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The Organ of the National Council of Labour Colleges

THE PLEBS

I can promise to be candid but not impartial.

Vol. XV

October, 1923

No. 10

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OUR POINT of VIEW

IN its editorial notes on the Trades Union Congress, the *New Leader* gave prominence to the discussion on Working-Class Education. We hope we may take that fact as an indication of a more appreciative interest in the work and aims of the Labour Colleges on the part of the I.L.P. than it has usually shown in the past. Individual I.L.Pers, of course, and even individual branches, have been among our keenest supporters. But, taken as a whole, the Independent Labour Political Party has been exceeding slow to realise the need for Independence in Labour Education.

Not that, even now, the *New Leader* is wholly converted to the

Pleb point of view. It tries to find a half-way house between W.E.A. "impartiality" and Pleb "narrowness." It declares roundly that though "a man may collect material 'impartially' *impartial thinking is half-thinking*"—and we thank it for that word! But it is still of the opinion that "fitness for the class struggle must not be the whole end or the chief end of a worker's education," though it admits that "it is not an end to ignore"—for which we are truly grateful.

Yet after all, Mr. Brailsford, why ought not fitness for the class struggle to be the chief end of a worker's education? The carrying on of the class struggle to a victorious conclusion is surely the chief task of the working-class movement. Why, then, should its members not concentrate, first and foremost, on equipping themselves for that task? We fancy that the *New Leader's* nervous pleas against "narrowness" are the result of a failure to realise all that the class struggle implies and involves. That struggle is not concerned solely with a quite limited set of problems about hours or wages or even Acts of Parliament or international Treaties. It is a struggle for the emancipation of the great mass of mankind. How, then, can a man who dedicates himself to it be committing any sort of "treason to his humanity?" Are there any individual interests which are of more importance, immediate or ultimate, than the interests of mankind at large? It seems to us that the man who regards his own soul as of such supreme importance is in danger of losing it.

For—even if the end aimed at were a much smaller thing than it actually is—a man is not less, but more "cultured" if his education has equipped him to render better service to his fellows. And as a matter of fact no sort of education is conceivable without some sort of *social* aim. It may aim at fitting a man to be a fit citizen of a non-existent Utopia, or a docile "citizen" of a capitalist democracy, or a capable servant of his class in its present-day struggles. Always it must aim at something. If there were anything in the *New Leader's* antithesis between the claims of one's class and the claims of "one's own humanity"; if one could not serve one's class without injuring one's own capabilities; then one might be alarmed at this bogey of "narrowness." But "one's own humanity" is much less likely to have "treason" done to it in the course of educating oneself for a specific purpose, than it would be if one took the Broad Highway with no intention of getting anywhere in particular. The *New Leader* should leave it to the *Manchester Guardian* and other organs of "enlightened" capitalism to enlarge upon the contrast between "the best and broadest" education and the kind which

is "propagandist, narrow, economic, and concentrated upon the development of the 'class-conscious' mind" (*M. Guardian*, Sept. 7th). That is, of course, how it looks to the capitalist. But one expects Socialists to see it differently.

A pretty object lesson in the "best and broadest" kind of education—the kind that regards "bias" as the unforgivable sin—is afforded by a little book entitled *The Way Out :*

A Book Without Bias *Essays on the Meaning and Purpose of Adult Education*, by Viscount Haldane, Messrs. Zimmern, Laski, Mansbridge and others (Oxford Univ.

Press, 4s. 6d.). There is an appendix to this volume which purports to give a list of "the most prominent bodies which undertake the work of adult education." The bulk of this is a list of "Voluntary Associations," which include the Adult School Union, the Y.M.C.A., the National Alliance of Employers and Employed, the Workers' Educational Association, the Workers' Education Trade Union Committee, Ruskin College, etc., etc. At the end of the appendix is a short list of "Other Organisations"—the "definitely sectarian institutions"—including the Catholic Social Guild, the Plebs League, and the Labour Colleges.

Now on what grounds is this classification made? If, for instance, the W.E.T.U.C. is what it pretends to be—a working-class body, out to provide education designed to assist in working-class emancipation—why is it not included with the Plebs League and the Labour Colleges among the "sectarian institutions?" Why is the National Alliance of Employers and Employed "educational" and the Labour Colleges not, if, as is here stated, the Alliance concentrates on "economic, social and allied subjects?" Is it that Workers' Education ceases to be "educational" when the workers themselves organise it and control it?

The book has for another appendix a Bibliographical Note which includes a list prepared "for those who wish to make a more detailed study of different sections of the movement." This gives under *Plebs League*, "Monthly journal, The PLEBS." Not a pamphlet; not a textbook; not a hint of any other publication whatsoever. Yet under *Workers' Educational Association* we find a paragraph to the effect that "the Central Bookroom, which works in close collaboration with the W.E.A., provides special editions of textbooks for classes and students, together with pamphlets. " Under *W.E.T.U.C.*, we get three pamphlets listed. And so on. No, dear friends, not bias! Simply a hint that if the workers develop ideas of their own as to the "meaning and purpose" of education, they must not expect their crude notions to receive the same attention as those put forward by their patrons.

We hope to return to the essays which form the body of the book later.

Those of us who feel that the *Daily Herald* falls a long way short of what a workers' daily ought to be—and could be—are faced with a rather difficult problem now that its continuance definitely depends on the increased support it receives during the next two or three months. It is all very well to tell us that, whatever its shortcomings, the one Labour daily newspaper must be kept in existence. Our difficulty lies in the very fact that there is little likelihood of a long time of there being room for more than one Labour daily and if that one is to continue to be the same officially-controlled, official-minded, tepid kind of organ—aiming apparently at a sort of petty suburban respectability rather than at working-class maintenance—that the *Herald* has become during the last year or so, then it is exceedingly hard to put any enthusiasm into the efforts we now make on its behalf.

It is not entirely a matter of policy. It is quite as much a matter of general aim and content. Looked at simply as journalism, the *Herald* strikes no note of its own. Practically everything it does now the *Daily News* or the *Daily Express* do better. It is just a sort of superstition, and nothing more, to believe that the particular kind of paper which happens at the moment to be getting the biggest circulation is the only kind that people will buy. Northcliffe made his name and his fortune by ignoring all the canons which laid down in *What Was a Daily Paper*, and starting a new one of a different sort. And no new daily paper to-day is going to defeat its competitors by merely imitating them. For a Labour daily to strike a new note ought to be far less difficult than for a paper whose point of view was merely a variation on the common or garden capitalist. Our own conviction is that a working-class daily which was frankly propagandist; which consisted chiefly of articles and paragraphs commenting on the news of the day rather than on special reports and late wires—a sort of daily *John Bull*, in fact, but a Labour one—would have a far healthier circulation in a short time than a poor imitation of the Beaverbrook model.

So what are we to do about the *Herald*? Our only solution is to work for its support, but do your best at the same time to give it a healthy criticism formulated and expressed, in any and every effective way. Perhaps even the Mandarins of Eccleston Square will stop the murmurs if they are insistent enough, and will realise that the rank and file of the Trade Unions will not buy the *Herald* if the fault may conceivably lie with the *Herald*, and not with the rank and file.

BANG GOES SEVENPENCE !

What to Read : A Guide for Worker-Students (Plebs League, 7d.).

BY publishing this handy and useful little book, at sevenpence, the Plebs League has enhanced its reputation. Its appearance marks an important stage in the growth of independent working-class education in this country. The increasing importance of our educational movement may not be apparent to critical new comers. But to those of us who have been actively engaged in Marxian tutorial work during the last twenty years, the publication of *What to Read* generates a happy glow of enthusiasm. We cannot help contrasting the facilities at the disposal of the modern student as compared with the meagre instruments which we were compelled to use a generation ago when we set out to try and build a Marxian educational movement. We may not have made a good job of the great task we set out to accomplish. We have probably made many blunders—as our candid and newly-found friends solemnly and emphatically assure us ; but despite all there are many indications that some substantial progress has been made.

Twenty years ago, for example, we had no guide to the best books on the various subjects which we sought to unfold to the small band of enthusiastic students who attended our classes. Many of us were compelled to hunt up our subject-matter by spending untold hours in diligent study in reference libraries. We wasted precious time in plodding through stacks of rubbish ; and when one of us came across a really good book the glad tidings were rapidly passed on to other tutors. We always had, of course, one or two indispensable volumes which were supplied to us by the book-club and which were paid for by weekly instalments. (So necessary is the book-club to students that its very important work might have been referred to in *What To Read*.) I was always steeped to the lips in debt to the book-club and the treasurer had good reasons for being very nervous regarding my financial stability. Luckily for me he never knew that I was heavily in debt elsewhere for books ! For I had a good friend in business—he was a hairdresser by compulsion and a bookseller by choice—who used to supply me with expensive books on the instalment plan. One day—it must be about nineteen years ago—I complained to my friend that it was most difficult to get a reliable book to guide young students, like myself, in their reading. My friend, Mr. Baxter, replied by showing me a notice regarding the publication of a work, compiled by Mr. J. M. Robertson, on *Courses of Study*. A copy of this was procured and

although it was very useful, it had to be used with very great caution. In addition to being pedantic, it showed the usual "freethinker's" bigotry by being unable to appreciate Marx's contribution to history and economics. And needless to say it cost much more than sevenpence.

It is, of course, the easiest thing in the world to criticise a book that serves as a guide to books. One gets angry when one realises that certain favourite volumes have not been mentioned. And criticism becomes very much easier when the guide book is cut down to seventy-two pages in order to bring down its price to such a figure as can be afforded by workers living in the present era of social prosperity. In the preface of *What To Read* the editors anticipate the form of criticism we have mentioned, by saying—"Owing to reasons of space and price, certain of the bibliographies given here have had to be curtailed at the last moment." While congratulating them on the success of their efforts there are, I believe, certain important volumes which they ought to have included. I am forwarding a list of these to the editors, and recommend other readers to respond in this way to their invitation—"We hope that every class tutor and student will give us the benefit of their experience, and make suggestions that we can use in future editions."

The important subject of Economics comes first and has been very well done. Those who desire to go into further specialised details can always consult the sixpenny syllabus series published by the Labour Research Department. This splendid series has been most generously praised in *What To Read*. When one gets a grip of the underlying principles of Marxism it becomes a great source of enjoyment, and even amusement, to do a bit of rummaging among some of the works of the more orthodox economists. It always gave me great pleasure to read the writings of that old antagonist of Marxism, Boehm-Bawerk. Two of his works are mentioned, but the one that has been omitted, *Capital and Interest*, contains a very useful critical and historical examination of economical theory. If he attacked Marx he also made fierce onslaughts on other economists. Witness how he flayed Senior and showed that the popularity of the Abstinence theory "has been due, not so much to its superiority as a theory, as that it came in the nick of time to support interest against the severe attacks that had been made upon it" (p. 286, italics mine). Here we have an aggressive anti-Marxian making the naive and fearful admission that the popularity of an economic theory is not determined by its being an honest contribution to social science but rather because it lends support to a doctrine defending certain property relations of a group within the ruling class.

The section on History occupies the largest part of the book. Considering the lamentable scarcity of works dealing with general

history the editors have been compelled to place some emphasis upon the importance of the recent volumes by H. G. Wells. I wish to say, in opposition to some of my comrades on The PLEBS Textbook committee, that Eugene Sue's *History of a Proletarian Family Across the Ages* gives a more vivid outline of the history of the class struggle than can be found in either of Wells's volumes. I know what has been said regarding Sue in The PLEBS. My editorial duties on the *Communist Review* prevented me from entering into a discussion when the matter was raised. I would never dream of giving Postgate, for example, the Sue novels to read. But at our tutorial classes the people we have to interest are not graduates of St. John's College; they are men and women of the mine and the factory and many of them are so mentally exhausted that they can only relish history when presented in a highly seasoned manner. I have known workers, who could not be persuaded to tackle an ordinary book on history, greedily devour the Sue stories. And when they had read them they knew something about the historical growth of the class-struggle. In many cases Sue created a desire for a more serious study of history. I know that many tutors, up and down the country, can vouch for the historical interest that the Sue novels create. In many classes we only were able to balance our expenses by hiring out two sets of Sue at 3d. per volume per week. My much-thumbed two sets of Sue have earned pounds, in this way, for several classes. I submit, with all due respect to our academic friends who have had little or no experience in class work, that the Sue novels deserved to be mentioned in *What To Read*.

The very brief section on Geography is highly informative, and makes one look forward to the publication of The PLEBS Textbook on the subject. The reader will also find splendid lists under the headings of Modern Problems, Psychology, Biology, Exact Science, Philosophy, etc. These cover a very wide range of knowledge and supply a thoroughly reliable guide to any student desirous of extending his acquaintance with these subjects.

