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EDITORIAL

IT has been asserted—with perhaps a good deal more of truth than of poetry in the assertion—that the doctors give their prescriptions in Latin so as to afford their ignorant patients the benefit of a little imagination. *Bolus Panificum* has a much more impressive and important sound than "bread pill." On one occasion in an American legislature, one of the members moved that all the Latin phrases in the Statutes should be translated into English, so that the people might fully understand them. The motion was opposed by a Mr. Updike, who claimed that there was no advantage in having the people understand the laws. They were only afraid, he held, of what they did not understand. To show that his claim rested upon something more than theory he quoted the case of an individual who was a perfect nuisance in the neighbourhood, and nobody knew how to rid the neighbourhood of him. One day he was hoeing corn when he saw the Sheriff coming with a paper and asked him what it was. "Now," said Mr. Updike, "if this man had been told it was a writ what would he have cared? But the Sheriff told him it was a *capias satisfaciendum*, whereupon the man dropped his hoe and ran, and has not been heard of since."



AN indispensable condition for gulling the multitude of its reason and sometimes of its coppers is to proceed on the lines of the mysterious. A due blending of ambiguity and incomprehensibility in speech or in writing has generally been counted as a contribution to culture. It was perhaps proceeding upon this principle that Mr. Charles Sydney Buxton, Vice-Principal of Ruskin College, wrote the article on "Ruskin College: An Educational Experiment" which appeared in the August, 1908, number of the *Cornhill Magazine*, and which has since been published in pamphlet form for the benefit of those who are to be experimented upon. Whatever we may think about Mr. Updike's argument against the translation of Latin into English, there is a very good reason why at least one of Mr. Buxton's quotations should remain in its

Latin purity. "*In facie Romuli*" has a much more impressive and mystery conveying sound to those who do not understand what it means than the English translation *on the dregs of the people*. Not to do the writer an injustice we will quote the sentence in full.

"The necessary common bond is education in citizenship, and it is this which, Ruskin College tries to give—conscious that it is only a new patch upon an old garment, an idealist experiment *in facie Romuli*."



THE unfortunate choice of such a phrase is even more evident when one knows the historical incident to which it refers. Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome, having found that his people were too few in number to achieve his purpose, set apart on the Capitoline Hill a sanctuary or asylum for escaped murderers, thieves, and other ruffians. Having gathered these together, he invited his neighbouring tribes, among whom were the Sabines, to visit Rome under the pretext of taking part in a festival to one of the gods. Suspecting no treachery they came, bringing their wives and children with them, but in the midst of the show these men whom Romulus had gathered into a community, rushed out and carried off all the marriageable maidens. This is known as the Rape of the Sabines which was the outcome of the experiment of Romulus on the dregs of the people.



AN "idealist" experimenter like Mr. Buxton ought surely to have employed some more idealistic analogy than this. But when we remember that he suffers from a University Education,—a disease that leaves the minds of its victims like a gramophone record—capable only of giving off what has actually been impressed upon it,—we can understand why he should have used the unfortunate phrase. Besides, so accustomed have those cultured ones grown to think that they possess a monopoly of learning, that it is just possible Mr. Buxton, when he made this allusion, never thought that it might return to him in plain unvarnished English and so spoil the effect. *The dregs of the people* has obviously reference to the working class. But the working class are *the people*, and the *only* people who are essential in human society. The dregs are those who live upon the people: it is one of the contradictions of our civilization that they are better off than the people, *and that they are better off because the people are worse off*. The dregs are not the disinherited but the disinheritors. *Civilization is but the rape of those who work by those who shirk*. And now in a day when economic phenomena asserts itself against the class which it once lunched into power, and the dispossessed gather strength for the

dissolution of a dreggish domination, when "the death knell of the expropriators is sounding" there is suddenly manifested a deep anxiety about "the future democracy." Time was, when the labourer was regarded with contempt: but such an attitude is no longer practicable. The age of experiment has gone and in its place there comes *the age of experiment*—"idealistic experiment." Our masters have grown fearfully and wonderfully idealistic of late. Their hearts are filled to overflowing with the "humanist" of motives and the purest of intentions, and if their æsthetic tastes and lofty culture prevent them from becoming "partial" and "partisan" in *revolutionary practice*, they are at least prepared to "impartially" teach and train us *in reactionary theory*.



HAVING satisfied the cultured readers of *The Cornhill* that the "experiment *in facie Romuli*" at Ruskin College is a sound one, and that it "may do something to dissipate the suspicions which threaten the solidarity of society in England

"Barriers Broken Down." *to-day*," the formula of satisfaction is made to do duty, in the shape of a penny pamphlet, as an invitation to what Mr. Buxton calls "the tidal multitude and blind." They are invited to open their eyes, their ears, and their mind to the advantages of a "humane" education that shall "throw down the barriers of class ignorance and class prejudice." It is rather interesting to observe that the so-called "tidal multitude" are convicted of blindness just in proportion to the extent that their eyes are opening to their real position in society. And our educational pepper-throwers are unable to conceal their recognition of this fact behind their *idealistic* drapery. It peeps out through the folds every time they are obliged to point out to the more indifferent section of the governing class, "the changes which are taking place in the constitution of English society, the most conspicuous symptoms of which are Labour Representation, &c.," and as a result of these changes "it has become incumbent upon Universities to watch carefully every sign that a new class is ready to receive their guidance, in order that the seed of University culture may be deposited wherever it has suitable material on which to work." These two last quotations are from the Oxford and Working-Class Joint Committee's report, *upon which committee sit five members of the Ruskin College Executive Council*, and when we are told by Mr. Buxton in his pamphlet "that the University lends some of its best thought to devising the scheme of studies at Ruskin College," recent events in the history of that institution become perfectly clear and intelligible. In these events the University's "best thought" has been diligently at work. It "devised" the "scheme" in September, 1907, of substituting Literature, Rhetoric, and Temperance, for Sociology and Logic, the

subjects of Mr. Hird; it "devised" the "scheme" of "*offering University scholarships for second year students at Ruskin College*"; it "devised" the "scheme" for the removal of the late Principal of Ruskin College, and it is still devising schemes for the continued rape of the working class.

