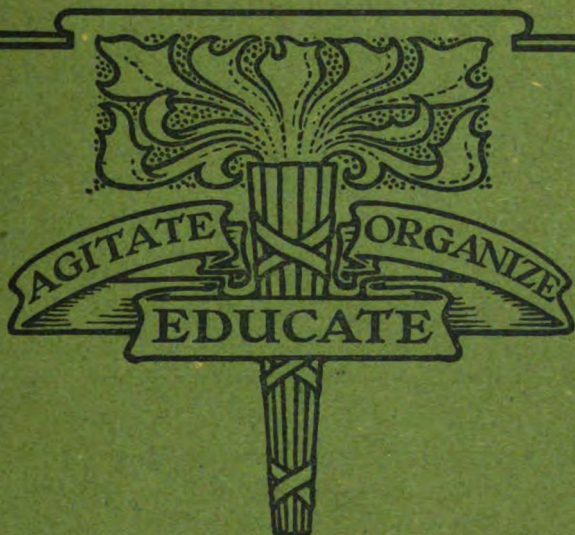


Vol. VII, No. 7

August, 1915

The
PLEBS
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

AT about the same time as this issue of the *Plebs* reaches our subscribers, the last Annual General Meeting of the Central Labour College under the old management will be taking place. Thenceforth, the National Union of Railwaymen and the South Wales Miners' Federation will have added to their responsibilities the management and control of the one real working-class educational institution in these islands. It will be for the members of those two Unions to see to it that that institution remains as unepromisingly partisan, specialized and "extreme" as the men who founded it intended it to be, and as it has been hitherto. The day when two of the foremost British Trade Unions definitely undertake the responsibility of providing class-education for their members is no unimportant date in the history of Trade Unionism. The Central Labour College must become the Intelligence

Department of the Labour movement ; and if our readers can inform us of anything of which that movement stands more sorely in need, we should be glad to hear from them on the point.

* * * * *

If ever the aims of the C. L. C. were justified, if ever the urgent necessity for independent working-class education was made plain and clear as daylight, those aims have been justified and that necessity made plain by the events of the

**The C. L. C. and
the Welsh Strike**

last few months. Other articles and communications in this issue deal with certain recent events in greater detail. Here we need only refer to them in so far as they have any bearing on the C. L. C. We wish, then, to point out that one fight, and one fight only, has been put up by organized labour against the profiteers who, organized politically as "the State," have done their utmost, under cover of a real national crisis, to rob labour of practically every safe-guard it had won for itself during the long struggle against exploitation. That fight has been put up by the South Wales miners ; and the entire Capitalist Press without exception have paid heartfelt compliments to those 'young men* with Syndicalist dreams'—those 'clever fellows,' as *The Times* called them—but for whose organizing and educational work in the coalfield it was felt that the profiteers might have hoped to win. We need not discuss the precise part played by these wicked "Syndicalists ;" enough that Fleet Street reserved its most blood-curdling epithets for them, and that the "clever fellows" are C. L. C. men—ex-students or active supporters. Every malediction hurled at their heads by the leader-writers of *The Times*, the *Morning Post*, or the *Daily News*, has been a testimonial to the value of the C. L. C. *The College must go on turning out those young men* ; and when it or they cease to deserve the maledictions of Fleet Street, it will have failed in its mission. The *Daily Express* by the way, offered a reward of £5,000 for information leading to the identification of the cunning German agents whose machinations caused the strike. We claim the money—and hereby give the names of the wicked aliens ; they are Karl Marx, Frederic Engels, and Joseph Dietzgen. Will the *Express* please make the cheque payable to the C. L. C.?

* * * * *

But if the problems of the immediate present justify the existence of a workers' educational centre, how much more do the problems looming immediately ahead demand it ? Here is an interesting passage from a recent number of the *New Statesman* :—

Looking Forward

In many establishments, and as regards many departures from practice, Trade Union rules may doubtless be revived. How far, and for

* Our friend George Barker is credibly reported to be greatly flattered by all these references to his extreme youth.

how long, they can be enforced will depend, as heretofore, partly on the extent to which they are reasonable and appropriate, and partly on the strength of the Union, which will to say the least not be likely to be the same after the War. But it would be wise for Trade Unionists to face the fact that, in some cases at any rate, Humpty Dumpty simply cannot again be set upon the wall. The whole organization of the workshop will have changed If the old order cannot be restored, it is for the Trade Union world of to-day . . . to work out between now and the end of the War . . . a 'new model' and a new policy with which to meet the new conditions that may otherwise bring down the skilled mechanic to the level of the labourer, without the labourer himself gaining any elevation in the process.

Another quotation—this one from a recent *Herald* article by Messrs. COLE and MELLOR :

The cessation of Trade Union activity may provide an opportunity for action of another sort. Now, when the normal work of the Unions is suspended, is the time to achieve some part of that drastic re-organization which the Trade Union Movement as a whole sorely needs Instead of going to sleep with the sad reflection that the fort has been sold, and that further defence and defiance are no use, let them make one further effort, and build out of the ruins of the old Trade Unionism a stronger and finer expression of industrial solidarity.

“ To work out a new model and a new policy ”—“ to achieve some part of that drastic re-organization, &c ”

Wanted—Brains —with problems like these confronting us, is there, or is there not, need for a Labour

College? Is there, or is there not, need for “ reflective knowledge and clear consciousness ? ” Has the Labour movement, in short, any need for brains—or will it be able to drift or dream its way to the Promised Land? Those who are content with dreaming—or with what is as bad as dreaming, mere muddle-headed “ plodding on ”—will see no use in the C. L. C. Those who are not will do all that lies in their power “ to further the interests of independent working-class education.” One last quotation—from an article on *The Economic View of History* in the *New Age* a week ago :—“ The proletarian movement must *know* ; merely to *feel* is not sufficient.” That observation is by no means new ; but it was never truer than it is to-day.

J. F. H.

Readers of the *Plebs*, who are members of the United Machine Workers' Association, are asked to forward their names and addresses to FRANK JACKSON, 8 Windsor Terrace, Newbold Street, Rochdale, Lanes.

“ If my soldiers were to begin to reflect, not one of them would remain in the Army.”—FREDERICK II.

