguarding has increased employment and wages is ludicrous. Unemployment is greater than when Tories took office. Even the most optimistic view of wages cannot put the general wage level as higher than 1914. All that Safeguarding does is increase the monopolistic power of the capitalist to exploit the consumer. Safeguarding means higher prices—that is its object.

Tories are arguing that Safeguarding has not increased prices. Even when it does not, the consumers suffer either by a lowering of the quality or by forcing a price reduction which they would otherwise have gained. This is

the case with silk. Mr. Churchill admits it. Here is what he said in his Budget speech:—
"... While the cost to the consumer has not indeed been increased by the artificial silk duties, we have probably intercepted to a very large extent a reduction which would have otherwise reached the consumer in this country."

Rating Relief to Help Big Business. The facts contained in Mr. Arthur Greenwood's broadcast speech "effec-

Mining will get £3,000,000, but the last published figures show that losses in the coal industry amount to an annual figure of £13,000,000. Cotton to thrive wants to reduce its export prices by 10 per cent.—thus rating relief will only account for about 1 per cent.

On the other hand—
Brewers are to get £400,000 a year, millionaire tobacco firms are to get £350,000 a year. And these are only two illustrations of the way the Government is handing out dollops to its wealthy supporters. Meanwhile, the ordinary householder and small shopkeeper gets nothing but the privilege of paying higher rates when local improvements are needed.

Peace at Home and Abroad.

This is just a joke. At home the Tories have assisted wage reductions, raised the miners' hours of labour, obstructed the Washington Convention, abandoned the Factory Bill, and carried the Trade Unions Act to cripple the workers industrially and politically.

Peace abroad—well, from 1925 to 1920 the total charge for the British fighting services has been £57,000,000; the total cost of the League of Nations to Great Britain has been only £360,000. And the Government has grumbled at that.

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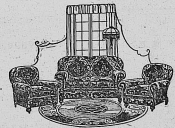
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BOOK REVIEWS.

A WORLD TRAGEDY.

"The Letters of Sacco and Vanzetti," written during the seven years of their imprisonment—1920-27. Published by Constable and Co. Ltd., 75, St. Paul's Churchyard, London, E.C. 4.

This outer cover of this book bears the remark: "The only true story of the most sensational trial of modern times." To justify the truth, it is perhaps necessary to point out that, in addition to the high repute of the publishers, the volume is sponsored by Benedetto Croce, Theodore Dreiser, Maxine Clerk, Sinclair Lewis, Romulo Beneditto, Bertrand Russell, and H. G. Wells—all of whom would need to be satisfied. As a "story" of the case, it embodies brief biographies of the two characters, Sacco and Vanzetti, letters from each of them over the whole seven years of their imprisonment; letters to prominent and humane American citizens who had taken great interest in them, and to their counsel. Finally, there are appendices giving the story of the case, the speeches to the court by the two prisoners, Vanzetti's last letter to Governor Fuller, and his last statement as recorded by his counsel, Mr. W. G. Thompson.

GREAT EPICS.

Taken as a whole, this work must stand with the world's great tragedies. The Book of Job is a great epic of human tragedy; the tragedy of pain and of what the twentieth century would call "bad luck"—but it is a record emblem of individual tragedy. As such it has passed into the classic literature of many peoples: it is the story of the unconquerable spirit of man. The trial and death of Socrates must have moved thousands of people since Plato recorded it; its simple grandeur, its record of gigantic misunderstanding of the public-spirited citizen by the powerfully placed, and its final curtain of darkness and despair. Both these great epics have become the heritage of the whole world, and we have perhaps prided ourselves that such things could not happen in the twentieth century.

A WORLD-WIDE TRIAL.

