

Vol. VIII, No. 11

December, 1916

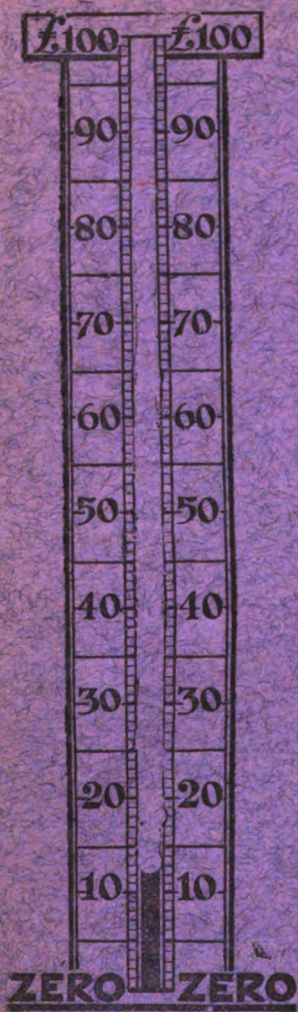
The
PLEBS
MAGAZINE



*Printed by Fox, Jones & Co., at Kemp
Hall, High St., Oxford, & published
by the Plebs League
at the same address.*

MONTHLY

TWOPENCE



We have to
get this
down
to

|
Zero

PLEASE SEE
OPPOSITE PAGE.

THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. VIII

December, 1916

No. 11

CONTENTS

	Page
A WORD WITH OUR SUBSCRIBERS - - - - -	241
A REPLY TO G. D. H. COLE. By NOAH ABLETT & W. W. CRAIK -	242
OPEN LETTER TO A DURHAM MINER. By WILL LAWTHOR -	246
GERMAN SOCIALISM & PARLIAMENTARISM. By J. B. ASKEW -	248
THE TIMES ON THE CENTRAL LABOUR COLLEGE - - - - -	251
REPORTS: (MANCHESTER, NEWCASTLE, EDINBURGH S. WALES, &C.)	253
CORRESPONDENCE: (FROM F. G. TEMPLE, & "AN OLD HAND") -	256
CUTTINGS - - - - -	259
THE PLEBS BOOKSHELF - - - - -	260

A Word with Our Subscribers

WE think Plebeians will be interested to know just how the Magazine stands. As they already know, our circulation is steadily increasing, and we have wiped out the greater part of the debt which so long had hampered us. *As a matter of fact, we could clear that debt altogether, now, if all our subscribers would pay us what they owe for magazines actually supplied to them, to their order.* Just read that over again—it's quite true. Some few of our subscribers—we are speaking of those who take parcels of twelve or upwards—pay in advance; others forward their cash regularly month by month; others—and these not a few—are months and months behind-hand with their payments.

Now is this quite fair—particularly at a time like this? If all our subscribers would regularly forward their cash monthly, the *Plebs* would be able to pay its way as it went along—with a margin, perhaps, for experiments and improvements. Surely these backward brethren are not waiting for accounts to be sent to them—as though we were an ordinary commercial concern, which could not rely on their support unless we "dunned" them for it? Will they respond, *at once*, to this appeal, and enable us to get our books straight immediately, in readiness for the commencement of the new volume?

One other point. At a time like the present, with the price of paper exceedingly high, and cost of postage, &c., increased, we would ask our readers to order only as many copies as they can sell; and, if they are asking for free copies for distribution (for propagandist purposes) at least to remit cash for postage.

We are compelled to make this appeal, because an idea appears to have got about that the *Plebs* is right out of danger, and that no urgent necessity for continued effort exists. *This is not the case*, nor, so long as the present national and international crisis continues, is it likely to be the case. The *Plebs* depends absolutely on the efforts of its individual supporters. One of those supporters, within the past few weeks, has sent us the names and addresses of no fewer than six new subscribers—and their subscriptions. Cannot others follow his example? At least, cannot everyone see to it that they are “fully paid-up” members—and not a source of some anxiety to the members of the Executive Committee? We don't think it is necessary to say more.

A Reply to G. D. H. Cole

THE MacTavish sulks in his tent. But what an ally Mr. Cole has been to him! Nothing but contempt for his own side; a scathing exposure of the hollowness of the cause in which he admits he is an officer—for the lofty purpose of “spoiling the Egyptians;” a description of a leading light on his own side as an idiot; and an admission that in “theory” he fully agrees with the opposition. Poor, patriotic MacTavish, what a friend you have in Cole!

Mr. Cole's attempted defence of the W.E.A. is characteristically W.E.A.-like. He starts out by condemning the assumption (alleged by him to be made by both the W.E.A. and the C.L.C.) “that Labour wants anything at all from education. . . . the great majority of the Unions are still quite unconscious that working-class education is of any special importance to them.” A few paragraphs further on he describes the C.L.C. as a “propagandist” organization. What does a propagandist organization want with an assumption that the people among whom it intends to “propagate” are already in possession of the principles to be propagated?

Mr. Cole describes MacTavish's pamphlet as giving a “lead,” in order that conferences should follow, from which a Labour educational policy is to emerge. So that in his third paragraph he forgets what he wrote in his first. Evidently MacTavish's pamphlet was “propagandist,” too. Mr. Cole is also so well aware of the unsatisfactory character of the principles propagated

in this pamphlet, that he feels it necessary to remark that Mr. MacTavish "gave no very clear guidance." That, perhaps, is also why he leaves our criticism of the special points raised in the pamphlet alone, and feels it "more valuable to devote my space to a discussion of the general position."

The pith of his article, however, is that the C.L.C. is right in theory, but the W.E.A. right in practice; so that theoretically Mr. Cole is a C.L.C. supporter, but as a practical man he is with the W.E.A. The C.L.C. errs "in practice," says he, in being "far too sure that it possesses the whole truth . . . and far too intolerant of Labour men who do not share all its dogmas . . . too ready to insist on its own terminology and its own way of thought." We consider that a high compliment, for it means that we are a coherent organization, with a definite point of view which we have learned to express in an unequivocal way. We practise what we preach. Our practice is just as consistent with the theory with which Mr. Cole agrees, as the practice of the W.E.A. is consistent with the theory which he rejects. The contradiction he attempts to find between C.L.C. theory and practice is in reality a contradiction inherent in his own attitude—between what he *knows* to be true, and what he *does* on behalf of the W.E.A. ¶

The eminently practical Mr. Cole says, in effect:—"I do not agree with the official W.E.A. philosophy, but I am convinced that the majority of its active members do not agree with it either. My sympathies are entirely with the C.L.C. But as the majority of the working-class does not yet understand or desire the C.L.C., let the working-class take over the W.E.A., run it as a definitely Labour concern, and *pay for it*." Our answer to that must, we are afraid, be somewhat disappointing to our practical friend. The C.L.C. with which he sympathises and with whose theoretical position he agrees, owes its existence and its extension to the fact that it followed a practical policy precisely *the opposite to that recommended by him*. Labour is already in process of taking over the C.L.C., and two of the most important Unions in the country are already paying for it. To that extent Labour is coming to agree with Mr. Cole that the W.E.A. philosophy is wrong.

