

THE  
"Plebs" Magazine

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## EDITORIAL

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**W**E are once more on the eve of another August Bank Holiday, of another Plebeian ingathering, and of the second march past of the Central Labour College. Most excellent as past Meets have been, we have no doubt that the Meet of 1911 will outdo them in progress made and pilgrims present. Our watchword will again be "onward." It has been no primrose path of dalliance along which we have moved, and our feet are yet upon the rocky ridge of the hill of difficulty. But is that strange? Strange were it otherwise. For we are of the proletariat, fettered by its weaknesses but sustained by its awakening consciousness of strength. It is the work of the educational army to awaken this consciousness without which strength availeth nothing; to show to the giant that he is a giant; to put to flight the Delilahs, who with their witchery and enchantment seek to render the Samson of Labour helpless, and to deliver him bound and gagged to the Philistines of Capitalism. The strength of the working class will never be effective without the consciousness that it is present and how that strength can be applied. The deed, for successful accomplishment, requires the searchlight of theory. To be a diffuser of theory is the purpose of a genuine working-class educational institution. The promotion of the conscious analysis of ideas throughout the ranks of the workers is the conscious aim of the Central Labour College. The College will not be able to report that twelve of their students obtained University honours in the shape of Diplomas. No! It is a Labour College which can preserve its purity and integrity only by refusing affiliation to any institution

which is not an integral part of the organized Labour Movement. It exists, not to be lured but to expose all lures. And one thing that the Central Labour College can do is to put up alongside of any holder of a University diploma, one of its own diploma-less students and confidently leave it to a working-class audience to judge what there is in these toys and rattles, of which so much has been made recently in the press. The very fact that the capitalist press has been so enthusiastically hailing with joy the conferring of these diplomas upon working men, should be enough to awaken at least an instinctive suspicion that all is not well. It will be proved in practice, that so far from it being shown that by these diploma successes the working men who have obtained them have brains equal to the University undergraduate, it is rather the possibility of reducing their brains to the same miserable state of confusion, that is demonstrated. The booming of the diploma will certainly return boomerang-like into the camp of the boomers. Meanwhile bring out the boomed and tap them with the drumstick of practice. We can hear in advance the hollow sound.



AT the PLEBS meeting in the afternoon of Bank Holiday there will have to be very serious consideration given to the financial position of the Magazine. The future of our organ is very much endangered by the deficit carried over from last year, and discussed

**THE  
PLEBS**

at the last Meet. So far as the current year is concerned, the Magazine has paid its way and gives hope for an early increase of its pages. But the main question of continuing publication depends upon the clearing up at once of our liabilities. It would be a serious matter for the movement if the Magazine had to be discontinued. So serious that we must put our shoulder to the wheel and prevent such a possibility. While the PLEBS is not an official organ of the College, it is a medium through which its principles are propagated, and without it the College would certainly suffer. But it must not be allowed to suffer. The PLEBS will go on. Only—only see that it does.

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Just as this editorial had been completed, there was brought to our notice an article in the current number of the Ruskin Collegian by the Principal of Ruskin College, on "The Diploma Results."

**"The  
Great  
Question"**

It, that worthy fills the rôle of Don Quixote, who found to his sorrow that knight errantry was not compatible with all forms of social life. Cervantes' creation tilted at windmills, but the Principal of Ruskin College is both tilter and windmill. He is overpowered by his own wind.

He opens with a tilt. "The Great Question" is, "Should Ruskin students avail themselves of the teaching offered by the University in

the subjects they were studying, or should they be shut out of University lectures?" "Should they be allowed to offer themselves as candidates for such University examinations as were open to them in their own subjects, or should they avoid examination tests and diplomas?"



THEN follows the tilter tilting himself. "The Answer!" "It was decided that the College should freely avail itself of the accessible teaching of the University, and that the students who desired to do

**"The Answer"** should be allowed to enter at the end of their course for University examinations open to them in the social sciences. Why have a College in Oxford of all places, if the great opportunities and advantages of Oxford were not to be utilized? The wind has overpowered the poor Ruskin Don. "Why have a college in Oxford?" Why have Ruskin College if it is incapable of providing the workers with the knowledge which they require? Ruskin College claims to be an institution that can effectively assist the Labour Movement. The Labour Movement is an independent and self-sufficient movement. But Ruskin College, through the mouth of its Principal, pronounces that institution to be dependent on the University, to be insufficient to meet the educational needs of the working class. The Principal has taken the wind out of his own sails. Ruskin College cannot avoid building its own scaffold. Every time it tries to defend itself, it damns itself, it demonstrates that it is as a rope of sand. The Diploma examination, the Principal tells us, is a test of the student, and "a test of the student is a test of the College." Even the Principal's logic fails him. We can well understand what one of the present students meant the other day with regard to the teaching of logic in Ruskin College, when he said that, "they did not trouble much about logic; it was too dry." The Principal states that the students attend University lectures preparatory for the Diploma examination. How can it therefore be a test of Ruskin College if a student is successful? If men have to go outside the college for the necessary information, how is Ruskin College entitled to take the results, at least partly of that, as a test of what Ruskin College can provide?



IN an attempt to show that the only possible argument that has been suggested against this connexion with the University, is a childish notion, the Principal of Ruskin College cuts as sorry a figure as the

**The Danger of the University** original Don Quixote did, when the sail of the windmill coming in contact with the knight, hurled him rolling down the field. He once more with this, reveals the barrenness of his logic and the superficial character of his sociology. What is this "childish notion?" "Because Oxford University, originall.

created for the people, has fallen by degrees into the hands of the wealthy classes, that therefore the teaching provided by the University in Economics and Political Science for young men who were going to be employed in private business, or officials of the State, would be in some way dangerous for working men, and that for the workers some other economics was required, because the interests of the workers and those of the wealthy are often in conflict." This is how the Principal of Ruskin College states the argument of his opponents. We have certainly never entertained such "childish notions" as the one that, "Oxford University was originally created for the people." True, in the early days of the University, the ruling powers were ever on the look out for "promising young working men" that they might be trained in the interests of the *status quo*. And it is because the existing order is in a much more serious plight to-day, that we have people like the learned doctor coming forward, with the story of the "original creation," for the purpose of charming more promising young men into the atmosphere of the University. Dr. Slater can have that "childish notion" all to himself. It is not and never has been ours. There is another part of the Principal's statement of the argument for which he must also take full credit. "The interests of the workers and those of the wealthy are often in conflict." Often! Another original creation! We say, *always*. We shall be glad to hear from any of the staff of Ruskin College as to the times when the conflict between capital and labour is not present. As for "some other economics" being required, it is evident that the brand that the Principal of Ruskin College possesses and promulgates, does not meet the actual conditions and therefore the requirements of the Labour Movement. It is unfortunate for the gentleman that, in his trying to prove that the College is a Labour College, he proves the opposite, in trying to demonstrate his efficiency as a teacher of the actual conditions of society, he demonstrates that he is inefficient.