Yet in many essential respects the trial and death of Sacco and Vanzetti are tremendously more important to us than are these earlier tragedies. It was once again the conflict of stagnation and progress—and if the progress was not quite of the order we should prefer, the stagnation was infinitely worse. It was the crushing of the weak and assailing by the powerful and hard-minded. And it was not merely a seven-year trial in the heart of an "enlightened" Republic and a foremost State in modern civilization: it was a world trial. Paris and London alike shook with its fiercest emotions, the aspiring everywhere were smitten by the gross injustice of the "trial." China and Japan were stirred by pamphlets on the case, and a worldwide upheaval was feared.

It is no longer possible to hush up

great injustice in a corner; it is no longer possible for ancient prejudice to wreak its vengeance on the poor and unprotected. Indeed, Vanzetti himself stated the case admirably in the substantiated report of his speech in Court after receiving sentence on April 9th, 1927:

VANZETTI'S STATEMENT.

"If it had not been for these things, I might have lived out my life talking at street corners to scornful men. I might have died, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life could we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man's understanding of man as now we do by pains—nothing! The taking of our lives—lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish peddler—! That last moment belongs to us—that agony is our triumph."

Now the record of the trial, the evidence of the letters, and the lives of the two men, give no suggestion whatever as to their responsibility for the crime for which they were tried and condemned—not for any other crime. Neither is there evidence to show complicity in the crime. On the other hand, there was a confession by a member of a gang, as follows:—

"I have by confes to being in the South Braintree Shoe Company crime, and Sacco and Vanzetti was not in the said crime.—CELESTINO F. MADRIGNO."

Madrigno was already in goal for a similar and later crime; but on an appeal being made to the judge for a new trial on the strength of the confession (backed as it was by much supporting evidence sought out by the defence), he ruled—in an opinion of some 25,000 words—"that the verdict of guilt must stand," and "that the new evidence did not call for submission to a jury!"

THE TRIAL.

As to the trial: "The alibi for Vanzetti was overwhelming. Thirty-two eye witnesses testified positively that no one of the four men they saw in the murder car was Vanzetti. Thirteen witnesses either testified directly that Vanzetti was in Plymouth selling fish on the day of the murder, or furnished corroboration of such testimony." On the day of the crime, Sacco was in Boston, seeing about a passport to Italy, "whether he was planning shortly to return in order to visit his recently bereaved father." The truth of this was "supported by an official of the Italian consulate in Boston, who, deposed that Sacco visited his consulate at 2-15 p.m. In this were true, it was conceded that Sacco could not have been a party to this murder.

But to understand the whole case, it is necessary to read the book itself. Sacco was a shoemaker, and a very hard-working man, who had done well at several other jobs, learning trades in the "off" hours. His father was well-

to-do as an owner of olive-orchards and vineyards in South Italy. Vanzetti had come from a comfortable middle-class home in Northern Italy, and adapted himself to whatever offered in the way of a livelihood in America. Dishwasher, pastrycook, ditcher, pick-and-shovel man with a railroad, he was a ice-cutter, and fish peddler. His two student and a philosopher. His two most-thumbed books were copies of "The Divine Comedy" and Renan's "Life of Jesus." Both of them were not too familiar with the English language, as the extract given above will indicate.

THEIR LETTERS.

Their letters—which of this book contains very many—are full of good feeling, of high idealism, and great courage. They expressed many Americanisms of the nobler type with their simple sincerity. Here is an extract from a letter by Vanzetti to Mrs. Maude Pettysjohn:—

"... I see that you are really and deeply convinced in rebirth, and in all of such doctrines. It may be true, and you have the right of your beliefs, which may soothe and console the anguish of this poor life of ours. I only know that I do not know, I cannot believe any of the many religious beliefs which come under my mind's eye. Yet I am a great mystic, and I can't get along without any faith. I can laugh at all the evil, worship all the good, accept whatever destiny the impalpable shall impose upon me. Yet, using all my capacities and will for what might seem to be right..."