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THIS kind of contact, the contact of class with class, which we have Mr. Buxton's word for, "Ruskin College attempts to establish," and is to be avoided as one would avoid the plague. Their touch is contaminating, their movement is malignant, and their influence is directed toward the consummation of their one idea, "we are at the top, and we mean to stay there for good." And all their high-sounding phrases and their philanthropic pretexts need deceive no one who looks beneath the surface. Romulus, when he invited the Sabines to Rome, pretended to them that he merely wished to foster their fellowship by their joining in some religious festivities. The Sabines unthinkingly walked into the trap. Our modern experimenters "*in face Romuli*" are no less pretentious than their Roman exemplar—their material interests lie hidden under their idealistic pretexts. Beneath the velvet glove there is the iron hand that would strike down the unguarded and the unwary. But we have seen that hand; we know that it is there, and we know why it is there, and we are therefore inexcusable if we allow ourselves to come within its reach.

**A Fellowship
which is Death.**

used their sham idealism to keep the people in ignorance, so all this stilted phraseology of our graduated flunkys is but an effort to preserve the rule of a clique under the pretence of intellectual superiority! But "*surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of the bird!*" The logic of events has demonstrated the necessity of independent action in the economic and in the political sphere, and the same logic points its finger no less unmistakably to the same need in the world of education. "*Mind your own business*" is a truism that must be applied on all sides of the square. There can be no compromise in the working-class campaign. *Co-partnership in education is based on the same false economics as co-partnership in labour, and they are both false beacons kindled by the same hand.* Let the experimenters experiment upon themselves. Let them patch their own garments and hide their intellectual nakedness. As for us, we will cut our own cloth, by our own yard-stick, for our own convenience, and leave patchwork to our academic dealers in shoddy, and their cultured customers.

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SURELY the meaning of these signs are plain! Surely the lesson has been learned from these recent events in the educational field, that just as the pagan priests with their rudimentary knowledge of nature

**"Mind Your
Own Business."**

of our graduated flunkys is but an effort to preserve the rule of a clique under the pretence of intellectual superiority! But "*surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of the bird!*" The logic of events has demonstrated the necessity of independent action in the economic and in the political sphere, and the same logic points its finger no less unmistakably to the same need in the world of education. "*Mind your own business*" is a truism that must be applied on all sides of the square. There can be no compromise in the working-class campaign. *Co-partnership in education is based on the same false economics as co-partnership in labour, and they are both false beacons kindled by the same hand.* Let the experimenters experiment upon themselves. Let them patch their own garments and hide their intellectual nakedness. As for us, we will cut our own cloth, by our own yard-stick, for our own convenience, and leave patchwork to our academic dealers in shoddy, and their cultured customers.

Easy Outlines of Economic Science

No. 4—Marginal Bill's Objections

MMARGINAL BILL (entering study of Marxian Scientist. Sits on a comfortable chair and takes a bundle of papers from his pocket).—I have been thinking over our last discussion and am now prepared with a list of what I consider to be fatal objections to the Marxian theory of value.

M. S.—Very well. Fire away!

M. B.—I will commence where we left off and work back. Now your point regarding the two-fold character of labour I must still regard as metaphysical, and in fact as having no existence outside your imagination.

M. S.—Ah, well! then my explanations were quite lost on you. Well, knowing your partiality for diagrams and arithmetic I will attempt to demonstrate this point to you in that way. Now can you explain why the "labour saving" machinery that has been introduced in production for over 100 years has had as one result the enormous increase in use values, (wealth), while on the contrary the exchange values of these same commodities have remained practically the same? I will illustrate: In 1709 a doll takes 12 hours to produce, and its value, expressed (for the sake of simplicity) in terms of price is 1s. In 1909 by means of "labour saving" machinery 12 dolls are produced in 12 hours. The laws of competition will force the price of those dolls down so that the whole 12 only fetches 1s. or the same exchange value as the 1 doll produced in 1709. We have therefore had an immense increase in use values (dolls), while the exchange values of this increase remains the same. Now why?

M. B.—Why? because their utility has fallen.

M. S.—Why has their utility fallen?

M. B. (reluctantly).—Because there is less labour needed to produce each one.

M. S.—Now then, what of your charges of metaphysics and imagination? You admit that the same labour has a two-fold character (1) the attribute of increasing use values; and (2) the attribute of lessening exchange value. Hence 12 hours of social labour in 1709, will produce the same value as 12 hours of social labour in 1909, while on the other hand the amount of wealth (use-values) will have immensely increased. This is therefore a practical demonstration of the soundness of the Marxian theory. Next question, please!

M. B.—You got over that nicely, but I think I have some more formidable objections for you. And your last answer gives me my cue. There you disregard the part played by machinery, and in your whole theory you disregard the part played by nature in the production of wealth. Now surely not to take into account such obvious forces as machinery and nature constitute a very grave objection indeed.

M. S.—I quite agree that the economist who failed to take into account the part played by nature and machinery in the production of wealth would indeed have made an ass of himself.

M. B.—I am very pleased. To admit so much as frankly as you have done even when you were getting the best of the argument is indeed very creditable to you.

M. S. (smiling)—Not quite so fast. That machinery and nature does play an important part in the production of wealth no one is more ready to admit than Marx. But then Marx never said that labour was the cause of *wealth*. In fact he expressly denies any such thing, and often quotes Petty that "the earth is the mother and labour is the father of wealth." But quite differently does he treat *value*. Neither nature nor machinery can in any way create value. They assist enormously in the creation of *use values*, but as we saw in our illustration they do not create *exchange value*, which is a social relation of production. Assume that a ton of coal finds its value measured by a silver watch; that the discovery of a rich vein of coal (useful in the production of both commodities) and the application of machinery causes 10 tons of coal to be produced in the time that one used to be, and 10 watches in the time one watch used to be produced. We shall have ten times more *wealth* due to nature and machinery, but we shall still have 10 tons of coal = 10 watches, or 1 ton of coal = 1 watch, and *value* will not have increased one iota.

M. B.—H'm! Yes! I never thought of that. But there is still another way to put my difficulty which your answer doesn't touch. Nature produces some commodities which are sold on the market in which there is no labour embodied whatever. I refer to commodities like virgin soil. That I think completely quashes the Marxian theory. You'll find that a tough nut to crack.