AND now let us look at the answer of Dr. Slater to the "childish notion." "It would be as sensible to suppose that in war, in the Russo-Japanese war for example, it was to the interests of the Russians to study one sort of geography, and for the Japanese to study another. The only geography any good for either side is true geography. And economics being similarly the survey of the field of life in which employers and workers both have to work out their own problems, the only economics good to either side is true economics." Such a childish argument will only deceive those whose one feverish desire is to be up with the intellectual band-wagon and for whom a D.Sc. is the hall-mark of wisdom and truth. It is based upon the very vicious method of proving by analogy. Analogy can illustrate, it cannot prove. But the analogy in this case does not even illustrate what is required to be proved. Geography deals with what is, for the most part, constant phenomena. Economics deals with changing phenomena. Geography describes the earth. Economics describes

the modes of production, including exchange; and the laws which operate therein. The continent of Asia does not change places with the continent of America. The Sea of Japan never gets mixed up with the Black Sea. That holds good for a Russian or a Japanese, a capitalist or a wage labourer. Both are concerned with the self-same earth, with the position of countries, cities, &c., on the earth. But now let us turn to economics. There is only one economics, in the sense that it must be the economics of the capitalist mode of production. But "in this field of life" we are dealing not with the position on the earth's surface of Korea or the Hoangho, not with lakes or mountains or rivers, but with social relations, with the relations into which people enter in the procuring of their livelihood. As the Principal of Ruskin College has to admit, there are two classes of people in this economic field, the employers and the workers, who, "both have to work out their own problems." What is the problem of the employer? To secure a profit. What is profit? A quantity of unpaid labour realized in the shape of the universal equivalent. What is the problem of the worker? To secure wages is his immediate need. What are wages? The price of what he sells to the employer, which is his labour-power. He does not sell his labour, because that belongs to the employer to whom he sold his labour-power. He only sells the latter, and secures a price equal to a part of the labour expended, on the condition, that he allows the employer to appropriate, gratis, the other part. The larger the paid part, the smaller the unpaid part, the more wages the worker receives, the less profit there is for the employer. Both want more and both cannot get more. Hence there is *always a conflict* between capital and labour. That is a law immanent in the very nature of capitalist production. And what is more this conflict deepens and intensifies with the development of capitalism. The Cambrian Combine dispute is an expression of that fact. While men are compelled to fight for higher wages, it is brought home to them more and more clearly, that to make a clean sweep of the chronic evils, they must organize to remove the cause of these evils, the capitalist mode of production, the merchandise status of labour, the capitalist character of the means of production. Now, what of these two problems? The solution of the one marks the disappearance of the other. Certainly, we want true economics. But true economics or the truth about economics is "not good to either side." It is certainly *not* a good thing for the employer, that his employees should know the truth about the source of his profits. It is a good thing for the employer, that his workmen should look upon him as their "giver of bread," should regard his profits as a reward for waiting, the wages of superintendence, a compensation for risk, and that they should view capital as an eternal verity. The capitalist press, that is now so enthusiastic about a University education for the workers, that speaks eulogistically of Ruskin College and the Diplomas,—they "know about it all," they know what "is good" for *their* side. Of

course they are impartial. Of course Ruskin College teaching is non-partisan. If you are to have dupes you must delude. If you want true economics, you will soon perceive written above the doorway of the University and Ruskin College, the "Abandon hope, all ye who enter in."

Is it all the same to the "young men who are going to be employed in private business," and young men who are going to work in the Labour movement, "this teaching provided by the University in Economics and Political Science." What about the two problems? What about the conflict between the employers and the workers? There is this about it. The young man in private business will continue to draw his dividends, to exploit his employees, and the young man with the diploma will obscure the exploitation and apologize for it to the worker who has to pay the piper, *twice*. Once to Ruskin College and every day to "the young man in private business." Yes, "the Unions which support the College will get a full and fair return!" Just in the same way that they get full stomachs and fair wages.

BUT how unfortunate that Dr. Slater did not send the Japanese into the camp of the Russians, to have a look at their atlas, to sit at the feet of some Russian officer and learn what was "good for either side" to blow out each other's brains. But how fortunate for the Japanese that they had no intellectual advisors of the character of Don Quixote de la Ruskin. And fortunate will the Labour Movement be, if it, like the Japanese, constructs its own intelligence department. "And nobody could think otherwise, unless he also had windmills in his head."

W. W. C.

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We are pleased to inform the readers of the PLEBS that the Tredegar District, and the Vivian Lodge of the Western Valleys District of the South Wales Miners' Federation, have given £20 and £5 respectively to the funds of the College.

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Give me a taste of Life!  
 Not a tang of a seasoned wine,  
 Not the drug of an unearned bread;  
 Not the grape of an untilld vine.  
 The Life that is really Life;  
 That comes from no fount afar,  
 But springs from the toil and strife  
 In the world of things as they are.—CLEAVES

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There are thousands hacking at the branches of evil, to one who is striking at the root.—THOREAU.

# CENTRAL LABOUR COLLEGE

## Programme of Second Annual General Conference

### MONDAY—MORNING MEETING.

The Chair will be taken at 11 a.m. prompt, by D. WATTS MORGAN,  
Miners' Agent S.W.M.F.

