

THE
"Plebs" Magazine

Vol. I.

March, 1909.

No. 2.

EDITORIAL.

OXFORD has its traditions, or rather, its traditions have Oxford.

Plato and Aristotle are its classic representatives. But for these ancient authorities we should have had no Oxford, no Culture, no Democracy. When all "other helpers fail

**The Backward
Somersault.**

and comforts flee," when all sources have failed to give solution to the problems of human existence, Oxford comes to the rescue with the cry, Back to Plato! Back to Aristotle! As a matter of fact, Oxford always gets back to where it started from, without being persuaded or compelled. The cultured acrobats of the classic city have reduced to a fine art this process of the backward somersault, and in order, we suppose, that no departure be made from this first principle, the performers are labelled backwards.



BUT uneasy lies the head that carries so much culture. So long as the uncultured lift up their eyes to it, admiringly, or shut their eyes to it, indifferently, all is for the best in the best of possible worlds.

**The Cultured
and the
Uncultured.**

But it is different if, at least, a considerable number outside the cultured zone, open their eyes to the fact that this culture is the hall-mark of a system of caste inherited from the past. So long as the slaves imitate their masters, their masters are flattered. But the flattery ceases when the masters begin to be ignored rather than imitated.

THE growth of independent working-class thought, the increase of independent working-class action, has given the purveyors of culture bad dreams—red dreams with plots in them, plots of dagger and dynamite, with society standing on its cultured head cracking its heels in the air. The movement of the working class forward must be counteracted by a scheme of benevolent assimilation which

The Synoptic Mind.

goes back to Plato for its guiding principle. The leaders of working-class thought and action must become initiated in the mysteries of the backward somersault, an initiation which Oxford alone can perform, and must perform, in the interests of Democracy. The "beneficents" have already organized themselves for the "noble" work of gathering in from the four winds—those that are worthy, those that are moral (for nothing that defileth can enter within the gates), those whose work for three years is deemed a fitting passport into Oxford. "We come," they cry, "not to destroy but to fulfil, not to dethrone Demos, but to place in his hand the sceptre of philosophy. Demos must be the Philosopher-King." So said one of the "beneficents" in a recent debate at the Union (this is not the Union to be abolished as the result of the Poor Law Commission, but the great Oxford Union). "This Oxford must see to: to the *full members* of the community must be given that statesmanlike education which Oxford alone can give, and is so uniquely fitted to give." And this statesmanlike training is to be imparted to working-class leaders by fitting them with a mental apparatus, patented by Plato, known as "the synoptic mind." Almost every speaker in favour of this beneficent scheme emphasized the fact, that to-day there existed among the working class a great lack of discrimination. Three examples were given: *Keir Hardie's thoughtless language in India*, *Victor Grayson's boisterous speeches*, and *the flaming headlines of Labour Leaders*. And so we are to be taught *better manners*. We are to have a more *respectable* vocabulary. Our masters are sensitive, and our harsh words wound their highly-strung nervous structure. But there is balm at hand, the physicians are ready if the patient can only be secured. Keir Hardie may have spread sedition in the past, Victor Grayson may have indiscriminately inflamed the populace, the flaming sword of *Justice* may have been brandished too fiercely, but like the heroic knight-errant of chivalry, Oxford steps boldly out to save the workers from themselves. And it is to be done by bringing to Oxford, "the best working men," "those likely to lead their fellows," "the labour leaders of the future." They are to be fitted up with this "synoptic mind," they are to be given "that comprehensive view so essential for the statesman." What does it all mean? Nothing else than that *the brains of those who are likely to lead their fellows are to be surcharged with the ideas of a class above them, so that their interests may become identical with the interests of that class.*

THE Romans built wonderful and costly aqueducts, miles in length, across plains, over hills and through valleys. But the waters refused to flow. The builders had failed to observe that water rises only to the height of its source. *Oxford cannot rise above*

Oxford and its Source. *the height of its source.* It cannot break away from the class to which it belongs. It cannot dispense with the trappings of a slave philosophy

from which it draws its principles. And for the same reason, therefore, *the W.E.A. cannot rise above the height of its source.* It is hopelessly entangled in the class interests of those whose body and blood it is. It is founded on the fallacy that you can reconcile the interests of all classes in the State. Its boast is that it stands for a non-class view. A very convenient device for that class who number relatively so few and who own so much, but disastrous to the other class who are so many and who own so little.



To the class that is down there can be but one point of view, that of getting up, and as the getting up of that class appears to the other to mean a coming down to the level of those who get up, it is absurd to imagine that both can look out upon

The Class Composition. the world from this impartial non-class standpoint. He who thinks he can, may be counted out in the battle of working-class progress. We

know that the term "class consciousness" offends many people, and we will be the last to deny that it is often used in a meaningless and tiresome way by the pyrotechnist. None the less, not even the most sophistical opponent can deny the fact, that the existing constitution of society is founded upon the division of the people into classes. The question is not whether we like them, but do they exist.