M. S. (serenely).—You are wrong. Apparently the strongest, that objection is really the weakest you have advanced. Boudin, a brilliant Marxian, has answered this point so well that I will simply quote him. First let me point out that virgin soil is not a commodity; is not produced by labour, and consequently does not possess value. Large tracts can be obtained on many parts of this planet without paying a farthing for it. Boudin says—"The query . . . 'Why is virgin soil bought and sold?' is to be answered: The fact is that *virgin soil* is not bought and sold. It is only after the soil has been husbanded and raped, and has given birth to the bastard *rent* that it becomes the subject of purchase and sale, and not before." I would also refer you to *Capital*, (see pp. 7-8) where Marx deals in detail with this point. Next please?

M. B.—I now come to the objection that makes all Marxians shudder, namely that pictures by the great masters are sold at prices hopelessly disproportioned to the amount of labour they contain. How can you surmount that difficulty?

M. S.—If Marxians shudder at that objection then they shudder at the appalling ignorance of their critics. It is only monstrous ignorance and absolute lack of appreciation of art that can attempt to degrade the picture of a master into a commodity. In addition, the idea betrays a misconception of elementary economics. A commodity is an article of utility produced for the *purpose* of exchange. I do not think you can fit the products of genius into that frame. The work of art not being a commodity your objection falls to the ground. But even so I suspect that you cannot prove your statement that pictures of the old masters are sold at prices out of proportion to the labour necessary to produce them. We have proved that the labour which creates value is social labour. Well, then, how much labour is necessary before we can have the work of a genius? How many schools of thought must come and go? How many new ideas have to be slowly accumulated? How many failures? What prodigious labour in many branches of knowledge must take place—before we can have genius? Tell us all this and then we can discuss your statement. When, however, capitalist production seizes on the works of genius, viz., when copies are reproduced by machinery, then they become commodities, and, of course, obey the law of value. You perhaps begin to see the loss of the utility school in not submitting commodities to an analysis?

M. B.—H'm. I thought I had you that time, but I will continue my objections. My last objection is that I find on considering our last talk that you tricked me by using the word utility in two senses. You referred to utility in the case of the plates of beef as utility to the consumer, but when you were summarizing the Marxian analysis you spoke of utility in a social sense.

M. S.—I did not trick you, I simply attacked you with your own weapons. I am glad, however, that you refer to it, as this point illustrates the difference between the Marxian and Utility schools of thought. You people think you can arrive at social laws by studying individual motives, hence utility to you is the utility to a consumer. What appears to you to be good economics Marxians therefore label as bad psychology. Economics is not a study of motives, it is a study of social forces to which the individual is subordinate. To us the utility point of view is as absurd in Economic science as it would be in physics. The reason why men can walk on solid earth yet cannot walk on water is explainable by the law of gravitation. What would you think of a man who tried to explain this by individual motivation? You would think he wanted his head bathed and well bandaged. Well, that's what we think of you. Before you go, a word of advice. If ever you want to criticize Marx again I would recommend you to first read and study him. Good night!

Next Month :—*Value, Money, Price.*

NOAH ABLETT.

THE AUGUST MEET

(BANK HOLIDAY)

The following is the completed

AGENDA:

1. Secretary's Report.
2. The Principle of Independence in Working-class Education.
3. The Recent Dispute and Present Situation at Ruskin College.
4. The New Central Labour College.
5. The "Plebs" League and Magazine.
6. Appointment of Editor, Organizer, and Executive Committee.

THE CHAIR WILL BE TAKEN PUNCTUALLY AT 11 A.M.

AN EVENING MEETING

will be held at 7.30, same date,

Addresses by

Prof. LESTER F. WARD,
Brown University, U.S.A.

Mr. DENNIS HIRD, M.A., J.P.

Supported by Representatives of various
Trade Unions, Trade Councils,
&c., &c.

N.B.—Will all Delegates, also Members of the "Plebs" League who intend being present, kindly fill up the Form sent, and return to the League Office not later than July 28th ?

[The following article was submitted as an Essay to the Economic Lecturer at Ruskin College (Mr. H. Furniss), in November of last year, and received the second lowest mark, viz. *Fair*. Three other Essays which were sent in on the same subject, *agreeing* with the propositions set forth, obtained the highest marks. A protest against such obviously unfair marking was lodged by the Students at the time, and two prominent University men, Messrs. Ball and Carlyle, were asked to give their opinion on the matter. *They absolutely refused to look into it, expressing perfect confidence in the fairness of the Lecturer*. We leave our readers to judge, feeling certain that they must arrive at one of two conclusions,—either that the Examiner is biassed, or that he is incompetent. In our opinion he is both.—*Ed.*]

A "Fair" Essay

- I. Interest is paid because Capital is productive.
- II. Interest is the reward of waiting.

How far do these two statements afford an explanation and justification of interest?

THE answer to this question requires very serious consideration, because upon it depends largely—one may venture to say, mainly—the future course of social development. There is looming on the social horizon a reaction against all forms of private capitalism which is rapidly assuming the dimensions of a social revolution. And this reaction is no mere blind, automatic reflex action. It is definite in its object, and deliberate in its methods. For years its heralds have been at work transforming public opinion and the character of politics, until Socialistic legislation of a palliative kind has now become the order of the day.

It is sometimes said, however, that this reaction is, after all, a merely moral one, and does not prove, or disprove, anything in economics: that, even if the abolition of the capitalist system, and the substitution of Socialism be proven to be necessary morally, such proof is no criterion of the economic justice, or injustice of either of those systems. But it is not at all certain that there is not a very close connexion between moral expediency and economic justice so-called. Be that as it may, it is very certain that there is a strong, intelligent, and growing sense of economic injustice at the back of the socialist movement which must be reckoned with.

The Socialist mottoes—"Labour is the source of all value," "Labour is entitled to all it produces." &c., &c., are claimed to be not merely the slogans of the movement, but the eternal principles of its economics. And really, there is at least, a greater semblance of truth in them, than in most of what is taught by the orthodox economists.

Let us consider the statements laid down at the head of this paper:—

I. "Interest is paid, &c." Granting that the latter part of this statement is true (which is very doubtful), the proposition as a whole,

contains, at least, two logical fallacies. Given in full we assume that it should read :

"Interest is paid to the capitalist because capital is productive."