So practical is Mr. Cole that he believes not only in the C.L.C. but in the W.E.A. as well. He remarks—"I feel that the hair of Messrs. Ablett and Craik will stand on end as they read these words." If excessive laughter will achieve that result he may be right, or again (as Prof. Arnold would say) he may not. Certainly Mr. Cole's attitude on this question is calculated far more to inspire amusement than indignation. He pictures the workers in the Trade Unions as a great apathetic mass unconscious of the importance of working-class education. Many of them, says he, lack the conception of the class struggle in politics as well as in education.

That is (Mr. Cole agrees) the *disease*. What now does he propose by way of remedy? From his own testimony about education in Social Science, one would at once expect him to apply the appropriate "class-biassed" educational instruments to the patient, and promote class-consciousness among the workers by means of class-conscious educational organization. But he is practical, and says: "I am only waiting till Labour is prepared to run the W.E.A. and pay for it. Meanwhile, as I see no hope of securing Labour money for education, I believe in spoiling the Egyptians." It is as if a doctor were to say:—"Wait till the patient *knows* he is ill, and is prepared to pay for the cure, before you begin to cure him. If he really has cancer, but believes he has measles, then treat him according to his belief—for measles. For if he were treated for cancer, I am not convinced that he would back the suggestion." Mr. Cole agrees that such a view is nonsensical, yet says:—"I am as anxious as anyone to sweep all such nonsense out of the W.E.A.; but I am not convinced that the Trade Unions themselves would back the suggestion."

To Mr. Cole we would say:—You set yourself up as a social doctor, but we are convinced that the patient (the Unions) would be well advised to give you the "sack" if you persist in giving admittedly false prescriptions. You say you desire class-education and wish to sweep the opposite point of view (the "nonsense") out of the W.E.A. You want to sever the connection between the W.E.A. and the Universities, and you are only waiting till Labour is prepared to do so. You believe in Marx and would like the W.E.A. to do the same. Has it never struck you that if these things were done, the W.E.A. would be the C.L.C.? What then would there remain to "take over" from the W.E.A. but its members? Is such a view likely to raise one's hair—or to raise a broad smile on one's face?

The truth is that Mr. Cole and a very few others in the W.E.A., are quite exceptional in so far as they recognise the evils from which the workers suffer and which the workers themselves must remove. These exceptions follow the general rule, however, in so far as they are by no means prepared definitely to take their stand on the side of the working class and have done with opportunistic shuffling. This is what being "practical" really means. Tomorrow the workers may desire to sweep away all such nonsense as prevails to-day; but to-day let us "wait"—wait until the cat jumps, and then jump with it. Meanwhile, we are to "spoil the Egyptians;" but let us not forget that these same Egyptians are also very "practical" men, and are out for spoil themselves.

What is the C.L.C. position in relation to what Labour *needs* from education? That position has been stated time and again in these pages; but as the C.L.C. does not "wait and see," but

works and strives for the purpose of making Labour *conscious of its needs*, its standpoint cannot, until that purpose has been accomplished, be re-stated too often.

☐ The W.E.A. is unfitted to be a working-class educational organization because it fails in the very first principle of understanding the working class. It has no sense of the relative or historic rôle of the working class. It wants to abolish, not the antagonism of classes, but simply the *idea* of class antagonism; at the same time leaving untouched the economic causes of class antagonism. Such an outlook is essentially capitalist in character, in spite of the claims of the W.E.A. to be non-political and impartial, and explains the capitalist patronage of the Association. We are justified, therefore, in saying that the W.E.A. is a danger because it threatens to blur the real issue that confronts the workers.

What is that issue? It is that under the present economic system the wage-worker has to sell his only possession, his power to labour, as a commodity. In the most important part of his life he is merely a commodity—like so much coal or manure. The C.L.C. conception of what Labour needs from education starts from this merchandise status of Labour. Therein is the source of the whole Labour problem. The solution of that problem consists in the conversion of the commodity into a free human being. In order, however, that the wage-worker shall become a man, *i.e.* economically free, it is not enough that he should know that he is a commodity, but also how he became and why he continues to be a commodity. Such knowledge has the immense advantage of showing him how he must act in the struggle for the overthrow of the commodity system. The C.L.C., therefore, teaches history and economics in accordance with the facts of which the workers have actual experience. That is just why it is so much easier for the workers to acquire an *understanding* of those facts, than for the capitalists and their professional retainers. That is why the teaching of the C.L.C. has found among the workers an ever-increasing response.

The C.L.C. teaches history and economics, not as the modern "schoolmen," but from an independent point of view. That this point of view coincides with the interests of the working class, does not detract from its scientific character. On the contrary, it is the very nature of the working-class position and interests that favour the working-class point of view becoming a scientific point of view. A scientific standpoint in social questions must be independent of the prejudices of the society which gives rise to those social questions—in this case capitalist society. The interests of the capitalists promote the desire, on their part, for society to remain as it is. They cannot, therefore, readily acquire the scientific independence necessary for understanding society as it is.

But the painful school of workshop experience is making the workers ever more accessible to the scientific (C.L.C.) point of view. The result of this teaching is to show quite unmistakeably "where the shoe pinches," and the worker who has the knowledge laughs to scorn the false teachers who would persuade him that it is his own shortcomings, and not the economic system, that prevents his emancipation. Further, knowing the real evil, his mind becomes concentrated upon the practical work of removing this evil. So we find him attending and, later, teaching in the class connected with his Trade Union branch. Such, however, are the character of the theories he is taught and teaches, that he can *combine the thinker with the fighter*, and we find him in his lodge and district, helping to shape and to wield weapons for the every-day struggle; always keeping before him the final object—the abolition of the wage-system. In this way the ideas of the C.L.C. gradually become more and more the settled policy of his class; and there we have the dynamite which will blow into a thousand fragments the superstitions and fallacies inculcated and maintained by the interests opposed to labour, through such institutions as the W.E.A.

On then with the "practice" which develops and justifies the "theory" of independent working-class education.

NOAH ABLETT and W. W. CRAIK.

An Open Letter to a Durham Miner

FELLOW-WORKER,—At the present time appeals are being made to you from many sources, and for many reasons. So far none has been made to you to think about problems affecting you and your class. As I am a working miner, like yourself, I should like you to pay special attention to what I have to say. There has been a lot of talk about what is to take place "when the war is over," but nothing of a definite nature has been placed before you.

You are told that there will be questions of wages, of hours, of an industrial peace (?), &c., &c., for you to consider. I agree there will be, but what I should like to ask you is, what are you doing to prepare to meet the emergency when it arises? To prepare to meet the problems requires understanding of them, and of how and why they arise. To understand them is to overcome them.

But what are you doing along the lines of understanding the situation? You may tell me that it is not your business to look into these matters. Let me point out that it is; and assure you that you can (if you will) bring such a force to bear upon the forces of the employers that nothing will be able to withstand you.

The solution will be found in the educational field. Not on the *quantity* of your knowledge, but on the *quality*, on the sources whence it springs, rests your future.

In a few days, the Annual Council Meeting of your Association will be held, and an attempt will be made to have the following new object added to the rules ;—" That we support the Central Labour College in its educational work."

