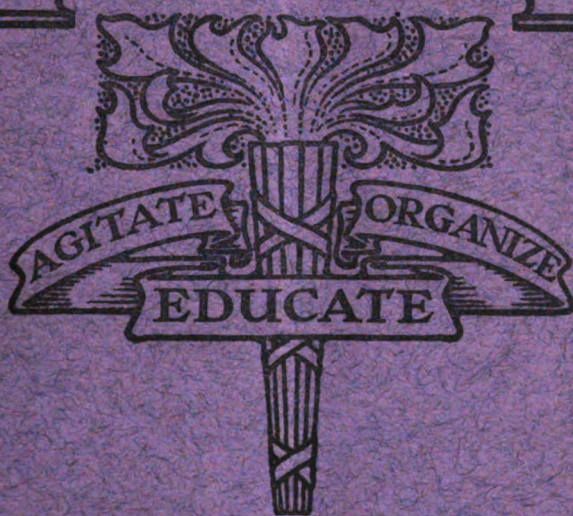


Vol. IX, No. 1

February, 1917

The
PLEBS
MAGAZINE



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THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. IX.

February, 1917

No. 1

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|------|
| TWO TRIBUTES TO THE C.L.C. CLASSES. - - - | 1 |
| THE BOOK WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR. By NOAH ABLETT - | 2 |
| HERRON ON MARX. By A. E. COOK - - - - - | 6 |
| INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION. By J. T. MURPHY - - - | 8 |
| TOO DEFINITE. By WILL LAWTHER - - - - - | 11 |
| A DOUBTING THOMAS AND NOAH. - - - - - | 12 |
| CORRESPONDENCE. (FROM JOE WALKER, R. HOLDER, MARK STARR, H. BROWNJOHN, &C., &C.) - - - - - | 15 |
| REPORTS. - - - - - | 19 |
| CUTTINGS - - - - - | 19 |
| THE PLEBS BOOKSHELF. - - - - - | 20 |

Two Tributes to the C.L.C. Classes

I.

From GEO. BARKER, Miners' Agent, Abertillery, Mon.

THE January *Plebs* is a good number. The thoughtful paper by Pallister Barkas, supplemented by the reports of Mark Starr and W. J. Hewlett, go to show that there is a Big Push on in more places than the Somme. *The C.L.C. Classes are the most important agencies at work in the Industrial Labour movement.* They will have immense influence on the future history of the T. U. Movement in this country. The Labour leader of the future will be able to make more than "price lists"—he will make history; and in making history let us hope he will make away with the wage-slave system altogether.

 SEE OPPOSITE PAGE OF COVER.

I should like to see a C.L.C. Tutorial Class in every Lodge in the Miners' Federation and in every branch of the N.U.R. Then things would begin to move. For the end of Knowledge is Action. The Classes are not an end in themselves, but a means to an end. The goal of all working-class education is Action towards Emancipation. The worker must be taught not merely to labour, but to labour for his own class—not for the enrichment of an exploiter. The aim and end of working-class education is the ownership and control of industry by the workers. The C.L.C. Classes will fit men for these new responsibilities.

When we can get the College open, we shall in a short time be able to turn out teachers by the score. In the meantime, FORGE AHEAD WITH THE CLASSES! As J. F. H. says, "Carry On!"

II.

From the *Times* Literary Supplement, January 11th, 1917.

IN a chapter devoted to the unrest in the South Wales coal-field, it is pointed out that the chief source of the trouble was the profiteering of the employers. The author seems unable to distinguish between State Socialism and Syndicalism, and is apparently unaware of the great influence wielded by Syndicalist students of the Central Labour College in South Wales. No part of the country stands in greater need of *university* tutorial classes; nowhere has the movement received less support, either from employers or from the university.—Review of *The War and Wales*, by Rev. J. V. Morgan, D.D.

(We hereby invite Mr. G. D. H. Cole, or any other supporter of the W.E.A., to explain away the clear and obvious meaning of the concluding sentences of the above passage. For our part, we ask for no better statement of the case for the C.L.C. —Ed. *Plebs*.)

The Book We've Been Waiting For

AT LAST! It will no longer be necessary to refer the intending student of Trade Unionism to the book by Mr. & Mrs. Webb as the only, or at any rate most reliable, work on the subject. For the "nimble tanner"* anyone may now procure Mr. Craik's *Outlines of the History of the Modern Working-Class Movement*, in which will be found all that was essential in the Webbs' book, as well as a good many other still more essential facts and ideas, which one would not expect to find in any work

*7d. (post paid) for single copies; 6d. each, for 6 or more; from W. T. A. Foot, 119, Harvist Road, W. Kilburn, N.W.

inspired by "Webbism." It is the first Labour College book, and it makes an excellent beginning. It purports to be a history of the Labour Movement, from its inception as an elementary organization to the present moment. Not, of course, a history of the details and dates of the formation and history of the various societies, but of all the salient facts and principles of industrial evolution, with their reactions on the development of the working-class. The reader will find in this book theory and practice in harmonious co-operation. It is a triumph of the dialectical method. I knew of no book dealing with this subject, where the ideas and forms of organization are seen to be developing as a consequence of the technical development of industry, until I read Craik's book. I have of course many times come across the idea in a generalised form in articles and pamphlets, but nowhere, to my knowledge, except in this book, has that idea been systematically worked out.

Now for the book itself. It starts, contrary to most books of this class, at the real beginning, viz., the origin of the working-class. And no reader who reads this book with the slightest care is likely to confuse the term "working-class" with "men who work," as each term has a specific meaning and is scientifically defined. Then comes a chapter on the Industrial Revolution, which is shown to provide the basis upon which Trade Unionism could commence to develop. Thereafter we have in historical order the various epochs of the industrial and political evolution of the working class. First, a chapter on the earliest and pre-legal form of trade unionism; next, the legalising of Trade Unionism, the Reform Bill, and the rise of the Owenite movement, expressed in the "Grand National Consolidated Trades-Union of Great Britain and Ireland." There follows the rise of the Chartist movement and the "jiggery-pokery" of the Anti-Corn Law League. Then again the long docile period from 1850 onwards, when parliamentary lobbying, followed by Lib.-Lab.ism, was the order of the day. Afterwards the New Unionism, the rise of the Labour Party, the Industrial Unrest; and then a most remarkable chapter on Industrial Unionism, the importance of which, in the present controversy on this subject—into which so many interested side-issues calculated to befog the whole question have been introduced—cannot be over-estimated. There is given a remarkably clear description of the new form of "Industry-Union," and the objections of the craft-unionists are dealt with in a masterly manner. The book winds up with a valuable chapter on the present and future problems caused by the war. That is a menu I can confidently recommend not only to every trade unionist, but even to opponents of the working class, for it is better that even they should criticise the real and not a spurious article.

So much in praise, and now a word of criticism.

 "AS TO POLITICS."

