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The
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MAGAZINE



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MONTHLY

TWOPENCE

The "Plebs" League

Object

To further the interests of Independent working-class education as a partizan effort to improve the position of Labour in the present, and ultimately to assist in the abolition of wage-slavery.

Methods

The holding of an Annual Meet: the issuing of a monthly Magazine, mainly devoted to the discussion of the various questions of Labour, theoretical and practical: the formation of local branches and classes for the study of social science, in connexion with the Central Labour College, and in every way to assist in the development of the latter institution, and its maintenance of a definite educational policy.

Membership

Open to all who endorse the object of the League.


Each Member shall pay 1/- a year to the Central Fund towards meeting the expenses in connexion with the Annual Meet, &c.

Management

An Executive of five members elected annually, and the Editor of Magazine, who shall be responsible as to publication and meets, &c.

The Magazine shall be 2d. per copy, 2½d. post free.

Subscriptions payable in advance: Quarterly 7½d., Half Yearly 1/3, Yearly 2/6

 The Seventh Annual Meet will be held in London (Bank Holiday), August, 1915

G. SIMS, Secretary-Treasurer

To whom all P.O.'s should be made payable

13 Penywern Road, Earls Court,
London, S.W.

THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

"I can promise to be candid but not impartial."

Vol. VII

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EDITORIAL

THE "new chapter" in the history of the C.L.C. is really and truly about to open. At the Special Meeting of delegates held at the conclusion of the A.G.M. of the National Union of Railwaymen, the resolution to alter the Society's rules so as to enable it to share in the management and control of the College was carried by 51 to 2. So that the long-drawn-out negotiations which have kept us all in suspense for just over twelve months have now (let us hope and pray!) ended—and ended entirely satisfactorily. It is unnecessary for us again to go over the history of those negotiations, since *Plebs* readers have month by month been kept informed of their progress. We need only congratulate the members of the N.U.R. on their evident determination to see that their own wishes—clearly enough expressed at last year's A.G.M. at Swansea—should be carried into effect, in spite of lawyers' difficulties and all the other irritatingly trivial obstacles in the path. We congratulate

them on their clear perception of the need for Independent Working-Class Education, and on the heartening way in which, since its very foundation, they have steadily rallied to the support of the one real Labour educational centre in the country. And we are quite certain they will never have cause to regret the decision—the refreshingly emphatic decision—which they have just made.

* * * * *

It is unnecessary, also, to say much in these Notes about the bearing of these important developments in the history of the College on the aims and policy of the Plebs' League and the Magazine.

Noah Ablett in our May number, Winifred Horrabin **Ourselves** last month, and W. H. Mainwaring in the present issue, have dealt with this—for us—vitaly important question from various points of view; and we trust that, as a result of their articles, a satisfactory discussion of the subject (and some definite decisions) will be ensured at the Plebs' Meet. One point, however, we must emphasise here. Now that the College is finally and definitely out of danger, it is the turn of the *Plebs Magazine* to appeal for assistance. If the League is to continue to exist—and that it must do so is surely plain—as a critical as well as a propagandist body, the Magazine is the most effective weapon it can wield. And the flat truth is that, quite apart from “needs” and “policies,” the Magazine *cannot* go on unless every reader is prepared to make some effort, and make it soon. If you think, that the *Plebs* is “worth while,” try and get a new subscriber. It is hardly necessary to have had a C.L.C. education to see that, if everyone can do that, our circulation is instantly doubled. If you have a better plan than that, bring it along—or send it along—to the Meet. But don't—unless you have made up your mind that it doesn't matter whether the *Plebs* goes on or not—put this copy down when you've read these words, and think no more about it. The matter is urgent.

* * * * *

ON another page will be found a list of donations to the College received recently. To these friends, who **Acknowledgements** by their generous help, have enabled the College to tide over the long and difficult period of waiting, our heartiest thanks are due. J. F. H.

We hope to publish at an early date an article by Mr. Vernon Hartshorn on “The Work of the South Wales Miners' Federation During the Past Five Years.”

Members who are in arrears with League or Magazine Subs. should endeavour to clear their accounts before July 28th to allow of Accounts being prepared for the Annual Meet on Aug. 1st.

Should the Workers be Organized by Industries ?

The question of the small craft unions in the mining industry and the larger craft unions which still take a proportion of workers on railways from the N.U.R. is rapidly developing into a clear-cut struggle between the old and new methods of Trade Union organization. Mr. Barker's article is an interesting consideration of the problem as it affects the miners.

IN this short article I shall endeavour to prove "That the time has arrived when all workers in an industry should be members of the organization pertaining to that industry."

I believe that all workers in or about mines should be members of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain ; that all workers on or about Railways should be members of the National Union of Railwaymen. And this, of course, is not to apply only to miners and railwaymen, but to the workers in all industries. One Industry, One Organization.

When dealing with the problem of organization this seems to be eminently desirable, reasonable, and practicable. To-day we have too many unions and too little unity. As a member of the Miners' Federation, I hope I shall be excused if I deal mainly with the organization of men employed in or about mines. What is known as the M. F. G. B. is numerically one of the largest organizations of a single industry in the world. I believe its membership is well over 600,000. Large and powerful as it undoubtedly is, it is not so powerful as it might be if all the workers employed in or about mines were members of the same organization. The number so employed is over 1,000,000. In this number officials are included. At this stage I do not think it is desirable that officials should be members ; when the mines are nationalized, or controlled and managed by the workers, the official will no longer be the paid agent of the capitalist, and will fall naturally into line with the workers in the industry. Until then the officials should be outside the organization. But this is only a detail and not of primary importance. Eliminating the officials, there are probably from 35 to 40 per cent. of the workers employed in or about mines who are not members of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain. This is a formidable number, the inclusion of which would add materially to the power and prestige of the Federation, while the workers would stand to gain more by becoming members.

These outsiders are mainly employed on the surface, and are in various organizations, such as the General Labourers' Union, the Surface Craftsmen's Association, the Gas Workers' Union,

the Navvies' Union, the Winding Enginemen's Association, &c., When trouble arises owing to disputes in these unions, sometimes thousands of miners have to stand by these men and remain idle until the dispute is settled, or the men would be defeated if the miners continued working. On the other hand, the miners fight for some great principle and win it, and the men outside the Federation at once participate in the benefits without fighting or paying for them. In my own district we had a notable case where 2,500 miners were idle nine weeks for the purpose of obtaining weekly payment of wages. At the end of the strike the men won; wages were paid weekly, and nearly 300 men who were members of other unions received the weekly wage benefit though they were working while the miners were on strike—virtually blacklegging the miners. Later, the Miners' Federation got an amendment inserted in a Mines Bill before Parliament, making it compulsory to pay wages weekly where the men decided by ballot vote in favour of that arrangement. This has now become law, and furnishes one more proof that these subsidiary unions are largely parasitical and live on the vitality of the larger body.

