CURRENT MAGAZINES

An Archbishop on Unemployment:—Editorial, in *The New Statesman.*
The Men and the Moment:—Mr. W. H. Hale, in the *Atlantic.*
These Economic Experiments:—Mr. H. Hazlitt, in the *American Mercury.*
Was an Innocent Man Lynched at San José?:—Mr. E. O. Jones, in the *New Republic*.

A FEW weeks ago the Archbishop of York issued a manifesto on the Christian Attitude to Unemployment. This is the prelate whose speeches about the poor habitually alarm Dean Inge—a very fair indication that they have some element of genuine concern for suffering and genuine zeal for social progress. His recent manifesto will not appear "radical", except to those who deprecate all reference to the contrast between extremes of wealth and poverty, or who think it dangerous to acknowledge that this time of most acute hardship has been also the time when productive forces were most readily available to combat it. "There must", writes the Archbishop, "be something grievously wrong with a society in which, while multitudes are suffering from under-nourishment, food is being burned and thrown into the sea for lack of a market". A reasonable judgment surely, fit for acceptance even beyond that circle of "psychopathic artisans and dishonest intellectuals" which the Gloomy Dean—let us hope in a passing fit of exceptional gloominess—declared to furnish all the leadership to an insurrectionary proletariat.

When we pass from diagnosis of disease to proposals for cure, we find that Archbishop Temple has no recommendations more exciting than an advance of the age for compulsory school attendance to fifteen (instead of fourteen as at present), the provision of "authorized courses for unemployed persons under eighteen years of age", and an increase in the allowance for adults who are totally unemployed so that they may be able to turn their "unoccupied time" to educational advantage. What chiefly impresses him is that aspect of unemployment in which a man's destitution becomes "both an affront and a corrosive poison to his personality". For boys and girls at all events, the use of unoccupied time will be utterly disastrous unless means are taken to find an adequate outlet for youthful energy, and even for adults there should be "cultural centres" at which the affliction of idleness may be transformed into opportunities of leisure. For this

way of regarding social duty, even at the cost of personal sacrifice by the more prosperous classes, the Archbishop claims Christian sanction, and it will be difficult for any brother ecclesiastic to prove him wrong. The effort of the hostile press has been directed not so much to traverse his contentions, as to reduce them to the harmlessness of a mere general principle with no concrete embodiment.

This whole discussion brings back to mind how, just a century ago, the problem of the English poor passed into a new phase. Last month saw the centenary of the enactments following the Report of the Poor Law Commissioners appointed in 1832, with terms of reference which read distressingly like those of a Commission of our own time:

> .....to make diligent and full enquiry into the practical operation of the laws for the relief of the poor in England and Wales, and into the manner in which those laws are administered, and to report their opinion as to what beneficial alterations could be made.

The situation was then indeed in many respects so like the situation in present-day England that the parallel in this centenary retrospect is worth working out in some detail.

After Waterloo, two quite distinct sorts of social difficulty had to be met. A generation of continuous warfare had dislocated the country from end to end. The Public Debt stood at eight hundred and eight millions, a figure slight enough to financiers of the Great War, but truly alarming for the population of that time, and for the crude fiscal methods which were still in vogue. An income tax, tried by Pitt on a timorous scale, had been dropped at the conclusion of war, so that while capitalists scarcely felt a pinch, the necessities of the poor were at a price almost prohibitive. One can judge the intensity of the strain by the fact that a thinker generally so cautious as McCulloch proposed to Windham the desperate expedient of a partial repudiation of the Debt. *The Political Register*, declared by *The Edinburgh Review* to be more weighty with the public than all other journals combined, preached to the poor a cunning abstinence from all excisable articles. Canning's Orders in Council, while effective for war purposes, had resulted in suspending the whole British trade with America; hundreds of mills had been closed, and tens of thousands of workers had been rendered destitute. Great numbers of men from the disbanded army and navy, long unaccustomed to industrial employments, were turned adrift in a country where work was already

scarce, and the statistics of crime began to rise at a terrifying rate. Farmers, whose glorious period of war gain had come to an abrupt close, were as disappointed as the business men of to-day by these "depressing" times of peace. And a succession of bad harvests made the outlook still more alarming.

