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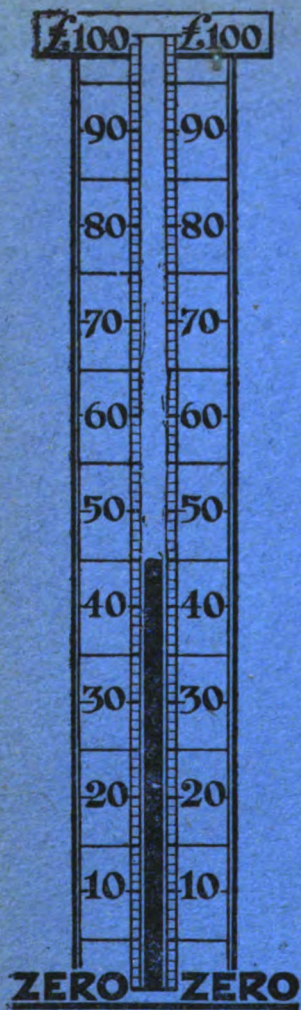
The
PLEBS
MAGAZINE



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MONTHLY

TWOPENCE



We have to
get this
down
to



Zero

**Can we do it
by August 1st ?**

It rests with you.

THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. VIII

June, 1916

No. 5

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Socialism and War

The first part of Mr. Craik's review of Louis B. Boudin's recently published volume, *Socialism and War*, appeared in last month's *Plebs*.

The development of capitalism to its third phase, in which the needs of iron and steel call for an abandonment of democratic institutions and a revival of autocracy, means that the capitalist class of the nations in this phase, can no longer go to a war which can have for its consequence the promotion of human progress. On the other hand, the passage of the nations of Eastern Europe from feudalism into capitalism does away with the need for a war in Europe, which can have such progressive consequences. *The time when the bourgeoisie could go to war for liberty and progress is past, never to return.*

Only the working-class can now fight for progress. But because it is their exclusive task, because they can no longer gain anything along the lines of national struggle, the fight is limited to the lines

of the *class-struggle*, the philosophy of which is in irreconcilable opposition to Nationalism. Socialism is a struggle for equality. Nationalism involves a struggle for superiority and the maintenance of a superior race or nation, just as within the nation it involves the rule of a superior class.

Nationalism is now reactionary. "Its future lies in the past. It must needs demand the retention or revival of "outlived and outworn institutions." He, therefore, who would work for progress must cease to be a Nationalist. Not only can the working class alone be the bearer of future progress. It alone can resist the reactionary wave which seeks to sweep away the useful achievements already won and the democratic principles already acknowledged.

Comrade Boudin goes on to ask "What should Socialists do when they are confronted with the actual *fact* of War." While he throws a great deal of light upon this very complicated question we feel that there is a lack of decisiveness in his final summing up. And probably our comrade feels that too. It is a difficult problem especially at the present time, to solve conclusively. The only people for whom it has no difficulties are those who have always an "eternal truth" ready to hand. We suspect that were a hero called on the battle-fields of Europe, Comrade Boudin would have something more definite to say to us. As he himself puts it "hind-sight is easier than fore-sight."

He sums up the controversy between Bebel and Kautsky, on the subject of the distinction between an *aggressive* and a *defensive* war. He concludes that while Socialists might justifiably participate in a defensive war, the ground of justification can alone be "the defence of the interests of the working class, and not of the interests of the nation."

But how does it stand with the actual practice of the European Socialists in this War? Have they entered the war on grounds of Socialist principle, or as "Germans first" and "Britishers first"? Our comrade's view is sustained by the facts, when he believes that they have participated in this war from ordinary "bourgeois-nationalistic considerations." Hence some of them have found it necessary to revise their Socialism so that it might better square with their Nationalism.

The action of the German Socialists was "utterly indefensible" from the Socialist point of view. The action of the Belgian Socialists on defensive grounds *could* be justified as consistent with Socialist principles. But did the Belgian Socialists *act* from that standpoint? "I cannot acquit the Belgian Socialists, or at least some of them, of the charge of having acted on non-Socialist principles in what they did."

Not "every defensive war is right" from a Socialist point of view. Our comrade emphasizes the impracticability of Bebel's

le—"when we are attacked then we will defend ourselves"—on the ground that it is not always easy at once to determine who is the aggressor, and that the defensive may pass into the aggressive some time before the transition is realized to an extent capable of enabling the working class to stop the war even if they desired to do so. But "the real trouble with this rule is that it is wrong in principle. It is based on the nationalistic principle that the 'nation' or 'country' must be preserved in all its vigour and power; any attack upon it must therefore be repelled, as it is likely to diminish that power." From the Socialist point of view the working class has no "country" or "nation" in the sense that the nation's power is working class power or the nation's interests are the working-class interests. If these differ, how can an attack upon the nation be an attack upon the working class?

The only interest that the workers can have in defending the country, says our author, is "the broadly human one" which holds in abhorrence "all and any kind of subjection and exploitation of man by his fellow men." This looks at first sight to be the humanitarian point of view applied not in opposition to war but for justification of working class participation in it. Only in this case, *sacrifices are necessitated* on humanistic grounds. What is more, the humanistic motive for going to war in defence of freedom, springs from the fact of the class struggle and is actuated by the consciousness that the "subjection of *any* part of the human family" "interferes with the successful prosecution of the class struggle."

When, therefore, the Socialist worker comes to the defence of the country "it is not because it is *his*," but he is actuated by the broad humanistic motive that a part of the human race is threatened with subjection and that another obstacle is being placed in the path of the final emancipation of the entire race." It is noteworthy that the ruling classes of the nations in the War, who never neglect to pursue bad ends for good reasons, have exploited to the full this same humanistic motive. But it is also true that their exploitation of this humanism has been favoured by the indistinct perception of the class lines upon which a humanism to be *effective* should be based. Thus the result has been, in all the countries, that the ruling classes have used the support and power gained from the humanistic motivation of the working class in these countries for the greater exploitation of the working class itself and for the suspension and obstruction of the conduct of the class struggle.

This granted, and the standard endorsed by our comrade Boudin accepted, viz., that the support of the War by the worker is "only permissible as a means of furthering the class struggle," may not be a way to a "real peace" and to a "resumption of neighbourly and friendly relations" be along another road than that of continuing hostilities—the road along which only the proletariat can travel?

We have given an extended summary of this most brilliant of War-Time, on War-Causes, so that our readers may intelligently and at once add *Socialism and War* to their armoury. It is absolutely devoid of all padding. There is no superfluous sentence in the whole volume. And the long woven thread of reasoning is never broken. It might have been written by the Master himself.

We need say no more. For we could thereby add to the brilliance of a book which it will be our agreeable to circulate throughout the length and breadth of the British Movement.

W. W.

The Sinn Fein Dead

When the dark world seems all too desperate,
 A hopeless, hideous struggle without cease,
 When hope is gone, what left but seek release
 In one mad struggle with the thing you hate ;
 Flinging all counsel to the whirlwind, send
 Defiant challenge to the world ; and so,
 Recklessly facing your triumphant foe,
 Pray that some welcome bullet bring the end ?