These craft unions have not only been detrimental to the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, but they have been the chief obstacle to the welfare of their own members. While the miners have been able to secure a Minimum Wage Act, raising the wages of the lowest paid workmen as much as a shilling per day, many of these skilled craftsmen are still on very low wages and are outside the pale of the Minimum Wage Act, and the Miners' Eight Hours Act. No more striking evidence of ineffectuality can be found than this line of demarcation drawn by the legislator between members of one strong Industrial Union and members of a number of weak Unions. It is well known how these unions retain their members, viz., by taking a lower contribution and giving benefits largely of a friendly society or burial society character. As trade unions they are practically helpless; at least that is my experience of them.

I have dealt rather lengthily with the material benefit side of the question, because it is the one string largely harped upon by the propagandists of these subsidiary unions. From the standpoint of organization there is absolutely no case for them. If unity means anything, it means "One and Indivisible," as the aim and end to be attained in organizing the workers. This is certainly the purport of the following resolution passed at the M. F. G. B. Annual Conference at Southport in 1911, carried by an overwhelming majority:—"We consider that all workmen employed in and about collieries should belong to the same organization." Never was there greater need for closing up the ranks of the workers than now, when they are attacked on all sides by vested interests and huge combines of capital; and betrayed by self-

seeking leaders who have thrown over the principles and constitution of the Labour Party rather than refuse office in a capitalistic class-ridden Government. One consolation the workers have : No one is able to bribe *them*. Whoever may sell the pass to the enemy it will not be sold by the workers themselves. Organized in their millions in their industries, no Government, no capitalists, are rich enough to bribe them.

What has been written here about the miners applies with equal force to the railwaymen, the transport workers, the sailors and every other industry. Let us organize our industrial workers to a man ; and *then* federate our organizations, and prepare for the great work of taking over the industries, controlling and working them, for the common good of all. This is the only way the wage system will be abolished. Through the power of organization the worker is invincible ; strange as it may seem, the workers are the only class that have not realised that. The C.L.C. will help them to understand.

The old type of labour leader, with his collective bargaining ideals, is being superseded, as quickly as the undertaker will allow, by a new mind, instructed in the principles of economics, and therefore with some scientific reason for his sure and certain belief that "there is no wealth but life," and that the future of the world belongs not to the idle rich, but to labour.

GEORGE BARKER

(Miners' Agent, Abertillery, Mon.)

A "Moderate" on Peace and War

DR. GILBERT SLATER, the Principal of Ruskin College, has just published a book* based upon six lectures delivered by him at Manchester College, Oxford (a theological seminary) in the autumn of last year. The question which Dr. Slater proposes to answer is in his own words :—"How can we make peace permanently?" With that end in view he undertakes an investigation of the forces which make for war and for peace, an investigation for which he thinks there is a great need. The existing literature upon the subject he declares to be inadequate for two reasons ; either it is propagandist as opposed to scientific ; or it exaggerates or underestimates the influence of the economic factor.

Here the author shows a typical and exceedingly fashionable way of thinking, current at Oxford and other laboratories of bourgeois thought. Propaganda may or may not be scientific.

* *Peace and War in Europe*, by Gilbert Slater, M.A., D.Sc. (Constable, 2/6 net.)

All working-class propaganda is of course in the eyes of the class against whom it is directed, unscientific, one-sided, narrow. And the majority of the "intellectuals" who never have and never will understand the working-class, so long as they think according to the conventional standard, share the view that workmen are barbarians who must remain mentally deficient unless they are taken in hand and tamed by the "professors." Only in this way is the "scientific spirit" assured. As has been repeatedly shown in these pages, "the opposite to the appearance" is nearer to the truth. I do not say that no good thing can come out of Oxford. The good grains, however, are so outweighed by the unscientific chaff surrounding them, that the faculty to distinguish the one from the other will best be cultivated on a plane independent of Oxford. As for "the economic factor," its association with the propagandist and its disfavour in the view of those who thrive so well under its existing manifestation, can easily be understood. Well-founded is the shyness of our ruling powers for scientific economic investigation!

I would suggest to the author of *Peace and War in Europe* that whether a literature is adequate or otherwise is to be determined, not by the standard of whether that literature is propagandist or not, but by the only scientific test, the material test of practice. Certainly, the eclecticism which Dr. Slater favours is unscientific, although this same eclecticism can be scientifically explained. This phenomenon has its roots in the growth of the proletariat. The growing power of labour makes it more necessary to secure practical and, to this end, theoretical reconciliations between capital and labour. So in economic theory the so-called "humane" conceptions are developed, the content of which presents itself as a series of factors in the creation of value. Labour is a factor, capital another factor, scarcity still another, and, occasionally, nature is invoked as one of the economic deities. According to this standard, you are supposed to be scientific in the degree that you are moderate, and the extent of your moderation consists in the number of factors you can array in the explanation of a phenomenon. If, as Herbert Spencer once suggested, in reply to some one who declared that the true conclusion was not the extreme conclusion but the one half-way between the extremes, you are asked which way the wind blows, east to west or west to east, you should answer, a little of both.

Dr. Slater classifies the forces that make for war or for peace under four different heads:

- (1). Biological and Economic.
- (2). Religion.
- (3). Political (Nationality and Empire).
- (4). Militarism.

This classification, and the author's treatment of the different categories, serve to show how far distant he is from the unity of real principle in the domain of historic interpretation. He stops short at the threshold of the, at first sight, confused spectacle, instead of proceeding on the way towards resolving the groups which he has abstracted into the unity of the economic substructure.

It is of course impossible within the space at my disposal to offer a detailed criticism of the author's reasoning under the aforementioned heads. Take, however, the sociological principle which he lays down as containing the fourth root of war, viz., "that a social necessity tends to create a social organization, and that every social organization acquires a sort of independent life of its own which it seeks to further even at the expense of the general life." He instances in proof of this principle the organizations which find their function in the conduct of war, e.g., armies, fleets, and the firms manufacturing their supplies. But the author might just as well have applied this principle to all his other factors, seeing that they likewise denote special organizations—religion, for example. Apart from this, however, I am of the opinion that his sociological principle, in so far as it is held by him to contain "a root of war," is incorrect.

I do not for a moment dispute that a social necessity tends to create a social organization, nor do I dissent from the further fact that such an organization may in time begin to lead a life independent of society. But if this specific organization, be it militarist or religious, is to be able to re-act upon society and influence it in the special, militarist or religious, direction, that *will depend precisely upon the degree in which this organization meets the necessity from which it springs*. If that be true, we have, therefore, the very opposite of what the author elevates to the dignity of a sociological principle. The more this organization acquires an "independent life," the less can it further its own interests "at the expense of the general life," the more will it visibly contradict the needs of the general life and appear superfluous.

The lecture on Religion and War makes it plain how much the author is deceived by the semblance. He tears religions out of their context, isolates them, gives them an independent life, and makes them produce wars; e.g., "the preaching of Protestantism in Northern Europe produced the wars of the Huguenots in France; the wars of the foundation of the Dutch Republic in the Netherlands; and, most important of all, the Thirty Years' War, which ravaged Germany between 1618 and 1648." Apparently for Dr. Slater as for a good many more, a war is not an economic war, that is to say, does not spring from economic conditions unless those who carry it on are conscious that therein is the root of their struggle. Because Martin Luther and his contemporaries were not aware that the Reformation was but an episode in the

historical development of bourgeois society, because the reformer was wholly wrapt up in the ideology of "true Christianity" and saw himself only as an agent of the Divine necessity, therefore, we should place this struggle of the Reformation to the account of a religious force independent of the economic life and development of that time. In opposition to this method, which attempts to explain social existence out of the consciousness, the scientific method judges and explains this consciousness and the acts into which it was translated, by the conditions of existence.