The Battle of the Welsh Miners

THE recent struggle in South Wales drew once more the attention of all the world in that direction. During these last few years it has been a storm centre from which many revolutionary ideas and proposals have emanated. Without a doubt the discontent and the strikes which took place there with the agitation that followed paved the way for the demand and realization of the National Minimum Wage Act for miners. The conditions created by the War, however, were thought by most people to be sufficient to make them toe the line and accept on this occasion, in common with the rest of the Trade Union movement, any coercive measures which the capitalists generally thought fit to introduce. What complicated matters rather in this case was, that a five years wage agreement entered into in 1910 terminated in March of this year. The Miners, however, gave the requisite three months' notice to terminate the agreement and asked the Owners to meet them for the purpose of discussing the basis of a new agreement. The employers, evidently under the impression that no strike would be thought of, gave a direct refusal. The men's representatives then proceeded to prepare their case, fully aware that the time would come when the employers would be compelled to meet them. Things were allowed to drift until the middle of July, when the Board of Trade stepped in and brought both sides together, when proposals and counter proposals were made. As is the case with all negotiations between Capital and Labour they were dragged out to the last minute. A strike is after all a terrible weapon, despite the fact that it is the best from the point of view of the workers, yet it makes some of the staunchest hesitate before putting it into operation. The employer knows this well and has everything to gain by holding out even if he intends giving way in the end. So in this case. Mr. Runciman was kept busy trying to get the Miners' representatives to give way, but fortunately they were tied by their own delegate conference, so that much as some of them would have liked to, they were prevented from giving too much away or making a settlement upon lines other than in accordance with that conference resolution.

After a couple of weeks negotiations (if the tortures of hell are drawn out over a longer period than are negotiations over wage agreements between labour leaders and their friends across the table they must be bad), Mr. Runciman placed certain proposals before them. These the men's representatives could not see their way clear to accept as a whole, but suggested further negotiations and asked for an interpretation of certain clauses.

In the ordinary way a wage agreement is sufficiently complicated without being made more so by ambiguous phraseology.

These proposals were however placed before another delegate conference three days before the stoppage took place, and were rejected by an overwhelming majority, and the strike decision reaffirmed. The Government replied by proclaiming South Wales under the Munitions Act. How much this affected the situation may be gathered from the fact that another conference was called upon the first day of the stoppage and again rejected the terms, together with a recommendation from the Executive Council to resume work under day-to-day contracts. Then the newspaper world went mad and hell was let loose. They pleaded, threatened, alternately called the men fools and traitors, praised and blamed them and gave their history to the world in a hopeless mass of contradiction such as "They go to Chapel on Sundays, play football, cards and billiards, gamble on horses, dogs and anything else that runs and some things that don't, drink beer and whiskey and are generally a bad lot. They lead their leaders (trust your leaders they are sure to follow you) and yet are easily duped by the demagogues of the coalfield. They love passionately and intensely their native land and are not in the least patriotic. They are highly imaginative and sentimental and yet cannot imagine or sympathise with the Army abroad or the Fleet upon the sea." Their wages too, or perhaps we had better call them earnings, received due attention, and really made people's mouths water. It is a well known fact that few miners draw old age pensions; their difficulty is to live long enough to claim them. But since there are some working men who do really think there is something in the cry of high wages, let them make special note of this, that the greatest concession in the form of wages is the minimum of 3/4 per day, or 5/0 inclusive to some of the grades. Again, the Minimum Wage Act gives to a hewer the sum of 7/4 per day, the introduction of which added to the cost of production. It this has added to the cost, then obviously it must be by paying higher wages, from which we gather the result that paying a minimum wage of 44/0 per week increased the cost of production of coal. It may be added also that even now there are hundreds of men who for various reasons do not get even this minimum.

To revert to the negotiations again. The Conference instructed their Executive Committee to be in readiness to continue negotiations with the Board of Trade, in accordance with which they travelled up to London. Their stay there, however, was of short duration, and finding that Mr. Runciman had nothing to add to his proposals, they returned next day. This set all the doves of Capitalism off again. What was this new unreasonable attitude that Labour was taking up? A way out must be found. Their great bogey the Munitions Act seemed to have no effect upon them; talk about fining a man £5 a day to whom they had just granted 5/0 a day. Lloyd George with a few of the lesser lights

went down to Cardiff, a few million gallons of stupefying gasses were issued from the newspaper offices, then a few hours anxious waiting and then came news of a great defeat of Capitalism. The workers of other industries must surely be asking what did the miners gain by defying the Government.

Briefly this.—

- I. No man to be paid less than 5/0 per day in whatever grade of work he is employed.
- II. Six turns for five for night workers, i.e. a workman putting in five shifts in a week to be paid at the rate of six.
A governing clause also, that should a man fail to put in five shifts through no fault of his own, he be paid the bonus.
- III. Creation of a new standard (for hewers, although the percentage apply to all grades).
in place of the 1879 standard of $\frac{4}{7}$ plus a minimum percentage of 35% and a maximum of 75%.
A new standard rate consisting of $\frac{4}{7}$ plus 50% or = $\frac{6}{10}\frac{1}{2}$, with a new minimum percentage of 10% and no maximum.

The vital question of what shall constitute the equivalent selling price of coal still remains to be settled and until then this will be largely meaningless.

- IV. Hauliers upon all shifts to be paid alike.
- V. Duration of agreement to cover six months after the War and then subject to three months' notice.
- VI. The agreement to cover every workman *who is a member of the Miners' Federation*.

The refusal of the first terms offered and the defying of the Government is responsible for No. I. covering all grades below 5/0. In No. II. the inclusion of the governing clause and the deletion of another. In No. III. the 10% minimum. The whole of Nos. V. and VI. The withdrawal of the proclamation and an understanding that no penalties be inflicted for flouting the Act whilst it was in operation. An increase of wages can also be immediately applied for under No. III. as a result of the abolition of the maximum.

Not the least effect of this struggle was the killing of the Munitions Act, and the whole fight has and will have a tremendous effect upon the Trade Union Movement.

The miners have not received all they demanded, but taken as a whole, and considering the opposition, it must rank as one of the greatest victories in the history of Trade Unionism.

W. H. MAINWARING.

THE STATE

AMONG the many problems which the present war has brought into being, there are none claiming more attention, or monopolizing so much space in both the Capitalist and the so-called Socialist Press, than the functions of the State, and the duties the people owe to it. In my opinion this question of the State and the relations of Labour towards it is one which will be thrust upon the Trade Union movement in the very near future, and the sooner the rank and file make themselves acquainted with the origin and functions of the State, the more competent will they be to deal with the question when it arises.

The conditions arising out of the war have brought about the interference of the State in spheres of our social life which were previously undreamt of. Leading articles in *The Times* advocate Government control of industry, and the suspension of ordinary business relations, because "in the face of the supreme competition which this war is, the other domestic competition loses all virtue and becomes a curse." In short, what is good in times of peace becomes a curse in times of war and *vice versa*. There was also an interesting article in *The Daily News and Leader*, August 29th, 1914, entitled "The Shipwreck," by A.G.G., in which the writer declared that "the individual has gone under. There is only one life—the life of the State—that concerns us." Further, we find members of the Labour Party appointed to and accepting State positions, and Trade Unions suspending their rules and customs in industry. In fact it is being generally advocated that everybody should become "servants of the State," and if people will not submit voluntarily, then compulsory measures are recommended.

