

THE
"Plebs" Magazine

Vol. II. November, 1910.

No. 10.

Copyright Entered at Stationer's Hall.

EDITORIAL

IN the October number of the *Highway*, the organ of the Workers' Educational Association, there appears an article from the pen of the Bishop of Birmingham, entitled: *Emancipation by Knowledge*. The title might at first sight

**"Emancipation
by
Knowledge."**

appear to be a somewhat bold and daring one for a Bishop to choose. The history of ecclesiasticism fails to furnish us with much that is encouraging in regard to either of the two items in the titular proposition. That however, is a matter of no surprise to those who understand just what ecclesiasticism represents. Time was when it acted like a highwayman. And if now such methods are less fruitful, still there is ample evidence that the highwayman's instincts yet slumber in its bosom. Where it cannot conquer by force it can adopt and conquer, it can befriend and then betray. The Workers' Educational Association has many ecclesiastics among its supporters, as a glance at the guarantor list will show. It will be interesting to hear what one of the number has to say upon the question of education for working men and women.



THE economist and theologian have this in common: all previous systems and religions are to them unreasonable, crude, diseased, superstitious, while the present is natural, reasonable and final.

**The Bishop
on the
Ancient Savage.**

To the Bishop of Birmingham the religion of the savage was superstition, "the offspring of darkness" and "bred of ignorance," while his own religion is an emanation from the great white throne of Eternal truth and reason. He begins by analysing the religion of early man. In essence it is superstition, and "the essence of

superstition is fear." The savage is afraid of what he does not know and therefore cannot control. In the wilderness of phenomena in which he finds himself, everything is to him mysterious, capricious, and often malevolent. Everything is uncertain and treacherous. The fire burns, the water drowns, the tempest overwhelms and destroys. What are these forces? They are to him terrible spirits which must be met and dealt with, flattered, fawned upon, propitiated. But they can never be above suspicion and so must be watched. "Such," sums up the Bishop, "are the ideas of superstition." Then he proceeds to point the moral :

Are they mere old world dreams? Is not the mass of mankind (not only in "heathen" countries) still either hopeless, overshadowed by the great dread of powers too strong for them to resist, and too mysterious for them to understand without any dominant sense of a purpose of good in the world with which they may co-operate ; or suspicions of everything or everyone that is above them, suspicious of everything that seems to be friendly, suspicious one of another, suspicious always? Even when the rites and ceremonies of superstition are gone we can none the less live under its shadow and be haunted by its spirit.

Now all this fear and suspicion is bred of ignorance. It is the offspring of darkness and not of light.



THIS is the Bishop's reasoning in our own words. Early man was surrounded by the forces of nature which, not understanding, he suspected and feared. Once these forces were understood, they ceased to appear as hostile. Knowledge thus emancipated man from suspicion and fear. The objects of suspicion still remained as before only they were no longer suspected. These forces had a "purpose of good" which man co-operated with as soon as he had knowledge. It is here we come across the superstition of the Bishop who apparently does not see *that the forces of nature were only made to serve a purpose when men applied their knowledge to them, that men alone made the "fire" and the "water" good for something.* The Bishop reasons analogically from nature to society. The working-class are surrounded by forces which they do not understand. These forces appear to them as hostile and malevolent. The worker is suspicious of the capitalist. He fears the Liberal Party. He distrusts the Workers' Educational Association. This is superstition. This is to be "hopeless" "without any dominant sense of a purpose of good in the world ;" "suspicions of everything or everyone that is above them." "Science and religion tell us that fear and suspicion are a betrayal of the succours that reason offers." The problem set is, the emancipation of the superstitious worker from suspicion. And the solution is to be found in Knowledge,

in "the succours that reason offer." And finally "the W.E.A. offers itself as the minister of these succours." Thus the capitalist mode of production is nature. The wage-earners are savages. Being ignorant of this natural force they are suspicious and hostile. This hostility frustrates "the purpose of good" in nature. The savages must be tamed. The W.E.A. will, with the assistance of a few bishops, benevolently do the taming. And then, as with early man, the objects of suspicion will no longer be suspected or feared, they will still exist but no longer as hostile forces calling forth the opposition of working-class organization. The lamb will lie down with the lion and co-operate to realize "a purpose of good in the world."



THE world in which the Bishop lives is an inverted world. Everything that is rational appears to him to be irrational, and that which is really irrational is to him rational. Every relation appears in his eyes as starting from the individual. Every idea is an emanation from the inner recesses of the individual's mind. The social origin of ideas is to him quite irrational. The individual origin of ideas on the other hand appears as rational. The good Bishop is thus standing on his head. The W.E.A. occupies the same posture. Both are savage-like in their superstition. The savage's superstition was grounded on ignorance of natural phenomena. Theirs is grounded on ignorance of social phenomena. With the savage it was the fetishism of nature. With the Bishop and his crusaders it is the fetishism of commodities.



THE commodity, that at first sight trivial thing, is the source of all the Bishop's "bewildered dreaming." His dualistic mode of thinking is the offspring of the dual nature of the commodity. It was with the production of commodities, i.e. the production of goods for exchange that social superstition arose. Formerly the producers produced directly for their own use. So long as that mode held sway social relations were simple and clear. The social character of labour was plainly visible. It was when the producers parted with their product and thus ceased to control it that social relations became complicated and difficult to grasp. The competition of producers gives to the product the appearance of being the result of individual labour, and with that the starting point of all relations, as well as the regulator of these relations, is looked for in the individual's own inner being. The gods of nature are supplanted by the gods of individualism. With the division of

society into owners of the means of production and dispossessed, masters and slaves, social relations are shrouded still more mysteriously, and the natural unity of movement and intelligence in the organism thereby destroyed. To the leisure and owning class fall the task of knowing. To the crowd of dispossessed fall the task of doing, of working with their hands. Out of touch with the source of their impressions—the social process of labour—the philosophers conceived of their ideas as arising from some super-natural power within them, while those who laboured were regarded with contempt. Man was now divided into two parts, a natural and a super-natural, while there arose two worlds, a bodily and a spiritual world. The "above" and the "below" of metaphysics or dualist philosophy is thus a product of the "above" and "below" of social classes. And with this class division there arose the need for the Bishop of Birmingham to tell those "below" not to be "suspicious of everything or everyone that is above them." When the Bishop becomes emancipated from the illusions of a topsy-turvy world, he will find that *to eliminate suspicion there must be an elimination of the conditions that breed suspicion*—of the "above" and the "below." "Knowledge will emancipate from suspicion and fear" if, but *only* if, that knowledge is of such a character that it can emancipate mankind from the rule of, and oppression by, the *objects* of suspicion and fear. But that is going too far for the good Bishop and his W. E. A. who want simply to emancipate the wage-earners from suspecting while still retaining the objects of suspicion.