You will find stated in this book very clearly, and more than once, the reasons why the capitalist class was compelled, in order to obtain rulership, to conquer political power and establish political liberty and the present machinery of what is called a democratic state. But you will search and search in vain for anything like clear reasons as to why the working-class must have a political organization before it can abolish class-rule. Yet that is the reiterated statement of the author. The nearest approach, in fact, the only attempt to explain this "must" that I can find, is on the last page but one (p. 106) where our author says—"It (the working-class) must constitute a political organization in order to clear away the political and juridical obstacles to the organization of its economic power." Now is that a valid reason for Mr. Craik's "must"?

I submit that it is not. In order to make it a good reason it would be necessary to show that the working class cannot further develop its economic power unless it constitutes a political organization. But he has throughout his book very ably demonstrated the contrary, by showing that political power is merely the result or reflection of economic power. Can it be seriously maintained to-day that the obstacles to the further development of the economic power of the workers are political or juridical obstacles? Mr. Craik's book abounds with illustrations and facts to the contrary. He shows that the great obstacles are that the great mass of the workers are unorganized, and that the majority of the organized are still only organized on the basis (and consequently with the ideology) of craft. Does the removal of either of these obstacles depend upon the removal of any political or juridical difficulties? If there *are* any vital political or juridical obstacles that prevent the further development of the economic power of the working class why don't they "prevent"? The economic power of the working class grows apace, and Mr. Craik may rest assured that there is already sufficient economic power to deal with any mere political or even the more serious juridical obstacles, without in any way frittering away our energy by creating a political organization.

I understand Mr. Craik to consider the Labour Party "the last attempt to make capitalist politics serve Labour," and therefore to argue from their failure would not be meeting his argument. He is thinking of some great political organization yet to be created. I will try and illustrate what I think of that from my own experience during the last 4 or 5 years. During that period the Miners, particularly the S. Wales miners, have been through several crises in which the Government has had to intervene—before, as well as

during the war. At no time during these troubles was or could any political party be of any assistance to us. The Government was compelled to meet us directly. If at any period the negotiations were transferred to the "House" then our business would have to be dealt with by men who could not understand as fully as we could our contentions. In the end the whole matter even to details would be decided by our economic power. In that atmosphere, anyone except those who, having devoted their lives to the political movement were prejudiced, could realize the pigmy character of political as compared with industrial organization. It is easy to deduce from this that the larger the industrial organization the less need is there for any political organization. If the Triple Alliance decided to strike of what use would a political organization be to them? Nil! Mr. Craik understands that it was Capitalism that needed and developed Political Democracy; he also understands that "The Trade Union Congress, the Trade Union, and the Trades Council, and not the national and local political assemblies, represent, in embryo, the administrative framework of future social organization"; why then does he want us to do the work of the Capitalist?

Before closing this brief review, I should like to mention that our good friend Mr. Bellamy has written quite a model in the way of an introductory preface, terse, to the point, and pregnant with good advice.

I understand the book is somewhat abbreviated from its original form. That this has not interfered with the inimitable "Craikeian" style the following sample well indicates:—

It (Capitalism) promised the rights of *all* men. It practised the rights of *some* men. It translated the poetry of liberty into the prose of the factory-system. It freed the labourer from feudal bondage in order to compel him to work for his liberators. . .

Every Plebeian not only ought to have this book on his shelves and in his memory, but ought to spend any leisure hours in inducing all his friends and his enemies to purchase a copy. Good luck to our first book! May we soon have our first dozen.

NOAH ABLETT.

I notice that those persons who are fond of saying that God has done all for the best have excellent reason for believing that He has done the best for them.—MICHAEL MONAHAM.

VIGOROUS
IRILE
ITRIOLIC.—A. W.E.A.er on the *Plebs*.

Herron on Marx

THE War is responsible for a good deal. A bishop thanks God that it has scotched Atheism; and a pious millionaire that it has "settled the hash" of old Darwin. G. K. Chesterton is rejoiced that it has proved the irrationalism of Rationalism; the great Wells asserts that it is a War to end War; and a "distinguished British Officer" thanks his God forasmuch as "this War will end Democracy, Socialism, Trade Unionism, and Syndicalism in England." And now comes Prof. G. D. Herron on the scene (*Clarion*, Dec. 8th) to declare that the War has killed Socialist materialism; that the theories of materialistic Socialism are now piled up on the "rubbish heap of history." To prove that the War has done this, the professor wastes a page of the *Clarion* in a desperate endeavour to kill these already "dead" theories.

He rages at the theory of historical materialism, and tears himself to tatters in the process. He hurls libels at Marx dead, and abuse at Marxian students living. He writes a hotchpotch of contradictions, flavoured with epithets, and the editor of the *Clarion* publishes them, and believes he is opening the eyes of poor deluded Marxians. List, Plebeians, to the imitation thunder! "On the vacant throne of Hebrew Jehovah the Marxian fanatics seated a monstrous mechanic God of their own making"; and, not content with this, they reduced the heart of man to dust, and tied mankind to an inhuman machine, which turned its spiritual aspirations to gross matter, and so on.

Having been impressed—or amused—by which, gentle reader, cast your eye over the following deadly parallel, and learn from the learned professor, the strange and peculiar ways of the Anti-Marxian:—

The mind of Marx was a monstrous and inhuman mechanism grinding out certain universal discoveries and principles with appalling accuracy.

About certain essential and tremendous things, Marx was childishly and impudently ignorant.

Marx must have been a curious cuss to have had a mind that could "grind out universal discoveries with appalling accuracy," (*appalling* accuracy, mind you, for Prof. Herron seems to regard accuracy as being nearly criminal); and at the same time to be "childishly and impudently ignorant" about certain *essential* things. To show how "childish and impudently ignorant" Marx was, the professor states that—"As Darwin stands to Natural Science so Marx stands to Political Economy." So having stood first on one leg and then on the other, our Anti-Marxist ends by standing on his head.

But the performance is not yet over. Of Marx the man, the professor informs us: "Marx had not the feelings that the average normal man has; his whole mentality moved outside the pale of the commonest spiritual aspiration." Now this is not argument, but merely the blackguard trick of evading the truth of what a man says by attempting to apply the tar-brush to the man's private character. The trick will not work with those who have been interested enough to study Marx's life. Those of us who have read of the Marx who would in the presence of children forget for a merry while the problems of capitalist society, and would dance and play around with them in the merriest and wildest games; of the man who would romp about Hampstead Heath with his little daughters on his shoulders, and with Engels and Liebknecht be an "omnibus horse" for the delight of his grandchild Johnny, will hardly be impressed by the professor's insinuations. This man, Marx, whose mentality, the professor declares, "moves outside the pale of the commonest spiritual aspirations," laboured for forty years at a life task that did not and could not bring him a penny profit. He sacrificed health and advancement to achieve that which was to mean so much to the wage-workers of Europe; and pigmy professors hurl their little handfuls of mud at a man whose height of real spirituality they cannot even glimpse.