Dr. Slater joins with the cheap-jack literary hawkers who have made the agreeable discovery that German aggression is due to the religious influence, in Germany, of "pagan" Odinism. "We feel it somewhat of a shock" he says in the second lecture, "to realize that the Kaiser believes in and worships a Deity whose special care it is to foster the Hohenzollern Empire and hallow all that is done for its aggrandizement, however atrocious in our eyes." "We have no difficulty in identifying the specially German god, the old ally of the Hohenzollern dynasty with Odin." In another place he tells us, "Odinism preached war for its own sake." It did nothing of the kind. It exalted *war for the sake of the worshippers* of Odin, and the author has just told us that the Odinism of the Kaiser exists for the fostering "of the Hohenzollern Empire." But Dr. Slater's superficial scrutiny of the essential facts of religion *does* disclose the egoistic nature of religion in general, of his own as well as of the Kaiser's so-called Odinism. *Man is for the gods only because the gods are for man.* The god is the ego of his followers. What about old Jehovah? Does he not compete with Odin? "Jehovah is my strength." "God Himself hearkened unto the word of Joshua for Jehovah himself fought for Israel." "Jehovah is a God of war." In this religion of Israel we find the most narrow-minded-egoism. There also is disclosed *the identity of God and man.* When men fall out, their disputes, so long as they believe in religion, are necessarily translated into religious disputes. Each group of combatants exalts its aims to the dignity of holy aims and degrades the aims of its opponents to the lowest hell; each claims its cause to be righteous and its god to be the true god. So it is to-day in Europe. Our home-bred ecclesiastics proclaim from their pulpits that the Allies are fighting for Christianity, that God is with us and that Jehovah is no Junker.

"In spite of all temptations
To belong to other nations
He remains," etc.

These differences about religion reflect the differences between men. The polytheism of European Christianity endures on the basis of the various European nationalities. **Le bon Dieu est*

* The good God is French,

Francais, is a French proverb. The real God of a people, wrote Feuerbach, is the *point d'honneur** of its nationality.

Dr. Slater is just as unfortunate in his investigations into the "fourth root" of the war. The present war, he says, in his third lecture, "is primarily and directly the result of the clash of Imperialist and Nationalist ideals." The economic point of view is, as in the second lecture, subordinated and the "ideals" are discussed as if they floated in the air. When it comes therefore to answering the question which he proposed at the outset—how to make peace permanently—he has nothing better than the paraphernalia of bourgeois pacifism to offer. The economic forces being subordinated in the premises, his conclusions show little else in the way of remedy but certain superstructural re-arrangements. His position in this respect is remarkably Angellic. *Peace and War in Europe* and Norman Angell's *Arms and Industry*, are both distinctly uneconomic and the primary influences are, in both works, regarded as "ideal" in character.

Bourgeois pacifism is the "great illusion." I agree with Walling that war can only be abolished by abolishing the causes of war, that these causes are primarily economic, that they are not to be exorcised with phrases nor conjured away by such devices as Hague tribunals, international police, international courts of honour or abolition of secret diplomacy. Militarism cannot be abolished by these pacifist miracles.

W.W.C.

The Plebs' Next Step

TO the readers of the *Plebs Magazine*, who constitute that indefinable something known as the Plebs League, the new chapter in the history of the Central Labour College, which is, one trusts, about to be entered upon, must be a matter of great importance; for with it is involved the future of the League itself.

The objects of the League are very briefly and concisely put:—

"To further the interests of working-class education as a partizan effort to improve the position of Labour in the present, and ultimately to assist in the abolition of wage slavery."

All the activities and energy of the League hitherto have been expended in the effort to establish the College, and from this point of view we have every reason to be proud of the work done. To those individuals who have been called upon to sacrifice most and to bear the brunt of the struggle is now given the greater pleasure of realising that all was not in vain. I am not, however,

* Point of Honour.

concerned here so much with eulogising those individuals as with attempting to point out some of the problems with which we are now faced.

The very fact that we have been concerned in the past mainly with the College, must now force us to find new outlets for our activities. The success of the College has created a new situation. In the past we tried to point out the need for the College, and a knowledge of the principles upon which it was based. In order to make secure the all important financial basis these principles had to be propagated amongst trade unionists and their support secured. Having succeeded thus far, we have now arrived at a stage when one eye, so to speak, must be kept continually on the College itself. At any moment we may be called upon to jealously defend our basic principles against attack, not from outside, but from within. To guard against any falling away from these principles must be one of our future responsibilities.

As a League we have always existed independently of the College, in theory, but in practice both organizations have been controlled more or less by the same individuals in different capacities, and, while the Magazine is not officially the College organ, it has made itself almost indispensable to its welfare.

It is essential that—temporarily—we become revisionists, i.e., we must thoroughly overhaul the whole machinery and activities of the League. It is more by luck than organization that we have muddled through many times in the past, but this will not suffice for the future.

The question, then, which forces itself first upon one's mind is: Are the present activities of the League sufficient to keep it together under the altered circumstances consequent upon the changed conditions at the College? The more consideration I give this, the less do I think so. It has been the critical position of the College which spurred us on these last few years, and now these conditions are changed we have need of some definite plan to work upon; otherwise, our object might just as well be "The nationalization of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, &c." We must prove that we are out not merely to repeat a formula, but to take up some definite, practical work. This must be done, otherwise I hardly think we shall see another Annual Meet (unless our creditors take it upon themselves to call us together).

In the second place, the relation of the League to the College must be considered. It has already been pointed out that had it not been for the League there would have been no College. Equally true it is to say, that had it not been for the men at the College there would have been no League, since it is from there that the League has been managed and directed, together with

the heavy work connected with the publishing of the magazine. We have now, however, to ask ourselves, not only whether this can continue, but, assuming its possibility, whether it is desirable that it should be so. On the one hand, we may have, as Ablett suggested, "the governing body looking askance at us." On the other, we may be called upon to strongly criticise both that body, the curriculum, and even the Staff of the College, at any time. Therefore, I think it necessary that we should have some managing body, or committee, *outside* the College (anyone reading the back cover of the magazine would be led to believe that such a body already existed).

In the third place, there is the magazine itself, with a debt, which refuses to dwindle much, despite moderately successful efforts to increase the circulation. I have heard it said that the magazine was started, and is presumably kept going also, for the "intellectuals." The only comment necessary upon which is, that if this is so, then they have failed both to look after its circulation and to pay for it. I feel extremely grateful to Frank Horrabin for rescuing it from the "intellectuals," as it is becoming almost possible, for one who has no pretensions to being of their number, to read it with some measure of appreciation. But whatever may be said, one way or the other, about the reading matter, it must be admitted on all sides that its loss would be a serious blow to the College, and would destroy the only remnant of an organization that we possess. Despite the fact that this subject has been discussed many times before with small results, I still believe it is possible to establish the *Plebs Magazine* upon a somewhat sounder foundation than it is at present. To do it means the co-operation of all. It is no one man's job.

