

tive assertion, and reiteration. Historians—‘that patient, modest, truthful, kindly and estimable race,’ as M. Maritain describes them—are to blame for neither sharing Mr. Belloc’s opinions nor accepting his conclusions. The whole business of the change of religion in England was ‘loot,’ according to Mr. Belloc, the ‘loot’ of the monastery lands and the chantry endowments. Historians do not find the explanation quite so simple. Gardiner with his published repudiation of papal authority, and the rest of the bishops who supported Henry VIII, are held, in spite of Mr. Belloc, to have had considerable influence on the change. The importance Mr. Belloc attaches to Elizabeth’s affair with her uncle, the Lord Admiral, Thomas Seymour, and her regard for the Duke of Anjou may seem somewhat exaggerated. It is certain that the popular risings in Edward VI’s reign were not in every case, as Mr. Belloc declares, concerned with changes in religion. Kett’s rebellion in Norfolk reveals no interest, for or against, in the new doctrines. But then Mr. Belloc writes of subdeacons in the Church of England; and ‘if you believe that, you’ll believe anything.’ (Mr. Belloc gives to Bernard Shaw and Andrew Lang the credit of this saying, though it is generally and rightly attributed in the first instance to the Duke of Wellington.) In matters of literary judgement Mr. Belloc insists that ‘the greatest master of English prose’ was Jonathan Swift. Thomas Huxley alone gets honourable mention as ‘one of the last exponents’ of English prose. As for Bunyan—‘he not only wrote prose, some of it very striking, though most of it dull enough as far as style goes, he also wrote verse.’ Wordsworth is ‘the high priest and chief exponent’ of what ‘may be called Protestant Pantheism.’ However, Shakespeare is allowed the benefit of the doubt concerning the authorship of his plays and sonnets. References are not given nor authorities quoted when evidence would be useful. Doubtful matters of fact are decided on Mr. Belloc’s word. The reader must take it or—leave it. In any case, Mr. Belloc is as forcible as ever in denunciation.

JOSEPH CLAYTON.

SOVIET LABOUR AND INDUSTRY. By L. E. Hubbard. (Macmillan; 15s.)

A critical account of pre-revolutionary, N.E.P. and Five Year Plan Soviet commerce, with relevant discussions of the Soviet rationing scheme, price-control, ‘equal wages for equal work,’ and similar Soviet slogans, set against the background of Soviet practice. On a purely economic level, Mr. Hubbard has no difficulty in showing that Soviet achievement does not terribly outdistance capitalist: but there he rather misses the point. For the appeal of the U.S.S.R. seems to lie in its refusal to accept economic defeatism: its urgent conviction that our problems can be solved: its presentation of the State, not as an all-devouring Leviathan, but as a family, the prior

family : and its subtle transference of loyalties that once went with the fact of Nation to the idea of State.

There is an acute examination of the whole notion of a Planned Economy : a judicial scrutiny of the possibilities and impossibilities of collective farming : and, refreshingly, some common-sense re the Jew in Russia to be commended to would-be authors of pamphlets with super-sensitive noses for the sinister.

It is curious how often ersatz nationalism has got across politically in Europe : proving that there is still a market for the genuine commodity. And our own personalist, pluralist, distributist or what-you-will state will only succeed if it recovers its reverence for the national context in which human values become incarnate, and which we cannot destroy without destroying them.

JOHN DURKAN.

VICTORY OR VESTED INTEREST? By G. D. H. Cole, Francis Williams, Harold Laski, George Orwell, and Mary Sutherland. (Routledge; 5s.)

Quintus Fabius restored the fortunes of Rome by avoiding action; but his modern descendants, the Fabian Society, from the moment they took the field, have never ceased to engage the enemy with a rapid fire—of pamphlets.

The breathless energy of their attack may even be noted in the style of one or two of these addresses on Victory or Vested Interests, of Mary Sutherland's in particular. Although her gun (like the guns of all Fabians) is ranged upon a single mark, her hand becomes unsteady with excitement, and some of her bullets spray over her own support lines. In 'Women and the War' she appears to want to draw every woman (married or single) into the web of State servitude by all-pervading trade-union organisation; but, as her words run away with her, she is found to be pronouncing a panegyric on home and family, regardless of the fact that any outside organising of the home would leave it a mere shell with nothing in it to admire.

In a somewhat similar way Mr. George Orwell opens with a vicious volley of fire directed against his own people, ending up with a sharp burst at the *New Statesman*. True, he explains this well-aimed shooting at his friends as something that 'could have been printed in one of those snooty little minor leading articles in *The Times*.' But his attack has been so effective that when he proceeds to rescue the pink intelligentsia he has just peppered, it is difficult to believe that they can have any valuable part to play in restoring the fortunes of England.

Mr. Cole and Mr. Laski are more professional in their manner. They do not appear to be in such a hurry, but even though they avoid open self-contradiction (perhaps because they avoid it), their theses are neither original nor attractive. Mr. Cole would escape the dilemma of the vested interests or Civil Service bureaucracy by