If our reading be correct, there is clearly here a *fallacy of "four terms"* viz,—“That which is productive,” “interest,” “capital,” “the capitalist.”

On the other hand, if our reading is not correct, and strict adherence is made to the original form of the statement, that form seems absolutely meaningless as an explanation or justification of anything.

It contains also the *faliacy of "false cause."* “Interest is paid because capital is productive.” This is not true. Interest is *not* paid because capital is productive. It does not require any great stretch of the imagination to conceive a society in which capital would be very much more productive than it is to-day, but in which there would be no payment of interest whatever.

The truth is, interest is paid, not because capital is productive, but because it is *monopolized*.

Even orthodox economists admit that there would be no interest were there no check to the supply of capital. But when these gentlemen come to state what that check consists of, they perform feats of mental acrobatics which are highly suspicious and which appeal neither to reason nor to experience. Marx calls them “subterfuges and jugglery tricks.” Of such is the second proposition :

II. Interest is the reward of waiting.”

This statement implies two things:—

(1) That the supply of capital is checked because the majority of people are imprudent, or unwilling to wait, or to save. (2) That those who receive interest do so by virtue of their prudence or willingness to wait. The old “abstinence” theory over again! What a travesty of the real facts! It is almost incredible that any sensible person could accept such a statement as a sincere piece of economic science. Everybody knows that the great bulk of interest is paid to people who live in luxury and ease,—people whose chief “abstinence” is from work and whose “waiting” is for other people to do the work, the reward of which they reap. This is a kind of “abstinence” and “waiting” which certainly should be punished rather than rewarded.

But let us suppose that there is some merit in “waiting for capital to mature.” Even then it is a merely moral virtue, and as such, may have a moral reward, but it has no “reward” in the economic sense. “Virtue is its own reward.” It is labour alone that is entitled to reward—in the economic sense.

“Waiting,” says Carver, “being equally essential with work, should be equally rewarded.” But here he begs the question: Is work rewarded except in the sense that it begets its own reward, i.e.

in the economic sense? Waiting for capital to mature does not beget anything. At best it is nothing more than a moral act.

But let us consider the quality of its morality. An apologist (and orthodox economists are more apologetic than scientific) would say that were it not for "interest" the capitalist would not supply his capital. The inevitable question which follows is: What would he do with it? He could not eat it, and if he kept it unused it would become spoiled. He would therefore be compelled to use it himself or "let" it to others for its *real* value. Then we should have the Socialists' economic ideal—value for value. Labour would be paid at its full value, and capital would have no more.

By the system of interest the labourer is being continually robbed, not only to fill the pockets of the idle capitalist, but also to replace his capital. Here is a miracle greater than the manna miracle of Bible tradition. The Israelites had to get up before sunrise to gather their manna, and when they had eaten it there was none left. But our virtuous capitalist may eat without getting up at all, and still keep his supply intact. That is, he is continually having interest on capital that has been replaced by the labour of the exploited worker, and often on capital which does not exist at all, i.e. nominal capital.

We have seen, then, that the first statement is flagrantly fallacious, even assuming that there is no ambiguity in the term "productive." The second is a very childish and quixotic piece of fencing with a question of great social importance. Neither statement affords any explanation nor justification of interest. When interest comes to be explained scientifically it will be explained away absolutely, because it is a most serious and unnecessary hindrance to progress. When this is done, capital will begin to be employed for *use* instead of for *profit or interest*, and the dawn of a new and better era will have been ushered in.

T. EVANS.

Welsh Miners and the New College

Monmouth Western Valley District South Wales Miners' Federation

"FELLOW-DELEGATES,—We now come to an important item on the Agenda—perhaps the most important—namely, the resolution which affirms the principle of a Labour College; and calls upon this District to levy members one penny per head in order to assist in the establishment of such a college. I take it every delegate has a mandate, and will therefore ask the Council to vote I declare the resolution carried unanimously."

THUS the Western Valley Miners made history! There were no fiery denunciations of the "higher breed" by these representatives of the mining "dregs." The matter had been more or less dispassionately discussed in the various lodges during the past months. The leaders of the district, including three prominent members of the South Wales Miners' Central Executive, stand for the principle of a labour college controlled by working-class associations of the country.

The coal-owners had also rendered invaluable assistance to the movers of the resolution, by disclosing in all its ugly nakedness, their real attitude towards their employees.

Doubtless, all these things played a part in the success of the resolution, the seed of which was sown during the discussion which ranged around the enforced resignation of Mr. Hird. These miners, having for years contributed their mite towards Ruskin College, really thought their organizations should have been consulted before such an important step as the dismissal of this man—who had won their respect by his unselfish devotion to their class—had been carried into effect.

To their discomfiture, they discovered that the money contributed by labour organizations formed only a small proportion of the whole cost necessary for the up-keep of the institution. The major portion came from representatives of a class which organized labour is continually fighting, and therefore the latter class were entitled to primary consideration while the request of the workers—embodied in scores of resolutions—for the reinstatement of Mr. Hird must be ignored.

The Monmouth Western Valley men have sounded a new note in working-class policy. On the eve of a great industrial crisis they have affirmed the necessity of Labour ploughing its own educational furrow, and strongly appeal to their fellow workers to come forward and assist in the creation of a new structure. To those who bleat about "brotherhood" under impossible conditions, they point out that the new policy is distinct from the old inasmuch as it aims at the abolition of class warfare, through an abolition of the conditions of which it is the inevitable result.

To those who like "to choose means which seem to be revolutionary," they appeal not to waste their time kicking the wind with the terminology of blood and thunder, but to make the necessary sacrifice, and by means of a levy assist in the establishment of an institution moulded along lines which will enable it to turn out strong brave hearts, fired with a sense of the injustices under which the workers linger. A consciousness of which alone will enable them to spread the gospel of righteous discontent.

E. GILL.

The following parody is "very sympathetic to the working class, and yet fair." It seems also to fulfil the well known prophecy :

"With superstitions will they blind you
And with cant will they fill your mouths."

The Smiler and the Wormy-One

The Varsity smiled on R. C.
For smiling was its plan.
It did its very best to prove
It loved the working man—
And this was queer and shows we fear,
That learned Dons will "cram."