The Central Labour College is the only institution of its kind in the world. It is owned and controlled by the South Wales Miners' Federation and the National Union of Railwaymen. It believes that the workers must have their own educational institution, independent of capitalistic institutions—like the W.E.A. for example, to which you recently gave £50. You have your own industrial and political organizations, independent of anyone, and yet you allow the spring from which these activities are fed to belong to others.

You may reply that " education " is not tainted with party or class outlook. On the surface it may seem so ; but you must realize that if, as I suggested at the outset, you are to settle the questions of the future with satisfaction to yourself, then the knowledge must come from your own class outlook. The coal-owners look after *their* class interests now—witness the last advance in wages. Why should you hesitate to do the same? *You do not place much faith in impartial chairmen, and yet you place it in impartial education.* The experience of your trade-union (like the experience of the Central Labour College) of things impartial, is that they are of no use.

Already the College has commenced in your district provincial classes where subjects such as the History of the Modern Working-Class, Industrial History, and Economics, are studied. Such classes form a very important part of the College's work, and are being held at Newcastle (3 classes), Consett, Chopwell and South Shields.

Up and down the country, the workers are beginning to see that education is the greatest step towards the winning of their freedom from wage-slavery. They look to social science to show them the way to that freedom which they have sought in vain by other means. And the College bases its case for your support on the fact that it teaches those social sciences which will aid you to throw off the chains of slavery that bind you—as effectually as the slaves of long ago were bound. Sooner or later you will have to settle the question, for your whole future well-being depends on what your opinion is on this subject.

Nothing but an entire change from the position of being " dependent " upon others for knowledge, to the more manly and self-respecting one of supporting such an institution as the Central

Labour College, which came into being because the workers had to find a solution for themselves, will do for you. What greater ideal can you have in view than to win, for yourself and your class, freedom? And that is the object of the Central Labour College.

I shall be only too glad to give you all the information you require on the subject, in the sure and certain hope that once you see clearly what it is we are out for, you will work with us for the overthrow of wage-slavery.

Yours for real education,

WILL LAWTHER.

(6, Wear Street, Chopwell, Co. Durham.)

German Socialists and Parliamentarism

In sending us this article, comrade J. B. Askew mentions that it is the result of sundry discussions with certain South Wales Plebeians as to the desirability or otherwise of political action. We trust that his critics will reply to the arguments he puts forward here—Ed., *Plebs*.

AMONG the many disputes which have divided the German Socialist Party since its origin, the dispute as to the necessity for political action has played a comparatively small part—far smaller than that played by the same subject in France or Italy, for example. This has been due, no doubt, in part to the comparatively late development of Trade Unionism in Germany, but even more to the warning afforded by their experiences under the Socialist Law. At that time the Government dissolved all the Trade Unions, or practically all of them, as well as all the political associations of the Socialist Party; and had it not been for the group in the Reichstag the German workers would have been left, for a time at least, without either representation or rallying point. The representation in the Reichstag gave them a means of speaking to the nation as a class, and of answering the calumnies propagated by the Government. What the small Reichstag group achieved—despite the fact that they were only a miserable minority—what they were able to do in exposing the policy of the Government and the dirty tricks of their agents—above all the so-called *agents provocateurs*—won the admiration of the very man who was endeavouring to crush them. Bismarck admitted in a speech made in the Reichstag in 1884 six years after the Socialist Law had been introduced, that his much advertised Social Insurance measures (miserable as they were and severely criticised as they have always been by the Social Democrats, who indeed voted against them) would never have been taken up by the Government had there been no Social Democratic movement. In other words, the Socialist movement, through its parliamentary represen-

tatives, was the means of getting for the German workers what the English workers only obtained 20 years later. Of course, that was due not so much to the representatives themselves, as to the determination of those whom they represented. The mere fact that the only result of six years of hard persecution was that the number of Socialist votes was really increased is eloquent testimony to the real strength of the movement. But a great deal also depended on the character and insight of the parliamentary representatives. It was necessary that they should be men of grit and experience—men who were neither to be intimidated nor flattered from doing that which they felt to be their duty—and this they undoubtedly were.

There has been in certain quarters a tendency to decry parliamentarism as a source of demoralisation for the movement, because, forsooth, so many men forget their principles when they get into Parliament. As a matter of fact, the men who are capable of being demoralised in Parliament are just as likely to be demoralised as Trade Unionists in the conferences with the employers or on other similar occasions. It may be gravely questioned whether there is much to choose between Trade Unionism and Parliamentarism in this respect. The great need is that the workers should learn to check and control the acts of those who claim to represent them in whatever capacity.

In what I have said above I have no wish to crack up the Bismarck Social Reform measures ; but they were the best that could be got from a capitalist Government—a government only actuated by the wish to dish the Socialists, in which it failed signally. The German Socialists themselves have never laid any great stress on the so-called concessions they have won. There has never been any tendency among them to tot up the gains of parliamentary or trade union action, and weigh one against the other in order to decide whether either or both paid a profit on the outlay. The fight for the emancipation of the workers cannot be measured in that way. The only test of any measure is whether it leaves the workers freer and better able to fight for their full emancipation—and the justification of the action of the Parliamentary group under the Socialist Law was that their action not only helped the party to overcome the fiercest attack that had ever, up to then, been made on an organized workers' party, but to about treble their strength. The question of concessions is besides that a false test because very often when the industrial organization is weak more concessions are gained than when it is strong ; partly because the employers want to avoid irritating the men and inducing them to organize ; partly also because the employers themselves are badly organized. Sometimes, where both sides are strongly organized, concessions are few and far between, and there follows a period when it is only possible to mark time—the forces on both sides being nearly equal.

We have very often heard in recent years the remark made by men who have learnt to know the Socialist movement in Germany somewhat superficially, that what German Socialists were demanding was no more than what the Radicals in this country were ready to concede ; and hence the conclusion was drawn that the Socialists in Germany were little if any more advanced than British Radicals. It is a remark which would have called forth the scorn of Marx, who had a great contempt for making far-reaching demands on capitalism. That is bourgeois Utopianism not Socialism. It fails to realise the limitations of capitalism. It is no use demanding as palliatives things that are incompatible with Capitalism. The essence of palliatives is their immediate practicability. If you want to go beyond palliatives you must abolish Capitalist production itself ; and that can only be when the development has gone so far that the Socialist form can supplant it. Other demands again, such as that of adult suffrage, have a very different meaning in the various countries. In Germany, adult suffrage for the Prussian Landtag would in itself have almost amounted to a revolution ; and certainly, if won by the action of the masses, would have been a revolution of the greatest significance, because it would have implied the passing of the centre of political power in Germany from the plutocrats who control it at present to the Democracy. Germany is the best example of Plutocracy in the world. The Junker rule about which we hear so much is merely the mask for a Plutocracy—and the Plutocracy fears to give the suffrage because they know it would be no good hoping it would not be used. Of course it is not to be denied that in Germany as in other countries there has been a certain tendency to allow the fight for smaller immediate issues to absorb the whole attention of the party, and to obscure the fact that we are Socialists fighting for Socialism. Also, undoubtedly, there has been always an equally strong tendency to whittle down our palliatives more and more in the hope of getting support—a futile proceeding, because though it may not be always true that the more you ask the more you get (certainly not if you demand what cannot be granted on the basis of the existing order) it is nevertheless true that if you demand little you won't get even that. In general of programmes it may be said that what they contain is not so important as the interests of those classes who demand them, their degree of class consciousness, and their determination to see them carried out.