IT is, after all, not so much the mere suspicion on the part of the workers that is troubling the powers "above," as it is the growth and more deeply rooted expression of that suspicion in the deed. It

**Emancipation
from
Suspicion.**

is the growing activity of the working class as an organized movement, industrially and politically, that makes them turn and toss in their downy beds and sigh for some saving solution to this problem which time effaces not

but enlarges. The Free Labour Association has been a failure. The Anti-Socialist Union is a farce. Both feed the very thing they were intended to starve. Their features are too visibly hostile, they look too much the enemy to stem the advance of the Labour Movement, and the more intelligent section of the ruling class have appreciated this fact. This section is quite as anxious to postpone "the day of judgment" as the less intelligent, only they adopt more "diplomacy" and "statesmanship" in their method of operation. The voice of Capitalism becomes the voice of Reason offering "succour." The concrete reality is veiled over with meaningless abstractions. The particulars of time and place are swallowed up in lofty generalizations about "human good" and "reasonable hope." And in a time in

which class rule declines, in which on the once fair and smooth face of capitalism the marks of decay, the wrinkles of age, appear, it becomes an indispensable necessity to call in the assistance of the paint pot and powder box to suppress "suspicion," to make men in the words of the Bishop of Birmingham, "fearless and hopeful and trustful," or in the words of Francis Bacon which he approvingly quotes, to "enter the kingdom of nature as a little child" and you will find it to be truly "the kingdom of man." Whereabout in the kingdom of nature we will find the capitalist mode of production, the private ownership of land and machinery, the wage-labourer, the Bishop, we have no information. The Bishop's soul soars above such mere mundane matters. To look at these things is to suspect, and to suspect is "a betrayal of the succours that reason offers," is to be out of "correspondence with a purpose of good working in the whole universe of things."



THIS sort of thing will sound beautiful to many working men who are content with the consolation of a sham idealism, just as many are deceived at election times by the high-sounding perorations on poverty, and the heart-broken sobbings over the starving millions, that come from the mouths and convulse the frames of Tory and Liberal politicians. And on the other hand those dreamers of red dreams

Illusion and Reality.

who hear the steady tramp of feet that are approaching ever nearer and who see upon the wall the sentence ever clearer, will hug the "succour" which the Bishop offers and the ministrations which the W. E. A. hold out with a "hopefulness" and a "trustfulness" for a longer lease of power. We can picture with what satisfaction the Wyndham's and the Harvey's would put down their October *Highway* upon the table and renew their youth with their subscription. But for those who look beyond the outward appearance, who insist upon analysing the fine phrases of the Bishop of Birmingham and the lofty pretensions of the Workers' Educational Association, there will be no illusion. They understand that stripped of his halo the academic dignitary is but the well-paid attorney called for the defence of a cause that is being "found out." And that understanding will only add to their determination to press forward a movement that is the legitimate offspring of the working classes and whose unfaltering purpose is the forging of the weapon of Knowledge for the battle of emancipation. It will truly emancipate from "fear and suspicion" by emancipating from the system whose inevitable products fear and suspicion are.



WE have just space to complete the Bishop's picture and from it to nally convict him of savagery and superstition.

Education is the training of a man's faculties to correspond with the purpose of good which is the summary law of the world.

This "purpose of good" is for the Bishop the great "elixir," where it is to be found is another one of the many points upon which he is somewhat reserved. Doubtless the secret is still locked up in the bosom of eternal reason, the key for which is the sole property of the W. E. A. What is required to become *en rapport* with this "good purpose." ? There are according to the Bishop

What "Reason Offers."

six categories :

- (1) Physical Education to enable him to make the most of his physical capacities.
- (2) Training of the craftsman's faculties, the faculties which enable a man or woman to do the business of the home, the land, the sea, the factory—in a word to be a good workman.
- (3) Training of the imagination, especially by literature, to qualify him to enter into the inheritance of the best conceptions the wisest men have formed of what is possible for man.
- (4) Training in history, so that he may gain some real knowledge of what human progress has been hitherto—of the manner in which advance is made, and of the perils which threaten it.
- (5) Training in the scientific knowledge of nature, so that he may know something real about our dwelling place and realise how much it may yet be improved.
- (6) Training in economic and social science, so that he may become a social reformer of a profitable sort and be able to distinguish knowledge from rhetoric and reasonable hope from bewildered dreaming.

Such are "the succours which reason offers." "The W. E. A. offers itself as a minister of these succours."



How shrewd a thing is this reason, dear Bishop ! How keen its eye for business ! In form and moving how like a capitalist ! And the "good purpose" ! Aye ! and the "good workman" too ! Yea ! and the good Bishop also ! And thou wilt not mind,

Whose Reason ? kind Sir, if in the eye of reason *the greatest of these is the good workman. For without him ye can do nothing.* Without him even is "reason" blind and the good purpose unrealized and the good Bishop unpaid. The ancient savage worshipped a tree. The modern savage, dear Bishop, worships a calf—a golden calf.

W. W. C.

The Status of Sociology

SOIOLOGY is a Science identical with other sciences in all essential respects. It is a domain of natural phenomena, subject to natural laws, determined by natural causes. Social causes are either conative or telic. The conative causes are the human will. The telic causes are the human intellect. The will taken in SCHOPENHAUER's sense, and familiar to all German readers certainly, and to most educated people, embraces the entire effective nature of man, his desires, wants, emotions, passions, and feelings generally. They are blind forces impelling him to action for their satisfaction. They constitute the social energy. In the social state these forces constantly conflict without being destroyed or diminished, producing collective or group action, which is the resultant of them all. It compels men to work together and constitutes social synergy. The necessary effect of human association is to convert social energy into social synergy. But this is nothing but the expression of a universal principle operating, alike in the astronomical, physical, chemical, and organic worlds. Synergy is the interaction of antithetical forces, whereby motion of translation is converted into motion of reaction, extensive action into intensive action, and destructive effects into constructive effects. The products are structures. These structures are worlds, substances, organisms, and human institutions. Telic causation produced by the human intellect performs the function of guiding and controlling the social will so as to economize the social energy, preserve and perfect the social structures, and render social permanence and social progress possible.