Although, as I have said, there are several books which I would like to have seen included in the lists, I readily sympathise with the tremendous difficulties which the editors had to contend with in making their selections. I have, on many occasions, prepared short bibliographical lists for the assistance of students and have always found that the main difficulty lay in determining which books should be excluded. If in future editions a double index could be included—one for subjects and one for authors—it would give a more finished look to what is, indeed, one of the most indispensable books that has appeared for some time.

WM. PAUL.

THE SECOND MILESTONE

(not—see cover—along the Broad Highway)

TWO years ago almost to a day the National Council of Labour Colleges was founded. Prior to that time the Labour College Movement had been a thing of fragments : there were colleges and classes here and there, but there was no National Organisation. Up to October, 1921, the Labour Colleges and class groups carrying on evening class work were still in the purely propagandist stage ; outside Scotland they had no national recognition. In England the residential Labour College only was recognised nationally.

The formation of the N.C.L.C. marked the passage of the provincial class work from the propagandist stage to that of a recognised part of the Labour Movement ; or, more accurately, it paved the way for that. One of the principal driving forces that compelled the organisation of our movement on a national basis was that the Trade Unions were beginning to consider the question of educational schemes and in these the local Labour Colleges could hardly expect to share unless they could negotiate and agitate on a national basis.

I.W.C.E. and the T.U.C.

Two years is a very short time for an organisation such as the N.C.L.C. to accomplish anything, as its central activities could only be carried on by a tiny handful of people, all very much engaged in carrying on educational work in their own localities. Moreover, the income was a mere shadow of what a Trade Union official would deem to be necessary even to carry on the work of a medium sized Trade Union branch, far less a national organisation. Despite these and other handicaps, however, we can say that the N.C.L.C. has justified itself to an extent hardly anticipated when it was founded. It has, of course rendered considerable assistance to some of its affiliated bodies by the publication of all sorts of syllabuses and outline lectures, but what is of greater importance, it has won for the provincial class work national recognition from the Trade Union movement and has carried on an incessant struggle with those Labour gentlemen who find it convenient to be attached to the W.E.A. But for the formation of the N.C.L.C. the current T.U.C. report would almost certainly have chronicled the complete capture of the official Trade Union movement by the W.E.A., at least so far as evening class work was concerned—the most important of all our activities.

The Builders' Scheme

That is not the only important fact that can be mentioned in

connection with the past two years' activities. What is of greater immediate value is the fact that the provincial class work has now the support of two of the big National Unions. Last year the A.U.B.T.W. asked the N.C.L.C. to carry out its educational scheme, which was to be financed by a contribution of 1s. per member per annum. Under this scheme all the N.C.L.C. classes were to be open to the membership of the Union and other facilities were to be provided in addition. The Builders' scheme is the most extensive in the history of British Trade Unionism, and involves over £2,000 per annum. It gave a great fillip to independent working-class education throughout the country and enabled many agricultural districts to be opened up for the first time.

Evening Classes for N.U.D.A.W.

The present year finds a further addition to the Unions which realise that an educational scheme is as necessary to a Union as a political fund. This time it is the National Union of Distributive Workers who are allocating, as a first step, 3d. per member per annum for the purpose of providing educational facilities. Like the Building Trade Workers, while they recognise the need for making provision for residential scholarships at the Labour College, London, they are for the first year at least devoting the whole of their fund to evening-class work and have asked the N.C.L.C. to carry this out. This winter, therefore, all the classes of the non-residential Labour Colleges throughout the country are to be open free to the members of this union, and where classes are not possible, study circles are to be arranged to carry on with the assistance of outline lectures to be provided by Head Office. It is for the local Labour Colleges to do everything possible to attract large numbers of A.U.B.T.W. and N.U.D.A.W. members into the I.W.C.E. movement, and make the schemes an unprecedented success.

When we add to the above facts that quite a number of Trade Unions and many hundreds of Trade Union branches as well as Co-operatives and working-class political bodies are running educational schemes for their members through the medium of the Colleges forming the N.C.L.C., and that the N.C.L.C. is now being backed by the Building Trades Federation, we must admit that the progress of our movement in the present period of great slump in the Labour Movement generally has been remarkable. To-day the N.C.L.C. claims that it has more classes and students dealing with subjects of direct importance to the working-class movement than any other educational body, and that the Labour College movement, bearing in mind not only the above mentioned activities, but those of the S.W.M.F. and the N.U.R., has the most extensive and the most notable of Trade Union educational schemes in the British Trade Union world.

The Path Before Us

Although we chronicle the above with a justifiable amount of satisfaction, the movement is not blind to the fact that what has still to be done dwarfs into insignificance what has been accomplished. Only a sprinkling of Trade Unions have even the shadow of an educational scheme and the Trade Union Congress has yet to realise that all the educational bodies that glitter are not gold. Moreover, our own organisation needs a certain amount of overhauling to meet the new conditions. This latter feeling was mooted at the last conference and recently the E.C., after carefully considering the matter, circulated among the Colleges proposals for organising the N.C.L.C.'s affiliated Colleges on a divisional basis, without which administration is extraordinarily difficult. The following are the suggested divisions :—

(1) London (10 mile radius) ; (2) Berks, Oxford, Wilts, Hants, Surrey, Sussex and Kent ; (3) From Wash to Thames, including Bucks, Bedford, Cambridge, Herts, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk ; (4) South and Mid Wales ; (5) Gloucester, Wilts, Somerset, Cornwall, Dorset, Devon ; (6) Warwick, Leicester, Worcester, Northants, Staffs and South Shrops ; (7) Yorks, Lincoln, Notts ; (8) Lancs, Cheshire, North Wales, North Shropshire ; (9) Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland, Westmoreland ; (10) Scotland ; (11) Ireland. The county boundaries would not in all cases be strictly adhered to as in some instances a border town might be much more easily worked from the neighbouring county. These Divisions are largely based on the A.U.B.T.W. Divisions which seem the most convenient. Such a scheme as the above would involve either that there should be one College in each Division, as in Scotland, or that the existing colleges should form a Divisional Committee. The basis of election for the E.C. will require to be modified either by giving each Division the right to elect a representative or by grouping divisions together for electoral purposes. We urge all our affiliated bodies to help us in this necessary re-organisation.

With this month a new winter's work begins. This year's progress must outshine that of all its predecessors. The future is ours—provided we continue to work for it.

J. P. M. MILLAR.

DO YOU EVER WANT TO TURN UP A BOOK ON

Chartism	German Revolution	English Grammar
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You will find all these and dozens of other subjects dealt with in "What to Read: A Guide to Worker Students" (7d.)

GERMANY during the NINETEENTH CENTURY

This is the first of a series of three articles tracing the social, political and economic development of a typical modern industrial State—Germany—during the nineteenth century. The two following sections will deal with the periods 1848-1871, and 1871-1914.

I.—1815-1848.



Germany in 1815. Only the larger States are named.

Economic Conditions

AT the beginning of the nineteenth century, the German States were, for all practical purposes, still sunk in feudalism. "The agricultural community was the basis of cultivation, and the manor in large measure the unit of administration." In these circumstances, economic change moved with leaden feet. The whole social life tended to stability. Capital accumulated slowly, and the masses of the people were simple serfs: the essential elements for the development of the capitalist system were still lacking. And accompanying this state of affairs were the inevitable barriers to trade and communication—the lack of good roads, the

existence of tolls and tariffs, which latter were multiplied by the division of the country into a vast number of states, kingdoms, electorates, principalities and free cities, differing widely in power and influence, but practically independent, and having different coinage, weights and measures ; and but loosely united politically within the Holy Roman Empire. Even after the unifying influence of Napoleon, no less than thirty-nine of these states still survived.

Early in the century, however, important changes were inaugurated in Prussia. These consisted of the Stein-Hardenburg reforms, by which these statesmen anticipated the policy which Napoleon would have initiated, and thus kindled the enthusiasm of the Prussian people—the middle and lower classes—to withstand the advance of the French armies. Although the landed magnates of Prussia were able to introduce into this legislation certain features which greatly strengthened their own hands, the reforms mark an important stage in Prussian development. They cleared the way for further economic development by the abolition of the feudal castes and the liberation of the serfs. The capitalist development of agriculture could now proceed, while the formation of the proletariat provided the necessary workers for the rise and extension of capitalist industry. These reforms, in fact, played much the same part in Germany as the Enclosure Acts had played—and were at that time continuing to play—in England.

Later came the establishment, under Prussian influence, of the Customs Union (Zollverein) which made possible a trade and industry really German in its scope. This Union quickly asserted itself as the most constructive and unifying force in Germany not only economically, but also politically ; and we shall have much to say of it hereafter. Finally, it is to this same period of German history that we must trace the beginnings of that educational system which later on was to become so powerful a force in German economic and social life. Such were the chief factors making for the progress of the German States—the Stein-Hardenburg reforms, the indispensable preliminary, the Zollverein, and the beginnings of a consciously-moulded mental equipment of the people for the new order, and the new tasks which that new order was to bring with it.

But while it is well to note these important positive and progressive tendencies, we must be careful to avoid exaggerating their influence during this first period of German nineteenth century history. Down to the very close of the first half of the century, the population of the German States remained sparse and widely scattered—a characteristic feature of the *ancien regime* ; the domestic system of production was still in vogue, and manufacture, as opposed to machino-facture was widely diffused.

In 1846, though there were nearly as many cotton looms in the factory

as in the home, by far the greater number of the former were handlooms, while in the case of wool, home looms were more than double those in factories, in spinning the comparison was naturally even more striking, little wool and far less linen yarn being spun outside the home. Of those engaged in the textile weaving trade, over 17 per cent. of those engaged in wool, and over 80 per cent. of those employed in linen were partly engaged in agriculture. (E. C. K. Gonner, *Germany in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 87—8.)

Similarly the mineral wealth of Germany was still unexploited, hardly any coal or iron being extracted.

A Striking Contrast

These backward economic conditions are all the more striking when we contrast them with the importance of Germany at the close of the Middle Ages, and again with the front-rank position which Germany had won for herself by the opening of the present century. The cause of the decline of German trade and industry after the beginning of the modern period was the triumph of a new form of transport—ocean transport: the discovery of the ocean routes to India and across the Atlantic made the old Mediterranean and Continental trade routes of little account, and Italy and Germany lost their old importance. It is significant that what gave to modern Germany its new importance, what indeed made possible its rise to power by enabling it to make use of its enormous and indispensable supplies of coal and iron, was the advent of another form of transport—land transport by rail. It is not too much to say that modern Germany, given its treasures of mineral resources, is one of the creations of the railway. But to this we must return later.

Progress of the Capitalist Class

In spite of the backwardness of Germany during the first centuries of the Modern Period, due in the first place to the transference of trade, wealth, and political importance to the countries on the western seaboard of Europe, and intensified by the ploughing and harrowing of those centuries of almost continuous warfare, the tremendous drama of the French Revolution, with its liberating influence for the capitalist class, was not enacted in vain. And though the struggle of State against State, especially the conflict between Prussia and Austria for pride of place in the Germanic Confederation, continued, the growing economic strength of the middle class found expression from time to time in legislative enactments, each of which marked one more milestone on its road to power. Each such victory brought with it a two-fold result: it consolidated the old position and it provided a vantage-ground on which to rally the forces for yet another assault upon the lingering fabric of the old system. Each success, while it emboldened the victors, threw into clearer relief the citadel yet to be stormed: it whetted at once the sword and the appetite for the decisive conflict yet to come.

Prussia and Austria

In order to appreciate more clearly the convincing character of these achievements, it is necessary to turn to the political struggles which marked this early period, and to contrast with the seeming triumph of reaction on the political field, the real substance of progress secured by the rising capitalist class in economic reform. The half-century following the Congress of Vienna was marked by a continuous Austro-Prussian struggle for power within the German Confederation. This struggle also was a feature of the rise of the capitalist system with its inevitable trend towards economic unity. So long as the old economic system, with its local self-sufficiency and stability was maintained, so long the two States could continue as independent of each other politically as they were economically. But once the capitalist system began to develop, always making for closer interdependence throughout Central Europe, the inevitable pull of the geography of the two States began to assert itself. The position of the great watershed of South Germany sent the rivers of Germany flowing north and west, while the magnificent Austrian waterway of the Danube river-system flows south-eastward into the Black Sea. Communication flowed with the river-systems, and as transport and communication became of increasing importance with the developing economic interdependence, a tug of war between the two States was inevitable. And this struggle was reinforced by factors derived from an earlier period.

Austria under the Hapsburgs, bound to Rome by historical and geographical ties, upheld the ancient Catholic religion ; the northern plain, more naturally one than the highland south, albeit never yet effectively united, and more open to help from without, became and remained Protestant. The natural differences between north and south were intensified.—(Fairgrieve, *Geography and World Power*, p. 221.)