J. B. ASKEW.

Robert Holder's article in October *Plebs*—"Strike at the Roots" (reviewing E. D. Morel's *Truth and the War*)—was reprinted in the *Socialist* for November.

How does your Account stand ?

The Times on the C. L. C.

(The following extracts from an article in the *Times* of November 22nd, under the headings—"South Wales Miners—Causes of Unrest—The Central Labour College," will be of especial interest to *Plebs* readers.)

It may be thought strange by those who do not know the Welsh miner that he should show his anger against his employer by sending delegates to a peace meeting. To the average Englishman the miners of South Wales have always been a puzzling problem. In peace time most people outside this area looked on them as a class of men who through some curious bent for truculence made a hobby of quarrelling with their masters over petty matters, and occasionally put down their tools for sheer love of fighting. Even when the war came and the bickerings continued little notice was taken of them, until one morning the country found itself face to face with a strike that threatened to cripple the Fleet and the Army. Then the "hobby" suddenly became a crime against the nation, and no words were too strong for the grasping greed and the utter lack of patriotism of the Welsh miners. There is a danger that the same mistake of ignoring the disaffection while it spreads and denouncing it when it comes to the point of open rupture will be repeated now.

AN EDUCATED PEOPLE.

What is it that makes South Wales the industrial storm-centre of Great Britain and why is it a fruitful ground for food agitation and peace propaganda? The answer is simple. Subject a fiery and educated people to a soulless, dehumanized, commercial machine for the extraction of gold out of labour and you will inevitably breed a seething discontent which must somewhere find its outlet.

Yesterday I dealt with one aspect of the machine. To-day I am more concerned with the people upon whom it presses. Their fieriness is sufficiently known, but the Celtic temperament alone does not explain their violence of action. To it is added a degree of education which would astonish some of their absentee employers. There are scores of men working in the Welsh pits who could pass an examination in Ibsen or Shaw or Swinburne, or could hold their own in an argument on economics or politics with the average member of Parliament. They owe their training, not to the State or the municipalities, but to the educational facilities provided by the Independent Labour Party and other organizations. In the current number of the *Merthyr Pioneer*, which may be regarded as the organ of the Independent Labour Party movement in South Wales, appears a column and a half article,* one of a series, on industrial history, dealing with the earliest written records of British history from the point of view of the worker, and at the end of the article is a reference to the works which bear on the subject. For years

*This series is being contributed to the *Pioneer* by Mark Starr, C.I.C. student 1914-15.

past free evening classes in economics, industrial history, and similar subjects have been held in I.L.P. branch rooms in the various mining centres, and many of the younger members have taken full advantage of them.

There is another educational movement which has its centre in the Rhondda, and which is carried on mainly by past students of the Central Labour College. This institution it may be remembered, was established as the result of dissatisfaction with the curriculum at Ruskin College, Oxford. From Oxford it was transferred to Earl's Court, London, and thence it has spread the doctrine of class-war far and wide. Recently it came under the joint control of the South Wales Miners' Federation and the National Union of Railwaymen, and special efforts are now being made to extend its work throughout this district, chiefly by lectures in the workmen's institutes and co-operative societies' rooms.

A third educational agency is an organization called the Plebs League, which aims at the education of the workers by means of classes in sociology, industrial history, Marxian economics, and so on. Not only do hundreds of young miners absorb this teaching, but many of them are sent by their lodges to the Central College, London, and come back to preach what they have learned—mainly as a gospel of open hostility to the employers and constant agitation for the complete extraction of their profits.

CAPTURE OF THE LODGES.

The fruits of specialized education are seen in the decisions of the Miners' Federation as much as in the protest against food prices and the clamour for peace. The advanced Socialists and Syndicalists are but a small porportion of the miners, but they make up for want of numbers by energy and influence. As a rule the miners' lodge meeting, even when important business is to be dealt with, is attended by only a few members. The rest find that the energetic young men manage local disputes to their satisfaction and are sufficiently anti-capitalistic to be entrusted with the larger task of carrying on the feud with the masters. Accordingly, the decisions of the lodges are generally taken by a handful of extremists, and in that sense it may be said that to a large extent the organization of the Miners' Federation has been captured by the active men of advanced and even revolutionary views. . . .

PLEASE NOTE:

That all communications and orders for *Plebs* should be addressed to the Secretary—Mrs. W. Horrabin, 127 Hamlet Gardens, Ravenscourt Park, London, W.

That all monies for *Plebs* should be sent to the Treasurer, Mr. G. Melhuish, c/o J. F. Horrabin, at the same address.

That orders and enquiries for books (not magazines) should be addressed to the Central Labour College, 13 Penywern Road, Earls Court, S.W.

Reports

THE CASE OF MR. REYNOLDS.

We learn, just before going to press, that the Governors of the College have granted the sum of £12 to Mr. Reynolds. That being the case, we have no wish to refer further to the matter here (at present), recognising as we do that, under the Military Service Acts, the Governors were compelled to ask Mr. Reynolds to take temporary leave of absence. But Mr. Reynolds has been too long and honourably connected both with the College and with the *Plebs* for us to remain silent in face of what—until this later development at all events—appeared to us to be very unfair treatment. The incident has perhaps afforded the Governors an opportunity of realizing the feeling of the rank and file regarding the unselfish work done by the officials of the College.

EDINBURGH DISTRICT N.U.R. HISTORY AND ECONOMIC CLASS.

The above class has got fairly under way for the fourth session, and at the first meeting held on November 12th, there were 35 members present. They were amply repaid by the splendid lecture which Comrade J. S. Clarke gave. Our comrade's subject was:—Prehistoric Archeology, which he illustrated by means of drawings on the black-board, and by pictures and maps. The illustrations showing the development of the tool from the sharp-edged stone were specially interesting.

To those who have made an effort to keep the class going, it was very encouraging to see so many at our first meeting. The time of the meetings has been altered from 11.30 a.m. to 1 p.m., and as this was the chief drawback to railwaymen attending, it is hoped that we will have a class of well on for a hundred. We have also decided not to confine the class to railwaymen, but to open it to any one who is interested, and as the lectures are also given in the West End of Edinburgh on Sunday evenings, there should be given a fillip to the cause of working-class education in this aristocratic city. The number of *Plebs* sold every month is close on five dozen, with every promise of an increase in the near future.

JAS. M. NIXON, *Secretary*.

MANCHESTER DISTRICT N. U. R. CLASSES.

The Manchester District Council of the N.U.R. has wisely decided that education, from a Labour standpoint, is an important phase of its work. Under the auspices of the C.L.C., classes have been formed at Manchester and Stockport, and are held on Sunday mornings and afternoons respectively. Mr. R. Holder, an N.U.R. student from the C.L.C., has been engaged as teacher and has proved himself to be eminently fitted for the position. While the number of students is not yet what some of us hoped for, it is pleasant to be able to report that a keen interest is being taken, and the number attending has steadily increased.

