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EDITORIAL

WHEN the organizers of the "Plebs" League, at its inception in December last, arranged for the holding of an Annual Meet, and when it was agreed that the first of these gatherings should take place in Oxford on the second day of August,

Looking Backward. 1909, not even the most prophetic Pleb had developed the clairvoyant faculty sufficient to be able to see that the Meet would take on the character and dimensions that it has done. The nature of the work undertaken by the League, combined with the then existing conditions in the educational field, rendered it necessary that at least once a year the members should come together and discuss progress and policy. The object of the movement being to secure a more satisfactory and more definite connexion between Ruskin College and the Labour Movement, and that institution being located in Oxford, no better place could have been selected for the Annual Meet. The principle of independence in working-class education was, at the outset, to some extent in the abstract stage of development, and consequently it was difficult to convince people of the necessity for its application. But the very conditions that had generated the idea were soon to reveal in a concrete form the inadequacy of Ruskin College as a working-class educational institution. As a general rule it requires a crisis to reveal a weakness, and to furnish a remedy. Just as Taff Vale Law made manifest the necessity for an independent Labour Party in Parliament, so the Ruskin College dispute revealed the need for the same independence in education.

THE recent conference at Oxford therefore took on a much more general and national character than it would otherwise have done had the ill-timed action of the Ruskin College authorities not taken

place. The difficulties that faced the League in the **The Meet.** shape of limited time and a much more limited source of revenue were considerable ; notwithstanding these not easily surmounted obstacles the first truly working-class college was made possible and the first truly working-class education conference was called. If the character of that conference is to be taken as a criterion of the Central Labour College's future then success is assured. Despite the despicable attempts made to discredit us in the eyes of the Labour Movement, in spite of the fact that certain pseudo-saviours of the working class tried to get behind the backs of some organizations sending delegates and delegates themselves, the first Annual Meeting of the New Movement was in every respect a triumphant vindication of its existence. (A detailed report of the conference will be found in another part of the magazine). The presence of the American sociologist Dr. Lester Ward lent an international colour to the assembly. The students of Ruskin College owe much to America. Apart from the fact that the institution itself was founded by an American, who appointed Mr. Dennis Hird to be its Principal, we owe it to the latter in turn for the introduction of the works of the world's greatest living sociologist. There is nothing of the pedant about Dr. Ward. He towers as high above the Oxford don as the sun does above the earth. Not that we desire to fall down before him in idol-worship. No man has done more to shatter the great man theory than Dr. Ward himself. But that does not prevent us from recognizing him as a great thinker, great in the sense that his life's labours have been to aid the progressive forces of evolution. Both the magnificent speeches of Dr. Ward and Mr. Hird, delivered at the evening meeting, which was a fitting climax to the day's proceedings, will be published in pamphlet form at an early date.

WHATEVER may cross the path of the "Plebs" movement nothing can for long impede its progress. Whatever may postpone, nothing can prevent the accomplishment of the task it has set itself. When

one recalls that it is only six months ago, since it **Looking** came into the world of working-class activity and that **Forward.** in this short time it has done much in the way of giving material shape to its aspirations, there is left little room to doubt that what it has done is but a foretaste of what it will yet do. The secret of its progress is to be found in the fact that economic conditions are in line with its demands. The vitality of the new movement is derived from these conditions : in other words it is related to the workshops, the union, the strike and the ballot box. It springs from the revolt and organization of the workers. This being so, it is the only educational movement of the workers as such. It is a movement of producers. Not in the technical sense of the term : we seek not to make for more efficiency in production,

but for greater and more efficient understanding of what that production really is and for whose benefit it is being carried on. Efficient knowledge of economic conditions is an indispensable basis for efficiently organizing to transform them. The education of the workers for the organization of the workers is the cardinal principle in the "Plebs" programme and is the basis of its material expression—the Central Labour College. "To train men and women for the industrial, political and social work of the organized Labour Movement," such is its function; "to be controlled by the Labour organizations of the United Kingdom," such is its control. In these definitions there is nothing vague and ambiguous, the meaning is specific and particular and leaves no loophole through which the apologist can slip in and explain away an awkward fact. An institution whose educational ideals are expressed in eighteenth century ideology—"broad" "liberal" "humane"—has no meaning or message for the working class. Twentieth century problems have their solution in twentieth century conditions. It has been urged against the "Plebs" League and the New College that they are anti-Trade Union in their character, that their object is to destroy the Trade Unions. It is absolutely untrue, and we venture to say that those responsible for the circulation of this statement are either ignorant or dishonest, or both. In Trade Unionism we see the hope of the future, and in the Trade Union Congress the potential parliament of the new administration. It is to further the development of these organizations that the Central Labour College starts out. It will become a vital part of Trade Union activity.—During the next few months the organized Labour Movement will be called upon to make a choice between two educational ideals. They have made the same choice before. What did they choose? Only that which we are confident they will choose again—*independence*. Before they made their political choice many plausible stories were told them. Before they make their educational choice, many plausible stories will again be told them, many promises will be made, for *to promise* is a necessary ware of reaction, a quality which those opposed to progress excel in. *To fulfil* is on the other hand an article which is not kept in stock in the shop of the benevolent bankrupt. How ~~then~~ shall we be saved? Only by saving ourselves. If the workers create a demand they must create their own supply. The rôle of suppliant is no longer adapted to the character of Labour. They who keep the world, who feed the world, and clothe the world, must work out their own historic destiny, not in fear and trembling, but in the spirit of self-reliance and solidarity.

For nothing can be broken up, whether lawful or unlawful, without a vast amount of dust, and many people grumbling and mourning for the good old times.

R. D. BLACKMORE.

Easy Outlines of Economic Science

No. 6—Capital, Labour Power, Surplus Value

In response to a large number of requests I have re-written this and the next article in dialogue form. As will be seen, the subjects treated here do not lend themselves so readily to this treatment as the discussion on value. But I feel sure that readers who have gone out of their way to urge me to this course will the more readily extend their sympathy. The disputants will again be our old friends Marginal Bill and Marxian Scientist, who obligingly submitted themselves to be resurrected for this purpose.

MARGINAL BILL.—You Marxians appear to be a very superior sort of people. The other day I heard one of you attempting to ridicule the good old definition of capital, viz :—"Capital is that part of wealth devoted to the production of more wealth," and wanting to add on the words "with a view to profit." What's the difference anyhow? You surely agree that such an addition is unnecessary?

