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The
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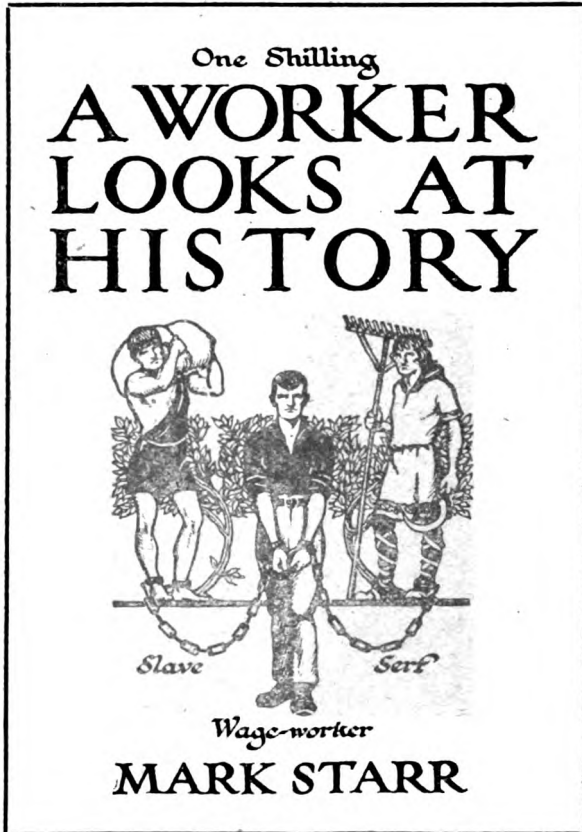
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THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. IX.

January, 1918.

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"Impartiality" at Birmingham

THE bone of contention between the reactionaries who support the W.E.A. and the revolutionaries who support the C.L.C. is—Can education in Social Science be non-partisan and impartial? Much space in the *Plebs* has been devoted to showing that this question can only be answered in the negative. The circumstances which led to the founding of the Plebs League, and subsequently to the establishment of the C.L.C., were derived from ideas in the heads of Oxford dons who, in the interests of their class—the Capitalist Class—desired to "dope" the education given to the working class students at Ruskin College. Their partisan efforts to impose bourgeois economics upon the students met with a vigorous resistance. Since that time, Ruskin College has been the central home of that emasculated teaching of sociology, described as non-partisan and impartial, of which the various branches of the W.E.A. are the provincial depots.

In Birmingham the local W.E.A., dominated by the Capitalist-endowed University of that Imperial City, is actively engaged in disseminating the Oxford brand of working-class education—surely a work of great national importance. Prof. Sir Oliver Lodge, pre-eminent in the knowledge of scientific books and unscientific “spooks,” sometimes addresses the students. At other times other professors—distinguished in their bourgeois world for their erudition, and notorious in our working-class world for their unsound theories as regards the heaven of capitalism, its god, Capital, and its devil, wage-labour, endeavour to obfuscate the minds of Birmingham’s artisans on economics, ethics, and social problems. Recently Prof. Muirhead addressed the Birmingham Trade Council on behalf of the W.E.A., and in the course of his appeal for the support of the Council, welcomed the Labour Party’s recently published political proposals “because of their definite recognition of brain labour. They marked a departure from the Marxian idea confining the term labour to work done by hand.” The present writer promptly repudiated that heresy in a letter to the press which led to an interesting controversy with a local Fabian. Just as promptly our local branch of the Plebs League has persuaded the Council to hear the C.L.C. view.

Strange as it may seem, all the Birmingham professors are not tarred with the W.E.A. brush when addressing an audience mainly composed of workers. An honourable exception is Dr. L. Segal, the University lecturer in Russian.

On Nov. 14th last he began a series of three lectures on the Russian Revolution. In his first lecture Dr. Segal broke the sacred law of Ruskin College tradition. He was candid and not impartial. In the teeth of the liars of the Capitalist Press and the Labour lieutenants of the Capitalist class he told the truth about the Bolsheviks! To give the Plebs an idea of Dr. Segal’s disconcerting candour I quote from a very fair report of the lecture published in the *Birmingham Gazette* :—

Neither the Moderates nor the Extremists were for a separate peace with the Central Powers. The Extremists were referred to in some quarters as German agents and German spies, or Bolsheviks. The first two titles were understood very well, but the Extremists did not deserve to be so branded. . . . The attitude of the Extremists was that they believed at the present moment that the most important thing was the abolition of private property and the establishment of a pure Socialistic Republic in Russia. They believed that the workers were in subjugation, and that they were the victims of the Capitalists and the upper and middle classes, that was were the outcome of the activities of the capitalists to keep the workers in slavery, and they asserted that in many respects the Russian, the British the Italian, and the French capitalists were just as bad as the German capitalists. Further, they believed that the German workers were more truly their brethren than the Russian capitalists, and that all the talk of this being a struggle for Liberty, Freedom, and Righteousness was pure fiction. So long as there were capitalists there would be war,

Dealing with Henderson's suggestion to send a Labour Delegation to Russia, Dr. Segal said :—" To those who had scruples about Labour playing such an important part he would point out—better to win the war by the mediation of Labour than lose it through the exertions of diplomacy ! "

That this amazing professorial outspokenness alarmed the Birmingham University authorities is revealed in the sequel. On the 27th of November the Senate of the University issued an official announcement to the effect that " owing to the disturbed political conditions and uncertainty of events in Russia the Senate has requested Dr. Segal to defer the two remaining lectures to some later date." Thus, without his consent, Dr. Segal was gagged.

Sir Oliver Lodge, Chairman of the Senate, when it was pointed out to him by a *Birmingham Gazette* representative " that it seemed unfortunate, if not tragic, that whilst a man like Dr. Segal, who has a first-rate knowledge of Russian affairs and problems, should be hindered from giving the public the benefit of his knowledge, other people less intimate with Russian matters and ideals are enabled to foist their views on the public "—merely shook his head and uttered an expressive " Ah,well ! " In conversation with another member of the Senate the newspaper man pointed out that " whilst the lecturer in his last lecture only outlined the aims and ideals of the various parties in Petrograd, he did not attempt to give any version of what was happening in Russia." To this the Professor replied :—" *That it was because it was presumed that in his following lecture the Doctor would refer to the present state of things that the other two lectures were deferred.*" Prof. E. de Selincourt, also a member of the Senate, when the same journalist urged that the action of the Senate looked like an attempt to suppress the truth rejoined : " I am democrat enough to say that did I think for one moment that it meant that I should have stood out against deferring the doctor's lectures. But I do not at all think this. *Moreover, you should remember that the University stands for the dissemination of knowledge, not for any particular opinions (!)* "

What a fine example is here of W.E.A. sophistry ! When Prof. Muirhead utters erroneous and prejudiced opinions about Marxism, he is disseminating knowledge. When Dr. Segal disseminates the truth about the Marxists at the head of affairs in Russia, he is uttering dangerous opinions !

Reviewing all the circumstances, all one need add to this exposure is the expression of the conviction that the action of the Senate of Birmingham University is a testimony more eloquent than words to the truth of our contention that education in Social Science is NOT impartial and non-partisan.