Both forms of social causation are psychic, and therefore sociology rests on a psychologic basis, and is not a direct outgrowth of biology. But both feeling and intellect are of biologic origin and were introduced into the animal world as advantageous attributes, necessary to survival in the struggle for existence, and conditions to all higher development. Hence sociology, while resting directly upon psychology, has its roots deep in the organic world. Sociology is the great comprehensive science which has all other sciences as its resources, while no other science is dependent upon it. It has been vaguely prophesied since the days of HERACLITUS and HIPPOCRATES, and was foreshadowed by IBN KHALDUN, MACHIAVELLI, VICO, MONTESQUIEU, KANT, and JOHN STUART MILL. It is not surprising that in so vast a field there should be schools within schools, or even that there should be those who deny the existence of such a science. All this has been repeatedly explained,

and it has been shown that sociology is no exception to the rule that all sciences have their formative period during which their most fundamental conceptions are disputed and their basic facts differently interpreted by different men. This is true even of mathematics and astronomy and still more of chemistry, biology, and psychology.

No science can be fully established until its laws are discovered, and in every science its laws have been questioned and denied long after they were discovered. DESCARTES and BACON refused to accept the Copernican law, and the church would not permit GALILEO to teach it. MACAULAY said that the law of gravitation would be disputed if there were any interests involved, and in fact it was disputed for a century as being thought contrary to Holy Writ. The atomic theory of chemistry has always been questioned and is still questioned, but is recognized by all as a useful hypothesis. Biology did not become a complete science till the Lamarckian principle of growth by use and atrophy by disuse, and the Darwinian principle of natural selection, had been announced, proved, and accepted. Psychology as a science is scarcely born, and is still confined to the narrowest field of experimentation. It will have nothing to do with the great division of its field into effective and perceptive attributes, as above explained, which alone can furnish a psychologic basis for sociology. The sociologist must therefore be his own psychologist, and the psychological laboratory has as yet no value for him. Sociology has advanced much farther and possesses a somewhat complete equipment, not only in scientific principles but in method, and even in terminology. The great need now is, as was the case in astronomy, to secure the acceptance of these principles, methods, and terms.

The tendency of all science has been to remain long on a static plane before advancing to the dynamic stage. This was pre-eminently the case with biology, and the science consisted entirely in the collection, description, and classification of facts until after the middle of the nineteenth century. Species were regarded as "fixed," and as representing so many separate creative acts of nature or of God. "Species tot sunt, quot diversas formas ab initio produxit Infinitum Ens."* Biology was only a half-science, viz. biological statics. The Lamarckian and Darwinian principles are both dynamic principles. They completed the science of biology by adding to it the other half, viz. biological dynamics.

* There are as many species as the Infinite Ens has produced differing forms from the beginning.

The impetus thus received was enormous, and from the date of the general acceptance of these principles the science has advanced by leaps and bounds.

Precisely the same tendency has been shown in sociology. The majority of sociologists have clung and still cling to the static aspect of sociology. The accumulation, description, and classification of social facts are regarded as constituting the whole of the science, and it has been repeatedly declared to be essentially a descriptive science. Yet this work, though always the necessary preparation of a science, is even less essential in sociology than in biology. Not because sociology can dispense with facts any more than can biology, but because in biology it is necessary to go in search of materials, while in sociology they are always directly at hand in almost embarrassing profusion. The most unobserving person cannot fail to have seen more facts than the wisest philosopher can co-ordinate in a lifetime. Not only is this true, but sociology, far more than biology, has a retinue of attendant sciences from which to draw its materials. These are called the "special social sciences." Such are anthropology, law, jurisprudence, political science, economics, and a whole train of disciplines that gather up the facts, describe them, classify them and prepare them for the sociologist. These special social sciences have always been recognized and have not been neglected in educational schemes. The sociologist is assumed to be familiar with them, as well as with the whole series of less complex sciences out of which sociology has developed, such as psychology, biology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, and mathematics. Anyone who has not covered all these fields, not necessarily as a specialist in any of them, but in such a manner as to enable him to grasp them, and see their relations to one another and to sociology is not a Sociologist but an intruder into a field which he is not prepared to enter.

Not only is sociology thus a fully equipped science, provided with adequate principles, a perfect method, and a convenient nomenclature, but, governed as it is by laws, it possesses a motor and rector* apparatus. The social machinery is driven by true natural forces, which enables us, without the use of metaphor, to speak of a social mechanics, which is nothing but the application

* This word is not in use in English in this sense, but is much needed, and was used by Fourier ("moteur et recteur"), who saw these sociological principles as clearly as they are seen by any sociologist to-day. I gladly acknowledge our indebtedness to him for this and many other terms and ideas. My own expression for this fundamental classification in sociology has always been: the dynamic and directive agents.

of the principles of mechanics in the physical world to the phenomena of society. And here as elsewhere the further subdivision into statics and dynamics is perfectly natural, and presents in a lucid manner the two great departments under one or the other of which nearly all the operations of associated men spontaneously fall. We thus have social statics and social dynamics. Social statics deals with the laws of social equilibrium and all those activities which maintain and preserve human institutions. Social dynamics deals with the laws of social motion, or movement in society, and all those activities which produce change in human institutions, whether forward or backward. But as most social change thus far has belonged to an ascending series, such change is implied unless otherwise explained. Social statics is then the science which treats of the social order, while social dynamics is that which treats of social progress.

The social structures evolved by social synergy are human institutions. These fall under two great classes, primary and secondary. Primary institutions are those which are as old as the human race and developed *pari passu* with man as he struggled up from the animal into the human stage. Secondary institutions are such as did not exist in the absolutely primitive condition of man, but have been created since by the vicissitudes of human existence. The principal primary institutions are language, religion, the "mores" †, and the family. Secondary human institutions may be further divided into two sub-classes, viz. those growing out of the family and adapted to the preservation of the vigour of the race, and those growing out of the struggle of races to be presently explained.