The effect of this book is to convince one that these men can scarcely have been guilty, quite apart from the actual evidence of their innocence as painstakingly set out by the editor of the letters. They were visionaries, no doubt; agitators certainly, yet agitators of a superior order. That sort of agitator has ever been a hard one, but it is particularly ironical that Massachusetts should be the scene of this great tragedy. The influence of the men of the "Mayflower" has perished, and this State, which commenced the West of American independence, and was the most active against slavery, has gone back to its history and its promise alike to use a prejudiced Court to suppress opinions that are, spiritually speaking, in the true "Apostolic succession." No Statue of Liberty at the entrance to the greatest port of the States can maintain liberty for its citizens, and those who seek tolerance, civil liberty, and progress will regret—with many of our brothers and sisters who are American citizens—that this travesty of justice has been possible. The victims were certainly but a shoemaker and a hardware; but then, the victim of an earlier persecution was a Carpenter of Nazareth. B.

LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS OF SHEFFIELD.

NEED OF A NEW CENTRAL LIBRARY.

COUNCILLOR BARTON gave an address on Sunday evening, March 31st, at the Hillsborough Institute, on the above subject. He gave an inside view of how the Library system was organized, and pointed out the enormous increase in the use of books since reorganization was commenced. Half-a-million had been the increase since the Library Party had come into power, and the total now was over 2,000,000 volumes per year. Not only had they increased the libraries to free access, but they were building a new library at Park Park, and had one in view at Woodhouse.

He impressed on his hearers the urgent need for a new Central Library. The old place was gradually falling down; there was not sufficient room for either stock or public; a children's library was crowded out, and altogether it was a disgrace for a large city like Sheffield to be carrying on under such conditions.

He also spoke about the treasures of art and beauty and craftsmanship to be seen at the Museum and Mapping Art Gallery.

A New Library for Hillsborough.

Of course it is not a new building, but the old library has now been transformed on the principle of free access for the public to the book above, and for all intents and purposes it is a new library. It has not been an easy task to take the inside out of an old building and remodel it, but the job has been done, and every one who visits the library after its opening by the Lord Mayor on April 9th, will be astonished by its beauty and convenience.

It is a proud triumph for the Labour government of the city that all its libraries are now on the open access system and thoroughly reorganized, and the interests of Hillsborough have not been forgotten.

It is very amusing that Councillor Harold Jackson asked the chairman of the Libraries Committee some time ago what he was doing about Hillsborough, knowing that the committee was considering the matter. Councillor Barton replied that the committee had it under consideration, but was surprised that Councillor Jackson should suddenly take an interest in the matter, as during the whole of the time the Citizens' Party had been in power he had never mentioned it—perhaps because he knew that nothing would be done, whereas he had hopes from a Labour majority. And, added Councillor Barton, his alterations would be done in time for Councillor Jackson to put on his election bills: "Who Impressed Hillsborough Library?"

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MAINLY FOR WOMEN.

BY EVA M. CHRISTIE.

Now the General Election is so near, the Government is anxiously drawing our attention to what it claims to have done, attempting, if possible, to withdraw our thoughts from the evils which prevail.

"What Conservatives Have Done."

By large posters, on nearly every building all over the country, it claims to have built 800,000 houses, and have given pensions to the widows and the fatherless. Wise men and women will seek to get behind pretensions and promises to facts and deeds.

The Truth About Housing.

When the Labour Party came into office it was found that previous legislation had meant some houses being built for sale, but that houses to let were neglected. Under the Housing Act, 1924, Mr. Wheatley, aided by Mr. Perry, who acted as his Parliamentary Secretary, sought to make it possible to build houses which workers may be able to rent. He met with fierce opposition from the Conservatives, who claimed that it was a fantastic scheme under which no houses could be built, yet, up to February 21, 1928,

Under the Wheatley Act, 1924, 341,513 houses were built to let. Under the Chamberlain Act, 1923, only 62,500 houses had been built.

But—and here home lovers should feel strongly indignant—in spite of the continued need for houses, in September, 1927, the Tory Government reduced the subsidy, and so reduced house building in one year by nearly half—from 22,380 in 1927, to 107,761 in 1928, increasing the number of unemployed in the building trade by 17,320.