It is not a question of individuals. We have no wish to doubt the sincerity of certain members of the possessing class in their desire to assist in the work of over-throwing our predatory civilization. But we must have *discipline* in the Movement. Someone has said: "Civilization is a history of class struggles." It is also a history of sidetracks. Great initiatives have always been robbed of definition when taken up by the class against which the movement was directed. And so if we are to avert the follies and failures of history we must insist on the absolute control of the working-class organization. The W. E. A. is not such an organization. It is a graft which only appears *when the movement of the workers begins to gain in power.* To quote again from one of the speakers at the Union: "Demos is now enthroned. It is now too late to attempt to dethrone him: we could not even if we would. He must now become the philosopher." Again: "Class bitterness would largely disappear by the mental contact of different classes."

WHAT is the cause of class bitterness? Is it not the effect of a class struggle between the many who produce and the few who possess? between those who make bread and do not have it, and those who have

Class Bitterness. bread and do not make it? Most assuredly it is. Class bitterness is but the natural outcome of the material enslavement of that class. It, therefore, cannot be quenched by Oxford's patronizing scheme. There will, however, be a certain effect upon those "labour leaders of the future" who are to be taken under her cultured wings. And therein lies the danger. In those statements we have quoted we can unmistakably see the cloven hoof.

Is it not significant that those who are engineering this beneficent scheme of education should be so painfully anxious as to "what the labour leaders of the future will be"? Have we not good reason to be suspicious of such an organization? We feel we are justified in uttering to our fellow-workers the warning note Beware! Beware of the "Greeks bringing gifts." Beware of the wooden images of the Philistines. Let not the day come when you will be obliged to confess that had they not plowed with your heifer they would not have guessed your riddle.

To the organized Labour Movement we appeal for support upon a question that lies at the very bottom of working-class organization. We cannot trust our economic safety to the good intentions of the possessing class. We do not rely upon the politics of our employers for measures of progressive legislation. We establish our own economic fortifications, we have our own political weapons, we control our own literary dispatches. Why then should we not as independently manage our own educational affairs? Even as we have a platform of our own and a press of our own, let us have educational institutions of our own.



TEN years ago Ruskin College was opened. Many were the prophets who foretold failure, who gravely shook their heads and solemnly pronounced it impossible. With many the wish was, no doubt,

The disappointed Seers. father to the thought. But like many other impossible things, it has disappointed the seers. It still lives. It still moves. To-day it is the

only educational institution in the country representative of the organized Labour Movement. We venture to think that the existence of Ruskin College has done more to bring forth Oxford's latest scheme than anything else outside. Those who crossed its path in 1899 with forebodings of gloom and confusion may just possibly re-cross it nine or ten years after: but with changed tactics. With countenances no longer malevolent but benevolent. The curse gives place to the blessing. The anxious

inquiry succeeds the prophetic utterance. It is not for nothing that Oxford is so anxious about "the labour leaders of the future." It is not without meaning that her hostages begin to permeate the field. There is method and purpose in her latest role as the Moses of Democracy. And Ruskin College stands to be seriously affected by this new move. In the early days it could meet fire with fire. But to-day the circumstances are changed. The enemy is no longer in the open. We have to deal with a foe acting under the mask of friendship, and with a good banking account available. We therefore require all the concentrated support of the Labour Movement. Ruskin College must go on, and to ensure its going on the right lines it must be free from any entangling alliances with graft associations. Education cannot be imposed from above, it cannot be handed down by a superior class to an inferior class.

The working class must achieve its own salvation. It must develop its own social intelligence, an intelligence which grows out of the economic world in which it lives and moves and has its being, and from which alone it can gather strength sufficient to relegate to the stowaway of the past the last expression of economic slavery.

The Function of a Labour College.

BEFORE attempting to put forth any personal ideas concerning the subject-matter of this article it may be wise to declare that they do not necessarily imply antagonism to any existing educational institution or movement. If there is already in existence machinery capable of rendering great service to the Labour Cause, it would, in my opinion, be utter folly for any individual to adopt a destructive policy simply because, for the moment, it fails to fulfil what some of us consider its true function. But why speak of a Labour College? is perhaps the query of an "outside" reader. Our answer is that the introduction of machinery into the industries of this country (1750-1820) made democracy possible. This formed the necessary condition for the development of distinct Working-class opinion. Such opinions, it will be sufficient to assert, do not harmonize with the doctrines taught in many of the "upper-class" centres of higher education in this country. Slowly but surely since the "Industrial Revolution" the "cash nexus bond" has differentiated Society into two groups. It is true that the governing [sic] class still keeps up the burlesque of Liberalism and Toryism, but the workers—the new disturbing element in Politics—are beginning to discern that both terms are synonymous with vested interests. This is not a declaration of class war. It is simply a statement of fact. Labour combinations imply an economic difference between Capital and Labour. If such a difference does not exist, why should the workers try to organize?

What other justification is there for a distinct political party? The most successful industrial administrator, to-day, is the man well versed in the art of bargaining. A demand for an increase in wages is not necessarily refused because of personal spleen on the part of the employer. Individual caprice is ruled out of court in commercial transactions. It is rather a question of the state of the market. Above all the determining factor—either in the concession or rejection of the workmen's demands—is the power of their economic organization to enforce their claims.