These three points of mine I have not attempted to enlarge upon, but I do think that, along with other proposals which may be forthcoming, they will serve as food for thought between now and August, and as a basis for the Agenda at the Meet:—

- (I.) What shall our future activities be?
- (II.) The administration of the League and its relation to the College.
- (III.) The position of the Magazine.

W. H. MAINWARING.

"The ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought."—MARX.

"If one wishes to be epigrammatic one must relinquish the hope of being veracious."—H. SEATON MERRIMAN.

"The ignorant man always adores what he cannot understand."—
LOMBROSO.

Letters on Logic

ECONOMICS

ELEVENTH LETTER OF THE SECOND SERIES

THE astronomers, you know, have divided the multitude of stars into groups, which division was assisted by fantasy. There exist a "Wain," a Little Bear, a Great Bear, and so on. Imagine that the different constellations are coloured on a map and the numberless, nameless army in the background drawn in grey, it is plain how such a grouping serves to simplify matters. And we have only to group the swarm of economic facts in order to clarify the confusion. I should like to emphasise that all real perception consists in such grouping. Our logic is a theory of perception.

The few main constellations do not exhaust astronomy; there remain not only the many unnamed bodies in the background, but also orbits and distances which have to be measured, and substances to be investigated. Nevertheless, the fact remains that grouping is the very essence of science. If we can only plainly colour the chief constellations of economics, the confusion becomes clear. If there still remains a grey background, it only proves once more that science does not exhaust the inexhaustible. Our limited knowledge always proves the inexhaustible background of science.

Let us now return to the colouring of our economic constellations. Production has a double purpose. It has to create objects for the satisfaction of the wants of society, for consumption, in fact. And it has to accumulate the products of labour in the form of wealth. It is unnecessary to ask why we must consume, but why do we accumulate? Answer: because accumulated wealth increases our productiveness. We do not want to become rich merely in order to be rich, but to use our wealth as a means towards the easier production of further wealth.

That is the economic importance of accumulated labour; the past assists the future. Buildings, factories, raw materials, railways—everything which has been created in the past is useful for future production. Therefore a nation cannot consume its wealth, but has to keep and to increase the legacy of the past. Man wants to make history, to develop, to consume productively. "All things must be consumed," he says; and yet he saves in order later to consume more abundantly.

But our economy has developed spontaneously, and not been created by any "social contract"; and here we have consumption and accumulation unreasonably separated. This evil is apparent in the form of the circulation of money, which serves two distinct

purposes. Everybody knows that the sun does not revolve round the earth, but the earth round the sun. Similarly, money does not revolve, but makes commodities revolve round it. Money assists the distribution of the products amongst the consumers. It only *appears* that money is exchanged ; in reality the exchange of commodities is the *motif*.

One side of the function of money is its circulation, or, to be more exact, the making of commodities circulate ; and on this side it plays the smaller, subordinate part. On the other hand, in creating surplus value, in maintaining and increasing wealth, it is put into a dominating position. In the distribution of commodities money is only a medium ; but in production it is capital, it becomes a " part of the wealth which yields revenues." Here money is creating more money ; here the golden eggs are laid.

We have been speaking of maintaining and increasing wealth. I should like to point out here that maintaining does not mean any sort of ' embalming,' but simply *reproduction*, which, without any special effort, proceeds side by side with production. In producing my leather, the consumed values, materials, and tools are preserved and contained in the price of my labour. The production of new values automatically includes the reproduction of the old ones.

Let us return to the grouping, the two different constellations of money : money as means of circulation and money as capital. If I sell my commodity for money, and exchange this money for the objects I am in need of, this is a simple transaction. But if I use the money to buy commodities in order to sell them again at a higher price, to get a surplus, to pocket a profit, then I must proceed more warily. I cannot deceive people permanently. I can increase my fortune, but not the sum of national wealth. Fortunes may be fraudulently *obtained*, but they must be *made* by honest labour. So the capitalist purchases the worker, who has just as much value as he costs, and who costs no more than what he is badly in need of. Even if his price is sometimes a little higher, it is much more often below its cost value. In the latter case the capitalist becomes rich all the sooner, and his worker becomes destitute ; this, if I am not mistaken, being the normal procedure under the system of free competition.

As regards circulation, where consumption is the end, where money circulates in order to assist the exchange of commodities, everything can proceed honestly, value can be exchanged for value ; but where it is a question of surplus value and money becomes capital, it purchases the worker—how ? The capitalist (like other people) buys his commodities at their value, but in this case the commodity is a poor wage labourer, who is bargained with to exchange his labour power for cost value, leaving the surplus value to the capitalist.

You can see from this that the humanitarians have no reason to blame money. Money is an honest thing enough, and only becomes evil through its capitalistic function. It acts as the means of circulation in the exchange of commodities; but, as capital, it buys the worker as cheap as it can—if possible, cheaper.

In the last chapter of the first book, Henry George deals with the “real functions of capital.” He states:—

Capital, as we have seen, consists of wealth used for the procurement of more wealth, as distinguished from wealth used for the direct satisfaction of desire. . . . Capital, therefore, increases the power of labour to produce wealth: e.g., by enabling labour to apply itself in more effective ways, as by digging up clams with a spade instead of the hand, &c. . . . Capital does not supply the materials which labour works up into wealth, as is erroneously taught; the materials of wealth are supplied by nature. But such materials partially worked up and in the course of exchange are capital. . . . If the farmer must use the spade because he has not enough capital for a plough, the sickle instead of the reaping machine, the flail instead of the threshing machine; if the machinist must rely on the chisel for cutting iron; the weaver on the hand loom, and so on, the productiveness of industry cannot be a title of what it is when aided by capital in the shape of the best tools now in use. . . . Even the pursuits of hunting, fishing, gathering nuts, and making weapons, could not be specialized so that an individual could devote himself to any one, unless some part of what was procured by each was reserved from immediate consumption, so that he who devoted himself to the procurement of things of one kind could obtain the others as he wanted them, and could make the good luck of one day supply the shortcomings of the next.”

To my mind this passage clearly shows that Henry George regards capital simply as accumulated labour, its function being to make present and future labour more productive. This is not only a harmless but a most praise-worthy function, and accumulated labour has always served this purpose amongst the Indians, just as with us. But as life in capitalist countries is a very different thing from life in the backwoods, so accumulated labour there and accumulated labour here are very differently characterised. Its characteristic function under the competitive system is not confined to rendering present and future labour more productive. Under that system, the capitalist proceeds to buy, by means of accumulated dead labour, the living power of the proletariat, because the latter has the notable characteristic of costing less than he creates. *This* is the “real function” of capital.

Modern capital steps upon the stage as a piece of money; a piece of money which is not acting merely as a medium of circulation, but as capital, as a means of buying first tools, machines, and raw materials, and then, finally, wage labourers. I do not deny that capital consists of accumulated labour; but this accumulation is not always or everywhere capital, or the property

of capitalists, who are characterised by the fact that they exist always side by side with wage-labour, exploited by them for private profit.