When we see all this commotion in high places it behoves the rank and file of the Labour movement to inquire very carefully into this "life of the State," which has suddenly become so precious as to require the co-operation of everybody to save it. More especially should the rank and file be on their guard when we consider such a significant passage as the following, which appeared in the leading article of *The Times*, June 14th, 1915. "Employers should become managers of the State, and workmen should feel that they are really industrial soldiers in the service of the State for war-purposes. The militant side of Trade Unionism disappears with the abolition of spoils to fight over, *but without prejudice to its restoration when the spoils reappear.*" (Italics mine).

All this goes to prove a keen desire on the part of the Capitalist Press for the suspension of the struggle between Capital and Labour, in order that this "life of the State" may be saved; but it also proves something else, viz., that the "life of the State" is not

the life of the working class, because in the first place the conditions of their lives are still ignored (except in so far as they compel attention by means of their organized strength), and secondly, the old struggle of trade unionism for a better existence for the workers is to reappear once the "life of the State" is out of danger. But this fact of there being two lives—the "life of the State" and the life of the working class, contradicts the popular view of the State being the people, the nation, the community, &c.

In order to solve this contradiction, it is necessary to inquire into the origin of the State, and to discover how it arrived at its present capitalist form. Of course one can only deal very briefly with this in the space of a short article. History shows us that the institution known as the State has not always existed. People have been so long accustomed to the political form of society, that they never think of the existence of a previous form. Mankind originally were wholly dependent—the same as undomesticated animals—on Nature for food, but in the course of time man gradually began to rise above this animal basis of existence; first, by means of the discovery of fire, then the bow and arrow, until finally after a long period of time he attained to the level of agriculture and the domestication of animals. This early life of mankind is known as Primitive Communism, and the first form of social organization of which we have any definite knowledge is Gentile society. It corresponds to a material condition where a definitely settled life had not commenced. The unit of this society was the Gens, which consisted of a number of individuals bound together by ties of kinship, and tracing their descent from a common ancestor (whereas the unit of the modern political society is the private monogamic family). No matter how elementary the social organization, representatives would be necessary, but in Gentile society men and women lived on a basis of equality, and they all participated in the election of their representatives, who if they did not render satisfaction could also be deposed by them. Thus we see Gentile society was a pure democracy based on the common ownership of the means for securing food and shelter. Where all rule nobody rules.

With still further development in the means of obtaining food, population increased; the various tribes began to jostle each other for space, finally leading to war and the plundering of one tribe by another. Agriculture and the domestication of animals enabled the social groups to produce more than was necessary for their immediate wants, and with the manufacture of iron and the invention of the phonetic alphabet, all the principal elements necessary for the development of civilization were at hand; they needed only to be further extended, but to carry forward these developments was more than the untrained barbarians were prepared to voluntarily undertake. To get over this difficulty coercion was necessary,

and coercion of the most ruthless character was employed. The first social group reached the point where it produced a surplus product above its immediate requirements, trading sprang up, and the possibility of a leisured class who could live on this surplus presented itself. This possibility became an actuality, and we get one section of society living upon the labour of the others. Thus slavery as a social institution was established, the communal basis of kinship with its Gentile form of organization and its equality of social relations being superseded by slavery with its political form and the domination of man by man.

The leisured class required some means whereby it could maintain its rule, and these means were established in the form of the State. The public offices of Gentile society were converted into private powers of the ruling minority, who used these powers to keep the dispossessed members in subjection. We are now in a position to see the difference between Gentile society controlled by the social group, and modern political society governed by a centralized body called the State. Political society is based on territory and property relations; individuals vote according to where they are domiciled. The women and a large number of the adult males have no part in the election of representatives, and the State powers are separated from the control of the social group. We find that it is with the appearance of a leisured class who live on the surplus product of the social group, and thereby convert it into their private property, that the social institution known as the State appears. Private property and the State go hand in hand. By means of the State, the ruling minority, through their monopoly of the social product, dominate the whole social group. There have been three main epochs in the evolution of the State:—

- 1.—Ancient civilization—based on slavery.
- 2.—Feudalism of the Middle Ages—based on serfdom.
- 3.—Capitalism—based on wage-labour.

All these epochs have something in common and also their own peculiarities. One general characteristic is the presence of inequalities within the social organism, and of institutions for preserving these inequalities; this function is known to day as "the maintenance of law and order." The ruling minority not only use the State powers to maintain their position within the social group, as is seen whenever Labour makes a fight for a better share of the "spoils," but they also use the Army and Navy to obtain spoils outside their own particular group, in the form of colonies and a larger share of trade on the world market. This all goes to prove that the State is nothing more than the private power of the ruling minority, disguised as the public power of the whole nation, and it follows that this "life of the State" which

is monopolizing the attention of the Press, and the majority of the so-called Socialists of Europe, according to the respective State under whose rule they happen to be living, is nothing more than the life of the ruling minorities of the respective European nations, which they have endangered through their mutual competition for "the spoils" of the world market.

In deciding what the attitude of the Labour and Socialist movement should be towards the State, it is essential to remember that the State with its political form of society has not always existed, that it only came into existence under certain conditions at a specific stage in human development; from which it follows that it will disappear again at another stage when conditions make its existence no longer necessary. In the words of Thomas Carlyle, "we must some day, at last and for ever, cross the line between Nonsense and Common Sense; from Political Government to Industrial Administration." At some future date I hope to deal with the relations between Industrial Unionism and the State.

ROBT. HOLDER.

Current Events

I.

TWO things which have happened recently within the Trade Union movement give one encouragement in face of, not only the lack of any aggressive policy, but the adoption of what is termed in military parlance "tactical manoeuvres," i.e., movements towards the rear, surrendering one position after another. One is the struggle in South Wales, where the coalowners, assisted by the Government and with the loyal co-operation of the patriotic labour leaders, the heavy artillery of the Press and the prayers of the Churches, have been making every effort to break down the traditional good conditions and privileges enjoyed by the miners.

It is too early yet and also otherwise inopportune to point out the lessons of this struggle, lessons for the miners themselves as well as for the Trade Union movement as a whole. But one thing we can refer to, and that is the sheer absurdity of sending an army into the field led by officers who have not the slightest intention of fighting. There can be no fight when the General Staffs of both armies agree to hold the same position. This is what happened on this occasion. The majority of the Miner's Executive Committee were agreed to surrender. The pity of it is that they were not asked to surrender their official positions when their own policy was voted down by the men,

Speaking broadly, and from the point of view of the labour movement as a whole, the smashing of the Munitions Act is of infinitely more importance than the settlement of a favourable wage agreement for the South Wales Miners. Everything that was held dear, all the rights and privileges which the Trade Unions had established, are swept away by this piece of legislation. Conditions have been introduced into workshops, &c., which in normal times would have created an upheaval unequalled in the Trade Union world, and even now men are only kept quiet by fear of the forces arrayed against them.

