

CURRENT MAGAZINES

The Presidency of General Pangalos:—Mr. William Miller, in the *Contemporary*.

Industry, Politics and Public Opinion:—Sir Ernest Benn, in the *Edinburgh*.

The Mine Strike:—Lord Buckmaster, in the *Atlantic*.

Church and State Conflict in Mexico:—Professor Charles W. Hackett, in *Current History*.

IT would be too much, I suppose, to expect that *The Quarterly Review* should include a page called "Our Contributors." But there are disadvantages to the reader in the absence of such a guide. One would like, for example, to know something of the antecedents and qualifications of Mr. William Miller, who has contributed a sparkling article on Greece under Pangalos.

The writer, however, has plainly some intimate knowledge on which to draw. From casual references in his article, one discovers that his first visit to Greece was paid thirty-two years ago, that he was an eyewitness of the fighting on the departure of King George II in 1923, that he was mingling in the talk of the Athenian streets in the early summer of 1924, that on the spot he watched the coup d'état by Pangalos a year later, and that some months afterwards he was present at the historic tea-party where Mr. Papanastasiou was to be arrested. So Mr. Miller has had a chance to know his Greece, or at least his Athens, of the last few years tolerably well, and he has memories of the same land a generation back which may serve him with comparisons or contrasts.

His interest in that storied region is keen, and he tells us a good deal that one does not hear from most travellers. Greece, Mr. Miller thinks, is a place very inadequately advertised. The available maps, for example, show no trace of that direct railroad communication with "Europe" which has existed for the last ten years. There is now an up-to-date guide-book called *Hellas*, but it is written in Greek, and one may guess how far this is fatal to its value for tourists from both sides of the Atlantic. They still rely on *Baedeker*, which is fast becoming like the ancient *Pausanias*—of historic interest, but little practical utility. It is amazing to learn that of existing English guide-books the latest is dated 1909! Athens at present has ten thousand motor-cars, but there is not a word about automobile conveyance in these tourist manuals. "People have recently brought out camp-beds from London, to use on the train

and motor journey to the excellent hotel at Delphi." Mr. Miller feels that Greece is assumed, even by its inhabitants, to have a purely archaeological charm for those abroad, and archaeologists will submit to any discomfort. But there are others, for whom the attractions of a different sort would be very powerful if they were known. The place seems to need the enterprise of an American publicity association. And how successfully, with such help, it might be exploited!

Even those who have never heard of the *Argo* can revel in the view over the Gulf of Volo from Portaria, and the varied scenery of the Gulf of Corinth appeals to many who only know the Corinthians as correspondents of St. Paul. A good series of picture postcards, not merely of the classical monuments, would be an excellent advertisement, and to many a revelation. They would discover that Greece possesses a Switzerland in Epeiros, a Corniche at Spetsai, and a *côte d'azur* at Hagios Andreas.

Of General Pangalos we are told that he is an able man, that he speaks well "for a soldier", that he can write a readable article, but that he has little experience of foreign affairs. It was on June 25, 1925, that with the support of a handful of men he seized the National Bank and the Telegraph Office in Athens. But for some time before this happened, there had been a campaign of newspaper articles, all urging an "Americanization" of the system of Greek government which had been set up on the fall of the monarchy. Pangalos had heard, from a friend of Mr. Miller, the sensational news that in the United States the President is his own Prime Minister, and it struck him that this was a bright idea for introduction nearer home. The precedent of the coup d'état by Louis Napoleon in France, seventy-four years earlier, likewise appealed to him with a winsome attractiveness. So, as had been predicted twelve months before, Pangalos as leader of the army decided to "send all these politicians away." The upshot was that a plebiscite was taken throughout Greece for election of a President by popular vote.

The whole thing was, of course, quite irregular,—as irregular as those nominations of a Princeps which used to be made at Rome by the Praetorian Guard. But it was received with great coolness by Athenians. Truly, as Byron said long ago, "'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more." Mr. Miller can testify, as an eyewitness, that the change of régime passed with far less excitement than a by-election in England. Business went on as usual, and there was neither public hostility nor public enthusiasm over the occurrence. Mr. Venizelos, that keen spirit of affairs, was not there to criticize.

le was far from the strife of tongues, annotating Thucydides in aris! And it was specially provided in the decree that he should not be eligible for the post of President. Other dangerous aspirants were similarly eliminated, by pre-requisites for candidature which none of them could fulfil.

