

British statesmen, Burke and Gladstone. Burke said in 1795 that an Irishman had every privilege, political and legal, of an English-born citizen. In 1871 Mr. Gladstone said the same thing. Patrick H. Pearse, the executed President of the so-called Irish Republic, was by the laws of citizenship an Englishman, having been born in England of an English father and an Irish mother. Michael Davitt also was born, not in Ireland, but in England. Yet neither of these men possessed any more political or civil rights than any Irishman born in Ireland. On this point I am sure that most of the readers of the *Nation* will prefer the opinion of Burke and Gladstone to that of Mr. Whery.

Mr. Whery is undoubtedly honest and conscientious. It is his knowledge of the subject which leaves much to be desired. To all lovers of the truth honest sincerity should not be allowed to cover the serious sin of misrepresentation.

GEORGE L. FOX

New Haven, Conn., August 19

## Benevolent Imperialism

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Among the essential articles of a treaty of permanent peace must be one providing for the benevolent administration of the politically and socially immature peoples of Asia and Africa—peoples heretofore considered, under the ethics of the old internationalism, as fit subjects for exploitation. The malevolent imperialism which looks upon the inhabitants of backward countries as means to the end of material aggrandizement has been truly regarded as one of the main causes of modern wars. But there is another kind of imperialism, and if the peace-makers sincerely desire to write the terms of a lasting peace, they must recognize the vital distinction that exists between malevolent and benevolent imperialism. Some kind of imperialism is necessary so long as there are peoples who are unable to govern themselves and who are subject to the exploitation of crafty Powers like Germany. Malevolent imperialism assumes that such peoples exist for the enrichment of their masters; benevolent imperialism assumes that until people are able to administer efficiently the affairs of government they must submit to a degree of control and guidance. Canada and Australia have not been sources for the enrichment of England. In the constitution of the league of nations there must be written a provision which shall guarantee the humane government of all colonies and of all subject peoples under the joint control of all the civilized Powers, Germany included.

HARRY SALPETER

New York, August 15

## Slang and the King's English

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: The pervasive quality of American slang in times of peace is familiar enough. In these days of war there are obvious reasons for its greater prevalence. The downright force, the "punch," if you please, of this form of speech particularly recommends it at this time when the affairs of the world are being settled by means of brute force. Our American President, whose command over the resources of our language no one is likely to question, has not hesitated in public speech to speak of "butting in" in Mexico, of "feeling that I was the whole thing," of its being "up to me."

In the speech of Englishmen the use of the vulgar idiom for expressing the temper of the present time is not less noteworthy. One is not greatly surprised to find a journalist like Lord Northcliffe, in an address to an American audience, asserting that "it is 'up to you' to raise a great memorial at Dayton," that "it is 'up to' the two great nations of the world," etc. Nor is it entirely unexpected when Sir Edward Carson, who planned to settle affairs in Ulster by illegal methods, makes use of outlaw speech and asserts that he "can never get cold feet." But the popular idiom has found its place in the speech of Englishmen even higher in authority. Premier Lloyd George speaks of Russia as "still on the ropes," of Germany's hope that the U-boats are to "put England out of business." Even Mr. Asquith, the

purity of whose English is so notable, is quoted by the newspapers as using the phrase, "deliver the goods." Verily slang has made its way to high places. But now comes the interesting story of the tribute paid to American troops by King George himself. "What the Americans have really done," he is quoted as saying, "is, perhaps, best expressed in their own idiom. They have 'put pep into us.'" American slang has now become literally the King's English.

GEORGE H. MCKNIGHT

Ohio State University, August 31

## Locrine and the Faerie Queene

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: The welcome fact, noted in your recent review of Professor Cory's "Edmund Spenser: A Critical Study," that Spenser is at last "coming into something like his just share of scholarly attention," warrants a word in your columns as to a minor point in which neither the poet nor one of his critics has had his due.