#### AGENDA:

Chairman's Opening Remarks.  
Minutes.  
Secretary's Report.  
Warden's Report.  
Financial Statement (F. C. Charles).  
Correspondence Dept. Report (A. J. Hacking).  
Provincial Classes Report (H. Kershaw and W. W. Craik).  
Other Business.

### EVENING MEETING & SOCIAL

The Chair will be taken at 7.30 p.m. prompt, by C. T. CRAMP,  
Executive Member A.S.R.S.

#### SPEAKERS:—

**DENNIS HIRD, M.A.** and other well-known Labour Men

In response to a request voiced at the Annual Meeting last year, Lectures will be delivered on Tuesday, as under, for the purpose of affording the Delegates an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the scope and methods of teaching carried on in the College.

### TUESDAY—MORNING LECTURES

The Chair will be taken at 11.30 a.m. prompt, by EDWARD GILL.

<i>Lecturer:—</i>	<i>Subject:—</i>
W. W. CRAIK . . . . .	Industrial History.
NOAH ABLETT . . . . .	Economics.

### EVENING LECTURES

The Chair will be taken at 6.30 p.m. prompt, by FRED. BURGESS.

<i>Lecturer:—</i>	<i>Subject:—</i>
DENNIS HIRD, M.A. . . . .	{ Sociology.
	{ Logic.

## Geoffrey Chaucer

(Continued).

THE literary man begins as a translator or setter forth—in altered dress—of other men's works, and, later, develops—if a genius—a style of his own, one independent of that of his teachers, and we find this is true, in its full extent, of our poet Chaucer. It has been said, with a degree of plausibility, that his literary products may be embraced, in the course of development, under three periods, the French, the Italian, and the English. This being the case, it may be well to say a few words as to the story of literary effort in each of the countries which is indicated by these periods.

French poetry, in the 12th and 13th centuries of our era, was distinguished into two schools, growing out of two dominant dialects, the *langue d'oc* and the *longue d'oïl*.<sup>\*</sup> Of the former, it may be said that it was the language of the troubadours, which influenced Italian literature, bringing forth the classics of the earlier renaissance—which rose in Italy—that wherein the names of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio are conspicuous; and the *terza rima*, (a third or triple rhyme), a peculiar and complicated system of versification, borrowed by the early Italian poets, had its basis and suggestion in France. It was the latter dialect, however, the *langue d'oïl*, which succeeded in conquering the heart and imagination of Europe in the period we have mentioned, and from this source we have what has become the French language. It burst forth into bloom as the poetry from which the English acquired its charm. Of this (French) poetry we have the *Chanson de Roland* by Tuoldus or Théreulde, words from which were quoted at the Battle of Senlac which worked the triumph of William the Conqueror, by the jongleur (bard) Taillefer, who rode exultingly before the Norman hosts, and sang of Charlemagne, of Roland and of Oliver, and of the vassals who died at Roncevaux. This *Chanson* was an early product of the Romance poems which formed a vast body of songs uttered by poet and minstrel in castle, market-place, hostel, and royal court, in praise of some warrior, king, or saint, embellished and adorned by successive mouths till the original grains of fact were overwhelmed by massed golden fable, glowing with the gems of fancy and imagination of countless singers; later, these originally detached songs were woven into a continuous story, and, perpetuated in writing formed the material which has been styled history. The story of Arthur, in its French as in its English dress, is a conspicuous type of this imaginative literature, as is also that of Charlemagne, of Troy, and of Alexander, as well as the celebrated romance of *Aucassin and Nicolette* of the 12th century.

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\* These names have been given because in the former dialect which prevailed south of the Loire, the word "oc" was used for "yes"; in the latter, used north of the Loire, the word "oïl" (the modern "oui") was employed with the same meaning.



Romance marked, in fact, the rise of the irrepressible spirit of gaiety and joy, bold, passionate, unmoral, free, refusing to be buried—in its humanity—beneath the soulless asceticism of the Roman Church. Persecuted as it was by the jealous ecclesiastic, who saw in its triumph the waning of his supremacy, wounded, prostrated, it breathed forth as a flower from its crushed petals, scent of divine sweetness which was enlarged into the wider-spread fragrance of the New Birth! It was the fostering mother, agonizing in its rise to a fuller life, which nourished our great writer, and inspired his efforts, re-clothing our drab speech with dress which excelled that of Solomon in its glory of colouring!

French was the language of the court. We have seen that Chaucer enjoyed the royal favour, and this was the golden key which unlocked for the poet the ivory gate through which he passed to cull "rich flowers of fancy" to delight his age with their form and fragrance!—into an Aladdin's garden, hung with scintillating fruits and gorgeous gems.

His earliest surviving work, one wherein French influence is strong, was *The Book of the Duchesse*, or *The Deth of Blanche*, written in commemoration of the decease of the wife of John of Gaunt, his patron, which happened in 1369, and at this time the poet would be in his thirtieth year. The fact as to his age renders it more than probable that Chaucer had appeared earlier still in the character of an author, and it must be certainly assumed that some of his earlier poems have perished. We have indeed the "leading case" of the poet Caedmon who composed late in life, but Chaucer seems to have been of different mould, to have had more of the character of the later Shelley who had ended his life work at the age at which his forerunner had brought forth his "earliest" literature. One piece is marked, indeed, as one of the productions of his youth by a reference made to his own list in the prologue of the *Legende of Good Women* (ll. 417-30). This is entitled *Origines upon the Maudelayne*, and this has not survived. The characteristics of *The Book of the Duchesse* are principally plagiarisms; not only verse and metre, but whole passages from the French poets, the *Roman de la Rose*, of which we shall speak presently, and Guillaume Machault, as from the "historian" Foissart, are pressed into service, the dream, the May morning, the whole machinery of the poem exhibit French conventions, while its tender and charming passages are redolent of the French spirit. There is in the poem no trace of the models later adopted, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio; while there is an equal absence of the Latin authors studied by him so thoroughly, in after life, and of his racy and playful humour.