Prussian claims to supremacy were based on the great role she had played in the Napoleonic wars. But that important part in warfare had itself been based on internal changes which now became of far greater importance in the struggle than any credit due to her on account of war-services. These changes were (1) a military reorganisation by which, even during the ascendancy of Napoleon, and while she was limited to an army of 42,000 men, she built up a powerful reserve of trained men by her new system of universal military service ; (2) the economic and social reforms of Stein and Hardenburg which defeated the moral influence of the French Revolution and its armies by anticipating their changes. Thus Prussia completely reorganised her administration. Serfdom was abolished, the cities secured municipal rights, a pioneer system of elementary and secondary education was initiated, and the civil service was opened to general competition. In fact, Prussia had

carried out a fairly complete bourgeois revolution ; and it was on that that her power to challenge the supremacy of Austria was based.

Austria's Position and Policy

But, as yet, Austria's power was predominant. If Prussia could point with patriotic pride to her services against Napoleon, the Austrians could assert the decisive character of her own intervention in 1813. And this gave her plenipotentiary Metternich an overshadowing influence at the Congress of Vienna. Even before that—in the latter half of 1813—Metternich had made treaties with Bavaria and other States, the object of which was the restoration of the old order, or at any rate, of its equivalent. Austria indeed was the champion of the old order, and Metternich the high priest of European reaction. Two principles underlay the latter's whole policy. These were : (a) To keep the many subject races of the empire in check by the familiar process of playing off one against another. This was a vitally important matter, for the Imperial Government of Austria was then, as a century later, a medley of races and of administrations. In Austria itself there was the absolute monarchy, but elsewhere the decisive factor was a local despotism exercised by the local feudal nobles. Hungary had its own government separate from that of Austria. The one institution which bore any stamp of modernity was a kind of parliament which met at Presburg sometimes ; to this the reformers, the rationalists and the middle class looked for the expression of views which bore reference, in some measure at least, to the needs and aspirations of the day.

(b) The maintenance of the absolute monarchy, the symbol and the centre of the feudal order. The failure of Napoleon to carry the stronghold of Central and Eastern Europe was the sign of the success of feudalism in withstanding the blows of the capitalist West. And once having made manifest that success, Metternich could rely upon certain well-marked classes both in Austria and elsewhere to support the edifice of feudalism. These were the old nobility, then the capitalist creditors, both native and foreign, who were interested in maintaining the Government which was their debtor ; and last, but not least, the Austrian army, which had become practically a hereditary caste and which held in the keenest contempt both the subject races of the empire and its toiling masses.

A Class Struggle

It will be seen, therefore, that the conflict between Austria and Prussia was not only a struggle of the two States as such, but was

at the same time a struggle between the respective champions the middle class and of the old nobility. It was one chapter—a very significant chapter—in the struggle of the bourgeoisie to achieve power. For the time being, Austria seemed impregnable and the Congress of Vienna, from which both States gained largely confirmed her predominance in the Confederation; but the final outcome admitted of no question, and Metternich himself is credited with the saying: “I have to give my life to propping up a mouldering edifice.” However, the process of mouldering is notoriously protracted one; and the German Confederation was in reality a triumph for disunity and for feudal autocracy. On the surface at least, the policy of Metternich appeared to flourish. Feudal restrictions on manufacture, guild regulations, the maintenance of authority at the expense of the masses, a rigid censorship of books and of such newspapers as there were—these measures appeared sufficient to sandbag the Austrian empire into mediæval slumber.

The Customs Union

And yet things moved! Beneath the surface, the whole system was being slowly but surely undermined. If the Confederation served to divide rather than to unite, this political disunity became an ever greater anachronism to the extent that the new economic unifying force of the Zollverein widened and deepened. Prussia had initiated this policy as early as 1818, and especially at first and in the case of the smaller States of the north, it not infrequently assumed the form of an “enforced commercial assimilation” establishing free trade between themselves and their more powerful neighbour. This policy and its success alarmed the larger States particularly in the south, but had the effect of driving them into two other unions, the one embracing Bavaria and Wurtemberg formed in 1825, the other including Saxony, Hanover, Brunswick, Hamburg and Bremen, organised in 1828. But the value of such unions was quickly proved, and the interests of both impelled them towards, and finally into, the original one under Prussia’s leadership hastened by Prussia’s abandonment of her earlier policy of compulsion in favour of the principle of voluntary association. It was in 1833 that the Bavaria and Wurtemberg Union was abandoned as a separate entity, and those two states joined the northern Union.

By the opening of 1834, the Zollverein included seventeen States with a population of some twenty-three millions and an area comprising at least two-thirds of the territory from which the German Empire was eventually to be formed. . . . By 1852 the whole of Germany was included except Austria, the Mecklenburgs and Hamburg, Bremen and Lubeck. At twelve-year intervals, *i.e.*, in 1841, 1853 and 1865, the terms upon which the Union rested were formally renewed. (Ogg, *Economic Development of Modern Europe*, pp. 298—9.)

This was the real unifying force in the German States—at once an effect and a cause of the growing wealth and power of the bourgeoisie. At the same time, this economic advance of the capitalist class, with its increasing wealth and extending trade, brought into bolder relief the obstacles imposed upon its further development by the political constitution of the country and the feudal fetters upon trade and agriculture. Hence there arose an acute class struggle between the ancient regime championed by Austria and the developing bourgeoisie of which events had made the Prussian State—not altogether willingly on the part of the government officials—the champion. The Zollverein had laid lasting material foundations for a union of the German States, and the next step was the bringing of the political constitution into harmony with it. This demand for a united Germany was placed in the forefront of the programme of the bourgeoisie.

The Political Struggle

But while the bourgeoisie and its demands formed the backbone of the movement, this more and more spread to other discontented elements. Thus the universities played a noisy part in the ferment. It was indeed the assassination of an agent of the reaction, a Russian spy named Kotzebue, by a student, Carl Sand, that provided the occasion and excuse for the passing of the famous repressive measures known as the Karlsbad Resolutions (October, 1819). These consisted of a whole system of provisions for supervising the universities, censoring the press, and establishing the theory that no constitution inconsistent with the principle of monarchy should be granted.

The triumph of reaction was further confirmed by the Vienna Final Act, 1820, which secured all that was necessary for the success of Metternich's policy, which may be summed up in a single phrase, the maintenance of the *status quo*. This, and the smooth functioning of the repressive machinery of the Karlsbad decrees, gave the promise of tranquillity from the menace of revolution. And the period which succeeded was, outwardly at least, one of political stagnation. Perhaps the single political triumph of the period was the establishment in 1823 of Provincial Diets representing not only the nobility and the knights, but also the towns and the farmers. Even there, however, the composition of the Diets was so arranged that in every Diet the two sections of the nobility always possessed a majority over the other two sections.

Economic-Legislative Victories

But the real substance of progress was achieved on the economic field. Apart from the advance of the Zollverein, two early laws

may be cited as illustrating the power of the bourgeoisie to influence legislation even while they were still excluded from the legislative bodies. These were :—

(a) *The Prussian Protective Tariff*, 1818.—This abolished all internal customs duties, and transformed the State for the first time into a single fiscal unit ; but while establishing free trade within its own borders—and in that respect leading the way on the Continent—it imposed a duty averaging 10 per cent. on all imported manufactures, as a means of protecting the home manufacturer against the otherwise irresistible competition from Britain. On the other hand, all raw materials were to be imported free. This protective policy is the more interesting inasmuch as it was not confined to Prussia. The removal of the Continental blockade following the fall of Napoleon had exposed all the States to the competition of the more efficient manufacturing capacity of Britain. Each State responded with its own protective measures. The immediate result was a further complication of the tariff barriers to trade with the Confederation and a consequent hindering of trade ; but the more ultimate effect was a powerful impulse towards the extension of the Zollverein—a federation of States having the same arrangements for tariffs and customs duties.

(b) *A Law of 1820* by which any new loan or any increase of existing taxation was rendered conditional upon the consent of “the future Representation of the People.” Thus control over finance and taxation was vested in the “people,” and though the Representation of the People was not realised for a considerable period afterwards, the time was to come when this law was to be invoked and to play its part in rallying the constitutional reformers against attempts on the part of a future monarch to rule without the consent, and in opposition to the will, of the middle classes.

Such legislation at once signalled and strengthened the ever-growing economic power and political influence of the bourgeoisie. And the influence of the new social force penetrated to every department. We have already instanced the ferment in the universities, prolific breeding-grounds for Liberal lawyers, professors and other orators and writers. Among the poets, novelists and dramatists, the same influences were at work, and found expression in numberless political allusions, which made a perennial appeal to readers and audiences. Finally, philosophy was drawn into the general current of thought, and “declared for the middle class.”

Thus it was evident that public opinion was undergoing a great change in Germany. By degrees the vast majority of those classes whose education or position in life enabled them, under an Absolute Monarchy, to gain some political information, and to form anything like an independent political opinion, united into one mighty phalanx of opposition against the existing system. (Marx, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, pp. 15—16.)

In such circumstances, all that was wanting for the outburst of the storm whose lightnings had already been collecting, was a single spark. And this was amply provided on the accession of Frederick William IV to the throne of Prussia.

The Coming of Revolution

The accession of Frederick William had been hailed with satisfaction by the Liberals, who had anticipated that he would play a leading part in the realisation of their aims. Completely contrary to these expectations, the king demonstrated himself to be one of the most eager defenders of the old order. The alienation of the middle class by such a policy, aiming at the revival of the social predominance of the nobility, was a mere matter of time. And that time was hastened by the extravagance of the king, which quickly brought him face to face with the harsh reality of an empty exchequer; for the regular revenue of the Crown was totally inadequate to meet his expenditure. It was now, in this situation of a glaring and growing deficit, that the Law of 1820 was appealed to against any proposal of the king to augment his revenue without the assent of "the people." The middle classes had discovered that their dream of a peaceful revolution initiated by the king was—only a dream. They now resolved to take up the gauntlet thrown down by the king. Their militancy was most of all marked in the Rhine provinces, where their most outspoken organ, the *Rhenish Gazette*, was suppressed after a brief but bellicose career of only fifteen months. But though this militant journal was suppressed, the problem of finance remained. Clearly, some compromise on the part of the king was inevitable. He proposed to fulfil the legal requirements of his position by calling together the Committee of the Provincial Diets. As we have seen, these Diets, established in 1823, seemed "safe" institutions enough, dominated as they were by the nobility and knights. To the king's pained surprise, even the provincial nobles were no longer to be trusted. Many of them were by this time capitalist farmers on a large scale, carrying on an extensive trade in corn, wool, flax and spirits; and they were as much opposed to feudal restoration with its absolute monarchy and its bureaucratic restrictions on trade and enterprise as were the middle classes themselves.

This assistance from part of the nobility greatly strengthened and emboldened the Liberal elements, and encouraged them in the Provincial Diets themselves. And still the financial embarrassments of the king and his government continued to accumulate: they were ever more acute, and were becoming chronic. Expedient after expedient was tried and failed. Even an application to Rothschild was refused unless the loan was guaranteed by the "Repre-

sentation of the People"; if that condition were fulfilled, he was prepared to undertake the business at a moment's notice, but otherwise——! As a last resort, the king, in February, 1847, called all the eight Provincial Diets to Berlin to form a single United Diet. His proposal was that this body should vote the necessary moneys and increases of taxation, and should be called together whenever the king required its sanction—as a mere formality—for any new policy he proposed. It was, in fact, to possess only duties: no rights. This modest proposal failed completely to meet the needs and demands of the provincial representatives; and, unfortunately for Frederick William, these representatives possessed one power in spite of all he could do, the decisive power of finance. The king could and did dissolve the United Diet, and send the representatives home; but he still lacked money, and his position was worse than ever. Not only was his financial situation more serious than ever, but he had demonstrated his weakness and had thereby stimulated and encouraged the opposition, an opposition now crystallised and organised in the Liberal League, and including not only the middle class, but a considerable section of the provincial nobility, and all the discontented elements among the masses. Of the last-named, we shall have to speak at length later. During this first period of the nineteenth century, the town proletariat was still numerically weak, while in town and country alike the masses were unorganised, and intellectually still under the tutelage of the middle class. The latter formed the body of the revolutionary army.

Germany was in the beginning of 1848 on the eve of a revolution, and this revolution was sure to come even had the French Revolution of February not hastened it.—(Marx, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, p. 25.)

T. ASHCROFT.

(*To be continued.*)

Special Notice

Several tutors and students have expressed a wish for *cloth-bound* copies of our latest publication, "WHAT TO READ," *inter-leaved with blank pages* to be used for notes and additions. We are arranging for a limited number of these to be bound in this way, and can supply copies to anyone ordering same (with cash)

ON OR BEFORE THE 15TH OF THIS MONTH.

The price of this Special Tutors' Edition will be 2s. 6d. (postfree).