F. B. SILVESTER,

The Chartist Movement and the Anti-Corn Law League

DURING the period of the Chartist Movement there raged also in England another agitation carried on by middle-class Radicals, mainly Free Trade factory owners, whose objects were to remove the taxes upon corn in particular and upon food in general. Taxes upon corn were instituted in England for the first time in the 17th century. But in the year 1815 existing laws were amended because the ground landlords began to suffer from competition of imported foreign corn. Foreign imports were totally prohibited when prices dropped below 80/- per quarter, but when above this figure were allowed entry free of tax. In 1828 the laws were again amended, and a sliding scale of taxation instituted under which the tax automatically increased with falling prices and decreased with rising prices.*

The Law of 1815 met with violent opposition, Parliament having to place itself under military protection while the Bill was being discussed. In London, open revolt broke out; and throughout the country tumultuous demonstrations were held, vehemently protesting against the imposition. But the interests of the landlord class proved too strong. From the beginning they were strongly opposed by the workers, who knew well that a tariff on imports meant high prices. More particularly did their opposition grow during the years of depression.

When the bad years of 1837-42 were entered upon and the Chartist Movement was in the full swing of its first strength, the factory owners realised that the time had come for them to definitely oppose the landed proprietors and the Corn Laws. On the 20th December, 1838, the Anti-Corn Law Association—later the Anti-Corn Law League—was formed, and the agitations commenced

* The Act of 1773 admitted foreign wheat at 6d. a quarter as soon as the home price had risen to 48/- a quarter, and though it maintained the old bounty of 5/- a quarter on exported wheat it made both that bounty and liberty to export cease when the home price was 44/-. In 1791 a less liberal Act was passed; prohibitive duties were put in importation till the home price was 50/- and it was only when the home price was 54/- that the duty fell to 6d. per quarter. Exporting was forbidden when the home price was higher than 46/-, and encouraged by a bounty when the price was below 44/-. Then came the French wars and several bad harvests, the crops failing in 1795 and 1800 and the price of wheat reaching 112/- in 1796 and 155/- in 1801. In 1804 Parliament, alarmed by the violent fall to 50/-, revised the Corn Laws once more; a duty of 24/3 being charged on imports when the price was below 63/-, 2/6 when the price was between 63/- and 65/-, and 6d. when it was 66/-. Export was prohibited when the home price was 54/-, and encouraged by a bounty when as low as 48/-. (See Lecky, *History of England*, VII., 249-261; and Smart, p. 372.)

(All quoted from footnote in *The Town Labourer*. J. L. & B. Hammond.)

in which Richard Cobden became the leading spokesman on behalf of the manufacturers. The struggle was carried into Parliament. In 1839 a proposal for the repeal of the Corn Laws was introduced and repeated at every session until finally, in 1846, it was successful.

Cheaper bread, for the factory owners, meant cheap labour. If the labourer could purchase his food with less money he could work for a smaller wage. The repeal of the Corn Laws also meant a reduction in the cost of production. This would serve them in good stead in the competition with manufacturers in other countries. The demand for English goods would be bound to rise and enable them to advance yet one more step towards their great goal, which was "England the workshop of the world." The outlook was promising, and the anticipated profits so great that the whole manufacturing class of England rose as one man and threw themselves with enthusiasm into the fray.

But these were not the only reasons they had for carrying on this agitation. The Anti-Corn Law League was formed when the Chartist Movement was in the middle of its first great wave of enthusiasm and was the rallying ground of the whole working-class movement of England. The strength and extent of the movement roused considerable uneasiness in the minds of the factory owners. It became necessary in some ways to counteract it, and prevent the workers securing the political power they were after. There can be no doubt that these two objects were in the minds of the manufacturers when forming the League. The press of the time quite openly expressed the need of winning the workers over to some other kind of agitation, the objects of which would not imperil the interests of the ruling class, or their rights as property owners. Since 1836 there had existed in London a local Free Trade organization. This now linked itself with the larger body. Their organ, the *Sun*, initiated a policy of attempting to persuade the workers to give up the struggle for political rights and liberties, and to take up the question of repealing the Corn Laws. When the London Workers' Association were preparing the mass demonstration to be held in September, 1838, at which the Charter was to be proclaimed, the *Sun* came out with an appeal to all those anxious to postpone as far as possible a trial of strength between the ruling class and the working class, "to see to it that resolutions in favour of the repeal of the Corn Laws were carried at the forthcoming demonstrations."

Naturally, this attitude served to make the workers question why it was that the middle class should launch their campaign against the Corn Laws at the very time when they were uniting in their demand for the Charter. The statements issued by the Radicals to the effect that the Corn Laws were *the* basic evil, and the source of all others, were received with considerable doubt; so was the further statement that the Charter stood little chance

of going through the Houses of Parliament ; and that therefore it would be more practicable to join in the repeal of the Corn Laws. The workers were led to the conviction that the manufacturers were anxious to abolish the Corn Laws, but still more anxious to prevent the workers organizing a successful political reform agitation.

The Chartists were, from the beginning, opposed to the Corn Laws. The high price of wheat had even been a factor in the formation of the movement. As in Birmingham the reform of the currency, and in the factory districts of the north the new Poor Law, so also the high price of wheat in Scotland was one of the chief causes that led them to adopt the Charter as their programme. In the first national petition taken to Parliament (June 1839) it was expressly asked that the taxation that made the means of life dearer and gold scarce should be repealed. And even after they declared themselves to be opposed to the Anti-Corn Law League, they still supported the repeal of the Corn Laws. Their suspicion of the Free Trade apostles was more than justified. Manufacturers were their chief enemies in all their efforts. They opposed the ten-hour day, they were responsible for the new Poor Law. The class feeling thus aroused made it impossible but to distrust everything emanating from the same quarter. The worker's opposition, however, was based not merely upon feelings ; they had also a theoretical basis. True, in general, it was feeling that governed their action rather than an understanding of economic development ; but they understood fairly well that the removal of the tax upon Corn meant a reduction in the cost of living, and a reduction in the cost of living would mean a reduction in the price of labour-power—wages. They realised that the conflict between the factory-owners and the great landed proprietors would inflict injury upon agriculture, which would react upon the labourers. These being thrown out of employment would crowd into the industrial districts, and there become a factor in reducing the condition of the men employed in industry. The argument that the repeal of the Corn Laws would increase trade and exports, and that this in turn would tend to better the condition and increase the wages of labour, they replied to by pointing out that while exports were increasing wages were just as constantly falling. Amongst the handicraft workers they had dropped from 82/- per week in 1815 to 5/- per week in 1843, and that machine weavers had suffered a reduction from 20/- in 1823 to 8/- in 1843.

The point of view put by Bronterre O'Brien—who, by reason of his being the chief theoretical defender of the Chartists, was called the "Schoolmaster"—was that free trade meant anything but prosperity for the workers.* This opinion was shared by O'Connor,

* After the Repeal of the Corn Laws, from 1846 to 1863, there are eight years of moderate activity and prosperity against nine years of depression and stagnation.—*Capital*, Vol. I., p. 461.

who went further, and said that since the Anti-Corn Law League was formed by their enemies it should be opposed on that score alone. O'Brien admitted that Free Trade would mean a reduction in the cost of living, but objected to the suggestion that increased trade would benefit the workers. Increased trade had for a number of years been attended by falling rates of wages.

The natural tendency of Free Trade lay in the direction of cheapening commodities, and that was in the interest of the usurer the tax eater, the clergy, and all classes enjoying a fixed income. With the same amount of money they could then command a greater quantity of goods so that in proportion to the decrease in prices their incomes would be increased. These classes would become wealthier without rendering any additional service to society, and therefore could do it only at the expense of the workers who produced all the wealth.