Yours was this grim resolve that nerves the will
 When faith and hope are fled beyond recall,
 As it was theirs who died at Bunker Hill,
 And those mad boys who held the Roman wall
 Your dreams, maybe, were madmen's dreams ; but
 You gave your lives for them—God rest you all

W. N. EWER. (in the *Herald*, May 6th)

The Plebs Special Appeal

The total amount received for the Special Appeal Fund to May 31st 1917
£55. 0s. 0d.

We have not published recent lists of subscribers in the *Magazine* takes up valuable space, and all contributions are individually acknowledged. We must, however, mention the following recent item :

Woolwich Arsenal Shop Stewards' Committee

There are still a few well-known names on our books which do not figure in the Special Appeal Subscription List. We shall be obliged, of course, to put this little matter right—on receipt of some payment from them. There's still some way to go before we get to Zero, and we are sure that their non-response must be due to oversight on their part. We are wondering whether a published list of *non*-subscribers might be helpful.

on 'Irish Nonsense About Ireland'

Plebs readers will be exceedingly interested—both because of the subject and of the author—in the following extracts from an article by Shaw, published in New York and Dublin *before* the Dublin rising, reprinted in full in the *New Age* of May 11th. Since the rising, Shaw has of course (in the *New Statesman* and the *Daily News*) tested very vigorously against the execution of the leaders, which he characterized as the "shooting in cold blood" of men who were prisoners of war." "I have used all my influence and literary power to discredit the Sinn Fein ideal," he wrote (*Daily News*, May 10th)

... But I remain an Irishman, and am bound to contradict any implication that I can regard as a *traitor* any Irishman taken in a fight for Irish independence against the British Government, which I regard as a fair fight in everything except the enormous odds my countrymen had to face."

The concluding paragraphs quoted below are also interesting as summarizing Shaw's point of view with regard to the war. It will be noted that he, too, is beginning to take into account the possibility of the possible advantages—of a "stalemate."

HERE has come into my hands, from a quarter it was not meant to reach, a certain address "To the Men and Women of the Irish Race in America," which is so typical of the sort of thing which gives its title to this article that I feel moved, in the interests of my unfortunate countrymen in Ireland, to offer a piece of my mind concerning it. As an Irishman I have been familiar with Irish patriotic rhetoric all my life. Personally it had no use for it, because I always wanted to get things done, not to let myself go for the satisfaction of my temperamental encouragement of my already excessive national self. I have seen it going out of fashion with the greatest relief. If something like an Irish national theatre was established in the Strand, Dublin, and a genuine Irish drama began to be produced, I enjoyed the new Irish plays because the heroes always blew down the house by declaring that they were sick of Ireland, expressing an almost savage boredom at the expense of the old Irishmen who were usually the fools of the piece when they were villains, and, generally, by damning the romantic Old Ireland up hill and down dale in the most exhilarating fashion. Although this might easily have become as tiresome and insincere as the most obsolete claptrap of the stage Irishmen who, when they confess that they have never been in Ireland, call themselves American Gaels, yet it was for the moment a notable step in the right direction, and it has finally straightened itself out in such admirable lines on modern Ireland as that recently put forward by a young Irishman of genius, St. John Ervine, in the guise of a speech of Sir Edward Carson, to whom about half a dozen lines are devoted in the course of the substantial little volume.

The first comment provoked by the appeal "to the men and women of the Irish race in America" is that, though it is dated 1916, there is no internal evidence that it was not written in 1866 (as, indeed, most of it was) except the inevitable allusions to the present war. In point of learning nothing and forgetting nothing these fellow-patriots of mine leave the Bourbons nowhere. . . .

Ireland is to be freed from the horrible contamination of association with England by complete political separation from her. "Ireland looks forward with hope and confidence to the complete breakdown of British misrule in Ireland as the certain outcome of the present war." "Success for England would mean only additional heavy burdens for Ireland and a renewal of strength to her age-long oppressor and tyrant." Finally, there is an appeal to America to maintain the principles of—among other illustrious Americans—Abraham Lincoln! As Lincoln is the most famous Unionist known to history, the Separatist patriots could hardly have made a more unfortunate selection of a name to conjure with.

Now, as against all this, I venture to ask the Americans of Irish race, and even those Americans who have to blush for less glorious origins, to keep a firm grip of the following facts:—

It is now half a century since the most populous and productive States of North America, compared to the least of which Ireland is only a cabbage garden, and a barren one at that, renounced the idea of independence and isolation, and fought for compulsory combination with all the other States across the whole continent more desperately than the many Irish soldiers engaged in the conflict had ever fought for separation. During that half century no small nation has been able to maintain its independence single-handed; it has had to depend either on express guarantees from the great Powers (that is, the combinations), or on the intense jealousy between those Powers.

In the present war the attack of a huge army of men of different races, speaking half a dozen different languages, and estranged by memories of fierce feuds and persecutions and tyrannies, but combined under the leadership of the Central Empires, made show of national pride, of the spirit of independence, and of bitter memories of old hostilities in England, France, and Russia. The three ancient enemies, any of whom could have swallowed Ireland more easily than Ireland could swallow her own Blasket island, had to pocket their nationalism and defend themselves by a combination of the British Fleet, the French Army, and the Russian steam roller. And even when these immense combinations were in the field one of them was glad to buy the help of moribund Turkey and immature little Bulgaria, and the other to offer Italy, in defiance of all nationalist principles, a lodgment in Dalmatia if she would come to the rescue.

In the face of these towering facts that blot out the heavens with smoke and pile the earth of Europe with dead I invite America to contemplate the spectacle of a few manifesto writing stalwarts from the decimated population of a tiny green island at the back of God-speed, claiming its national right to confront the world with its own army, its own fleet, its own tariff, and its own language, which not 5 per cent. of its population could speak or read or write even if they wanted to. Unless the American climate has the power of totally destroying the intelligence of the Irish race its members will see that if Ireland were cut loose from the British fleet and army to-morrow she would have to make a present of herself the day after to the United States, or France, or Germany, or any big Power that would condescend to accept her; England for preference. . . .

And now we are told—as if it were something to be proud of—that “the heart of Ireland is not changed.” It does not occur to the gentlemen who have made this announcement, which is fortunately not true, that in that case the sooner it is changed the better. “Deprived as Ireland is by the Defence of the Realm Act of the right to express any national opinion” is the beginning of their depressing declaration. Pray, is England any the less deprived of the rights of her people by this reckless Act? Has anything happened in Ireland since the war began, whether in suppressions of papers, arbitrary arrests, excessive sentences without trial, even secret executions, that can be compared for a moment to the abuses of the Act that have occurred in England? And can such abuses be restrained in any other way in either country than by the peoples of the two countries making common cause against them instead of, as this silly document does, accusing “the English” of guile, calumny, falsehood, cant, and what not, taunting them with the very defeats the English papers try to minimise by such headlines as “Heroic Stand by the Dublin Fusiliers.” . . .

In short, the war is a convincing demonstration of the futility of the notion that the Irish and English peoples are natural enemies. They are, on the contrary, natural allies. The whole case for Home Rule stands on that truth, and the case against it, on the contrary falsehood. If we are natural enemies England must either hold us down or be herself held down by us. If we are natural allies there is no more ground for denying self-government to us than to Australia. There is, of course, what the Germans call the class War always with us; but that is a bond of union between the workers of all nations, and not a division. . . .