Marxian Scientist.—I certainly do not agree. Since Darwin and Marx wrote, what you call the good old definition is absurd. No *economist* who could apply his evolution, would accept a general definition for a particular period. As Untermann has pointed out, your "good old definition" would make a monkey a capitalist.

M. B.—I didn't come here to be insulted. I wasn't aware you descended—

M. S.—Take a breath while I explain. Monkeys, so I am informed, use a stone to crack nuts. Well, that stone is "wealth devoted to the production of more wealth." According to you that stone is capital and the owner of capital is a capitalist. Hence a monkey is a capitalist. There is a legend that the only reason why a monkey will not talk is that he is afraid he will be put to work. In this—his anxiety not to work—you must agree he resembles the modern capitalist. Now don't look so foolish. Your mistake is due to your economics being pre-evolutionary. If it is a consolation to you, the same absurdities are common to those numerous philosophical and ethical systems that talk of "pure reason," "eternal justice," and such antique relics.

M. B.—Now no bluff. If I have made a mistake show me *why* and don't adopt that superior attitude.

M. S.—Your complaint is also ancient and utopian. Well listen, "Wealth devoted to the production of more wealth" or (means of production) has existed throughout all forms of society—savagery, barbarism, communism, slavery, serfdom, and wagedom; but the specific character of that wealth has constantly changed. Let us examine two periods. Broadly speaking modern capitalism, i.e. industrial capital, originated in the 16th century. Prior to this the

typical mode of production was fundamentally different from ours. Production existed mainly for local consumption (called production for use). To-day production exists mainly for exchange. Then, production was on a small scale, the facilities of communication and transport were undeveloped, and the producer himself brought his goods, to what, for convenience, we may call a market, to get in return the things necessary to life. *He sold in order to buy*, goods were exchanged for goods and money was practically unknown. The demand was known and "over-production" could not exist. But now, under capitalism, production is on a large, ever increasing scale, a world market obtains; instead of goods for goods it is now money for money. The "producer" does not produce. He (capitalist) invests his money which is converted into capital for the purpose (not of obtaining necessaries), of obtaining surplus value. *He sells in order to buy*. All transactions are conducted by money or its representative. The demand is unknown. Over-production constantly occurs. You see the purposes or motives of the use of the means of production in these two periods are different. The one is production for consumption *only*, the other is means of exploitation also. The craftsman of the middle ages had no wage-labourers to exploit. His motive was to get a living. The motive of the capitalist is compelled to be an increase in surplus value. He lives in a mode of production wherein revolution in machinery and constant growth in the means of production are laws of his existence. The mode of production of the middle ages could go on for ever without growth and extension while the principle of production remained. The old craftsman made a tin can and exchanged it for a dozen eggs. He was no richer, there was no increase in value. Hence you see the necessity to differentiate the means of production in these two periods.

M. B.—Hold on, you have contradicted yourself. You have been saying all along that exchange implies equality, haven't you?

M. S.—Yes. Quite right. What of it?

M. B.—Well, you say that to-day production is for exchange, and in the same breath you say production is for profit or surplus value. Ha! ha! I've caught you this time!

M. S.—The two statements are quite correct. Production is for exchange and exchange implies equality. But it is not by exchange that surplus value arises.

M. B.—What are you saying? You are becoming involved, (patting M. S. on the shoulder): Keep cool, or you'll make an ass of yourself. You see all money transactions are a result of exchange and profits cannot come where there is no money. Hence it must come from exchange. Better own up, old boy,

M. S. (feeling bumps of M. B.).—Your penetration is remarkable. Let me clear one more cobweb from your thinking apparatus. On the market there are two orders of men—buyers and sellers. Every

buyer must sooner or later become a seller, every seller must sooner or later become a buyer. Say the buyers have £50 and (supply and demand being equal, an assumption all economists have to make) the sellers £50 worth of commodities. There can be no increase in value (and consequently no surplus value) from an exchange between these people any more than could a "change of a £5 note into sovereigns and shillings." Here I assume an exchange of equivalents. I am, however, prepared to admit that in practice exchange is not always between equivalents. Assume now then an exchange of non-equivalents. Let the sellers be privileged to sell their £50 worth for £55 or £5 above their value. After the sale the sellers have to become buyers and now other sellers come to them and sell again £50's worth for £55. What the sellers gained as sellers they lost as buyers, and the same result would obtain if the buyers were privileged. The claim that surplus value is created by exchange is on a par with the famous legendary island where the inhabitants lived by taking in each other's washing. To quote Marx (p. 141): "The sum of values in circulation cannot be augmented by any change in their distribution any more than the quantity of precious metals in a country by a Jew selling a Queen Ann's farthing for a guinea."

M. B.—I am getting quite giddy. Where on earth do profits come from?

M. S.—Let me first state the problem clearly, or you will get more giddy. The Ricardian School failed mainly because it was unable to solve this problem. It was claimed by Ricardo and most of the Classic economists that value was created by labour. About the year 1830 this theory was very energetically attacked on the following grounds:—All commodities are exchanged at their values. If labour is the creator of value then the value of labour ought to be its product. Yet the value of labour (wages) is always lower than its product. Hence the surplus does not arise from labour.

M. B.—Ah! I see. If exchange implies equality then wages are the value, fair, full, equivalent value for the work performed by labour. There is no getting over that. That's a clean knock out. I'll write to Marshall and get him to give up marginal utility, as there is a better weapon to kill the labour theory of value. Good! very good! (beaming with joy).

M. S.—Well, that question did knock the Ricardians out. It also killed the Owenites, the disciples of Proudhon, and reduced Utopian economics to an ethical society who claimed that the value of labour *ought* to be the product of labour. But Marx entered the arena, answered the question, and once for all, rescued economics from Utopianism, and made it a science.

M. B. (cynically smiling).—Let us have the details of this wonderful exploit,

M. S.—First of all he showed that the phrase "value of labour" was ridiculous. Labour is an activity that creates value, and can no more have value itself than gravitation can have any weight, or space any height or depth. To say the "value of labour" is like saying the value of value. You cannot measure a thing by its own self. Besides, when the worker goes to the capitalist he does not sell his labour,—that would be absurd. He only sells his power to labour, or labour-power, a very different thing.