Again, we must remember that the State machinery itself, is—to quote Deville, "a consequent of the division of Society into classes," e.g. the legal bias of the lawyer in favour of capitalism found expression in the Taff Vale decision, which necessitated the organized workers forcing distasteful legislation upon the Government in order to safeguard their funds. Quite recently the wage-earners have received another set-back, this time in the political field, owing to the Judges interpreting law in a manner injurious to Working-class politics. Again, the workers will have to use their economic organizations in order to regain their old political position. If we turn to our military department of State we look in vain for any recorded attempt to assist the worker in an industrial dispute. The miners of Great Britain still remember Featherstone, and recollections of Belfast are still green!

The above statements are not mere assumptions but historical facts. In my judgment, they sufficiently demonstrate that if Labour is to assert its true position, it must adopt a policy distinct from other interests in society. I am fully aware that many brave spirits are working heroically to try and democratize the old Universities. That their motives are perfectly sincere I have no doubt. Although many adverse comments upon the latest attempt, (*i.e.* the Workers Educational Association) to bring a *humane* education within reach of the masses, have appeared in some of our Labour Journals, I cannot help thinking that any criticism of suggested educational reform carries with it an obligation to suggest an alternate scheme; a feature sadly lacking in the recent comments. My own fears as to the ultimate success of the Workers Educational Association lie in the consciousness that the progressives in University life are such a small minority. The stagnating influence of the old Grecian Philosophy, which has no message for the wage-slave, is still predominant in University teaching, and therefore it is just possible that the reformers will have their efforts nullified by the old-world school. However, in any case, the realization of an ideal system of higher education is a long way off, and the workers cannot afford to wait. The Labour Movement has a special mission to perform, namely, the emancipation of all wage-earners. This implies that the movement has a special interest, hence the necessity of an institution for the propagation of ideas calculated to further that special interest.

A Labour College, assuming this position, would simply copy the attitude of other educational institutions, which have long been the nurseries of privilege.

It is well to understand your opponent's position, but surely it is more important to understand your own. The Working-class student has no time to listen to elaborate apologies made on behalf of the oppressing class. Neither has he time to listen to effusions on the weaknesses of his own class. What he requires is a knowledge of the social forces operating in society, and how best they can be utilized for the benefit of the people. While it may be as well for him to know the other side of the case in the field of Political Economy, it is essential that he should know his own side. The theories of men, who dedicated their lives to the Workers' cause, should be interpreted to him in a sympathetic and efficient manner. He should be made conversant with the origin and growth of all working-class organizations in the manner which would enable him to clearly comprehend both their possibilities and shortcomings. The workings of his own organization should be his special interest in order to detect possible defects, the removal of which would lead to greater unity.

To sum up, the function of a Labour College should be the diffusion of ideas most likely to assist the Labour Movement generally. An objection might be raised that any institution attempting to run upon such lines would not command outside support. My reply is, So much the better for the institution, *i.e.* provided such support was withdrawn on account of its policy. It must be fairly obvious that under existing circumstances those who "pay the piper call the tune," and so long as the Labour Movement fails to realize the necessity of giving its whole-hearted support to institutions capable of transmitting its ideals, it is foolish to dream that the interests of Labour alone will influence their teaching.

E. GILL.

They should have knowledge who seek to govern others.
—*Napoleon I.*

The age of chivalry is gone; and one of calculators and economists has succeeded.—*Burke.*

To endeavour to work upon the vulgar with fine sense is like attempting to hew blocks with a razor.—*Pope.*

No one has a right to be contented; it is the one absolutely fatal state.—*A Lost Leader*, E. Phillips Oppenheim.

"There is no case on record of any one of these men ever disturbing a peer. As for thinking, we have prevented all that. They have so much to learn, and they *must* make money; so how should they think?—*Shear my Sheep*, D. Hird.

Unemployment.

WHENEVER unemployment is spoken of, what is meant is, that social problem which faces us in the shape of a large number of the proletariat seeking to sell their *commodity*—labour-power—but who are unable to find capitalists who will buy the commodity which they offer for sale.

Many political quacks are abroad explaining to their own satisfaction, if not to the present writer's, the causes, and what they consider to be the remedies of this particular evil. We have the Tariff Reformers, some bigoted Teetotallers, who assert that poverty, &c., is caused by the drink evil, and the preachers of thrift, frugality, and Temperance. We have also those who, whilst believing that the capitalist system is the best of all possible systems, and advocate its conservation, agree to its being patched up in some inconceivable way by those who are wishful of alleviating the distress caused by the evils which arise out of the system. They never seem prepared to do any of the dirty work of patching up this rotten system themselves, they leave that to such a body as the Labour Party. Some of us think it is not worth while to spend our energies in patching it up; we consider the best and most expeditious way of dealing with the evil effects of this system would be to end it by supplanting it with another which would be more scientific, being based upon fundamental economic and sociological truths.

What are the causes of Unemployment? The proximate causes are many, but the primary root-cause is to be found in the ownership of land and of the machinery of production by a small section of the community, and therefore the exclusion of the rest of the community from all participation in the ownership thereof. This latter portion of the community is allowed to exist only on certain conditions. The conditions are these: they must appear—and driven by the pangs of hunger they *do* appear—on the market to sell to the capitalists as a commodity the energy contained within their own bodies. The complexity of our social life is hidden from the mass of the proletariat, and consequently the capitalists are able to keep them divided each against the other—in competition with one another—thereby keeping the wages which the capitalists pay to them down at a very low standard.