W. H. MAINWARING.

(To be continued.)

A Talk to Teachers

IT is doubtful whether this article has that "permanent" value desired from *Plebs* contributors by that sound khaki critic. Let us hope that he will disgorge some of the gleanings of his reading to us, who are busy with class-work, and labouring for the war bread that perisheth. As we attract a wider audience, we shall make possible the maintenance of a British *Neue Zeit* abounding in expositions of the Marxian theories, of the philosophic logic of Dietzgen, and of other deep questions in Sociology.

At the risk of stating the obvious and of giving superfluous advice, the following is the fruit of a short teaching experience placed on record in the hope of helping our growing army of Social Science teachers. By himself, or by collaboration with others, the teacher has prepared or adopted a Syllabus suitable to the needs of his particular class session. He then may divide up each lesson under several headings indicating the method of presentation. Then, from his reading and reflection, past and present, he groups his facts under their respective headings. (For a good example of such division and a fine *What to Read List*, see Fred Shaw's Syllabus (3d., Plebs League) and the Rhondda Classes' Syllabus.) Thus he is provided with ample lesson material in abbreviated notes, which can be expanded at will before the class and used and added to repeatedly.

So much for preparation difficulties. Attention to many little details makes for the success of the class itself. The empty chairs near the door for late comers, the temperature of the room, and tables or desks for the use of the note takers (these should include every class-member) are small things worthy of notice. A good class secretary is invaluable. Quotations from authorities—especi-

ally lengthy ones—should be sparingly used and chiefly kept in reserve for unconvinced questioners. Each lesson in its introduction should be hinged on to the previous ones. By the aid of suitable questions, the teacher can get from the students a summary of the preceding lesson ; the aim of course being, not to develop the talking powers of the teacher, but to impress the lesson points upon the students' minds and to discover whether or no they have really grasped the teaching aright.

Other aids to the teacher are maps, a black chart, and a black board. The Imperialist is thus equipped ; why not the Socialist ? In history, for example, how helpful is a picture of the stage upon which the various acts take place. The black chart is comparatively cheap, and, being portable, can be prepared at home. On it can be placed the lesson headings and the important points in their order. A lesson skeleton of this sort enables men students, unused to method in arrangement of notes, to acquire the art of grouping ; it is also handy for recapitulation of lesson and helps when the mental gearing of the tired teacher slips a cog. Again, by diagrams, the eye as well as the ear avenue to the brain can be utilised. For example, Morgan's classifications are understood much better if given in their proper order upon a chart or blackboard ; the Feudal structure can be well shown by a triangle based upon the land, from the pinnacle of which downwards can be shown the descending grades in the hierarchy ; the break-down of parochialism and the ever-extending power of trade can be portrayed by circles made larger and larger to represent the various stages ; while the C—M—C and the Simple, Expanded, and Money Forms of Value of the first Vol. of *Capital* could with many other formulæ be effectively represented. The Roman remains, the primitive spinning wheel and such like in local museums should not be forgotten at the appropriate lessons. Exceptional employers might allow inspections of their works. Some day, we shall be able to get suitable cinema films.

The question and discussion time at the end of class should be tactfully kept to the lesson, and not allowed to wander or anticipate later lessons. Home work, like note taking, should be strongly encouraged. Short simple questions are preferable to the setting of essays for beginners. Home work contributions not only train the powers of expression and thought of the student, but also afford concrete, permanent evidence of understanding. From the point of view of the acquirement and use of Plebeian knowledge, there are many " diamonds in the rough " among the working-class. To cut and grind these diamonds and send them to the C.L.C. for a final polish is the function of the provincial classes. What these diamonds will later cut, and what districts of darkness their scintillations will illumine, may be left to the imagination of the reader.

MARK STARR.

Students' Pages

A disgusted student is said to have written on his examination paper: "A fool can ask questions that a wise man cannot answer. However true this may be, we are sure the questions coming from C.L.C. class students will not be of that order, that they will not be beyond the wisdom of the Plebeians who have volunteered to answer them, and that they and their replies will be of more than individual interest. Students sending in questions are asked to send them early in the month, and to make them as concise as possible.

INDUSTRIAL HISTORY.

1.—What is the scope of *Industrial History*?

Briefly how man has throughout the ages solved the bread-and-butter problem. It deals with the tremendous progress shown by the evolution of the sharpened stick into the steam plough, of the Palaeolithic flint into the electric coalcutter, of the coracle into the Cunard liner, and so on. It traces too the changing relations between (a) the actual worker possessing energy to labour, e.g., the railwaymen; (b) the object of his labour, e.g., the goods to be transported; and (c) the means whereby (a) comes into contact with (b), e.g., the rails, trucks, engines, &c.

2.—Why is *INDEPENDENT education of the workers advocated in Industrial History*?

Because rejoicing over the improvements in the labour-process hinted at in Answer 1 does not fill the stomachs of the workers unemployed through "the logic of the machine" and only by a clear view—free from capitalist bias and prejudice—of those changing relations between (a), the tool-user, and (b) and (c) now in the hands of the tool-owners, can they understand the reasons behind their present position and find how to alter it. The coming of private property and the State, the relative position of the worker in the Golden Age of the 15th century, the value, past and future, of Trade Unions—these are only a few matters out of many touched upon in I.H. about which to profess impartiality is futile. Hence, education on independent lines.

3.—Does acceptance of the *Materialistic Conception deny the force of the idea of psychic factors in history*?

Emphatically, No. Or else, why the Plebs League, the C.L.C., and other efforts to spread "the delivering power of the new idea" among wage-workers. No person would assert this who has read and understood pp. 11-12 in the Preface of Marx's *Critique* (this passage is contained in Aley's "Socialism and Evolution," S.L.P. (1d.)). Here *consciousness* is not denied in any way. As the air to the lungs, so, the economic conditions to the mind. From experiences ideas are obtained and theories generalised. The questioner cannot do better than read carefully Engels' *Feurbach*, *The Roots of the Socialist Philosophy*, and Chaps II. and III. of Boudin's *Socialism and War* for to understand the relation between the predominant (i.e., the economic) factor and the one he mentions.

4.—Did the members of the medieval craft guild produce commodities, and could they be said to own capital?

The question forcibly demonstrates the connection between Industrial History and Economics. Craft guild products were certainly produced for exchange and for the local market of that time; though the producers were concerned almost as much about the use, as the exchange, value of the goods.

To the second part of the question, the answer is No. For reasons see Lassalle's *What is Capital?* pp. 15 and 16. The owners of potential capital (i.e., wealth used to make profit by the consumption of labour-power) had to attack the guilds, in which owners and users of the means of production were

combined, and escape from and break down all the numerous guild regulations, before the modern capitalist system could come into full being. The stage coach proprietors did not become owners of the railways, neither did the guildsmen become capitalists. Capital, it should never be forgotten, is a relation, implying the existence of men owning values increasing those values by having within their power the free (?) labourer. The Guilds mark a transition stage between Feudalism and Capitalism; its tools were no more capital than is the pen of the clerk or the mandrill of the miners.

MARK STARR.

ECONOMICS.

1.—*Are the potatoes grown in the cottagers' garden and the cakes of the housewife, commodities?*

No. A commodity is an article produced by human energy for the purpose of exchange. The potatoes and the cake are produced for consumption in the home. If they were produced for the market they would then be commodities.