The Miners are therefore fighting the battle of the working class. They have dared to do what no professed revolutionary party in the country would dream of attempting; dared to think and act in terms of their own interests, and this despite the Jingoism of some of their own leaders. The moral effect of this strike is bound to be tremendous, and the powers that be must fear it much more than a shortage of coal. It may be depended upon that there are huge reserves of coal to fall back upon, but no provision has been—or can be—made against a discontented and rebellious working class.

How far capitalist aggression can still proceed remains to be seen. Trade Union and Socialist Leaders have been very insistent that the workers of the country have something to defend, something worth fighting for. But, may we ask, how much more will need to be given away before we arrive at the level of the German standard of living? It is good policy for the employers and their henchmen to urge upon the workers the need to go abroad and fight for their country, in order that during their absence they can do away with whatever advantages they enjoyed. If things proceed much further, it would be as well for the army of workers abroad to stick tight to whatever they can capture, and stay there; there will certainly be nothing in their Motherland worth returning for.

II.

The other matter referred to is the initiation of a movement in London under the title of the Trade Unions Defence Committee, the objects of which are stated as follows:—

(I.)—The defence of Trade Unions against all legislative enactments directed towards the weakening or suppression of their industrial social, and political activities and rights.

(II.)—The resistance of any other attempts by organized capital to encroach upon conditions established and maintained by the Trade Unions.

(III.)—The restoration of such rights as have already been, or may be, surrendered.

(IV.)—The consolidation of the Trade Union movement so that it shall be in a position effectively to resist all opposing forces.

Realising that these objects can only be attained by the support of the organized workers, we appeal to all Trade Unions, Trade Union branches, and Trade Councils to render every possible assistance, financial and moral, to this Committee in its work. These objects and the appeal are embodied in a manifesto which is intended for distribution amongst the Trade Unions with a view to obtaining their co-operation. The Manifesto deals fully with the position of Trade Unionism to-day, how its activities are condemned, the workers vilified and insulted from all quarters, insinuations with regard to their habits and honesty, made with the intention of bringing public opinion as a force to bear upon whichever section of the workers may be in revolt. And hundreds of thousands of workers are going abroad to lay down their lives, while exploitation at home is not only unchecked but actually increased!

Dealing with the Munitions Act, it points out that with its passage has gone the last shred of defence. "The right to strike the right to demand higher wages and better conditions, the right to safeguard what has been wrested from the exploiters in the past—all these have gone at the bidding of Capital." Referring to the part played by official labour, it declares that Trade Unionism has been handed over, bound by legal chains, to the tender mercies of the profiteers. "Compulsory Arbitration has come, despite our repeated protests in the past; fines and penalties are now a recognized part of the machinery of industry. Customs and practices, rules and regulations, rights and privileges are bargained away for nothing."

After thus dealing with the conditions the plain question is put:—"Is Trade Unionism worth fighting for?" and a warning given against being caught unprepared "at the out-break of peace as we were at the outbreak of war." The manifesto ends with a strong appeal for the support of all Trade Unionists pointing out that never was there greater need for unity, that the one thing that counts is the liberty and freedom of the workers,, their fight the one fight that matters, and now the time to act.

That such a movement should be initiated just at this time is distinctly promising, and should lead to something being done if it obtains the support asked for. Extensive and very active propaganda is to be carried on, meetings organized, &c. It is understood that the first meeting will be a conference of London Unions, Councils, &c., and from this it is hoped to spread over the country.

Enquiries, offers of assistance, &c., should be directed to G. Belt, 24, High Holborn, W.C. Members of the Plebs League will find in this movement a means of carrying on some useful propaganda, and doing some real lasting service to the Labour Movement.

MYCHEL.

Psychology a la Mode

ONE beneficial result of the dispute in the Welsh coalfield has been the impetus given to the study of that fascinating (and highly developed) branch of science, psychology. Many of our most respected contemporaries have published articles which come under this heading, and there has been evidence of very widespread interest in their learned researches. The victim on the dissecting-table has, of course, been that interesting animal, the Welsh Miner, who has been carefully examined from every point of view (bar one—his own); every aspect of his busy and eventful life (so full of pleasurable excitement and so free from all trace of monotony) all his habits and customs, accomplishments and idiosyncracies, even the degree of purity of his Cymric blood (cf. the *Daily News* expert, A.G.G., July 17th) have been carefully observed and noted down. This last point has created a deal of confusion amongst the psychologists, as several of them came dangerously near to proving that the Welshmen were not Welshmen at all; and everybody, from the King downwards, would have shuddered at the bare possibility of their turning out to be Germans.

On the whole, however, it has been decided that a distinct Welsh type does exist—a distinct South Welsh type, in fact. Here is a specimen report as to its main characteristics, as contributed (by its Parliamentary Correspondent) to that well-known organ of unprejudiced psychological research, the *Observer*:

The South Wales collier, unlike his fellows of the North, is a creature of impulse. He has no real sense of cohesion and no instinct for effective organization (!) He is the sport and plaything of the demagogue, and he is continually being exploited by men of fluent tongue and unscrupulous methods. Without being at all Socialistically inclined, or knowing the meaning of Syndicalism, he is a prey to Socialist and Syndicalist propagandists. Like all Celts, he is intensely susceptible to the influence and opinion of his neighbour. He is afraid of the moral reproach of doing anything unpopular, and this is why he is such an easy dupe of the specious. . . .

And so on. Illuminating, isn't it? In one blinding (psychological) flash one sees the South Wales miner as—poor lamb—
—he really is.

But all this scientific research work is incomplete unless the South Wales coalowner is likewise analysed and reported upon. And it is to fill this gap that we have persuaded our own Psychological Expert to weigh in with a rough-and-ready "impression" of the South Wales owner, which we hereby humbly offer for use anywhere—no rights reserved:—

The South Wales coalowner, unlike his English and Scottish confreres, is a creature of generous impulse. He is the sport and plaything of his men, by whom he is continually being

exploited, and whose affection for him knows no bounds. Without being at all patriotically inclined, or knowing the meaning of Jingoism, he is a prey to patriots and war-mongers. In the hour of national need, he places himself and his collieries unreservedly in the hands of the State—the community of which he forms but a single loyal section. Like all Christians, he is intensely susceptible to the good opinion of his brethren in Christ, and is much afraid of moral reproach. That is why he is so often the dupe of his own generous impulses, and why he finds it so hard to make ends meet in a world in which true idealism is so sadly lacking. That is why the demagogues who lead his men whithersoever they list have always found it so easy to impose upon his good nature; and why, when they suggested the reconsideration of the wages agreement, instead of telling them to go to—, as he might so easily have done, he merely meekly suggested that the agreement should continue to operate until the end of this terrible War—, so ruinous to every industry in the country, but more particularly to the mining industry. “Let us sink our little differences for the common good,” he said. “Let us wait until the horrid Hun has been laid low, and then we shall have time to think of ourselves.”