Even now the tale has not been told, for last year the Tories decided to reduce building even more by removing in September next all subsidies on houses built under the 1923 Act, and £1 10s. on houses built under the 1924 Act.

They are coming to us for our vote behind this second reduction in house building takes place. We shall decide by our votes whether they return to power to carry out this decision. I think our answer will be "you have done enough."

What About the Widows and Orphans?

Pensions for widows has always been part of Co-operative and Labour policy, but we consider their scheme introduced by the Government utterly inadequate. Thousands of widows are denied the pension altogether. Thousands are losing their pension. Just when there is a demand for more food, more clothing, greater care, the child of fourteen and its mother has this small assistance taken away. In hundreds of cases 10s. a week is given in pension, 10s. taken away by reduction in poor-relief. 10s. a week is given the aged woman, 15s. is taken away by loss of unemployment benefit. The "generous gift" of the Government is seen in its clear light when we contrast these figures.

The estimated cost of the scheme is £8,500,000. Against this the Government approved cuts of £7,500,000 in poor-relief, and of over £2,500,000 in unemployment benefit. The result is £1,000,000 saved at the expense of the bread of the widow, the orphan,

The long line of women waiting for houses—the great army of workers anxious for work—The suffering and needy unable to satisfy their simple needs—all cry aloud of what Conservatism has failed to do.

Now, to every man and woman, Comes the moment to decide. These are facts that cannot be denied—

"By their fruits shall ye know them."

If you have weighed Conservatism in the balance of these facts and found it wanting,

VOTE CO-OPERATION AND LABOUR next time.

ONE SHILLING FOR FORTY.

When the election comes we'll hear a lot from the gramophone Tory Press about the losses on the Australian State ships. But what about Armstrong, Whitworth and Co., which has just written off £24,117,596 as lost capital? Each ordinary shareholder is to get a shilling share for every two £1 shares he formerly possessed. Your capital is safe in a co-operative society!

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1. Has over £175,000,000 capital invested in it.
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 3. IS OWNED AND CONTROLLED by its members.
 4. Is unique. All profits in businesses are excesses in PRICE over complete COST. In Co-operative Societies they all come back to members, mainly as DIVIDENDS, and PARTLY as EDUCATIONAL and other SOCIAL SERVICES.
 5. Has widened up. All other businesses are represented in Parliament, OURS THEREFORE MUST BE. We have many enemies because we seek to abolish profit, made out of the pockets of the workers.
 6. Has been badly let down by Governments in the past. Thanks to having our own representatives in Parliament, we can see that we get fair play in all legislation in future.
 7. IS GROWING, will keep on GROWING; YOU MUST BE IN IT!
- Was started to prevent the workers from being "skinned." If it stopped you would be "skinned."
- Start co-operating, and begin to "mind your own business."

A cheap edition of "The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism" (revised in December last) will be published early in May. 5s. net.

"Is that your car?" belittled the traffic cop. "Well, either, since you ask me, considering the fact that I still have fifty payments to make, one three repair bills, and haven't settled for the new tyre, I really don't think it is."

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EUKRONOS.

BEING A "UTOPIA" OF
TIME, NOT PLACE.

I.—THE CHANGE, B.C., AND AFTER.

Note.—This is the first instalment of a serial "Utopia," meant to be entertaining and challenging, but it does not in any particular necessity represent the view of the co-operative movement.—Ed.

I HAVE all my life wished to live in a better country, though (except for the matter of climate) England appears to be as good as any shown in the atlas. Utopia and Oceania, the New Atlantis and Erioleon all had their points, but had also the place where men were like gods. But even none of these was entirely satisfying, there was an element of freshness in most, of rigidity in some, and all alike were finally unsatisfying in that you could not possibly live in them for they did not exist! Accordingly the time came when the hope of stepping clean out of civilisation in one short stride (so to speak) into a New Jerusalem finally died away.