The *A.B.C.*, a poem based upon the successive letters of the alphabet, which form the initials of its lines, is French in character. It is a free translation of Guillaume de Deguilleville's *Pèlerinage de*

*la Vie Humaine*, (Pilgrimage of Human Life). This poem is no masterpiece, but there are magnificent lines in Chaucer's version, and some considerable skill is shown in the changing of the short-line stanzas of the original into a five-accent metre, and in the liberties taken by the author owing to a manifest difficulty in beginning the stanzas each with a new letter. It was possibly written before the poem just mentioned, though this is disputed. Its wording, rhyme, and versification testify to an experienced hand, and these are little inferior to those of the *Deth of Blaunche*. We may note the prototype of the alphabetical arrangement in Psalm 119, and Lamentations 1-4.

The *Romaunt of the Rose* may now claim attention. This poem, —if written by Chaucer, about which there seems to be some doubt— was a translation of the French original, the *Roman de la Rose*, a poem of 4,000 lines by Guillaume Lorris, 1237, extended to over 22,000 by Jean Clopinel about 40 years later. Chaucer is credited with having translated a poem bearing this name, but the English fragment of the work, once attributed to him, containing about 7,700 lines, is, evidently, with the exception possibly, of the first 1,705 lines, no part of Chaucer's work. This would seem to be proved by the consideration of its metre, alien to the poet's style, and the occurrence of pre-Chaucerian rhymes and words.

We may now consider the following question: How far does the first—the French—period of Chaucer's literary life extend? and this has been answered by fixing the year 1372 as its terminus. After this time we find the influence of Italian thought upon our poet.

Dealing with his several amorous poems called *Complaints*, we may consider among others, *A Complaint to His Lady*, and *A Balade of Complaynt*, the former may be regarded as a genuine production: this is apparent in view of the imitation of Dante's *terza rima*, and the close resemblance of several lines to those occurring in the poet's *Pitié*, *Anelida*, and *Parlament of Foules*.

The latter has resemblances to the former, and may be genuine, but is not without suspicion. They betray the romantic passion of the lover, who, "sighing like furnace with a woeful ballad made to his mistress' eyebrow," distracted by her beauty, hopeless with unrequited passion, seeks death rather than life, absolving the queen of perfection from all blame though she is the root of his disease and unhappiness. She is blameless since Nature has made her so, that she must smile when she sees men sigh! It has been argued that these *Complaints* are bound closely together by the similarity of the subject, the poet's love for a high-born dame who does not return his affection, but sneers and laughs at his pains.

These poems were written, probably, between the author's return to England from the Continent in November 1373, and his marriage with Philippa in the following year, and not later, as the style and

sentiment expressed do not agree well with the cynicism of his later years. No man marries his first love, and his wife was not the object of his early passion!

Chaucer began with straightforward narrative in his *Life of Seynt Cecyle*, composed about this time, and containing some imitations from Dante's *Paradiso*. This appears as the *Second Nonnes Tale* in the Canterbury series, is taken from the *Legenda Aurea* (Golden Legend) of Jacobus de Voragine, and is the weakest of his works: the story of the *Patience of Grisilde*, (the *Clerkes Tale*, in the above-named series, is more pleasing, adapted from the Latin version by Petrarch of a story by Boccaccio. *The Story of Constance*, (The Man of Lawes Tale), was taken from the Anglo-Norman Chronicle of Nicholas Trivet, 1331. Herein Chaucer is seen struggling to put some substance into another weak tale, and yet is without the courage to remedy its radical faults, though he does as much for the heroine as the conventional exaltation of one virtue at a time permitted him.

The part of Puritan sat ill upon the jovial Shakespeare of the 14th century!

A change took place in the tone of Chaucer's poems after the period of devotional literature. The poet was sent abroad on special missions from the end of 1376 to the beginning of 1378, and another absence from England extended from May of the latter year till the following February (1379), in Lombardy. He is thought to have devoted his leisure to astronomy and Latin, and has given full proof of this in the *Complaint of Mars*, which is a subtle reference to a meeting between the planets Mars and Venus in the sign Taurus, where they are surprised by the Sun on his entering the same sign on the 12th of April. Reference is made to the classic story, but it is supposed to describe a real astronomical event, and the date of the poem has been worked out by Professor Thurein, of Berlin, and is fixed at 1379.

After an attempt, abandoned because unsuccessful in constitution of plot, *Queen Anelida and Fals Arcyte*, founded on Boccaccio's *Teseide*, Chaucer wrote a prose-work, *Boëthius' Consolation of Philosophy*, the reminiscence of which enriched many after poems and inspired short pieces; but the English of that day proved inadequate to reproduce the Latin original.

Chaucer achieved his greatest artistic triumph in *Troilus and Criseyde*. The plot was taken from the *Filostrato* of Boccaccio, who is followed, step by step, through the poem, whose characters are clothed with flesh and blood, and which exhibits, in convincingly human spirit, the glory and tragedy of youth, work wherein vivid colouring, humour, and pity have their highest expression. This was written in 1382. This poem is accompanied chronologically

by the fable of *Palamon and Arcite*, which is now known as the *Knights Tale* in the celebrated Canterbury series. Its plot is taken from Boccaccio's *Teseide*, but only as far as is deemed needful, and what is made use of is brightened and humanized. Theseus, the arbiter of the plot, is developed significantly. Emile, the heroine, and her two lovers receive as much individuality as is possible without a disturbing of the atmosphere of romance. The whole story is vivified, articulated and expressive.

*The Parliament of Foules*, a short poem of 699 lines, commemorates the betrothal or marriage of Anne, of Bohemia, to Richard II (1381-2). This is a charming sketch, wherein, on St. Valentine's day, the birds counsel the Formel (female) Eagle on the choice of a mate.

A more ambitious venture, *The Hous of Fame*, shows the poet borne aloft by an eagle to the temple of Fame; he describes what he sees and hears there, but breaks off in apparent inability to get home; this poem shows a curious mixture of poetic ideals, Chaucer's talk with the eagle betraying personal touches and considerable humour.