But even had the private life of Marx been an unlovely one, it could not alter the value of his contribution to Social Science. Had Prof. Herron had any case against the theories of Marx he would have stuck to them and left his private life alone. But it is not difficult to prove by his own words that he understands even less of the theories of Marx than he knows of Marx's life. He exposes his own ignorance as follows:—

Of course the economic interpretation of history, the disclosure and exposition of the material *interests* behind and within social evolution, was all needful and true. It had to be done. *We did it well*, and there we should have stopped.

The professor exposes his hand—and it is empty. He never understood the theories of historical materialism. If he had, he would not have fallen into the error that every superficial critic of Marx falls into—the error of confusing material *conditions* with material *interests*. No exponent of the theory of the economic interpretation of history ever maintained the view that it was material *interests* that lay behind and within social evolution; that is the bogey that our friends of the Herron type raise up, label historical materialism, and proceed to knock down. What we do maintain, and what we challenge a thousand Herrons to refute, is the theory that social progress is determined by material or economic *conditions*; that changed economic conditions change the forms and expressions of the life of human society; that social activities like Government, Religion, Literature, are affected and

influenced by the economic conditions then obtaining. Get a grasp of what this theory means, and then get your historical volumes down—I care not by what author—and in the recorded facts of history you will be overwhelmed with proofs. But neither Marx nor any of us who accept his theories ever held that material *interests* are the mainsprings of social progress. Only a fool would say that it is material *interests* that impelled the millions dying on the battle-fields of Europe to go to War; but it is correct to say that it was the material *conditions* of the nations concerned that led them to an armed quarrel. Whilst an urgent need for capitalist expansion may have impelled Germany's ruling class to seek War, yet hundreds of thousands of her people have sacrificed all material interests, even life itself, for an idealistic abstraction—patriotism.

But the crowning example of Prof. Herron's impertinence is the concluding line—"We did it well, and there we should have topped." For the theory of historical materialism what did Herron ever do, and who are the great "We" who did it well? The professor has done the theory about as well as the cobbler "did" the suit of clothes he attempted to make. But for one thing done well we are grateful to him; and that is his admirable demonstration to the readers of the *Clarion* of the poverty of the Anti-Marxist's case.

A. E. COOK.

Industrial Organization

THE interesting and combative article by Frank Jackson in the January *Plebs* makes one wonder why he has ignored the extensive movement for the amalgamation of the unions in the Engineering Industry. A report is to hand of a Rank and File Conference on Amalgamation held at Leeds on November 11th and 12th, 1916. 124 delegates representing Trades Councils, Trades Unions, Trade Union Branches, &c. from all parts of the country, met to discuss what could be done to form the kind of union which he advocates. The result of that conference is conveyed in the model resolution for Trade Union Branches which reads as follows:—

"That the members of—Branch of the —, realising that sectionalism is useless, demand that the executive of the various Unions immediately get together for the purpose of formulating a practicable scheme of amalgamation, and that the preliminary conference be held before the second week in February 1917.

"We further agree that the A.S.E. shall be the organization to convene the first conference, and that the following shall be the basis of discussion:—

(a) That the title of the Union after amalgamation be the Engineering and Shipbuilding Workers' Industrial Union.

(b) That the Industrial Union shall embrace every worker in the Industry, regardless of craft, grade, or sex.

(c) That all friendly society benefits shall be entirely separate from the Industrial side of the movement.

(d) That representation on all administrative bodies shall be occupational- not geographical.

(e) That each district branch and craft group shall have complete autonomy consistent with efficient and effective organization ; control of policy and action to be vested in the workshop.

(f) That the definite object of such union shall be to secure complete control of the Industry for the abolition of the wages system."

Here at least there seems to me to be a recognition by engineers of the force of the criticism made by F.J., and a distinct attempt to raise out of the present muddle a more unified organization.

But there still appears to me to be something lacking, and in the hope that a discussion will ensue and the air be cleared somewhat with regard to ideas on organization, I wish to raise certain further points. It is time we really understood what it is we are after. There has not yet been made a real distinction between organization by Industry and Industrial Unionism. The first is based upon Industrial occupation. The second is based upon a *class* basis and implies the union of industrial workers, conveying in my opinion ideas of a completely different form of organization.

We have repeatedly proclaimed the class struggle and called upon the workers to organize politically and industrially upon that basis, arguing effectively that all workers have one thing in common to fight- *i.e.*, exploitation by means of the wages system ; and it is *upon that basis* we should proceed to organize. This implies that wherever there are workers they should get together on that basis. It is true that workers have peculiar interests as well as common interests. But whether national organization on the basis of their peculiarities (their trade or occupation) is going to satisfactorily meet the situation is altogether questionable. It seems to me that, in view of modern developments in the capitalist mode of production, the great occupational unions will be faced with a repetition of grievances with which the trade unions of to-day have to contend.

The engineering workers in particular are in for a very interesting time, conflicting as they will with the miners, the railwaymen, the builders, &c., as mechanical improvements extend to all spheres of industry. The intermingling of occupations in modern large businesses is a very significant development, which we must take into account when considering problems of organization. Specialization exists to a very large extent in every part of industry, it is true. But with the large concentration of capital there is a tendency to make each capitalist concern self-contained. Concentration on one particular form of production is one stage in the competitive race ; but, as the monopoly position is reached, the

business begins to encroach upon those other forms of production upon which it is somewhat dependent.

An armament firm, for example, concentrates on armour plate, makes a success, turns to gun production, then to transport, motor-cars, &c., reaches out at rubber, develops plant to produce its own gas, utilises the by-products, starts repairing its own engines and then produces them, builds its own workshops, offices, and so forth; until within a single plant you have bricklayers, masons, joiners, patternmakers, moulders, navvies, painters, cabinet-makers, mechanics, chemists, &c., &c. In every direction there is an increasing intermingling and interdependence of the workers.

The only form of organization yet introduced which will in my opinion meet the demands of the day and answer the case for a real democratic organization on a class basis is that introduced in the form of Workers' Committees. Here is an outline of their structure and a statement of their principles:—

(a.) The workers in each shop should elect shop stewards, skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled, women workers, each electing their stewards according to the number in the shop. These stewards form the shop committee.

(b.) Each shop committee should elect a convenor to be the delegate to the district meeting of delegates, the workers committee, held at least once in four weeks.

(c.) The district meeting of delegates should elect a sub-committee to deal with correspondence and matters financial, &c.

(d.) The delegates should call a meeting of shop stewards immediately after a district meeting to enable all information to be immediately circulated among all the workers in the shop.

(e.) This organization to proceed in every plant irrespective of industry.

(f.) From each district should be elected delegates to a National Workers' Committee, to make possible the fullest application of organized labour as occasion demands.

(g.) No elected bodies should have executive powers. The functions of all committees being those of dissemination of information and the co-ordination of workshop with workshop, district with district. The determination of policy to be vested in the rank and file.