Mr. Holder is also visiting branches and doing propaganda work, especially on the educational side; and though Manchester has hitherto been rather a

black spot so far as the C.L.C. is concerned, Holder is making a good impression, which has already resulted in a new interest being taken by the rank and file. Should this bloody conflict end before all our young men are sacrificed to Moloch, one can confidently look forward to a great extension of this work in the near future.

F. G. TEMPLE, (Asst. Secretary).

NEWCASTLE AND DISTRICT CLASSES.

A successful conference was held at the Newcastle Socialist Society Rooms on Saturday, November 11th. There were present representatives from five N.U.R. branches, two A.S.E. branches, two I.L.P., one S.L.P., and one local Socialist Society, one National Amalgamated Shop Assistants, as well as a number of sympathizers. After an address by Will Lawther on the C.L.C. class system, it was decided to commence a class on Sundays at 11 a.m. and 5.30 p.m., to be conducted by Will Lewcock of Westerhope; subject, History of the Modern Working-Class Movement. The Newcastle and District Council of the N.U.R. are going to send six students from their branches, paying all the expenses of same. This is a method that other organizations could copy with advantage to themselves.

Last month the Editor commented on our "big push." We have now turned it into "a big offensive" and it augurs well. The enemy have retired at various strongholds, and we more than hold our own. The shrapnel (*Plebs*) is strong, but more will be needed, ere we reach their last hope (the large trade-unions). We are optimistic, however. Nuff sed!

O. K.

NEWPORT (MON.) CLASS.

The Joint Committee of the four branches of the N.U.R. at Newport called a general meeting of their members, and others interested, at the I.L.P. institute on Sunday, October 29th. A class was formed and a committee elected under the chairmanship of Mr. D. J. Hughes, the chairman of the N.U.R. Joint Committee; this committee includes the secretaries of the four N.U.R. branches and of the I.L.P., who have generously given the use of their rooms on Sunday mornings. The class meets at 11 a.m. under the leadership of Mr. H. Griffiths and the study will take the form of reading and discussion, there being no teacher as such, in the class. Difficult points will be submitted to the C.L.C.

The book to be studied is Mr. W. W. Craik's *History of the Modern Working Class Movement*.

The books not having yet arrived, on Sunday, November 5th, the class listened to an interesting account of the Workers' Democratic Educational League which has recently been started under the chairmanship of Mr. Sid. Jones (Blackwood) to organize classes in South Wales. After some discussion the class decided to wait further reports before deciding to affiliate.

Have you sent us a P.O. lately ?

On Sunday, November 12th, an interesting discussion took place on the W.D.E.L. who had invited delegates to a Conference at Cardiff, and also on the need for a study of the rules of debate.

It is expected that the class will be a large one, an invitation to attend being given to members of the N.U.R. and of the I.L.P., and especially to others outside these bodies who have any thought for the social position of the producers. Up to now our largest class has been of forty-five, but we hope to at least double this, the forty-five being very enthusiastic.

The secretary of the class is Mr. A. Sid. Wilson, of 11, Woodland Park Road, Newport.

WANTED—LEICESTER READERS.

Mr. A. W. Burrows, 31, Dronfield Street, Leicester, would be very glad to hear from any Leicester readers interested in the idea of forming a C.L.C. class in that town.

OTHER PLEBEIANS, PLEASE COPY !

The following is a copy of a p.c. forwarded to us by a Fleetwood Plebeian :—
Fleetwood Industrial Co-op. Society, Ltd.
Educational Department.

Dear Sir,—The committee are prepared to take the *Plebs Magazine* for News Room. Will you please arrange supply ?

Plebeians elsewhere are requested to note—and get busy in a similar way.

GETTING BUSY IN SOUTH WALES.

From the Merthyr *Pioneer* of November 18th we take the following :—

In connection with educational work it is worthy of note that the classes run by the Rhondda No. 1 District and the Central Labour College, are doing good. There are at present seven classes in existence at Mardy, Pontygwaith, Ynyshir, Porth, Mid-Rhondda, Treorchy, and Treherbert. These are likely to be added to again.

A most satisfactory feature of late development in the Labour Movement in the Rhondda is the close relation that is being established between members of the teaching profession and the other Trades Unions in the district. It is also gratifying to note the assistance rendered by members of the Teachers' Union to the C.L.C. classes, both as teachers of English grammar and literature and as students in the other subjects viz., Economics and History.

Mark Starr is contributing to the *Pioneer* a series of "Outlines of Industrial History," and at the foot of his article in the same issue appears the following time-table of classes :—

Economics.—Mountain Ash, Fridays, 6.30 p.m. Aberaman, Mondays, 6.30 p.m.

Industrial History.—Aberdare, Fridays, 6.30 p.m. Aberaman, Wednesdays, 6.30 p.m. Mountain Ash, Mondays, 6 p.m.

We hope to print a more detailed report of these classes next month. A report of the formation of the class at Newport appears above. South Wales is keeping the pace up.

A Red + on the Wrapper signifies that your Subscription is due.

Correspondence

NOT TOO MUCH W.E.A., PLEASE!

Sir,—The *Plebs* for November is again good, but one can see that any considerable addition to the "Labour and Education" discussion is likely to become a bit boring, since neither G. D. H. Cole nor anyone else can add anything to the views of their side that has not already been over-discussed in (and out) of the magazine.

I suggest that a much more fertile field of discussion just now would be the effects of women's wholesale plunging into industry during the war. I saw recently that it is intended to train and supply women-carpenters for work behind the lines out in France. Now this sort of thing is going to cause the "crafts" some sleeplessness! And I suppose the same is happening in Germany. What an ironic criticism of the alleged "will-ing" of the ruling classes. Here's Germany's action in precipitating the war resulting in a heavy blow being struck at the roots of one of that country's most cherished beliefs—that "Woman's place is the Home."

The various social effects of the war, in fact, *ought* to be discussed. "A.E.'s" article, reprinted in the *Plebs* early last year, struck me as perhaps the most generalized truth about its possible effects that one would be likely to come across—within the limits of a single article. Of course his theory—that though Germany might be defeated, the German Idea (State organization and so forth) would triumph—is not new; Lester Ward talked about the "Cross Fertilization of Cultures," and Marx about "The Cheap Product as a breaker-down of Chinese walls and a setter-up of new ideas and new moralities." Ideas and moralities *are* being tested and questioned just now; a dozen big problems will remain for Britain to tackle even when "Militarism" (at home or abroad) is defeated. Plebeians ought to be discussing them.

Why not a series of articles on "Woman: The Future"? The *Plebs* ought to be able to obtain the views of all kinds of workers in all branches of social and industrial activities. Even so far as regards Trade Unionism alone there are sufficient indications of trouble ahead—for those who are blandly talking about a return to the *status quo*. As if such a turning back were possible!

A good many of our "leaders" are already overwhelmed—intelligent enough to see that something big is happening, but incapable of really grappling with the arising problems. Are we—the educationalists?

Yours etc. AN OLD HAND.

(We agree with a good deal of what our correspondent says. Nevertheless we would point out to him that the *primary* aim of the *Plebs* is to insist—and keep on insisting—on the need for Independent Working-Class Education. It is highly probable that he—and some other readers from the first—weary a little of this. But we are constantly getting new readers, (and trying for more!) and it is obviously necessary to go over much of the old ground again. The same old arguments are being put forward by the other side; who, if not the *Plebs*, is to answer them—even though it be in the same old way?—Ed., *Plebs*).