*The Legend of Good Women* is the last of Chaucer's works to be mentioned here. Its most familiar passages, in the Prologue, are those in which Chaucer expresses affection for the daisy, and the attack by Cupid, the love-god, on his loyalty, and the defence thereof by Alceste,\* the supreme figure in the poem—the queen over nineteen of Cupid's "saints" (women), whom Chaucer had intended to have shown as the devotees of the grand passion, but of whom he portrayed nine only, becoming, apparently, wearied in his work. Some of the tales, notably that of Cleopatra, rank with Chaucer's best productions. The loss of ten stories may possibly be regretted less than that of the celebration of Alceste, and the possible epilogue which might have excelled the glories of the prologue.

We will end with a quotation from this work :—

Hyde, Absalon, thy giltë tresses clere ;  
 Ester, ley thou thy mekenisse al adown,  
 Hyde, Jonathas al thy frendly manere ;  
 Penelopee, and Marcia Catoun,  
 Make of your wifhode no comparison ;  
 Hyde ye your beautes, Ysonde and Eleyne  
 My lady (Alceste) comith, that al this may disteyne.

We hope next month to deal with Chaucer's best-known work, *The Canterbury Tales*.

A. J. HACKING.

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\* Alceste, or Alcestis, is a character portrayed by Euripides, a Greek poet, in a play with that name. She is shown as giving up her young life to save that of her husband whom a doom of the gods had destined to perish. The whole story is powerful and affecting.

## The Law of Social Progress

### II

**Rise of Christianity.** It was under such conditions as these, that Christianity extended its influence among the Roman proletariat. The prediction was made by the pioneers of this new religion, that the old order of things was about to pass away to give place to a new. The rich and mighty were to be brought down from their seats, and the humble and meek were to be exalted. It was declared by the young carpenter of Nazareth, who became the central figure of this new agitation, that it would be as difficult for the rich man to enter into the new social order about to be established, as for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.

Under this new order of things, the great among them would administer to those that were least.

If the rich man was desirous of joining the new movement, then he must be prepared to sell all that he had and give to the poor.

For the Cause which alone was worthy, old associations must be given up, and, where necessary, even the closest family ties must be broken. Life itself must be sacrificed, rather than that the Cause should be betrayed, for he that loseth his life in such a movement shall, in reality, find it.

Impatient ones must never despair if victory seemed long delayed, for "he that continueth to the end, the same shall be saved."

These utterances, when considered in their relation with the material conditions prevailing at the time, are strikingly significant. Their effect, in the widespread influence they had on the common people, need occasion no wonder. Nor need we be surprised at the action of the ruling-class authorities in seeking to suppress the movement by the arrest and condemnation of its chief propagandist.

No movement, however, was ever suppressed by persecution or by the martyrdom of its adherents; rather do such methods accelerate its growth. And so it proved with Christianity. In three centuries it had attained such proportions as to become a positive menace to the Roman Empire. What, however, the ruling class fail to accomplish by persecution and attempts at suppression, they often succeed in by patronage and compromise. It turned out so on this occasion. When in the year 312, Emperor Constantine saw his vision, became converted to Christianity, and made his terms with the more wealthy and influential Christians by adopting Christianity as the authorized religion of the Empire—Christianity as a force with the toiling masses lost it strength and influence; as the religion

of the ruling class it became a weapon for keeping the masses in subjection. A religion that had grown out of, and reflected, the conditions of the oppressed, was bound to become in the hands of the oppressors—determined to maintain their oppression—a more or less organized hypocrisy; it has retained that characteristic ever since.

If ever an example was provided of proving the impotency of religion alone in securing the emancipation of the oppressed, it is to be found in Christianity. Christ himself believed that the generation of his own day would not pass away without seeing the realization of the new kingdom of justice and equality; and yet here we find ourselves, two thousand years later, with the rich exploiters still in the seats of the mighty, and with the toiling masses still in their oppressed condition. Christianity failed, as it was bound to fail, simply because the material means were as yet undeveloped which would make the emancipation of the enslaved masses a possible object for achievement.

Failing to achieve a real, palpable salvation, it could only perpetuate its existence by becoming a ruling-class religion which fixed the people's hopes on a fantastic spiritual salvation in some unreal world, and at a period remote enough to leave the ruling class in undisturbed possession of all the good things of this life.

The adoption of Christianity by Constantine did not, however, save the Roman Empire; the economic causes of decline were too powerful for that. The invasions by the Teutonic tribes completed the processes of dissolution, and by the end of the fifth century, Rome, with all its power and grandeur, had passed away.

**Feudalism.** For the next five centuries no settled or orderly system of government was possible, and conflict and anarchy were universal. Eventually this chaotic anarchy was reduced to a system of order which made further social progress possible. Out of the amalgamations and absorptions which took place between the invading barbarians and the various elements which had composed the old Roman society, there gradually began to take shape a new economic system, which ultimately formed the basis of a new social order.

This new social order which dominated Europe throughout the middle ages, from the tenth to the fifteenth century was the Feudal System. When once feudalism had established itself, all the surviving elements and institutions left over from Roman days shaped themselves to the Feudal form.

It was upon the Feudal model that the Roman Catholic Church based itself, and arose to its mediæval supremacy. Not in form only, but also by its material possessions did the Church become a most powerful Feudal institution. The Church never has, except in

theory, neglected the material means of assuring its spiritual supremacy; "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth" is a dictum which it has always studiously ignored in practice.

Under the Feudal system, the land with people attached was divided among so many feudal barons—the people acting as serfs to the latter. About one-half of the labour time of the serfs was given to producing wealth for the feudal lords, the remaining half being taken up in satisfying their own needs. While being an advance on the old slave system, feudalism, still represented a system of exploitation, and the social antagonism still existing generated frequent revolts. The peasants' revolt which took place in England in 1381, was the first historic labour uprising recorded; it drew a great deal of its inspiration from the more communistic utterances of the New Testament. Brave old John Ball, the parish priest, was its prophet, and he suffered martyrdom at the hands of the ruling class, for having dared its authority by championing the cause of the people.