I forget how old I was at that time, and in any case age is not important. There was no Coming Race under ground, and even the angels had died of cold and wet up in the clouds. Yet at the foot of utter disillusionment the fact was suddenly new to me: the fancy had been, and I stepped right into the middle of the golden age! I hate to write that line; it is the sort of thing that smacks of sentimentality! Accordingly will believe. There was no finding of an unexplored land—no change of locality at all; had not Wells told us that one spot could not be immeasurably better than another? There must then have been some strange gap in time, some hastening of the years, for there were all my old friends; and even my wife and children were as before the—whatever it was.

I recollect we had gone on successive evenings to see "Back to Methuselah." Monday started us off in the Garden of Eden, and Friday night we had God as far as Thought can be. Perhaps it was the Slavian send-off; the impetus we had gathered through that hectic week; but whether or no, one thing is certain, Saturday took us further still—into actuality. There is no conscious thing in our memories; so far as we know we were simply hurried forward. We had fallen off the end of Shaw's complete human chain and back to Methuselah: the Irish Hop o' My Flumb with his 7,000-year boots had taken us a few strides and then flung us forward, not into oblivion, but into order—as one takes a few running steps with a cricket ball before releasing it for a still more rapid motion. Where we landed (it was a time throw and not a space throw) I cannot tell, neither does it matter. The only serious problem to me is how Shaw managed to throw the whole place and population along to us, for here they are, people and the entire thing, his dear city, just as I knew them in the days before the great throw! There are, of course, many changes in buildings, in streets, in the layout of the city, in the general arrangement of the artificial part of the outlook—but that is now what I wish to tell you about.

It was Saturday evening, and I quite distinctly recall saying to my wife: "I could stand a sixth instalment of 'Back to Methuselah,' if there were one."

"Very well," answered she, "let's make it for ourselves"; and no sooner

had the notion been uttered than on turning to look at her, I observed a freshness and a richness of complexion that ought to have abashed me. But that was quite a trifling thing compared with alterations that were apparent in our dress and the room in which we sat. And now I am at a loss how to continue, for when everything is changed, how shall one describe it? There was no sequence that one could pursue, the one and without seam, all of it much more present to consciousness than even a solitary incident of life had been before. Perhaps the most striking thing of all, the increased largeness of life. Hitherto we had only been half alive. Events of a moment did not now absorb our whole attention; did not henceforward thrust us into a deep gloom or raise us to high ecstasy. The average level was raised, and its stability fairly maintained, which (I conceive) lengthened our lives by very many years. Largeness of spirit and outlook helped in the same beneficent work, since shocks were fewer and better resisted. A thing that for us in the past had at that moment happened—and that will be seen in the experiences that have yet to be related.

I shall not describe our house, at least not yet: we will go to the open air, where there is freshness and sunshine. It was, of course, the following day, for Eukronos (I think for more properly, Eukronos) the sun does not shine in the evenings in winter. There are laws of Nature which Eukronos must recognize, though I do not suppose the economists were, after all.

Peppin and I were standing on the top of a hill overlooking the city, and though it was after ten o'clock, not a church bell sounded. He is a man who had always been addicted to a rather satirical outlook, and I found an expression in caustic and witty remarks. That trait was still a pronounced thing in him, but it had been subjected to a subtle refinement since I saw him last, a few days earlier.

"The old place has altered in our time," said he, gazing at the city and indicating it with a sweep of his hand.

"Yes," I answered; "the crop of chimneys has been harvested."

They had. From our vantage point we had often swept the huge blot of the city with our gaze. It had looked black, desolation—black with masses of houses, shops, and factories; black with grime and smoke, with thick upright lines standing out of it which were the chimneys of a hundred factories. The surrounding hills had been grey and barren, smitten by a blight which permitted only an occasional ugly tuft of persistent and scraggy vegetation to find a precarious hold. The river down, the valley, bisecting the city, had been a stream of foul mud and filthy water, hounded in by dirty and third-rate workshops here in its restless hurry of the Industrial Revolution. To-day, as we stood in the sharp early spring sunshine, the head of a fairy seemed to have changed the scene. Not a chimney, not a spire (although there were massive towers, well proportioned, at certain points), and there was no pervading smoke, but there were trees and spaces and finely tinted buildings built in the seeming design. The hills themselves were wooded, and even at this early time of the year were beginning to hint at green masses of foliage.