If, indeed, the South Wales coalowner has any fault, it is his sentimental, Celtic generosity. Visitors to South Wales—and increasing numbers of persons have journeyed thither of recent years in order to benefit by the salubrious air of the district—have brought back touching stories of the many little luxuries— asylums, hospitals for cripples, institutions for the blind, and so forth—which the magnanimous employer has provided for his co-partners in industry. But the high wages he insists on paying—the minimum in certain grades has now risen to the dizzy height of 5/- per day—speak for themselves. Is there need to say more? Is it not clear that in self-sacrifice, in a highly developed sense of responsibility, in true Christianity, patriotism, and every other virtue ever invented, the South Wales coalowner sets a noble example to all and sundry? If not, then at least it is clear that the reader is no expert in psychology.

We give this effort of our Psychologist's for what it is worth—not that we are under illusions as to its being worth much. But it strikes us as a satisfactory “pendant” to the other effort quoted previously, and anyhow we feel that anything we can do to further the great cause of Psychological Research ought not to be left undone.

X. Y. Z.

Correspondence

THE NATIONAL GUILDS LEAGUE

SIR,—The need for a National Organization of Industry becomes more a commonplace every day. In the mouths of many of those who use the phrase it amounts to a demand for Martial Law in the workshops, for the surrender of many of the rights that Trade Unions have won for their members. Organized Labour, if it will, can give the phrase another meaning. It can insist that the exploitation of the worker by the individual capitalist must cease, and give way not to a system of Martial Law but to a frankly recognised Partnership in the control of industry between the Trade Unions and the State.

For some years before the war there were signs that Labour was awakening to the importance of this demand. Though in the chief industries the strike for higher wages still held the first place, a new type of dispute was developing. The claim to interfere in the conduct of industry, and the right of the Trade Union to take matters of "discipline" out of the control of the capitalist or his representatives, was being more clearly defined. With this new spirit abroad in the Unions the time-honoured claim for Recognition expanded into what was virtually a demand for Status. The Trade Union was beginning to claim the right to control, in some part, the unfettered autocracy of the owners of capital; and in the workshops the individual worker was beginning to demand the right to check and criticise the actions of his foreman and manager. Freedom in industry was becoming a matter of real concern, and the cry of higher wages was developing into the claim to Status and Control. The Trade Unions were ceasing to be critics and were becoming sharers in responsibility.

The War has shown how justifiable is this change of outlook. Only by giving to the organized producers the right to organize production for themselves can the community expect to secure willing and efficient service. The workers must become the recognized and responsible agents of the community, and cease to be bound to the owners of capital by the bonds of wage-slavery. Freedom depends upon the position of Trade Unions in industry, and the fight for freedom is the fight for control. While economic exploitation remains, while the worker is divorced from the control of process and product alike, there can be no truly democratic community. Democracy, for which the workers have striven so long in the sphere of politics, must be extended to industry; for only when the worker is free at his work will he be free as a man and a citizen.

In this belief the National Guilds League has been founded. Its objects are:—"*The abolition of the wage-system, and the establishment*

of Self-Government in Industry through a system of National Guilds working in conjunction with the State." Out of the bargaining Trade Unions, it believes, will grow the producing Guilds; out of the organizations of dependent wage-earners will come organizations of free and self-governing producers. The State will look after the interests of the consumers, but it will leave the producers free to organize production.

The National Guilds League is a propaganda organization; it makes a special appeal to Trade Unionists, and is anxious to send its lecturers to Trade Union Branches, District Organizations, Trades Councils and other Labour Bodies in return for out of pocket expenses. Membership is open to all who endorse the principles of the League and are prepared to work for them.

Anyone desiring to arrange lectures or to obtain further information should write to me at 16 Grosvenor Road, London, S.W.

Yours, etc., W. MELLOR (*Secretary N.G.L.*)

THE WAR—WHERE DO WE STAND?

SIR,—It is impossible, in the unfortunately all too limited space of the *Plebs*, to deal adequately in a letter with all the points raised by C. T. Cramp (and also "G.S.") in last month's issue, therefore something must of necessity be left to the reader's intelligence. Because I stated in the June *Plebs* "that the workers *under capitalism* are *not* 'men and women first' but that they are simply commodities," C. T. Cramp, having taken the statement out of its context, arrives at the conclusion that "I lack an understanding of the proletarian mind." The references to the "unconsciousness" of the workers in my letter indicate at least some understanding of the proletarian mind. It is quite true that the workers are endowed with "emotions, instincts, &c," but under capitalism these are subordinated to the commodity status. It is this commodity status which has prevented the workers from getting access to the "bookshelf" and thereby adding reason and knowledge to the animal attributes of "emotion and instinct." It is precisely because these emotions and instincts, up to the present, play the largest part in "the collective mind," that the workers of Europe have donned the khaki and marched forth to slaughter each other.

I note C. T. Cramp admits "that the workers are commodities is of course true in the economic sense." In what other sense does he think I meant the statement? It is difficult to account for everyone's sense of humour, but if any of my statements are "comic" they are certainly surpassed by C. T. Cramp when he makes the amazing statement that "desires constitute the *justification* of our movement." The desires of the workers are merely the effect of their exploitation, and it is this exploitation, not desires, which is the *justification* of our movement. How far does C. T. Cramp think that the "emotions, instincts, and desires" of the South Wales miners have had

any influence with the coalowners and the Government in the negotiations over the miners' new wage-agreement and in the application of the Munitions Act ?

It is knowledge and organization not "poverty and misery" which will "prepare the way" and enable us to apply the remedy. With regard to the duty of a class-conscious Socialist, how far are our khaki-clad Socialists helping our class to protect themselves from the exploitation and the recent oppressive legislation of the real enemy within the gate, e.g., such as the action (at the time of writing) of the South Wales coalowners and the Government ?