As matters now stand this war is just as much Ireland's business as England's or France's. A mere victory for British navalism over Prussian militarism might be as great a misfortune as a victory for Prussian militarism over British navalism. But a victory

of Western Democracy and Republicanism over Hohenzollernism and Hapsburgocracy, or a stalemate with the Prussian and Austrian legions held up hopeless by French and Irish Republican soldiers, even shoulder to shoulder with Britons who think that they never, never, never will be slaves because they have never been anything else, would be a triumph for the principles that have made the United States the most important political combination in the world, and, through the United States, made the Home Rule movement possible in Ireland.

I am under no illusions as to the extent to which modern nominal democracy and republicanism are still leavened by the old tyrannies and the old intolerances. I have declared in season and out that the task before us is not so much the sweeping out of the last monarchs as the Herculean labour of making Democracy democratic and Republicanism republican. It was by devoting my political life to the solution of that problem that I learned to see mere romantic nationalism in its essential obsolescence and triviality. There is such a thing as Irish freedom, just as there is such a thing as Cork butter. But it was by studying foreign butter and tracing its excellence to its source in foreign co-operation that Sir Horace Plunkett and George Russell, the only two noted Irishmen who have done anything fundamental for Ireland in my time, have kept Cork butter sweet. And it is from England and America that the Irish will have to learn what freedom really means. . . .

Ireland, without the least regard to its squabble with England, must group itself in a combination of which the real centre is Western republicanism and democratic internationalism. . . . The Irish patriot may demand in desperation whether he is to fight shoulder to shoulder with the English Unionists and Russian autocrats against the enemies of his "age-long oppressors;" but the reply is inexorably Yes. Adversity makes us acquainted with strange bedfellows. The Czar, when this war came upon him, must have exclaimed to M. Sazonoff, "Good Heavens! do you mean to tell me that I, an absolute Emperor and a Romanoff, am to fight against my imperial cousins the Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns who stand with me as the representatives of the principle of monarchy in Eurpoe, on the side of this rabble of French and Irish republicans, this gang of Serbian regicides, this brace of kings who are so completely in the hands of Parliaments of middle-class lawyers that their own subjects call them india-rubber stamps!" If the Czar has to swallow that, even an Irish patriot must not be surprised at not having it all his own way. He must, therefore, console himself by considering that, in the words of a deservedly celebrated Irish dramatic poet,

Fate drives us all to find our chiefest good
In what we can, and not in what we would.

The Law of Supply and Demand

HOW IT WORKS IN WAR-TIME

IT is only as the reports and accounts for 1915 come out that a correct idea can be formed of the benefit this catastrophic war has been to the majority of our large industrial concerns. The following is a list of companies whose reports and accounts have appeared during the past few days. The difference between the profits for the two years shown is even greater than appears, for in practically every case the 1915 profit is stated after allowing for the excess profits tax, additional depreciation or extra reserves, most companies now adopting these and other devices to render less conspicuous their war-time prosperity.

	1914		1915
	£		£
Smithfield and Argentine Meat Co.	25,732	...	142,055
Waring and Gillow	35,217	...	100,885
Projectile Co.	30,739	...	194,136
Lanarkshire Steel	28,144	...	45,985
Frederick Leyland Steamship	337,188	...	1,196,683
Sutherland Steamship	94,600	...	295,200

Waring and Gillow's sudden prosperity is not due to any better business in the ordinary furniture trade, but to war contracts. The Projectile's Co's figures are astonishing even for an armament company; after applying £47,500 in satisfying the balance of the prior claim of the Debentures, the Ordinary Shares receive their first dividend—one of 50 per cent.

(*New Statesman* 'City' article, April 29th, 1916.)

The Co-operative Wholesale Society gives us some authentic particulars of the rise in prices of food of English working-class consumption. The purchasing power of a pound two years ago is now equal only to 11s. 2d.; the 5s. per week that the State grants to its Old Age Pensioners is now worth to them in food only as much as 2s. 11d, was then . . . There are still adult women in *controlled establishments*, besides many others to whom Section 7 has been applied (forbidding them to leave their employment), not getting threepence an hour.

(*New Statesman*, May 6, 1916.)

When things seem twisted and out of joint
 Don't get discouraged and quit the game;
 The corkscrew never goes straight to the point,
 But—it gets there just the same!

(*London Opinion*.)

Have YOU done anything to help the PLEBS through a trying time?

Outlines of Political Economy

(Continued.)

STUDY OUTLINE No. 20.—SIMPLE REPRODUCTION.—CIRCULATION OF CAPITAL.—The circulation of capital considered as industrial capital—and all other forms of capital presuppose and are dependent upon industrial capital—consists of three acts:—(1), purchase of means of production and labour-power, or M-C; (2), the process of productively consuming means of production and labour power, or P.; and (3), the sale of the commodities resulting from the process of production and loaded with surplus value, or C. + M.

For present purposes, we leave aside the various divisions of the surplus value and *assume* that the whole of the surplus value goes to the industrial capitalist. This assumption in no way vitiates the analysis to be made while, on the other hand, the process is simplified thereby.

PRODUCTION AND REPRODUCTION.—The process of production, be its social form capitalist or otherwise, must at the same time be a process of reproduction. The means of production and labour-power must be continuously replaced. The commodities sold must be transformed into a sum of money large enough to replace the worn out machinery, the raw materials and labour-power used up, with an equal quantity of the same.

The surplus-value remaining may either be consumed by the capitalist,—individual consumption—-or it may be partly consumed and partly accumulated as capital—productive consumption. In the latter case, the scale of production is enlarged.

Here, however, we have first to consider the case of simple reproduction, i.e. where there is no extension of the scale of the successive processes of production. This implies, therefore, that the capitalist spends the whole of the surplus on behalf of his own personal consumption.

THE LABOURER.—The labourer not only produces this surplus. He produces also the variable capital out of which his future wages are to be paid. It is not the capitalist who graciously provides in advance, the wages of future labourers. The wages of next year are advanced by the capitalist *out of the value created by labour*, last year. The working class produces its own wages as well as the surplus value.

ORIGINAL CAPITAL DISAPPEARS.—The original capital does not continue for ever. It matters not whether the original accumulation resulted from the personal labour of some capitalist or from other peoples labour. In the course of time it disappears, and capital becomes wholly an accumulation of surplus value or unpaid labour. Assume then that the capital originally advanced was £2,000, the annual surplus value on the same, and consumed each year by the capitalist, was £200,—then in the course of ten years *the original capital has disappeared*. The capital of £2,000 is, thereafter, nothing but an accumulation of labour which cost the capitalist nothing.

One good shove—all together—and that debt will be ancient history.

CONTINUOUS RENEWAL OF SEPARATION.—The labouring class therefore, continually reproduces its own separation from the means of production and the product of its labour. The capitalist advances the daily wage of 3/-. The labourer not only produces a value equivalent to the wage he receives, viz. 3/-, but a surplus value, let us say, of 3/-. The capitalist has advanced his 3/- *productively*. The labourer, on the other hand, must spend his 3/- for the satisfaction of his daily wants. He must, therefore, continually return day after day to produce another 6/- in order to get another 3/-: In short, the labourers ceaselessly, even under the conditions of simple reproduction, *re-create the means of their own exploitation*.