In Mr. F. G. Hubbard's "Locrine and Selimus" (Shakespeare Studies by Members of the Department of English of the University of Wisconsin: Madison, 1916), it is stated categorically and several times reiterated (pp. 23, 26, 30) that Locrine "has nothing from 'The Faerie Queene.'" A footnote (p. 23) refers for confirmation to Crawford's "Edmund Spenser, Locrine, and Selimus," which was published (Collectanea, Vol. I) as long ago as 1901. Mr. Hubbard ignores altogether Prof. Carrie A. Harper's "Locrine and The Faerie Queene" (Modern Language Review, 1913, Vol. VIII, pp. 369-371), in which the fact that Debon (the eponymous hero of Devonshire) is associated with Brutus in both poem and play (and appears in no other extant version of the story) is made the basis of a plausible argument for the indebtedness of "Locrine" to "The Faerie Queene."

Spenser's influence is God's plenty without "Locrine," but it is not agreeable to see him despoiled of even a minor item merely on the strength of an *ipse dixit*.

E. K. B.

University of Alberta, August 18

## Prophets and False Prophets

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Your reviewer of "Religion—Its Prophets and False Prophets," by Mr. James Bishop Thomas, in the *Nation* of August 24, damns with faint praise a book which appeals to many as a real contribution to practical theology and work-a-day ethics. Dr. Thomas makes the allegation, not too fantastic, that the clerical profession is more concerned with being a bulwark of society as it is than with carrying on the stalwart traditions of revolutionary prophecy as exemplified by Isaiah and Jeremiah, by John Baptist, and by Jesus of Nazareth, the last and greatest. Surely one can see that there is a great chasm between the religion of Jesus and the Christian religion. There are too many evidences that a minister who espouses the cause of the oppressed and disinherited cuts himself off from future advancement, perhaps loses his position altogether.

It is reported that only one clergyman took sides with the strikers in Bisbee, Mr. Brewster, of the Episcopal Church; it is not surprising to hear also that he "lost his job." Yet there is the anomaly that in our most aristocratic church—which families make alliance with as they get on in the world—there are a good many radical clergy, and they must be reckoned with one day. Perhaps we shall come back to the Apostolic (and Quaker) custom of having unpaid ministers and also to the wholesome and democratic custom of having the prophesying done by men and women of the laity as good things come to them to say. It may be said that we shall again, as in the primitive times, have the churches in such and such a one's house, where people met together in fellowship for the breaking of bread and for prayer. Vital religion will put the emphasis on the Kingdom, for centuries ignored by theologians.

This book of Dr. Thomas's is a sincere attempt to bring us back to the essential content of Christianity. There are, unfortunately, too few books which make the attempt: those we have ought to be appreciated.

ALBERT FARR

Newark, N. J., August 27

## BOOKS

## The Colonial Merchants and the Revolution

*The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution, 1763-1776.* By Arthur Meier Schlesinger. New York: Longmans, Green & Company. \$4.

THIS well-printed volume is not intended as a popular exposition of the subject. It is a work of devoted scholarship and abundant research with full citation of the original evidence, and is issued as Volume 78 of the Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, edited by the Faculty of Political Science of Columbia University.

The Northern merchants were a picturesque and romantic class of our Colonial life. Fine old fellows they seem now as we look back at them in their yellow embroidered long waistcoats, short trousers, and long stockings. A delightful life they lived, strolling out of their counting houses, when tired of figuring profit and loss, to take a look at one of their ships discharging or loading at their wharf. All was still and restful, with the delicious odor of tar and oakum. The sailors sang their "Heave-ho" songs, as they handled the tackles. The sail-maker was working away on his snowy canvas. The captain, with the shadow of the last hurricane still on his face, paced sternly to and fro.