A WORKER looks at IRISH HISTORY

This is the first of a series of articles by Mark Starr which will be published in The PLEBS this winter.

FOREWORD.

IT has been said that Irish history should be understood by the British people and forgotten by the Irish ; the former to appreciate how the British capitalists have done Ireland much wrong, the latter to cease from nursing the ancient grudge already fat. There can be no doubt about the first part of that statement, for, without a knowledge of British behaviour in Ireland as well as in India, Egypt and elsewhere, British workers will unconsciously become the victims of Imperialistic mis-education, and acquire the evil outlook already possessed by a favoured section of the working class, which shares to some degree in the feast of Imperial Britain.

And Irish workers need to re-learn, rather than simply to forget. James Connolly, who, before his martyrdom at Easter, 1916, had done more than any man to re-write Irish history from a newer and truer point of view, wrote :

Were history what it ought to be, an accurate literary reflex of the times with which it professes to deal, the pages of history would be almost entirely engrossed with a recital of the wrongs and struggles of the labouring people, constituting as they have ever done the vast mass of mankind. But history, in general, treats the working class as the manipulator of politics treats the working man—that is to say, with contempt when he remains passive, and with derision, hatred and misrepresentation whenever he dares evince a desire to throw off the yoke of political and social servitude. Ireland is no exception to the rule. Irish history has ever been written by the master class—in the interests of the master class.

These short surveys of Irish social history will give the main outlines of Irish industrial development, but will not include a special treatment of the Irish Labour Movement.

I.—IRELAND BEFORE THE ANGLO-NORMAN INVASION

Ireland's later social development has been peculiar, but in early days it shared many of its social features, including its mythology, with other lands. The early Irish were in close touch with their fellow Celts in Wales and Britain, and like them had received the attention of the "colossal pedlars of antiquity"—the Phœnicians.

Before the Norman invasion, as in England, a small population (little over half a million) was emerging from the mark to the manor stage. In the Brehon law and many other customs there were strong survivals of previous primitive communism. (Even now the individual home is less to the Irishman than his clan or social order.) The Norsemen and the Danes had raided and traded and established their outposts in what are now Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, Cork and Limerick.

Viewed politically, Ireland consisted of five warring kingdoms, again composed of tribes. The kings and the greater chiefs had no fixed capital towns; in fact, towns and buildings of any size were very rare. Law and taxation in the modern sense did not exist. The chiefs exacted tributes of food from their subjects by whom they were elected. In some cases the right of kingship had been restricted to a special family. No one local chief was ever able to maintain permanently his claim to kingship over Ireland as Edgar did in England at the end of the tenth century.

How They Lived

Agriculture had barely started when Strongbow introduced feudalism in the twelfth century. Previously, the hunting of wild deer, oxen and swine, and the keeping of flocks and herds, had been the mainstay of life. The population was very small; each tribe had its common pasture for cows, which were the chief form of wealth, and which were used to express the value of other things. Herds of swine were fed in the unfenced forests. Arable land was cultivated in strips, re-distributed every two or three years. In Ireland, as elsewhere, this evidence of a previous state of communal land-holding existed. Once the tribe had hunted and shared the spoil of the chase communally; the herds of its members still grazed in common. But tillage in its development incited the more vigorous tribesmen to seek to retain individually the fruits of their own labour and so the land had been divided into strips for individual families. The strips distributed the inferior and superior soils equally among the tribal members and the periodic redistribution emphasised that the land was not individual property.* It was the Anglo-Norman invasion which finally swept away these relics of communism. And thus occurred the first of many *alien* interferences with Irish development which produced and strengthened the erroneous view that Irish problems were different from those of all other lands.

* "The one living thing in the social and political chaos was the sept, or tribe, or clan, whose institutions remained those of the earliest stage of human civilisation.... The land belonging to the tribe was shared amongst its members, but redivided among them at certain intervals of years." J. R. Green, *Short History of the English People* (Chapter 7, Section 8, dealing with this period).

For the most part the people lived in villages of wooden houses. These would be clustered together inside a ditch or rampart—the latter made of earth or stone. Arable and pasture land surrounded the stockade, which was often placed so that a wide view of the surrounding country and of any approaching enemy could be obtained. Traces of villages built on piles in the middle of lakes and marshes have also been found.

The people made their own clothes of wool, which they spun and wove and dyed themselves. The skins of animals provided them with leather. Quarrymen, bricklayers and stone masons, and men of other trades were not wanted; the former because the forests and marshes provided all the building material—timber, wattles and clay—required. The first crude weapons and tools were also forged from the iron which the members of the community had smelted. This was the stage when man was a jack-of-all-trades, and the division of labour even *outside* the workshop had not begun.

Chart says that oatmeal porridge, flesh meat—particularly pork—milk, butter and cheese, with ale and mead, were the chief items of food and drink. Obviously these were home products, and the little village stockades were as self-sufficient in the matter of food as in clothing and tool production.

Early Trade

What little trade there was developed in the periodic fairs. At first it was merely an exchange of surplus foodstuffs for articles of luxury. It was carried on by barter—a sure sign that trade was not very advanced. Coined money appears in Irish records only about 750 A.D. Previously cows, or weights of precious metal, had been used as money. Horses, cloths, food, live-stock and articles of gold and silver were the chief things dealt in.

Foreign trade was even less important in the life of the community. The only ship used was a large canoe, the *curragh*, which would not carry heavy freights or weather rough seas. Rich cloths, weapons—special in quality or design—wine, salt, jewellery and slaves were imported in return for skins, hides, wool and dried or salted fish.

Irish missionaries were better known than Irish merchants. St. Patrick organised Christianity in 432 A.D., and so hastened the removal of the older animistic beliefs. Numerous churches and monasteries were erected. Ireland became a noted centre for religion and learning, sent out workers to Germany, Italy and Iceland, and received students from Western and Southern Europe—and even from Egypt. Some historians credit the Church with a deliberate weakening of any attempts at central kingship and

have little sympathy with the churchmen when their monasteries were afterwards looted by the pagan Norsemen, whose triumph was the easier for the absence of a centralised defence.

Trade received a special stimulus from the Danes, who began about 850 A.D. to settle in Ireland. Their galleys were superior to the curragh, and very soon they monopolised Irish overseas traffic. Thus the improvement of navigation broke down, once and for all, Irish isolation. With the increase in trade the fortified Norse settlements grew into the first towns with stone walls and buildings. The trading contacts with Britain paved the way for the Anglo-Norman invasion (1169) and the army of Strongbow captured Wexford and Waterford, and later made Dublin the centre of its government.

Summary

Ireland, until the Anglo-Norman invasion, had been *much less* affected by foreign invasion than Britain, where, successively, Romans, Saxons, Danes and Normans had conquered and ruled. In Britain, accordingly, the old "kinship" social organisation had been modified out of existence. In Ireland, the older forms still survived to a considerable extent. Ireland right up to the twelfth century was, approximately, what England had been before the Danish invasion. Production for strictly local consumption, and later, the beginnings of trade, are the chief characteristics of this period. Note, accordingly, that there is at first no separate working class, and that the people elect their own rulers.

MARK STARR.

"WHAT TO READ:" A Correction

BY the sort of accident that will happen even in the best regulated households, no reference to Mark Starr's *A Worker Looks at History* appears in the first few hundred copies of our *What to Read: A Guide for Worker Students*. Fortunately, the error was noticed before the bulk of the edition had been printed; and in all these later copies the book is included in its proper place—on page 21 (History, Section H.—English History).

Will all those readers who obtained copies of *What to Read* before the error was rectified insert at the foot of that page the note:—

MARK STARR. *A Worker Looks at History* (PLEBS, 2s. 6d.).

The best short summary of English industrial history. An indispensable introduction to the larger books on the subject.

GEOGRAPHICAL FOOTNOTES to CURRENT HISTORY

ITALY AND CORFU



THE arrow in the above map points the way into the Adriatic Sea. The "gateway" is a fairly narrow one—about forty miles across from the heel of Italy to Valona, on the Albanian coast. Just outside the gate—almost in the fairway, so to speak—is the island of Corfu. Control of the gateway is a vital matter to Italy, for its closure by any hostile power would automatically blockade half her coastline, including some of her most important ports.

These are the essential facts underlying Mussolini's seizure of Corfu. That very typical episode in modern imperialist history is a reminder that, though the influence of "the geographical factor" on the life of the men of to-day may not be so immediate and direct as in the days of their more primitive ancestors, yet geographical facts—*e.g.*, the area and position of particular pieces of land and water—very powerfully affect the policies and actions of modern states (and therefore the lives of proletarians).

A Geographical Footnote in *The PLEBS* of December, 1921, described Italy's acute interest in Albania—an interest which a

glance at the map sufficiently explains. The eastern coast of the Adriatic "belongs" to Jugo-Slavia—all but the hundred odd miles just north of the gateway, which is Albanian. Italy is accordingly a champion of Albanian independence—so far, that is, as Jugo-Slav aspirations are concerned. Obviously, Albania can have no real independence (in the imperialist world of to-day)—the Adriatic being the shape it is, Albania being located where it is, and Italy and Jugo-Slavia being where they are. So it comes about that Albania is an Italian "sphere of influence"—a very typical instance of imperialism operating on European territory. The "key" port of Valona is in Italian hands. And the further south Albanian territory runs, the safer Italy's hold on the all-important gateway. The actual frontier line between Albania and Greece has not yet been finally decided upon; it was while they were taking part in the International Commission which is engaged on the job of delimitation that the Italians were murdered whose deaths gave Mussolini his opportunity.

What is the real international significance of Mussolini's action? It would appear to be a "try-on" on his part—an assertion of Italy's independence of the two Great Groups—the British and the French—which are struggling for control of the Mediterranean area. The seizure of Corfu is an act of defiance against both; against Britain, since Corfu is Greek, and Greece is Britain's subsidised agent in the Eastern Mediterranean; and against France, since the occupation of Corfu is a threat to Jugo-Slav interests in the Adriatic, and Jugo-Slavia is a member of the Little Entente, which is in the main dominated by France. Remember that Italian independence is a somewhat precarious thing, for the simple reason that she is dependent on other countries for those two vital raw materials—coal* and iron. It is the clash of French and British interests in the Mediterranean which gives Mussolini his chance.

Were either France or Britain absolutely supreme in the Mediterranean, Italian independence would be a still more shadowy thing. Her advantageous position *within* that sea enables her to bid for the backing now of one, now of the other. . . . (PLEBS *Outline of Economic Geography*, Chapter XI., in the press).

And even occasionally, as Corfu shows, to defy both, and leave the two of them to settle it between them. Britain accordingly invokes the League of Nations—and France, one presumes, supplies munitions to the Little Entente.

But one may be permitted to wonder whether, if Signor Mussolini's

* And you cannot get a battleship's steam up on war-songs, as Mussolini himself bitterly remarked the other day.

passion for occupying islands grows on him, and he should fix his eyes a few miles south of Sicily (see map), the League of Nations would be asked to intervene—or whether something with a Union Jack on top would not speedily give a little object lesson in Direct Action.

J. F. HERRIN.

The ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY TEXTBOOK

The PLEBS Economic Geography Textbook will be published some time next month (exact date to be announced in the November magazine). For the benefit of those tutors and classes desirous of starting a course on the subject immediately copies of the Textbook are available, we print below a brief syllabus of its contents.

You will help us by placing your orders for the book NOW. Delivery during November is guaranteed. Prices and terms as other volumes in our Textbook Series—but it will be extra good value, as it will be illustrated by over forty specially drawn maps.

INTRODUCTION—Why Geography? Our subject, Geography linked with History and Economics; knowledge of Geography essential to understanding of both these. Economic Geography, in our sense, more than “Commercial” Geography. Its importance in the study of modern world problems and of Imperialism.

CHAPTER I.—*Geographical Factors in History.*

These can only be properly studied, and their importance estimated, *in relation to social and economic development at particular stages.* Factors advantageous at one period, disadvantageous at another: examples.

CHAPTERS II. TO V.—*World History: The Growth Towards World Economic Interdependence.*

CHAPTER II.—*The River Valleys.* Beginnings of civilisation. Tropics and Temperate Zone. “Natural protection.” Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, China. Influence of rivers.

CHAPTER III.—*Inland Seas.* Civilisation spreads. The Mediterranean as main centre of development. Crete, Phœnicians, Greeks, Rome. Outer peoples break in; Teutons, Goths, Arabs, Turks. Baltic inland sea area opened up by the Hansa. The Rhine link.

CHAPTER IV.—*The Ocean.* Eastward and westward routes to the Indies. New World discovered. The coasts of the world made one.

CHAPTER V.—*Land Transport.* Railways. Opening up of great land masses—America, Africa, Asia. New land routes challenge supremacy of ocean powers; development of Germany and Russia. Economic unification of world carried to further stage.