STUDY OUTLINE, No. 21.—REPRODUCTION ON AN EXTENDED SCALE.—PROGRESSIVE ACCUMULATION.—An extension in the scale of production implies an extension of the means of production and the means of subsistence. This, in turn, presupposes that part of the surplus value or surplus labour has been employed in producing these additional means of production and of subsistence. The productivity of labour remaining the same, additional labour will be required.

When part of the surplus value is employed as additional capital, the process of production and, therefore, of reproduction is no longer simple but *progressive*. If we assume a capital of £20,000 with an annual surplus of £4,000 then, if the whole of this surplus were employed as additional capital, the £4,000 would, at the same rate of surplus value, result in a surplus of £800. The £800 would, in turn, give birth to a surplus of £40, and so on. This illustrates the progressive accumulation of capital.

THE LABOURER.—Under these circumstances the labourer not only reproduces the conditions of his own exploitation, but, now, *on a constantly increasing scale*. He increases the commanding power of capital over labour.

DIVISION OF CAPITALISED S-V.—It is important to bear in mind a fact, which official political economy has frequently failed to recognise, viz., that the capitalised surplus-value is not wholly invested as variable capital, as a fund for the payment of wages, but that it is *partly* invested as constant capital—machinery, raw materials, &c.—and *partly* as variable capital.

REVENUE AND ACCUMULATION.—That part of the surplus value spent by the capitalist on his own personal requirements may, in a restricted sense, be designated *revenue* as distinguished from the surplus accumulated for productive consumption.

Historically considered, the capitalist is at first dominated by the passion for accumulation. Later, his wants as a "man of the world" grow more obtrusive and conflict with the money-making passion.

Political economy of the classical school, took this function of accumulation in deadly earnest and proclaimed it to be the function *par excellence* of the capitalist. When the necessity for a growth of consumption on the part of the exploiters, in order to maintain equilibrium between production and consumption, became more imperative, Malthus, about 1820, introduced his proposed division of function. The industrial capitalists, according to Malthus should concentrate on the function of accumulation, while the other function

of consuming on a rapidly increasing scale, should be attended to by such as ground landlords, court nobility, &c., who were especially adept at that art. Malthus, in this way, cleverly justified the existence of these unproductive classes. The necessity of the latter, however, always assumes *the necessity of capitalist production itself.*

ABSTINENCE.—Nassau Senior, an Oxford economist, later designated the capitalist function of accumulation, by the name of "abstinence." In Oxford, to this day, one may still hear that *profits are the reward of "abstinence."* There is no choice for the capitalist, if he would remain a capitalist, in this respect. He *must abstain* from consuming the whole of his surplus unproductively. He *must accumulate* otherwise, another form of abstinence will be his unhappy lot—*abstinence from appropriating the unpaid labour of others.*

FACTORS WHICH DETERMINE EXTENT OF ACCUMULATION.—Given the proportion according to which surplus value is divided into capital and revenue, then the magnitude of the former depends upon the magnitude of the surplus value. Thus all the factors which operate in the determination of the magnitude of surplus-value operate also in determining the extent of accumulation.

(1)—The magnitude of surplus value, in the first instance, depends upon *the degree of exploitation of labour power.* While it has been assumed that the wage paid to the labourer equalled the value of labour power yet, in actual practice, wages have been on different occasions, below this value. To that extent, the accumulation fund of the capitalist has been derived by *transforming value* that should have entered the necessary consumption fund of the labourer, into surplus value.

Consequently, capital has always operated with a tendency to lower the cost of reproducing labour-power, and has been assisted, in this respect, by the growth of competition between the labourers of the whole world.

An increase in the rate of exploitation can, furthermore, enable the capitalist to secure an increased quantity of labour without necessitating any additional outlay in means of production. Marx has shown how this operates for an increased accumulation with reference to the extractive, agricultural and manufacturing branches of production.

(2).—A second factor which has a determining influence on accumulation is *the productivity of labour.* As the latter increases, so also increases the mass of products. The same value is then spread over a larger quantity of products. *Thus the capitalist may consume more without decreasing accumulation.* If he, on the other hand, continues to consume no more than before, then *an additional surplus is available for accumulation.* The cheapening of those products which enter into the consumption of the labourer, reduces the value of labour-power and increases the rate of surplus-value. The same capital, as before, now sets a greater quantity of labour in motion and makes possible *an increased accumulation of unpaid labour.*

There is the further fact to be noted, that the increased productivity of labour enables the old means of production to be reproduced in a more productive form. "The part of capital which is advanced in the form of mechanical

equipment always functions in the productive process *as a whole*, while, as it is worn out only little by little, it transfers its value *only by bits* to the commodities which it successively aids in making." There results, in this way, an increasing difference between the total capital employed and the fraction of it which is used up in each particular operation. Compare that part of capital-value used up on a railway in a single day with the total capital invested in that railway. The railway company, in this case, realises from these instruments of transportation, certain useful effects without incurring any additional expenses.

The labour of the past helps to make living labour more productive. But to the capitalist and his official spokesmen this service is attributed, not to the labourers, who carry on the labour-process, but to the capitalists who appropriate the results of the process. For them, past labour is *in itself* capital. Hence the potency of past labour is regarded as a property of capital. In reality, however, this productive power springs, not from the capitalised form of the social labour process, but from the process itself.

THE FIXED WAGE FUND.—This theory was largely held by classical political economy. It was raised to a dogma by Jeremy Bentham and endorsed by Malthus, James Mill, McCulloch and others. According to this dogma, that part of capital advanced for the purchase of labour-power—the labour fund—is a fixed magnitude. It is nature that fixes the limits of the labour fund. The working class should, therefore, cease to vainly strive to remove this inexorable barrier.

This theory may be illustrated thus:—Assume the total wealth produced to be £100. Assume also that £40 are required to replace the used-up machinery and raw material, and that the profit is put down at £30. There remains £30 available as wage-fund. To expect more is an impossible thing. The fallacy here consists in the *assumption of the rigidity of profits*.

Neither is it correct to assume as rigid, the division of the £30 surplus into accumulated capital and revenue. More or less may be capitalised, or spent. The social capital is a *variable fraction* of the social wealth, which is itself of varying magnitude.

Furthermore, if the whole £30 surplus be capitalised, the proportion into which it is divided into constant and variable capital, is also variable. *How many labourers* are required to supply the quantity of labour necessary to set in motion the materials of constant capital, or *how much* each is to be paid for his labour power, is not a fixed magnitude but *varies with the degree of exploitation of labour-power*.

To be sure the capitalist system imposes limits upon the consumption of the labourer. Such limits are however only "natural" to the capitalist form of production and not natural in the general sense, i.e., natural to *all* forms of production. Nature did not create, one fine morning, capitalists on the one side, and wage-labourers on the other.

The Trade Unions of the post-Chartist era accepted the premises and conclusions of the labour-fund theory. Wages could rise only by keeping down the supply of labourers. Hence the Trade Union policies of promoting emigration, limiting apprentices, &c.