Henry George regards this as eternal and inevitable, and sees no evil in the capitalist wage-system. He wants merely to improve it, and thinks to succeed in this by changing labour which is paid a wage into one which "rewards itself" on the basis of the collective ownership of the land. He is unable to see that this reform would not emancipate the worker from the control of capital. Under capitalism work is not rewarded, but miserably paid. Henry George recognises this latter fact, and yet illogically declares both at the beginning and end of the 5th chapter of Book I that "wages are not drawn from capital, but from the produce of labour." No! Wages are paid by the capitalist, and the product of labour is wholly appropriated by him, and not by the worker. Henry George would like to consider wages and profit as mere differences of form, just as money and commodity are different in simple circulation. Money which is expended in wages is distinguished from the money which makes commodities circulate in so far as it has the function of capital in exchanging not value against value, but value against surplus value.

These are the two constellations which light the economic sky. Marx gives expression to this difference by two different formulæ. Firstly, when a commodity is exchanged for money, and that money into a commodity (C-M-C), the object is the exchange of products. In the other case, money is the starting point and goes through a metamorphosis of commodities into money again, but more money—surplus value—(M-C-M); the object here being capitalist accumulation, which finally becomes self-destructive and socially intolerable.

We are prepared to admit that capitalist accumulation and its low wages are not quite so dishonest as they appear. The "surplus value" which the capitalist pockets is not quite lost to the worker since it is a part of the world process of development. Accumulation of capital, wage labour and its low standard of living have all been necessary stages in the evolution of economic productiveness. The present stage has only been reached by means of vast stores of accumulated labour. We owe this to the cunning world-spirit which uses the self-interest of the capitalist as a means for the realization of its purposes. The world-spirit, however, often follows a very senseless course; and if one were not certain that the human mind would one day rule and control that world-spirit, and that spirit become *conscious* in the minds of men, one could only call it a mere blind force, since world-history has so tragically developed up to now.

(Translated for *The Plebs Magazine* from the German of JOSEPH DIETZGEN by Miss Bertha Braunthal).

Correspondence

SOCIALISM AND THE WAR—A PERSONAL STATEMENT.

SIR,—Last October I threw up my work at the C.L.C., and joined the Army. The C.L.C. has got along very well without me, so there is no need for me to defend my action from the point of view of loss to the College. Which simplifies things.

But, as a Socialist and a worker in the Labour Movement, I should like to make a few comments on some expressions of opinion on the war which have appeared in recent numbers of the *Plebs*. Certain correspondents have implied, if they have not roundly declared, that a man cannot retain his Socialist convictions and take an active part in the war. (I suppose he can work on munitions—though he knows full well for what purpose those munitions are designed; but he must not *fight*). Well, as my action makes sufficiently plain, I disagree—flatly—with that attitude; and I should like briefly to put my own position.

We have been vaguely expecting Armageddon these many years, calculating its possible effects and its ultimate readjustments of social relations. But in none of our anticipations did we allow for what has actually happened. Not a Socialist amongst us but at some time or other got excited about the use to which we should put our power as organized Socialists. Twenty-four hours of war showed us that, as an International Party, our power to influence the course of events was practically negligible. Indeed, anyone who had eyes to see (and a copy of the *Positive Outcome*) knew that an independent Socialist policy based either on armed insurrection or "down tools" passivity was bound—under existing circumstances—to crack up at the first shock of actuality. This for two reasons. *First*, because any such policy only received the sanction of the German Socialists (the largest section of the International, and the one, moreover, on whom most depended, since it was obvious that the German Government was of all the European governments the one most likely to move deliberately for war) on condition that the Germans could retain their nationality; *i.e.*, could, in the event of war, do exactly what they have actually done—throw in their lot with their own State parties. *Second*, because a "down tools" policy was plainly ridiculous at the present stage of development of organized Labour. To hold out any reasonable hope of success, such a policy would have had to aim at getting control of the whole machinery of production, since mere idleness hits the worker much sooner than the capitalist.

It is essential that we should run over these facts, not because they are new, but simply that we may grasp the situation that actually confronted us at the outbreak of war. That great fact swept aside our paper organizations and professorial lines of policy as so much scrap. Everywhere Socialism was forced by the logic of events to take sides with Capitalism. And the Socialist Parties of the States involved speedily recognized this. True, here and there there was a protest, but it was quickly apparent how little real backing such protests had. (In Britain, for example, the South Wales Miners' Executive resolved to advocate an industrial stoppage; how little that resolution represented the real feeling of the mass of the Welsh miners was seen in the rush of S.W.M.F. members to join the Army during the months of August and September).

The problem of the war was not, then, complicated (or simplified, if you like) for Socialists by any direct Socialist counterstroke to the Capitalist State governments. Since there was not, in fact, the slightest chance of opposing Socialism, pure and simple, to Capitalism at this stage, or even of making such a reasonably good showing as would have justified us in entering upon any such struggle, our only choice was between certain *degrees*

of Capitalism. In Britain, we were called upon to decide whether our own particular brand is or is not any better than the German. Events since the war commenced have only strengthened my previous belief that it is; and, further, that German dominance in world-politics would be disastrous for the development of Socialist propaganda. In the history of the working-class many occasions have arisen when we have had to fight, not for any *advance*, but simply to *maintain* what we had already won. I believe that this is one of those occasions. I also believe that we can never merely stand still in these conflicts; the outcome must inevitably be either the improvement or retrogression of our class position. Of course, I do not suggest that a German victory would lead to the German feudal-State-capitalism being forthwith imposed upon Britain and France. But I do certainly assert that the dominance of Prussian ideas and Prussian methods in Europe would result in very considerable obstacles to the rapid growth of those conditions we Socialists work for. For forty years the German menace has been a real weapon in the hands of French reactionaries; and the present actions of the French Socialists are sufficient evidence that there were solid grounds for the arguments put forward. The victory of the Allies will, in my opinion, favour our cause. To the suggestion that war cannot possibly result in any progress for the workers, I reply that any such assertion betokens a very superficial acquaintance with the Materialist Conception of History. Marx laid it down clearly enough that *no line of capitalist action* could hinder the evolution of the forces of progress. The capitalist often takes a course which he hopes, nay, is sure, will result in nothing but advantage to himself; he is *always* undecieved by results. And this war is no exception to the rule. Forces are already in motion which go to show that the International Labour Movement will reap returns which (*if we have the energy and courage to work and wait*) will be in proportion to the sacrifices we have made.

To return, however, to our choice. There are, as I have already said, *degrees* of Capitalism, degrees accentuated by national characteristics, which play an inevitable part in the development of a people's property relations. I have no particular respect or affection for any form of Capitalism—British or otherwise; but least of all for the feudal-capitalism of the Prussian type; and I have an idea that most of those who voice anti-war sentiments share my view, inasmuch as they are prepared—or say they are—to defend themselves if this country is actually invaded. Not only does this attitude imply an objection to the German state, therefore disposing of the argument that there are no degrees of capitalism; but it also implies an exceedingly detestable attitude—from the International standpoint; namely, that these "Socialists" are quite prepared to let French and Belgian proletarians be saddled with a system that is not good enough for the British worker. Such an attitude is a long way behind (and below) the Radical ideals of the older Trade Unionists, and would certainly justify the contempt expressed for Socialists in certain quarters. My point of view is that, since under capitalism we cannot choose our own ground to fight upon, the best we can do is to get the most out of the limitations imposed upon us. That best is to secure our industrial position to the utmost, and, at the present juncture, to work for a speedy *and satisfactory* end to hostilities. And the only way to achieve this latter point is to encompass the complete defeat of Prussia, as at present constituted. We have often enough insisted that the development of any one country re-acts on the development of others. Could we therefore view with indifference the rise to unparalleled power of the reactionary Prussian idea? I am not enamoured of the common exaggerations of German brutality, &c.; nevertheless one could not but look with dismay at the prospect of the further strengthening of a Power that wages war as the Germans have undoubtedly waged it. I for one should be proud to give all to help in defeating the forces responsible for even that proportion of the atrocities charged against them which are undoubtedly true.