CHAPTER VI.—*The World To-day.*

Fundamental fact, economic interdependence, but political divisions. Present day problems (e.g., the Ruhr) spring from this anachronism. The five great World Groups:—America; British Empire; the Far East; Russia; France and Central Europe.

CHAPTERS VII. TO XI.—*The Five Great Groups.*

CHAPTER VII.—*America.* Growth of U.S. due to development of land transport. Coast on both great oceans. Wealth of raw materials. "Penetration" of Caribbean, S. America, and Canada.

CHAPTER VIII.—*The British Empire.* Geographical dis-unity. Sea power and sea routes. Air power and possibilities. Indian Ocean and Mediterranean-Suez road thither. Development of colonies and "possessions" as industrial states, and relative decline of Great Britain.

CHAPTER IX.—*The Far East.* Unexploited wealth of China. Japan's dominance. The "Pacific Problem." Japan *versus* America.

CHAPTER X.—*Russia.* Historical development: (i.) pressure towards sea, (ii.) problem of land transport. Geographical factors and the Revolution. Land transport the vital factor to-day.

CHAPTER XI.—*The French Empire and Central Europe.* The "New" France. Imperialism in Europe. France *versus* Britain in the Mediterranean. Italy.

CHAPTER XII.—*Conclusions.*

The task of the Working Class—One World Group. The workers' attitude towards Imperialism, and Nationalism. Need to study *technical* factors of revolution, particularly geographical factors.

NOTES BY THE WAY for Students and Tutors

Students and tutors are invited to contribute paragraphs on any subject of interest to those engaged in class work.

Marx's Remains

THE "selections from the literary remains of Karl Marx" which have been appearing in the *Labour Monthly*, edited by our friend Max Beer, have been of varying value. Some of them have been only scraps, others have been most interesting applications of Marxian methods, in a small way, by himself. It is unfortunate that they have been seriously marred

by ignorant or incompetent sub-editing. One of the most important of them, the Confidential Circular (extracts only) of the First International is marred not only by printers' errors (*Neue Zeit* becomes *Neue Zest*), but gross ignorance. Bakunin becomes "Baknuri," leading a party of "Baknurists." A person called "Cintro" appears; what he was in the original cannot be traced at all. It is a pity that the "remains" should have been so defaced.

Ghouls of Finance

Most students do not notice sufficiently the part played by the great Insurance Companies in (a) collecting a great amount of cash for the use of big business, and (b) mercilessly exploiting the poor. The astounding prosperity of these concerns—e.g., the Prudential in the slump year of 1922 paid an income-tax-free dividend of 62½ per cent. on a capital of £1,000,000 (only £6,700 had been really subscribed)—has provoked criticism even from other sections of the capitalist class. A summary of the findings of the Government inquiry is given in *Industrial Insurance: Its Uses and Abuses*, by Charles Elton (I.L.P., 1d.). The bad years have brought a rich harvest of "lapsed policies," and overpaid directors have increased the exploitation of the collecting agents. Altogether a pretty kettle of stinking fish which the Industrial Insurance Act will do little to alter.

Webb "Stands Pat"

Anybody who thinks that the Fabians have been "influenced" by the Guild Socialists, the Industrial Unionists, or the Soviet form of administration, should read the closing paragraphs of Mr. Sidney Webb's contribution, the discussion on *Craft or Industrial Unionism* (*Labour Magazine*, Sept. 1923). Nothing is more ridiculous to Mr. Webb than this "will-of-the-wisp" of making the unions not only capable of maintaining and improving the workers' standard of life, but making them the machinery for the future management and control of industry. To Mr. Webb it is still the *consumer* and the *community of citizens* which is going to have the final say. These are going to be organised in the Co-operative Society, the Municipality, or the State. A body in which all men meet as *producers* of mutual services, and a how-do-you-work democracy instead of a where-do-you-live one, seems beyond Webb's range of vision.

According to Pike

The Economics Study Club is getting poor value for its money if one can judge by the reports of some of its lecturers. Mr. C. F. Pike (*N.W. Daily Mail*, Sept. 5th, 1923) brackets Marx

and Macdonald, Snowden and Newbold together, as holding that surplus value means "nothing short of robbery with violence." The Labour Theory of Value is wrong, according to Pike, because an article costing £10 to produce might have an exchange value of £5 or £50. We hope no rude person in the audience laughed to hear arguments for the Labour Theory used as if they killed it! Marx, it appears, forgot many things—cost of raw materials, of carriage and of selling, and also supply and demand. Pike has certainly forgotten to read Marx!

Then Pike let his imagination rip. If, said he, a nugget of gold was produced by the same amount of labour as a brick, then they would be equal in value according to the Labour Theory. Just so, but what of it? The fact that in general more labour is needed to produce gold than bricks is the explanation of the difference in their price and value. This is exactly the opposite of what Pike was trying to prove.

But, too dense to understand his own illustration, he returns to the charge and tells his hearers that if the skilled worker gets only a subsistence wage, then the unskilled worker could not survive. What this has to do with Marx, who devoted special attention to the differing wages of skilled and unskilled workers, we are left to guess. However, just to show how much he knows, Pike quotes Marx (Vol. I., p. 578) on the fact that a part of the products of society must be converted into means of production. The line of reasoning suggested is: Part of the value created has to go back into production, hence there is no surplus value. Clear as mud, is it not?

The Barrow Labour College class should invite this clear thinking expert to contribute comic interludes at its socials.

The Golden Ass

One of the very best means of getting some idea of the organisation and life under the Roman Empire is to read a translation of Lucius Apuleius' *Transformations*, which for some reason or other has received the attractive name of *The Golden Ass*. This is the only complete novel, of any great merit, that has come down to us from Imperial times. It deals with the adventures of a young business man who landed himself in a rather out of the way town in Thessaly, and got himself turned into an ass by interfering with what didn't concern him. For the rest of the book he suffers a miserable existence, driven from place to place, overworked and ill-treated. He is stolen by brigands, works for peasants and for a market gardener, and falls into the hands of an enterprising large-scale baker. In this case we have a curious sketch of an arrested capitalism, which could not get beyond a certain point

owing to the absence of machinery. The whole picture that one gets of the Roman Empire reminds one, in its security, fixity, and difficulties of transportation and of making the Emperor's writ run in all odd corners, of nothing so much as of the Chinese Empire some thirty years ago.

If it comes to that, their fates are much the same. A thousand years of stability broken by the inrush of barbarians, who force their way to the capital, after lesser raids, sacking, raping and burning, so that the Emperor's power falls to nothing. The Empire falls in two halves. The barbarians loot it province by province, held back only by their own internal quarrels. Why, even the Chinese name Sacred Emperor is a literal translation of "princeps augustus."

There are two translations available, both based on Adlington's Elizabethan translation. The *Abbey Classics* (3s. 6d.) contains all the archaisms and obsolete spellings. The *Loeb* (10s.) is revised and includes the Latin text.

A Bourgeois Faces Facts

To the references for the final chapter of The PLEBS Economics Textbook an article by Professor Clay on the post-war boom and depression in *M.G.C. Reconstruction* No. 15 should be added. Professor Clay is a prominent bourgeois economist, and he reckons that the war and the post-war boom have had three principal effects in reducing the productivity of British capitalism:—

1. Economic resources have been reduced.
2. These resources have been *misdirected*, and have been diverted from more to less productive channels.
3. Foreign markets for British goods have been reduced.

He estimates that, converted to 1913 values, the volume of capital accumulation during the four years 1919-1922 represented only £473,000,000, or only *one-half* the pre-war rate of accumulation. In addition this capital was *misdirected*, too much going into the constructional trades, where there was relative over-investment. He quotes the following table to show how $\frac{3}{4}$ of the increase in the male population went into these trades. Although the labour-power and capital investment was enormously increased in those trades, output never achieved the pre-war level except in a few cases; and the result is now severe depression and unemployment in those trades.

Industry (in thousands).	Numbers employed.		Increase or Decrease.	Un- employed Oct., 1922.
	June, 1914.	Jan. 1922.		
Building and construction	908	870	— 38	142
Coal mining	1,134	1,180	+ 56	84
Engineering and ironfounding	790	1,127	+337	249
Shipbuilding	242	315	+ 74	121

	1911.	1921.	Increase.
Male population (aged 15-65) (in thousands) ..	12,536	13,316	780
Males over 16 in engineering, shipbuilding, vehicles, iron and steel, and metal trades (in thousands)	1,600	2,175 (Jan. 1922).	575

NOTE : (a) The close correspondence between numbers unemployed and increase in numbers attracted into the industries between 1914 and 1921. The only exception is building, where special conditions prevailed. (b) That 575,000 out of 780,000 increased population went into the constructional trades, and most of these are now unemployed. Professor Clay in commenting on this, says that on account of this maladjustment this margin of unemployed is unlikely to be absorbed even if an "exaggerated boom" comes. Unemployment a permanent feature of post-war capitalism ! And that from Professor Clay.

BOOKS REVIEWED

by PLEBS reviewers

FASCISM

Fascism. By Odon Por (Labour Publishing Co., 7s. 6d.).

Material for the study of Fascism is hard to come by, but of "dope" there is plenty. Signor Odon Por has provided a queer mixture of both. His interpretation of Fascism is fantastic. It would appear to have been evolved out of his inner consciousness, and he seems to expect us to take it by way of faith. But he contributes to his own defeat by making himself largely unintelligible. For the rest, let his advocacy be judged according to facts.

Signor Por's master was a Socialist. He now wages open war on the Socialist organisations of workers. Yet Signor Por, who will be remembered by some as a contributor of Guild Socialist writings to the *New Age*, justifies Fascism by pretending that it will become the apotheosis of Guild Socialism.

"Fascism," says he, "will probably develop into a kind of National Socialism characterised by Guild tendencies of a mediæval type rather than by Collectivism."

It is significant that this should be written by a former exponent of

the "Guild Idea," who was among the many of such exponents who, in the new light shed upon the class war by the Russian Revolution, rejected the method of "dictatorship of the Proletariat." Although he became an opponent of Bolshevism, Signor Por has not escaped the necessity of choosing sides in the class war. And, in espousing Fascism, he has chosen the side of the bourgeoisie. This is a point worth remembering, for there remain in this country many propounders of tempting social theories which reject the workers' dictatorship. Can there be any doubt when the struggle becomes as acute here as in Italy, as to which side, in the class war, they will be drawn?

We may at least thank Signor Por for having shown us that interesting development. But he will not agree that it has taken place. He rejects the statement that Fascism is the instrument of the Capitalist class in its war upon the workers. He pretends, as we have said, to see in it some mystic social force, although he never gets anywhere near definition.

One of his more precise statements is "the aim of the Fascisti is to control and absorb all parties and all movements, including their own, and to in-

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corporate them all in a State whose sole purpose is the welfare of the whole community." And later comes this astonishing statement:—"This insistence on the absorption of all parties in the State tallies with the determination that power shall not be used for the benefit of any class, bourgeois or proletariat, because Fascism recognises that such classification has no longer any correspondence with reality nor with the needs of the State."

Where in the world, one wonders, does Signor Por live? Does he not know of Mussolini's deliberate policy of turning over all State industry to private capitalists? Does he think this is anything but the price the Dictator must pay for the maintenance of his power? On what can Mussolini's Government function except a revenue, and how, if there is to be no State enterprise, can revenue be obtained unless industry be active? And, if the deliberate policy be to encourage private capitalists, in what way has the description of worker and employer as "bourgeois and proletariat" ceased to correspond with reality?

Signor Por, in the narrative parts of his book, gives enough material to show that, far from his statement being true, Italy is experiencing a particularly acute phase of the class war. And, as to the future, the story of the past also makes it clear that Fascism can lead to nothing but the continued subjection of workers to capitalism—with the bludgeon and castor oil as the only symbols of Signor Por's mystic social force. It is possible only to recall here that the Italian bourgeoisie had been driven to the point of defeat by the workers' revolt, that, at the moment when the blow for dictatorship should have been struck, the Socialists quailed, and that Mussolini struck instead—thereby saving capitalism. For that reason he is recognised and hailed by the bourgeoisie of the world, and none of Signor Por's romantic theorising conceals that fact. Despite himself, the fact stands out from the tale he tells.

Signor Por's theorisings have yet another confusing intent. They are calculated to conceal the fact that Fascism—or Mussolini—has no pro-

gramme, nor any objective but power. Signor Por pretends that there are two revolutionary methods—"the Moscow method," and the Roman. "The Moscow method," he says, "suggests a leap into the future with a broken neck as the result; the Roman, an orderly march of well-drilled troops." But you may search his pages, and you will find no hint as to whither the "well-drilled troops" are marching, and that is because Signor Por knows that they are not marching at all. They are trampling on the workers of Italy, and keeping them in subjection to that bourgeoisie which Mussolini rose to save. W. M. H.