While feudalism was still supreme, it became the practice of feudal lords to confer special privileges on a number of their serfs to engage in certain trades and handicrafts. These traders and handicraftsmen became gradually differentiated and separated from the rural serfs, and formed a section to themselves which eventually laid the basis for the new towns. Interchange of goods between these trading centres increased the importance and influence of this new class of traders, and ultimately resulted in the shifting of the centre of economic gravity from the feudal manors to the newly-arisen boroughs. The increased demand for goods which accompanied growing interchange, gave rise to a demand for labour greater than could be met by the traders and craftsmen themselves. A call for outside labour was therefore made. This was responded to by the discontented rural serfs who were only too ready for an opportunity of escaping the exactions of the feudal lords.

**Capitalism.** Thus, coincident with the development of the new economic system of capitalism, there also went on the development of two new economic classes: the capitalist class on the one hand owning the means of production, and the working class on the other owning nothing but its labour-power which it had to sell in order to live and reproduce its kind.

Further sub-division of labour, the discovery of new trade routes and the consequent growth of foreign trade, and the increasing use of mechanical appliances in production—all led to increased expansion of the capitalist system of industry. This expansion was kept within rigid limits, however, by the restrictive influence of feudal institutions. A stage was eventually reached when any further development of the capitalist system of industry became incompatible with the maintenance of the Feudal system. The Feudal system therefore had to go.

**Meaning of the Religious Reformation.** Now the great International centre of feudalism was the Roman Catholic Church. It had organized its own hierarchy on the feudal model; it had united the whole feudalized Europe into one grand political system; it surrounded all feudal institutions with the halo of divine consecration; and, lastly, it was by far the greatest feudal exploiter of any, as it had in its own possession about one-third of the land of the Catholic world.

Before profane feudalism, therefore, could be successfully attacked, this, its sacred central citadel, had to be overthrown. The bourgeois movement against feudalism had, consequently, to take a religious direction, and assume a religious disguise.

The war cry against the Catholic Church was first raised by Luther in Germany, in the year 1520. It was responded to by two political insurrections in rapid succession—one in 1523, and the other in 1525.

The next great bourgeois upheaval was due to Calvin's influence, and took place in England in the seventeenth century. This revolution was initiated by the middle class of the towns, and it was taken up and carried through by the yeomanry of the country districts under Cromwell's leadership.

The third great upheaval occurred in France towards the end of the eighteenth century. The French Revolution drew its intellectual inspiration from the Freethinkers; it was by far the most complete of all the bourgeois revolutions, and ended in the final destruction of the Feudal class in France.

**The Industrial Revolution.** The overthrow of Feudalism and the triumph of the capitalist class, left the field clear, and set free the forces, which have led to the development of the modern system of industry.

Under capitalist control and direction the productive forces have expanded to limits inconceivable to those living under former economic systems. From the puny tools and crude methods of production in vogue during the handicraft period, to the perfected instruments and marvellous processes prevailing to-day, society has travelled a tremendous distance.

The capitalist mode of production dates in England from the middle of the sixteenth century. Its starting point is marked by one master simultaneously exploiting many wage-workers. Its first period is that of manufacture. The principal elements of manufacture are the detail labourer and the detail tool which develop to a point where it is possible to transform the tool into a machine and the craftsman into a machine minder. This transformation marks the



period of mechanical production or machinofacture. To fix the beginnings of this mechanical revolution we need only give the dates when some of the more important of that remarkable series of inventions were first introduced.

In 1730 Watts invented the Roller-spinner ;  
 In 1738 Kay " " Fly-shuttle ;  
 In 1764 Watts " " Steam-engine ;  
 In 1770 Hargreaves " Spinning-jenny ;  
 In 1771 Arkright " " Water-twist ;  
 In 1779 Compton " " " Mule ;"  
 In 1785 Cartright " " Power-loom ; and it was  
 In 1785 also when the Steam-engine was first used in mining.

C. WATKINS.

*To be continued.*

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## Melodic Minors and a Rhapsody

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TO you gentle and unsophisticated reader it is sufficient to know that we arrived there when the threatening clouds were scudding across the sky. We had left an atmosphere permeated with *patriotism* and an horizon limited by coronation bunting for one of those open waving areas, for which the county is famous, and the health giving breezes that blow up hill and down dale and across wide stretches of country. The clouds did no more than threaten. I did not consider it at all strange when after seeing the dust cloud sweeping along, curving and pirouetting in all sorts of fantastic forms I recalled Ruskin's *Queen of the Air*, from which I quote, "the two Harpies, "Storm-swift," and "Swift-foot," are the sisters of the rainbow—that is to say, they are broken drifts of the showery south wind, and the clear north wind drives them back ; but they quickly take deeper and more malignant significance. You know the short, violent, spiral gusts that lift the dust before the coming rain : "the Harpies " get identified first with these, and then with more violent whirlwinds, and so they are called "Harpies," "The Snatchers," and are thought of as entirely destructive ; their manner of destroying being twofold—by snatching away, and by defiling and polluting. This is a month in which you may really see a small Harpy at her work almost whenever you choose. The first time there is a threatening of rain after two or three days of fine weather, leave your window well open to the street, and some books or papers on the table ; and if you do not, in a little while, know what the Harpies mean ; and how they snatch, and how they defile,—I'll give up Greek myths."

So reflecting on the above and the interesting passages which follow, too long to quote, with faces aglow and blood tingling in the finger-tips, feeling "full of bracing health and happy impulses," we were scarcely aware that the road had narrowed down to a footpath which wound past the country houses and up the hill-side, and appeared at odd intervals visible through the trees. After following the path, wending our way down a rocky slope and crossing the brook at the bottom of the vale and then threading a tortuous path through the woods, we found a sandy sloping road ahead.

Halfway up we heard singing, and on reaching almost to the top an open space was presented to our eyes, studded with listening groups of people. On an eminence strewn with boulders were sitting members of the Clarion Vocal Union "breathing soft like a gentle lute" in strains of dulcet harmony, "A Mother's Lamentation," the story of a mother taking leave of her daughter who was emigrating. The music ceased, being but an informal practice. For an interval, fellowship, chatter, and sports reigned supreme. Then the several hundreds adjourned to the grass grown meads to pour forth a torrent of song to the sombre listening woods.

I had an idea they would be there. I did not know their names. "What's in a name," if the minds atune?

"You ought to have been with us," said a voice. "There's been an argument about the Central Labour College. It's over now."