About three hundred years ago, when the Capitalistic system was in its infancy, the owner of the machinery appropriated the product, but at that time the owner was working in most cases at his trade; he was a master craftsman. He paid wages to those whom he employed; but payment of wages was an exception rather than the rule. A young man used to go as an apprentice, becoming in time an artisan, and later—on account of the small amount of capital required to set up in business for himself—he in most cases became

a master-craftsman ; so as a general rule a man was only a wage-labourer for a portion of his working lifetime.

There are several facts to be noted in this connexion, viz. :—

1. That the product was appropriated by the owner of the implements of production, and that this is still done.
2. That wage-labour, which was the exception, has now become the general rule as a result of industrial and economic development
3. That production was mainly for use, whereas now it is mainly for profit.
4. Unemployment in the modern sense was unknown.

The position is, then, that the workers are devoid of the opportunities of becoming individual owners of implements of production (1) on account of the size of those implements, and (2) on account of the monopoly of them; they are compelled to be, therefore, life-long wage labourers; they appear on the *labour market* to sell their labour-power to the capitalists.

The capitalists buy the commodity labour-power, but do not give the workers an equivalent to that which they as workers produce. The capitalists buy other commodities which have been produced by labour besides this commodity—labour-power. For these other commodities, they have as a rule to give an equivalent; but, with respect to labour-power, if they gave to the worker the full value of his product they would have no surplus and capitalism would be at an end. Labour power is the only commodity sold on the market which produces an exchange value greater than its own exchange value. It receives its value, *i.e.* an equivalent to the Social Labour Power which is necessary to produce the commodities which are essential to the workers' subsistence and to enable them to reproduce their kind—so that the labour market may be always *well* supplied. The workers produce an equivalent to their cost of subsistence in a very few hours, consequently during the rest of the time they are working they are producing Surplus Value which passes in the form of Profits, Rent, and Interest, to the owners of the means of production. The products of Labour are divided roughly speaking into two portions—profits and wages, and the greater the portion of the production which is allotted as profits the less will be the portion allotted to wages, and vice versa.

It is to the interest of the capitalists to keep wages down. To do this necessitates their having at their command a large reserve army of unemployed workers, and, as Mr. Charles Booth stated in his memorable work *Life and Labour*: "Our modern system will not work without some unemployed margin—some reserve of labour. Thus it will be seen that the capitalist flourishes on the unemployed; for monopoly-wealth is rooted in labour's poverty, the workers being mere counters in Mammon's game of greed. Capital, therefore has

need of the unemployed to maintain its supremacy over Labour." It has been stated that the workers receive their cost of subsistence. This implies that the workers live up to their incomes. Their demand is a staple demand mainly for the necessaries of life. Their wages are spent almost at once upon consumable commodities. When they have bought all they can there is still a large surplus left on the market. The capitalist and landlord class do not consume the portion which is left to them as fast as the workers are compelled to consume the portion which is allocated to them, consequently there is still a surplus left after the wants have been satiated, and this surplus grows to huge proportions until the markets become glutted with commodities which no one seems willing to buy, or if any are willing, they have not the means of purchasing. This is the phenomenon which the capitalist economists call over-production. Masses of workers are unemployed; men, women and children are starving—bootless, homeless and hungry because the workers have produced too much wealth.

Over-production—in the sense of producing more than is sufficient to satisfy the present needs of a community—may occur under any system, but under a system of production for use such could not have the disastrous effects which occur under the capitalistic system of production for profits.

Under our present system every single capitalist tries to produce as much as possible, because, other things being equal, the more goods, the more profit; only his estimate of the extent of the demand and his own capacity to enlarge his capital limit the extent to which he will produce. Production is for sale, and what is most important, for quick sale. Delay or prevention of the sale of a commodity is disastrous to its owner; it may cause his ruin. Through commerce the general market becomes greatly extended and more difficult to control. With our immense productivity of labour and rapid means of transit, large quantities of merchandise can be brought together quickly. As soon as there is a great demand for a commodity in any part of the world-market it flows thither in large quantities, until its supply far exceeds the digestive powers of the market. Prices tumble, firms become bankrupt, an industrial crisis is on, immense masses of capital are lying idle, being wasted, while the numbers of the unemployed are enormously augmented. All this arises out of our planless, haphazard, happy-go-lucky system. Those who read between the lines will see that the present writer believes the only solution to be the substitution of an economic system based on the principle of production for use, in contradistinction to the present principle of production for sale—for profit. Such a system implies the Social Ownership and control of all the means of Production, Distribution and Exchange.

G. BROWN.

A Woman's Point of View.

I WISH I knew more. The speaker sighed a little as she uttered the simple words, and somehow the utterance of a soul struggling against unfair limitations seemed out of harmony with the rest of the picture.

For where would you find a more ideal place for a People's Platform than in the Broad Walk of Regent's Park. The leafy loveliness of the avenue is at any time an inspiration, and small wonder is it that some of our younger disciples of Socialism find their feet easily planted here in the thorny field of oratory.

Then, too, if the morning is a sunny one, it is a pleasure to go forth, and metaphorically speaking, kill two birds with one stone. Once arrived at the People's Platform you can study at your ease two kinds of Nature—human and otherwise.

It was at one of these gatherings, brimful of pulsating life and eager emotions, that on the edge of the crowd I found a fellow-worker. Her face was lit up with that divine discontent which makes one feel that there are lofty ambitions that one could fulfil if one only had the training required to carry out the oft time self-imposed task.