While the Napoleonic war lasted, it was not difficult to keep malcontents in submission. Patriotic sentiment was easily rallied in support of any measure which the Ministry declared essential, and it was not until many years afterwards that the public outgrew its war mood, in which the French Emperor had been everywhere caricatured in a green coat, carried to hell by devils, pitchforked into a burning lake, or haunted by the ghost of the Duc d'Enghien. But even "patriotism" could not silence for ever the voice of protest on behalf of the suffering poor. It had to be assisted by the corroborating witness of that new science which was so long to serve the sterner sort of rulers at their need.

Certain economists, illustrating the early conflicts of systematic knowledge with mob ignorance, still quote to us the burning of mills and the breaking of frames a century back. Those stupid rioters, they say, could not see how such inventions must ultimately serve the cause of the workman by increasing the demand for labour and so raising the standard of life. It is but fair to add that this was not Ricardo's view at the time. The belief of the labouring classes that machinery often injures them is, he said, "not founded on prejudice and error, but conformable to the correct principles of political economy". But the sneers which came from Ricardo's school, and which prompted Carlyle's denunciation of "the gospel according to McCrowdy", are enough to show that Mr. Gradgrind, in *Hard Times*, was scarcely a caricature. When the rioters argued that they and their families were to die of starvation in order to secure plentiful trade at some distant date, they spoke the truth. When they suggested that the future prosperity of the nation was less in the mind of the manufacturer than an immediate fortune for himself, they were not wide of the mark. It was surely obvious that workers thrown out of employment for the public advantage should be made a charge upon the public care. The wretched handloom weaver could no longer find a market for his produce in his own town. Cast adrift, perhaps in middle life or in old age, he could take up no other sort of handicraft. He was not even at liberty to migrate elsewhere, lest he should be arrested as a vagabond or flogged as a "sturdy beggar". The highest statesmanship which occurrred to the Government of the day was to

protect the millowner by strengthening the instruments of repression, and in 1812 the frame-breaker was declared liable to be hanged.

Byron, in the House of Lords, objected in vain. That maiden speech was indeed one of the truest efforts of his genius. Fresh from a tour through the battle-stricken Peninsula and among the oppressed provinces of the Turkish Empire, he said he had seen no such squalid misery abroad as was to be found at that moment in Nottingham. The alleged "outrages" had resulted from unexampled distress among a population of industrious and law-abiding citizens, and the efforts to punish them had so far failed because in the disturbed districts public feeling had been wholly on the side of the rioters. What might be expected from the attempt to inflict death for an offence which no one in the county believed deserving even of transportation? Was it not both humanity and wisdom to begin by investigating causes, and seeking to provide fair satisfaction for the spirit which had become desperate among so many of the King's loyal subjects? Might not that policy of temporising which their lordships invariably adopted towards rash schemes of benevolence be tried for once towards a rash scheme of coercion?

Upon a community thus distraught with hardships which they had done nothing to cause, and looking in their desperate straits for some word of guidance or some measure of help from their rulers, was launched the extraordinary political doctrine called *Laissez Faire*. "The sole function of government", said the Prime Minister, "is to keep the peace and enforce contracts". Unless, then, a proposed scheme for public improvement could be shown to fall either under the heading of the maintenance of order or under the heading of insistence upon a bargain, it was ruled outside the sphere of parliament.

This maxim of the middle-class legislature was applied with a grotesque literalness that surpasses all we know of the communist idolatry of Karl Marx. What, for example, was to be done about education? How far did that fall within the scope of a Government with no concern except to police the community and collect a merchant's debts? Lord Stowell, grounding his opinion as usual upon the maxims of the market, declared that if highly trained minds are supplied in a quantity exceeding the public demand for such commodities, "the residue is likely to turn sour"!

For this amazing creed of non-interference, every advocate quoted the sanction of political economy. Having reduced their conception of the State of that of a trading concern, the politicians

naturally inferred that the whole wisdom of government is to be found in those rules which, under the name and authority of Adam Smith, had been made the basis of mercantile transactions.