2.—*Is it not splitting hairs to make a difference between labour and labour-power? The next question, What is the value of labour?, can best be answered at the same time.*

The differentiation of labour from labour power is one of the most illuminating discoveries Marx contributed to economics. The classic school of economists had determined that value was due to labour. The Utopian Socialists then asked, "What is the value of labour?" (they meant wages), and they answered the question and said that the value of labour ought to be the product of labour. But Marx showed that labour (social labour) and value were only two names for the same thing. The relation between, say, a miner and a mineowner is not that a miner sells his labour to the mineowner. His labour is embodied in coal, and to sell his labour, or the product of his labour, would be to sell coal to the mineowner. But the coal belongs to the mineowner, and all the miner does is to sell the energy in his body and brains to the mineowner, who uses it to produce coal. This energy Marx called labour-power. The value of labour-power is expressed in wages. That discovery enabled the first scientific theory of wages to be formulated. The failure to make this discovery caused the breakdown of classical economics, since when official economics has not been a science.

3.—*Does supply and demand affect the value or the price of a commodity?*

Supply and demand regulates the price of a commodity, by merely indicating whether a commodity is sold above or below its value. That supply and demand do not affect the value of a commodity can be seen by the following question, "When supply and demand are equal, what, then, determines value?"

4.—*What does inflation of currency mean, and can historical debasings of the coinage be termed such and how does it affect prices?*

On the market every day a certain quantity of commodities at certain prices have to be circulated. The quantity of money required to circulate them is determined by the total sum of the prices divided by the rapidity of the moves of each coin. That quantity, we assume, is X. Part of the coin is issued in the form of notes. If notes to a greater face value than X are thrown into circulation, the currency has been inflated. The values of the commodities will not be affected, but the face value of the coin will depreciate. If currency is inflated to thrice X, then their face value will fall to half of X. Debasing the coinage has precisely the same effect, and a greater quantity of debased coins will enter circulation until its value will equal X.

NOAH ABLETT.

Ways of Helping with the Work

Don't sit looking at that red cross on the front page of the magazine. It means that your subscription is already due, so send *at once*. It helps.

Don't write to us for Kerr's books. We have not got a single copy. Also, we only stock W. W. Craik's book in small quantities, so that if you want more than six write to W. T. A. Foot, 119, Harvist Road, West Kilburn, N.W., direct. It will save our time, and yours.

PLEASE NOTE :—We only stock the following (and we want to get rid of these) :—Plebs pamphlet, *What Does Education Mean to the Workers ?* ; Plebs Leaflets, *How to Start a Social Science Class*, and *Short Study Outlines* ; and Fred Shaw's *Marxism : Fundamentals of Social Evolution* (which is a Syllabus and book list, *not* a pamphlet).

We hope to be able to supply Mark Starr's book immediately. Meanwhile, don't get impatient. The production of a book in war conditions is no easy business. We want to get rid of this book as soon as possible, so that there would be no object at all in our holding up your copy.

Don't let your account run on into months, or even years, and then ask us how much you owe. Where possible, accounts will be sent, but if everyone will attend to his own account, that will help enormously, and should not be an undue strain.

Don't send in matter for publication late in the month. If you have an article or some verse which you *cannot* keep to yourself, let us have it *early*.

If you wish to order extra copies of the magazine, let us know, if possible, *before the 25th of the month*. The printer despatches parcels (over six) from directed labels supplied by the secretary. Altered numbers after the labels have been sent to the printer mean confusion and more work. So that you can help by sending early. Not that we object to work ! But people are always asking to be allowed to help, so we thought we might mention it !

We thank very heartily all the friends who have already helped in these ways, and feel sure that others will.

Plebs Publications—Important

Mark Starr's book—see p. 2 of cover—is ready. If you have not received your parcel by the time these words are in print, it will reach you in the course of a few days. Now Mark's book has got to GO. It is a fine companion volume to Craik's, and every possessor of *The Modern Working-Class Movement* must have a copy of *A Worker Looks at History*. The two books don't clash—they are complementary. Mark wrote his with his eye on Craik's, and avoided any mere repetition. His book runs to 160 pp., has a Foreword by Geo. Barker, a cover-design by J.F.H., and is altogether a production of which the Plebs League can be proud. The Plebeian who cannot sell a dozen copies is unworthy of his "historic mission. . . ." We await your orders !

Hearty congratulations to Noah Ablett on his election as Merthyr Miners' Agent. But naturally the activities of an election campaign have hindered

him somewhat in the work of revising *Easy Outlines of Economics*. He writes us:—"It is hard, at present, to keep the detached mind necessary for economics." We hope that by the time this magazine is distributed the printer will be at work on the first pages of the book, and that next month we shall be able to give full particulars, including the date of publication. It is eagerly awaited, and will have a ready sale. We have had the following suggestion:—forwarded to us, and put it forward with due humility to the S.W.M.F.:—

"Don't you think that the S.W.M.F. might guarantee all or part of 'the needful' for publishing Ablett's book? It is needed badly, and will prove of such great assistance to thousands of their members. Anyhow, why not make the suggestion?"

That Pamphlet, 2nd edition, is now practically sold out. We have a small handful left, but in a day or two those will be done, too. We should like to order a third edition, but cannot do so without some guarantees. The sales of the pamphlet prove that it is good propaganda, so that if you sent cash with order we could get out another edition almost at once. All the classes should have a permanent stock by them to give to newcomers. It is such a handy answer to the question: "What are Plebs?" and will save you time and energy. Despite the big sales, we *know* that many of our regular readers have not even seen it yet. Let us put in that order for the third edition before the new Volume begins. There isn't much time, so hurry.

Some of the classes have already got their leaflets, also for propaganda, but not all. The price of 2/6 for 100 is so modest, that any class—even if it only calls itself a study circle—can afford a few to give away. Those who have got them write enthusiastically. We still have a good number in hand. Let us have your order or they may be gone when you do want them.

News of the Movement

It will probably interest many readers to know that the C.L.C. has been 'raided.' A little posse of detectives arrived one morning recently, and, according to Mr. Hacking, "very courteously and politely" searched the premises for ('twas said) lurking C.O.'s, or, as the *Daily Express* informed us, "pacifist" literature. They found neither. We suggest (also "very courteously and politely") that they now search the College for pro-War literature, since a big percentage of both staff and students are in the Army. And, by the way, why did not the police apply direct to Mr. Brace, Under-Secretary to the Home Office, for is he not President of the S.W.M.F., who, jointly with the N.U.R., own and control the College?

* * * * *

Ida Chaytor, Sec. of the L.P.L., sends the following encouraging report:—"A course of lectures on Economics has been arranged at the C.L.C. in co-operation with the London Dist. Coun., N.U.R.; 84 keen and enthusiastic students (12 of whom are women) have been enrolled, amongst them being members of the following organizations:—N.U.R., A.S. of Carpenters & Joiners; B.S.P., A.S.E., S.P.G.B., Shop-Assistants; I.L.P., N.U. of Clerks, Railway Clerks, Iron & Steel Smelters, to all of which the good word will go—Education by the workers for the workers. The Economics lectures will last till Xmas. In the New Year a course of lectures on Socialist Philosophy will be commenced, and there will be no drawing back for the student, for he will be a confirmed Marxian. The lecturer in both cases is Mr. C. Terry."

From all sides come rumours of classes! "If only" we had the tutors—but the classes in many districts seem to get on wonderfully without. Knowledge comes to those who help themselves—to travesty an old saying.