The Students frowned gloomily—
The Varsity, they said,
Had no business smiling there,
And they would not be led.
The Varsity o'er working men
No charm at all could spread.

* * *

The room was filled with eager brains—
The lecturer was there.
You could not find a seat, because
A student filled each chair.
The subject—sociology—
Was loved beyond compare.

The Smiler and the Wormy-One
Were walking arm in arm—
They moaned like anything to see
A man with so much charm.
"If he were only kicked away"
They said, "We'd fear no harm."

"If seven men with seven brains
Worked for a year about—
Do you suppose," the Smiler said,
"That we could get him out?"
"I doubt it," said the Wormy-One,
"You see the 'boys' might shout."

* * *

"O students come and walk with us,"
The Smiler did beseech.
"A pleasant walk—a pleasant talk—"

THE "PLEBS"

Prosperity you'll reach.
 And wide *we'll* open Learning's door—
 A scholarship for each."

The knowing student looked at him
 But never a word he said.
 The knowing student winked his eye
 And shook his knowing head—
 Meaning to say he would not leave
 His "Principal" till dead.

* * *

But four green students hurried up
 All eager to be led.
 Their hair was brushed—their faces washed,
 And "tone" upon them spread.
 And this was odd, because you know
 They hadn't any "Head."

Four other students followed them,
 But no more could they gain.
 "The greatest brains," the Smiler said
 "In England we'll obtain.
 I'll teach—and Mr. L. S. D.
 Shall 'discipline' maintain."

The Smiler and the Wormy-One
 Talked on a year or so,
 And then they rested on a fake
 Conveniently low;
 And all the green, young students stood
 And waited in a row.

"The time has come," the Smiler said,
 "To talk 'economy.'
 For some say this—and some say that—
 (No 'logic' here you see)
 "And some of course say something else—
 But, 'in the long run'—we—"

"O wait a bit," the students cried,
 "We haven't got it pat;
 It takes a bit of thinking out,
 And all our heads are fat!"
 "No hurry—to the 'Archives' come
 And have a pleasant chat."

"Diplomas now," the Smiler said,
 "Are what we chiefly need,
 Gagging, and bandage for the eyes,

Are very good indeed—
 Now students, let us try this plan,
 I'm sure it must succeed,"

"But not on us!" the students cried,
 Turning a little blue,
 "Gagging and bandaging are not
 An education true.
 Write to the Town Clerk, 'your good selves';
 And ascertain his view."

"It was so good of you to come
 And learn from us at all."
 The Wormy-One said nothing, but
 "I'll give the Cat a call—
 I heard her say she'd help, for I
 Was listening in the hall."

"It seems a shame," the Smiler *said*,
 "To play them such a trick,
 After we've wasted all their time—
 This gag is rather thick."
 The Wormy-One said nothing, but
 "Another bandage—quick."

"I weep for you," the Smiler *said*,
 "I deeply sympathize!"
 With snorts and grins he sorted out
 Gags of the largest size,
 And tied a bandage tightly o'er
 Each pair of eager eyes.

"O students," said the Wormy-One,
 "Our work is nearly done!
 Will you be Labour Leaders now?"
 But answer came there none—
 And this was scarcely odd, because
 They'd Curzoned (cozened) every one.

The Watch Tower

VICTOR HUGO, in his work *The Laughing Man*, gives the following description of the state of the mind and the principles of one of his characters:—"Barkilphedro had but one thing in his favour—that he had a very big belly. A big belly passes for a sign of kind-heartedness. But his belly was but an addition to Barkilphedro's hypocrisy; for the man was full of malice. He was active and ponderous; a sort of hippopotamus-monkey. A Royalist, certainly; a Republican—who knows? a Catholic, perhaps; a Protestant, without doubt. For Stuart, probably; for Brunswick, evidently. *To be For is a power only on condition of being at the*

some time Against. Barkilphedro practised this wisdom. An obscure but fattening servitude had long made up Barkilphedro's whole existence." We are not surprised to learn that he hated those who were possessed of the virtues of constancy and gratitude. Hugo's character lived in the 18th century, but Barkilphedro's flourish among us even in the 20th century. When Mr. Wilson, Secretary of Ruskin College, first came to Oxford, he was a professing Socialist, an idea being abroad at that time that Ruskin was to favour that sort of thing. Years have brought discretion, and disillusionment. Oxford frowns upon such ideas; the private people who contribute to Ruskin College Funds look upon such a theory of society as anathema; even open enthusiasm for Unemployed Bills and such-like "crudities" are discouraged. So Mr. Wilson must change his opinions—and he does. He forthwith frowns on street-corner propaganda and participation in Unemployed meetings by the students. "It is likely to injure the institution, you know," at the same time hastening to assure them that he agrees, privately, with "your good selves." Such is the person who informed an old student on Whitsun Tuesday last that "We had to get rid of Mr. Hird in the interest of the Labour Movement."

A copy of a letter sent for publication to the *Western Mail* and other South Wales newspapers by the Welsh students in residence at Ruskin College has just been sent us, and is inserted in these pages. For some time past, it would seem that one or two of the students who acted as "blacklegs" during the recent dispute, have been writing in the *Western Mail* defending the position taken up by the Executive at Ruskin College, for which we hope the latter are truly grateful. No doubt they will express their gratitude more tangibly later on in the shape of a free scholarship, tenable at that "unparalleled" institution. The letter in question constitutes a reply to a reporter, named Hopkins, who has been fulminating recently in the paper already referred to. We have no wish to advertise that individual's mental affliction in these columns, only we think it is a matter for profound regret that when he first made up his mind to become a newspaper correspondent he had not examined himself more closely and seen that he was better constructed for sawing wood. We feel certain that he could *make a dust* much more effectively in that occupation. However, as the fools sometimes cause more confusion in the world than the rascals, it is, perhaps, just as well that some reply in repudiation of his statements was made. Not that it will make any impression upon Hopkins. Common sense is likely to have as little a loosening effect upon him as castor oil would have on a graven image.