Probably the early economists were not personally of more callous mind than other men of their time, and in their enthusiasm for repeal of the Corn Laws one may even detect a humane spirit they failed to show elsewhere. Like the theologians, they must not be charged with conscious approval of all that their doctrines logically involve. Ruskin indeed found the chief merit of Mill's "Principles of Political Economy" in the frequent occurrence throughout its pages of such an amiable *non sequitur*, and in the tacit acknowledgment which it reveals again and again of moral considerations which it has elsewhere fiercely disclaimed. But one cannot wonder that "political economy", as it was then called, had—on the whole—such a rough reception. It was in 1810 that De Quincey "looked into loads of books and pamphlets" on that subject, and abandoned them with the conviction that they were the very dregs and rinsings of the human intellect. Twenty years later, Carlyle expressed himself about the matter in his *Journal*. Political economy, he there wrote, needed less brains than successful bellows-mending. On the whole, it did less good. Though a young science, it was obviously decrepit, and for his own part he wished it a soft and speedy death.

It has become usual to say that *Laissez Faire* is dead. But its successive obituaries, written at such widely distant times, suggest the sort of decease which has to be accomplished too often, and there is still anxiety among those who fear a reappearance, Even though it changes its name to "Rugged Individualism", its qualities, if it comes back, will show no improvement. But at least it is no longer attended by the obsequious service of economists. No longer, as a century ago, are they at hand to pretend scientific necessity for the policies dictated by private greed. Mr. John Maynard Keynes in England and the so-called "Brain Trust" in Washington have been setting free their science from the meshes of superstition and prejudice in which it was so long entangled, and at length, for the United States at least, the Platonic dream of power directed by speculative insight is coming true. Not that the "philosophers" are all agreed about this! When were they all agreed about anything? But in the seats of the mighty are those who will take the chance of a new hypothesis, the older ones having been such a disappointment in practice.

THE immense and sustained success of President Roosevelt in firing the imagination of his fellow-countrymen is now indeed beyond the reach of all efforts either to discredit or to explain away. Mr. W. H. Hale speaks in the *Atlantic Monthly* of his "genius to captivate, disarm, encourage, befriend, enthrall". Who can doubt that for twelve months this power has been most notably displayed? According to a very prominent New York correspondent of the London press, even Republican newspapers which at first attacked the President so fiercely have relapsed into silence, if not into approval. What a commanding gift it is to know one's own mind and act upon it in a time of crisis!

Not long ago Mr. Baldwin described Mr. Roosevelt as the world's greatest autocrat. The description has been illustrated, if not confirmed, by Signor Mussolini's admiring reference to the imposition of codes by presidential order upon United States industrialists. This act seems to be admired in Rome less on account of what the codes contain than because they were imposed. Signor Mussolini has many misgivings about what he calls "the American Experiment", but the bold coercion of industrial magnates from the White House appeals to him tremendously. Behold across the Atlantic, where the very shrine of democracy was supposed to be found, an autocrat is directing the country's economic life,—and in Rome they find it easy to conjecture where the autocrat got his pattern! But in Rome they may be wrong about that.

Mr. Roosevelt, at least, unlike Signor Mussolini, has carried out everything under due constitutional process. There has been no "March on Washington". The United States Constitution commits to the President such personal authority, if he cares to wield it, as no Premier possesses elsewhere; in this case Congress was asked, and agreed, to extend those powers still further. Besides these definite and specified extensions, Mr. Roosevelt was entrusted under the *Industrial Recovery Act* with a control so vast and also so vaguely defined as to make him an industrial dictator. The preamble to the Act announced a national emergency, and unique measures were adopted for a unique situation.

Think how the opportunity has been used. Now that just a year has elapsed, the magazine writers are taking a retrospect. Within a few days after his Inauguration, the President had suspended the whole banking system; had reduced the pensions list by about $500,000,000 a year; and had thrown the international exchanges into a deliberately contrived chaos by abandoning the Gold Standard. It was the purpose of his changes to try how

Government might intervene with advantage in business, how it might so operate, for example, upon the currency as to repair the disastrous drop in prices. To borrow a metaphor from medicine, Mr. Roosevelt's predecessors had assumed that Government can help national recovery only by taking away its obstacles, and letting Nature—which alone can heal—have its best chance to do the rest. Mr. Roosevelt, on the other hand, has a specific drug, for direct action upon the disorder. Not only has he the talent that Matthew Arnold saw in Goethe, to lay his finger on the place and say "Thou ailest here and here"; but he can tell just what needs to be done, and how it can be done. Reopening the channels of trade, that business may recover slowly but surely, is not enough for him; and—if the whole truth must be confessed—those who have been content with that method elsewhere have hitherto seen much less of its sureness than of its slowness. Mr. Roosevelt will not wait, but will so manipulate the currency as to send prices almost at once up or down at will.