So Pangalos went to the polls as sole candidate for popular suffrage. He was elected without opposition, on a very small vote, about 40 per cent of the total number of registered electors. There was enthusiasm for him among some of the poorer districts, chiefly, it seems, because he had got the reputation of hating the rich, and because he had hanged two officials for misappropriation of public funds. "So", says Mr. Miller, "Robin Hood would have been a popular candidate for the Sherwood Forest division." To inflict capital punishment for such an offence required a new decree making such new methods retroactive, and this was calmly issued. Pangalos, at election, proceeded to put a price of 500,000 *drachmai* on the head of his most dangerous rival. He likewise suppressed three Athenian newspapers, and suspended others. The press was forbidden to publish articles by political leaders opposed to him, or to give any account of interviews with such people. It is a familiar tale of the new autocracies that have been springing up over Europe.

Mr. Miller has some good things, however, to record about the Pangalos administration, particularly about the negotiations with Albania and with Jugoslavia. There is a diverting tale of the attempted arrest of Mr. Papanastasiou, who chanced to be entertaining some friends when the official arrived with his warrant. He begged, in the name of courtesy and hospitality, that he might be arrested next day instead, and the polite official agreed to the postponement! It is interesting to note Mr. Miller's conjecture that Pangalos might find himself deposed by measures as irregular as those by which he won his way to power. That has been fulfilled, with abrupt decisiveness. And there seems to be little effective protest among those Greeks whose *sang froid* persists throughout varied rise and fall of new despots. As Herodotus has it, "Hippocleides doesn't care."

A PICTURESQUE and amusing sort of writer is Sir Ernest Benn, who discourses in *The Edinburgh Review* on "Industry, Politics and Public Opinion."

Sir Ernest begins with the pleasant remark that the industrial situation in England is not dangerous, though it is very depressing. It is depressing, in his view, because so many people refuse either to

do the things or to think the way that would lead them to prosperity. Neither employers nor employees will understand their relative position in "the bigger scheme of things." And Sir Ernest would not be supposed to harbour any bias in this matter. It is not just the Red Flag that he dreads. He fears Moscow less than he fears "Copec" (the famous Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship so much applauded two years ago in an article in *The Dalhousie Review*). "Comrade Saklatvala", he says, "makes me smile, but the Bishop of Manchester makes me shudder"!

This suggests that things are in a very bad way indeed. If even those brighter intelligences which seek to mend them are provocative only of either ridicule or terror, it looks as if the case were indeed dangerous as well as depressing.

What this critic regards as the root error of everybody is the prevailing notion that the State is all-powerful, that it can enable the employee to be prosperous without working, that it can with propriety relieve the manufacturer by a tariff from having to meet the competition of his rivals, that—in short—it can dispense everyone from "the stress and strain of the struggle for existence." In Sir Ernest's opinion, the road back to sanity is through frank acknowledgment that public control can do no more than to facilitate the activities of the individual. It can prevent much evil, but can do very little positive good.

How and in what degree the Bishop of Manchester or the men who organized "Copec" have transgressed this wholesome principle, is a point on which our prophet does not minutely inform us. Clearly he is the antagonist alike of doles for the worker and of protective tariffs for the manufacturer, on the ground that in each case there is disastrous appeal to "government" to do for the citizen what the citizen should do for himself. He would like, he says, "to get back to eighteenth-century habits of thought." But he knows that it is "out of fashion"—and consequently impracticable—to set up a doctrine of *laissez faire*. On this point Sir Ernest gives us a fierce diatribe against those who to-day speak of the Industrial Revolution as if it had been a curse, while it was in truth "the greatest civilizing movement of all time", and against those who once more glorify the Middle Ages, which were actually "the blackest period in the history of man." In particular, he resents the prevalent "libels" on the early factories, where—it seems—child life was no worse treated than the child life of the time in general, and where the conditions of labour were much better than in the home industries which had been supplanted. Lord Shaftesbury, he admits, did much to rouse a social conscience on the case of

children as a whole; but he used the factories for this purpose in much the same way as Mr. Lloyd George used the dukes to promote interest in his People's Budget, "and with about as much justice."