Finally, a word about this talk of the worker being a commodity, pure and simple (see a letter in last month's *Plebs*). That is an "intensification of production" which would have staggered Marx if he were alive. The main interest of the worker is admittedly economic; but if any of our friends suggest that he has no interests not exclusively and directly economic, and that his present status, in fact, relieves him of all obligation to act or think other than as a mere commodity (in that case, of course, he would have no business to think), then I disrespectfully suggest that they had better try again. How many times have we Socialists agitated against atrocities, both personal and social, which by no stretch of imagination could have been described as economic grievances, and which certainly did not affect *us*, as pure and simple commodities, in the least. Nevertheless we have protested, and demanded that our Government should protest, even though it was impossible to avoid the use of such tabooed words as "humanity," "manhood," or "womanhood." We have had, and will continue to have, sympathy on occasion for people not belonging to our class, and might even as individuals take action on their behalf likely to reduce the value of our commodity—our labour-power. Yet every decent person inside or outside our class would applaud our action, and most would have acted similarly under similar circumstances. This does not alter the fact that our main interest is the production of our commodity—labour-power; but it does decidedly dispose of the notion that we have neither feelings nor interests apart from our economic relationships. Marx, I remember, waxed eloquent over the sacrifices made by British workers during the American Civil War, and rhapsodised over the refusal of the Lancashire cotton operators to be jockeyed into a demonstration against the *capitalist* North in favour of the Southern slave-owners, although the war made big demands upon them, *as workers*.

Having made my choice, and decided that fighting is inevitable, I don't intend to leave the fighting to other people. I have no respect for those "Socialists" who pass resolutions insisting that Germany *must* give up Belgium; and proceed to shut their eyes to the perfectly plain fact that Germany will *not* give up Belgium—will, in fact, add more than Belgium to her "bag"—unless she is turned out of Belgium by force. At least, I am quite certain that I have not got *my* head in the sand! G. S.

THE WAR—WHERE DO WE STAND.

In his letter in last month's *Plebs*, Mr. Cramp says that although it is quite true we are Socialists first and Britons afterwards, that is a mere trifle which has blinded us to the great fact, unnoticed by anyone but himself, that we are men and women first and Socialists afterwards. Not for a moment would I deny the coruscant truth of that brilliant discovery. Mr. Cramp, however, attempts to make of it a justification for taking part in the war. But does it not strike him that if we are men and women first and Britons afterwards, and if this is any argument at all, it works out more against fighting than in its favour? Are not the people in Germany men and women too? On the other hand, why does Mr. Cramp not go farther? Let us make a table of our position:—

We are Socialists first and Britons afterwards;
 We are men and women first and Socialists afterwards;
 We are mammals first and men and women afterwards;
 We are vertebrates first and mammals afterwards;
 And so on.

Perhaps Mr. Cramp now sees that although it is well to bear in mind similarities, yet for practical purposes it is the differences that count and that to ignore them is to stand on one's head. By the way, does not Mr. Cramp recognise the close blood-relationship between his "men and women first" and the W.E.A.'s "citizens first"?

As for the times demanding practicability, I would point out with all due deference to Mr. Cramp that practicability is the name of the bog in which lie the bones of many earnest reformers and revolutionaries. To the ordinary person to be a martyr seems the heights of impracticability, but very often from the point of view of the cause it may be very practical indeed.

Musselburgh.

Yours, JAMES P. M. MILLAR.

STR,—Shorn of all unnecessary trimmings the point of view of "Mens Sana" appears to be:—First—That the workers are "simply commodities," and that human attributes, emotions, instincts, etc., play no part in the collective mind; and Second—That the best service we can render to our fellow workers when Brother Fritz mows them down with flying fragments of iron is to lecture them for being naughty children in the past.

The first contention reveals that curious lack of understanding of the proletarian mind which one frequently observes among both revolutionary and reformist Socialists. It proceeds, I believe, from too great a devotion to the book-shelf and too little study of the human material at first-hand, and largely explains why in Great Britain, with all the material conditions favourable, Socialism instead of becoming a great popular movement has resolved itself into a cult, with a priesthood of pale young men in long hair and spectacles, and maiden ladies in eccentric dress.

That the workers are commodities is of course true in the economic sense, but unlike other commodities they possess instincts and desires, these desires in fact constituting the justification for our movement. Of human instincts, the most valuable is the instinct to resist. "Always hit back" is a safe motto for the proletariat, whether the aggressor be British Capitalist, or Foreign Worker deluded by militarism. I have observed that the majority of those of my own Union (the N.U.R.) who have enlisted are the most militant of trade unionists in times of peace.

The second contention is comic. On the same lines I suppose "Mens Sana" would argue that if one discovered a comrade struggling in a pool of water, one's duty would not be to take some personal risk in pulling him out, but would consist in standing safely on the bank and scolding the drowning one for walking so near to the edge.

No, it will not do. When the war terminates, then our opportunity will arrive. Poverty and misery will prepare the way for us to point the moral and the remedy; at present the duty of a class-conscious Socialist is to encourage his class to protect themselves, to rely upon themselves, to realise that they are the people who matter, and to give back blow for blow, and shot for shot, to any who would oppress them.

And one thing more; a good Socialist should be not simply class-conscious, but caste-conscious, and object to being outshone in anything, self-sacrifice, courage, or devotion, by members of the exploiting class. We are as good as they in anything.—That has always been the C.L. C. way; may it continue.

C. T. CRAMP.

Reports

THE WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF THE C. L. C.

A very successful General Meeting of the League was held on June 8th, at the College, and if the enthusiasm was any measure of the work we shall do, we have a particularly bright prospect ahead. The basis of the League was discussed, and a Constitution decided upon; the object of the League being re-stated as—

To assist in the educational propaganda of the College, and to establish a hostel for women students.

The following officers were elected for the forthcoming year:—Committee, Miss Mary Howarth, Mrs. Westrope, Mrs. Chaytor, Mrs. Butler, and Mrs. Mason; Miss Grace Neal (Treasurer), and

(MRS.) WINIFRED HORRABIN
Secretary.