W. W. C.

(To be concluded.)

The Green Grass

The following poem, written by Lce.-Corp. J. Lee, Black Watch, appeared in the *Dundee Advertiser*, and in the monthly journal of the National Union of Journalists.

The dead spake together last night,
And one to the other said :
" *Why are we dead ?*"

They turned them face to face about,
In the place where they were laid :
" *Why are we dead ?*"

" This is the sweet, sweet month o' May,
And the grass is green o'erhead—
Why are we dead ?"

" The grass grows green on the long, long tracks
That I shall never tread—
Why are we dead ?"

" The lamp shines like the glow-worm spark
From the bield where I was laid—
Why am I dead ?"

The other spake : " I've wife and weans,
Yet I lie in this waesome bed—
Why am I dead ?"

" O, I hae wife and weans at hame,
And they clamour loud for bread—
Why am I dead ?"

Quoth the first : " I have a sweet, sweet heart,
And this night we should hae wed—
Why am I dead ?"

" And I can see another man
Will mate her in my stead,
Now I am dead."

They turned them back to back about
In the grave where they were laid :—
" *Why are we dead ?*"

" I mind o' a field, a foughten field,
Where the bluid ran routh and red
Now I am dead.

" I mind o' a field, a stricken field—
And a wae'ful wound that bled—
Now I am dead."

They turned them on their backs again,
As when their souls had sped,
And nothing further said.

The dead spake together last night,
And each to the other said,
"*Why are we dead ?*"

Correspondence

THE DUBLIN RISING

Sir,—You ask me, as an English Trade Unionist who has spent some little time in Dublin, for some expression of my feelings on the subject of the recent rising. The task is not an easy one, for one's sympathies naturally go out to any person or persons prepared to sacrifice everything for their convictions—however wrong, wholly or in part, one may believe those convictions to be. And a Nationalism or Republicanism which, even if triumphant, would leave an employing class still in power, does not seem to me a goal worth the sacrifice of valuable lives.

But my own experiences in Dublin at the time of the strike two years ago help me to understand why some of the Dublin workers came to look upon armed force as an inevitable weapon in their struggle against oppression, and how the "Citizen Army" came to be formed out of the Transport Workers' Union. When I read in the papers recently of the rebels being marched down to the quay for deportation to England, it recalled to my mind that other march when, the scheme having been worked out for sending the strikers' children away to England, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, led by the priests, turned out to frustrate that scheme by brute force. It was in those days—to defend their own women and children from brutal treatment—that the Citizen Army was formed. And Dublin Castle, remember, was allowing (by taking no notice of it) the "free labourers" to be supplied with fire-arms. The funeral procession of Alice Brady, the girl who was shot by a scab, was guarded by Transport Workers armed only with "hurlies" (hockey-sticks). But you cannot meet shots with sticks, and so a Revolver Club was started. Once this spirit had been aroused, it was fostered by police and military irritation, and encouraged by many of the Nationalists who came into touch with the Dublin Labour movement at that time. I remember being helped away after the fight at Amiens-Street Station by someone who said, "This is all the result of your English misrule." "We did not give you the priests," I replied. But the mere fact that one was English was sufficient for one's motives to be questioned—except, of course, by the small handful of class-conscious Internationalists.

One comes back to the old and only solution—Education. And yet what chance is there of educating men and women living under such hopeless conditions as the bulk of the Dublin workers! But it is up to us to see that the lives of men like Skeffington and Connolly have not been sacrificed in vain. We know that the ultimate blame will not be laid at their door, but at the doors of the same class who are ultimately responsible for this horrible war—this war in defence of small nationalities! Let us at least decide *now* that all nationalities shall be merged in one great Internationalism. That, I believe, is what the saner leaders of the recent rising would have recognised as the true goal, had they not been blinded and maddened by their hatred of injustice and oppression.

London, W.

GRACE NEAL

KEEPING THE FLAG FLYING

Sir,—Things being somewhat quiet in our (N.U.R.) branch just now, I am going to try and get some of the articles appearing in the *Plebs* read and discussed at branch meetings. I think this plan has distinct possibilities for good in it, and will most probably result in an increase of circulation. Should the College have temporarily to close, it will help to keep its aims and objects prominently before Trade Unionists until the crisis is past—as well as equipping them to deal with the situation they will have to face.

Edinburgh.

JAS. M. NIXON, (N.U.R.)

THE C. L. C. AND THE PLEBS

Sir,—The threat of a suspension of the Central Labour College's activities has quite depressed me. Even if it has to close down for a time so far as resident students are concerned, cannot the Board and the Staff between them evolve some scheme whereby the correspondence students at least may keep in touch with the institution? We realise now, as much, or more, than ever before, the need for equipment in the struggle for Labour's emancipation. We cannot afford at a time like this to risk the loss of so vital an institution as the C. L. C. Earnest students in various parts of the country will view with genuine dismay the possibility of any such retrogressive step.

As for the *Plebs*—surely its real supporters would willingly pay a double subscription, and pay it now, rather than see it go down! I trust you will call on us to "do our bit" whenever that is necessary.

Bootle, Liverpool.

ARTHUR KEATING

ANOTHER RAILWAY CLERK'S POINT OF VIEW

Sir,—Your contributor, E. M. Newhouse, makes rather a poor case for amalgamation (of the R. C. A.) with the N. U. R., and it will require an abler pen than his to persuade his fellow-members that the time is ripe for reversing the verdict they have so emphatically affirmed against such a step at successive Annual Conferences. Few of the older members of the R. C. A. would dispute the growth of a healthy tendency towards this goal; but a tender plant must not be unduly forced by young men in a hurry with shibboleths to shout.

That the N. U. R. has been a good friend to the R. C. A. few would deny. No-one values more than the writer the vigorous handling of the "case for the clerk" in Parliament by Messrs. Wardle, Hudson, and Thomas. But I think it permissible to doubt whether the R. C. A. has not a just claim to all the assistance the N. U. R. can give it, without putting itself under the obligation to render a *quid pro quo* whenever the latter thinks fit to demand it. The R. C. A. must choose its own time and its own course, despite the vociferations of leather-lunged Joshuas who imagine they have only to shout loud enough to bring down the walls of Jericho.

Mr. Newhouse refers to the "weird and wonderful" objection to the union of forces—that the Companies will not negotiate with the N. U. R. in respect of clerks. In the light of Mr. Bell's agreement (accepting Sir G. Gibb's dictum that the Companies would not permit their clerks being in the same union as the operative grades) this is neither "weird or wonderful"—so long at any rate as the agreement continues in force.

To put it briefly, the clerk is not yet ready for a full meal at the Trade Union board. The A. S. R. S. failed to organize him because it tried to feed him with too strong meat. The R. C. A. succeeded because it realized that the Clerk started with a fifty years' handicap. Some of us may smile at the "try to please everybody" policy of its early years, but it was the only way. Under the present Gen. Secretary's wise guidance, its members and influence have increased by leaps and bounds. Its members—men who for years had stood outside the progressive movements of their time—need years of education before their minds are ripe for the course of action which a small minority of hot-air cranks persuade themselves they are aching for. One branch Mr. Newhouse knows of—with 450 members—cannot get its roll of officers filled. Are these the men likely to swallow a red-hot T. U. programme? To try to induce them to would stampede them.

