

conditions to be brought about in what has been called the Government of Coal are that fuel should be produced and delivered regularly, steadily, uniformly, and at prices that are just and reasonable; that the relations between employers and employees should be just and result in mutual satisfaction without injury to the coal-using public; and that coal resources should be conserved and economically used.

It is to be assumed that the present Coal Commission, after careful study of the facts, will make practical suggestions for National legislation that will meet the demands of these three parties and these three primal requisites with just balance as between them. This would make quite unnecessary agitation for that Government ownership which is obviously regarded even by some of its advocates as a last resort and to be sought only if measures of moderate supervision and control prove a failure.

## THE PARADOX OF POETRY

**D**EFINITIONS of poetry, even the best of them, are never wholly satisfying. They are useful chiefly in isolating aspects of the poetic spirit. They are never adequate to encompass its whole being.

Perhaps, therefore, it is an unsafe thing to say that all great poetry contains paradoxical elements. Some one is sure to arise and cite a poem in which the elements we are thinking of are absent. We refer to individuality and universality. Is it safe to say that all great poetry contains thought, emotion, and action which can awaken comprehension in the minds of men differing in creed, condition, and inheritance? Is it safe to say that this poetry to be truly general in its appeal must at the same time be intensely individual in its utterance? We think a very good case could be made out for such statements.

To reason from the particular to the general, let us take such a poem as Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven." The element of universality in this poem is to be found in the search for spiritual contentment—a search common alike to Protestant, Catholic, and agnostic. The poetic form in which this search has been expressed could have come from no other brain than that of the poet who set it forth in immortal music. The voice is the voice of Francis Thompson, the problem is the problem of mankind.

It might not be so easy to make out a case for the inevitable relationship between individuality and universality if other poetry generally recognized as great were chosen as an example of the

paradox of which we are speaking, but we suspect that these two elements could always be found. Light might be thrown on the discussion by investigating the failures of poets as well as their successes.

Take, for example, some of the numerous verse of the "home and mother" type which has a broad appeal in its own time without establishing itself as part of the world's literature. The element which these poems lack is the element of personality; they have not been born of a mind that is set apart.

At the other side of the picture let us observe some of our modern verse, technically excellent, certainly individual, and nevertheless destined to a speedier death than even the sentimental offerings which the authors of this modern verse so despise. It is of course true that this modern work for the most part is not born of personalities of importance, but its failure cannot wholly be ascribed to this cause. Its failures are due to its lack of broad contact with humankind. The problems of the individual, in so far as they are individual, are poetically uninteresting. It is only the individual experience which is interpretative of the universal experience which is material for the making of true poetry.

To hazard any poetic theory is a dangerous thing if one is searching for a reputation for infallibility. If this bit of philosophizing provides any one with food for thought, it will have fulfilled its purpose.

## DIVERSITY IN CREED, UNITY IN FAITH

**R**ECENTLY there came to the office of The Outlook a letter from which the following is a quotation:

The Jewish Passover is a time of release from bondage, and the Christian Easter is a time of hope for good will among men. The two festivities usually occur simultaneously, and I am taking the opportunity to devote the Passover issue of the "American Hebrew" this year to the promulgation of these two ideas, namely, that Gentile and Jew in America free themselves from the bondage of misunderstandings which are retarding the era of good will.

I am inviting a few of the forward-looking men and women in this country to help me put this thought across. I believe that an analysis of the causes that underlie misunderstanding between Gentile and Jew, some of them age-long, accompanied by constructive suggestions for overcoming them, will prove a vital force in the undertaking.

The object is not to wound, but to heal.

The writer of this letter, Isaac Land-

man, editor of the well-known Jewish weekly the "American Hebrew," explained that he was asking editors of several other journals to contribute to his Passover issue suggestions that would help to unite both Gentile and Jew for the sake of America.

To this request we were glad to reply; and on behalf of The Outlook the following article was written by one of its editors and is here reprinted by permission from the issue of March 30 of the "American Hebrew."

Religion unites. It is creeds that divide. Men separate into groups when they are moved by doctrine. They come together when they are moved by faith.

Creeds are formulas for thinking. Faith is a manner of life.

Religious antagonisms, so called, are not religious; they are creedal.

When men try to substitute creeds or doctrines or formulas of thought about religion for religion itself, they cause, not the unity they seek to enforce, but only confusion.

It is the conflict between doctrine, personified by Job's comforters, and faith, personified by Job himself, against the dark background of the mystery of suffering, that is the subject of the greatest dramatic poem in all literature.

As long as men have had religion they have thought about it; and as they have thought about it they have divided. Division is essential to any high form of life. The jelly-fish is not the symbol of organized society. Distinctions between Jew and Christian, between Catholic and Protestant, between orthodox and liberal, are not unwholesome. Creeds will always be necessary, but they are not means of union.

This is evident in government. Theories or doctrines about the nature of the state do not unite the citizens; they rather divide them into parties. Attempts to secure union by making people accept a common political creed always end in failure. The only way to bring citizens of varying political creeds together is by arousing or renewing in them their patriotic faith.

Between Jew and Christian there are barriers both of religious thinking and of political or social habits of thought.

Most of the people of Israel in America have come from lands whose traditions and customs are different from the traditions and customs prevailing in America, and have lived under circumstances that have intensified their sense of separateness from the Gentiles. They brought with them alien habits and manners; partly derived from the lands from which they have come and partly

derived from their very sense of separateness from all nations. On the other hand, Americans have habits and manners, customs, and ways of thinking of their own that they are inclined to think are or ought to be the basis of National upity and mutual understanding.