It is a wonder that the merchants ever did any figuring at all. They could have so much better amusement investigating the armament of their vessels and hearing the endless tales of fights with pirates or privateering in the British wars with France and Spain. No doubt the merchant appreciated all this in a way, and never realized what an important person he was. He would have been amazed to think that in a hundred and fifty years it would take 700 pages to explain him. The reason is that, with all his pleasant, picturesque life, he was a very broad-gauge man. He was a navigator, mariner, and owner of ships, as well as owner of a shop. He must know foreign markets and politics, India, China, Ceylon, as well as the Mediterranean shores and the ports of Great Britain, France, and Holland; and must know it all without the aid of telegraph or news bureaus. It was a balanced judgment and a courageous, sturdy soul that could speculate in ships, cargoes, pirates, and privateersmen, over the vast distances of the oceans, and keep on the agreeable side of bankruptcy. In other words, he was a great economic force—although "economic" in this sense was hardly then in use, and he might not have known what you meant—and therefore his part in the revolution was a serious one.

Dr. Schlesinger is by no means blind to the fact that there were other weighty factors in the Revolution. "The revolutionary movement," he rightly says, "was the product of a complexity of forces, governmental and personal, British and Colonial, social, economic, geographical, and religious." But economic conditions and the merchants played such an important part in the Revolution that Dr. Schlesinger in revealing them was in the predicament of having to write an almost complete history of the Revolution without the battles, in order to show the working of one of its factors.

In the Northern Colonies down to Maryland, the merchants were the picturesque ship-owning class just de-

scribed, and usually natives of or living in the Colonies. But the merchants that controlled the trade and ships of the Southern Colonies lived in England, and transacted business in the Colonies through factors, who were not altogether respected by the Southern planters. Capital in the South was invested in plantations and negroes, not in ships and goods. The planter sent his products—tobacco, rice, or indigo—to a merchant in England to sell for him on commission and to send back manufactured goods and luxuries. To help out this deal, the merchant maintained in the Colonies a factor, usually a canny, thrifty Scotchman, who kept a stock of merchandise, worked up business, and collected debts from "as wasteful a race of gentlemen farmers as ever lived." On the other hand, the merchant in England took high commissions and freight rates and held the gentlemen farmers in the sort of slavery which in those days could be maintained over a man always in your debt. "These debts," said Thomas Jefferson, "had become hereditary from father to son, for many generations, so that the planters were a species of property annexed to certain mercantile houses in London."

It was different in the New England and Middle Provinces, where resident merchants, spreading a network of ships and trade over the whole known world, became identified with the communities in which they lived, and were respected, influential citizens. It is true that they also had their little tyrannies, which could be exercised in the conditions of the times; but there was no serious objection, because of the overbalancing benefits.

Dependent upon the merchants for a livelihood were great numbers of petty shopkeepers, vendue-masters, ropemakers, sail-makers, sailors, coopers, caulkers, smiths, carpenters, and the like. These men were that numerous portion of the community in republics, styled the People; in monarchies, the Populace, or still more irreverently the Rabble, or Canaille, as a contemporary said; and they were, for the most part, unenfranchised.

At Philadelphia, the merchant-aristocracy ruled the city with a rod of iron; their methods of harrying the price-cutting vendue-masters and of discouraging country peddling were similar in kind to those which modern business integration has rendered familiar. The same was true, in lesser degree perhaps, at New York, Boston, and Newport.

The burden of Dr. Schlesinger's book is the effect of the Revolution on these men and their effect on the Revolution. They surged about back and forth when struck by the changing economic currents of the momentous epoch. Members of the Colonial Dames and of the Sons of the Revolution who fondly believe that the Revolution was a spontaneous uprising of the whole Colonial population without doubt or hesitation, and who think it wicked to suggest otherwise, will find little comfort or satisfaction in the pages of this iconoclast. He has a disconcerting way of stating facts as he finds them in the documents and record. He is an historian of the Revolution who has a respect for evidence—not for some of the evidence or selected evidence, but for all of the evidence. He cares nothing for secondary authorities or subsequent opinions. He wants the eye-witnesses and the original participants.

The merchants and factors liked the British Empire. They grew rich under it. The armies and fleets of the Empire protected their trade and their ships. It is true that the navigation and trade acts of Parliament were intended to confine profits largely to the mother country and make of the Colonies mere producers of raw materials to be exchanged for the manufactured goods of England. But by