DONATIONS TO CENTRAL LABOUR COLLEGE

<i>Received last December</i> :—		£	s.	d.
Gen. Union Braziers and Sheet Metal Work- ers (2d. levy) ...	...	18	18	10
<i>Received since Easter</i> :—				
N.U.R. BRANCHES AND COUNCILS :				
Barry No. 1 ...	...	1	0	0
Barry No. 3 ...	...	10	0	0
Bethnal Green (second quarterly donation)...	...	5	0	0
Brentford ...	...	10	0	0
Cardiff, No. 5 ...	...	1	0	0
Carlisle City ...	...	1	0	0
Landore ...	...	10	0	0
Peebles ...	...	1	0	0
Stratford-on-Avon ...	...	5	0	0
Westbury ...	...	1	0	0
York No. 1 ...	...	1	0	0
York No. 2 ...	...	1	0	0
Crewe District Council	...	2	0	0
London District Council	...	2	0	0
VARIOUS T.U. BRANCHES, & C :				
Scientific Instrument Makers' Trade Society ...	...	10	0	0
Celyn Lodge S.W.M.F.	...	5	0	0
Cognant Lodge S.W.M.F.	...	5	0	0
Vivian .. ..	...	5	0	0
Aberbeeg .. ..	...	1	0	0

<i>T.U. Branches, &c., continued.</i>		£	s.	d.
Amal. Engineers' Club & Institute (Plumstead)	...	2	2	0
Barrow Branch, B.S.P.	...	4	3	0
Barry C.L.C. Class ...	...	15	0	0
Brightside and Carbrook Co-op. ...	...	1	1	0
Bury Socialist Society	...	5	0	0
Ashington C.L.C. Class	...	1	0	0
Blackpool C.L.C. Class	...	12	0	0
Walthamstow Trades and Labour Council	...	5	0	0
Walthamstow Branch B.W.I.U. ...	...	5	0	0
INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS :				
Dr. G. D. Herron ...	...	5	0	0
"T.B." ...	...	1	0	0
John Cory (U.S.A.) ...	...	1	0	0
A. Keating ...	...	10	0	0
P. W. Davies ...	...	2	6	0
J. P. M. Millar ...	...	2	6	0
W. Roberts ...	...	5	0	0
J. P. Willis ...	...	6	0	0
COLLECTING CARDS :				
Per A. E. Hayward ...	...	1	8	6
.. J. Mather ...	...	10	0	0
A few P.O. Clerks, Carlisle, pp. R. Hetherington	...	1	0	0

Reviews

FRIGHTFULNESS.

The Submerged Nationalities of the German Empire, by ERNEST BARKER
(Oxford University Press, 8d. net.)

One benefit, at all events, the war has conferred on the student—particularly the student with a limited purse. Never were there so many really useful books and pamphlets on historical subjects obtainable at moderate prices as there are at the present time. This little book contains 64 pages packed with information on the subject nationalities—Prussian Poland, Schleswig, and Alsace-Lorraine—of the German Empire. "All these three populations, it is to be noted, are recent additions to Germany, and all three

are acquisitions made by force." The circumstances of their acquisition, the treatment they have received at the hands of the German Government and the political and economic problems raised thereby, are very fully—and very fairly—described and discussed.

Apart from its usefulness as a chapter of modern European history, the book is especially interesting to Internationalists as a study of Nationalism run mad—developed, that is, into the worst kind of Imperialism.

(The Germans) have become the apostles of a new doctrine of Nationalism. They are 'Nationalists' to a man; but their Nationalism means that they themselves are to have all the 'rights of nationality.' It means even more. It means that they have identified their own national civilization with Civilization itself, and that they feel that they spread Civilization when they use coercion to replace another national civilization by their own.

They have, in short, carried Nationalism—like so many other things—to its logical extreme. And a very ugly thing it is, too, when carried, as in Prussian Poland particularly, to that extreme. It is also—from the Nationalist point of view—a ghastly failure. The result of "Prussianising" has been to give new political strength to the Poles, and to stimulate them to an economic development which, based itself on a fine co-operative organization, has in turn become the basis of Polish nationalism, . . . Prussian Poland has become more Nationalist than Nationalist Ireland.

J. F. H.

THE HERALD WAR PAMPHLETS.

In France, by GEORGE LANSBURY; *To Destroy Militarism*, by JOHN SCURR; *The Way to Peace*, by GERALD GOULD; *Uncommon Sense about the War*, by ROBERT WILLIAMS. (The Limit Printing and Publishing Company, 1d. each).

These four pamphlets are by three Labour "leaders" and a literary gent; and the best of them, by a long way, is the literary gent's. The other three, though each contains interesting passages, can scarcely be reckoned as important contributions to Socialist literature on the war. George Lansbury's is an account of an eight-day trip to France, with brief descriptions of the many delightful churches he inspected and the terribly bad Channel passage he had to endure. It is, of course, full of that 'goodwill towards men' which one expects in any utterance of George Lansbury's, and as full, too, of regrets that 'peace on earth' seems a long way off at present. It ends with the "sure and certain hope that out of the troubles and difficulties of to-day a nobler and better order will arise." John Scurr's, on the other hand, is not full of brotherly love; on the contrary, it is inclined to be merely spiteful.

We should like to hear from our Socialist leaders how they propose to do this (destroy English militarism). But perhaps they deem it the final futility of final utility; or they wish to grow roses; or peradventure they think an alteration in the marriage laws or a collision with a comet will do all that is necessary. And if things change not, one can always escape to Morocco, or introduce to the consideration of the theatre-loving public a new phrase from the vernacular. It is all so amusing, but how are we going to destroy militarism?

Echo answers, How? After twelve pages of miscellaneous denunciation we come at last to John Scurr's recipe. Universal disarmament not being an "immediately practicable proposition," the "only thing left" is the Citizen Army. The pamphlet concludes with a new version of the Beatitudes, which again seems to mistake denunciation for criticism. We shall re-arrange the letters of the author's Christian name, and spell it Jonah in future.

Robert Williams starts out by confessing that his chief reason for adding his name to the already long list of pamphleteers upon the war is that he is assailed by so many doubts, misgivings, and perplexities, that he is well nigh unable to determine his own attitude towards it. Which does not strike us as a good and sufficient reason. And, apart from a few useful quotations from T.U. Congress Reports, and from speeches by Jouhaux, of the C.G.T., Legien, of the German G.F.T.U., Molkenbuhr, Jochade, and others, his pamphlet is not sufficient justification either.

The literary man—Gerald Gould—confines himself to a reasoned, if ultra-idealistic, plea for unrestricted public discussion of the terms of peace. He can be ironic without being spiteful, as where he refers to "those who, generous to a fault in offering their brothers' lives, are implacably resolved to pursue the business of war to the last drop of other people's blood." His appeal is to "practical and moderate people." One can say no worse of him than that, being an idealist, he seems to us to over-rate both the proportion of practical and moderate people in the world, and the influence—assuming their existence in even moderate numbers—which they would be able to exert on the course of events. J. F. H.

ONE TOO MANY FOR THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

A Christian with Two Wives, by DENNIS HIRD, M.A. (Watts and Co., cloth 1/- net, paper 6d. net.) (Copies may be obtained from the *Plebs*).

Mr. Hird has a genius for good titles; and he never hit upon a better one than *A Christian with Two Wives*. As he himself points out in his Post-script, had he decided to write about a Christian with two Breweries or a Christian with two Mansions, "no Bible-worshipper would have been shocked"—and fewer sceptics, one might add, would have been attracted; yet either of these latter two Christians would have been "more entirely foreign to the religion of Jesus than a Christian with two wives need necessarily be."