"But" I argued with my comrade, "you know a lot."

"Yes," she replied, "I know so much that I am simply longing sometimes to stand up and plead for more justice to women, only I feel that I am not educated enough."

On my way homeward I pondered over the little episode under the trees, and I said to myself "Will it ever be thus? Will no one ever feel sufficiently interested in the thinking, thoughtful working-woman so as to give her the chance of using the knowledge she accumulates with such infinite pain and toil in the industrial world of to-day."

The answer to the problem may be that there is Ruskin College. Yes, and thank the gods for it! Yet while such a desirable educational establishment awaits the woman worker, would it not be of more value to let the humble toiler see a trifle more plainly that she would be a welcome guest at the intellectual feast.

In a future paper I hope to show to what practical purpose the working woman would put her training, if only she could be lovingly induced to accept it.

Aye, there's the rub! When offered a garland of the flowers of learning will she accept it?

The obvious answer to that is "It depends entirely on the way that the fragrant bouquet is offered."

The Mutation Theory.

"Species have been modified chiefly by the *natural selection of numerous slight variations*, aided in an important manner by the inherited effects of *use and disuse*, and in an important manner by the *action of external conditions*."

DARWIN, *Origin of Species*.

(Continued.)

The specific stability of organic forms has always perplexed the student of natural science. The pedigrees of some of our common plants and animals are traceable back to pre-historic times. Seemingly throughout the entire period of their existence, their specific characters have remained perfectly adamant. Wheat has given rise to wheat, and so on. To no theory of evolution does this apparent adherence to type constitute so serious an obstacle as it does to the theory of mutation. But De Vries overcomes the difficulty by elaborating the ingenious hypothesis that *species are subjected to very long periods of stability, interrupted at relatively long intervals by short periods of mutability*.

It now remained to discover some species actually undergoing such a mutation period. In this respect De Vries was particularly fortunate. Wandering one day by a piece of waste ground near Amsterdam he observed that some evening primroses had escaped from an adjoining field and were growing wild. He made a careful examination of the plants and found that they were members of a species known in scientific terminology as *oenothera lamarckiana*. A year after this discovery De Vries again visited the spot, and upon examining the flowers was surprised to find two completely new species. Proof of this was afforded by growing both forms from self-fertilized seed, when the new characters fulfilled one of the tests of species by breeding true.

In order to obviate the many accidents to which wild flowers are exposed, and to ensure greater scientific accuracy, De Vries collected examples of the three species and cultivated them, under observation, in his garden. After the plants had been under cultivation for some time De Vries was able to record the appearance, not of three species merely, but of about a dozen. All the new forms possessed definite classificatory characters, and all, as will be evident, were descendants of the original evening primrose *oenothera lamarckiana*. Many of De Vries's results were afterwards verified by other experimentalists.

The experiments of De Vries, very briefly outlined above, constitute by far the most important part of the evidence as yet contributed in support of the theory of mutation. In fairness to this theory, however, attention should be directed to the work done by other investigators, especially the labours of the brilliant school of experimentalists under Bateson at Cambridge. Quite a literature on the subject has grown up, and the occurrence of a great number of

mutations, both in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, is chronicled therein.* With these evidences it is beyond the range of this essay to deal, but I mention them here lest it be thought that the experiments of De Vries constitute the sole basis for the mutation theory.

We will now consider the present status of the mutation theory, and a few of the principal objections raised against it. The views hereafter to be quoted will be those of distinguished naturalists only.

Darwin, in the work already referred to, notes the numerous objections to such a theory. He believed "mutations to occur far too rarely to afford the basis for comprehensive species formation." Moreover, "the new characters would be lost or swamped by crossing."

Sir W. T. Dyer, an eminent botanist and late Director of Kew Gardens, vigorously combats the mutation argument. He writes: "that mutations are of frequent occurrence under purely natural conditions is, I believe, unsupported by evidence, but I agree with Darwin that it may be doubted whether they are ever permanently propagated in a state of nature. The reason is that an organism is so nicely adjusted to its surroundings that it is in the highest degree improbable that a sudden and extreme structural change would fit in with them. Mutation, though it might now and again hit the mark, is likely in most cases to overshoot it and is therefore seldom called into play or utilized." The same authority lays great stress on the difference between artificial and natural conditions, pointing out that the conditions of cultivation have the effect at first of causing plants to vary to a remarkable degree. He cites numerous examples of such artificially induced mutations, observing in conclusion: "In all these cases I think we may safely infer from their persistent specific stability at the commencement of cultivation that the changes which subsequently occurred would not have occurred in nature."

That great Darwinian, Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace, regards the mutation hypothesis as presumptuous and lacking in evidence. He peremptorily dismisses it, likening it to Mr. Pickwick's "famous Theory of Tittlebats."

Another Darwinian stalwart, Prof. E. B. Poulton, in his recent book "Essays on Evolution," discusses the mutation view mainly in its application to his own special department of "Animal Colouration." The facts encountered there can, he thinks, only be explained in the light of the theory of the "natural selection of slight variations."