Very interesting are the doings at Ruskin lately. For instance, it is being laid down by Mr. Buxton to the student "dregs" that it is high treason for them to speak, or write anything detrimental to the

interests of the college. It has also been laid down by the same person that a student has no right to belong to an outside organization; this has to be interpreted as meaning the "Plebs" League, as no objection has been raised to them joining the Boys' Club in connexion with Balliol College, or the League of Progressive Thought. Indeed, Mr. Buxton has been anxious, on more than one occasion, to push these "safe" ventures among the students. So when Mr. McKay, a student, recently sent a letter to the branches of his Trade Union (Coachmakers) explaining the past trouble and the present situation at Ruskin, (that it might be understood and its importance appreciated by the time the matter came up for discussion at the annual meeting of that body), he was forthwith summoned into the august presence of the man who maintains "discipline" at Ruskin now (Mr. Buxton), and asked what he meant by remaining in the college holding the views he did with regard to it. Mr. McKay replied that his scholarship was a six months' one that terminated on June 26th, 1909, on which date he intended to sever his connexion with Ruskin; that he had been offered an extension of his scholarship which he had refused, as he was opposed to any more good money being sunk in such a bad investment as Ruskin College.

In the interests of the Executive Committee an attempt is again being made to antagonize the Trade Unionists by attempting to prove that the cause of the revolt among the students had been engineered in the interests of Industrial Unionism. On April 6th last the same statements were made through the columns of the *Morning Leader* on the authority of Mr. Wilson. Mr. Wilson was at dinner at the College on that day; after dinner was over he was challenged by Mr. Sims, whose name had been mentioned in the report, to give one instance where, inside the college or outside in Oxford, Mr. Sims, or any other student, had spoken at a meeting or debate on this subject; also to prove that more than three students were adherents of Industrial Unionism—(there is now only one left). Mr. Wilson was silent as the Sphinx, and relied on Mr. Buxton to apologize for his inability to reply. If the object of the strike was to exploit the theory of Industrial Unionism, why are such elaborate precautions being taken to secure that the control of the new college remains in the hands of Trade Unionists? Why is the idea of a new college being so enthusiastically supported by old students, and others, who have never heard about Industrial Unionism? Why cannot the Executive Committee of Ruskin answer the other objections that have been hurled against the College, and thus leave the real cause, *as they term it*, Industrial Unionist propaganda, high and dry without a shred of clothing to cover its nakedness? They cannot, and their inability is only made more glaring by their attempts to hocus-pocus the Labour Movement with such silly tales.

Reports

WIGAN BRANCH.

On Saturday Mrs. Taylor read the second book of her poem. The subject matter deals with "Men's Occupation." This book contains a canto of eight verses, entitled "Compensation," but owing to the bad writing and spelling, and the omission of many words, the lady said that she was only enabled to give the class one verse. Mr. Bennett volunteered his help, and the two students will produce the other seven verses next week. After this meeting the members of the League will go on holiday till July 17th, when ways and means will be discussed relative to the sending of a representative to the first meet of the Plebs at Oxford on August 2nd. Mrs. Taylor then gave the following particulars, and repeated that it was essential for the students to know all that pertained to the discovery of the manuscript. The master of the house was greatly puzzled over the meaning of the characters upon the hounds' food. What did they portend? How could he solve this intricacy? Question engendered question in rapid succession, each one more perplexing than its predecessor. The gentleman had to confess that he was completely baffled for an answer. He was a student well versed in Sanskrit, the Zend, and other ancient languages; he was an accomplished paleographer, being often employed to elucidate the purport of old diplomas and documents; he was also an able expert in deciphering cryptograms, and had rendered valuable aid to Cabinet Ministers by putting in their possession the secret plans of would-be invaders; but here was a problem the most complex and complicated that he had ever attempted to unravel. While he was pondering painfully for a solution he felt a violent tug from behind. Looking round he beheld with great astonishment John, the workman, gesticulating in a most remarkable manner. Now John did not know the difference between a German B and a hieroglyphic, but it was evident from the contortions of his features, and the erratic movements of his arms and body, that he had something of importance to reveal. More signs, and still wilder movements, and then the gentleman began to understand the meaning of it all; a light flashed into his mind, and he became ecstatic with joy as he shouted loudly, "Eureka, I've solved it!" Here is the fifth stanza of the canto on "Compensation":

" I used to work at clay-hole,
A very nasty place ;
Belike ha'ast not ha't beg,
That would be a disgrace.

I wor thirty year a worker
Afore I lost my seet,
Am lookin' for kompensashun,
I hope it'll come au reet."

The above lines refer to a blind man; the following lines refer to the blind man and his little girl, who go round to the public-houses collecting money at "recknin":

" From house to house they went,
In that storm of blinding snow ;
Shame on all miner's to allow
Such misery and woe."

By the Way

DON'T forget. If your branch of the Trade Union or the Trades Council have not had an invitation to the Meet, see that a note to that effect is forwarded to this office *immediately*.

Should any Unions desire to change their delegates, as previously sent in, for the August Meet, a note to that effect from the Secretary of Council or Branch will be efficient guarantee of bona fide of substitutes.

Will Secretaries of League branches *please* remember to send in names and addresses of members when forwarding annual subscriptions to centre.

Bravo! Monmouth Western Valleys District. This is indeed good news from Gallant Little Wales. Big in enthusiasm as ever, and ready to pay for your opinions, of such is the kingdom of Labour.

Having enlarged the Magazine we shall be able to include more reports of branches and their work. Reports should be as short as possible, having regard to essentials, and should reach the office by the 21st of the month. Secretaries please note.

Correspondence

This is a copy of a letter sent to the *Western Mail* and the *South Wales Daily News*.*

Sir,—With reference to a letter appearing in the *Western Mail* of the 21st inst., we the undersigned, students of Ruskin College and members of Trade Union organizations in South Wales, desire to inform our fellow Trade Unionists and those interested in the institution of a Labour College at Oxford, owned and controlled democratically by the Trade Union Movement, that the statements appearing therein are not founded on fact.