Modifications according to district peculiarities are to be expected. But the principles upon which the above proposals are based are sound. They challenge the election of people to tell us what we have to do, and this procedure seems to be as far as any organization has yet progressed towards democracy! They invest the rank and file with responsibility and in doing so affirm the principles that the workers have the incontestible right to control their own affairs and determine their own destiny. J. T. MURPHY

Too Definite !!

TWO lodges of Durham Miners' Assn. (Chopwell & Follonsby) put forward at the annual meeting of the Association a resolution that a new "object" be added to the rules, *viz.*, "That we support the Central Labour College in its educational work."

In the programme for the annual meeting the following foot-note appeared, signed by the Executive Committee:—

"The second resolution is more definite, but the question of Education is a very difficult one and appeals to our members differently. On a thorny question of this kind we think it would be very undesirable to set out in our constitution, definitely, the precise character of education we have to subscribe to. We think it would be much better if this matter was left to the discretion of the Council, who deal with cases on their merits as they arise. There is no educational institution the utility of which has been so much questioned as the College to which the resolution refers."

If that solemn expression of opinion does not emphasise the need for the education of Executive Committees, it would be difficult to say what would. Of course it was written with the best intentions possible, and really expresses the state of "mind" of the writers on the subject of working-class education. To add such an object as that stated in the resolution to the rules of the Association would be "too definite" a step!

Is not the issue perfectly definite—and does it not necessitate definite action? Labour has got to be either dependent or independent in the matter of education—one or the other. There is no half-way house. In the matter of industrial or political action, would the E.C. regard it as "undesirable" to "set out, *definitely*, the precise character of" the course of action to be followed? In a few months' time we shall probably be snowed under by election addresses giving *definite* reasons why Alderman W. House, Messrs. James Robson, W. P. Richardson, and Joseph Batey, ought to be *Labour* members for the constituencies they may contest. *Then*, at least, we shall hear an appeal to the workers to have one policy in the political field—although "it is a very difficult one, and appeals to our members differently." The question of politics may be "a thorny one," but the above-named agents of the Durham Miners will nevertheless endeavour to give definite grounds for their definite policy.

Education may—nay, does—appeal to different people differently. It appeals—or *should* appeal—to worker and master, for instance, in quite different ways. The worker, if he be intelligent, looks to education to equip him in the struggle for his economic freedom. The master looks to education to increase his output—and his profits. Ought a Labour organization, then, to be afraid of appearing “too definite” in a choice of this kind?

The list of Tutorial Classes published in the January *Plebs* is sufficient answer to the final sentence of the E.C.’s statement.* One would have thought that the day had gone by for a Labour body to question the “utility” of an institution owned and controlled by their organized fellow-workers, and aiming at the betterment of the status of the whole working-class. On what grounds is its utility questioned? Will those who so question it come out in the open, and state their objections? If they dared to do so, we C.L.C.ers would very confidently leave the issue to the common-sense of the rank-and-file. The result (like the recent Marsden Lodge vote) would be on the side of “definiteness”—not vagueness and indecision.

WILL LAWTHOR.

A Doubting Thomas and Noah

IN the Merthyr *Pioneer*, December 23rd, 1916, there appeared a three-column article by John Thomas (late W.E.A. tutor, we believe, in the Aberdare district) entitled “Afterthoughts on Ablett’s Anathema.” The article was a reply to Ablett’s two reviews, in the August and September issues of the *Plebs* (“that vigorous and virile—some would say vitriolic—monthly magazine of the Central Labour College and Plebs League”) of H. Clay’s *Economics: An Introduction for the General Reader*. We regret that considerations of space prevent us from quoting it *in extenso*; a summary of its main points must suffice.

The writer begins by protesting against Ablett’s “pitiful and pathetic puns” on Clay’s name.

There was something repulsive to me in the way Ablett with his extremely able mind descended from the heights of real, honest, sound criticism of certain theories propounded in Clay’s book to the low-down game of punstering.

He then objects that Ablett only

pounced upon one or two particular spots in the book. The chapters on “Value” and “Marginal Utility”—presumably the two red rags that enrage him like the proverbial bull—stir Ablett’s ire.

*Geo. Barker’s remarks, on p. 1. of this issue, may also be commended to the notice of these gentlemen.—Ed.

He "agrees with and endorses," however, much of Ablett's criticism on these particular points, and protests that Ablett should bear in mind that there are others besides Hyndman ("in the W.E.A. even") who "believe in the Futility of Marginal Utility as an explanation of the determination of value."

Clay's book he considers "an honest attempt to analyse the working of the modern industrial or economic world;" and he observes—significantly enough!—that—

Economics . . . is a subject which to all working men and women, if they really hope to emancipate themselves from the clutch of the Industrial Machine, will be as essential to study as bread and cheese is for them to eat.

(The style of which sentence might be improved, though its spirit is admirable.)

It is true (he proceeds) that Clay's attacks upon and criticism of modern economic structure would not go so far or be as vigorous and revolutionary as the joint-author of *The Miner's Next Step*. But Clay in all fairness to him says some particularly strong things which cannot be construed by the most prejudiced of readers to be in any way in support of the Capitalistic or Competitive System of to-day. Neither can I imagine the most class-conscious working-man condemning many of these pages . . . as being too tender with the so-called Ruling Classes.

Further—please note this, Marxians—

Of all the books on Economics of recent years by any university lecturer or professor I have noticed more reference to Marx in Clay's book than any. In all his reference to Marx (with one exception where he negatively criticises Marx's Labour Theory of Value) Clay quotes Marx approvingly.

J. Thomas himself is of opinion that "no Pope should be recognised in economic science, even though he be a Marshall or a Marx." Finally, he devotes some little space to his own criticisms of Clay, which range from a regret that Clay nowhere makes reference to "the very vigorous social movements up against the modern system of industry" ("this, perhaps, has got Ablett's back up more than anything") to the suggestion that the book could have been condensed with advantage.

In the *Pioneer* of January 13th appeared Ablett's reply, some extracts from which here follow:—

THE DOUBTING THOMAS.

What is the title Mr. Thomas? Is it a pun on your name or a reference to a well known biblical character? It is unquestionably a wicked pun. But that won't be my worst sin for I am going to immediately justify it as a correct description of your mental attitude in that part of your article to which I am replying. Let us see what it is you are complaining of. Is it that I have perpetrated a pun on your dear colleague Clay's name? The first answer is Yes, because you say "There was something repulsive to me in the way Ablett . . . descended . . . to the low-down game of punstering." But the second answer is No, because the very next words you say are "Don't think for one moment that I object to Ablett punning." Well, then, is your complaint that my punning was ineffective? Yes, because you describe the puns as "pitiful" and "pathetic." But again No, because you say "I do object to the dismissal of any book with the flick of a pun." If the book

was dismissed the pun succeeded. Let us try again. Is it your complaint that my economic criticism was unsound? Yes, because you say "To his own mind he has torn Clay to bits much in the way that I have seen many a pulpitarian think that they have pummelled and annihilated Darwin." But on the other hand you go on to say "I agree with and endorse a great deal of what I call real criticism of the theories of value by Ablett", and you even take pride in the fact that both you and Hyndman disagree with your friend Clay on the very points that I had already taken him to task upon. . .