For Sir Ernest Benn, it is ignorance of economic law that lies at the basis of most of the trouble, and the remedy for it is to be found in education. It must be made clear to that "public opinion" which controls us all (1) that work is a service to others, (2) that the buyer settles the price, (3) that an article is worth what it will fetch and no more, (4) that property—to whomsoever it belongs—serves the community, and can be made to do this by private ownership alone, and (5) that "government" is from its nature incapable of any form of material production. On such matters as these, public opinion is in a state which the critic calls "idiocy", and until the idiocy is dispelled—anything may happen.

No doubt there is a great deal of truth in this, though it might perhaps with advantage have been less pontifically proclaimed. As one who has the privilege of knowing the Bishop of Manchester, and has much respect for his great qualities of head and heart, I venture to believe that such rather obvious though quite valuable points as Sir Ernest Benn has made will not strike that quick-witted prelate as a new revelation. Unless his mind has become far more sluggish than it used to be, twenty years ago at Oxford, he has kept at least so far abreast of "modern" enlightenment about the limits of State control. So too, I believe, have the minds of the men who met at "Copec". And even Mr. Lloyd George, surely, should not be dismissed on the assumption that he is either too stupid to grasp these verities or too wicked to admit them.

Yet Sir Ernest Benn has some real points to make, and one regrets that they should have been made in language which, though vivid and arresting, is likely to repel the audience he desires to attract. When he trounces us all for neglect of "Economics", he is, of course, open to the very easy retort that economists cut a poor figure in the days when they obstructed the factory legislation, with language very like that which their champion has used in this article. But he is driving home a pregnant truth when he writes this:

The Liberty and Property Defence League is saying the right things for the wrong reasons. It does not matter a row of pins to the community, considered as a whole, whether I possess a thousand pounds' worth of values, or whether they belong to somebody else. The only thing that does matter is that those values should exist, and be secured and conserved. I do not claim any rights in my property as against the community because of my ownership of it, but I do claim to serve the community by

the assurance I provide, and which only an individual can provide, that adequate care will be taken to preserve my property for the service of all.

COUCHED in a different style, and more likely to persuade if not to entertain the reader, is Lord Buckmaster's article in the *Atlantic*. It is written with the authority of one who is not only an ex-Lord Chancellor, but also ex-Chairman of the Commission of Enquiry that investigated the coal problem two years ago.

Lord Buckmaster looks back upon the record of British mining, and sees in it something better worth reflection than those "libels" which have irritated Sir Ernest Benn. He recalls the time when work was done underground by mere children kept at their task for twelve hours at a stretch, while "women, unsexed in form, function and soul, dragged trucks on all fours, half clad, like wild beasts." Those horrors of a hundred years ago are mentioned once more, not for the purpose of inflaming a temper that is already fierce enough, but to point out that the memory of reforms which had to be slowly extorted from resisting mine-owners has much to do with the bitterness of the mine-workers to-day. It is unnecessary, remarks the critic, to enquire whether the men now led by Mr. A. J. Cook are less than just to the predecessors of the present company directors. The fact that this long treasured resentment remains is "one of the most important factors in the tangled problem with which we are confronted."

Lord Buckmaster details some recent stages in British mining history. In 1908 an Act was passed forbidding a day of more than eight hours' work in the pits. Four years later, in consequence of a strike, there was a Minimum Wages Act, providing that throughout the whole industry there should be a minimum wage below which no company should be allowed to reduce its employees, but leaving the determination of the amount to an agreement between the parties themselves. During the war years there was frequent trouble in the coalfields, so that the government had to assume control of the mines, paying that very high wage which lasted until "decontrol" in 1921. But before this last stage had been reached, there was insistent demand that the whole industry should be taken over by the State, and worked like the Post Office as a national concern. The Commission appointed to enquire into the business reported in favour of such nationalization. But the government refused to act on this report, and passed instead a bill reducing the hours of labour to seven.

In the period of depression which followed those years of inflated prosperity for the manual worker, there was soon another coal strike. It was settled by a bargain under which the mining industry of Great Britain was divided into thirteen districts. Wages were to vary in different districts, but it was provided that in each "all the profits over and above certain defined expenses were to be added to the wages, and the balance retained by the owners." It provided in addition for a "standard wage", payment to be in all cases at least 20 per cent. above this minimum. By this means the miners were given an interest in the profits of the coalfields. And for a time the scheme worked well, especially while the occupation of the Ruhr imparted such tremendous stimulus to the British export trade in coal. But the Ruhr episode came to an end. The German mines resumed production. In neutral markets Silesian and French coal competed in increasingly formidable degree with coal from Great Britain, and there naturally followed a proposal to reduce the cost of British production by lowering the "minimum" miners' wage. The retort to this was another threatened strike, averted only by the granting of a government subsidy for one year which terminated on May 1st, 1926. It was to meet this crisis, by remedies of permanent rather than temporary effect, that the Commission of Enquiry made its recommendations last spring.