FUSION OF THE R.C.A., AND THE N.U.R.

Sir,—I was sorry to see the discussion on the above subject take a somewhat acrimonious turn and suddenly cease. Personally, I think that to discuss whether or not fusion of these two Unions is necessary or desirable would be a criminal waste of *Plebs* space ; more especially when one remembers the clerks are among the operative grades of the railway service, and were always eligible for two of the three Unions which were merged into the N.U.R.

I contend that as the constitution of the N.U.R. is framed on a basis of organization by industry, it is up to the N.U.R. to rid the railway service of the remaining vestiges of sectionalism. It should invite the R.C.A. to discuss terms of fusion in precisely the same way as it did the A.S.L.E. & F., and failing success after reasonable terms have been offered, it should vigorously compete for membership and so weaken the R.C.A., instead of encouraging it (as your two former correspondents have admitted it is doing to-day).

In this as in all suggested amalgamations two obstacles present themselves ; viz., official opposition, and apathy of the rank and file. Overcome the latter, and the former will melt away like dew before the sun.

The Manchester District Council of the N.U.R. has endorsed a resolution from the Ashton-under-Lyne branch requesting the E.C. to invite the R.C.A. to discuss terms with a view to fusion. Unfortunately, the E.C. burked the question, but that will be dealt with at the proper time and place. Meanwhile the Council has embarked upon a campaign to achieve the much desired " One Union for All Railway Workers ;" and one method adopted is to send speakers to R.C.A. branches. The syllabus of special meetings arranged by the Lancashire Council of the R.C.A. contains the names of several speakers from the N.U.R., and as one who has visited R.C.A. branches, I can truly say that up to now I have found a strong feeling in favour of fusion. It is said that 10,000 are ready to come over—the cream of the R.C.A. at that—and they are doing much to leaven the lump.

The obstacle, I have found, is the fact that the N.U.R. has never invited the R.C.A. to amalgamate, and the apparent indifference of the rank and file, together with a pretty evident opposition on the part of certain Unity House officials, is being interpreted by the R.C.A. captain as hostility to the idea of fusion. It is constantly being dinned into the ears of the Clerks that the N.U.R. don't want them. I am confident that among the rank and file there is no hostility, but a real and genuine desire for fusion, and I appeal to Plebeian brothers in both Unions to get to work and create a demand that will compel their governing bodies to meet and discuss terms. Then when the time arrives for another encounter with the companies we can meet them not as divided units but as a mighty army of workers standing shoulder to shoulder. Yours etc.,

F. G. TEMPLE.

Dukinfield, Cheshire.

Does your Conscience prick you at all ?

R. B., SENTIMENTALISM, &c., &c.

Sir,—I think I recognise the identity of your correspondent "S.W.," and I should like to have a word on that charge of "sticky sentimentalism." If you knew "S.W." as I know him, you would be more than surprised at his first letter. In spite of his being able to look back on half-a-century, he is a rebel of the first order. During the dark days of the College, when moral and monetary support were so necessary, "S.W." and I were members of the same branch of the N.U.R., and I look back with pride on the work he put in to keep the College going. I found him a real good comrade.

But really, "S.W.," if the Editor has made no charge against you, I am bold enough to charge you with acute Hero-Worship and with ignoring fundamentals. You claim to be a disciple of Blatchford. May I ask *which* Blatchford?—the one who wrote in the *Clarion* that he owned neither a brick nor a yard and had nothing to defend, and that the workers had nothing to lose but their chains; or the Blatchford who, during the mercenary war in South Africa wrote in the *Clarion*—"I read of Britain's great victory—I sat down and drank my burgundy and ordered my daughter to play on the piano 'Britons never shall be slaves,'" and who to-day hires himself out to a renegade Irishman? The Blatchford who wrote *Not Guilty* (see chapter XIII on the failure of punishment); or the one who to-day calls for reprisals, and the punishment of Germany, by demanding the blood of poor German conscripts, victims of class rule, who by their votes have been sending such anti-militarists as Leibknecht to the Reichstag? The Blatchford who in an article in *Life* (New York) January 1st, 1910, wrote as follows:—

I have tried to feel like a foreigner in Germany and have failed, and I dare affirm if the majority of Germans were put down in the streets of Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow, or Birmingham, no-one could know them for foreigners:

and further—

You can't bluff a German. He has too much horse sense. You can't drop him in a race. You can't beat him without extending yourself. It is his nature to fight to a finish.

Or again—

The Germans are as a nation better educated, more sober, more orderly, than the British. So far as my knowledge and observation carry me I have to say, and I say it regretfully, that I believe the Germans to be a more efficient people, a nicer people, a better people, than our own. The fact is, the Germans *are* our own kith and kin, spirit and kind.

Or the Blatchford who writes the sickly sentimental articles in the *Weekly Dispatch*, *Sunday Chronicle*, &c., shouting that we must beat the "Huns," crush Germany out of existence, &c. &c. Now, "S.W.," choose you this day which Blatchford you will follow. You can't follow both and deny the Editor's charge, or the charge I have made.

You say it was Blatchford who set your feet on the right road. It was Blatchford who helped me to cut myself adrift from conventionalities and

Can't you get us ONE New Subscriber ?

study Socialism ; but the more I read of Socialism and of Blatchford, the more I thought of the former and the less of the latter, and long before those panicky articles appeared in the Northcliffe Press I had come to the conclusion that at the best Blatchford was a sentimental Socialist.

One more question. Does the fact that Blatchford condemned the Manchester slums (which, by the way, he now demands we should be conscripted to defend) make it necessary for one to agree with his Jingoism every time the war drums beat, or the Northcliffe Press trades on his reputation ? I don't see any reason why an intelligent person like " S.W. " should do so. If I had been an elector at West Nottingham in 1885 when John Burns was candidate, or in Barnard Castle when Lady Warwick wired best wishes for Arthur Henderson's success, I should have voted for both of them. But if I did so to-day, I should feel I was no longer a Socialist.

So I stick to my charge, " S.W. " But should I live to see the end of this bloody conflict, I am confident (in spite of this difference) that you and I will be found standing shoulder to shoulder in the fight that lies before us.

Yours etc., F. G. T.

Cuttings

" ALL DRESSED UP—"

Who is the greatest " swell " in the House of Commons ? Who wears the most carefully cut overcoat, the most shiny silk hat (and at the most jaunty angle), and who walks with the most subdued consciousness of the fact that he is shiny and well dressed and that no speck is ever upon his clothes ?

You might expect the answer to be one which would give the name of some scion of the peerage, or the son of one of our rich families among the manufacturing, ship-owning or merchant princes.

Not so. His name is William Brace, a miner. He worked down on the coal face when a boy. Now, although not in the Cabinet, he is a Minister, a member of the Government, and he adorns the Treasury Bench. Not only does he shine sartorially, but he has the biggest moustache in the House of Commons, and it is as black as the coal which he used to dig as a hard-working boy of tender years. Brace shines.—*Sunday Chronicle*, " Confidential Notes on Political and Social Events of the Hour," October 29th, 1916.

" YES, GRANDMA !"