M. B.—Bosh! What's the difference between labour-power and labour? Your distinctions are too fine. Don't glare at me! I repeat:—What's the difference?

M. S.—The difference between a machine and the operations that machine performs; between your stomach and digestion; between my fist and a difficulty of vision on your part should it and your eye come into violent contact. Now don't interrupt till I have finished my explanation. I was saying—the worker sells his labour-power (on credit till pay day) to the capitalist at its full value. And the value of this commodity, labour-power, is determined by the amount of social labour required to produce, and, of course, reproduce, it as is the case with every other commodity. In other words, the cost of subsistence. But the capitalist having purchased this commodity has the full use of it under the conditions of sale—say 12 hours per day. That is, having paid its exchange value he possesses its use value. Don't forget that. It's important. Let us illustrate the point. A man buys an onion in 1860 and another one in 1900. He pays a different price on both occasions, but that doesn't interfere with his right to their full use, and whatever benefits are derived from their consumption belongs to him. Now labour-power, like the onion, is a commodity, and whoever buys it has the full benefits of its consumption. But labour-power differs from every other commodity in one particular, viz. when set in operation it can create value. Let us say that the value of labour-power is measured by 4/- per day. The day by law or by agreement between the commodity owners (workers and capitalists) is 12 hours. Labour-power put in operation creates in 6 hours (say) a value equal to 4/-. Say the worker having some knowledge of economics proposes to the capitalist that as he has now rendered an equivalent for his wages he will quit work. But the capitalist says—"Have I not bought your labour-power for 12 hours at its fair value? What value you create in that time belongs to me according to all the laws of fair and equal exchange." He sees that 12 hours' work are performed and himself pockets the difference between the exchange value (wages) and the use value (product); in other words, he pockets the value over and above the value of labour-power—surplus value.

M. B.—Oh. That is your wonderful explanation is it?

M. S.—Yes, that solves the riddle of surplus value. Just look over the question that seemed to please you so much just now and you will perhaps reconsider your decision to write to Marshall.

M. B. (bursting forth indignantly).—Ah! And to solve that difficulty you—you have reduced honest working men to the level of a stinking onion. I—, I—

M. S.—Hush! You are criticizing capitalism. Be quiet, or if the authorities of your College hear you, you will be branded as a Socialist.

M. B., considerably alarmed, allows M. S. to pacify and conduct him to the door of the study. They shake hands, and as he is going M. S. says,—Call again next month and I will show you how and when labour-power became a commodity and also the difference between profit and surplus value. Good night!

Next Month :—*Manufacture to Machinofacture.*

NOAH ABLETT.

The Study of Sociology

(Continued.)

From the May No. of *International Socialist Review*. Reprinted by kind permission of Messrs. Kerr, Co-operative Publishers, of 153 Kenzie Street, Chicago. [In August No. appears an article on Ruskin College dispute. Copies can be obtained from this office: 5d. each.

MORGAN declares private property to be the principal cause of the change. Thus he says, in regard to Athens: "The useful arts had attained a very considerable development; commerce on the sea had become a national interest; agriculture and manufactures were well advanced; and written composition in verse had commenced. They were in fact a civilized people, and had been for two centuries." Says Engels, in his *Origin of the Family* which follows *Ancient Society*: "Liberty, equality and fraternity, though never formulated, were cardinal principles of the gens." For a long while the wife perforce was the head of the family. "In all societies in which the matriarchal form of the family has maintained itself," Lafargue tells us, "we find landed property held by the woman. . . . So long as property was a cause of subjection, it was abandoned to the woman; but as soon as it became a means of emancipation and supremacy in the family and society man tore it from her."

The family has undergone many changes. Morgan finds *five forms of the family*, each representing a different period: *The consanguine*, the intermarriage of brothers and sisters in a group, giving the Malayan system of relationships; *the punaluan*, the inter-marriage of

several brothers to each others wives in a group, and several sisters to each others husbands in a group, creating the Turanian system of relationships ; the syndyasmian family, *the pairing* of one male with one female, with no exclusive habitation and with separation at the option of either ; *the patriarchal* family, the intermarriage of one man to several wives ; *the monogamian* family, consisting of one man and one woman, creating the monogamian system of relationships. Evidence of the first two forms still remains, although they belong to savagery and precede the institution of the gens. The third form is still extant among barbarians ; Engels tells us it existed among the Irish and Welsh down to the twelfth century. The patriarchal form is that of pastoral tribes, notably the Hebrews of biblical times. It exists among the Mormons to-day. The last form is peculiar to private property and civilization. Here again, as Morgan says : "Property becomes sufficiently powerful in its influence to touch the organic structure of society."

The immorality of our time is, to a great extent, a reversion to what was formally normal. Immorality is atavistic. Bigamy, the double code of sexual morals and the other one-sided secret arrangements especially prevalent among the upper class, are of this nature. As a general rule, frequency of relapse to a former sexual relation depends upon how nearly it approaches the present relation. By what we can gather from evolution, the family of the future is likely to be one of pure monogamy.

It has been well said that the freedom of any society may be measured by the freedom of its women. "Woman was the first human being to come into bondage ; she was a slave before the male slave existed," says Bebel, in his great work, *Woman under Socialism*. Let us remember that as late as the sixteenth century—after Sappho had twanged her lyre and when we were about to have from Shakespeare the characters of Desdemona, Lady Macbeth, Ophelia and Portia—serious men were still in doubt as to whether or not woman had a soul ; while Havelock Ellis tells us, in his work *Man and Woman* : "It can scarcely be said that the study of the brain from the present point of view leads to the revelation of any important sexual distinction." For over a century woman has been struggling for the right of suffrage, a right she enjoyed in barbarism. Step by step she has fought her way up, bearing the sacred burden of motherhood and yet deemed unworthy to share the liberties of her offspring. At the present time over five million women in America, a large proportion of whom are married, crowd the labour market. Like man they are compelled to prostitute their minds and muscle for bread, while more than half a million are thrust in the mire even more deeply than man. The woman problem is most decidedly part of the social problem, although women are prevented from assisting in its solution.