CAMBRIDGE ECONOMICS

The Control of Industry. By D. H. Robertson, M.A. (Nisbet, 5s.).

This is another volume in the series of Cambridge Economic Handbooks by which a group of Cambridge economists under the leadership of Keynes is endeavouring to re-state economic principles and relate them to current problems. Here is no wage-slave who has felt the gall of his chains, but a University professor—"above the battle"—who, after a deal of fairly good descriptive matter about modern industrial, commercial and financial organisation, comes out as a cautious exponent of joint control. Mr. Robertson can even discover and explain the good accomplished by the speculator on the Exchanges. Wonderful is the revealing power of "the University spirit!"

One of the chief features of capitalism according to the author—its "Golden Rule," in short—is "that where the risk lies, there the control lies also." Now ignorant workers would think of gob fires and explosions as *the* risks, and realise how far such things are away from Goodwood and Mr. Arthur Henderson at the Buckingham Palace tea-party.

But Mr. Robertson argues and is understandable and maybe we can benefit from his shrewd thrusts at nationalisation, co-operation and the attempts at workers' control. However, he should read the M.F.G.B. proposed Bill and alter his reference to the Miners' Scheme of Nationalisation in which, he suggests, the consumer was forgotten. M. S.

IMPERIALISM ACROSS THE ROAD
The Transport Workers' Report on The Ruhr (Lab. Pub. Co., 9d.).

This otherwise valuable pamphlet is marred by a most important omission, namely, a consideration of the policy of British capitalism towards the Ruhr problem. The reason for this defect is doubtless that British Labour itself has no policy distinct from that of our capitalist Government.

Otherwise, the description of conditions in the Ruhr is well and faithfully done—the position of the workers in some details, supported by some interesting and useful statistics. The policy of the French and their methods of occupation are unsparingly condemned.

There is a real danger in this attitude of British Labour, which is rapidly degenerating into a mere anti-French tactic. Not capitalism or the capitalist class, but the French Government, and in a smaller measure, the French ironmasters, would appear to be the real criminals; and the problem is regarded, not as an economic and political problem, but an ethical problem. With the industrial magnates of the two countries moving rapidly towards sharper conflict, the unmeasured hostility of British Labour to the French Government means the formation of a public opinion which will place the masses unreservedly at the disposal of British as against French Imperialism. The study of and attack upon Imperialism should, like charity, begin at home.

T. A.

BAH!

International Labour Directory, 1923
 (Allen and Unwin, for International Labour Office, Geneva. 10s. 6d.).

This elephantine book—1,120 pages—is published by the Labour Office of the League of Nations which Mr. Ramsay Macdonald went out of his way a little while ago to defend. We must say it wants some defending if this is a specimen of its activity. It is a pretentious and incompetent piece of window dressing. It is clumsily arranged, in the worst possible manner for reference, so that it takes hours to find the simplest thing.

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the Labour College movement. They make awful blunders, as witness their tangle over builders labourers' unions. They tell lies, as when they pretend there is only one general T.U. Federation in France, the rump of the old C.G.T. Moreover, the book is badly bound, and when you kick it about the room in natural fury, it falls in pieces.

M. P.

THE WAYS THEY HAVE IN THE ARMY
A Psychological Retrospect of the Great War. By W. N. Maxwell (Allen and Unwin, 6s.).

This book is not important enough or original enough to be worth six shillings to a Pleb, but we think well enough of it to advise those who have access to a gratuitous copy to turn its pages. Men who "went through the mill" between 1914 and 1918 will be the better enabled to understand their own experiences. The author, who was an Army Chaplain, is a "moderate behaviourist" with a working knowledge of the New Psychology and the pen of a ready writer. Working-class students who have mastered *The PLEBS Outline of Psychology* will have

no difficulty in following his arguments and descriptions—and, incidentally will be able to correct Mr. Maxwell's occasional manifestations of bourgeois class bias. This bias is not obtrusive, but of course it is there. He has too much good sense, however, to disgust his readers with patriotism or heroics. There are plenty of excellent stories, some based on the author's personal experience, and others culled from various books on the war. Here is one of the latter, illustrating the way in which we are driven by our sentiments:—

"One man I knew . . . who, at the tears of two tiny mites, clambered into the ruins of a burning outhouse, then being shelled, to fetch out something they wanted, he could not understand what. He found a terror-stricken cat and brought it out safely. No, not pussy, something else as well. Back he went again, and after a little search discovered on the floor in the corner a wicker cage, in it a blackbird. Yes, that was it. And, oh, the joy of the girl mite in finding it still alive. 'Well, you see, sir,' he said afterwards, 'I've got two kiddies the image of them, and it was no trouble, anyway.'"

E. & C. P.

LETTERS

ROBOTS TO DO THE DIRTY WORK?
 DEAR COMRADE,— "The making of Robots *must* continue if mankind is to be relieved from drudgery," writes "A. A.," criticising our review of *R.U.R.*

What is "mankind," and what are "Robots"? It seems to us that the "mankind" A. A. is talking about is precisely the old leisure class which the Robots have to wipe out in the opening phase of the revolution!

"A. A." cannot find any coherent

criticism of our present day social structure in Karel Chapek's play. But *R.U.R.* is not a logically planned disquisition, it is a work of art; as such it is the fruit of an emotional attitude quite as much as of intellectualist reasoning; a product of the creative unconscious. We read the other day in the *Daily Herald* that Chapek himself repudiates any "coherent criticism" of the extant social system. He may repudiate as much as he likes—and when he writes another play his subconscious self will find expression

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for the same criticism in a new dress. *The Insect Play* (which was not "a real play," forsooth!) voices an almost despairing criticism of life in general; it has all the bitterness of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. This play is the work of the Chapek brothers. But *R.U.R.*, by Karel Chapek alone, is suffused with hope. It ends with the vision of a regenerated world.

No "coherent criticism" in *R.U.R.* / One of the most interesting experiences at the London performances of both the Chapek plays, was that manifestly none but the class-conscious proletarians among the audience grasped their inner meaning. Applause came from gallery and pit. Stalls and dress-circle might as well have been looking at a Punch-and-Judy show, for all they seemed to understand.

In the end of July we read *R.U.R.* to an audience of over two hundred at Ferndale in the Rhondda. Deep called to deep; kindred emotions were stirred; and our hearers did not share "A. A.'s" doubts as to the meaning of Karel Chapek's drama. Before we left the valley, four days later, a hundred and sixty copies of the half-crown volume had already been ordered and paid for. "More life. New life. Robots to Work. March!"

Yours fraternally,

EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL.

SOCIALIST TEACHERS AND A W.E.A. APOSTLE

DEAR COMRADE,—Mr. H. E. R. Highton, of the W.E.A., recently addressed a meeting of the Glasgow Socialist Teachers' Society. As this Society had already refused to join, or to endorse the policy of, the W.E.A., Mr. Highton was making a missionary effort to convert unbelievers. He spoke for an hour or more, on the perfectly spineless form of educational effort provided by his organisation.

Replying to his persuasive arguments, Miss Annie Maxton told him that the Socialist Teachers were out to back the Scottish Labour College. Another speaker related an unfortunate experience whilst attending a W.E.A. history class and said that if such sort of dope was being handed out as history the less the workers had of it the better.

Mr. Highton was then asked if he thought character was a test of educa-

tion, and if he personally believed in tolerance and fair play in the Labour movement. On his replying in the affirmative the interlocutor demanded to know if it were true that Mr. Highton had black-balled Walton Newbold in the Glasgow Trades and Labour Council, and if so, how did that square with his ideas of fair play? And, further, could such actions give the Socialist Teachers a fair idea of Mr. Highton's character?

This merely brought a superior smile from Mr. Highton, but it spurred the men and women of the Teachers' Club to further cross questioning. One after another, members asked polite, but none the less damning questions about his alleged working-class educational league.

The result of the evening's meeting was that Mr. Highton gave a splendid, but unintended advertisement to the Scottish Labour College, and departed a sadder, and—may we hope?—a wiser man.

Yours fraternally,

R. FYFE.

NEED WE FOOTLE?

DEAR COMRADE,—The letter of R. Murdoch and the syllabus of T. Ashcroft in last month's magazine, suggest to me that we are not quite sure always of what we mean when we talk of simplifying. Sometimes I think our comrades believe we mean talking down to the workers as the curate talks down to the Sunday school. Ashcroft, for example, gave us two syllabuses, one of which was old-style, and one of which was "brightened up" for the workers. Now the second seemed to me—this is only an individual opinion—to be footling. Its "brightness" consisted in italicizing every other word and inserting painfully facetious remarks which even the Reverend Verdant Green would shy at. Or again there are several comrades who write—candidly—much too much; they repeat themselves over and over again in a flood of words. They think the workers don't understand them because they are not simple enough. On the contrary, it is because they write as though the workers were fools who could not resent the same thing being repeated nine times.

It is not true that the worker cannot understand "difficult English." I take it that what the average man reads most of all is the sports news. Well, take Pollux, of the *Herald*. He is one of the obscurest writers in the world. "Lewis was always carrying the fight to his rival and when the ninth meeting arrived the Kid hung out the victory sign by flooring the Australian with a long sweeping left for eight seconds." Again, he refers in one paragraph to "the Pittsburgh dentist," the "imported tooth extractor," and the "owner of the advertised Mary Ann," and not until we get to the end of the account do we discover that these are all one person, Frank Moran.

What we are doing is something quite different. We are not being too "difficult," we are being too sloppy. We are letting idleness cause us to drop into jargon. I suggest we could do worse than privately make as rules: (1) Never use a Latin derivative if you can find a satisfactory short English word; (2) Never write a sentence more than three lines long; (3) Never write two sentences when one sentence will make the meaning clear; (4) Never start a sentence without having its end already in the mind; (5) Impose a small fine for the use of the words Ideology, Proletariate, Ergatocracy, Petty-bourgeois—this list could be extended. Such rules would have to be broken, but they would be a sort of guide.

May I correct a small point? Willie Paul on another page refers to me as "a graduate of St. Johns." I never was such. I was pushed out.

Yours fraternally,

R. W. POSTGATE.

[We hope that any correspondents who join issue with Postgate will not confuse two distinct things—Simplification and "Brightening Up." We agree that the latter can easily be overdone though we do not think Ashcroft's experiment in that line was in any way "footling." But it is desirable to keep the two issues clear, and not to take it for granted that Simplification—i.e., the sorting out of a mass of facts and the presentation of *essential* ones first—necessarily means "brightening up," in the sense of doing "stunts" with one's material.—ED.]

THE BANK RATE

DEAR COMRADE,—Maurice Dobb's article in September PLEBS is extremely interesting in so far that it states the effects of fluctuations in the Bank Rate; but it is not very illuminating as to the *cause*.

Unless there is a money monopoly these fluctuations must respond as speedily as do other commodities to the stimuli of supply and demand. In the ordinary course of events, if there are more borrowers than lenders up goes the bank rate and *vice versa*. Added to the requirements of industry, as can be seen by financial reports, ever since 1922, the Government has every few weeks floated huge loans. This competition for money must cause a rise in the Bank Rate. How the need for these loans comes about I am at a loss to explain—unless it be that Budget expectations have not been realised.

Although certain interests benefit by a rising Bank Rate it is hardly believable that they could exercise artificial means of "rigging" the market. Questioning this, it might be rightly pointed out that the last Budget was supposed to show a surplus of receipts over expenditure. It would seem either that those who framed it knew they were uttering an untruth or were incompetent, or that there are political influences working to obtain advantages for the financial groups.

Of course it must be realised that there is now in this country a far greater number of people interested in "dear" money and "cheap" goods than ever before. All the holders of war loans of one description or another, from the humble war savings certificate to bonds of huge dimensions held by Banks, Insurance Companies, Finance Corporations, Co-operative Societies, Public Bodies, Trades Unions and individual capitalists—all like the idea of going into the market with their "interest," which is not subject to the Index Figure as are the workers' wages. Things to them appear "cheap"—but are they to the workers whose wages are controlled by this factor?

Then away back there are the Gold interests, strongly represented in Parliament by the holders of South

African mining shares. They are getting pretty tired of their best market drying up. They have an interest with a vengeance, which coincides with that of Government Bond holders, so it requires no stretch of imagination to see that such a powerful combination could exert tremendous powers. Having netted quite a number of the working class with their paltry certificates, the rest may be cajoled by the notion that they will share in the "loot" by getting wages that will buy more.

Yours fraternally,
F. L. RIMINGTON.

"WHAT TO READ"

SIR,—In your new and excellent handbook, *What to Read*, it is stated that there is no book of any value upon the Fascist movement in Italy or elsewhere.