His analysis of the principles underlying industrial conditions in the earlier part of the last century seems to us less satisfactory. He attributes the privations of the working class at that time to the " intellectual error " of mistaking the material progress of society as a whole for the welfare of the individuals who compose it. The " error " was really the adoption of an organic theory in production, combined with an individualistic theory in

Do all your Friends take the Plebs ?

distribution. Our trade unions are now making the opposite mistake ; they dis-regard the necessity of augmenting the aggregate wealth of the nation, and think only of increasing the share of the individual workman. The mistake in both cases is quite as much moral as intellectual. Class selfishness must be banished from any State which aspires to be rationally and equitably organized.—*Times* review of *Christianity and Politics*, by W. CUNNINGHAM, D.D.

* * * * *

A BISHOP WAKES UP.

"The day of the old tract is gone for ever," said the Bishop of Chelmsford at the annual meeting of the S.P.C.K. yesterday. "I don't think you will do much good by publishing tracts to-day, 'Are you a drunkard?' or 'The sin of dancing.'" "I wish that everybody who is going to write tracts would take in, for instance, 'The Clarion,' and read it for a while; read carefully the works of Ramsay MacDonald, Philip Snowden, Keir Hardie, and George Lansbury, and go through a course of Chesterton and Wells. For these are the kind of men that the working classes to-day are reading."

—*Daily News*,

The Plebs' Bookshelf

Three or four months ago, I quoted Mr. Sidney Webb's plea for the uses of novels as material for the student of sociology; of novels, that is, which—either primarily or incidentally—were studies of some particular social class, or locality, or set of industrial conditions. *The Family* (Elinor Mordaunt), to which I referred last month, is a novel which gives one a quite valuable picture of a certain class of English society—that of the "county gentleman"—and the reaction, upon certain members of that class, of modern social conditions. It is quite definitely a study of a class, as distinct from a study of certain individual characters. Another novel of a similar sort (though somewhat lighter in treatment) is *The Mountains of the Moon*, by J. D. Beresford (Cassell's 1/- series). *New Review* readers will remember Floyd Dell's enthusiastic admiration for Mr. Beresford; and Plebeians may recall that this same author's little book on H. G. Wells was reviewed in these pages twelve months ago. *The Mountains of the Moon* is a study of an even higher social "stratum" than that depicted in *The Family*. It deals with the very uppermost ten, the inheritors (and inhabitants—reluctantly and occasionally) of one of the stately homes of England. And it views them through the eyes of an American sociologist and idealist. I fancy, by the way, that Mr. Beresford imagines this hero to be a rather alarmingly advanced person; whereas he is obviously only a "progressive" of the real American, sentimental sort, who has read his Ruskin and his Wells. However, that does not in any way lessen the interest of the book from the point of view already indicated.

We know you meant to send it—but did you?

I am not, of course, suggesting that the reading of books like these will serve as a pleasant substitute for more serious study. I merely point out that—besides being well-written and interesting novels—they possess an added interest to the student of social evolution.

* * * * *

A Northumbrian correspondent writes recommending to Plebeians a novel by S. R. Crockett—*A Tatter of Scarlet* (Hodder & Stoughton, 7d.) "The book deals," he says, "with the Garibaldian detachment of the French army of 1870, and incidentally with a revolt of the Communists of the Red Internationale under one Keller Bey; and it would, I think, interest *Plebs* readers, although written from the conventional standpoint." I don't know the book myself, but am very glad to pass on his recommendation; and I take this opportunity of again inviting all Plebeians to send along the names of any "finds" of theirs for the benefit of other readers.

* * * * *

The November-December number of the *Socialist Review* contains a very interesting article, by John Edwards, on John Francis Bray, the author of *Labour's Wrongs and Labour's Remedy*, published at Leeds in 1839. In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx quotes extensively from Bray's little book; and in *The Critique* Bray is referred to in a footnote. The writer of the article alludes to the charge made by Prof. H. S. Foxwell, to the effect that the omission of Bray's name from the bibliography in *Capital* was intentional, "as hiding the source of ideas which Marx desired to claim as original"—an accusation dealt with by Engels in the preface to *Capital*, Vol. II. Incidentally, Mr. Edwards remarks that—

In Germany there is a series of cheap abridgements of all our early English Socialist writers—Bray, Hodgskin, Thompson, &c. Yet while the writings of this Leeds printer are known to economists in Germany, France, Italy, Austria, and Holland, we English Socialists hard'y know the name of his book.

The chief point of interest about Bray's book would appear to be that, at a time when political reform was expected to bring the millenium—when "the People's Charter was to solve all problems"—he boldly questioned "the peculiar efficacy of any particular governmental remedy to accomplish the end desired." He insisted that the "productive classes" must change "that social whole which keeps them poor, as well as that governmental part which oppresses them because they are poor"—the root of social injustice being the institution of property as it at present exists.

Mr. Edwards has collected some facts about Bray's life, of which little or nothing has been hitherto known, and prints some letters of his. Bray went to America in the early 'forties, and died there, at the age of 86, in 1896.

Why (asks Mr. Edwards) did he take no further part in the Socialist movement? Did he watch with pleased interest the growing numbers of people who adhered to doctrines which he was one of the first to propagate in his "energetic little book"? Did he know the great Marx had praised his work, and used it to trounce the anarchist Proudhon? . . . Did he read the Socialist books which in the 'eighties and 'nineties

came teeming from the press? And did he note the movement of Labour—"not Labour in the United Kingdom only but in France and the United States and the world at large," as he himself had foretold—springing to power and throwing off its old feeling of inferiority?

One would like to know.

* * * * *

Mr. Emil Davies' City notes in the *New Statesman* are generally good reading. In the issue of Nov. 11th he writes:—

Various small Cardiff shipping companies are being picked up by interests identified with Lord Rhondda, who has also bought the assets of the German company owning Sanatogen. Perhaps this is an extension of "welfare work," and the South Wales miners are going to be fed on that health-giving preparation.

Perhaps so. I notice that in an interview with a press representative Lord Rhondda assured us (if we needed the assurance) that he had not gone into this new business "for the sake of his health." So very likely it is the health of the miners he is thinking about.

I presume, by the way, that all Welsh miners will be very proud of the bunch of statues of national heroes (and one heroine) presented by his lordship to the city of Cardiff, and unveiled by Mr. Lloyd George recently. I have not seen any criticism of these sculptures as works of art, so that I don't know whether Cardiff is made more beautiful by their presence. What are they carved in—anthracite? There are eleven of them—an odd sort of number. Whose "image" is eventually to make up the dozen—The Rt. Hon. Dewi's, his lordships own, or that doughty warrior, Stanton's?

* * * * *

The lectures by Prof. E. V. Arnold, delivered to members of the W.E.A., and recently published serially in the *New Age*, have just been issued in book form under the title of *War-Time Lectures* (Allen & Unwin, 1/- net). Three series of lectures are included, the first being that on "Trade Unions and Friendly Societies in the Roman Empire" discussed in an article in the October *Plebs*. The other two—on "Germany: Her Strength and Weakness," and "Social Organization for the War"—were described by Mr. G. D. H. Cole last month as "even more amazingly silly" than the first. I have not space to deal with them at any length; a quotation or two must suffice to indicate their general tone and outlook. The Professor is discussing the probable effects of a German conquest of England:—

Certain *extreme theories*, according to which individual property is to cease to exist, and all industries are to be managed by and for the mass of the workers, with equal weight given to the wise and unwise, would have no prospect of realisation. But we may safely say that the vast majority of our population already knows in its heart that these vast changes are not practicable, and would feel relieved by their disappearance.