Differences there are between the two sexes, differences that reach down into our very being. Havelock Ellis, after considering such distinctions, sums the matter up in this fashion: "All the evidence brought together points, with varying degrees of certainty, to the same conclusion—the greater physical frailty of men, the greater tenacity of life in women." "From an organic standpoint, therefore, women represent the more stable and conservative element in evolution." "In each sex there are undeveloped organs and functions which in the other sex are developed." Ward has this to say: "The dominant characteristic of the male faculty is courage, that of the female, prudence." "In the realm of the intellect, where he would fain reign supreme, she has proved herself fully his equal and is entitled to her share of whatever credit attaches to human progress thereby achieved." And Edward Carpenter, in *Love's Coming of Age*, pays this tribute: "Since she keeps to the great lines of evolution and is less biased and influenced by the momentary currents of the day; since her life is bound up with the life of the child; since in a way she is nearer the child herself, and nearer to the savage; it is to her that man, after his excursions and wanderings, mental and physical, continually tends to return as to his primitive home and resting place, to restore his balance, to find his centre of life and to draw stores of energy and inspiration for fresh conquests of the outer world." It is the male who searches for new worlds to conquer, while the female conserves what has been gained. Organic inequalities tend to make the sexes complement each other and work for social betterment. Each is realized only through a perfect union with the other. There is no room for social distinctions.

As deplorable as the condition of woman is to-day, that of the child is still worse. Two millions,† of the youngsters are turning their frail bodies into profit; thousands of them die before arriving at maturity. Says Charlotte Perkins Gilman, in her work, *Concerning Children* "As members of society, we find they have received almost no attention. They are treated as members of the family by the family, but not even recognized as belonging to society. . . . Except for these rare cases of special playgrounds, except for the quite generous array of school houses and a few orphan asylums and kindred institutions, there are no indications in city or country that there are such people as children." And here it may be inserted that, whatever element of truth there may be in the view that Bernard Shaw writes plays for the opportunity it affords him of penning prefaces, true enough is it that many such a sociological contribution as Spencer's *Education* is badly in need of a long preliminary chapter, setting forth the fact that for the great mass of the people the treatise is largely inapplicable. Mrs. Gilman, for her part, knows that the welfare of the little ones is bound up in the general concern. "Our children suffer individually from bad social conditions," she says, "but cannot be saved individually." JOSEPH E. COHEN.

†U.S.A. only dealt with. (To be continued.)

The August Meet and Conference

IT is difficult to write soberly of August 2nd. We expected a good time—it was a brilliant success! From 11 A.M. till 11 P.M. the enthusiasm was at fever heat. A perfect August day, a Bank Holiday, a beautiful city, in fact, all the ingredients for a joyous day in the open air: yet there were 200 people, with extremely limited opportunities of enjoying such advantages, facing the discomfort of a continuous indoor meeting on purpose to carefully consider the details of a scheme of working-class education—“*By this sign we shall conquer.*” Seldom does it fall to the lot of pioneers of a new movement to have such an auspicious start. Six months ago not a thought was in our minds of a gathering of such moment. A few enthusiasts anxious for a definite working-class policy in educational matters would, we anticipated, meet to discuss this, and then separate each to their own part of the country, and, between whiles, try to stir up a little interest in the question of controlling Ruskin College and the starting of educational classes among their fellows. Yet here we were on August 2nd,—Ruskin College abandoned—the Central Labour College established, and we of the rank and file being asked to suggest the best means to safeguard the democratic control of a real labour college. Who shall talk of the apathy of the working class, when, at six weeks’ notice, we were able to get representatives of 70 labour organizations to come to a purely business meeting, and that on the invitation of a League who were practically unknown! As for the members of the League they trooped in from all parts of the country—and they had their reward. They sat down to the first meals served in the new college; met and conversed, for the first time, with an old and valued friend—Professor Lester Ward; renewed their friendships of the past; made new friends; and last, but not least, they were able personally to assure “Dennis” of their abiding faith in him and their common cause—the advancement of the educational interests of the Labour Movement. And the evening meeting.—Who shall describe it! We certainly shall not attempt to do so. “Dennis” was great; Lester Ward more than fulfilled our expectations (and *that* means much); the audience were electric; and *how* they cheered the two speakers mentioned! Altogether the day’s proceedings was an exhibition of the faith and enthusiasm that moves mountains.

Conference Report

The Secretary read letter from advertised Chairman :

Dear Sir,

I regret very sincerely that I am prevented of having the pleasure to join you at the Conference Monday. Duties here make it impossible. I wish your Conference, and all the other meetings, a bumper success, and also, what is more important still, the Central Labour College. May it forge ahead.

Please accept my keen sorrow and apology.

Yours faithfully,

D. WATTS MORGAN

Mr. W. M. Watson, of the Scottish Miners, was thereupon elected chairman. He briefly welcomed the delegates, congratulating them on the purpose of the meeting, and expressed his gratification on the opportunity they had afforded him of occupying the chair at such an important Conference. He then called upon the Secretary to give his report.

A delegate moved that the Press be admitted. Being seconded, it was put to the vote and lost by a large majority. The SECRETARY then gave his report. He briefly traced the history of Ruskin College during the last four years; the sudden interest displayed in the College after the last General Election; the attempt to alter the curriculum in 1907 by replacing Sociology, Evolution and Logic with Literature, Temperance, and Rhetoric; the signing of a protest against the proposed change by all but one of the students in residence; and the withdrawal of the proposal as a result of the stand made by the students. He pointed out as a curious coincidence that this was about the time of the appointment of the Joint Committee on *Oxford and Working-Class Education*. The sudden conversion of the Executive Committee of the College to the importance of Sociology and Logic in the new curriculum of February 1908, and incidently mentioned that the reference to the "then Executive Committee" in the recent official circular was a deliberate attempt to hoodwink the Trade Unions, &c., as the "then Executive Committee" of 1907, was the same in composition as the one which existed in February 1908, and with one exception, the present Executive Committee. That sudden conversions of this sort are seldom lasting or sincere.

He then dealt with the introduction of Revision Papers into Ruskin College in July, 1908, and the objection of the students to the same on the score of being a step towards a closer connexion with the University, how during the dispute the students approached two members of the Executive Committee, Messrs. Ball & Carlyle, and made charges of unfair marking of assays by some of the lecturers, particularly Mr. Furniss, the Economics lecturer. The promise of

Messrs. Ball & Carlyle to investigate if the students agreed on unfairness in any particular essay, and their refusal to carry out their pledge when asked to do so over the very next essay set by Mr. Furniss.