W. F. Watson is to start Central London Classes in the New Year, which will almost certainly be affiliated to the Plebs. Particulars from 8, Featherstone Buildings, Holborn, W.C. 1.

Comrade G. F. Bailey (Hanwell, W.) writes:—"I hope to be able to start a class around this way after some more spade work," so that Plebeians in this district may get into communication with him at 24, Church Road, Hanwell, W. 7.

At EDMONTON, at Walthamstow, in Kentish Town, at Croydon, the good work goes on, and South London is organising a conference on Working Class Education; particulars from Sec., 4, York Street, Walworth, S.E. West Ham and East Ham have their classes. In fact, the Thames is on fire! Considering that London is the most reactionary place in England, this augurs well for the North and places where Capitalism is more developed and the workers have more kick.

Walton Newbold has been lecturing in Lancashire, where the demand for the real thing in working-class education grows apace. He has now departed to Scotland, and from all accounts the heather is beginning to smoulder.

Comrade Brownjohn reports the formation of a class at FLEETWOOD which promises great things, and the circulation of the Magazine has already advanced. Other classes, please note. The magazine is *the* medium for propaganda and for linking the movement together. Support the magazine. You need us, and we need you.

GLASGOW flourishes. Space does not permit a full and detailed account of all the activities, but the following reports from Arthur Solomons and J. F. Armour show how things are moving. The former writes:—"I get letters every day from trade unions asking for instructors. If only we could supply them all." ("IF ONLY"—how many of us echo that!) "Our aim this winter is to prepare as many of the students as possible to become Instructors, and any comrade showing an aptitude is given special instructions and tuition. We have opened the branch (of the Plebs League) to individual members, and have already received a great many applications for membership. The fee is 2/- per year, if this catches the eye of any I.L.P.'ers or B.S.P.'ers wishing to join, we hope they will communicate with the Secretary (12 Binnie Place, Montieth Row). We are also inviting branches to affiliate (trade unions and socialist societies) and up to now have had a good response." The work is being divided between the Plebs League and the Scottish Labour College Committee, who, J. F. Armour reports, "run in double harness, two Plebs Leaguers having joined the College Committee and two from the latter joining the Plebs League." We need hardly express our pleasure that such an arrangement has been come to—the unification of all the forces working for real working class education being *the* great thing to aim at. The scarcity of tutors is the great drawback everywhere, for Comrade Armour goes on to say, "We shall be glad to hear from anyone willing to conduct classes or reading circles, and I can assure volunteers that every assistance will be given them." Write to J. F. Armour, 65, West Regent Street, Glasgow.

In his monthly report in the *Coachmaker's Journal* B. Skene Mackay writes: "Here also (Glasgow) is the first Plebs Class to be run by our union. The students meet on Sunday mornings and have begun their work on the now famous text-book written by my friend and fellow-striker, W. W. Craik." . . . One other Glasgow note:—We note an advt. in *Forward* (December 15th) of a Lecture-Recital by the William Morris Choir—subject, "Music for Plebs." Good! Hymns of Hate for the Home Huns?

Good reports of the work at EDINBRUGH and MUSSELBURGH still come in. Comrade Kilpatrick writes :—" In the November *Plebs* my name appeared as leader of the Musselburgh class, and in December I was down as sec. On one or two occasions I have acted as class-conductor, but the class just appoints one of its members at each meeting as conductor. The secretary is Mr. John Hamilton, 203, North High Street." Our apologies for the error. A Plebs League class has been started in LEITH by local branches of the A.S.E. On Sunday, 2nd December, seventeen members were enrolled, and we hope to have about fifty members within a few weeks. The class meets Sundays, from 1.45 to 3 p.m., in Labour Hall, Smiths Place. Our study course is Value, Price and Profit, and the fee for the Session is 2/- for journeymen and 1/- for apprentices. Membership is not confined to A.S.E. members. Comrade Drummond, a good Marxian, has agreed to act as Class Leader. Plebeians in Leith District are invited to join. A good supply of intellectual armour is guaranteed. Write John Cameron, Sec., 59, Balfour Street, Leith.

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The cry, "Scotland leads," will very soon become obsolete if LANCASHIRE and YORKSHIRE stick to it. Lancashire is maintaining with great vigour its enthusiasm for education. At Warrington, Wigan, Leigh, Openshaw, Rochdale, and Oldham, the classes, in spite of vicissitudes, are still going on, and where no tutor is available, they are "doing it themselves"—or being led by one of their number who is a little less backward at coming forward than the others. A very good report comes from G. Holt (Oldham) :—"We have made splendid progress. 75 students already on the list." This is a workshop class, arranged to suit the men on the different shifts. Other "shops" please note. It's no good cursing the ignorance of your mates if you don't offer them something to mend it with.

MANCHESTER is also awakening. Tom Yates, an old Plebeian, says :—
Less than two years ago I was the only Plebeian hereabouts; to-day the only affiliation of the local Socialist Society is to the Plebs League. Said Society has recently carried through a successful conference of local T.U branches resulting in Comrade Lexton addressing about 50 students on Economics and Industrial History. From all round come requests for classes. I feel I have not lived in vain!" He adds modestly, "The work has *not* been done by me"—though he admits pegging away at a few others till they became more enthusiastic than himself. Surely that is a definition of a good organizer—Get others to work!

* * * * *

YORKSHIRE deserves a long par. Interesting news from LEEDS was left out of the November number, so that the growth of the movement in that city will come as a surprise to many. The Loiners have lined up in fine style. There is a big class at the Clarion Cafe on Fridays at 8. Teacher, T. A. Jackson, Sec., J. F. Richardson, from whom comes the following report :—"50 students attend the class, and everybody expresses satisfaction with the work done. Then Comrade Lew Davies has 22 students (Tuesdays) at the West Ward B.S.P. Davies and I are taking the Adult Class at North Ward I.L.P. Sunday School on alternate Sundays. We are taking the course outlined by Mark Starr. Next Sunday we are commencing yet another class, this time at the Socialist Hall, West Hounslet, and we are assured of a good attendance. We want, if possible, to see a Labour College established in Leeds, and our teacher, Comrade Jackson, seems to think it quite possible in the near future. There's optimism! We have certainly made a beginning with nearly 100 students in the three classes." It is interesting to note that the success of the classes is due to the fact that the S.L.P., I.L.P., and B.S.P. are all working harmoniously together to promote a sound independent working class educational movement in Leeds. Who said Leeds lagged behind. It's a rumour, for another good Plebeian also forwards a glowing account. A class has

been started for members of the N.U.R. Information from the Sec., H. Clabby, 31, Nowell Mount, Harehills Lane. The teacher is Mr. Harold Clay, President of the Leeds Labour Party, and the class is to study G.D.H. Cole's *World of Labour* and Craik's *Working-Class Movement*.

The S.I.P. have a class at South Leeds, Socialist Hall, Derby Crescent, Dewsbury Road, on Sunday mornings at 11 o'clock. Comrade Ashurst is the teacher, and particulars can be obtained from the Sec., Frank Stork, 18, Dunston Street, Beeston Road.

In case Leeds begins to be too proud of itself, SHEFFIELD must here be mentioned, for there has always been a friendly sort of rivalry between the two towns. Full particulars of Sheffield classes appeared last month. The interest is well maintained and may be judged by the following:—After 2½ hours' lecturing and questions, some one asked Fred Shaw, "What time is your train?" to which he replied, "9.42." "Well," said the questioner "it's just gone!" (It *almost* makes one want to live in Sheffield again.—Sec.).