Language is a universal necessity as a means whereby rational beings shall be capable of communicating ideas to one another, whereas non-rational creatures (animals) can communicate their feelings only: Religion with primitive man is an instrument of social control, and is used to deter wayward members of the group from the performance of anti-social acts that tend to weaken or destroy the group. Its decrees are enforced by a priesthood which claims to be capable of influencing supernatural beings and of calling down their wrath upon such offenders. In primitive groups there is usually no other government, or the civil power is far too feeble to secure this end. But the fear of the gods is all-

† I adopt this term, somewhat expanded, from Professor Sumner's *Folkways*, in place of various less satisfactory terms that have been used for the general body of rules accepted by the group as necessary to its preservation, in so far as they can be distinguished from religion.

powerful. The "mores" constitute that body of rules in primitive society calculated to regulate conduct, and consist chiefly in customs, rituals, ceremonies, and taboos. They are the substitute for civil government and reinforce the power of the priesthood in the work of maintaining the social order. The family begins with the human race and is at first nothing but the continuance of the animal fertility into the human stage. The primitive group is itself the family, all the members being kindred, and therefore society is based on kinship, i.e. on sex.

The first secondary institution grows directly out of the last-named primary one. The blood bond, i.e. the affection which every member of the group experiences for every other member, holds the group together. The blood bond is an exclusively human sentiment. Animals possess the maternal instinct in common with man, but not the fraternal, paternal, nor filial. The result is that animal families scatter and mingle in such loose ways that what little inbreeding occurs is not injurious to the species. Not so the human groups. The endogamic breeding is so close that it enfeebles the race, and ultimately a recognition of this fact is forced upon the rational minds of the wiser members of the group. Slowly and gradually efforts are made to offset this evil. Forms of marriage are adopted to this end. The first step is the prohibition of the intermarriage of own brothers and sisters by the adoption of that form of group marriage described by MORGAN under the name "punaluan," which includes most of those forms otherwise known as polyandry, and has been mistaken for promiscuity.

(To be continued.)

The Barry Congress, and—Victory

"**T**HAT, inasmuch as the provisional committee elected to manage the Central Labour College answers all the requirements for democratic control to satisfy this society, this Congress instructs the Executive Committee to transfer student Kinsella from Ruskin to the Central Labour, appoint another student to the latter college, and appoint two representatives on the provisional committee."

For the resolution	-	-	-	-	47
Against	-	-	-	-	2

Majority	45
----------	----

The above resolution was passed at the Annual Conference of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants held at Barry during the week ending October 8th, 1910.

All sympathizers and supporters of Working-Class Education will consider this result as the most memorable victory in the history of the Central Labour College.

In these days when the dust of industrial disturbances darken the workers' horizon; when nearly all the organized energies of the toilers are focussed in foiling the subtle attacks of organized capital; when bread and not brains demands the greatest consideration of the exploited, is it not astonishing that time should be found for calm, cold reflection and discussion upon the question of education? It appears to be astonishing upon the surface but in reality it is not so. There are men who can perceive that the question of education is even more vital than that of the Osborne Judgment. There are men who recognize that the development of the one makes the other impossible. These men are to be found in a tremendous majority among the Railway workers of the British Isles. We are greatly encouraged by their support as it is not the first time that they have given a lead to the English working-class movement; they led the revolt against the legal disability under which workmen suffered owing to the negligence of their fellow employees: in the movement for the establishment of the Labour Party: in fighting against and obtaining a law for the reversal of the Trade Union disability known as the Taff Vale decision, and they are now playing an important part in the agitation for the reversal of the Osborne Judgment. With such an organization on our side we cannot fail.

The victory for the C.L.C. was decisive, and complete. A brief account of some of the incidents that happened in connexion with our triumph at Barry, may be interesting to our readers.

I arrived at Barry on the morning of the 5th. Deposited my baggage—chiefly "Plebs"—at a proletarian hostel, and then set out to find the "Masonic Hall" where the A.G.M. were holding their meetings. Arrived there I was struck by a strange sense of familiarity, I was astonished, perhaps a little dismayed. Then the light came. I remembered the meetings at Ipswich last year. The psychologist would call it the association of ideas. Near the portals of the hall I picked up a leaflet. I read it. Horror! I dropped it as though I had been stung.

To A. S. R. S. Delegates.

Meeting

THE CASE FOR RUSKIN COLLEGE.

You have heard the case against Ruskin College it is only

Fair to hear both sides.

Speakers.

Robert Young, A.S.E. (Ex-Student)

Gilbert Slater, M.A., D.Sc.

Principal.

The blow was a severe one. I felt dazed, but quickly recovered. I looked about me. My eye lit upon other documents floor-ward. I picked them up. The very feel of that fine, glossy paper reminded me once again of Ipswich, and the riches of Ruskin College. I read both carefully. The one asked the delegates to support their "own college." The sentiment was obviously Allsop-py, provoked by a kind of Slat(t)er-nly suggestion. The other was an appeal to the Trades Union Congress intimating that Ruskin College was rotten ripe for the Labour Movement. It had taken ten years for it to attain its ripeness, but alas! it had become too ripe. It had fallen into the University garden, there, to undergo the usual process of putrefaction.

I hastily pocketed the precious pages and strolled out into the air; to think. When lo! strolling down the main street came the myrmidons of Ruskin College. A smile of significant complacency played about their lips, almost inscrutable. They seemed to have accomplished something. Had I arrived too late? I thought of the decision of the last A.G.M.; of the discussion in the branches; of the delegates' mandates. I was consoled, I breathed again. The morning session over, I met many friends, among whom was Mr. Charles Watkins who, I might say in passing, did more for the interest of working-class education than can be possibly imagined. We are grateful, Mr. Watkins:

Ruskin College had cunningly arranged to have their meeting previous to the discussion of the resolution. But inscrutable are thy ways, oh Providence! It seemed as though the gods were not anxious to perpetuate a lie. Ruskin College authorities announced their meeting for 6.15 p.m. The congress adjourns at 5.30 in the afternoon; leaving only three-quarters of an hour for tea and refreshment; this of course is tantamount to an insult to a congress delegate. He will not have his pleasure prescribed. Positive proof here of the faulty education at Ruskin College. As if to avenge this flagrant insult, the congress suspended standing orders that evening and continued to discuss the agenda items until 6.15. This was crushing, but the Ruskin myrmidons bore up bravely. As the delegates poured into the street they were told that the "other side" would be put at 7 o'clock. But the humiliation was not yet complete. The delegates chuckled grimly. They felt for a certain gilt-edged card which, thanks to development of co-operation, invited them to a regal banquet at the Co-operative Hall, at 7.30 that evening. Their knowledge of Ruskin College and its oratory and argument (?), it turned out, was not sufficiently encouraging to lead them to forego the pleasure of the banquet.