The appointment of the Committee of Inquiry into the internal matters at Ruskin College was next dealt with, including the curious fact that this took place at the same time that the Joint Committee of *Oxford and Working-Class Education* made their report, which contained proposals for the offering of opportunities to students of Ruskin College to enter the University. How it was common knowledge that Mr. Hird did not favour *any* connexion, and the curious fact that the Committee of Inquiry recommended to the Executive Committee the calling for the resignation of Mr. Hird, in spite of the evidence brought before them being in his favour—with the exception of that of the members of the Staff. He pointed out the pettiness of the charges brought against Mr. Hird, and the ridiculous nature of the attempt to prove want of discipline, if any, to be due to Mr. Hird's incompetence. How the strike followed on the announcement of Mr. Hird's *enforced* resignation, and the declaration of the Executive Committee that the Trade Unions could never control Ruskin College, as according to Constitution it was bound to remain non-partisan. That the Executive Committee by stating that the students ought to have appealed to their Trade Unions before taking action, had shown that the Trade Unions had a right to be consulted on the matter, and that no such action had been taken by the Executive Committee themselves before taking such drastic action as the dismissal of Mr. Hird. That the students, recognizing that the last link which bound Ruskin College to the Labour Movement had been broken, took the bold step of trying to found a new college owned and controlled by the organized Labour Movement. The success of which had culminated in the taking of two houses 3 and 4 Bradmore Road, as a Central Labour College, and in the calling of this Conference to devise the best means of safeguarding the control and the securing of financial support to maintain it as a permanent part of the organized Working-class Movement. They had their Industrial and Political organization, and he trusted they would do all in their power to see that at no distant date, the Educational organization, as represented by the Central Labour College, was put in such a position as to be able to supply the movement with men and women who were thoroughly equipped theoretically for the part that the history of the ages had assigned to the modern working class, viz. the abolition of classes, and all that *it* implied for the uplifting of our common humanity.

After some questions and discussion the Secretary's Report was adopted, with two dissentients.

THE CHAIRMAN then called on Mr. Ablett to move a resolution on the second item on the Agenda, viz. "The Principle of Independence in Working Class Education."

MR. ABLETT then proposed the following resolution :

That this Conference of workers declares that the time has now arrived when the working class should enter the educational world to work out its own problems for itself.

In a short pithy speech he traced the development of the Labour Movement. In the latter end of the 18th century the workers declared for their organization into Trade Unions. In 1825 they won for themselves that right. That was the first great movement of the workers. In 1900 they formed an L. R. C. In 1906 they definitely entered the political arena, freed from the traditions of their past, as an independent force, standing squarely on their feet. In the first case it took about 40 years to make the movement strong, and secure the right to work out their industrial aims. In the second case it only took them six years. In November, 1908, a small section of workers declared for the control of working-class education by the organized workers, thus the "Plebs" League was founded. In August, 1909, only nine months later, they enter into the first fruits of their activity, by the founding of the Central Labour College, and make an epoch marking contribution to working-class thought, viz. that the working class control its own special education. This is the third great movement of the workers. Luck attaches to the number three, Comte says, all thought moves to its highest expression in three stages. In religion the highest expression is the Trinity. While even in the sordid but necessary world of finance the letters of magic are three—£ s. d. We are going to work out our own salvation in education, but we need not do so with fear and trembling. Our history, as a class, is a record of great victories whenever it has put on the garb of independence. First of all we had Lib.-Lab. organization; then we evolved into direct Labour representation. So it is with us. Ruskin College has done good work, and things went on peacefully until three years ago. Then a direct movement to unify the teaching of Ruskin College with the University brought out the opposition of the Trade Union Students. They considered it a betrayal. We are of those who believe that working-class education should be democratically controlled by the workers, and we claim that Ruskin College is in the nature of private ownership. Working-class education is too great, too vital in its importance, to be privately owned, even by archangels—and Ruskin College Executive Committee are not quite that.

MRS. BRIDGES ADAMS seconded the resolution in a fighting speech of great power and force, the University being treated to a terrific onslaught in her inimitable style.

C. WATKINS, A.S.R.S., an ex-student, dealt with the reasons why they should establish the New College. He ridiculed the plea that

the desire of Ruskin College was to give an impartial education, and declared that impartiality in knowledge was a myth. He was glad that the crisis had arisen. As the Taff Vale judgment had consolidated the workers in political independence, so would the crisis at Ruskin College consolidate them in educational independence. He had found that when the facts were explained to the workers they were invariably on the side of the new movement. The delegates must go round and educate the ordinary members and cease to bother themselves about the attitude of labour leaders.

Several delegates took part in the discussion that followed, nearly all the speakers showing that they possessed a keen grip of the subject and no small powers of expression.

THE CHAIRMAN then put the resolution, which was carried unanimously, amid prolonged applause.

MR. NOAH REES was then called upon to move the following resolution, on item three of Agenda, Central Labour College, viz :—

That this Conference of workers heartily approves of : (a) the taking of premises at 3 and 4 Bradmore Road for the purpose of starting a Central Labour College ; (b) the Provisional Committee already formed ; (c) the proposals for control contained in the provisions for two-thirds representation of Trade Unions on Board of Management (and all meetings of same), the election of three members of "Plebs" League and 1 resident student ; and Annual Delegate Meeting of subscribing organizations. It further pledges itself to do all in its power to secure the support, financial and otherwise, of labour organizations for Central Labour College.

Proceeding to speak on the resolution Mr. Rees pointed out that the Conference had agreed to the principle of independence in working-class education ; the Section *a* of resolution proposed to put this in concrete form. With regard to the carrying out of the necessary work before the establishment of the permanent Board they were asked to agree that this could be safely entrusted to the Provisional Committee already formed, Section *b* of resolution.

The names of the members already on Committee were as follows :

FRED BURGESS, I.L.P.
 ALEX. GORDON CAMERON, A.S.C. & J.
 FREDERIC CHARLES, O. Co-op. S.
 JAMES GORMAN, A.S.E.
 DENNIS HIRD, M.A.
 J. T. MACPHERSON, M.P.
 BEN MC. KAY, U.K.S.C.
 JOSEPH POINTER, M.P.
 GEORGE SIMS, S.D.P. & I.L.P.
 ALD. P. WALLS, N.F.B.