If the additional need, in C. T. Cramp's opinion, for us to become "caste-conscious" as well as "class-conscious" is the result of his "study of the human material at first hand," I would suggest that he should devote a little more study to the "bookshelf," and as to being "outshone in *anything* by members of the exploiting class," the workers need have no fears, unless it be in vice and hypocrisy ! I have no desire to emulate or compete with the exploiting class in such matters, but prefer to take my stand with those who are continuing to "raise the scarlet standard high."

Just a word in conclusion with regard to one or two points by "G.S." In my opinion there is a big difference between one who goes *willingly* to fight in the trenches and one who, by force of economic circumstances, is compelled to assist in the production of munitions, or starve, and this difference is not removed by "G.S.'s" disagreement.

I quite agree that the International was largely a paper organization, but if all the other sections had been prepared to act in accordance with its principles like the South Wales Miners' Executive this war would not have occurred. "G.S." implies that the action of the S.W.M.F. Executive did not represent the real feeling of the mass of the Welsh miners, owing, as he states, to "the rush of the S.W.M.F. members to join the Army." How far "G.S.'s" reference is correct may be judged by the fact that not more than 20 per cent. of the *whole* South Wales coalfield, has been reported as joining the Army. In his pride to help defeat German brutality, "G.S." seems to overlook the fact that he has the assistance of the noble and civilised Gurkhas in his noble, civilising, humanitarian mission.

To whom does "G.S." refer as "suggesting that war cannot possibly result in progress for the worker ?" If "*we have the energy and courage to work and wait,*" there is no doubt, the International movement will ultimately benefit as a consequence of the war, but the energy and courage to work is required in the form of pointing out to the workers the crippling and evil effects, to the Trade Union movement, of the pernicious legislation which is being advocated and placed on the statute book by the enemy at home. Also, if there is any superior degree of capitalism in this country, as "G.S." seems to think, then, to say the least, it is rapidly being closely moulded according to the much detested Prussian pattern.

If space would only permit it would be quite easy to prove that no Socialist can justify his participation in modern Imperialistic wars on the grounds of defending the interests of the Socialist movement. The fact that Marx waxed eloquent over the sacrifices of the British workers during the American

Civil War *in the 19th Century*, does not justify the inference that he would do the same over an Imperialistic war *in the 20th Century*. In the 19th Century capitalism was a progressive force, whereas to-day it is no longer progressive and instead of lifting society on to a higher plane, it is retarding it by fighting as to which nation shall command the greatest power and the largest share of the world's wealth.

To paraphrase Marx, I refuse to draw the magic cap of patriotism down over my eyes and ears and try to make-believe that there are no monsters in Europe except those of German origin. Yours, &c., MENS SANA.

Porth, Rhondla.

FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Sir.—I have been a regular reader of the *Plebs* for six years, and have been a resident here exactly four years. Many a time have I thought of sending you a few notes on the condition of things out here, economically, socially, and politically, but I had—and still have—the notion that although I am in perfect agreement with you in the matter of working-class education—I mean the necessity for independent education—my view point differed very much from yours in respect to Socialism generally. However, I am going to put that idea to the test.

First let me clear myself regarding a somewhat peppery reference to myself in the February *Plebs* just to hand. I sent on some cuttings of a newspaper controversy in which I took part, and stupidly remarked in my note that they were likely to prove at least as interesting "as some of the far-fetched and academic articles often appearing in the *Plebs*." I conclude from the editorial reply to this that you are a glutton for criticism, but that I ought to have pointed out the articles I was "getting at." Please excuse me for not venturing to particularize; if I had done so, it would have been adding insult to injury. What I have said (to quote a great Empire Builder) I have said. If I was wrong, I am sorry; if I was right, then what I said needed saying by someone.

But to turn to affairs out here in S. Australia. We have just been passing through the throes of a General Election for the two Houses of Parliament—the Assembly and the Council. After being in opposition for three years the Labour Party has returned to power in the Lower House with a majority of 26 to 20 (Liberals). In the Upper House 7 Labourites form the minority and 13 Liberals the majority. I think I hear the Revolutionary Social Democratic Anarchists of the C.L.C. asking whether it matters a damn which of the two are elected. To which I unhesitatingly answer, "Yes, it does." Liberalism, here as elsewhere, stands for and is the political expression of capitalism. Labourism (though we should all prefer the word Socialism) stands for the uplifting of the status of the worker. And although the Labour Party out here in Australia does not emblazon on its banner the word which so many of us worship, it no doubt includes in its programme as much of Socialism as the mass of the people are prepared for. Certainly Labour here demands as much in the Socialist direction as the people want; and in practical politics they can go no further.

In what, then, did the difference between Labour and Liberalism consist in our elections? Well, the Labour Party stood for such measures as the

provision of seed, wheat, and fodder for the rural population in distress; the establishment of State Fisheries to provide fish at reasonable rates to the people; Fair Rent Courts for town and country; State brick-works; the abolition of the contract system in all State undertakings, and the substitution of direct day labour; preference to trade unionists; State Hospitals; the reform of the electoral system in favour of Proportional Representation; the abolition of the Legislative Council (the Upper House); and so on.

The Liberals opposed these attempts to interfere with private enterprise and the "liberty" of the subject. I am fully aware that a programme such as the above would not satisfy some of the Revolutionary Anarchists who contribute to the *Plebs*; but it is nevertheless as far as the Australians are prepared to go in one jump.

S. Australia has also just decided by an overwhelming majority to close all liquor bars at six o'clock every evening. (They are already closed on Sundays).

I should add that the return of a Labour Ministry in S. Australia makes five Labour administrations in the Commonwealth. The principal one, of course, is the Fisher Government, representing all the States in the Federal Parliament. There are besides the Holman ministry in N.S. Wales, the Scaddon ministry in W. Australia, and the Tasmanian administration under Mr. Earle.

Just now, owing to nearly three years' drought, as well as to the war, unemployment is abnormally widespread. Thousands are out of work and dependent upon public charity.

W. MARTIN GORMLIE.

Adelaide, S. Australia.

(We are very glad to publish Comrade Gormlie's interesting letter. But we wish he would "particularize" those "academic and far-fetched articles." And will he at the same time say (1) what sort of a strange beast a Revolutionary Social Democratic Anarchist is, and (2) what gave him the notion that the C.L.C. harboured such creatures?—Ed.)

Reviews

A HARD-SHELL DARWINIAN

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

In this book Dr. Mitchell, who calls himself "a hard-shell Darwinian evolutionist," discusses "a theory of war, rather than an actual war or its causes." The theory which he sets out to criticize is Bernhardt's "biological necessity of war," and this he does very effectively. In so doing, he is compelled to attack the biological explanations of the social organism, and thus he indirectly administers some hard knocks to biological Socialists. He points out that some people are too ready in making generalizations, and that they often mistake analogies for scientific argument.