At 7 o'clock I hied me to the meeting place to distribute certain interesting documents to possible converts. Not a soul in sight. Had I mistaken the building? I became anxious. A tiny, almost grotesque figure sidled up to me under the lamplight. A voice, heavy for so small a person rasped in my ear: "To what trade-union do you belong?" I started. It was a pertinent question. I interrogated him in turn. "Would it be a bad thing to be unclassified" I asked. The response came readily, emphatically, "yes." "Then your great enthusiasts, Haywood and Walker," (names familiar to our readers) "who were unclassified, were equally bad in your opinion." To this I received no response, the tiny figure had shuffled away. I was left to meditate upon the utility of logic. Suddenly I heard the same voice crying. "The meeting begins gentlemen; this way!" At this moment I encountered about a dozen delegates who displayed keen interest in the question, and who were going to attend the R.C. meeting, presumably to obtain information. We mounted the staircase together. In the distance we could hear the hum of voices. The meeting had begun. What a magnificent spectacle greeted our eyes! Tableau never to be forgotten. The chairman with knit brows, and intent expression. Dr. Slater holding forth on the utility of capitalist diplomas for the working-class student; proudly declaring that twelve of his boys were studying for this University trade-mark. R. Young sitting—reflecting—in a corner with my "little man" as his companion, another Ruskin student in the audience, the audience itself making up the grand total of four persons.

It is enough. Space will not permit me to describe the scene or the events further, except to say that Dr. Slater came to light in a new *rôle* as a teacher of Marxian economics, and as an apologist for Oxford University. The effect of the speeches upon the audience was to decide two of the four possible ones in favour of the Central Labour College.

The following day the resolution was discussed. The debate was cold and judicious. Mr. Layton of E.C. very cleverly put the case against the C.L.C. His great point being the removal of a certain sting in the resolution which covertly condemned the executive committee for not carrying out the decision of the last A.G.M. It was, however, unanimously resolved to withdraw the offensive morsel and the resolution was sent back to the standing orders committee to be "reformed."

In the meanwhile, one of the A.S.R.S students who had written to the general secretary asking to put his case before the congress in person, was granted permission to speak. His appeal was to the effect that he wished to finish his term of two years at Ruskin College. Fearing a break in his educational programme he wished the con

ference to allow him to remain. His appeal was perfectly straightforward. He preferred Ruskin College. The conference unanimously acceded to his request. It was a victory for him. Ruskin College, too, rejoiced at this preliminary triumph. But on the morrow, in less than half-an-hour after the reading of the minutes, the conference had passed the resolution with which this paper opened, and had, by a majority of 45 votes, at one stroke, supported the great educational principle of the C.L.C. : had condemned Ruskin College with its University curriculum ; and had doomed a student, upon his own request, to a year's absorption of ideas, which it, as a conference, as a society, had definitely denounced. Small scope here for thanksgiving.

Ours was a glorious victory. It was a decision that will decide the destinies of an institution fraught with possibilities of gigantic accomplishments.

Mr. Kinsella, mentioned in the resolution, has already taken up residence at the C.L.C. The other student will be elected in the usual way according to the established procedure of the A.S.R.S. We hope that we shall be able to welcome him at the college at the beginning of the New Year. In the meanwhile the E.C. will elect their representative to sit upon the provisional committee of the College, there to help steer our ship clear of the University sand-banks, and to direct its course towards the harbour of social-democracy.

The principle is established. Two permanent scholarships have been secured. Direct representation and labour control are a reality.

On the Friday evening the South Wales section of the "Plebs" held a meeting. The indefatigable Mr. Murgatroyd had worked Trojan-like among the local railway-men. We did not expect many delegates. We were not disappointed. Mr. Brydges-Adams, Messrs. Barker and Gill wired to say they were in other parts of the kingdom and regretted their inability, etc.

Mr. C. Watkins took the chair, the writer held the audience for a short time, and thereupon Mr. Noah Ablett delivered an address. The local people were keenly interested and enthusiastic. Questions were asked by several persons among whom was the inevitable "little man" aforementioned. A collection was taken to defray expenses amounting to the welcome sum of £0 7s. 6d. Thus ended the most glorious week in the history of the "Plebs" movement. Principles propounded, hopes realized, success assured. There is intoxication in victory. Let us beware that we do not sleep!

Bathos, or Impartiality Incorporated

So far as everything else was concerned it was quite an ordinary morning. I am the Proletarian and consequently I was sipping my coffee in bed when my valet brought the telegram to me.

"Jules. Come at once. Important."

Editor "Plebs" Magazine.

I DRESSED leisurely. An hour or two afterwards I was out in the raw air of an October morning. The matter being so urgent I walked instead of taking the Oxford Municipal Mail. In a few minutes I was at the palatial offices of the "Plebs" Magazine. I knocked timidly at the door of the Editor's Den. An unintelligible growl was the response so in I walked. The Editor was in a protoplasmic mood. He was irritable, and judging from the way he paced the floor he possessed a great amount of motility. "Well what do you want," I asked. "Copy" he snarled. "We must have an absolutely impartial report of the various meetings and conferences. We cannot rely upon our supporters. We must be wary. Dr. Gilbert Sullivan has said the Way-Rail Review is a distorter of the Newcastle report. "What *shall* we do"? "Will you give me a 'carte blanche'" I asked, lapsing momentarily into the diplomatic language. "The Party Chest is at your disposal," he declared, with a wave of his hand. "Go!" he said. I went. The interview with the great man was ended.

The meetings were on the morrow and I had to reach Barry that night. As a disguise was essential I was in doubt whether to go as a W.E.A. Report or a Three Months Scholarship with a Diploma dado; finally I dressed in an Inverness coat, a red tie and a slouch hat, and thus disguised as a labour leader I sallied forth. I reached Barry safely and repaired to a cyclist's shop where I purchased recording kinegramaphones with several blank records and films. My plans began to materialize. I had communicated with the local Pinkertons, and towards midnight three syllogistic shadowy forms approached the building where the meetings were to be held. In a few minutes, by an illicit process of a miner, the kinegramaphones were installed, and arranged to operate at varied intervals during the following day. As the clock struck the solemn hour we permuted ourselves, or in other words, we departed in another mood, and that, a happy one.