Have I said enough to prove that the title is a justifiable pun on your name? If I thought not you could have some more. But now a word on puns. A pun of itself is neither repulsive nor excellent. It is the use of this literary device that calls either for praise or blame. Let us take for example the pun I used on Clay's name which seems to have revolted your aesthetic soul. Let's quote it—"It is simply a Clayish touch. Oh, Most Right Honourable Clay why wasn't your name mud or slime?" Put there like that, without explanation, most people would agree with you that it was a deplorable pun. But you had read the article, and seem to have conveniently forgotten that most readers of the *Pioneer* had not. Why did you not explain that before using the pun, I had given chapter and verse to prove that the Honourable Clay had wilfully and deliberately distorted, and dishonestly selected from, a Marxian theory in order to bolster up his case? Do you think that a nice thing to do? Do you think it ought to be described in gentle and forbearing language?

Old Dietzgen says "In order to throw a man out of the temple you must first of all embrace him." If a colleague of yours is properly consigned to be thrown out of the temple for dealing the altars with pitch; if I, in executing the sentence, and in order to throw him out, have to embrace him; if after, I find my hands, previously clean, are now soiled; if now I strongly express myself on this point; then your complaint is not with me for strongly expressing myself (because language is given to us for that purpose) but with your colleague who committed the offence. It is not the strong description, but the art that merits the description, that is to be blamed. The chief point about the description is that it must be accurate.

(Readers of the *Pioneer* might here ask "Well, what is all this bother about, why doesn't Ablett get on with the point at issue?" I must reply that there is no point at issue. I criticised some chapters of Mr. Clay's book, chapters dealing with "Marginal Utility." Well, Mr. Thomas actually prides himself in agreeing with me. He says that both himself and Hyndman believe in the "Futility of Marginal Utility." He seems to strongly object to my punning. But yet he says specifically that he doesn't object. Seeing him so undecided I have written this article with the only object of helping the poor man to make up his mind on this vexed question, and I am sure he will pardon me for this little interruption of my admonitions.) . . .

I wonder, Mr. Thomas if you are aware of your own literary vices? Do you know that you are rather fond of alliteration? e.g., "Afterthoughts on Ablett's Anathema," "pitifully and pathetically", &c. &c., I am afraid that between your indignation at my effective criticism of your colleague, and the mental energy wasted to express that indignation alliteratively, you really forgot all about the accuracy, logic, and sequence of your article, and therefore gave a sorry exhibition of your probably otherwise great reasoning powers. In conclusion, let me remind you that in spite of your one-time stated repulsion to my punning you could not resist the temptation of having a try at my name, by reminding me of my great ancestor, the Admiral of the Ark. I don't feel in the least repelled. On the contrary I shall only reply in the most friendly spirit with an amateurish attempt on your name. If you will add an "s" to your surname and strike out the first syllable, there will then inevitably rise in your mind a vision of what your friends will think of you after they have read this article.

NOAH ABLETT.

Correspondence

A MESSAGE FROM THE FRONT.

(The following letter from a *Plebs* reader now Somewhere near Salonika to his brother in this country has been sent on by the latter to us. We hereby offer our best thanks to the writer.)

Please send 10/- to *Plebs* in addition to my subscription. I must see what I can do for them after the war. I reckon *Plebs* one of my chief joys out here and you can tell them so if you like. The Magazine is a real tonic and makes one realise the need of the scientific view-point more every time its columns are read. Good luck to it! If such a paper can be kept alive, it will go a long, long way towards leavening the mass of ignorance amongst our own people.

A PLEBS PAMPHLET.

Sir,—Amid a good deal that was interesting in the January *Plebs*, nothing struck me more than Mark Starr's suggestion of a *Plebs*—or C.L.C.—pamphlet, giving the case for C.L.C. v. W.E.A., and an outline of the history of the Labour College movement to date. There is no need to argue about the desirability of such a pamphlet—everyone who has done any work for the cause must have felt the need for some such brief, pointed statement of our aims and ideals

I hope the matter, now that it has been raised, won't be allowed to drop. Might I suggest that class-secretaries and lecturers mention the idea to their members, and write in at once to "headquarters," stating whether they would be prepared to push the pamphlet, if it were prepared and published. I am perfectly certain that the Labour College and the *Plebs* only need to be more widely known to get far more support than they do at present from the movement generally. I would suggest a fairly full pamphlet—say 24 or 32 pages—to be sold at 1d. or 2d.; and a smaller leaflet, containing the main points of our propaganda, which could be given away with specimen copies of the Magazine. Of course, I quite realise that all this means cash; but if the classes would "get together" and take the idea up, we could well afford to do it. Let's hear what S. Wales, Northumberland and Durham, Lancashire, &c. &c., have to say about it

LONDONER.

Sir,—Mark Starr's suggestion of a *Plebs* pamphlet explaining the origin and development of the College, and its relation to the W.E.A., is one that ought to be adopted. Such a pamphlet would be certain of a good sale among the classes, and in branches where propaganda meetings are held.

R. HOLDER:

APPRECIATION—AND RECOMMENDATION.

Sir,—I have not long known the *Plebs*, but I must say I am delighted with it, and am recommending it to my friends. The Trade Unionist movement must be made definitely and intelligently class-conscious, or otherwise

we shall make no real progress. The W.E.A. policy is no use when you want to tell workers *why* and *how* they are robbed and kept with their noses to the grindstone. It's no use wasting valuable time going from Leeds to Liverpool to get to London.

I think Mark Starr's suggestion for a C.I.C. pamphlet excellent. It is the one thing needed.

I should like to take this opportunity of thanking J. F. H. for making the Bookshelf such interesting reading, for informing us of so many books dealing with the lighter side of our necessary education. I pick up the books mentioned at earliest opportunity, as they are useful to sandwich between the harder and dryer facts of life and industry. I would like to recommend to *Plebs* readers two books I have recently read:—*The Metropolis*, by Upton Sinclair; and *The Yellow Van*,¹ by Richard Whiteing—two books of similar character, one American and one British (both obtainable in 6d. paper-backed editions.)

Yours &c.,

JOE WALKER

(Leeds and District Organizer, Workers' Union.)

Sir,—Congratulations on the Mag. during the past year. To read it has been a real pleasure, which is profit enough. The Bookshelf and reviews are a great attraction to me. But you might ask J. F. H. to hold his hand a bit—there is a limit to a wage-slave's war-bonus!

Yours &c.

F. H. D.

ANATOLE FRANCE.