I do not believe that we can bring Christian and Jew into union by intimidation or self-assertion on either side. I do not believe that we will find Jew and Christian coming together if we deny that barriers of thought exist or if we pretend that differences in their thinking about religion or about society and government are not real differences. I do not think we can find unity by flattery or self-depreciation, by attempts to enforce social contact, or by efforts to make Jew and Christian think alike.

Fortunately, the way toward a real union is open here in America, as it is nowhere else in the world. It is the way of faith.

What is it that makes America a nation? It is not a common tradition or body of customs or inheritance of art or any such thing. It is not to be found in the past at all. It is in the future. It is a common faith. It has been kept alive by those in the past who have been making the nation; but it still is ahead of us. It is a summons to press forward to something not yet attained. It can be shared by people of diverse ways of thinking, but only if they take their part in making it come true. It has been said that no one can be at the same time a Jew and an Englishman or a Jew and an Italian. Perhaps not; for nationality in most countries in Europe is different from nationality in America. But Jews and Christians alike can be American by keeping their own ways of thinking and yet sharing the common faith in the America that is to be and that they are helping to make.

And more than that. In spite of differences in doctrine—in fact, because differences in doctrine are not only tolerated but welcomed—there can be here in America, and there ought to be, unity in religion. And that, too, can come, not by creed, but by faith.

The great expressions of religion are not formulas for thinking, but are calls to faith; and when men respond to them they come together.

Micah's cry is one to which Christian and Jew can both respond:

"What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

And with Jesus both Jew and Christian can say:

"Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother."

ERNEST HAMLIN ABBOTT.

## WAS SARAH BERNHARDT AN ARTIST?

WHEN she died on March 26 in Paris, Sarah Bernhardt was about eighty years old. There is some doubt as to the exact date of her birth. She was a native of Holland, and her father was Jewish. She ran away to Paris as a child, and her early career was a stormy one. She made her way partly by her gifts, that amounted perhaps to genius, and partly by carefully planned sensationalism and advertising. She visited this country seven or eight times, coming here last in 1916. She was not a beautiful woman, nor had she a magnificent physique like Mrs. Siddons, but she had great physical energy and courage. In 1915, when she was over seventy years of age, one of her legs was amputated, and even after that she came to this country in 1916 and made a dramatic tour, which was remarkably successful. Even during this visit she went through another serious operation in an American hospital. She did good service in the Franco-Prussian War for France, and again during the World War. Her work won for her both affectionate applause and official recognition.

A much more competent theatrical critic than I am, Mr. Charles Henry Meltzer, gives on another page his estimate of the art of Sarah Bernhardt. He is a playwright, and has had a wide experience and association with the dramatic literature and dramatic workmanship of France, Germany, and Russia. It requires some courage to take issue with him, and I am going to do so. He evidently thinks that in some respects the "divine Sarah" was incomparable. The New York "Tribune" editorially calls her "incomparable artist." The New York "Times" says of her: "Admitted to be the greatest actress of all time, Madame Bernhardt," etc., etc. Well! Sarah herself admitted it. Mr. Meltzer may admit it; the "Tribune" may admit it; and the "Times" may admit it; but I certainly will not.

She was, without question, one of the greatest personalities of her sex in the domain of the Fine Arts since the days of Sappho, but supreme artist, no! Mr. Meltzer says that her whole purpose in life was to portray beauty, beauty, beauty! It is, of course, dangerous to ascribe fundamental motives to anybody, but I think Bernhardt's ideal was to create sensation, sensation, sensation! She was an impressionist, an emotionalist, and she wished to arouse emotions in her hearers. She knew how susceptible men and women are to emotional power. She knew, even as a very young woman, that a great body—if not a majority—of people based their judgments

on their emotions, and therefore early in her career she deliberately set to work to make a sensation. She courted publicity; she had tigers or leopards, I forget which, for pets; she was a past mistress in the art of stimulating curiosity and talk. Though she was not beautiful, she was terribly engaging. She knew theatrical technique from top to bottom. When she made her entrance upon the stage the drums and cymbals rattled, the limelight glowed, and everybody knew that Sarah Bernhardt was coming on the stage.

How different this was from Duse! I remember the first time I saw Duse—it must have been thirty years ago. She played in a double bill, "Cavalleria Rusticana" and Goldoni's "La Locandiera." I knew only a few words of Italian. What impressed me, an impression that has lasted all these years, was that in the opening scene of "Cavalleria Rusticana," in which a group of peasant women appeared on the stage, Duse herself was on the stage a minute or two before anybody realized it. She was dressed exactly like the rest of the company; she was made up no differently from the rest of the company; and she mingled with the rest of the company. Her individuality came out most beautifully and distinctly during the play, but she stooped to no claptrap. If Bernhardt had been a peasant woman, I cannot help feeling that she would have worn a ragged silk dress instead of a ragged cotton dress.

It is useless, of course, to try to define artistic beauty. There is no immutable standard. If a man likes to have his emotions stirred, as he likes to have his head rubbed when he gets a shampoo, that would be his standard of dramatic art. The man to whom beauty means a sense of proportion and a fitness of things will have a totally different standard. I should say that Bernhardt is the Liszt of the theater, while Duse is the Paderewski; Bernhardt is the Paganini, Duse the Kreisler. Bernhardt was not a Cubist, but she stooped to some of the methods of the Cubists in advertising her art. The "Times" has admitted that Bernhardt is the greatest actress of all time. I want to avoid a similar mistaken use of superlatives, but I am inclined to believe that as the history of the theater goes on, Bernhardt will take somewhat the position that Dr. Johnson has in literature. He grows in remembrance steadily as a personality, while his literary art is as steadily fading from view.

Bernhardt will always be one of the great figures in the dramatic world, but much that is now acclaimed as pure gold in her genius will gradually prove to be meretricious gilt. I suppose I am in a hopeless minority, but Coquelin and