It is unnecessary to continue these adverse criticisms further. Sufficient has been said to indicate the two positions. The Darwinian position, it should be said, still retains the confidence and

* Darwin's *Variation of Plants and Animals under Domestication* Bateson's *Materials for the Study of Variation*, and De Vries's *The Mutation Theory*.

support of biologists generally, and there is no immediate likelihood of a change of attitude. The insufficient evidences of mutation in nature; and the known tendency of the mutations to be obliterated by crossing; these at present are most serious difficulties in the way of an acceptance of the new theory. Many years must elapse before these problems will be settled. Whether it will be able eventually to hold its own cannot yet be said. It may be that the principle of mutation, instead of supplanting, is really destined to complete the Darwinian theory; that the new factor, along with the principles of the illustrious Darwin, will be incorporated into another evolutionary theory. On no account must finality be assumed with regard to the operating causes of organic evolution. Our knowledge of nature is visibly becoming wider and deeper, and it is possible that future researches will reveal the existence of factors as yet undreamt of.

HERBERT ASHPLANT.

Reports.

THE "PLEBS" SOCIAL.

A very enjoyable evening was spent at the Co-operative Hall, Cowley Road, on Friday, February 5th, by members of the "Plebs" and their friends. Mr. Sims, of Ruskin College, in a short and breezy speech, explained that the object of the "Plebs" League was to bring about a definite and more satisfactory connexion between Ruskin College and the Labour Movement. He said in order to promote those interests, it was essential that the teaching the worker received should be in harmony with such interests, and that it should not require that mental condition known as the open mind, which often betokened an empty mind. It was necessary that the control of their institution should be ultimately in the hands of the workers. Their mandate was "the education of the workers in the interests of the workers." The first number of the "Plebs" magazine was on sale during the evening. The following programme of dance and song was gone through: Waltz, Lancers; song by Mr. B. Lee; Highland Schottische; recitation by Mr. M. Loynd; Quadrilles, Waltz; duet by Misses Smith and Witts; Circassian Circle; Pas de Quatre; song by Mr. Williamson; Waltz; recitation by Mr. Shawyer; Lancers, Waltz, Quadrilles; song by Miss Witts; Military Two-step; recitation by Mr. Stronach; Waltz, Barn Dance; song by Miss Smith; Lancers; song by Mr. Titterington. The recitations were particularly good, and the performance showed that Ruskin College possesses much musical talent. Dancing was kept up till after 10 p.m., and refreshments were served in the interval.

THE "PLEBS" LEAGUE.

The first meeting of this league was held on Sunday. Mr. Faulkner was appointed leader, and explained the aims and objects of the movement. The "Plebs," although not officially connected with Ruskin College, consisted of correspondents and ex-students and sympathizers, who were endeavouring to prevent the Oxford University from capturing the Workers' institution. A Ruskin College Essay was then read, entitled

"Edmund Spenser's Faerie Queen," and resulted in a debate between Messrs. Graves and Tebbs on the vice of "Envy," as allegorized in the "House of Pride." The essayist contended that ethics taught us the "ideal" was personal, and not social, so that it was the duty of every man to banish the wolf from his own breast ere he attempt to banish the wolf from the door. All lovers of freedom, Socialists or Individualists, Trade Unionists or Non-Unionists, and students of literature, are invited to become members of the "Plebs" League. On Sunday next Miss Helen Saxon will contribute an original poem entitled "The Hero Satan."

Information from Mr. J. G. Faulkner, 14, Manchester Road, Ince, Wigan.

THE "PLEBS" LEAGUE.

A meeting of late resident students at Ruskin College was held in the "Glasgow Clarion Scouts" Rooms, Elmbank Crescent, on February 20th, for the purpose of forming a branch of the above league. Amongst those present were our old friends McGillvoray, Denny, Sykes, Scott, Watson, Tait, Taylor and Stewart.

Comrade McGillvoray occupied the Chair and proceeded with the business. It was agreed to form a branch of the above league (the Scottish Section or Northern Lights), and to co-operate in the aims and objects set forth in the Magazine. Comrade F. Stewart was appointed Secretary. The question of local work and organization was then discussed, and how we should aim at the attainment of our object.

The meeting was exceedingly pleasant, and the discussion of the finest Ruskin type, being not wholly Scottish throughout, due to the presence of a solitary Southerner and a representative of the kingdom of Fife.

Owing to many of the members having to travel by train, the meeting terminated all too soon with old friends. We hope our next meeting will commence sooner, and many of the points raised will receive full consideration and prove beneficial in the formation of a real live branch.

It was agreed to invite the co-operation of corresponding students and sympathizers to join us in our work, and we invite them to attend our next meeting.

A further meeting will be held on Saturday, April 3rd, 7.30 p.m., at the same place, and all who are interested in the Magazine and its work are invited to attend.

"Keep your eye on Scotland."

By the Way.

WE have every reason to be proud of the reception given to the first number of the Magazine. The majority of our correspondents are evidently quite satisfied with the contents and the general get-up of it. To those impatient ones who are already asking for more, *i.e.* a larger Magazine—we can only say "Get more Subscribers." So soon as our circulation reaches 2,000 we shall be in a position to add more pages and reduce the price. A 1d. Magazine is our aim. And let us here say that our only purpose in running the Magazine is to provide a medium for the propagation of our objects, *i.e.* control of Ruskin College by the Labour Movement and the spread of scientific working-class education, the application of which is necessary to guide the labourers' activities. The *only* consideration being that the Magazine must be self-supporting.