The words were probably written at a moment when that was true, but since then we have published *Fascism*, by Odon Por (7s. 6d.). This book must, I think, be of some value since it has already called forth long, prominent and highly laudatory reviews in the *Daily Herald*, *Spectator*, *Morning Post*, *New Statesman*, *Outlook*, *Challenge*, *Scottish Nation*, *Yorkshire Post*, *Truth*, *Methodist Times* and *Scotsman*, besides smaller notices in innumerable other journals of all political complexions. I may add that the

reviews are appearing every day and that the above list will probably be quadrupled by the time this letter appears.

Yours, etc.,
B. N. LANGDON-DAVIES
(Managing Director).

[A review of *Fascism* appears in this issue. We did not mention it in *What to Read* because we do not think it good. Maybe the *Morning Post* and the *Methodist Times* praised it, but in our opinion the *Herald* castigated it justly and didn't praise it. We omitted it as being the kindest thing to do.—Ed.]

DEAR COMRADE,—I should be very grateful if you would allow me to draw attention to two points in connection with your recent valuable publication *What to Read*.

The B.S.P. publications mentioned are now taken over by the Communist Party, and may be obtained (as may all other books) at the Communist Bookshop.

On p. 29 mention is made of J. Shapir's *Secrets of Menshevik Georgia* and Trotsky's *Between Red and White*. In order to bring these invaluable publications within the reach of all, the Party has reduced their price from 2s. to 9d. each.

Yours fraternally,
(for The Communist Bookshop),
L. WELSH.

ESPERANTO NOTES

Winter Programme in London

THE attention of PLEBS readers is particularly directed to the classes now starting and to the urgently needed Workers' Esperanto Club, which will be opened in Central London under the auspices of B.L.E.S. on October 6th.

Bethnal Green.—Men's Institute, E. 2, Wolverley Street, L.C.C. School, Bethnal Green Road, 7.40—9.40. 'Bus 8 and 39. Tram 53, 55 and 57. Fee 1s. for Term. Elementary, Wed.; Advanced, Mon.; men only. Instructor, Mark Starr (B.E.A. Diploma).

Forest Gate.—Whitehall Place School,

near Forest Gate Station, G.E.R. Mon. at 8 o'clock. Fee, 1s. Instructor, J. Gourlay, F.B.E.A.

Highbury.—Laycock Street School, Laycock Street, Upper Street, Islington, 7.30 to 9.30. Elementary, Wed.; Advanced, Thurs. Instructor, E. E. Yelland, D.B.E.A., etc.

Holborn. *The Workers' Esperanto Club*.—Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1, will be inaugurated on Sat., October 6th at 7 p.m. Would-be members should write to C. W. Spiller, Sec. B.L.E.S., 25, Richmond Avenue, Willesden Green, N.W.10.

Marylebone.—Upper Marylebone

June by the sea on a heather clad hill! Soft sea breezes and the low sweet voice of a lecturer murmuring "As Dietzgen says"! Who can resist?

A PLEBS WHIT WEEK SCHOOL

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Street School, Great Portland Street, W. 1, 7.15 to 9.15. Elementary, Tues.; Advanced, Thurs. Instructor, M. C. Butler, Secretary of the British Esperanto Association.

Woolwich.—Bloomfield Road School, Plumstead Common Road, S.E. 18, 7.30-9.30, Tues. Instructor, P. Carter.

Will organisers of classes in trade unions, Co-operative Guilds and Labour Colleges—particularly the "sami-deanoj" in Manchester and Edinboro'—send information to complete the list?

He'll Grow Up

A very young man, near Swansea, is rather more anxious to see his words in print than to really understand what he writes. He has discovered (*Daily Herald*, 14-9-23), an opposition between the teaching of Economics and of Esperanto. This does credit to his powers of imagination! Economics and Social History first in our I.W.C.E. programme by all means. But because some of us understand the economic tendencies of our time encouraging the growing spread of Esperanto and because we want to further our study of Economics—and other subjects—by brushing away impeding language barriers—the superficial phrases of our critic make us smile. If he only knew the first-

hand economic data to be found in the monthly *Sennacieca Revuo* and the *S.A.T. Year Book*, he would write more wisely.

Apologies!

Those many comrades who have ordered *Esperanto and Labour* (2½d. post free) will, by the time they read this, have received their copies. The delay was caused by a hitch in delivery caused by a strike. Now, we have some bana—no, I mean pamphlets.

Esperanto Among the Labour Journals

The Clerk (September) the official journal of the N.U.C. had a short supporting article. A longer one appeared in *The Record* (Transport and General Workers' Union), containing some of the facts of the League of Nations Report. In July, *The Miner* (fortnightly journal of the Reform Union of the Lanarkshire Miners) commenced a series of articles on Esperanto. *The Soviet Russia Pictorial* (No. 3) contained an appeal for the First Workers' Loan in Esperanto. A remarkably fine full page appeal by Romain Rolland was made in the *New Leader* (3-7-23). All these, in addition to other examples given in these notes, demonstrate a growing interest that we must stimulate.

BLESANO.

The PLEBS Page

WE are confidently looking forward to the best winter session we have ever had. The classes everywhere are bigger than ever and the session has been heralded by large conferences in the districts which augur well for future activity. Reports of classes, etc., will be found under "N.C.L.C. Notes"; the PLEBS Page is to be devoted to more or less personal appeals and discursive paragraphs about League and magazine activities.

* * *

We have to record two losses in our ranks. One, Will Revitt, of Bradford, a staunch supporter of whom our Bradford comrades asked us to say "he was not much in the limelight but wherever real work required to be done he was always prompt in putting himself forward to take his share. May his example be an inspiration to others to carry on the good work." We join with our Bradford comrades in their sorrow at his loss.

The other is Jean Dott, woman student at the Labour College (1921), who was just beginning her married life in Canada, with Percy Sephton, an ex-N.U.R. student at the College. They went out to Canada together about three months ago and everything promised a rosy future together. Jean was accidentally shot. Those of us who knew her will feel the cruelty of this blow to her husband and to the movement. Jean was one of those unassuming workers who inspire others by the steadfastness of their own service. Our hearts go out in sympathy to Sephton. These dead comrades leave us a great responsibility; they hoped so much from the movement and gave so much to it—we have to prove ourselves worthy to carry on the work.

A very special appeal to all lecturers:—In many places the "pushing" of the sales of PLEBS is left entirely to the Literature Secretary. We want to ask all lecturers to put in a word now and again about the importance of the magazine to really keen students. There are many opportunities for this and much weight is behind an appeal from a class leader. If we had that 10,000 circulation there is no end to the things we could do to assist the classes. Until we get it we are handicapped in every way. Please miss no opportunity of putting in a good word for us from the lecturer's platform; it goes a long way and will be appreciated by the chap who manages the literature stall, as well as by us.

* * *

On the opposite page you will see an advertisement of our Whit-week School at Cober Hill Guest House. We expect heavy bookings . . . Whit-week is late next year and Cober Hill is delightful in every way so that a school at this time and place should be very popular. The sea is near, the Guest House is almost on the edge of moorlands with gardens artistically laid out, there are croquet and tennis lawns, and the interior of the house is well adapted for its purpose. There is a small theatre which is splendid for lectures if the weather is unfavourable to outdoor lecturing, or given good weather the terraced gardens are very suitable for outdoor lectures.

It will be remembered that the first two weeks in August were suggested at Culcheth as the ideal time for a summer school. After writing round to a hundred and one places it was found that almost all the suitable places were booked for those two weeks. If the School is a great success, we shall endeavour to hold an overflow Summer School the second week in August—if we can find a place. More of both later. *But book your place now for Whit-week.*

W. H.

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OF
ECONOMICS

AN
OUTLINE
OF MODERN
IMPERIALISM

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The Young Worker (America).

"In the descriptive chapters a considerable amount of information will be found very clearly set out. It may be doubted, indeed, whether any other book of this compass and price provides so much useful detail on these subjects."

J. F. REES, in the *Highway*.

"This textbook is based on the teachings of Marx, a discredited philosopher.... Appears to be written for no other object than to distort facts to suit the fancy of those responsible for its preparation."

British Dominions Trade (Employers' organ).

"Parts are excellent."

GERALD GOULD, in *Daily Herald*.

"Another person on the committee—perhaps Mr. Bernard Shaw—polished up the crudities of the original writer.... Some other competent hand—perhaps Mr. Sidney Webb—provides excellent chapters on banking, foreign exchange, etc."

A speaker at Leeds Economic Study Club Conference.

"A vigorous analysis of modern Imperialism."

Times Literary Supplement.

"The best short summary of international politics yet written from the working-class standpoint."

G. D. H. C. in the *Guild Socialist*.

"Invaluable in some respects, inadequate in others.... Yet while the book may not be the much needed textbook, it must undoubtedly find its place on the working-class fighter's bookshelf.... Absolute simplicity of language—written for the workers and by workers.... The get-up is what we have come to expect from *The PLEBS* people, first class; so also is the much needed appendix and glossary."

A. F. in the *Worker*.

"This is a workmanlike book for workers' use. Those who best can appreciate workmanship will best appreciate this excellent book."

T. A. JACKSON in *The PLEBS*.

"There could be no more pointed contrast to the Liberal method of dealing with history than this book. The Socialist historian must not be a writer of economic history only.... but he will recognise that always the preponderating factor in man's development has been the economic. *The PLEBS* book recognises this."

C. R. ATTLEE, M.P., in the *New Leader*.

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N.C.L.C. ITEMS and NOTES

WE urge all individual PLEBS readers and especially the active members of all the Labour Colleges to read and mark well the article by the General Secretary on the present reorganisation. All affiliated bodies have by now made their wishes known to the E.C. which meets on September 29th to consider the replies to the circular. Class secretaries should keep a strict register of class attendance and also a record of all meetings, especially those for propaganda among the branches of the unions affiliated to us nationally. As a body we are accepting a contract—to provide educational facilities. Unless our local Colleges and Councils keep a record of their activity we cannot prove that the work is being done and the local body cannot expect a central grant.

Progress in the Unions

N.U.G.W.—Those comrades responsible for the Lancashire and District Council decision (see the September Notes), should anticipate support for I.W.C.E. by the amalgamation at the end of 1923 of the Municipal Employees Association with their union, for in the E.C. report of the M.E.A. for last June a resolution from Glasgow No. 1 Branch was only postponed until amalgamation details were settled. We understand Mr. Jack Jones, while he wants a different sort of politics to Liberal and Tory only wants more education, not a different one. However, if the rank and file are keen enough his misunderstanding can be overcome. After all, of what use is increased power by amalgamation, unless we have knowledge to wield that power more effectively? N.U.G.W. and M.E.A. members, get into touch with your PLEBS group comrades.

Workers' Union.—The National E.C. ruled out the proposed new object (see September PLEBS) but I.W.-C.E. supporters are going to back on September 22-23 an amendment asking for a special fund to support N.C.L.C. education. We hope to report a good debate and a favourable decision later.

T.U. Congress.—Our thanks are due

to Meredith Titterington, Ted Williams* and others for their effective championing of I.W.-C.E. at Plymouth. The Congress decided to create a special educational fund by (a) a grant from the T.U.C. funds up to a maximum of £1,000 per annum, and (b) by such voluntary grants as may be obtained from affiliated unions by the Council; the fund to be available for assisting such working-class institutions as may be approved by the General Council.

The point we want to stress here is that the eloquence and ability of our supporters at Plymouth—and even the capitalist press spoke of the "high standard of debate"—will all be useless unless we organise support both locally and nationally inside the trade union branches. The majority of the General Council are in favour of the W.E.A. and its Man Friday, the W.E.T.U.C., and very little of the cash will be given to our work unless this bias to Lib-Labism in education is corrected. Comrades, it's up to you to wake up your own branch and your union in this matter.

With the Colleges

Halifax Labour College is circularising all the trade union branches with a view to rousing their interest and getting their support for the College. They are sending out a bright and breezy letter which outlines their aims and objects and calls attention to the fact that classes will be run in the following subjects:—The Forces Behind History, Elementary Economics and Industrial History. They begin on October 9th, 10th and 11th respectively at the Friendly and Trades Club at 7.45 each evening. The secretary is Arthur Taylor, 23, Exeter Street, Salterhebble, Halifax.

N.E. Labour College.—A good "kick-off" for the winter by a Week-end School is reported from Chopwell, where W. W. Craik lectured.

Liverpool and Sheffield.—Detailed re-

* Who had an excellent article on I.W.-C.E. in the August Colliery Workers' Magazine.

ports are lacking concerning the Conferences on September 15th and 16th respectively. Sheffield had not only Will Paul, W. Ward (A.E.U.), E. Clark (N.U.D.A.W.), J. Jerran (Yorkshire M.A.), C. Rickard (A.U.B.T.W.) and T. Crooks (Workers' Union), but also the assistance of the Sharrow Glee Party to make a splendid success.