The R. C. A., working on its lone trail, has done quite as well for its members as the N. U. R. could possibly have done for them. That it has achieved something is proved by the recent boom in membership.

I suggest that Mr. Newhouse should set himself to answer a few 'posers put to young men in a hurry by a writer in the April issue of the *Railway Clerk*. And in the meantime he might accept the invitation repeated at two successive branch meetings, challenging him to carry even a considerable minority of his own branch with him in his desire for immediate amalgamation with the N. U. R.

A. RAND.

(Hackney, N.E.)

Review

A USEFUL TEXT-BOOK

Modern Europe, 1789—1914. By Sydney Herbert. (Macmillan, 2/6 net).

Those Plebeians, and there must surely be many, who have felt the need of a good summary of modern European history, should make a note of this book.

One result of the Great War (says the author) has been that a very large number of people is seeking seriously to understand what are called "foreign affairs." . . . It is a commonplace that the causes which bring States to hostility or friendship can only be understood when something is known of their respective histories, of the manner of their growth, and of the forces which have conditioned that growth. . . . I have endeavoured to show how the internal histories of the European States have affected their external relations, and how these in turn have influenced domestic development. The method of dealing with the history of each nation separately and continuously has many advantages, but these were outweighed in my mind by the desire to describe the forces moulding Europe as a whole.

Mr. Herbert has achieved a very useful summary of events rather than an analysis of "the forces moulding Europe." He believes in "ideas," and

When you've a debt to clear, you soon find out who your real friends are.

accordingly starts off in 1789 with "the principles asserted in the Declaration of the Rights of Man—personal liberty, nationality, self-government."

The reasons why a movement which began as an attempt to reform the domestic institutions of France had such widespread influence (on Europe generally) must be sought, *first*, in the nature of the *social philosophy* which inspired the revolutionists, and *second*, in the internal condition and mutual relations of the contemporary European states.

Some people would have put it the other way about—and even sought for an explanation of the nature of the revolutionary social philosophy in "the internal condition and mutual relations of the contemporary states." Mr. Herbert's misunderstanding of the "economic interpretation of history" (of which, and of its author's life and work he nevertheless gives a quite fair summary) may be illustrated perhaps by a sentence taken from his description of German political evolution in recent years:—

Liberalism has ceased to be a vital force, and has merely become the expression of economic interests.

He does not see, apparently, that Liberalism, when it *was* a "vital force," (that is, when Liberals really and truly believed in the "ideas" of Liberalism) was none the less the expression of economic interests. He only recognizes the economic factor when it comes, undisguised, as a straightforward affair of buying and selling, of markets or money. Yet, in writing of that very Revolution whose social philosophy was to "remodel Europe," he remarks:

In the minds of great masses of (French) men, love of country had become identical with approval of the Revolution; the success of the foreigner meant that the tithes and feudal dues would once more be imposed upon the peasant, and that the middle classes would again be condemned to civic inequality.

And again, after mentioning that England was in the first place hostile or indifferent to any outside intervention in French internal affairs, he has to chronicle the fact that the French domination of the Netherlands "menaced England's security and her commerce," and made the issue for her accordingly "one of life and death." Of course the Revolutionary ideas were important; but *what* conditioned the Revolutionary ideas?

But we wish rather to emphasise the usefulness of this book than to criticise its author's point of view. We also admire his courage. He actually dares to include Marx's *Revolution and Counter-Revolution* in his bibliography; and to remark of the rebuilding of Prussia after its crushing defeat by Napoleon, "Fortunately for Prussia *and for Europe*, men who could begin the task were forthcoming." His footnote to the incident of Bismarck and the Ems telegram is also interesting:—"The word 'forgery' has been used in this connection; it is excessive."

J. F. H.

There are people who can sing "The Red Flag" alright, but who, when the hat comes round, go outside for some fresh air.

The Plebs' Bookshelf

First, as to those novels for Socialists :—A small crowd of Plebeians have recently discovered *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists*, by Robert Tressall, and are wildly enthusiastic about it. Robert Tressall was a builder's labourer, and the General Secretary of the B. W. I. U.—who ought to know—says that this book is IT. (In fact, he insists that only builders—workers in the building industry, I had better say—can properly appreciate *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists*; but still, as it very nearly says in *Solidarity*, "We are exploited together: let us read novels together.") Perhaps a quotation which throws some light on the peculiar title may not be out of place :—

They were the enemy—those ragged-trousered philanthropists—who not only quietly submitted like so many cattle to their miserable slavery for the benefit of others, but defended it, and opposed and ridiculed any suggestion of reform.

They were the real oppressors—the men who spoke of themselves as "the likes of us," who, having lived in poverty and degradation all their lives, considered that what had been good enough for them was good enough for the children they had been the means of bringing into existence. . . .

And the "hero" of the tale, Frank Owen, Socialist, sees that :—

It was because they were indifferent to the fate of *their* children that he would be unable to secure a natural and human life for his.

The book was first published (by Grant Richards) just over two years ago, but no cheaper edition has been issued. So it is a case of the Free Library or a second-hand copy for mere Plebeians! (Mudie's and W. H. Smith's have, I believe, "surplus library copies" for sale.)

* * * * *

Another novel recommended by a *Plebs* reader is Ivor Brown's *Security*, published this year. Those who have read Mr. Brown's *New Age* articles, and his first novel, *Years of Plenty*, will not need any persuading to "ask for more." But here again it is a case of watching and praying for a cheap copy. *Security* deals, in part at any rate, with labour and labour problems. "Most people who write novels about Labour politics," remarked the *Statesman* reviewer, "don't even know the difference between Socialism and Syndicalism, or between the Labour Party and the I. L. P. In *Security* we get three strikes, two of them quite convincingly done, and all of them handled as by an expert, with knowledge at once intimate and peculiar. . . ." Yet another "strike novel" recommended by a Plebeian (and by me) is *The Harbor*, by Ernest Poole. This—as the spelling of the title sufficiently indicates—is an American story, and it is a good one. I am not quite sure whether the author could define the precise difference between Socialism and Syndicalism—or between the A.F. of L. and the I.W.W. But his grip of the main problem is sure enough; and although—like another American Socialist novelist one could mention—he is more than a little of a sentimentalist, he is not (if you ask me) any less likely to appeal to Socialists on that account. . . . One other item, and I must leave novels for this month; another Galworthy—*The Island Pharisees*—has just been added to Heinemann's shilling series.

