

The Enemies of Liberty, by E. S. P. Haynes.
London: Grant Richards, 1923. 6s.

[*Sunday Times*]

'LIBERTY,' said Mr. H. G. Wells through the mouth of one of his characters, 'is the very substance of the soul.' That saying, supplemented by the dictum of an older philosopher that 'the price of liberty is unsleeping vigilance,' would have made an excellent epigraph for Mr. Haynes's excellently written book.

The 'Enemies of Liberty' whom he catalogues and dissects, the Modern Puritan, the Collectivist, the Communist, the Prohibitionist, the Prude, and the rest of them, are indeed all actively at work among us, and it is well that we should be reminded of their existence, and that exposure should be made of their aims, their methods, and of such measure of success as has been granted to their evil industry. But it may be doubted whether, singly or collectively, they are the terrible dangers Mr. Haynes proclaims them to be. Their little temporary triumphs are the measure of the public indifference, and public indifference in England has a disconcerting fashion of changing to active resistance, sometimes when the metamorphosis is least expected. The dominant desire of the average Englishman is to be let alone.

Mr. Haynes, toward the end of his book, tells an altogether delightful story, out of which he might have sucked more comfort than he seems to have derived from it. An Englishman, entering the bathroom of a country hotel, found on the wall the notice, 'Do Not Smoke in the Bath.' 'Good God!' remarked the Englishman, and promptly lit his pipe. He was a very typical Englishman, and his stock is not extinct.