Lord Buckmaster rehearses the chief items of that now familiar Report. It failed of acceptance by the miners on account of two objectionable features, (a) the retention of a seven-hours day, and (b) an immediate reduction in wages. The promise it held out that mines should be amalgamated, reorganized, strengthened by the help of scientific research into methods of greater efficiency—all this was far off in the future, while the thing to be faced at once was a drop in pay. "Justice", says Lord Buckmaster, "will not be done to the miners until the magnitude of the sacrifice they were called upon to make can be properly appreciated." And the heart of the difficulty lies in the diverse character of the coalfields. It is true that, apart from the subsidy, during the last quarter of 1925 there was a loss on the production of 73 per cent. of the total output of coal. Nor can such loss be thrown indefinitely upon the shoulders of the State. Nationalization, again, in this critic's view, could not obtain sufficient support in the present parliament, nor perhaps in any parliament which is at all likely to be elected for a long time to come. What remedy, then, is practicable?

It is pointed out by Lord Buckmaster that although there are certain mines which cannot be profitably worked "except under such conditions of labour as ought not to exist", there are also

rich seams stretching through Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire which might still be developed to great advantage. It is the poorer mines which involve, in a national scheme, such enormous general loss. What is needed is a transference of labour from those that ought to be closed to those which would well repay development on a great scale. To shut up the unprofitable pits at once would add about a quarter of a million men to the already swollen numbers of the unemployed. On the other hand, it would take years to make effective the unworked areas which are of high potential value. Why not then extend a subsidy to "certain specified mines", and to no others, for that limited period which might be needed to bring about the readjustment of labour?

By this means it ought to be possible to provide that the men would know in advance the coalfields that must fail, and they would be able to seek occupation in the new ones that were being developed.

How much there is of promise in such a scheme, I do not pretend to judge. But it has a ring of good sense, and is obviously the proposal of a man in serious earnest with a menacing situation. One can heartily agree with Lord Buckmaster's general conclusion that "some larger and more far-reaching plan than any hitherto suggested must be conceived and carried out, or irretrievable disaster will overtake the whole trade." The figures of loss already incurred are enough to make one shudder.

WRITERS about Mexico have of late been deluging us with articles on the quarrel there between Church and State. On one side is a government denouncing the ecclesiastical influence as seditious; on the other side is an array of prelates urging resistance by the whole population against a government decree as an outrage upon spiritual freedom. There has been an edict from the Vatican such as history does not record since the Middle Ages. And there has been action by the republican authorities analogous to that of Lenin or Trotsky for the paralysing of the Russian Church. The whole thing is worth very serious study, and one could wish that more help for disentangling the difficulties had been given by the current press.

An investigator, for example, from the University of Texas was attracted to the spot. Professor Charles W. Hackett, whose office it is to teach Latin-American history, has written for us the record of what he found. But what a visiting observer in su

circumstances will think he has "found" is likely to be determined in great measure by what he either expects or desires to see. And Professor Hackett, to whom I turned for details of what he saw, has occupied a disproportionate amount of space with what could be equally well discovered from the official statements. The value of an enquiry on the spot lies in what it reveals through intimate contact with persons, through the gossip of the store, through a hundred signs—each in itself perhaps trivial, but amounting to a great deal when brought together. We have something of this psychological interest in the *Current History* article, but not enough.