Of course we have also received some letters of friendly criticism, in a more or less personal form, but as some of them deal with matters of personal interest to all "Plebs." we shall publish the most important of them next month with editorial comments. They were received too late to be dealt with this month.

So far the Working-class press has maintained a discreet silence with regard to ourselves. Why? Ought we to have had a few Bishops and Intellectuals tacked on to our League so as to give us that standing which is necessary to merit their kind consideration? Are we *too* democratic?

Our Welsh friends continue to make great progress. Not only have branches of the League been started, but educational classes are already under way. This is enthusiasm translated in the best of all possible ways.

We desire to call our readers' attention to the alteration in the editorial address (inside front cover of Magazine), to which all future communications should be addressed. On NO account are communications to be addressed to Ruskin College, which is in NO way *officially* connected with the League or the Magazine.

One of our friends who signed the circular of membership sent out, indignantly returned the first number of the Magazine saying that he did not know ours was to be a political organization. We are rather in the dark as to our friend's meaning. In what way does he interpret 'politics'? From the tone of his letter it would seem that he infers we are out to forward the political aspirations of the Labour Party (L.R.C.) So far as the Magazine is concerned we have *not* committed ourselves to the support of ANY political party. Our aims are educational, and in particular are directed to the control of Ruskin College by the organized workers. If we were asked to name a particular organization it would be the Trade Union Congress, as being the largest and most representative of all the federated unions, and is perhaps in the best position to give financial expression to its wishes. Since only *organized workers* can control, we wish the most representative body to do so. We were also careful to point out in the February number that it was not our aim to exclude any worker from participation in the advantages which may be offered by residence at Ruskin College. But after all it is our duty to bring the advantages of organization home to every worker, and Ruskin College or any other working-class educational institution, would be failing in its duty to the movement if it did not point this out. So far therefore as our politics are concerned they are contained in the expression used in last month's editorial "the education of the workers in the interests of the workers and controlled by the organized workers. If it were not that, then were it worthless." If education from the working-class view-point is politics, then we *are* political, but this is surely using "politics" in a very broad sense.

To J.S.W.—Your letter too late for this issue. Will appear in next.

Erratum in February Number.—Aberdare Secretary's Address, 365 Cardiff Road.

N.B.—Owing to lack of space we are compelled to hold over the Reviews until our next issue.

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THE GOLD SICKLE,

OR

Hena, the Virgin of the Isle of Sen.

A TALE OF DRUID GAUL

By EUGENE SUE,

Translated from the Original French by DANIEL DE LEON.

(*Continued*).

ALL these threatening signs notwithstanding, the unknown rider seemed nowise thankful for the hospitality that Joel and his son had pressed upon him. Extended on the bottom of the chariot he was pale with rage. He ground his teeth and puffed at his mouth. But keeping his anger to himself he said not a word. Joel (it must be admitted) passionately loved a story, but he also passionately loved to talk. He turned to the stranger :

"My guest, for such you are now, I give thanks to Teutates, the god of travellers, for having sent me a guest. You should know who I am. Yes, I must tell you who I am, seeing you are to sit down at my hearth"; and unaffected by the stranger's gesture of anger, which seemed to say he cared not to know who Joel was, the latter proceeded :

"My name is Joel . . . I am the son of Marik, who was the son of Kirio . . . Kirio was the son of Tiras . . . Tiras was the son of Gomer . . . Gomer was the son of Vorr . . . Vorr was the son of Glenan . . . Glenan, son of Erer, was the son of Roderik, chosen brenn of the confederated Gallic army, who two hundred and seventy-six years ago levied tribute upon Rome in order to punish the Romans for their treachery. I have been chosen brenn of my tribe, which is the tribe of Karnak. From father to son we have been peasants; we cultivate our fields as best we can, following the example left by Coll to our ancestors. . . . We sow more wheat and barley than rye and oats."

The stranger continued nursing his rage rather than paying any attention to these details. Joel continued imperturbably :

"Thirty-two years ago, I married Margarid, the daughter of Dorlern. I have from her three sons and a daughter. The elder boy is there behind us, leading your good black horse, friend guest

. . . his name is Guilhern. He and several other relatives help me in the cultivation of our field. I raise a good many black sheep that pasture on our meadows, as well as half-wild hogs, as vicious as wolves and who never sleep under a roof . . . We have some fine meadows in this valley of Alrè . . . I also raise horses, colts of my spirited stallion Tom-Bras.* My son amuses himself raising war and hunting dogs. The hunting dogs are of the breed of a greyhound named Tyntammar; the ones destined for war are the whelps of a large mastiff named Deber-Trud.† Our horses and our dogs are so renowned that people come more than twenty leagues from here to buy them. So you see, my guest, that you might have fallen into a worse house."

The stranger emitted a sigh of suppressed rage, bit what he could reach of his long blonde moustache and raised his eyes to heaven.