But the great thing is the conference promoted by the Joint Committee on Working-Class Education. C. T. Watkins sends us the preliminary notice. It is to be held at the Montgomery Hall, on Sat., December 29th, from 2.45 to 5 p.m. John Maclean will address the meeting. The Agenda sounds exciting, and should provoke good discussion. (1) The question of securing wider support for a National Labour College: (2) A Future Labour College for Sheffield; (3) An Organized System of Local Classes with Trained Lecturers. This is *the goods*, and we wish the conference every success. A movement in every large town like this promises to be, and working-class education will never look back. Comrade Watkins has visions of a Labour College of surpassing splendour. Let us hope that the town Councilors will not object, or suggest that it be built on the Manor Tip where a rude man once suggested the city should erect a statue to one of its benefactors!

HALIFAX already has its C.L.C. branch, with Fred Shaw lecturing on Social Evolution, A. Waight, A.S.E. on Economics, and J. W. Thomas, F.S.I.F., on Industrial History. Mr. Thomas sends this account of their activities:—"Although you may not have had any account from us for a long time, we have not been asleep. Comrade Waight and I have been separately or jointly to 43 branches of T.U.'s or societies connected with the working-class movement. On December 2nd a conference was held in the Trades Hall, and at the afternoon session 83 societies were represented. Fred Shaw, Walton Newbold, and J. T. Murphy spoke, and a good discussion followed, the resolutions being carried unanimously. The evening session was open to all Trade Unionists on production of their card. 1,250 were present, and listened with rapt attention to Shaw, Newbold, and Murphy. All literature sold—£5 worth in 1d. and 2d. pamphlets! As a result of the work, classes have been formed at Sowerby Bridge, Brighouse, and Elland. Workshop classes are springing up in every centre, all under the direction of the Board of Management elected by the branches affiliated to the Central Classes."

DONCASTER, too, is in the running. W. E. Crawford, of the N.U.R., who has represented Doncaster in the Plebs League for a very long time, says that there is every prospect of a good movement "*even*" at Doncaster. Two meetings, one under the auspices of the T & L.C., have already been addressed by Mr. Fielding, of Sheffield, on "The Need for a Social Science Class on the lines of the C.L.C., and Support to the Plebs League."

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By mischance, the following were omitted from the list of S. Wales classes. (Perhaps it was because the secretaries never sent in particulars until too late!)

ABERTHILERY.—Economics, Geo. Dagger, C.L.C. Sec., Allan Johnson, 2 Crook Hill, Cwmtillery.

LLANHILLETH.—History of Working Class Movement, W. J. Williams, Llanhilleth. Sec., S. Rees, Glandwr Street, Aberbeeg.

CWMCARN.—Hist. of Working Class Movement, W. J. Williams. Sec., L. James, 7 Factory Trip.

PONTNEWYNYDD.—Indust. Hist., W. J. Hewlett. Sec., W. G. Davies, Myrtle House, Pontrepiod, near Pontypool.

PONTYPOOL ROAD N.U.R. CLASS.—Hist. of Mod. Move., W. Coldrich (Pentwyn). Sec., Mr. Pruden, South Street, Panteg.

BLAINA I.L.P. CLASS.—Indust. Hist., W. J. Hewlett. Sec., Wyndham Jefferies, 1 New Lancaster Street.

There are also classes at Blackwood and Tredegar, with S. Jones as teacher. Classes at Wattsville and Oakdale, with S. Fisher, 8 Beechwood Terrace Wattsville, as teacher. These with the classes given in last month's magazine make up a list that it will take Scotland and Yorkshire some time to beat!

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Reports from MIDDLESBRO, from Miss Connie Ellis, show liveliness in that quarter. The Cleveland and District branch is growing apace, and a very good conference has already been held. STOCKTON is included in the new move, and Miss Ellis says, "Everyone is astonished at the success of the C.L.C., and we hope to keep them amazed."

* * * * *

LEICESTER is joining in the movement, and Com. Rimington, of the S.L.P., is the responsible person. A conference was called on November 24th, and though we have not heard the result—judging from the moving appeal for support sent out by our friend, its success was a foregone conclusion. Leicester will be no worse for a little C.L.C. leaven, and Rimington is the man to supply it!

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The BIRMINGHAM classes are still going strong, and Com. T. D. Smith was good enough to travel to Northampton to put the case for the Plebs League on October 20th. The occasion was a conference on Education, and our delegate was asked to speak by the Sec. of the Trades Council. Comrade Smith outlined the history, origin, and aims of our movement, laying special stress on the *independent* character of our teaching and curriculum. This did not please the chairman, a local J.P., and employer of labour.

The "bourgeoisie" having retired, the workers continued the discussion, and several of the later speakers were heard to say they would have liked the chairman to have "sat out" all the speeches. There are many enthusiasts in the town anxious to start a class, so that we hope to hear again from Northampton. Our thanks are due to Comrade Smith for so ably helping to spread the light.

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One of the most interesting reports we have before us this month is from "down under". The Victorian Labour College, Unity Hall, 636 Bourke Street, MELBOURNE, is being run on precisely similar lines to the C.L.C. here in England. Subjects taught—Literature, Grammar, Industrial History, and Economics. The Constitution says: "The point of view of the teachers shall be frankly working class, and the aim of the College shall be to enable working men and women to serve their class." When support is forthcoming from the trade unions the management will be taken over by the unions represented (in the approved manner), but the College is at present governed by a provisional Board, and Comrade W. P. Earsmon, the secretary, sends us a detailed account, which we would like to print in full if space permitted. Suffice it to say that 53 students enrolled in two months, and in August,

when our comrade wrote us, the movement was flourishing. We wish our colonial cousin every success both in spreading the light and in combating the W.E.A. dope which has been administered to the Australian workers. Australia has been to the forefront in the fight for freedom (from Militarism) during the last three years, and we can well imagine that the College in Melbourne will meet with the success it deserves.

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One last word. We should be very much obliged if secretaries of classes, or others sending in reports, would write them separate from letters about business matters, and mark them "News of the Movement." This would be a great help, and would ensure everyone getting a mention.

Correspondence

THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT.

DEAR NEWBOLD—The concepts "right" and "wrong" have played an interesting, some think a valuable, part in human history, but on educational and philosophical grounds quite as much as upon those of Marxian economics and Marxian sociology we have long regarded them as obsolete categories, and you therefore will not fright us by trumpeting never so loudly the great name of Marx, or by rattling the spectre of "bourgeois morality," saying the while with contemptuous good-nature, "These be thy gods, O Israel!"

Like all hyper-abstract terms of wide extension, "civilisation" is by no means easy to define, but we think that a survey of social evolution inspires it with a meaning which transcends applications to the civilisations of specific epochs. However this may be, in the passage you quote, when we speak of the "truly civilised human being" we think of civilisation as dominated by two characteristics. The first of these characteristics is that force and compulsion recede more and more into the background as civilisation advances. This does not imply that we consider the use of force "wrong," and we agree that it will always remain an essential factor in human society. But the civilised man is slow to appeal to force, and in proportion as he and those with whom he has to deal are "civilised" does the appeal to force become superfluous. The second characteristic is that he is hostile to exploitation. He has overcome the desire to exploit others, and he is prepared to resist. (by force, if need be, we grant you) the desire of others to exploit him. His attitude towards exploitation arises, not because he thinks exploitation "wrong," but because he is an artist in life, and has discovered that by the discontinuance of exploitation, whether active or passive, he is enabled to become a more successful practitioner of the fine art of living.