* * * * *

After the meetings were over I left Barry with my precious freight, my concrete impartiality, my kinegramaphones, and in a few hours I was seated with my chief. We were excited and on the tip-toe of expectancy, wondering if those dark discs and celluloid films were free from class affiliation or if their one-time waxen consciousness had become "universatized."

Everything was now ready. The disc began to revolve, slowly at first, then gradually gaining in speed, but not a sound broke the stillness of the room save the laboured breathing of the watchers and the scratch of the needle. Hark! what was that? A subdued murmur filled the room whilst the film showed a hall almost deserted. Four persons, occupying as many seats, were seated near the front. Some dozen men now enter and seat themselves in the rear. The speaker was Dr. Gilbert Sullivan. The record was running very well but the words were disjointed and at times indistinct ". . . if Ruskin College intended to join the University why am I . . . my labour record . . . I am in favour of the University connexion. . . . The record continued for several minutes and so far as one could judge it appeared to be an autobiographical speech.

The record was removed. The whirr began again, and the films unrolled themselves. The men at the back of the hall were evidently asking questions. One of them was on his feet.

First Questioner.—"Is it true that nearly all the lectures attended by the Ruskin Students are given in the Colleges of the University?"

Dr. G. S.—"Yes, previously, but they are not attending them now."

Second Questioner.—"But isn't it a fact that the University is taking its Long Vacation?"

Murmurs of a complex character. Apparent embarrassment on the platform.

The films showed another gentleman rising in the rear, and the disc gave out the following:—

Q.—"If the University is a capitalist institution, what is the use of the Diploma in capitalist economics to the working man student and his class after having studied two years for it?"

Mr. Rodbertus Youth.—"It will prove that the working-class student has the intelligence equal to the undergraduate." Here the film showed a row of beaming faces on the platform.

First Voice.—"Might as well study Pink Pills and call yourself a medical man, an M.D."

Second Voice.—"Capitalist Economics are quack remedies for the working class."

Sardonic smiles and furtive glances shone on the film.

Another man now got up.

Q.—"Are Marxian economics taught in the University?"

Dr. G. S.—"Mr. Thims will be able to enlighten the questioner upon that point." Here the film showed the eminent Sociologist and D.Sc. turning to a curious bundle which I had not noticed before. A consultation appeared to take place. A peculiar grating

noise now issued from the horn and I thought the pin was scratching, looking at the film I found the Enigma had moved forward. The rasping continued. "Two or three lectures, I think," the disc rapped out.

Q.—"Do you teach Marx at Ruskin College, if so what is the text book."? The reply was rather indistinct and halting.

Dr. G. S.—"I don't teach Marx exactly from Marx, one cannot use three volumes as a text book (*Joke*). But I use an American book which is a summary of Marx . . . further I do *not* believe that commodities exchange according to the amount of labour embodied in them. . . . I do not believe that Marx believed the theory of value of the Marxians . . . well . . . I yes . . . no . . .

Here a voice was faintly heard, evidently questioning, and Dr. G. S. was looking embarrassed when the Chairman arose. "The questioner is not fair to ask the Doctor questions relative to a period of which he is ignorant." This question was, no doubt, concerned with the change of teaching or the events which led to the Student's Strike.

Here followed a period of silence broken only by the shuffling of feet, little explosions of laughter and the blowing of noses.

The film showed the group at the back rising and making their way towards the door. Again a silence, followed by a noise like the shutting of doors. The film was now entirely black. In a few seconds the disc had ceased to revolve. The Editor was rubbing his hands in glee. He pushed the cigar box toward me, and in a few minutes we were blowing out beautiful blue rings of smoke and chatting merrily on the benefit of Greek to the working man and its relation to the Osborne Judgment and the Wages Question.

MEREDITH F. TITTERINGTON.

E. D.—Just before going to press we were informed by our special correspondent that the Enigma was a person (legally), who hailed from Bradford from a labour organization (for definition see Ruskin College Constitution) known as the Working Men's Club and Institute Union.

Reminiscences of Karl Marx

From JOHN SWINTON'S *Book of Travels*

One of the most remarkable men of the day, who has played an inscrutable but puissant part in the revolutionary politics of the past forty years, is Karl Marx. A man without desire for show or fame, caring nothing for the fanfaronade of life or the pretence of power, without haste and without rest, a man of strong, broad, elevated mind, full of far-reaching projects, logical methods and practical aims, he has stood and yet stands behind more of the earthquakes which have convulsed nations and destroyed thrones, and do now menace and appall crowned heads and

established frauds, than any other man in Europe, not excepting Joseph Mazzini himself. The student of Berlin, the critic of Hegelianism, the editor of papers, and the old-time correspondent of the *New York Tribune*, he showed his qualities and his spirit; the founder and master spirit of the once dreaded *International*,* and the author of *Capital*, he has been expelled from half the countries of Europe, proscribed in nearly all of them, and for thirty years past has found refuge in London.

He was at Ramsgate, the great seashore resort of the Londoners, while I was in London, and there I found him in his cottage, with his family of two generations. The saintly-faced, sweet-voiced, graceful woman of sauvity, who welcomed me at the door, was evidently the mistress of the house and the wife of Karl Marx. And is this massive-headed, generous-featured, courtly, kindly man of sixty, with the bushy masses of long revelling gray hair, Karl Marx? His Dialogues reminded me of that of Socrates—so free, so sweeping, so creative, so incisive, so genuine—with its sardonic touches, its gleams of humour, and its sportive merriment. He spoke of the political forces and popular movements of the various countries of Europe—the vast current of the spirit of Russia, the motions of the German mind, the action of France, the immobility of England. He spoke hopefully of Russia, philosophically of Germany, cheerfully of France, and sombrely of England—referring contemptuously to the "atomistic reforms" over which the Liberals of the British Parliament spend their time. Surveying the European world, country after country, indicating the features and the developments and the personages of the surface and under the surface, he showed that things were working towards ends which will assuredly be realized.