Chapter III is also a good corrective to the vapourings of pseudo-Socialists of the Blatchfordian-Thompson type, and those other people who argue that this is a racial war, and that the Germans as a nation are endowed with some innate brutality which places them far below the Allied peoples with their supposed superior moral traits. Dr. Mitchell points out that the races

of Europe are intermixed, and that "Germany is most alike to England." He also proves that "the existing political divisions of Europe do not correspond with the racial types of their inhabitants," and "with regard to the making of nationalities, the three races of Europe present equivalent mental and moral material."

Although our author clearly apprehends that the laws governing the animal world are not applicable to human society, nevertheless, he completely misunderstands the laws governing the social relations of mankind. The cause of the German desire for world-power he traces back to Kant and his moral law. He does not appear to be aware that the animal "struggle for existence" has only been modified in form, but not abolished in human society. When he states "it is too obvious a truth for elaboration that civilized man has developed fashions of obtaining food, more economic and successful than those involving the slaughter of his fellow-men," he fails to see that, so long as society retains its capitalist form of organization, there will be slaughter of man by man, both in industry and in war, the latter being only a more glaring expression of capitalist greed for profits.

It is when Dr. Mitchell enters into a disquisition on the distinction between "science and reality" that he makes it quite plain how helpless and confused a physical scientist may become when he ventures outside his own special field of inquiry. In his explanation of a scientific law, he unintentionally proves the correctness of historical materialism. He says "When we take the scientific law, and attempt to fit it again to any part of the extended world, except precisely that part from which it was derived, we are apt to bump up against reality, and to receive an unpleasant if salutary shock." This statement means that practice is the true test of theory, and that in order for our ideas to be correct they must correspond to the particular material from which they have been derived.

But our author goes completely astray in his analysis of reality. He states—"In my own scheme of the universe there is an ultimate metaphysical reality which enfolds and permeates us. It is without qualities or conditions, relations, parts or magnitude, for all these are modes of human knowledge. . . . and all that we know of ultimate reality is that it is 'not us.' About it we know nothing, for we can think and know only in terms of ourselves. . . . The moment part of reality enters into us and becomes known, it ceases to be real." We are now "back to Kant" with a vengeance; it is quite plain that Dr. Mitchell's "ultimate metaphysical reality" is nothing more than the Kantian "thing in itself."

With regard to consciousness, Dr. Mitchell states, "he is not prepared to say what it is," but he admits, "It may be that our difficulty about consciousness is no more than that being among the trees, we cannot see the wood." It is quite evident Dr. Mitchell is "a hard shell Darwinian evolutionist." It is precisely this "hard shell" in the form of *the limited materialism of physical science*, which prevents him seeing the wood for the trees. If in addition to the study of Kant, our author had also studied the philosophical works of another German by the name of Dietzgen, he would not have had this difficulty with consciousness, nor with "metaphysical reality." Nevertheless the really scientific parts of this book are well worth perusal, and they form a splendid answer to biological Socialists and racial megalomaniacs.

R.H.

THE IDEALISTS AND THE CRISIS

The International Crisis in its Ethical and Psychological Aspects. Lectures delivered at Bedford College for Women by ELEANOR M. SIDGWICK, GILBERT MURRAY, A. C. BRADLEY, L. P. JACKS, G. F. STOUT, and B. BOSANQUET (Oxford University Press, 3/6 net.)

Six eminent academic persons hold forth in this volume on various idealized abstractions such as "Patriotism in the Perfect State," "International Morality," "The Morality of Strife," "War and Hatred." Each of them, it is plain, means well; and "we all have views," as the first of them remarks. So they air their views, and build cloud-castles of fancy on the top of the views, and get quite stern and fierce at times over this or that ethical or psychological aspect of things; but never by any chance—or at any rate only very occasionally—do they set their feet upon solid earth and talk about the world as it actually happens to be. *Their* world is a world of "theories," of "ideas;" so that when they discuss history, national policies and so on, they regard them as the outcome of certain ideas, and only sigh over the unfortunate way facts have of blurring the clear outlines of a really satisfying theory.

Most of them have a good deal to say about "the State"—its "rights" and its "duties." And their remarks on the subject will be of some interest when set alongside the article on this subject on another page of this issue. "A State rests on, and in a sense only exists in, the minds and wills of its members, The improvement of this State depends on the ideas of its members and their will to make their ideas good." We are given fair warning, however, that "there can be no more fatal error than to identify the nature of the State with any development of it that has hitherto appeared." ("Keep Your Eyes off the Facts," in short.) "If now we ask what the State is, we may say that it is the nation considered as an organized whole or individual. . . . Further, they are not a mere collection or aggregate, but form an organized whole, performing a multitude of different functions, which should, and more or less do, so complement and play into one another that they make a common life and produce a common good." "The State is there to be the condition of organized good life for the inhabitants of a certain territory."

Having thus visualized an ideal State, they proceed to play with the idea of how such States ought to behave to one another (this branch of intellectual gymnastics being called International Morality.) And then, having got a "genuine international moral world" all in working order, we suddenly wake up with a jerk to Europe in the 20th. century; and wonder whether this sort of thing is very far removed from the children's game of "Let's pretend."

Very occasionally, as we have already suggested, one or other of our Idealists comes down to earth. Mr. L. P. Jacks, for instance, whose subject is "The Changing Mind of a Nation at War," gets at times perilously near to dispersing the cloud-wreaths by a breath of commonsense. "We call our selves a democracy," he muses. "But there are moments, even in the course of dealing with domestic problems (!) when we find it hard to reconcile the facts with the theory." There are, indeed. Further, the present crisis is "forcing us to question the whole basis of our civilization. . . . We are prepared to find that there is something *radically* wrong." And then we get right up against the facts with a vengeance. "Now there are two great forces

which as everybody knows have been mightily at work in European history for the last hundred years. One is militarism, the other is industrialism . . . Militarism we have always suspected; industrialism has borne a better character, though some of us have had our doubts. But recently there have been signs . . . that *these two forces are much more intimately connected than once seemed possible.*" A little further consideration of the subject, and "a suspicion gains ground that industrialism when unchecked by other forces may be a positive cause of War." One step further, and we come to the bold assertion that "Whether they sail under the Jolly Roger, or under the red ensign of industrial civilization, makes little difference." (This particular remark naturally aroused the wrath of *The Times* reviewer; to him it "savoured of the Hyde Park orator.") Mr. Jacks goes on to the conclusion that "When militarism goes the check will be removed which has so far prevented industrialism from producing its bitterest fruits—the disruptive tendencies of pure industrialism having hitherto been largely held in check by militarism itself. If, therefore, the War merely yields the negative result of destroying militarism, we may lay our account with the certainty that there are yet greater troubles in store for the world."