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is has been a regular 'Shaw month,' and a good many of us are proportionately grateful. First there was the article entitled "Some Neglected Acts of the Irish Rising" in the *New Statesman* of May 6th; then the *News* letter, May 10th; then the *New Age* reprinted "Irish Nonsense in Ireland"—some extracts from which are given elsewhere in this issue; finally, in the *Statesman* of May 13th, there were four pages of Shaw at very best, under the heading "The Case Against Chesterton."* Every one who owns Chesterton on Shaw ((1/- edition available) should get the *man* of that date, and paste in Shaw on Chesterton as a supplement. Start quoting—anyhow, there's got to be room for a line or two:

Mr. Chesterton's notion that he is an anti-Socialist is founded on the erroneous superstition that he was once a Socialist. An early fancy for Socialism no more makes a man a Socialist than an early fancy for the architecture of St. Sophia's makes him a Moslem. In the spirit of the schoolmaster who offered Coleridge a little essay on Method to cure his discursiveness, I recommend my own tracts to Mr. Chesterton, to cure his delusion that social salvation is attainable by a combination of personal righteousness with private property in the form of a picturesque allotment. When Mr. Chesterton combines a knowledge of the law of rent with his regard for the law of God, he will become a Socialist for the first time; and his Socialism will stick. I'll thus on Chesterton's "anti-Modernism":--

I will even go so far as to say that it will serve him right if future professors, specializing in the literature of the Capitalistic Era, explain to their students that they must not rely on traditional dates, as it is clear from internal evidence that though Wells and Bennett and Chesterton are dated as contemporaries, Chesterton must have died before the middle of the nineteenth century, and may perhaps be placed as early as the fifteenth or sixteenth as a master of the school of Rabelais. Wells and Bennett, on the other hand, could not possibly have come earlier than the post-Ibsen period. "As against this," we may conceive the future professor lecturing "it is alleged that one of Chesterton's best books is a monograph on Shaw, who is dated as a contemporary of Wells. But the best authorities are agreed that this extraordinarily enlightened author was one of the pioneers of the twenty-fifth century, and that the allusions to him in the books of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are later interpolations, the pseudo-Chesterton book being probably by Shaw himself, a hypothesis which fully accounts for its heartfelt eulogy. . . ." Not to labour the point further, Mr. Chesterton does unquestionably affect to throw back to the grandfathers of Mr. Bennett and Mr. Wells, rather than forward to the Democracy of Walt Whitman and Edward Carpenter. Like Morris, he goes back to the Middle Ages, but does not, like Morris, finally admit that we are in the Dark Ages, and that the Middle Ages are still ahead of us, and that our news about them is as yet news from nowhere. Nietzsche's appeal to him to be a good European does not move him. His Radicalism is not that of Cobden but of Charles James Fox, including his enthusiasm for the French Revolution, so heavily blown on by Marx and his school.

would like to quote the passage, too, about Chesterton's "romanticinary public-house, the public-house that never was on sea or land do not mention no more unpleasant things—drink is not drink but a

* Since this was written, the *New Age* (May 25th) has also reprinted "The German case against Germany."

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dream, and the worship of Dionysos does not turn into a sick headache. The public-house which is merely "an idealistic mask for the real public-house." But order a back copy of the *Statesman* (6d.) and enjoy yourself.

* * * * *

The "Irish Nonsense About Ireland" article is also interesting in that it provoked a biting attack on Shaw—to the effect that he made more of a belittling and deriding his own countrymen—from the pen of James Stephens, one of the most brilliant of the younger school of Irish writers. The attack was followed a week or two later—after the publication of Shaw's article—on the Irish rising—by an equally outspoken apology. "Your public opinion on the Irish insurrection has given the lie to everything I said in my last letter, and I beg you to believe that I am deeply sorry for having written it," wrote Mr. Stephens. (Both attack and apology were published in the *New Age*.) The book of St. John Ervine's which Shaw refers to, * by the way, is one entitled *Sir Edward Carson and Young Ireland*, and is published by Maunsels', in a series which also includes books on "A.E." & W.B. Yeats, at half-a-crown. References to it which I had seen previous to Shaw's article made me anxious to get it; but the half-crown has not as yet been there where I required. And while on the subject of St. John Ervine, let me mention that I haven't already done so in a previous issue—that Maunsels' have reissued his novel, *Mrs. Martin's Man*, at 2/-, and that it must most certainly be added to the "highly recommendeds" above.

* * * * *

IN MEMORIAM, JAMES CONNOLLY. . . . One hardly knows what to write about that tragedy. The whole problem of Nationalism is so difficult for an outsider to grasp that one is left just puzzled as to how a man of Connolly's type and calibre should have come to play a leading part in so hot a business. Fleet-street, with its usual mixture of caddishness and ignorance, hastened to fasten upon "Larkinism" as a factor in the revolt. (No one in Fleet-street had the remotest idea of what "Larkinism" meant—i.e. simply, like "Syndicalism," a vague term of abuse to be flung at people with the uncomfortable habit, not only of questioning the eternal rightness of existing Law and Order, but of putting forward alternative suggestions for a decent human society.) The tragedy of the revolt, from the point of view, is that "romantic nationalism" was so largely the inspiration of it; and that Connolly—the Industrial Unionist, the sane and practical thinker—should have been goaded by circumstances into sharing it. In the "Bookshelf" one must mention his *Socialism Made Easy*, an efficient piece of simple propaganda; and the second part of the same pamphlet, the Political Action of Labour, as satisfying a statement of the theory of Industrial Unionism as anything I know. *Labour in Irish History* is, of course, a book in a thousand; but, read again in the light of recent events, can there not be found in it something of that extreme and bitter romanticism which at last—so it would appear—swamped his "class-consciousness"?

*see page 101

ness?" Whatever the truth of the matter, the international labour movement has lost a man who deserved the name of "leader;" and he needs no finer epitaph than W. N. Ewer's poem, quoted on another page.

* * * * *

"When 'The Encyclopedia of Human Imbecility' comes to be compiled," wrote Mr. Edward Garnett in the *Daily News* the other day, "the international staff of editors will no doubt devote a special section to the story of the years 1914-16." Or as Shaw puts it in the course of his Chesterton article, "It is unnecessary to urge that there are feeble-minded people in the world; for the war has brought out the fact that there are hardly any other people." Not so long ago we had Sir James Crichton-Browne, a distinguished "scientist," informing the Sociological Society (with cold, scientific impartiality?) that for any English man or woman to marry a German any time within the next 100 years would be "eugenically disgraceful"; the Germans being undoubtedly infected with a "foul moral taint," from which it would take three generations (- 100 years) to cleanse them. Certain of your twentieth century "scientists" certainly make one sympathetically inclined towards Chestertonian anti-Modernism. Then we get a quiet, scholarly person like Mr. Edmund Gosse disfiguring decent paper (in a book of essays) with such an outburst as:

War is the great scavenger of thought. It is the sovereign disinfectant, and its red stream of blood is the Condy's Fluid that cleans out the stagnant pools and clotted channels of the intellect.

Of course, Mr. Gosse—who discovered Ibsen way back in the seventies—is well over military age. But war-fever seems to turn most decent citizens into cads—cads who want younger men to go and fight for them, cads who want to "punish" conscientious objectors, or strikers, or somebody at any rate; cads, in short, who have clean forgotten that decent people count it caddish to demand of any man or woman service or sacrifice which you are not rendering yourself. Human imbecility, forsooth! Behold a man like Cunninghame Graham hastening to protest in the *Nation* against H. W. Nevinson's appeal for clemency in Casement's case, and adding as post-script to his letter the following:-

As Sir R. Casement has been in Germany since the war broke out, he must have known of all the horrors of the Wittenberg and other camps.