I was often surprized as he spoke. It was evident that this man, of whom so little is seen or heard, is deep in the times, and that, from the Neva to the Seine, from the Urals to the Pyrenees, his hand is at work preparing the way for the new advent. Nor is his work wasted now any more than it has been in the past, during which so many desirable changes have been brought about, so many heroic struggles have been seen, and the French Republic has been set up on the heights. As he spoke, the question I had put, "Why are you doing nothing now?" was seen to be a question of the unlearned, and one to which he could not make a direct answer. Inquiring why his great work *Capital*, the seed field of so many crops, had not been put into English as it has been put into Russian and French from the original German, he seemed unable to tell, but said that a proposition for an English translation had come to him from New York. He said that that book was but a fragment, a single part of a work in three parts, two of the parts being yet unpublished, the full trilogy being *Land, Capital, Credit*, the last part, he said, being largely illustrated from the United States, where credit has had such an amazing development. Mr. Marx is an observer of American action, and his remarks upon some of the formative and substantive forces of American life were full of suggestiveness. By the way, in referring to his *Capital*, he said that any one who might desire to read it would find the French translation much superior in many ways to the German original. Mr. Marx referred to Henri Rochefort the Frenchman, and in his talk of some of his dead disciples, the stormy Bakounin, the brilliant Lasalle, and others, I could see how deeply his genius had taken hold of other men who, under other circumstances, might have directed the course of history.

The afternoon is waning toward the long twilight of an English summer evening as Mr. Marx discourses, and he proposes a walk through the sea-side town and along the shore to the beach, upon which we may see many

thousand people, largely children, disporting themselves. Here we find on the sands his family party—the wife, who had already welcomed me, his two daughters with their children and his two sons-in-law, one of whom is a professor in King's College, London, and the other, I believe, a man of letters. It was a delightful party—about ten in all—the father of the two young wives, who were happy with their children, and the grandmother of the children, rich in the joysomeness and serenity of her wifely nature. Not less finely than Victor Hugo himself does Karl Marx understand the art of being a grandfather; but, more fortunate than Hugo, the married children of Marx live to make jocund his years.

Toward nightfall he and his sons-in-law part from their families to pass an hour with their American guest. And the talk was of the world, and of man, and of time, and of ideas, as our glasses tinkled over the sea.

The railway train waits for no man, and night is at hand. Over the thought of the babble and rack of the age and the ages, over the talk of the day and the scenes of the evening, arose in my mind one question, touching upon the final law of being, for which I would seek answer from this sage. Going down to the depth of language, and rising to the height of emphasis, during an interspace of silence, I interrogated the revolutionist and philosopher in these fateful words:

"What is?"

And it seemed as though his mind were inverted for a moment while he looked upon the roaring sea in front and the restless multitude upon the beach:

"What is?" I had inquired, to which, in deep and solemn tone, he replied:

"Struggle!"

At first it seemed as though I had heard the echo of despair; but per-adventure, it was the law of life.

* The International Working Men's Association, founded in London in 1864.

"Smiler" Brown

A NOTICE in the paper about a fortnight ago turned my thoughts towards old and gladsome times at Ruskin. Only a notice to say that Mr. G. W. Brown, of Hull, was a candidate for the post of Assistant-Secretary of the Railway Servants' Society. "Smiler" Brown was being put up for one of those positions in his Union that we confidently anticipated his fellow-workers would elect him to, sooner or later. Well! I'm sure many of the old students will be anxiously awaiting the result of the election, and if he is successful, not a few will celebrate it, each in his particular way. Few men could bring to the office more accomplishments than "Smiler." Methodical, he certainly is, but it is not the method of the automaton. Few at Ruskin possessed greater independence in thought or action. He held to his opinions tenaciously, and yet without prejudice. If you convinced him by argument he was wrong, he was always prepared to admit your point. His power for detail work was phenomenal, and we had to feel the brunt of it occasionally. Perhaps at a "House meeting," or at the debating society, some slovenly statement would be made which brought the heavy artillery of "Smiler" into action—result, "slovenly" statement demolished. He could also hit hard physic-

ally, as many undergraduates found out to their cost on one occasion at a meeting in the Oxford Town Hall. The exact nature of the subject before the meeting I forget. But the statements of a Labour M.P., who had been speaking in Oxford a few days previously, were severely criticized. "Smiler" rose to ask a question. Perhaps it was his benevolent aspect that did it, I know not, but three or four tried to answer his question by attempting to put him outside. And then the "fun" commenced. Before we knew what was the matter, about six persons were on the floor, but the numbers told, and Brown was ejected. But I don't think the same lot would take it on again. This was, to us all, a new side to "Smiler's" character and an unexpected one. Personally I don't remember ever to have seen him without a smile on his face, it was this characteristic that earned him his nickname. I have known few men who were more "lovable" in character, more capable in work or play, less prone to push themselves forward. And so I wish him success, for the sake of his Union as well as for his own sake, an advanced Union should have advanced and capable men working for it. But one thing I know, win or lose, "Smiler" will still smile, and continue to work for the emancipation of his class.

F.J.C.

Reports

Our Northumberland and Durham friends held a meeting in Newcastle at the beginning of October to consider ways and means of promoting the interests of the Central Labour College. Mr. Dennis Hird was present, and most of the ex-students of Ruskin College. Needless to say the utmost enthusiasm prevailed. After discussing various matters it was decided to elect a committee for the purpose of organizing a delegate meeting of Labour organizations at an early date, and also to centralize any efforts that may be necessary to advance the College movement. Mr. G. W. Hardscomb, Grosvenor Drive, Whitley Bay, Northumberland, is the organizing secretary, and friends and sympathizers, who were unable to be present at the Newcastle meeting, who desire to help should communicate with him.

The London Branch of "Plebs" have been very busy these last few weeks, in the Press and elsewhere trying to organize Lecture Glasses, and generally assist the Central Labour College and the League. London members and friends wishing to assist should communicate with Mr Reddiford, 42 Cowley Mansions, Cowley Road, Brixton.

Economics or—What ?

THERE is no doubt that the demand is growing for instruction in social science. Working men are beginning to realize that knowledge is as necessary as enthusiasm if they are to improve their position as a class. This demand is arising from busy men. Men who are already taking their corner in the work of the organized Labour Movement. Men whose time for study is restricted because

of these very activities. The question naturally arises for them—where ought I to begin my studies? As they will usually want to take one subject at a time, it will be as well to see what the tuition is for before attempting an answer.