In his inaugural address he declared that no one in the United States under his presidency should be allowed to starve, and that no business should be allowed to continue which paid its workers less than enough for a decent living. Quickly, too, he made it plain that he meant this as no mere expression of a pious hope, but that he would use his unprecedented powers to compel the payment of higher wages and to protect the unemployed against starvation. With some twelve million unemployed, and with many industries so embarrassed that they could not long continue working even at their reduced rate of pay, these seemed like intimations that he would deflect the stars in their courses or make the rivers flow backward, and that he had been armed with special authority from Congress to do so. But that he could effect a tremendous change at least temporarily, the record of a few months was enough to show. With gigantic sums at his disposal for industrial reconstruction, he announces that the entire country must show a minimum wage of $14 a week, with a maximum of 35 hours' work, and then summons all firms which desire to be eligible for a share in the new State expenditures to table at once their code of work and wages. There was no delay; the speed with which the codes appeared has been amazing. With a wariness born of old experience, minute regulations were issued to prevent firms from defeating in practice what their contract seems to prescribe in principle. The alternative for failure to raise wages and reduce hours is not simply that the firm will get no share in new State business; its former business will be wrested by the new competition from its grip.

In like manner Mr. Roosevelt instructs the western farmers that they must send up the price of wheat by reduction of their wheat acreage, and undertakes to make good to them the immediate loss by a tax on the processors for their benefit. He proceeds to co-ordinate railways, and eliminate wasteful competition, with scant respect to private interests that used to be held sacred, and that no former President would have had the power to disregard. He proclaims State control over forest lands in private ownership, involving some hundreds of millions of acres, with the purpose of preventing destructive methods of forestry, and refusing to be deterred by any plea that the owner can do what he will with his own. Under the *Tenessee Valley Development Act*, as one picturesque writer has put it, the United States Government is now in the power, explosives and fertilizer businesses; while the *Home Owners Refinancing Act* (a beautiful title that, by the way) and the *Farm Relief Bill* have given the Government control over the entire mortgage business of the country. In presence of these gigantic ventures, it seems trifling to mention what might otherwise have struck the observer as very sensational indeed; that at a stroke Mr. Roosevelt abolished political party patronage in the office of postmaster, placing some 15,000 of the more lucrative Post Office positions in the hands of the Civil Service.

Since the opening of the New Year he proceeded still further. He persuaded Congress to give him power to lay hands in the name of the State upon all the monetary gold in the country, issuing to the individuals and corporations which surrender it "gold certificates" in its place. He likewise proceeded to "devalue" the dollar by over 40%. The President is master of the situation. His doings will be judged by results, but for the time he will have a free hand. One need scarcely point out the immensity of the risks he is being allowed to run. In the words of the old adage, he will either make a spoon or spoil a horn. But he is at least a large-scale operator, and the spectacle of such a man at work has a fascination all its own. Economics and political science will never be quite the same again when these dazzling phenomena of our period have to be included in their interpretations. For such enquirers at least, this is a great time to be alive.

MR. E. L. JONES, in the *New Republic*, has added a notable contribution to the literature of horrified protest which the recent outburst of lynching in the Southern States has called