TRUSTEES FOR PREMISES :

DR. STANTON COIT. MRS. CHARLES. W. W. THORNE, M.P.

Later in the day three members would be elected from the "Plebs" League, these would probably be ex-students of Ruskin College, whose practical advice on Committees and Board would be of great assistance. He thought the names he had submitted would be sufficient guarantee of the bona-fides of the Movement to any Labour body. With regard to Section *c*, the promoters expected, nay hoped, that the Conference would make suggestions which would still further strengthen the principle of democratic control; he was prepared to say on their behalf that the question of democratic control could not be made too strong for them. If, after discussing the matter, they could arrive at a unanimous decision on the various points of the resolution he felt sure they would do all in their power to promote the welfare of the Central Labour College as an expression of democratic working-class control of their own special education. As an old student of Ruskin College, he was glad to take part in this movement which sought to minimize the failings that Ruskin College suffered from and to strengthen its good points; that could only be done by creating a new structure in line with, and part of, the great movement of the working class of which they were members. He had much pleasure in moving the resolution.

MR. C. PATTINSON in seconding the resolution, referred to Section *c* as containing the most important of all the proposals. This question of control was at the bottom of the whole dispute between Ruskin College and the students, past and present. There had been a marked desire on the part of our opponents to hide this issue under an avalanche of trivial matters, that proved the weakness of *their* case and the strength of *ours*. The whole resolution was in line with the modern Labour Movement, it also pointed to the only way out of the many difficulties and dangers which beset the working-class student in the old place (Ruskin College), dangers which had cost the students there, year after year, many hours of anxious thought. As an old student and an organized worker, he wanted to thank the present Ruskin College students on their splendid fight on behalf of Mr. Hird and the Labour Movement.

MR. W. L. COOK spoke in support of the resolution. He was in favour of democratic labour control of special education, this would allow of any anomalies being satisfactorily adjusted. As labour men coming away for twelve months to improve their education they did not want their time wasted by men practising the art of lecturing on them; the time of men coming away from the pit, the factory, and the workshop, should be well used, and the best available talent should be secured to teach those who were to go back to assist their fellows. A great deal of work would be needed to make the Central Labour College a success, but he felt sure it would be given freely.

A delegate moved that each section of resolution be discussed separately. This was agreed to.

After a few questions put to the Secretary, Section *a* was put to vote and carried unanimously.

A short discussion took place on Section *b*, and it was then put and carried unanimously.

The longest discussion of the Conference took place on Section *c*. Messrs. Ames, Chiswick; Bland, Shrewsbury; Simmons, Stafford; Keating, Luton; Davies, Wales; Jones, Wales; Watkins, Chesterfield; Reddeford, London; Craik, Oxford; George, Swindon; Groves, Stratford; Gill, Abertillery; Evans, Treorchy; Stevenson, Notts.; Flint, Rotherham; Ames, Stockwell; and others took part in the debate. Keating of Luton was successful in amending the first part of section so as to read: "two-thirds of representation on Board of Management shall be labour organizations on the same basis as the constitution of Labour Party, i.e. Trade Unions, Socialist and Co-operative Societies." As thus amended Section *c* was finally passed.

The following resolution was then put and carried unanimously, viz:—

That the Scheme of the Provisional Committee with regard to Central Labour College, as amended, be adopted.

The scheme as it now stands is as follows: Central Labour College to be opened at Bradmore Road, Oxford; a Board of management to be elected from subscribing organizations on the following basis, viz. Trade Union, Socialist and Co-operative Societies,* and to have, at least, two-thirds representation of directly elected delegates: three members of "Plebs" League and one resident student. Minimum number of Board to be 12. Administration to be subject to approval at Annual Delegate Meeting of contributing organizations.

* Basis of election will be the contribution of one or more scholarships, one vote on Board for every scholarship provided.

A hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman for his able conduct of the meeting closed the business of Conference.

"Plebs" Meet

MR. C. WATKINS, A.S.R.S., and ex-student of Ruskin College, was elected Chairman.

The Secretary gave his report, of which the following are the principal points: League started in October, 1908. Committee formed from resident students at Ruskin College to draft a working scheme. They suggested (1) an Annual Meet in August; (2) the starting of a monthly magazine, run by an Executive Committee of four resident students and a General Secretary; and the formation of

branches of the League in furtherance of the object of the League and for local educational purposes ; (3) That the League be called "Plebs," and that the magazine be named after the League ; (4) Membership fee to central fund be 1/- a member per annum ; Magazine 2/6 a year, post free ; (5) Object "to bring about a definite and more satisfactory connexion between Ruskin College and the Labour Movement." All these suggestions were subsequently accepted. The Executive Committee of students had reason to believe that they would be victimized by Ruskin College Authorities and in March dissolved the Committee after electing George Sims to manage the magazine and League business, a fictitious person "Brand" being called Editor on purpose to mislead the authorities of Ruskin College. After the "strikers" returned to Ruskin College they held a meeting at which it was decided to hand over the business in connexion with the proposed new Labour College to the "Plebs" League and to authorize George Sims to act for the students in residence. This necessitated a vote of members of League as to changing the object of League in accordance with the changed situation. This was done and the new object was carried with only three dissentients. The various steps taken on behalf of the new object were then dealt with. That recently owing to a letter sent to Monmouth Western Valley District of S.W.M.F., and signed by three members of the League, students at Ruskin College, in which an attack was made on the League and its object, these persons had been notified that their names were removed from the books of the League.

After several questions had been asked and answered, and the circular letter sent by the expelled members had been read : the report was unanimously adopted.

It was also decided to elect three members of the League to Provisional Committee on the invitation of that body. The members elected being Mrs. Bridges Adams, Edward Gill, and Noah Ablett.

The election of Officers took place. Result will be seen on back page of Magazine cover.

The new Executive were instructed to determine on the advisability of issuing a pamphlet on the dispute at Ruskin College, &c. (They subsequently met and agreed to issue one under the title of "The Burning Question of Working-Class Education). Also to consider the financial position and make suggestions.