Sir,—The mention in this month's Bookshelf of a novel by W. L. George reminds me that he has written a fine little study of Anatole France (Nisbet, 1/3)* which served me as an introduction to *Penguin Island*, that wonderful satire upon things as they are—and, as they have been. *Penguin Island* contains passages which shock a Puritan up-bringing; but the theological controversy in heaven over the mistake of St. Mael, and many other pages biting in their irony, make it a great book.

Yours etc.,

MARK STARR.

WE AGREE.

Dear Comrade,—Herewith 5/-; 2/6 for sub., and the remainder to help remove that horrible thing on the inside of the front cover, as it's been there long enough.

(Plymouth)

Yours, A. R.

R. B., HERO-WORSHIP, &c., &c.

Sir,—I hoped that the little tiff between J. F. H. and myself was over and done with. But as F. G. T. has thrown *his* hat in the ring, I suppose I must tackle him, too.

*Recommended to Plebeians in the Bookshelf, March, 1916.

To begin with, I shall couple the first and last paragraphs of his letter (all about us "standing shoulder to shoulder" in the past, present, and future, &c. &c.) and answer them in one word—"piffle."

He caarges me with acute hero-worship and with ignoring fundamentals. This is serious. I know something was the matter with me, but I'd hoped it wasn't as bad as that. He wants to know "which Blatchford I am a disciple of." I'll tell him—it is the Blatchford of to-day, yesterday, and 20 years ago—the Blatchford of all F. G. T.'s "contradictory" quotations. The extracts from his letters in 1910 prove that at that time R. B. had no idea of the depth of brutal depravity to which the German skunk could sink. Neither had I—and I have worked with Germans. There are thousands of people who have had good cause to change their opinions about Germans since this war began. I don't know whether F. G. T. has troubled to read the Bryce report on the German atrocities in Belgium, or the report of the English doctors on the Wittenburg Camp?

And where, pray, has Blatchford "called for the defence of the Manchester slums"—either by conscription or any other means? And will F. G. T. kindly say from whom the slums are to be defended? My advice to him is to Be Good, Seek after Grace, leave me alone with my Heroes, and not worry too much about those "fundamentals."

Yours &c., S. W.

JACK LONDON.

Sir,—The remarks in the Bookshelf on Jack London prompt me to set down my own opinions. All his work, I think, is decidedly *our* literature. Some of it may show signs of having been done in a hurry, but I have never found it uninteresting, or felt that I was wasting time reading it. Three short stories I have a particular fancy for are "The Game," "The God of His Fathers," and "A Piece of Steak." Burning Daylight's character struck me as rather "swanky." *Martin Eden*, *The Sea Wolf*, and *The Valley of the Moon* are all fine novels, *Before Adam* and *The Iron Heel* I call good "hashings-up," but no doubt they should be read by Socialists. I believe Jack London had spent some time in prison; he gives an account of it in *The Road*, and in a short autobiography at the end of the volume of short stories entitled *The House of Pride*.

And, by the way—be a bit more lenient when dealing with R. B. There's room on my bookshelf for Jack London, the *Plebs*, and the *Clarion*.

Yours &c., L. B.

(Penistone).

Sir,—Apropos the interesting note on Jack London in last month's *Plebs*; if J. F. H. will read *The Road*, which is a chronicle of Jack London's tramping experiences, he will find the author was arrested for "vagrancy" and incarcerated in an American Penitentiary for a period of thirty days.

D.D.

INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM.

Sir,—As a regular reader of the *Plebs* I am much interested in this month's issue.

Over the signature of Frank Jackson there is an article entitled "Is the A.S.E. the Meat?" On page 274 we find a definition of Industrial Unionism. This definition is not enough in my estimation, so I would ask the writer if he agrees with the Preamble of the Industrial Workers of Great Britain, which has four clauses, the second of which points out, that between the two classes a struggle must go on until all the toilers come together on the political as well as on the industrial field, and Take and Hold that which they produce by their labour, through an economic organization of the working class?

Does he class the N.U.R. as an Industrial Union, or does he look upon it, too, as not being "the meat?"

Yours etc., ROMANNO.

MEATLESS DAYS.

Sir,—In these days of abstinence (only more so!) the title of friend Jackson's article struck home. But was that article an exercise in the gentle art of leg-pulling?

To begin at the end thereof:—"There are many engaged in the engineering industry who are prepared to take their place in the A.S.E. when the iniquities I have mentioned have been removed. The A.S.E. has built the house; but the house is not yet in order." Well-a-day, comrade, we are but poor human clay; we did not (to become metaphorical) commence our existence in the full-blown butterfly stage, but had to pass through a chrysalis period (may it be short) just like other organizations. And inside our (meatless) "house," some of us are trying by the usual hard and thankless methods to flog the lagging Pegasus (another metaphor!) through the craft stage of organization. Why tilt at the A.S.E., friend critic; why not at the S.E.M., or the hapless U.M.W.A., or other lesser houses?

Individuals may label the A.S.E. the Engineering Workers' Industrial Union; but intelligent people inside (Plebeians, for example), know that that is all bunkum. And accordingly we slog along at the job of making it something nearer that. The old order (remains of which are manifest in our rule-books) dies hard; but we are helping along its decease—per, Clyde Workers' Committees and Barrow Amalgamation Committees, &c., &c. Are you, friend Jackson, going to work on in the old divided way until we of the A.S.E. perfect our organization? We need your help and criticism—we don't want to leave the job entirely to what somebody once designated Comrade Evolution . . . The A.S.E. may not be "the meat"—but it's certainly the fodder from which the meat will ultimately be produced.

H. BROWN JOHN

Reports

WALSSEND INDUSTRIAL HISTORY CLASS.

To the list of classes published last month we are glad to add the following:—
WALSSEND-ON-TYNE S.L.P.-C.L.C. Class:—*Industrial History*, J. Barber
(J. Trevorrow, 3, Percy Street, Wallsend-on-Tyne.)

TO DURHAM AND NORTHUMBERLAND PLEBEIANS:—

On March 31st, an Educational Conference will be held in the Socialist Society Rooms, Newcastle. Full particulars in next month's *Plebs*.

PRESIDENT LAWTHER.

Will Lawther has been elected in the place of County Coun. W. N. Johnson to the position of President of the Chopwell No. 1 and 2 Lodge, Durham Miners' Association. "He is a prominent member of the Labour movement," says the Newcastle *Illustrated Chronicle*; "was a student at the Central Labour College, London, and has been lecturer for the movement at Chopwell, Consett, and South Shields." "He is one of the best," adds the *Plebs Magazine*, "and is working like a Trojan for the cause of Independent Working-Class Education up north." Congrats.

Cuttings

"Welfare work"—the very latest style of ornament for Labour's harness—*New Age*.

The hand that fakes the cable fools the world.

War Finance:—"Abolish cash, and let the credit run."—*Star*.

It is quite likely I may have once said that, if I were a collier, I should in all probability be a Socialist, for I should not then have had the knowledge and practical experience of the application of economic principles to the industries of the country which I now possess. My employees know well that I am a convinced Individualist.—LORD RHONDDA (in *New Age*).