"What a magnificent valley," said I; "somehow, I never thought of its wonder as a valley before."

"Yes," said Peppin, "but the greatest

change of all is not in the landscape. A little corporate effort at any time in the past of our lives might have secured that; the real change is the change in what we used to call—in our debating society days—human nature. We never realised how plastic it was, and how the habits of the people could be so thoroughly altered. It is eleven years, and I see no signs of church-going, and no mark of the presence of a church. Let us go home another way and keep a special lookout for churches."

About many things on our way, I must perform be silent here, leaving much for comment on some future occasion. Through a shadowy birch wood we wended our way onwards; a well I remember the path of, old, we hesten track down a barren hill, a beaten paved road, and by a fine instinct—perhaps the result of long familiarity, and perhaps some inspiration by the power that had directed the change—had no doubts as to the way. The buildings were rather a puzzle; there were a mass of houses; there were open spaces, lawns, and woodland about the buildings, and overhead the clear blue sky. It is true that amongst these palaces there were occasional buildings which had some special use, and these we felt we had lived in their neighbourhood all our lives. Perhaps an American novelist would say that we "sensed" their purpose.

But there was no church, or chapel, no brick barn in which a fierce party, spring into being one day in seven, and praise Heaven, no tin Bethel. Tin tabernacles had always struck me, not as being too poor, too lowly, for the purpose of religion, but too glaringly a reminder of the fearful toil of working man and of the shoddy and cheap processes of the commercial spirit. It seemed too much of the world of the machine and the workshop, of builders' merchants, and of mass production. Musing upon these things, I broke the silence:

"In earlier days, when I used to prophesy the doom of the Church, I did so with much diffidence—ever before friends who had long ceased the habit of church-going yet still had their babies christened. They made allowances for me—some of them; others got a little bit scared of my companionship, still others wrote me off as an infidel."

"Nothing strange in that. They did that in old Judee," he answered, laconically.

"Anyway, we appear to have arrived at the city without a church. John

evidently had a clear grasp of what it would give of Revelation and so on."

How the ecclesiastical apparatus of the Free Church Councils would fare in the face of this apparent lack of worship if it had been proposed to them! One thing was sure, though—the real change was not from one old church, ringing about the valleys on summer evenings, but from the sound through the still air, that were not an insistent clamour, but a clear and melodious note, which somehow came from within. Whence the fingers had evidently grown, and had a large range of notes. They were certainly in their choice of tones, and distinctly heard of former days, and the sequence of airs.

We stood to listen, and along the road we saw a townswoman in a plain, staid, crisp in the enjoyment of the music. It was the first person we noticed since returning to the town; he others were enjoying the air and the music in the spacious grand old houses, and others had gone to be absolved—by means I have not yet

The ringers left their simple and beautiful airs and plunged into a stream of notes and then into harmonised settings, the first being a Brahms's waltz well known to us. Although the notes of the sound must have been distorted, it could hardly have disturbed a single person. In fact, the town was so quiet that it had been before me in the when the bells were not ringing, for was no wheeled traffic and in the absence of motor horns.

We passed along, and greeted our friend the physician, who was in the street. "And how are you to-day, friend?" "Very contented, thank you; here are but few sick, and those few, except one; and there are few to whom my ministrations are of use. The nature cure is beginning to win and men to believe."

"Believe what, doctor?"

"Believe in themselves; and in and in one another; they have done so since we."

"Since when?" we asked, puzzled.

"B.C.," he answered, and chuckled.

"Before the change, you know?"

"It is I, and I shall therefore use it to end for before the Change."

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