As to "the dictatorship of the proletariat," we do not think there is any essential difference between our outlook and yours. We fully agree that the social revolution "is going to be no matter of peace by negotiation, no pacifist pilgrimage into the promised land." But we think it probable that in that revolution the use of force will not be obtrusive. In the early stages, doubtless, of industrial unionist organization, there will be numerous manifestations of force on the part of the authorities, and there will be numerous manifestations likewise of what Sorel terms "violence," *i.e.*, of proletarian reaction against the authority of the class state. But by the time the workers are sufficiently well organized to "expropriate the expropriators," their reserves of power will have become so enormous that the use of coercive methods will be needless—force will remain in the background. Be this forecast true or false, we cannot but feel that a "dictatorship" of the proletariat would involve the dangers of all dictatorships, the dangers that invariably wait upon absolute power. The difference in outlook here is largely verbal, but we dislike the brandishing of this particular phrase, not because of the effect we fear it may have upon the bourgeois mind, but because it involves notions which are disharmonious with our general conception of civilisation.

A critical word in conclusion. We agree with you that the class struggle theory is the key to social progress at the present time, and we know that you agree with us in holding that only through the vigorous pursuit of the class struggle can social classes be abolished and this particular form of struggle be done away with for all time. We know that in a short lifetime one has often to be guided by the motto, "First things first." But personally we have a taste for envisaging the question also, if not *sub specie aeternitatis*, at least from the viewpoint of those children of the morning who will look back dispassionately upon the days when class warfare had still to be waged. Do we attempt the impossible here? Perchance. But a Marxian socialist and great artist among our contemporaries, recognising the impossibility, attempted it, as artists will. Writing in imagination seven centuries after the events to which the main text of his book relates and more than four centuries after the successful completion of the social revolution, he tells us: "Everhard did unusual work, especially in the elaboration and in the interpretation of working-class philosophy. 'Proletarian science' and 'proletarian philosophy' were his phrases for it, and therein he shows the provincialism of his mind—a defect, however, that was due to the times and that none in that day could escape."

De te fabula narratur!

EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL.

REFORM OR REVOLUTION.

DEAR COMRADE,—Your footnote to my letter in the November issue makes me write once more on the question of Reforms and Programs.

You say I seem to have taken fright at the word reform and read the articles no further than the titles. Now if my letter is looked at it will be seen at a glance that I have read more than the title, as I quoted from the articles, "Miners' Reform Movement in Lanarkshire" and "S.W.M.F. Unofficial Reform Programs."

But why should the workers be called on to reform their present obsolete unions, when the proper form of union is at hand, viz., the Industrial Workers of Great Britain. I hold the opinion that the trades unions cannot be taken and moulded into the proper revolutionary union, despite the arguments of our friends of the amalgamation type. Marx, in his day, said: "Workers of all lands unite," and since Marx died another great man, Daniel De Leon, has done his part in giving the working class a lead as to the proper tactics to adopt to bring about our freedom. I maintain that we are only marking time in taking such action as advocated in the article I took objection to, and that we, as Plebs, should do all in our power to get the working class into the proper union, the I.W.G.B., which has for its motto, "The Abolition of the Wage System."

Again I am yours for Revolution, *not* Reform,

BONNIE SCOTLAND.

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The *Plebs* Bookshelf

New volumes in the Home University Library are few and far between in these days. Fortunately, few of us will have had time to read all the old ones. One in particular I have had on my shelves nearly two years, and have only just got on to—H. N. Brailsford's *Shelley, Godwin and their Circle*. It is as "meaty" a little book as any I have yet discovered in the series, and that, as Plebeians will agree, is saying a lot. It is especially interesting at the present time, dealing as it does with a period of European war, revolution, and reaction—a century ago. Mr. Brailsford, whether one always agrees with him or not (and his article in the Xmas *Herald* did stagger one a little) is one of the most informative, stimulating, and *interesting* writers I know. Scarcely a page of this book but contains some sentence or passage worth quoting. Here are one or two specimens from the number I have marked:—

It makes some difference whether a man sees history from above or from below.

Sanity is a capacity for becoming accustomed to the monstrous. Not time nor grey hairs could bring that kind of sanity to Shelley's clear-sighted madness.

The human mind can never be satisfied with the mere assurance that sooner or later the golden years will come. The mere lapse of time is in itself intolerable. If our waking life and our years of action are to regain a meaning, we must perceive that the process of evolution is itself significant and interesting.

But it is not only because of its writer that this volume is so notable. Its subject, to every working-class student, is vitally interesting. These pioneers of revolution a hundred years ago—Tom Paine, Godwin, Holcroft, Mary Wollstonecraft, and the humbler (yet even more courageous) members of the "London Corresponding Society"—have left us an inspiring example. Mr. Brailsford's chapter on Paine is a masterpiece of biography in little. "Paine thought in prose and acted epics. He drew horizons on paper and pursued the infinite in deeds." (One wonders, by the way, whether, if Paine had been alive to-day, he would have seen any reason to change his view that 'war is with us the art of conquering at home.')

The chapters on Wm. Godwin, the half-forgotten apostle of philosophic anarchism, "spiritual father" of a whole school of poets and writers, are also full of good things. Plebeians will appreciate Godwin's vehement onslaught on systems of "national education."

State-regulated institutions will stereotype knowledge and make for an undesirable permanence and uniformity in opinion. . . . No Government is to be trusted with the dangerous power to create and regulate opinions through its schools. Such a power is, indeed, more dangerous than that of an Established Church, and would be used to strengthen tyranny and perpetuate faulty institutions.

The chapters on Godwin form the main portion of the book, and this is justifiable if only for the reason that so little is written or read of the author of *Political Justice* nowadays. But there are also the studies of Mary Wollstonecraft—of interest to every student of the woman's movement—and of

Shelley ; and the brilliant opening chapter on "The French Revolution in England," with its keen criticism of Burke, its vivid account of the Corresponding Society and of the operations of D.O.R.A. in days gone by. . . . Altogether, this is a book in a thousand. I wish I had space to deal more fully with it, but I hope I've said enough to whet the appetites of all Plebeians.

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Mark Starr writes :—"W. H. Dawson's *Industrial Germany* (Collins' Nation's Library, 1/-) can be read after Boudin with much profit. It also provides (Chaps. V. and VI.) ample illustration of concentration of capital in a country of advanced development." I agree. By the way, the Reformers' Bookstall (126, Bothwell Street, Glasgow) are offering several of the volumes in the Nation's Library at half price (6d.). I am not sure whether Dawson's book is included among these. If so, it is a good sixpennyworth.

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A sentence in the *Times* Literary Supplement's review of Lord Morley's *Recollections* will interest Plebeians.

One of the melancholy ironies of life is that education so often destroys the elasticity of the mind. The atmosphere with which it surrounds its victim is a halo of steel, brilliant but impenetrable.