Suppose, on the other hand, an English conquest of Germany:—

Let us imagine further that the typical German of the governing classes is so broken in spirit that he makes no effort to re-establish

his authority. At once Social Democracy would be established in Berlin and other large towns : the wild ideals and the hideous cruelties of the French Revolution would be re-enacted and the whole proud structure of German civilization would crumble into nothing.

So much for "horrible possibilities." As for actual facts, everybody will be delighted to learn that—

Fourteen nations are now engaged in the Great War. In eleven of them the people are working as one man under the direction of their Governments. In Austria and Bulgaria the Governments suppress all opposition. In Great Britain alone the war is essentially a war of volunteers. Those who desire to take part in it receive sympathy and support from the Government ; those who object to it, or are on the other side, receive equal sympathy, and at least passive support.

Also that—

As the organization of labour can only be effected with the co-operation of the working classes and by accepting working-class ideals so the organization or conscription of wealth can only be effected with the co-operation of the saving (!) classes. The classes do not constitute two opposing armies, as is so frequently suggested by the abstract terms Capital and Labour ; they are constituted in the main by the same individuals, but differently organized and in different compartments of their lives.

Prof. Arnold's suggestion for "social re-construction" is the organization of National Trade Guilds (which system "has been already tested in the history of Imperial Rome") :—

In this organization *the present association of employers and workmen must be taken as the basis*. The employers would find it wise to associate with them all persons engaged in the supervision and direction of work, so that their organization would include all those whom we may call the officers of the industrial army ; the workmen of various grades would be the rank and file. Thus in each Guild there would be an Upper and Lower Chamber.

And "all capitalised wealth connected with necessary national industries (is to) be vested in the National Guilds and its control entrusted to the *Upper Chamber in each case*."

Through communication between the two Chambers the working-men in each Guild will get to understand more fully the functions of Capital in each trade. Nor will individuals of the saving class have anything to fear (!)

A very pretty travesty of the ideas of National Guilds ! Guildsmen *will* be pleased. The social substance remains the same, but the label is altered ; thus "individuals of the saving-class" will have "nothing to fear," and the working-classes will get—"to understand more fully the functions of Capital." And the *New Age* publishes the stuff !

One other remark of the Professor's I cannot resist quoting :—

It has been the motto of the W. E. A. always to be ready to accept the truth, even when it comes from an unpopular statesman or a suspected class.

* * * * *

This reference to Guilds reminds me that Plebeians who have pondered over the National Guildsmen's insistence on the need for "the State," should endeavour to get hold of the *New Age* for November 16th, which contained

a particularly interesting article by Mr. G. D. H. Cole, entitled "National Guilds and the Balance of Powers." In this article, the old line of defence—the need for "the State" as representing the "organized consumers," &c.—is somewhat modified. The new argument is that there must be a division (or balance) of powers, in order to safeguard the freedom of the individual.

The fundamental reason for the preservation, in a democratic Society, of both the industrial and the political forms of social organization is, it seems to me, that only by dividing the vast power now wielded by industrial capitalism can the individual hope to be free. The objection is not simply to the concentration of so vast a power in the present hands, but to its concentration **anywhere** at all, even in the hands of the whole community. If the individual is not to be a mere pigmy in the hands of a colossal social organism, there must be such a division of social powers as will preserve individual freedom by balancing one social organism so nicely against another that the individual may still count. . . . That is the fundamental reason why, in the same of individual freedom, I call myself National Guildsman.

There is ample matter here for future discussion, but space forbids any attempt to "reason together" here and now. I notice, by the way, Mr. Cole says that—

In *our* interpretation of history, the evolution of Society is seen as a long series of struggles between social classes for the possession of economic power.

He will forgive me for remarking that, although I don't know that there is any question of copyright involved in this particular "interpretation of history," yet I seem to have heard of it before I ever heard of National Guilds.

* * * * *

From the Introduction to the Catalogue of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition at the Royal Academy:—

All civilization and culture is built upon the crafts—government and education sprang from them.

This is a wee bit like the Materialist Conception of History, isn't it? And in a somewhat unexpected place, too.

J. F. H.

* * * * *

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Trade as a Science. By E. J. P. Benn. (Jarrold, 2/6 net.) (Review by R. Holder next month.)

WHAT OUR READERS THINK OF US.

" . . . The healthiest little revolutionary journal in the movement."—An S. L. P-er.

"The *Plebs* is alright, if only Plebeians will push it. It has never been better than it is now."—A North-Country Railwayman.

"The books which from time to time are recommended in the Bookshelf to busy wage-slaves are O.K."—A Lancashire reader.

"The articles on What Labour Wants from Education are good, and urgently needed just now. Our branch, to encourage discussion, has procured 100 copies of Mactavish's pamphlet, so we may look out for an interesting afternoon in the near future."—A South Wales class-secretary.

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 NINTH Annual Meet will be held in London, August 5th, 1917.

The Plebs Magazine.

The Magazine is published monthly, price 2d. (2½d. post paid).

Subscriptions (payable in advance): six months 1/3, Yearly 2/6.

P.O.'s TO BE FORWARDED TO

GEO. MELHUISE, Treasurer,

127 Hamlet Gardens,

Ravenscourt Park, London, W.

The "Plebs" League

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

Executive and Officers of "Plebs" League:

SECRETARY
MRS. W. HORRABIN

TREASURER
GEO. MELHUISE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MRS. W. HORRABIN, 127 Hamlet Gardens, Ravenscourt Park,
London, W.
J. F. HORRABIN, " " " " "
O. KEIGHLEY, 25 Black Lion Lane, Hammersmith, London, W.
B. S. MACKAY, 28 Oxford Gardens, Notting Hill, London, W.
G. MELHUISE, 80 Clessold Road, Stoke Newington, London, N
J. V. WILLS, 10 Layard Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.

ORGANIZERS

NOAH ABLETT, 44 Glanville Street, Mardy, Glam.
G. W. BROWN, 112 Bishop Road, Bishopston, Bristol
FRED BURGESS, 47 Clonbrock Road, Stoke Newington, London, N
W. E. CRAWFORD, 60 Abott Street, Doncaster
EBBY EDWARDS, 3 Duke Street, Ashington, Northumberland
W. T. A. FOOT, 119 Harvist Road, West Kilburn, London, N.W.
T. P. KEATING, 80 Clarendon Road, Luton, Beds.
J. LEACH, 15 Church Street, Bolton
R. M. ~~Street~~ Street, Hull
F. B. ~~Street~~ Evelyn Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham
W. STEWART, 5 Portallo Street, Belfast
CHARLES WATKINS, 47 Laverack Street, Richmond Road,
Handsworth, Sheffield
W. M. WATSON, Weston Cottages, Cowdenbeath, Fife
H. WYNN-CUTHBERT, "The Ferns," Pavilion Road, Worthing