The Labour Party are evidently determined to live up to their nickname of "the dashing Ruperts."—A. E. R., in *New Age*.

After the war . . . I am hoping that those who have fought together for their country will continue to fight together to make their country worth living in.—MR. J. H. THOMAS, M.P.

PLEASE send your orders for W. W. Craik's *Outlines of the History of the Modern Working-class Movement* to W. T. A. Foot, 119, Harvist Road, West Kilburn, N.W.

Shropshire farmers at a meeting at Shrewsbury on Saturday declined to accept a motion in favour of compelling every farmer to grow more wheat. Several big farmers said they objected to the word "compel," Mr. J. Darlington remarking that if they were going to compel farmers they were up against a very big thing. Sir Walter Smythe said he thought they should adopt a more gentle word than "compel."

Eventually the meeting agreed to a motion reading "That every farmer be induced to grow more wheat and an increased acreage of potatoes." *In order to stop youths leaving their work on the farms for higher wages offered in the towns or in the mines the meeting decided to ask that agricultural labourers be placed under the provisions of the Munitions Act, and that special measures be taken to prevent these young men transferring their services to other employments.*—*Daily News*, December 18th, 1916.

At an anti-conscription meeting in Byrnestown, Queensland, the following resolution was carried unanimously: "That the citizens of Byrnestown do now and herewith supply the Prime Minister's pressing lack of a short length of noosed rope, and recommend October 27 as the date on which he, William Morris Hughes (after leaving his thumb print as his one valuable legacy to posterity), might fittingly go out and—complete the example of his Scriptural prototype." A short coil of rope, was then produced, noose adjusted, and the resolution and the rope immediately forwarded to Mr. Hughes. —*Maoriland Worker*.

The Plebs' Bookshelf

The literary columns of the newspapers have been dealing at some length lately with the Letters and Recollections of Charles Lister, edited by his father, Lord Ribblesdale; and of course the "excursion into Socialism" of Lister's Oxford days has come in for a good deal of comment. Some of those who knew him in those days—survivors of the Ruskin and Bradmore Road era—will doubtless have smiled a half-sorrowful, half-cynical smile at the tone of those comments now. Lord Ribblesdale, one gathers from the reviews, regarded Charles' connection with the I.L.P. with a kindly, ironic tolerance—a sort of "let him have his fling" attitude. One who remembers Lister at Oxford assures me, on the other hand, that "C. L. told us that his father had threatened to stop his allowance if he didn't give up his 'evil' ways." One gets, by the way, a priceless side-light on the mental outlook of our Rulers and Governors in the remark made by Mr. Balfour (quoted in the book) who pointed out "that Charles (by his association with the I.L.P.) would get all sorts of experience and some sort of special knowledge which might be of more use to him in after-life than if he kept Selling Platers or ran an actress." There is a charming, truly blue-blooded assumption about that remark—that the world of race-horses, women, and common people had been created for the amusement or edification of the young scions of our old nobility—which, one feels certain, would have aroused

in Charles Lister, had he heard it, a righteous lust for somebody's blood. . . . But the snobbishness of the Snobs is only equalled by the snobbishness of the Snob's Press, which quotes such remarks with fawning enthusiasm. . . .

"Poor old Lister," writes the friend I have already quoted, "would have done a wicked grin had it been possible for him to have perused some of the slop that has been poured over him, dead. He was a good fellow—if he had got with the right crowd he'd have turned out different, for he was a *lon* fighter." Which (sincere) epitaph the *Plebs* respectfully offers to Lord Ribblesdale for insertion in any future edition of the book.

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To Methuen's Shilling Library has just been added *A Shepherd's Life*, by W. H. Hulson (not to be confused with the University Extension lecturer of the same name and initials, who wrote *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Herbert Spencer*, &c. &c.) *A Shepherd's Life* is not a novel, but rather a book of travel—around and about Salisbury Plain. Those town-dwellers who love at least to *read* of country life, and the ways of animals, birds, and men in places as yet far removed from the "great industrial centres," will enjoy this book; and students of Industrial History, moreover—which includes the facts of rural life and work—will find a good deal to think over in its pages; e.g. the chapters entitled "Old Wiltshire Days," in which are collected the memories of old villagers who remembered the doings of the machine-breaking "mobs" in the 'thirties of the last century,

when the farm-labourers were driven by hunger and misery to revolt against their masters—the farmers who were everywhere breaking up the downs with the plough to sow more and still more corn, who were growing very fat and paying higher and higher rents to their fat landlords, while the wretched men that drove the plough had hardly enough to satisfy their hunger.

Read these chapters—read of the "food" the labourers had to live on, of the savage sentences of death or transportation with which any crime against property was met, of the conditions of their labour even at the best of times, and recall what was happening in the "great industrial centres" at this same period; and then smile at the pious politician who, in 1831, moved in the House of Commons that a day for a general *fast* throughout the United Kingdom be appointed, inasmuch as—

the state of the country called for a measure like this—it was a state of political and religious disorganization . . . that in this land there was no attachment, no control, no humility of spirit, no mutual confidence between the poor man and the rich, the employer and the employed; but fear and mistrust and aversion, where in the time of our fathers there was nothing but brotherly love and rejoicing before the Lord.

To restore confidence, Special Commissions were sent down to Salisbury, Winchester, and other towns; "at Salisbury thirty-four poor fellows were sentenced to death; thirty-three to be transported for life, ten for fourteen years, and so on." (Doubtless, had God willed that he should be living then, Mr. H. G. Wells would have written newspaper articles about the Resentful Employee.)

All this about the agricultural labourer reminds me that I would much like to get hold of Mr. Maurice Hewlett's *Song of the Plow* (Heinemann, 6/- net) which is a sort of chronicle-poem (6,000 lines!) telling the story of "Hodge" (Mr. Hewlett uses the name in no ironic, uncomplimentary sense) "through twice four hundred stricken years." Of it, Mr. J. C. Squire remarked in the *Daily News* that "a poet could read this epic with delight without being bothered by the economics, and a politician could read it with profit without noticing the poetry." A Plebeian could doubtless enjoy both poetry and economics—if ever a cheaper edition were published!

A writer in the *Labour Leader* waxed a little scornful about the poem some weeks ago, observing that it appeared to be a sort of "modern, drawing-room edition of *Piers Plowman*;" which rather implied that in *Piers Plowman* everything on the subject had been said, once and for all. I wonder if the writer of that remark had read *Piers Plowman*; because I have found that a lot of people talk about that poem easily and familiarly who never read a line of it. (I have read it recently: * *Long Will*—the novel which—hope all Industrial History students have made a note of ere now—aroused my curiosity about it. And I have no hesitation in saying that any ordinary reader of to-day will get little or nothing out of it. He will certainly get more out of *Long Will*.) The *Labour Leader* afterwards appeared to repeat, for a week or two later it published a very enthusiastic column review of Mr. Hewlett's poem, in the course of which this fine verse was quoted:—

He sees his masters, he gives them hail
With hand to forelock as they ride by—
They that eat what he doth bake,
They that hold what he must buy,
They that spend what he doth make,
They that are rich by other men's toil;
They of the soil and he of the rake,
The lords of the land, the son of the soil!