Fuller details next month

READ—The Burning Question of Working-Class Education : Being an account of Ruskin College Dispute, its causes and consequences. Edited by William H. Seed (ex-student) Price One Penny.

A Great Victory

WHAT is known in this district (Monmouth) as the "Ruskin College Crisis" was once more brought to the notice of the Western Valleys Miners' Council as a consequence of a report dealing with the "Plebs" Conference held at Oxford during the August holidays. The delegate gave a very interesting account of the proceedings which led to the necessity of forming a Labour College at Oxford, and the calling of the conference to discuss the details of control, &c.

He described the condition of affairs at Ruskin College at the present time, and reported that he was unfavourably impressed with the whole atmosphere of that institution. There appeared to be no discipline, and the place was in a state of undelightful anarchy. He conversed with the two students who were present at the last District Meeting and who then assured the delegates that they could obtain the sworn testimony of twenty students to the effect that Mr. Dennis Hird incited the students to "strike." They refused his invitation to appear before a commissioner of oaths and make a declaration to that effect. They also denied that they attempted to thrust such an inference upon the District delegates. However, an affidavit had been distributed round the District which was very wordy, but did not prove Mr. Hird's connexion with the "strike." He then dealt with the principle underlying the Central Labour College, and concluded by recommending the District to support the new institution. After some questions had been asked and answered, Mr. Gill (ex-student) and Mr. Hodges (present student) addressed the meeting; both advocated the support of the new college, and Mr. Hodges gave the delegates some interesting details of the course of events at Ruskin College since the strike. Many of them denounced the tactics of the "minority" and the Ruskin College authorities towards the new College and Mr. Hird. Every delegate expressed sympathy for, and full confidence in, Mr. Hird, and also their utter disgust with the literature from the Ruskin College side.

After further discussion it was unanimously agreed that we re-affirm our previous resolution *re* supporting Central Labour College; also that Mr. Hodges take up residence there on September the 8th. That the officials send along immediately a sum equal to a 1d. levy per member of the whole District to assist in the good work. The Secretary was further instructed to write to Ruskin

College authorities intimating that the District had severed its connexion with that institution and wished for no further correspondence with them.

Truly it is a glorious victory ! Many men have worked heroically for the cause, outside of the "Plebs" League, and while the supporters of Ruskin College may sneer and belittle the faith that moves mountains, we believe that the Western Valleys men have turned their faces towards the goal of freedom.

JOHN DAVIES, Abercarn.

The Anthracite District, South Wales Miners' Federation, 14000 members, have also decided to transfer their students from Ruskin College to Central Labour College, and further to levy themselves 3d. a member in support of the latter institution.

By the Way

All further acknowledgements of the Students' Collecting Sheet Fund will appear in Annual Balance Sheet of Central Labour College.

The Central Labour College opens with 19 students. The regular work commencing on the 14th inst.

The Gray Lodge, S. W. M. F., have passed a resolution protesting against the scandalous misrepresentations contained in the latest circular from "the minority." The description of the "Plebs" Executive as Anti-Trade Union is declared to be false, and Edward Gill's work in the Federation since its inception is held to be sufficient answer to such charges. Similar protests from other places have reached us.

During Congress week at Ipswich a meeting is to be held in support of Central Labour College. Mr. Robert Smillie will take the chair, and will be supported by Mrs. Bridges Adams, and Messrs. Alex. Gordon Cameron, Dennis Hird, J. T. Macpherson, M.P., Joseph Pointer, M.P., John Williams, M.P., and George Barker.

Correspondence Classes in most of the subjects taught at Central Labour College, will be started in a few weeks. A word to the wise is sufficient.

Photo post cards of the C.L.C. will be ready in a few days 3d. each 5 for 1s. Printed cards 6 a 1½d. 1s. 2d. per hundred. Post free in all cases.

Special Notice to "Plebs"

The Executive Committee have inquired into the financial position and have decided to recommend a voluntary levy of 1/- a member to meet the deficit which exists and to assist in the publication of a pamphlet. No special notice will be sent out, but each member, if able, is asked to send the levy to G. Sims,

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.

CHAPTER V.—*Continued.*

"**Y**OU speak truly," rejoined Joel, "Margarid has a brave heart and a wise head. Often her opinion is better than mine . . . I gladly say so . . . But this time I am right. Whatever may happen to the rest of Gaul, never will the Romans set foot in our old Brittany. There are her rocks, her marshes, her woods, her sand banks—above all her Bretons to defend her."

At these words of her husband Mamm' Margarid shook her head disapprovingly; all the men of the family, however, loudly applauded their brenn's words.

CHAPTER VI.—THE STORY OF GAUL.

When the noisy and martial ardour, evoked by the boastful words of the brenn of the tribe of Karnak had subsided, the traveller was seen sitting in sombre silence. He looked up and said:

"Very well, one more and last story, but let this one fall upon the hearts of you all like burning brass, seeing that the wise words of this household's matron have proved futile."

All looked with surprise at the stranger, who with sombre and severe mien began his story with these words:

"Once upon a time, as far back as two or three thousand years, there lived a family here in Gaul. Whence did it come, to fill the vast solitudes that to-day are so populous? It doubtlessly came from the heart of Asia, that ancient cradle of the human races, now, however, hidden in the night of antiquity. That family ever preserved a type peculiar to itself, and found with no other people of the world. Loyal, hospitable, generous, vivacious, gay, inclined to humour, loving to tell, above all, to hear stories, intrepid in battle, daring death more heroically than any other nation, because its religion taught it what death was—such were that family's virtues. Giddy-headed, vagabond, presumptuous, inconsistent, curious after novelty, and greedier yet of seeing than of conquering unknown countries, as easily uniting as

falling apart, too proud and too fickle to adjust its opinions to those of its neighbours, or if consenting thereto, incapable of long marching in concert with them, although common and vital interests be at stake—such are that family's vices. In point of its virtues and in point of its vices, thus has it always been since the remotest centuries; thus is it to-day; thus will it be to-morrow."

"Oh, oh! If I am not much mistaken," broke in the brenn smiling, "all of us, Gauls though we may be, must have some cousin red with that family—"

"Yes," said the stranger, "to its own misfortune—and to the joy of its enemies—such has been and such is to-day the character of our own people!"