Joel proceeded while pricking his oxen :

"Mikael, my second son, is an armourer at Alrè, four leagues from here . . . He does not fashion war implements only, but also plough-coulters and long Gallic scythes and axes that are highly prized, because he draws his iron from the mountains of Arres . . . But there is more, friend traveller . . . yes, there is more . . . Mikael does other things besides. Before establishing himself at Alrè, he was at Bourges and worked with one of our parents who is a descendant of the first artisan who ever conceived the idea of alloying iron and copper with block-tin, a composition in which the artisans of Bourges excel . . . Thus my son Mikael came away a worthy pupil of his masters. Oh, if you only saw the things he turns out! You would think the horse's bits, the chariot ornaments, the superb casques of war that Mikael manufactures to be of silver! He has just finished a casque the point of which represents an elk's head with its horns . . . There is nothing more magnificent!"

"Oh!" murmured the stranger between his teeth, "how true is the saying: 'The Sword of a Gaul kills but once, his tongue massacres you without end!'"

"Friend guest, so far I can bestow no praise upon your tongue, which is as silent as a fish's. But I shall await your leisure, when it will be your turn to tell me who you are, whence you come, where you are going to, what you have seen in your travels, what wonderful people you have met, and the latest news from the sections of Gaul that you have traversed. While waiting for your narratives, I shall finish informing you about myself and family."

At this threat the stranger contorted his members in an effort to snap his bonds; he failed; the rope was staunch, and Joel as well as his son made perfect knots.

"I have not yet spoken to you of my third son Albinik the sailor," continued Joel. "He traffics with the island of Great Brittany, as

* Ardent.

† Man-eater,

well as all the ports of Gaul, and he goes as far as Spain carrying Gascony wines and salted provisions from Aquitaine . . . Unfortunately he has been at sea a long time with his lovely wife Meroë; so you will not see them this evening at my house. I told you that besides three sons I had a daughter . . . as to her! Oh, as to her! . . . See here," added Joel with an air that was at once boastful and tender, "she is the pearl of the family . . . It is not I only who say so, my wife also, my sons, my whole tribe says the same thing. There is but one voice to sing the praises of Hena, the daughter of Joel . . . of Hena, one of the virgins of the Isle of Sen."

"What!" cried the traveller, sitting up with a start, the only motion allowed to him by his bonds, that held his feet tied and his arms pinioned behind him. "What? Your daughter? Is she one of the Virgins of the Isle of Sen?"

"That seems to astonish and somewhat mollify you, friend guest!"

"Your daughter?" the stranger proceeded, as if unable to believe what he heard. "Your daughter? . . . Is she one of the nine druid priestesses of the Isle of Sen?"

"As true as that to-morrow it will be eighteen years since she was born! We have been preparing to celebrate her birthday, and you may attend the feast. The guest seated at our hearth is of our family . . . You will see my daughter. She is the most beautiful, the sweetest, the wisest of her companions, without thereby detracting from any of them."

"Very well, then," brusquely replied the unknown, "I shall pardon you the violence you committed upon me."

"Hospitable violence, friend."

"Hospitable, or not, you prevented me by force from proceeding to the wharf of Erer, where a boat awaited me until sunset, to take me to the Isle of Sen."

At these words Joel broke out laughing.

"What are you laughing about?" asked the stranger.

"If you were to tell me that a boat with the head of a dog, the wings of a bird and the tail of a fish was waiting for you to take you to the sun, I would laugh as loud, and for the same reason. You are my guest; I shall not insult you by telling you that you lie. But I will tell you, friend, you are joking when you talk of a boat that is to take you to the Isle of Sen. No man, excepting the very oldest druids, have ever or ever will set foot on the Isle of Sen."

"And when you go there to see your daughter?"

"I do not step on the isle. I stop at the little island of Kellor. There I wait for my daughter, and she goes there to meet me."

"Friend Joel," said the traveller, "you have so willed it that I be your guest; I am that, and, as such, I ask a service of you. Take me to-morrow in your boat to the little island of Kellor."

"Do you know that the ewaghs watch day and night?"

"I know it. It was one of them who was to come for me this evening at the wharf of Erer to conduct me to Talyessin the oldest of the druids, who, at this hour, is at the Isle of Sen with his wife Auria."

"That is true!" exclaimed Joel much surprised. "The last time my daughter came home she said that Talyessin was on the isle since the new year, and that the wife of Talyessin tendered her a mother's care."

"You see, you may believe me, friend Joel. Take me to-morrow to the island of Kellor; I shall see one of the ewaghs."

"I consent. I shall take you to the island of Kellor."

"And now you may loosen my bonds. I swear by Hesus that I shall not seek to elude your hospitality."

"Very well," responded Joel, loosening the stranger's bonds; "I trust my guest's promise."

While this conversation proceeded it had grown pitch dark. But the darkness notwithstanding and the difficulties of the road, the chariot, conducted by the sure hand of Joel, rolled up before his house. His son, Guilhern, who, mounted on the stranger's horse, had followed the van, took an ox-horn that was opened at both ends, and using it for a trumpet blew three times. The signal was speedily answered by a great barking of dogs.

"Here we are at home!" said Joel to the stranger. "Be not alarmed at the barking of the dogs. Listen! That loud voice that dominates all the others is Deber-Trud's, from whom descends the valiant breed of war dogs that you will see to-morrow. My son Guilhern will take your horse to the stable. The animal will find a good shelter and plenty of provender."

At the sound of Guilhern's trump, one of the family came out of the house holding a resin torch. Guided by the light, Joel led his oxen and the chariot entered the yard.

To be continued.