It would be paying Mr. Hird a poor compliment to assume that he would write the same book to-day. One is fairly certain that he would "rub in" his animadversions on Mrs. Grundy and Churchianity a little more effectively and from a somewhat different point of view. But, as Edward Carpenter (another ex-parson) remarks in the Foreword which he contributes to this new edition—"Faults may doubtless be found with the book. . . . But the general exposure of the social pretences amid which we live is excellently amusing, and well calculated to make the reader *think*—which after all is one of the best things a book can do."

The *Plebs* Bookshelf

Those plebeians who (wisely) unbend occasionally and enjoy a good novel, should make a note of one or two cheap editions recently published. First and foremost, Anatole France's *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard* is now obtainable for a shilling, in the John Lane series which also includes his *Red Lily*, Chesterton's *Shaw*, and Neil Lyon's *Arthur's*. If you have not already done so, make the acquaintance of M. Bonnard without delay; only don't imagine from the title that his is a detective story, or you may be disappointed. (If you just after detective stories, get *Trent's Last Case*, by E. C. Bentley, just added to Nelson's sevenpennies). Another notable shillingsworth, offered by Heinemann, is *The Man of Property*, the best of Galsworthy's novels, and worthy to stand alongside the best of his plays. And, finally, Nelson's now offer Chesterton's *Manalive* for 7d.—one of the very best things Chesterton has written, and calculated to fetch a smile even to the dour countenance of a hard-shell Marxian.

One Mr. L. Cecil Jane has just written a book on *The Interpretation of History*—a subject not devoid of interest to readers of this magazine. I have not bought it, because it costs five shillings (net), and a book has to have something to say worth saying to be worth five shillings of a plebeian's money. But certain sentences in the *Times Literary Supplement's* review of the book make interesting reading. According to the reviewer, Mr. Jane's theory is that "the conduct of States which make history"—some, apparently, are non-producers of this particular commodity—"is ultimately determined by the forces regulating the conduct of individuals." So that psychology is to provide the key. "According to Mr. Jane's psychology (the reviewer proceeds) which is simple—one might even say naïve—there is a struggle in every mind between the desire to be ruled and the desire to rule. . . . History is neither more nor less than the story of the never-ending conflict between these two impulses. It has been so in the past and it will be so in the future. There is no escape from this oscillation." Down with Evolution, up with Oscillation! The world-spirit (see Dietzgen) is at last unmasked. And—talking of Dietzgen—the reviewer goes on to say that Mr. Jane "is able, by dint of much ingenuity, to string upon his formula a very large number of events apparently unconnected." The review concludes with the remark that "the real interest of the volume is that it is one of many signs of impatience with the conception of history as a collection of unconnected facts, of a desire to seek for unity and purpose in the course of events, and of a proneness to accept unsubstantial theories rather than go without any at all." Which almost leads one to conclude that the reviewer's history is as naïve as Mr. Jane's psychology.

* * * * *

Another book with an alluring title recently published is too dear for my pocket. This is Mr. Harold Owen's *Common Sense about the Shaw*, which is offered at half-a-crown. Real common sense about Shaw, being scarce, might have been cheap at the price. But I've heard of Mr. Harold Owen before. He is a literary gentleman who does good business by exploiting the popular prejudice of the moment—a sort of minor James Douglas. When the Suffragettes were the pet bugbear of the Man in the Suburbs, Mr. Owen was first in the market with a book entitled *Woman Adrift*, the burden of which was of course that woman's place was the 'ome. His latest production—equally as a matter of course—is designed to show that Shaw's place is Berlin. I notice that the *Times* says of it that "if there are any readers in Britain at all who attach any importance to what Mr. Shaw has to say, they will do well to read this book." There's crushing sarcasm for you! But one reader at all events is going to wait until it comes out, say, at threepence.

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I wish very much indeed that the *Plebs* had been able to quote some extracts from Mr. H. M. Tomlinson's fine article on Labour and the War in the *June English Review*. But space is space. And, doubtless, copies of the *Review* are still obtainable (*verb. sap.*) The article was the expression of a sensitive man's disgust at the "patriotism" of profiteers, and at the attitude of those profiteers, and their Press, towards the workers of this country. Its biting irony on such subjects as "healthy competition" and "laws of supply and demand" made it—like most things by this writer—literature. (*Plebs* readers will remember the brief extract from his book, *The Sea and the Jungle*, which was published, under the heading of "A Fable," in last November's issue).

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One must find space for a word of comment, and congratulation, on the new *New Review*. Personally, I wish the *Plebs* could afford to make a similar change, both in *format* and times of publication. For the benefit of those—

let us hope they are few—who have not seen the *New Review* since its transformation, let me explain that it is now published fortnightly instead of monthly, and has adopted a larger page and dispensed with a cover—more after the style of the *New Age* or the *New Statesman*. But I should be quite content to leave the shape and style of the *Plebs* as it is, if we could get it up to 32 pages. And I hope somebody is coming to this year's Meet fully primed with practicable schemes for achieving this by next year—and starting free of debt, too.

THE READER.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

The International Crisis in its Ethical and Psychological Aspects. (Lectures delivered at Bedford College for Women). (Oxford University Press, 3/6 net.)

Evolution and the War. By P. CHALMERS MITCHELL (John Murray, 2/6 net.)

The Stoic Philosophy. By PROF. GILBERT MURRAY (Watts and Co., 9d. net.)

Canada and the War. By A. R. TUCKER (Oxford Pamphlets—Oxford University Press, 2d. net.)

A CORRECTION.—In H. Wynn-Cuthbert's article in the last issue, p. 100, line 9, for "colleges" read "colleagues."

"He Died for His Country"

(In Memoriam, J.N., of Luther Street, Liverpool).

Comrades, what was "his country"
For which he fought and died?
Did he own farm or homestead
On fertile country side?

Did his country offer him learning
In her shrines of classic lore?
Or did she grant him the leisure
To garner his mental store?

As a child, had he food and shelter
While thews and brain grew strong?
Or had he to work as men work,
Who fight in the struggling throng?

Did his country demand his labour,
And buy it in open mart;
And did she buy with his labour,
His body, soul and heart?

Comrades, he was a hero!
He died for a Hope, for a dream;
He died for an unknown country,
For the land of the poet's theme.

He died because kings are fighting
For what they call "Balance of Power";
But the People must hold *that* balance;—
And he died for that Day, and that Hour!

March, 1915.

DORA B. MONTEFIORE,

ANNUAL MEETINGS

“PLEBS” LEAGUE,

On SUNDAY, AUGUST 1st, at 3 p.m.

AGENDA:

SECRETARY'S REPORT
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
FUTURE POLICY OF THE LEAGUE
ELECTION OF OFFICIALS
OTHER BUSINESS

Central Labour College A. G. M.

On BANK HOLIDAY, AUGUST 2nd, 1915,
at 11 o'clock sharp.

DANCE and “SOCIAL” in the Evening.

Both Meetings will be held at
THE COLLEGE, 13 PENYWERN ROAD,
EARLS' COURT, LONDON, S.W.,

near the Earls' Court Station, Underground Railway.