forth. In California, as magazine after magazine has been quick to point out, a new chapter has now been written in the records of crime. The Governor of a State has openly announced his approval of lynching, and by implication has incited to disregard of the laws he is sworn to administer. It may be a mere coincidence, but the ghastly parallel reported so soon from Maryland suggests that the "lesson" given by California to the country began to be assimilated fast. As the *Manchester Guardian* puts it, Governor Rolph praised men for wresting his own responsibility from his hands. It is no news that a considerable volume of opinion in the South takes the same side; if it did not, the problem of lynching would long ago have ceased to exist. We did not require the strident shrieks of support which this latest action has elicited to tell us that in too many quarters reckless people have been impatient for a lead of this very kind from someone in authority. The new thing under the sun is that they have now got it—from a State Governor! What they had long believed, but some of them had been ashamed to avow publicly, they all now hasten to proclaim from the housetops. Governor Rolph set free these dark human passions from the restraint under which civilized usage had slowly managed to bind them. Herein, perhaps, he has unwittingly done a service to the social order. A distinct step has always been taken when a social enemy has been driven or lured from tacit manoeuvering to open avowal.

Despite the plea urged with such plausibility by Mr. Jones, it seems extremely improbable that any "innocent" man this time suffered. The case of the two miscreants whom the mob victimized can attract little compassion. Their crime was one of the very worst in the calendar: without, it seems, a single mitigating circumstance. Kidnapping a boy, holding him to ransom that money may be wrung from his frantic parents, finally murdering him lest a witness should remain some time to bring the guilty to justice—it is hard not only to find on record, but even to conceive in the imagination, a worse atrocity. Those who think, or pretend to think, that the protest against lynching in general, and especially against Governor Rolph's defence of it, comes from "sentimental sympathy with criminals", are talking sheer nonsense. The outburst of horror all over the world at this piece of news has been fiercest in those countries where there is least tolerance for cant about "unwritten law", "brain-storm", and other expedients so familiar elsewhere to save the criminal from his just doom. At least equally pointless is the pretence that the San José mob was actuated by a noble indignation whose intensity

burst all fetters, and by impatience of "the law's delay" lest it should let the guilty excape. We are well accustomed to these justifications of Judge Lynch—the sort of thing Browning had in mind when he wrote about duellists:

> Sustainers of society!—perchance
> A trifle over-hasty with the hand
> To hold her tottering ark, had tumbled else;
> But that's a splendid fault whereat we wink,
> Wishing your cold correctness sparkled so!

A statement by the man who collected the nucleus of the lynching mob disposes of this picture. "I went," he says, "all over the town in my flivver roadster, and passed out the word 'We're going to have a lynching at the jail at 11 o'clock to-night'. Mostly I went to the speakeasies, and rounded up the gang there". Many of those who promoted the adventure were drunk, and the inciting motive was quite obviously to share in a gruesome spectacle. A very little acquaintance with pathological psychology makes the sequence of events as clear as day. But what sort of psychology will ever explain Governor Rolph,—the "sunny" Governor, so proud of his "hearty western ways"?

The arguments commonly advanced in defence of lynching, whatever may be their value elsewhere, have not even a plausible relevance to this case. Machinery of social justice had not broken down, there had been no failure to apprehend a criminal, there was no possibility of a criminal's escape through lack of evidence, or through any legal and technical ambiguities. The last risk of all, that the Governor of the State might be misguided enough to exercise in favour of these two murderers his prerogative of pardon, was not, we may assume, in the mind of anyone who knew Mr. Rolph. It was clear that Holmes and Thurmond were within sight of suffering the due penalty for their horrible offence. Consequently it is also clear that what the mob-organizers desired was no mere execution of justice, but a blood-curdling sensation. If they dignify such a desire by reference to "happy western ways", they had better acquaint themselves with the other description which every psychiatrist will be quick to apply to it.

The story of lynching is a painful one, but the story of "reasoned" defences for lynching is of the sort one can describe only in the words of Flaubert: "It shames the human mind". For long it was customary to tell visitors to the Southern States that this is a special method of security against just one sort of outrage—"the shield of white women against negroes". Not a few

have returned from the Black Belt with the conviction that only by occasional recourse to this terrific remedy can unspeakable horrors be kept in check. One hears less of that tale now, as the truth has been made more widely known through persistent publication of statistics. It is true that lynching is still directed chiefly against negroes, though the records show a substantial number of whites subjected to the same treatment—fifteen since 1927. But it is altogether untrue that the provoking cause is limited to the one specified type of offence. During the last six years this accounted for not more than 11 per cent. of the cases. The shameful list continues to grow—of men lynched for giving information against a criminal and again for refusing information, for giving evidence and for withholding evidence, for threatening political exposures, for the monstrous wickedness of a negro bringing suit in the courts against a white man! From the days of Harriet Martineau's tour in the United States a hundred years ago—when she heard at every turn the threat of lynching for anyone who dared to advocate emancipation of the slaves—this method of relief for sadistic fury has been more or less familiar.