As must obviously appear from the nature of the control of the proposed new institution, the question of Industrial Unionism is irrelevant, and its introduction into this matter only demonstrates the bankruptcy of Mr. Hopkin's case. Only one student in residence at the College is in any way connected with the I. W. W. Regarding the subject matter of Mr. Hird's lectures, the merest tyro in Sociology knows that Spencer is the pioneer of that science, and if Mr. Hopkins were at all familiar with Sociology he would know, that to understand the present one must have a knowledge of the past, out of which the present has evolved. Mr. Hird's teaching did not however stop at primitive types to which Mr. Hopkins seems to be reverting. Neither did his philosophy end with Spencer. He co-ordinated the findings of all leading scientists and tested them in the light of present development. In conclusion we desire to say that no man has done more to assist us in obtaining a knowledge of our place in nature and society than the late Principal of Ruskin College. His departure is our loss, and is certainly not to the gain of the Labour Movement for which he has done more service than will probably ever be known.—Yours truly,

G. F. T. BARRETT, A.S.R.S., (Tondu).

C. JENKINS, E.V.M., (Pontypool).

WILL W. CRAIK, A.S.R.S., (Barry).

JOHN JONES, S.W.M.F., (Tumble).

J. A. DICKS, S.W.M.F., Anthracite.

DAVID JAMES, S.W.M.F., (Maesteg).

FRANK HODGES, S.W.M.F., (Western Valleys).

Oxford, June 23rd, 1909.

* See comments under "Watchtower."

To the Editor of the PLEBS Magazine.

Sir,—At a meeting of the Ruskin College Educational League held at Barrow, on Thursday, April 22nd, 1909, it was decided that we sever our connexion with Ruskin College, Oxford, as a protest against the action of the Executive Committee in enforcing the resignation of the Principal, Mr. Dennis Hird. Yours truly, W. J. BARTON. *Secretary.*

Ruskin College Educational League.

Barrow Branch, May 5th. 1909.

New College Fund

FIRST Instalment of Collecting Sheets results. We shall publish lists each month—owing to pressure on our space we cannot give more than one page to this Fund. It is interesting to note that the sums are indicative of the class to whom we appealed—the workers, and we prefer these amounts to the cheques of our masters. Of our subscribers it may be truly said, "They have done what they could."

	s.	d.		s.	d.
Batley Co-operative Society			E. N. Johns	...	0 1
Educational Dept.	...	5 0	W. O. Joseph	...	0 1
Mrs. Berkeley	...	20 0	F. J. Harris	...	0 1
Evelyn Berkeley	...	5 0	E. Rigg	...	0 1
Harold Berkeley	...	5 0	F. Busby	...	0 2
Mr. Grout	...	1 0	A. J. Whitein	...	0 2
Hampstead & Kilburn I.L.P.	2	6	W. T. Williams	...	0 3
W. Matheson	...	2 6	C. H. Denton	...	0 3
C. H. Lewis	...	1 0	Henry D. Gunter	...	0 6
W. E. Marshallson	...	1 0	W. Jones	...	0 3
C. F. Linsmith	...	1 0	H. Pierce	...	0 3
Mr. Hewins	...	0 6	R. H. Shaw	...	0 6
Mr. Rogers	...	0 6	C. S. Oliver	...	0 2
W. Jenkins	...	0 3	S. Jones	...	0 3
E. Robinson	...	0 6	H. West	...	0 1
D. Rees	...	0 3	A. Chapple	...	0 2
Mr. Currell	...	0 3	J. Lewis	...	0 3
C. Griffiths	...	1 0	F. Browning	...	0 3
S. R. Jones	...	1 0	F. Baker	...	0 3
T. John	...	1 0	H. C. Batchelor	...	0 3
Mr. Hamer	...	1 0	A. N. Mills	...	0 3
Gladys Lewis	...	0 3	W. H. Sutton	...	0 3
Collection	...	0 6	Mrs. W. M. Watson	...	5 0
W. J. Lewis	...	1 0	W. M. Watson	...	5 0
J. D. Jones	...	1 0	J. Watson	...	2 6
H. Rees	...	1 0	Mrs. Jas. Watson	...	2 6
Mrs. Goodall	...	0 3	Jas. Watson	...	2 6
Miss Baker	...	0 3	Alex. Watson	...	0 6
Mrs. Witts	...	0 2	Arch. Watson	...	0 6
R. Follows	...	0 2	Henry Watson	...	1 0
Mr. Witts	...	0 6	James Hunter	...	5 0
A Friend	...	1 0	John Robertson	...	2 0
E. Lloyd	...	0 3			
T. Murley	...	0 3			
C. T. Lewis	...	0 3			
			TOTAL	...	<u>£4 8 5</u>

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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)

"**I**S it a story that you want of me?" asked the unknown guest turning to Joel, and seeing the eyes of all fixed upon himself.

"One story?" cried Joel. "Tell us twenty, a hundred! You must have seen so much! so many countries! so many peoples! One story only? Ah, by the good Ormi, you shall not be let off with only one story, friend guest!"

"Oh, no!" cried the family in chorus and with set determination. "Oh, no! We must have more than one!"

"And yet," observed the stranger with a pensive and severe mien, "there is more serious work in hand than to tell and listen to frivolous stories."

"I understand not what you mean," said Joel, no less taken back than his family; all turned their eyes upon the stranger in silent amazement.

"No, you do not understand me," replied the stranger sadly. "Nevertheless, I shall keep my promise—the thing promised is a thing done"; and pointing to Julyan who had remained at the other end of the hall near the oak-covered body of Armel he added: "We must see to it that that young man has something to tell his brother when he joins him beyond."

"Proceed, guest, proceed with your story," answered Julyan, without raising his head from his hands; "proceed with your story; I shall not lose a word . . . Armel shall hear it just as you tell it."

"Two years ago," said the stranger, beginning his story, "while travelling among the Gauls who inhabit the borders of the Rhine, I happened one day to be at Strasburg. I had gone out of the town for a walk along the river bank. Presently I saw a large crowd of people moving in the direction of where I stood. They were following a man and woman, both young and both handsome, who carried on a buckler, that they held by the edges, a little baby not more than three or four months old. The man looked restless and

sombre; the woman pale and calm. Both stopped at the river's bank, at a spot where the stream runs especially rapid. The crowd also stopped. I drew near and inquired who the man and woman were. 'The man's name is Vindorix, the woman's Albrege; they are man and wife,' was the answer I received. I then saw Vindorix, whose countenance waxed more and more sombre, approach his wife and say to her:

" 'This is the time.'

" 'Do you wish it?' asked Albrege. 'Do you wish it?'