Now I *knew* they had come.

Two young men came through the gate. "Is there anybody down there?"

"No, I'm looking for someone too!"

T'was thus we met. Soon we found out more of each other. I've forgotten their names, but again I must invoke the aid of Shakespeare and write this article so that they shall not be "unhonoured and unsung." Wherever they be, this printed page will greet their eyes. Maybe they came from Rochdale. I'm not sure and so I've mentally reduced our Lancastrian towns to this position, now that these roamers have become famous.

"Seven cities contend for Homer dead,  
Through which the living Homer begged his bread."

I've gone to a great length to tell the readers who indubitably show intelligence of a high order and culture by reading my articles, that I met some fellow Plebeians on Coronation Day.

At this juncture the Editor will say "Zounds!" but to tell you frankly he's sweating me.

This is a pot-boiler!

But now to the moral which shall adorn my tale.

Amphion is said to have built the wall of Thebes with his lyre, the capital of Arthur's kingdom we are told, was built by divine music, and we who have been blessed with music in our souls and are not "fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils," often build a brighter and better England. We know that the Jewish history tells that the great city of Jericho fell before the might of music; and Nero fiddled whilst Rome was burning, but the study of Bach's fugues will not shorten the working day, nor will the playing of Rubinstein's Melody in F by fingers that I know, give me the key to the solution of the Woolcombers' and Seamen's Strikes.

I'll finish now.....the discord begins to dominate the melody.

MEREDITH F. TITTERINGTON.

## The Proletarian Theory of Understanding

### II

**I**N the study of botany the human mind has for its special object plant phenomena, in the study of sociology it has social institutions for its special object. In the science of understanding the human mind has itself for its object. In our study the human mind is both subject and object. *What is mind, reason, thought, understanding?* This is the problem set down for solution.

When considering mining in general, we include under that head, in spite of their differences, coal mining, gold mining, lead mining, salt mining. Similarly we are here concerned, not with the special forms of thinking, *e.g.* apprehending, judging, inferring, but *with its general nature*. Until this latter question is settled, all sections and subsections of the thought process may be dispensed with.

We lack logical thinking when we fail to recognize that different things are alike, when we fail to see *the interrelation of all things*. Ignorance of economics results in the failure to notice that while all labour is individual, it is at the same time social, that while the miner, the carpenter, the tailor, and the transporter are engaged in different forms of labour, they are all in common producers of value, all in common wage-labourers, all in common the victims of exploitation. Ignorance of monistic thinking, of logic, of true understanding, in the same way, overlooks the universal interrelation, the fact that all things without exception are chips of the same cosmic block. We shall see hereafter that while mining and thinking are different, the difference is not absolute but relative, that both are in general, forms of existence, links in the universal chain of being. Even truth and error are both real—parts of reality. And just as the

economic problem of the hour is how to secure the general interests, the general well-being, so the educational problem is the general understanding, without which general systematic action is not possible. Here do we see the connexion between the cause of the working class and the science of understanding. The working class who in default of mental training have so far been outwitted, must lay hold upon this science of the general. *And for this equipment no academic dignitaries or diplomas are required.* The economic conditions in which the workers are situated, their general needs, their general hardships, urge both their understanding and their organization in the direction of the general good, the general liberty of the masses. With the triumph of the modern proletariat, humanity will become for the first time general, will become a *truth*.

In the special fields of natural science the practice of understanding is well applied. In other words, natural science knows well how to operate with the mind. The proofs of that are found in its results. But when we meet some of these natural scientists outside their specialities, in the field of politics, ethics or sociology, the proofs are present in abundance that the scientific method has been abandoned for the speculative method. We have a striking example of this contradiction in Emmanuel Kant. While his Nebular hypothesis was arrived at inductively, on the field of morals he forsook the scientific method and fled to the mist enveloped regions of introspection. In more recent times Herbert Spencer, Alfred Russell Wallace, Oliver Lodge and William Crookes, are, among others, examples of those who outside their specialities offer "lawyers proofs" in place of scientific proofs. Even our most illustrious Haeckel has not completely rid himself of the last of the metaphysical Mohicans. As we have already said, within their special fields these scientists employ the inductive method. What is more, they are *aware* that they are operating inductively. But what they are not aware of, is the fact that the nature of inductive science is the nature of science in general, that what holds good in physics or biology holds good in ethics and sociology. The parts of the Universe and their relations to each other, whatever their form, are only intelligible by the monistic inductive method. *That this method has not been applied generally is due to a misunderstanding of the general nature of the thought process.* Because natural science has neglected the critique of reason, the theory of understanding, it has operated only practically inductively and not scientifically, like the farmer who has not yet arrived at the science of agriculture.

But has not physiological study investigated thought and shown it to be a property of the brain? "The brain secretes thought as the liver secretes the bile." Quite true, we would reply, cerebral matter is the subject of thought, the faculty of cognition is a property of the brain. "Thinking is a function of the brain." Agreed! But with that is the nature of the thought process by no means explained.

When you have demonstrated the relation existing between subject and predicate you have not explained what thought is, any more than when you have shown writing to be a function of the hand, is the nature of writing explained. You may take the hand to pieces and yet the question "what is writing?" is still unanswered. Similarly the brain may be dissected and subjected to the most minute physiological analysis, and yet the nature of the force of thought will remain unexplained. What physiology has shown, is that thought and the brain are intimately connected. And that is unquestionable. And it must be put to the credit of physical science that by this demonstration the thought process has been divested of much of the fantastic garb and made to appear as a bodily function. However much we admire the triumphs of natural science, we must lodge a complaint against it. By leaving the problem of cognition unsolved, by halting at the point where only the relation of the subject to the predicate is made clear, it left a corner for the High Priest Caiaphas to whom the shrugging-shoulder-Pilates could refer their clients. Of course the people must be kept straight, "lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears" and understand and act! And lest the rein should break, the "workpeople" must have "something higher," even if it be only a "Higher Education."