That is a true saying. And it *may* be true of real working-class education, as of the university brands. We need to take care of that "elasticity of mind"—to go on applying, testing, and re-examining our mental outfit. I have met Marxists (I don't say Plebeians) who, having read all or most of Kerr's publications, considered their education complete, and regarded with **scorn**—or, at any rate, with mild condescension—all other books whatsoever. Such an attitude is hopelessly wrong. Marx gave us a priceless *key*, to be used for further—unceasing—study. Use the key, and go on learning. Avoid at all costs that "halo of steel." Better for ever lack brilliance, if impenetrability be the price one has to pay for it. Better—dare I say it?—be a revisionist than a deadhead.

* * * * *

John S. Clarke's comments last month on autograph letters and their sale-prices came to my mind when I read this paragraph in the *Daily News* (December 14th) :—

One can imagine the quiet smile of Charlotte Bronte on hearing that her letters respecting her first book had fetched £108 at Sotheby's—in war time. She could enjoy the irony of it, for that first book, a collection of poems by Emily, Agnes, and herself, was refused by several publishers, and finally printed at her own expense. A year after publication the sale totalled two copies !

* * * * *

Another quotation—which I cut months ago, and promptly mislaid. This is from the *Literary Guide* (the organ of the R.P.A.) for May last, and is an extract from a review of the Rev. Wm. Temple's book, *Mens Cr  atrix* :—

A book like this will interest future sociologists as illustrating the singular medley of Platonism, Hegelianism, Robert Browningism, and Evangelism (the hymn "There's a song for little children Above the bright blue sky" being reverently quoted) which did duty for

Liberal Christianity in 1917. Mr. Temple is Rector of St. James's Piccadilly,* and chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury; and the W.E.A. has secured him for President. He seems to be a well-meaning, busy, and elegant soul, troubled with an indigestion which arises from trying to harmonise metaphysic (of the Hegel-Bosanquet sort) with the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

And these are not the only things Mr. Temple—vainly—tries to "harmonise."

* * * * *

Still another cutting—a priceless one, this. My Lord Haldane, in the *Daily Chronicle* (November 8th), held forth at some length on that favourite topic of his, "An Educated Democracy." Now Lord Haldane, like other educational "reformers," has at long last learned that it is futile to discuss such a subject until one has cleared the ground by some statement as to one's point of view regarding the present state of society. This is how he does it:—

We have long ago passed away from the doctrine of Karl Marx, that wealth is created by the capitalist (!), who dictates a wage which will just keep body and soul together, to an ever-increasing proletariat, forced by fear of hunger to compete for employment by him. To-day capital is hired in the open market from a multitude of investors, great and small, who buy shares in the joint stock company in which their only real interest is a dividend, which, taken over head, is not large. It is capital that to-day normally competes quite as much as labour for employment in great undertakings. The man who can organize these, and, by inspiring confidence in his ability, induce others less competent to let him give directions which will result in the conversion of the potential energy of the resources which the earth possesses into kinetic energy, producing valuable industrial products and their accessories, this is the man who in these times really creates wealth as neither the labourer nor the capitalist do.

A purple passage, indeed! *Very* choice—considered either as English or as Economics; the thought is well-matched by the style. There has been a good deal of discussion at one time or another over Lord Haldane's "spiritual home." Judging by sample, I should say it was Bedlam—or a kindergarten.

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"The people have been *mis*-educated. And to *re*-educate them we must first *un*-educate them of their erroneous ideas."—*Appeal to Reason*.

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Who wrote the *Times* "Ferment of Revolution" articles? They have been attributed to Dr. Shadwell, but I hear from South Wales that Prof. E. V. Arnold, of Bangor University, author of *War-Time Lectures* (delivered to the W.E.A., and reviewed in *Plebs*, October and December, 1916—and described by G. D. H. Cole in these pages as "amazingly silly") is the Hidden Hand in this particular mystery. The *Welsh Outlook* (November), after dealing with the articles, proceeded:—

All organizations are controlled by minorities. The S.W.M.F. at the present time is dominated by young and intelligent men who have been, and are being, fed upon the political doctrines of the I.L.P. and the economic theories of Karl Marx as expounded in the C.L.C. classes. The Unrest Commissioners stated that nineteen such classes were

* He has recently, I believe, resigned that post.

being conducted in South Wales in March last; from another source we gather that arrangements are being made to promote 129 classes this winter. The membership will vary from 10 to 50, and it is probable that at least 2,000 young miners will, during the next year, be made "class-conscious" and relentless foes of Capitalism.

Let the good work go on—even though it grieve Prof. Arnold!

* * * * *

The most important item this month to all Plebeian book-buyers is that Mark Starr's book is now ready (1/1½ post paid). I shall have something to say of *A Worker Looks at History* later. Let me just say here that it is the obvious duty of every reader of the *Plebs* to send for his (or her) copy without delay—and to sell another copy or two to friends. I don't think anyone, having seen it, will be disposed to deny that it is a rattling good shilling's worth.

* * * * *

A post-card review (by Mark Starr) of Philip Snowden's *Socialism and Economic Theories* (Nat. Lab. Press, 1d.) :—"Belies its title. No Socialism in it. An able, short re-statement of Adam Smith's arguments for Free Trade."

* * * * *

I read with much interest Chas. Watkins' review of G. D. H. Cole's *Self-Government in Industry* in recent numbers of the *Railway Review*. We hope to publish some notes on the same book by an Old Pleb, Somewhere Abroad, in an early issue. Mark Starr is doing us an article on *An Alphabet of Economics*, by A. R. Orage—"the celebrated Midwife of the (Guild) Movement," as the *Cambridge Magazine* recently described him.

* * * * *

A correspondent writes to point out that in his *Fundamentals of Social Evolution* Syllabus, Fred Shaw quotes the Everyman (2 vols.) edition of Green's *Short History*. I know Fred Shaw will forgive me for reminding Plebeians that in the Bookshelf (September, 1916) I recommended them, very earnestly, to spend an extra half-crown and go for the Macmillan one-vol. edition (5/-), revised and enlarged, and containing Mrs. Green's masterly Epilogue, bringing the history down to 1914. There is no comparison between the two editions—so I repeat what I then wrote, "Wait until you can afford 5/-, and go for the Macmillan edition."

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In the November Bookshelf I quoted some extracts from the *Times'* summary of Kautsky's *Neue Zeit* article on the question of Small States. The *New Statesman* (October 6th) gave a rather fuller summary, from which I have only space to quote a few lines here. It will be remembered that Kautsky argued that the view that small States must be absorbed by large ones is a pseudo-Marxist fallacy, a false analogy from the economic tendency towards concentration. He points out that, during the past century—

Putting aside Germany and Italy, the number of small States in Europe did not diminish, but increased. Belgium separated itself from Holland, Norway from Sweden, Hungary half separated itself from Austria, the Balkan States broke away from Turkey. And the present war appears to be leading rather to the formation of new States—Poland, for instance, and possibly Finland—than to the absorption of old States.

This is to be explained, says Kautsky, by the fact that the *antagonism* which Capitalism excites is as much a product of Capitalism as its efforts to protect itself. By its development (of the means of communication, etc.) Capitalism excites an interest in politics in the masses of the people; and generates, therefore, not only the class-struggle, but modern Democracy, which implies a striving among the people to democratise the State. "This is too easily overlooked by those who see in the modern State nothing but Imperialism." Still, International Socialism has to think, not only of the promotion of Democracy, but of the general economic development of the world. "The problem before us is to reconcile the requirements of Democracy with those of economic progress."

As the *Statesman* observes, "The article, as a contribution to the political philosophy of the day, deserves further consideration, especially from British Socialists."

J.F.H.

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