The one and only George Hicks spoke to a good audience at Liverpool where A. L. Williams, J. Johnstone, T. Ashcroft and J. Hamilton, are going to carry through a good winter programme; the latter is running a special class on *The Builders' History*. Lancashire generally hopes to reap the harvest of its successful Week-end Schools and the visits made by Mark Starr in August.

Manchester and District Labour College.

—The tutorial Council has been meeting twice weekly during the past month and have made full arrangements for the winter session which opens on September 24th with the following classes:—Economics, Industrial History, Economic Geography, History (special class for women), Esperanto, English and Composition. The last class is only open to students taking other subjects and past students who have made two-thirds possible attendances during past sessions. Arrangements are also in hand to hold large classes for Trade Unionists under the auspices of the Manchester Trades Council.

The Lending Library has been reorganised and is open each evening from 8 to 10, as is also the Literature Sales department.

A special effort was made to obtain greater publicity for the College and good reports of the Conference (see September Notes) were given in local papers and also in the *Daily Herald* and the *New Dawn*. The *Manchester Guardian* gave an excellent report and the *Manchester City News* explained the Builders' Scheme. The Conference was also discussed in the *Saturday Review* which commented on John Jagers' speech. Every effort will be made to follow up this interest.

London Council.—The Annual Report shows great activity despite financial difficulties. Some of the groups have carried on through the

summer. In one case, class students, owing to the generosity of one of their fellows have received an abstract of each lecture as delivered.

How not to do it

To use such a phrase, in a circular to be sent out to trade union branches, as: "Correct *sociological* knowledge is the road to power"; or such terms as "historical materialism," "economic evolution" and "economic laws," or such words as "negate" and "function," when simpler words will do, is to ask for failure. One bored listener heard so much about the "general" and the "particular" in what was meant for an introductory address on I.W.C.E. that he voted it a *general* nuisance. In a weekly paper meant for workers we read: "Scientifically it is quite legitimate to hypothecate around the fringe of our existing knowledge." One of our comrades in advertising a Week-end School mistook his job and thought he was writing the chapter headings of a scientific encyclopedia. Comrades, it *won't* do. Read the leaflets issued in last month's PLEBS and follow a good lead. Cut out "high brow" stuff; it mystifies the chap you want to attract and only makes you funny to the people who really know.

Press Publicity

We are far too shy. No Conference should be called without inviting the local press. Summarised reports of such Conferences and details of class work should be sent to all local journals. It doesn't matter if only half gets in for you are doing your bit to give our educational work the standing it deserves. Then again no T.U. journal should be left untouched and remember it is you as members who can best get inside. Adapt sentences and paragraphs from The PLEBS Point of View. We shan't mind. If you'll give the source all the better for us. Don't forget to send us dated cuttings or marked copies. Different editions of the *Daily Herald* have different pars and we can't be expected to scrutinise every T.U. journal. And we'll be encouraged to know the headway you are making.

IS YOUR UNION HERE? Plebs "Occupational" Groups

OUR appeal last month for volunteers who would act as Corresponding Secretaries of groups of Plebs within the various Unions has been promptly answered. Here is a first list—let us have some more to publish next month.

If you are a member of any of the Unions named below, get into communication with the comrade here mentioned, and so take the first step towards an *organised* plan of campaign on behalf of I.W.C.E. in your Union. Send him particulars of anything you have done, or are doing, and let him have your suggestion as to practicable courses of action:—

National Painters' Society.

Mark Collins, 23, Rhondda Place,
Halifax.

N.U.G.W.

J. D. Walmsley, 60, Mercer Street,
Newton-le-Willows, Lancs.

A.S.W.

M. R. Lay, 47, Rose Valley, Unthank
Road, Norwich.

Scottish Painters' Society.

W. Morrison, 323, Holburn Street,
Aberdeen.

Workers' Union.

Miss A. Crabtree, 1, Tyson Street,
Halifax.

Boot and Shoe Operatives.

A. Segon, 41, Stafford Street,
Norwich.

[Action in this Union needed promptly, as at its last conference a proposal in favour of the W.E.T.U.C. was only shelved until the T.U.C. decisions were known.]

Associated Blacksmiths' and Ironworkers' Society.

J. Wilson, 27, Waverley Terrace,
Motherwell.

[Revision of rules takes place next year—now is the time to get busy.]
A.E.U.

C. F. Booth, "Sonoma," Leasowe
Road, Wallasey, Liverpool.

This is a good beginning. But what about the N.U.R.? Why not an organised movement for Railwaymen's Evening Classes?

STUDENTS' REPRESENTATION on GOVERNING BODIES

The following extracts from an article on Education in Russia, by R. H. Best, in "Reconstruction" (July 15th), are of interest in view of the London Labour College students' demand for representation on the governing body of that institution.

IN Russia, the students now have a voice in the administration of the Universities, the selection of courses, etc. . . . Every faculty in the University of Moscow has an Administration Commission, on which the students have one third of the places, the assistants one third, and the professors one third . . .

The various Faculty Commissions discuss and vote on all the larger problems of administration. Students may introduce measures and may also take part in all discussions.

Within each Faculty there are Commissions for Special Subjects . . . and on each sit all the professors and instructors on that subject, and enough students to give them one third of the votes. These bodies meet twice a month to consider questions connected with the teaching of the subject, and the administration of the department. . . . Methods [of tuition] are discussed . . . Any assistant to be added to the staff must be voted in by this body—

and woe betide the poor fellow who is appointed against the solid "No" of the student representatives.

Another elective body in each faculty . . . composed entirely of students, has the responsibility of looking after the general welfare of the students . . .

Students also have places on the examining boards which pass judgment on a student's scholastic record. The right of a student to protest against a statement of his professor is recognised as a fundamental principle of justice; but it is not often resorted to unless a professor is overbearingly unfair . . .

On the whole, from the students' point of view the closer relationship with their tutors, resulting from sitting on commissions with them, is an improvement. Discussions between teachers and taught take on a more natural tone.

Next Month's

PLEBS

will include special articles by
WILL LAWTHOR
and **GEO. BARKER, M.P.**
on the Proposal to Increase the Powers of
the T.U. General Council

An article on Postgate's *Builders' History* by
T. A. JACKSON

and on *Rosa Luxemburg's Letters* by
W. H.

and second instalments of

T. ASHCROFT'S

"Germany in the 19th Century," and

MARK STARR'S

"A Worker Looks at Irish History."

Labour College (London) Students' Association

ALREADY some members have drawn up syllabuses of courses of lectures to be delivered in the coming winter. The returning student brings with him new ideas and new methods and the new notes will be of a different calibre, continually enriching the content of class work.

A great deal depends upon the lecturer. The classes will get support to the extent that the lecturer *earns* it; that is, by his proficiency as compared with the lecturer who has not been to the Labour College. The new student enters new districts; the work of the Labour College is introduced to new audiences, thus the number of eyes inspecting the work of the Labour College increases.

This raises the subject of methods of teaching, a too often neglected subject. I herewith invite suggestions from members.

* * *

Congratulations to the students who have been successful in gaining the scholarships offered by the various Unions tenable at the Labour College. It is to be hoped they have obtained a guarantee of reinstatement at the end of the term of scholarship.

So far, only about six of the returned students have obtained work, the others are still seeking employment and appear to have small hopes of a start. Such is the penalty of notoriety! It also shows how much the students think of the movement, that they are prepared to risk their future by going to the College and return to probable unemployment.

* * *

If the Labour College is to have any real future, its management must have the full confidence of the Trade Unions concerned, and of the students therein residing. The Unions are fully represented on the Board of Governors, and members of the staff are present at its meetings. Are the students, who in numerous instances have shown they have the interest of the College at heart, to have no voice whatever?

There are indications that this injustice will soon be removed. The students' agitation for a Committee of Enquiry into the administration of the college has been successful to the point of obtaining the support of both controlling organisations. We are now awaiting the turn of events.

A. G. E. (Secretary).

The PLEBS Bookshelf

History of the Northumberland and Durham Miners. By Richard Fynes (Reprinted by T. Summerbell, 10 Green Street, Sunderland, 2s. 9d.).

Lord Shaftesbury. By J. L. and B. Hammond (Constable, 12s.).

FYNES' history was written in 1873, and to-day, despairing at the various shoddy substitutes that have been put out, Mr. Summerbell has taken the excellent step of reprinting this grand old chronicle, just as it stood. (He might have added an index.) The price is low, for there are over 300 close-printed pages and it is strongly bound.

Richard Fynes was a chronicler and not a historian. He recorded facts, important and unimportant, he rarely attempted to interpret them. But to be a chronicler is to be in a good company, and Fynes does not fail to be worthy of the lineage of Froissart. But if he does not desire to interpret the Durham and Northumberland history, this does not mean that he has no "point of view" or is "impartial." He knows perfectly well where he stands in the struggle between the men and "aristocratic tyranny, arbitrary power and immense wealth," using every method of "injury and insult, oppression and injustice, cruelty and annoyance." If, like so many others, he believed that the grant of the franchise meant the dawning of the "day of retribution for the awful catalogue of wrongs of a proud aristocracy," he at least knew and intended that it should be a day of retribution and not a P.S.A.

There are many passages in this savage and dreadful history of oppression and wrong that stay in the mind,

and many terrible stories of mine disasters. Perhaps one quotation may be allowed: it deals with an incident in the great strike of Hepburn's Union in 1832. One of the strikers who had killed a magistrate had been caught and was to be hung: the other escaped. "William Jobling was sentenced to be hanged on the third of August and his body to be afterwards hung in chains near the scene of the murder. The sentence was carried out soon after twelve o'clock on the 3rd of August on the drop erected in front of the County Court at Durham. Jobling exhibited on his way to the scaffold the utmost resignation and fortitude, and denied being the principal in the fatal transaction which led to his ignominious death. His step was firm as he entered upon the scaffold, but the power of articulation failed him and he was unable to address the spectators as he had stated it to be his intention to do. Just as the fatal bolt was about to be withdrawn, a person near the scaffold cried out 'Farewell, Jobling!' and he instantly turned his head in the direction whence the voice proceeded, which displaced the cord and consequently protracted his sufferings which continued some minutes. The voice was supposed to be that of Armstrong, for whom there was at that time such a large reward offered. After hanging an hour the body was cut down and conveyed to the gaol where it remained till the gibbet was ready." Fynes describes how the corpse was escorted by soldiery and taken in a cart or barrow to the gibbet, not crucified, but barbarously extended on a criss-cross of iron bars. The face was pitched and covered with white cloth

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and the gibbet was fixed out at sea, so that at high tide he hung not only in chains but out in the water. This horrible sight remained till it was stolen on a very dark night. "The body, when gibbeted, had on the clothes in which he appeared at his trial, blue jacket and trousers, the heel quarters of his boots were down, his head was thrown back so that his face appeared as if looking upwards."

"Day of Retribution." Very well said.

The high reputation of the Hammonds in the Labour movement is a sufficient guarantee that to read their new book will be both a duty and a pleasure. Their books upon the *Skilled Labourer*, *Town Labourer* and *Village Labourer*, have a charm and erudition which makes it possible to compare them, on a lesser scale, with the great work of Edward Gibbon. In the figure of Lord Shaftesbury they have a subject that is worthy of them.

This book is a lesser book than their earlier works. It has less insight, for—like his contemporaries—the authors have more admiration for than comprehension of Lord Shaftesbury's character. In these pages we follow his career from a distance. Like all his contemporaries, we see the great Earl in his place in Parliament, the long body and haggard face, lined with pain and the sufferings of others. We watch him from outside, and admire his struggle for the Factory Acts, in defence of the climbing boy sweeps, for the reform of the Lunacy Laws, for Public Health, and all the half-

remembered fights he put up for the workers, whom he never understood, and who never understood him.

But we learn nothing—or next to nothing, for there are fine passages towards the end—of the strange tormented soul of the man. Shaftesbury was an aristocrat, and at the same time a rigid Anglican. He was a man with no sense of humour, who took every rebuff to heart. He was as wretched over the growth of the Puseyite "heresy" as over the sufferings of boy-slaves in the mills. He had no friends but God, and he pointed out every day in his diary the record of his fanatically hard work, his perennial distress of mind, to his God and no one else. He died at an advanced age, universally respected and loved, and without a friend in the world.

It is idle to say that he did not confer great benefits on the British workers, or that the startling victory over the *laissez faire* doctrine of the employers was not made much easier by his position as a member of one of the governing families. But his life does not prove that "great man" theory of history, or show that "Shaftesbury did this or that." As the Hammonds well point out, the great forward phase of his career was the Chartist period, when Oastler and others were threatening the employers with violence. After their collapse had removed the shorter-hours movement from public interest, Shaftesbury's successes were more and more in the religious sphere and in the organisation of more autocratic social reforms, such as the ragged schools.

R. W. P.

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Organ of the National Council of Labour Colleges

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