"But at least admit, despite such a character, the dear Gallic people has made its way well through the world. Few are the countries where the inquisitive vagabond, as you call it, did not promenade his shoes, with his nose in the air, his sword at his side—"

"You are right. Such is its spirit of adventure: always marching ahead towards the unknown, rather than to stop and build. Thus, to-day, one-third of Gaul is in the hands of the Romans, while some centuries ago the Gallic race occupied through its headlong conquests, besides Gaul, England, Ireland, Upper Italy, the banks of the Danube, and the countries along the sea border as far east and north as Denmark. Nor yet was that enough. It looked as if our race was to spread itself over the whole world. The Gauls of the Danube went into Macedonia, into Thrace, into Thessaly. Others of them crossed the Bosphorus, and the Hellespont, reached Asia Minor, founded New Gaul, and thus became the arbiters of all the kingdoms of the East."

"So far, meseems," rejoined the brenn, "we have nothing to regret over our character that you so severely judge."

"And what is left of those senseless battles, undertaken by the pride of the kings who then reigned over the Gauls?" the stranger proceeded, looking around. "Have not the distant conquests slipped from us? Have not our implacable and ever more powerful enemies, the Romans, raised all the peoples against us? Have we not been compelled to abandon those useless possessions—Asia, Greece, Germany, Italy? That is the net result of so much heroism and so much blood! That is the pass to which we have been brought by the ambition of the kings, who usurped the power of the druids!"

"To that I have nothing to say. You are right. There was no need of promenading so far away only to soil the soles of our shoes with the blood and the dust of foreign lands. But if I am not mistaken, it was at about that time that the sons of the brave Ritha

Gaür, who had a blouse made for himself of the beards of the kings whom he shaved, seeing in these the butchers of the people and not its shepherds, overthrew the royalty."

"Yes, thanks to the gods, an epoch of real grandeur, of peace and of prosperity succeeded the barren and bloody conquests of the kings. Disembarrassed of its useless possessions, reduced to rational limits—its natural frontiers—the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees and the Ocean—the republic of the Gauls became the queen and envy of the world. Its fertile soil, cultivated as we so well know how, produced everything in abundance; the rivers were covered with merchant vessels; gold, silver and copper mines increased its wealth every day; large cities rose everywhere. The druids, spreading light in all directions, preached union to the provinces, and set the example by convoking once a year in the centre of Gaul solemn assemblies, at which the general interests of the country were considered. Each tribe, each canton, each town, elected its own magistrates; each province was a republic which, according to the druid plan, merged into the great Republic of the Gauls, and thus constituted one powerful body through the union of all."

"The fathers of our grandfathers saw those happy days, friend guest."

"And their sons saw only ruins and misfortune! What has happened? The accursed stock of dethroned kings joins the stock of their former and no less accursed clients of seigneurs, and all of them, irritated at having been deposed of their authority, hope for restoration from the public misfortunes, and exploit with infamous perfidy our innate pride and lack of discipline, which, under the powerful influence of the druids, were being steadily corrected. The rivalries between province and province, long allayed re-awakened; jealousies and hatreds sprang up anew; everywhere the structure of union began to crumble. For all this the kings do not re-ascend the throne. Many of their descendants are even judicially executed. But they have unchained internal feud. Civil war flares up. The more powerful provinces seek to subjugate the weaker. Thus, towards the end of the last century, the Marseillians, the descendants of the exiled Greeks to whom Gaul generously assigned the territory on which they built their town, sought to assume the rôle of sovereignty. The province rose against the town; finding herself in danger, Marseilles called the Romans to her aid. They came, not to sustain Marseilles in her contemplated iniquity, but to themselves take possession of the region, a purpose that they succeeded in, despite the the prodigies of valour with which they were opposed. Established in Province, the Romans built the town of Aix, and thus founded their first colony on our soil—"

"Oh, a curse upon the Marseillians!" cried Joel. "It was thanks to those sons of Greeks that the Romans gained a foothold in Gaul!"

"By what right can we curse the people of **Marseilles**? Must not also those provinces be cursed which, since the decline of the republic, thus allowed one of their sisters to be overpowered and subjugated? But retribution was swift. Encouraged by the indifference of the Gauls, the Romans took possession of Auvergne, and later of the Dauphinè, and a little later also of Languedoc and Vivarais despite the heroic defence of their peoples, who, besides being divided among themselves, were left to their own resources. Thus the Romans became masters of almost all southern Gaul; they govern it by their proconsuls and reduce its people to slavery. Do the other provinces at last take alarm at these ominous invasions of Rome that push ever forward and threaten the very heart of Gaul? No! No! Relying upon their own courage, they say as you, Joel, did shortly ago: 'The south lies far away from the North, the East lies far away from the West.' This notwithstanding, our race, which is heedless and presumptuous enough to fail to prepare in advance, and when it is still time, against foreign domination, always has the belated courage of rebelling when the yoke is actually placed upon its neck. The provinces that have been subjugated by the Romans, break out in resolute rebellion; these are smothered in their own blood. Our disasters follow swiftly upon one another. The Burgundians, incited thereto by the descendants of the old kings, take up arms against the Frank-Compté, and invoke the aid of the Romans. The Frank-Compté, unable to make head against such an alliance, requests reinforcements from the Germans of the other side of the Rhine. Thus these barbarians of the North are taught the road to Gaul, and after bloody battles with the very people who invited them, remain masters of both Burgundy and Frank-Compté. Last year, the Swiss, encouraged by the example of the Germans, make an irruption into the Gallic provinces that had been conquered by the Romans. Thereupon, Julius Cæsar is appointed proconsul; he hastens from Italy; overthrows the Swiss in their mountains; drives the Germans out of Burgundy and Frank-Compté; takes possession of these provinces, now exhausted by their long struggles with the Romans. It was a change of masters. And finally, at the beginning of this year a portion of Gaul shakes off its lethargy and scents the dangers that threatens the still independent provinces. Brave patriots, wanting neither Romans nor Germans for their masters—Galba among the Gauls of Belgium, Boddig-nat among the Gauls of Flanders—induce the people to rise in mass against Cæsar. The Gauls of Vermandois and those of Artois also rise in rebellion. Together they all march against the Romans! Oh, it was a great and terrible battle, that battle of the Sambre!" cried the unknown traveller with exaltation..

(To be continued.)