That is the "message" of *Piers Plowman*, if you like; but it is expressed in a language—and an ideology—that the modern reader will grasp far more readily than he will Langland's poem.

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At various times I have recommended volumes in Nisbet's Writers of the Day Series to *Plebs* readers; J. D. Beresford on Wells, for instance, Rebecca West on Henry James, and W. L. George on Anatole France (to which Mark Starr refers in a letter on another page). I have just read two further volumes of the series—*Kipling*, by John Palmer, and *Galsworthy*, by Sheila Kaye-Smith. Both—the latter especially—are excellent introductions to the authors with whom they deal. Miss Kaye-Smith is nothing if not direct, "Galsworthy takes his place in modern literature chiefly by virtue of his plays." *Strife* and *The Silver Box* are his best plays. I agree—though I certainly do *not* agree that the interest of the former play is centred (as it is in *Justice*) in the "social and industrial problems" on which it is built. The interest in *Strife* is as purely *personal*, as entirely dependent on the *characters* of the two leading figures in the drama and as entirely removed

*Everyman Series, with a very interesting Introduction by A. Burrell, M.A.

from any propaganda whatsoever (of any discernible sort) on social and industrial problems, as it is in *Joy or A Bit o' Love*. In *Justice*, one's main interest is in the social problem rather than in the persons of the drama; in *The Silver Box* and *The Fugitive*, as Miss Kaye-Smith says, there is a sort of balance between the two; but not in *Strife*. And I notice that, despite her assertion, Miss Kaye-Smith makes no effort to state what exactly the propagandist "moral" of that play is. . . . As regards the novels, I am glad that *The Man of Property* and *Fraternity* are rated as the finest. And this appears to me a true and striking criticism:—

Another reason why Galsworthy is more successful in his plays than in his novels is that most good plays are founded on a *situation*, most good novels on the *development* of a situation, and development is not characteristic of Galsworthy's art. He likes to take a situation, examine it from characteristic and conflicting points of view, and show the effect it has on different lives, but he never attempts to develop it, to start a chain of events from it, mould characters by it. Practically every character in a Galsworthy novel, with the possible exception of *The Dark Flower*, is the same at the end as at the beginning.

I am glad, too, that Miss Kaye-Smith has high praise for the volume of sketches entitled *A Commentary*, in some ways surely the finest thing Galsworthy has done. (A shilling edition of that book would be worth while!) And sentences like the following accurately hit one or two of Galsworthy's weaknesses:—"Galsworthy's inalienable idea that every woman is ill-used in marriage." "Lately, misplaced pity has grown to be a habit with him. He cannot resist the temptation to weep over everyone whose clothes are not quite as good as his own." "Galsworthy can penetrate only in swift spasms of intuition . . . the result is not so much a lack of profundity as a lack of grip." ". . . the extraordinary sensitiveness he brings into his work, as distinct from penetration."

Having used up all my available space in discussing Galsworthy, I shall have to hold over the Kipling book till later.

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On October 28th last, the Poet Laureate spake unto the assembled members of the Swindon Branch of the W.E.A., and his words have been printed in a little book, and published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford, (6d. net.) Really I don't know what to say about the laurel-crowned one's remarks. They seem to me—like what little of his verse I have seen—quite innocuous. His subject-matter is, he says, "the improvement of the educational condition of the working-classes." But before he is able to say anything on that subject likely to be of interest to intelligent working-people, it appears to me that his own "educational condition" will have to be improved in certain directions. But, then, as he himself observes:—

We must remember that Reason is the only tool that we have to work with, and that a tool cannot work on itself. Temper and sharpen it as you may, your chisel cannot cut itself. We should therefore not expect too much.

One remark about education I like—

The purpose of education is to *draw out* or educate this inborn love of Beauty. And if any of you doubt whether there is such a thing, I do not think that it matters what you call it, if you admit (what you cannot deny) that you have a desire, and that that desire is for something 'better' or 'good.'

We C.L.C.ers have a strong desire for something 'better' than the 'education' the W.E.A. offers us. And the purpose of our C.L.C. education is to "draw out or educate" this particular desire. So we are on the right road!

* * * * *

Marxism in the *Labour Leader* makes one sit up and pinch oneself. Yet what, if not Marxism, was Walton Newbold's article on "Socialism and the Metal Industries" (January 4th)? Can it be that the editorial chiefs of the *Labour Leader* are blinded by friendship to the true nature of the doctrines Newbold is using their pages to disseminate? . . . "The Socialist State," a leaflet drawn up by "a little company of I.L.P. experts," and published in the same number of the *Labour Leader*, is as decidedly *not* Marxian, but rather MacDonallean. And O! but it is feeble.

* * * * *

If there is one thing the Labour movement in this country could well do with, it is a well-written, well-illustrated satirical weekly or monthly, light but pointed, good-humoured but afraid of nothing and nobody. We need such a journal—something after the style of the American *Masses*, for example. But I am afraid the new monthly, *Satire* (127, Ossulston Street, N.W.) hardly fills the bill. I had looked forward to its appearance with interest. I must confess to disappointment. Reproductions of miscellaneous cartoons from other papers is hardly what one wants—not particularly recent cartoons either, some of them. And satire should above all have *point*; which some of the literary matter decidedly lacks. Sorry—but this is an honest verdict.

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National Guilds Pamphlet No. 3, "Towards a Miners' Guild," has just been issued, and I hope to persuade Ablett to review it in these pages. It is obtainable (1½d. post paid,) from the Victoria House Printing Co., Tudor Street, London, E.C. Another pamphlet of interest to Plebeians is "Labour After the War: Problems for Trade Unionists," by J. Hallsworth, Gen. Sec., A.U.C.E. Also—"Cranks and Commonsense," by Miles Malleon (2½d. post paid, from Henderson's, 66, Charing Cross Road, W.C.) And finally, a word of welcome to *Solidarity*, a "journal of Modern Trade Unionism," monthly, 1d.—1/6 annually, post paid (from 29, Theobalds Road, W.C.) Contributors include J. T. Murphy, A. M. M., &c. &c. Every Plebeian should send a sub. (having paid his *Plebs* account) to *Solidarity*. There are enough and to spare of journals of *ancient* trade unionism about; we can do with another that puts the emphasis on the 'modern.' (Talking about the *modern* ones, the *International*, the organ of the Socialist League of South Africa, has been re-printing the leaflets on Working-Class Education issued by the London N.U.R. District Council; it also had recently some trenchant remarks on "Workers' Mystification Associations.")

J. F. H.

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.

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(Organ: "PLEBS" MAGAZINE, Published Monthly,
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