For this Realist among the star-gazing company of Idealists one gives thanks.

J. F. H.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Homeland or Empire? By JOSEPH BURGESS. (The Homeland League Press, Bradford), 1/- net.

The Meaning of the War. By HENRI BERGSON. (T. Fisher Unwin), 1/- net

The Plebs' Bookshelf

In his review of Dr. Gilbert Slater's book last month, W.W.C. touched in passing on the question whether any good thing could come out of Oxford, Curiously enough, there is a reference to this same question in Mr. William Archer's introduction to Prof. Gilbert Murray's lecture on *The Stoic Philosophy* (Watts and Co., paper 6d. net, cloth 9d. net.) "Professor Murray," declares Mr. Archer, "is one of a group of scholars, his contemporaries and his juniors, who are converting Oxford from a home of lost causes into a Great Headquarters for causes yet to be won. Is it not a most encouraging sign of the times that that admirable series, the Home University Library, should be edited by two New College dons, Prof. Murray and Mr. Herbert Fisher? What would Moncure Conway have said if anyone had predicted that, within seven years of his death, such a book as Prof. Bury's *History of Freedom of Thought* would be written by the Regius Professor of History at Cambridge, and published under the editorship of the Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford? I think he would have said: 'No, no; the world does not move so quickly as that!'"

* * * * *

The world does move, of course; and undoubtedly a good many ideas are current in Oxford to-day which would have surprised and shocked the Oxford of 50 or even 10 years ago. And though class-conscious working-class students may not be so impressed by Oxford's progress as Mr. William Archer and the members of the Rationalist Press Association, nor be under any illusions as to exactly how far Oxford is likely to go, they may yet make good use of the books that come out of Oxford in order to provide themselves with valuable munitions of (class) war. I would like to emphasize this

particular point—as to the usefulness, and sometimes even the indispensability, of books not expressly written from our standpoint—since a correspondent has (very sensibly) pointed out that reviews in the *Plebs* ought to be very carefully considered, lest the *relative* praise one might give to a book of this kind should be mistaken by some readers for praise *absolute* and unqualified. Of course. But it would be paying a poor compliment to the intelligence of *Plebs* readers to assume that they were unable to grasp the fact that a book might be well worth reading—and buying—without being, from our point of view, quite “sound” throughout. Until the workers have won a decent measure of freedom, and leisure to investigate and write for themselves, we must inevitably make use of the labours of those more fortunately situated than ourselves. That does not prevent us from *interpreting* the results of these peoples’ labours in our own way, nor from arriving at conclusions, based on their investigations, which might be very unwelcome to the investigators. In short, we have to *think* all the time we read; and to confine ourselves strictly to books hall-marked “sound” by our own authorities is to run serious risk of losing the capacity to think for ourselves.

* * * * *

One good thing that came out of Oxford (speaking relatively, of course) was Mr. G. D. H. Cole’s book, *The World of Labour*. Plebeians will be interested to note that the demand for a cheaper edition has been large enough to encourage the publishers (Messrs. G. Bell and Sons) to re-issue the book in popular form—to be out shortly. Mr. Cole has also just finished a book on *Labour and the War* (same publishers, 2/- net) which we hope to deal with in the *Plebs* later. Messrs. Bell are also issuing a cheaper edition of Mr. H. N. Brailsford’s *War of Steel and Gold* (2/- net) which Ben Mackay, it will be remembered, cordially recommended to *Plebs* readers three or four months ago.

* * * * *

Talking of *The World of Labour* reminds me that in the very valuable Bibliography appended thereto, there appears the following item:—

ABLETT, NOAH. A forthcoming book.

Has that book forthcome yet? A good many of us have been eagerly awaiting it for what seems a long, long time. It would give the leader-writers of *The Times* and the *Daily News* something to write about. See how famous *The Miners’ Next Step* has become again lately.

* * * * *

Another good thing out of Oxford—the World’s Classic Series published by the Oxford University Press. These little volumes are a boon and a blessing to Plebeians with bookshelves. Among recent additions to the series are Prescott’s *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (2 vols.), Savage Landor’s *Imaginary Conversations*, a selection of William Morris’s poems, and a volume containing six plays by Shakespeare’s contemporaries—Beaumont and Fletcher, Dekker, Webster, and Massinger. A selection such as this last is particularly valuable to readers with limited leisure, who, if they can find time to read Elizabethan dramatists at all, certainly cannot afford to do more than read half-a-dozen representative specimens. At a shilling a time, the World’s Classics—the Pocket (thin paper) Edition especially—are, I repeat, a boon and a blessing. (No Plebeian should be without the *Twenty-Three Tales* by Tolstoy published in this series some time ago).—THE READER.

Poetry

AN AUSTRALIAN VERSION OF MARK ANTONY'S SPEECH OVER THE BODY OF CAESAR

" Blokes, cobbers, pals o' mine, give us your lugs :
 I'll plant this cove to-day, not crack him up.
 What blokes do on the crook lives after them,
 Six foot of earth falls plunk on all that's straight.
 That's Caesar's mozzer, too. The noble Brutus
 Says this 'ere Caesar chap was on the make,
 If that's the case, by Cripes, it was red 'ot,
 But Caesar 'ad a red 'ot time just now.
 Now I've got leave from Brutus and his push.
 (For Brutus is the little clean pertater.
 And all his click is clean pertaters too),
 To cough up talk at Caesar's funeral.
 Caes' was my cobber—acted square with me :
 But Brut' will have that he was on the make.
 And Brut' is just the little glassy taw.
 When Caes' caught pris'ners, all the push alike
 Had a cut-in when the good gaunce was split.
 Does that look like a cove that's on the make ?
 Caes' shed a tear whenever FLEMMING preached.
 He should have had a 'arder chiv than that.
 But Brutus says he played for his own hand,
 And Brutus is the little blameless flower.
 You all remember how, last eight hours' day,
 I offered him a knighthood more than once,
 And he said : " Rats ! " Would CROOKS have acted thus ?
 But Brutus says that Caesar's game was crook,
 And Brutus is the snow-white mother's pet.
 I don't stand here to say that Brut' tells lies,
 But just to cough up what you know is true.
 You used to think old Caes' a good sort once,
 What's wrong in bein' sorry, now 'e's stiff ?
 Garn ! Sense is with the monkeys at the Zoo,
 And men are off their dots. Don't mind me, blokes,
 My 'cart is in the bloomin' box with Caes',
 I'll take a pull till it comes back to me."

(From the *Australasian*).

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.

The "Plebs" League

(Organ : "PLEBS" MAGAZINE, Published Monthly,
Price 2d.)

Executive and Officers of "Plebs" League:

SECRETARY-TREASURER

GEORGE SIMS

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