Could imbecility—or caddishness—further go? Does the picturesque Graham imply that Sir Roger Casement took over the supreme control of the Central Empires while in Berlin? And how does he know that that misguided "patriot" did not—or would not, had he heard of them—have protested against the horrors of Wittenberg as in times past he protested against the horrors of the Congo or the Putomayo? Is this sort of "argument" a specimen of the New Chivalry?

* * * * *

While on the subject of caddishness, we may as well mention another instance or two—if only to relieve our feelings. How else can one characterize the action of Mr. W. S. Sanders, general secretary of the Fabian Society, who, having himself taken a commission in the Army, writes to the press

to insist that "a Socialist holding conscientious objections to entering the Army must base his justification upon other tenets than those of the International Socialist movement;" knowing, as he must very well do, that such a statement, coming from a man in his position, will inevitably be used by the enemies of that movement to prejudice the case of Socialists who differ from him in their conception of Internationalism? What other term can one apply to sundry recent utterances of Mr. Will Thorne's, who, like a good many others of his fellow M.P.'s, seems to mistake coarseness for "true blue" British bluffness? Or to those "enlightened people" who form societies like the Anti-German Union, and then unblushingly admit (as a lady member of the Executive did in the course of a police-court case in which she gave evidence recently) that she read none of the Union's literature "I didn't know it was for enlightened people . . . You would not distribute such pamphlets among educated people. I thought they were for the lower classes." An illuminating glimpse of "enlightened" psychology! . . . "Every man over 45 is a scoundrel," somebody observes in one of Shaw's plays; one is certainly beginning to wonder seriously whether every man over 45 is not a cad. There was a notable suggestion in a recent letter to the *New Statesman*—that all the fierce patriots over military age should be taken to the front to serve as sand-bags, and thus enabled to "do their bit." What do the Bottomleys and A. M. Thompsons think of the idea?

* * * * *

I take the following gem of a story from *Mufti*, a Paper devoted to Civilian Interests, (printed and published: I'm not sure whether it is still running by Mr. Jas. Sellar, Basildon, Essex).

About half-a-century ago, a gentleman in Ireland, desiring to protect the remains of an ancient building on his estate in Co. Down, employed a contractor to build a wall round it. When the gentleman came to view the progress of the work, he found that the contractor had used up all the stone of the ancient monument in building his protecting wall. The application of this true story to the present condition of England is painfully obvious.

* * * * *

Those Plebeians who make occasional pilgrimages to London will know Henderson's book-shop in the Charing Cross Road. Mr. Henderson is publishing a series of modern plays, including reprints of Ibsen, Strindberg, and Tchekhov, as well as works by new authors. One of the latest additions is *Youth*, by Miles Malleon (1/- net) a play produced by the Stage Society a month or two ago. It is an exceedingly interesting "discussion" on the text (from James Stephens)

" You will die unless you do
Find a mate to whisper to,"

and the moral of it, put bluntly, is that unless you can make up your mind to take risks in this as in other matters, you'll never be happy; the same sort of moral—so it strikes me, at any rate—as that conveyed in Stevenson's story *Will o' the Mill*. I recommend those sensible Plebeians who set apart one corner of the bookshelf for plays to get *Youth*. Mr. Malleon—as is sufficiently obvious from the play—is an actor; and he is also, by the way, (*vide* his very sensible letter in the *Daily News*, May 18th) a "conscientious

objector"— of a somewhat unusual sort ; one who has seen six months' active service and been invalided out of the Army.

* * * * *

If America goes on progressing, it will soon have arrived at the stage reached by certain individuals in this country seven years ago ! The *New Review* for April contains a long notice of a book on " the Nearing case," which, it appears, recently agitated progressive opinion in the States somewhat considerably. Dr. Nearing was Assistant Professor of Economics in the University of Pennsylvania, and was dismissed under circumstances which made it clear to our American comrades that " certain representatives of the privileged classes have determined upon the control of research and teaching." The reviewer refers to " the economic orthodoxy " which characterises the controlling body of the University, and to the " corporation lawyers, gas magnates, sugar kings and financiers " who compose the Board of Trustees and who are " the Invisible Government." Dr. Nearing, you see, was rash enough to teach other than orthodox economics, and was accordingly regarded by the authorities as an advocate of " dangerous and untried theories." All of which sounds more than familiar—almost home-like—to certain students of the problem of economic education on this side of the Atlantic. We are even assured that the Pennsylvanian big-wigs would actually like the college curriculum to include " more Latin, Greek, and Mathematics—less of the 'dangerous' new sciences, and more of the 'safe' disciplinary studies." . . . I can well believe it. The only point that surprises me is that they should only have just begun to make such " discoveries " in America. And I can assure the New Reviewers that if they are going to be content to demand " the right of academic free speech " and the necessity for " trained scholars to be absolutely unfettered in their methods of investigation and in the conclusions at which they arrive," then they must be very young and green indeed.

* * * * *

Messrs. Longmans' have just issued a new edition of Earl Brassey's *Work and Wages*, originally published some forty years ago. I take the following touching paragraph from a review of the book in the *Times Literary Supplement* :—" Lord Brassey's father, whose career as an employer of labour inspired the original *Work and Wages*, himself illustrated in a remarkable degree a deep-lying truth which is totally ignored in current theorizing about capital and labour. He was a great employer of labour, not because he possessed capital, but because he had a special gift for conducting industrial enterprises and employing labour. And he made a great fortune not because he sought it—for he rather shunned it and disliked money—but because it came to him involuntarily through the exercise of his special gifts. He was not out for profit or to " exploit " labour, but to perform the functions and use the faculties peculiar to his endowment.

A priceless passage. One wonders who can have written it—in A.D. 1916. I should say it came from a country vicarage. One can hear an ecclesiastical voice saying, with a sigh, " It came to him involuntarily. . . . "

J. F. H.

BOOK RECEIVED.

The History of the Fabian Society. By Edward R. Pease. (Fifield, 5/- net.)

The "Plebs" League

Object

To further the interests of Independent working-class education as a partizan effort to improve the position of Labour in the present, and ultimately to assist in the abolition of wage-slavery.

Methods

The holding of an Annual Meet: the issuing of a monthly Magazine, mainly devoted to the discussion of the various questions of Labour, theoretical and practical: the formation of local branches and classes for the study of social science, in connexion with the Central Labour College, and in every way to assist in the development of the latter institution, and its maintenance of a definite educational policy.

Membership

Open to all who endorse the object of the League.

Each Member shall pay 1/- a year to the Central Fund towards meeting the expenses in connexion with the Annual Meet, &c.

Management

An Executive of five members elected annually, and the Editor of Magazine, who shall be responsible as to publication and meets, &c.

The Magazine shall be 2d. per copy, 2½d. post free.

Subscriptions payable in advance: Quarterly 7½d., Half Yearly 1/3, Yearly 2/6.

✉ The Eighth Annual Meet will be held in London, (Bank Holiday) August, 1916.

P.O.'s to be forwarded to

J. REYNOLDS, Secretary-Treasurer,
13 Penywern Road, Earls Court,
London, S.W.

The "Plebs" League

(Organ: "PLEBS" MAGAZINE, Published Monthly,
Price 2d.)

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J. REYNOLDS

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