It will be generally agreed that the immediate demands of organized labour is for a greater share of the means of life—food, clothing and shelter. Upon what are these demands based—Charity or Justice? Are we going cap-in-hand to the owning class and ask them for the things that belong to them by all the laws of equity, or, are we to approach them as men who seek a greater share of the value which their labour creates? These are questions which have to be settled before a clear perception of what we want and how those things are to be obtained is possible. Many and many a time has our advocacy of measures for improving our lot as workers been challenged by our opponents, and it cannot be said that the majority of these disputes have been overwhelmingly convincing to the members of our class whom it is desired to convert to our views. Why is this? It can at once be answered. It is because the nature of the industrial society in which we live is partially or wholly misunderstood by many of those reformers who long for a new social order.

What is the most important fact in the worker's life? The necessity to sell his power to labour in order to live. From his earliest years this all-powerful fact is constantly menacing his comfort—yea his very life. Few of us escape some measure or other of ill through the inability of those upon whom devolves the necessity of providing our sustenance, being partially or wholly unable to fulfil their functions owing to unemployment, sickness, or scanty, if regular, wages. The effects of these things causes some of us to sharply challenge the right or necessity of this state of affairs. We see around us evidences of vast wealth, unlimited stores of those very things which we lack, and we also see people enjoying a surfeit of these without any necessity on their part to labour. Under these circumstances the question inevitably arises—Why? We attend meetings and are told that this condition of affairs is the result of the legalized robbery of the working class, or that the unequal distribution of wealth is a result of the inequalities in capacity which exist among men. Which is true? To answer this question we need to investigate the processes by which wealth is created and distributed. This investigation is the work of what are known as economists. What is known as the orthodox school of economists claim that the worker receives wages in accordance with the value that he creates, and that wealth is accumulated by the rich in proportion to their ability in directing the processes of production or distribution. The Marxists, on the other hand, claim that the labourer does not receive the equivalent of the value which he creates, but that, owing to the means of production and distribution—machines, factories, railways,

&c.,—which the worker must use in order to live, being owned by others, the labourer is forced to sell his labour-power—his only possession—in return for food, clothing and shelter. That the amount of these are in turn determined (1) by the standard of comfort generally prevalent among the section of workers to which the labourer belongs, and (2) the competition among them for the opportunity to work.

Broadly speaking, the whole of the economics can be divided into the above two schools. Belief in the orthodox school logically carries with it the "charity" aspect of labour's demands, and sentimental appeals to the owning-class for improvements in the lot of the worker based on "citizenship" or "humanitarian" grounds. The Marxist school teaches self-reliance; while not despising sentiment, it points out that improvement of the worker's lot depend entirely on the strength of his organizations and their understanding of the social process by which those who labour remain poor, and those who do not labour increase their wealth. That all measures which have not as their ultimate object the social ownership of the instruments of labour will still leave him and his a dependent and oppressed class, hewers of wood and drawers of water for those who toil not neither do they spin, yet, because of their ownership of capital, Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed, housed and fed, like unto these.

As the most important question for the worker is to secure an employer, so the most important thing for him is to understand the nature of those social relations which make, broadly speaking, of one class, employees, of the other, employers. If the Marxists are right, and we are assuming that they are, all improvements of the lot of one class must be at the expense of the other class. Can we expect that these changes will be solved other than in the "good" old way—*Might is Right*? From this necessity to protect each his own interests arises the class struggle—the struggle of one class to maintain its supremacy, the struggle of the other to wrest from its opponent this power. In war we do not talk of "good-will," "appeals to the heart," "common interests," "brotherly love," &c., we know that such appeals are useless. Rather, we seek to perfect our organization, imbue our fighting forces with a common aim, get our most perfect guns at work, and if possible, secure an advantage numerically. Military and naval wars have been, for the most part, waged for economic ends. And shall we—the working class who have supplied the common soldier on whom, in the last analysis, the fortunes of the wars depended—expect that the owning class, who have used us so unsparingly to *extend* their ownership, will be less ruthless in fighting us to *maintain* their class interests—private property in the means of life? No. We may get something from the capitalist class, but it will depend entirely upon our power to help ourselves whether what they "give" is an economic advance for the workers or

only an economy for the capitalists. Knowledge then of the economic relations in society is the first requisite of the working-class student. From this knowledge alone can he fairly and squarely judge the value of any measure, industrial, political, or educational, that may be brought forward in the interests of his class—and this is just as necessary to judge the measures proposed by our friends, as those put forward by our opponents. "Evil is wrought by want of thought [knowledge] as well as by want of heart."

With Marx economic theory loses all semblance of a "dismal science." Under his revivifying touch it is pulsating with life—life in all its social glory and shame. History, logic, sociology and economics are so beautifully and easily blended that the inquirer finds a new world, one in which the worker can move freely and confidently on to the conquest of those questions which are of such fundamental importance to himself, his class, and the future of the world's workers. It has been the policy of our opponents in the past to belittle both the man and his work. To-day, with the enormous growth of adherents to Marxism, we are finding the tactics changed. "Marx was a great man, a very great man, and his teachings were true of his day and generation, but, that was fifty years ago, nowadays with the new developments in science and industry they require much modification." Thus the new method of disposing of Marx. In the main the "argument" against Marx and his teaching amount to no more serious attack than the above. The "modifications" it is true amount to a complete denial of all Marx's principles. But wherever and whenever we get at grips with these revisionists, they either put up a "dummy" Marx, or else they leave the Marxian principles entirely alone, and struggle with some statement of Marx's which has nothing at all to do with the correctness, or otherwise, of his principles. These principles—historical materialism, the class struggle, and the origin of surplus-value—are as true to-day as when they were first propounded. They follow logically from one another, and must be accepted or rejected as a whole. The growth of their supporters is one of the outstanding features of the workers' movement the world over. The teaching of the despised German-Jew are to-day the most potent factor in social life, and it is well that it should be so, for they point the way to the "emancipation of society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class-distinction and class-struggles." To bring about which is the proud prerogative and historic mission of the world's workers.

L. BRUMAIRE.

A criticism of our correspondent's article will be welcomed. Or we should be pleased to receive any article showing that some other subject should take precedence of Economics, as the starting point for the adult student desirous of participating in the work of the Labour Movement.—*Editor*.