One is ashamed to marshall again the considerations which have led all over the world to the substitution of orderly social justice for the wild outbursts of popular revenge. Long ago, in civilized countries, the habit of executing criminals publicly was abandoned, because the spectacle tended to brutalize those vast crowds which thronged round the gallows. One reads of moving-picture operators who made films of the scene at San José, for which—as the narrative tells us—the crowd "good-naturedly agreed to reconstruct the lynching". No subtle analysis of human nature is required to set forth the effect of those pictures upon American youth. It is obvious, too, that mob rage, even when justified, will often explode in the wrong direction, and fasten upon the wrong victim. The manifold safeguards which centuries of experience have provided for the taking of evidence must be altogether needless if Governor Rolph is right; but the public memory still retains the horror of 1927, when a white man was seized and beaten to death by a California mob that mistook him for someone else! Administration of justice is difficult enough, in all conscience, at the best, without such extra risks as these. The list of offences for which insensate mob vengeance has been wreaked shows exactly that disregard of differences in heinousness and that confusion of features utterly different which one should expect when so crude an instrument is applied to so delicate a task. Moreover, underlying the whole apology for lynching is an assumption, unmistakable

in most of those who defend it,—that for certain offences, and at least where only a negro is concerned, it is better to shoot or burn an innocent man if he is generally thought guilty, than to leave the public without an edifying object-lesson in "justice". The philosophy of this was well expressed by Dickens, who did not, however, think it characteristic of "red-blooded" heroes. It was the "debilitated cousin" in *Bleak House* who was overheard soliloquising from his couch: "Better hang the wrong feller than hang no feller!"

Governor Rolph announces that he has received 267 messages praising him, and only 57 criticising him. It would be interesting to know their respective sources. One telegram of congratulation was from a clergyman, who ministers—suggestively enough—to "The Church of the Heavenly Rest", but who, on second thoughts, decided that his impulsive action called for apology. Bishop Manning expressed himself at once with the propriety and emphasis one has a right to expect from his position. In California itself a wholesome example was set by the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, which "deplored the humiliation and shame" of what had taken place. From both President Roosevelt and Ex-President Hoover we have had such comments of mingled scorn and anger as may serve to redeem the national repute.

But the example is still having sinister results. The year 1933 was already a bad one in lynching history, with twice as many such outrages as had marked 1932, and the recent one in St. Joseph, Missouri, has resembled rather suspiciously in its technique the performance which Governor Rolph called "a good job", "the best lesson California has ever given the country". Here, indeed, as Carlyle said of another Governor, is "a constitutional sight like few". In a country which has had to lament increasing lawlessness, the Chief Executive Officer of a State not only refuses the aid of State forces to control a riotous mob, but compliments the mob leaders on their courageous contempt for law, and promises in advance to pardon all and sundry whom the courts may in this matter convict! A pardon, it seems, will not be required, as the District Attorney says he sees no need for any arrests.

Though the protest by all those best worth considering has been prompt and decisive, there is a feeling apparent here and there that if ever lynching had a word to say for itself, it is now. What else, they ask, in heaven's name, will stop this abomination of kidnapping? It seems to be assumed that kidnappers have enjoyed wholesale immunity, and that the ghastly Lindbergh case has had many sequels in which justice was similarly frustrated.

The truth is that, numerous as the kidnappings had been during 1933, arrests were effected in almost every case: that legislation, both Federal and State, has provided enormously heavier penalties: and that the combined drive against this most odious of outrages gives promise of the very best results. Unless all mankind's social experience has been misleading, it is surely by such organized and orderly common action, not by the wild outbursts of mobs, that anti-social man is to be brought under control. In England an excellent phrase was coined by H. H. Asquith, to describe what we in this country have, from time to time, known only too well. He had no belief, he said in the new method of "government by competitive crime".

H. L. S.