Professor Hackett was struck by the tremendous manifestation of loyalty to President Calles in the great parade he witnessed at Mexico City on August 1st. A procession, variously estimated at from 30,000 to 50,000 men and women, filed past the President and the members of his Cabinet who were stationed on the balcony of the Municipal Palace. It had been arranged by the Regional Congress of Labour. With bands playing and banners flying, these sympathizers walked abreast for hours in an apparently endless stream,—delegates from Masonic lodges, government employees, school teachers, professors and students of the National University, members of Labour Unions, representatives of village communities which have had their communal lands restored to them. Their flags bore mottos and challenges, contrasting "the terrible yesterday" and "the free tomorrow", deriding "the Prisoner of the Vatican", extolling the sovereignty of Mexico as against the sovereignty of Rome. This sounds great. But one feels like saying to Professor Hackett, in traditional language, "These are generalities, man. Come to particulars." In what respect, to be precise, was yesterday terrible? What is the promise that tomorrow, under President Calles, will be free? It is not enough to denounce "superstition", the religious Orders and the like, for such influence has been observed elsewhere, not least in its wholesome effect long ago for the civilization of Latin-America. When we hear, too, about the reforms of 1917, we remember how they were achieved,—and some of us have read that terrific book, *Mexico under Carranza*.

Yet an open mind must be kept, and it may well be that there are grave sins to be laid to the charge of these ecclesiastical guides. They are said to have seized upon public property, to be avaricious, to be the foes of "modern conditions of life." On the other hand they themselves declare that property bequeathed by pious testators for a religious purpose has been sequestered by a tyrannical State. We may be ready to believe that priests, like other men, are capable of avarice. At least we have ample proof that under Mexican

dictatorship there can be the most ruthless sequestration. All the help we can get from Professor Hackett's report is the assurance that the Roman Church in Mexico has been "ever reactionary and conservative", that it resisted the Liberal Constitution promulgated in 1917, and that whatever has been done by President Calles has been no more than an enforcing of the long dormant laws of the land. Whether those "laws of the land", enacted by a body in which Carranza allowed no one a vote unless he was pledged to vote "right", may not well have been left dormant, is a point upon which one is curious. And it may not be irrelevant to remark that in other countries a measure of tolerance is allowed by reforming governments even to such as remain "reactionary and conservative." Specific charges of wrong-doing by the Mexican clergy would be worth more than these vague epithets of abuse.

The repressive decrees issued by the State are at least well known. No minister of religion, Catholic or Protestant, is permitted to express "political views." No one who is not a native Mexican may act as minister there at all. No religious newspaper or periodical may offer any comment on political affairs. Not even in a private elementary school may there be any provision for worship. Every church edifice has been declared national property, and all "religious acts" must be celebrated in churches authorized by law. A minister of any denomination must be licensed by the State, and no minister is permitted to manage a school of primary instruction. All religious Orders, monasteries and convents are dissolved, and no ecclesiastical organization is allowed to administer or acquire property or capital of any kind. According to what Professor Hackett has heard, officials of Protestant organizations in Mexico find nothing objectionable in all this! Perhaps some of them have found it expedient to say so.

Meanwhile the President of a republic in which over ninety per cent. of the people are Catholics issues to the press his views on comparative religion, wherein his readers are informed that Christianity, Mohammedanism and Buddhism are all of equal value. I shall not discuss the value of this ethical deliverance, but merely note that it is unlikely to make for peace. While the priesthood may not criticize politics, it is plainly thought quite proper for the politicians to criticize religion. In truth, the apologists for the Mexican dictator, if they have a case to present, have so far put it in the least convincing form.

This is a weary tale, about yet another civil government which—if it means what it seems to say—is going out to stifle the religious impulses of its subjects. Always and everywhere we have the same

proclamation of a "new era", heralds of light advancing against the kingdom of darkness. As Carlyle said of von Bruhl, they have become "wearisome even to laugh at." President Calles, in the intervals of pontificating against superstition, has found time to send an impudent message to the Secretary of the League of Nations, intimating that the majesty of Mexico is quite indifferent to what that council of uplifters may have to say.

When the smoke of this disorder has cleared, we may perhaps find out that substantial misdeeds by the priesthood were the ground of the attack. They may be gross indeed, as gross misdeeds have sometimes been chargeable to that class in the past,—like other classes, landowners, capitalists, trading companies, even "Labour Unions." But the priests have a great chance of escaping censure from the outside world, so long as their assailants make such preposterous demands as that the clergyman should have no voice in politics, should not dare to criticize the powers that be, should limit himself to the mere celebration of ritual and keep aloof from all the throbbing interests of life. The present Mexican situation recalls many an historical analogy. It recalls, for instance, the Kulturkampf of Bismarck. And if the President of Mexico were not exalted high above all advice from the western world, he might learn much about how such an enterprise as his began with like tumult and was chastened to a sober conciliation if he would enquire at the lips of M. Aristide Briand.

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