There can be no subject without an object. A subject which does not predicate an object is no subject. Just as there could be no sense of touch without tangible objects, or faculty of seeing without light and colour, so there can be no faculty of thought without material that can be thought of. *Without material outside of the brain that can be comprehended, there could be no comprehension, no understanding inside the brain.* Thinking is a form of work and like all work requires an object. You can no more think without an object than a tailor can make a coat without cloth or that a child can be born without both a father and a mother. Could the nature of a child be explained from a study of the father alone? No more can thought be explained from an analysis of the intellectual subject alone. Thought is never perceived alone. It cannot be studied alone but only in action, in its manifestation, and such a study will make clear to us that "a thought is a child begotten by the function of the brain in communion with some other object." *What the intellect therefore accomplishes, it accomplishes not of itself but in connexion with the universal existence of which the intellect is but a part.* When we understand this, then we cease either to debase or to exalt the understanding, to disparage or to idolize it. It is an achievement of our theory of cognition that it breaks in pieces the idols and unmask the servants of Baal.

WILL W. CRAIK.

*To be continued.*

## Strike off Thy Chains!

**A**ROUSE, ye Sons of Labour, in factory, field, and city!

The morning breaks, the bugle shakes

Its clarion notes to wake ye from your rest, 'neath scorn and pity.

As lightning leaps from thunder, arouse in wrath and sunder

The chains that bind ye captive to the guarded Lords of Plunder.

Arouse, and strike to win your own in factory, field, and city!

Arouse, arouse, ye sons of toil, from every rank of Labour.

Not to a strife of leaping lead; of bayonet and sabre:

Ye are not murderers such as they who break ye, day and hour.

Arouse! unite! win back your world with a whirlwind stroke of power!

Think on your wives who toil to death in factories of fever:

Your Sister's cry, a prayer to die

Unheeded amid ghastly mirth in the brothels where they leave her.

Look! from *your* ranks they take them, to bind and bruise and break them.

The fairest of your daughters pick, to wrong, abuse, forsake them.

Ye men defied, 'tis Woman cries, and will he longer leave her?

Invisible the chains ye wear; but feel yet not their galling?

Can ye not hear, sore wrought with woe, your wives and daughters calling?

Shall these your frail and fair, still die at the Masters' Profit-altar?

Arouse ye slaves of Work-and-wage;—too long ye blindly falter!

Listen!—in the grey dusk of dawn, your driven children weeping!

In dust and gloom, by the whirling loom

With stunted forms and haggard eyes, watch o'er the spindles keeping!

*Your* children,— they thus broken: and ye have only spoken,—

Your wrath despised. *Arise and strike!* for the Masters' hearts are oaken.

They've wrung your women; chained your children; shall ye still stay sleeping?

Awake, ye guards of Human Right, from every rank of Labour.

Not to a strife of murderous lead; of bayonet and sabre;

Arouse, to rend these wage-slave chains; blood-rusted links to sunder.

Unite! and then resistless strike, like lightning through the thunder!

FRED. F. ROCKWELL.

*J. S. Review.*

## Clippings from *Le Matin*

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**T**HE Botocudos have discovered a way of limiting parliamentary eloquence.

It is very simple. During the full house, just as the orator is going to begin the President says to him :

"Your leg !"

Thereupon the right honourable gentleman balances himself upon one leg. As long as he can maintain this fatiguing position he has the right to speak, but he is not permitted to change legs. Soon the moment arrives, when overcome by fatigue, he gives way to the next speaker. If this system had been adopted in France, the Budget would have been voted long ago, and not so many blunders would have been committed. Imagine M. Jaurès talking and hopping ; at the end of five minutes he would be compelled to admit defeat.

The Botocudos are savages. Their parliamentary conventions ought to be completed. M. Pierre, the genial Secretary of the Chamber, proposes to add to the rules of the Chamber :—

- i. Members from the Right will speak stood on their right leg.
- ii. Members from the Left will speak stood on their left leg.
- iii. Members from the Centre will have the right of choosing.

Under M. Coombes they will choose the right, under M. Briand the left.

Would you like to bet that this system gives the best results ?

We have spoken politics with the open palm, the closed fist, let us try the uplifted leg.

\* \* \* \* \*

Scientists have just examined a dog which replies very clearly "Yes" or "No" when questions are put to him. It is useless to say that this dog is not of French breed.

Don—that is his name—is at present in the Zoological Garden at Hamburg. Moreover, it is in German, and in good German, that he

expresses himself, for this fellow has a perfect diction. To tell the truth his vocabulary is very limited. Here it is :—

Haben (to have) used for asking.

Hunger (hunger) frequently pronounced.

Kuchen (sweets) signifies all desirable things.

Moreover, the ja (yes) and the nein (no) he employs correctly. In fact he has no more words. These five words are sufficient to explain all the ideas not only of a dog, but also of a man.

*To have* is the sentiment of property, covetousness, and pride ; *hunger* is the eternal cry of humanity, the cry of revolts, the word which creates war ; *sweets* are pleasure, glory, love, joys of life, sweets (cakes) which moreover are indigestible. Add to these "yes" and "no" and the language is complete ; all the rest is literature.

This poor Don astonished the professors on the other side of the Rhine. He spoke ! If he spoke his species is capable of progress and intellectual development ? What new possibilities are revealed at a stroke ! Who knows ? The day will come perhaps when the Dog will drink alcohol, enter politics, become ungrateful ; then he will be the equal of Man.

Translated from the French by M. F. T.

"For instance, if a young villager shows any dangerous symptoms of brain activity, I help him to become a schoolmaster or a curate, or something of that sort, and by the time he is ready to begin earning a living he must stick to the existing social order, and he will probably find it his mission in life to teach that only the rich can ameliorate the lot of the poor and make life bearable. He is our best friend."

"Just so. They give us no trouble. Their own people settle them. If a few vagabonds should disgrace their set by not working, the police lock them up. And yet the police belong to their own set. If the police were to side with them, our soldiers would shoot down the police, and yet the soldiers are their own brothers. So not only do the virtuous toil for us, but they will slay each other—shoot down their own brothers and sons, rather than see us the least disturbed. My dear Prince, does this satisfy you that we are safe and that there is something miraculous and magical in our religion ?"

From *Shear my Sheep*, by DENNIS HIRD.