" 'Yes,' answered the husband; 'I doubt—I want to be certain.'

" 'Then, be it so,' said she.

"Thereupon, himself taking the buckler where the little child lay, smiling and stretching out its chubby arms to him, Vindorix walked into the river up to his waist, raised the buckler and child for a moment over his head, and looked back a last time towards his wife, as if to threaten her with what he was about to do. With her forehead high and a steady countenance, Albrege remained erect at the river bank, motionless like a statue, her arms crossed upon her bosom. When her husband now turned to her she stretched out her right hand towards him as if to say:

" 'Do it!'

"At that moment a shudder ran over the crowd. Vindorix deposited upon the stream the buckler on which lay the child, and in that frail craft left the infant to the mercy of the eddies."

"Oh, the wicked man!" cried Mamm' Margarid, deeply moved by the story as were the other hearers. "And his wife! . . . his wife . . . who remained on the bank?—"

"But what was the reason of such a barbarity, friend guest?" asked Henry, the young wife of Guilhern, embracing her two children little Sylvest and little Syomora, both of whom she took on her knees as if fearing to see them exposed to a similar danger.

With a gesture the stranger put an end to the interrogatories, and proceeded:

"The stream had barely carried away the buckler on which the child lay, than the father raised both his trembling hands to heaven as if to invoke the gods. He followed the course of the buckler with sullen anxiety, leaning, despite himself, to the right when the buckler dipped to the right, and to the left when the buckler dipped on that side. The mother, on the contrary, her arms crossed over her bosom, followed the buckler with firm eyes, and as tranquil as if she had nothing to fear for her child.

"Nothing to fear!" cried Guilhern. "To see her child thus exposed to almost certain death . . . it is bound to go under . . ."

"That must have been an unnatural mother cried Henry.

"And not one man in all that crowd to jump into the water and save the child!" observed Julyan, thinking of his friend. "Oh that will surely anger the heart of Armel when I tell him that."

"But do not interrupt every instant!" cried Joel. "Proceed, my guest; may Teutates, who presides over all journeys made in this world and in the others, guard the poor little thing!"

"Twice." the stranger proceeded, "the buckler threatened to be swallowed up by the eddies of the rapid stream. Of all present, only the mother moved not a muscle. Presently the buckler was seen riding the waters like an airy skiff and peacefully following the course of the stream beyond the rapids. Immediately the crowd cried, beating their hands:

"'The boat! The boat!'

"Two men ran down the bank, pushed off a boat, and swiftly plying their oars, quickly reached the buckler, and took it up from the water together with the child that had fallen asleep—"

"Thanks to the gods! The child is saved!" exclaimed almost in chorus the family of Joel, as if delivered from a painful apprehension.

Perceiving that he was about to be again interrupted by fresh questions, the stranger hastened to resume his narrative.

"While the buckler and child were being taken from the water, its father Vindorix, whose face was now as radiant with joy as it was sombre until then, ran to his wife, and stretching out his arms to her said:

"'Albrege! . . . Albrege! . . . You told me the truth . . . You were faithful!'

"But repelling her husband with an imperious gesture, Albrege answered him proudly: 'Certain of my honour, I did not fear the trial . . . I felt at ease on my child's fate. The gods could not punish an innocent woman with the loss of her child . . . But . . . *a woman suspected is a woman outraged* . . . I shall keep my child. You never more shall see us, nor him, nor me . . . You have doubted your wife's honour!'

"The child was just then brought in triumph. Its mother threw herself upon it, like a lioness upon her whelp; pressed it closely to her heart; so calm and peaceful as she had been until then, so violent was she now with the caresses that she showered upon the baby, with whom she now fled away."

"O, that was a true daughter of Gaul!" said Guilhern's wife. "A woman suspected is a woman outraged. Those are proud words . . . I like to hear them!"

"But," asked Joel, "is that trial one of the customs of the Gauls along the Rhine?"

"Yes," answered the stranger; "the husband who suspects his wife of having dishonoured his bed, places the baby upon a buckler

and exposes it to the current of the river. If the child remains afloat, the wife's innocence is proved; if it sinks under the waves, the mother's crime is considered established."

"And how was that brave wife clad, friend guest?" asked Henry. "Did she wear a tunic like ours?"

"No," answered the stranger; "the tunics in that region are very short and of two colours. The corsage is generally blue, the skirt red. The latter is often embroidered with gold and silver thread."

"And their head-gear?" asked one of the young girls. "Are they white and cut square like our own?"

"No; they are black and bell-shaped, and they are also embroidered in gold and silver."

"And the bucklers?" queried Guilhern. "Are they like ours?"

"They are longer, and they are painted with livery colours, usually arranged in squares. Red and white is a very common combination."

"And the marriages, how are they celebrated?" inquired another young girl.

"And the cattle, are they as fine as ours?" an old man asked.

"And have they like us brave fighting cocks?" asked a child.

The stranger was being assailed with such a shower of questions that Joel said to the questioners:

"Enough; enough. . . . Let our friend regain his breath. You are screaming around him like a flock of sea-gulls."

"Do they pay, as we do, the money they owe the dead?" asked Stumpy, despite Joel's orders to cease questioning the stranger.

"Yes; their custom and ours is the same as here," answered the stranger; "and they are not idolators like a man from Asia whom I met at Marseilles, and who claimed that, according to his religion, we continued to live after death, but not clad in human shape, according to him we were clad in the form of animals."

"*Her! . . . Her!*" cried Stumpy in great trouble. "If it were as those idolatrous people claim, then Gigel, who departed instead of old Mark, may be now inhabiting the body of a fish; and I would have sent him three pieces of silver with Armel who might now be inhabiting the body of a bird. How could a bird deliver silver pieces to a fish. *Her! . . . Her!*"

"Our friend told you that that belief is idolatry, Stumpy," put in Joel with severity; "your fear is impious."

"It must be so," said Julyan sadly. "What would I become who am to proceed to-morrow to meet Armel by oath and out of friendship, were I to find him turned into a bird while I may be turned into a stag of the woods or an ox of the fields?"

"Fear not, young man," said the stranger to Julyan, "the religion of Hesus is the only true religion; it teaches us that after death we are reclad in younger and handsomer bodies."

"I pin my hopes on that!" said Stumpy.

(To be continued.)