

Vol. XIV. No. 3

March, 1922

THE PLEBS

AGITATE EDUCATE ORGANISE

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THE PLEBS

“I can promise to be candid but not impartial.”

Vol. XIV

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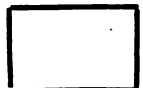
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OUR POINT of VIEW

THE PLEBS is just now where it likes to be, and where it ought to be—in the wars! All sorts of folk are out after our scalps; Lord Pembroke and Montgomery of the Primrose League, Mr. Gerald Gould of the *Daily Herald*, the Rev. John Lewis of Gravesend (and *Forward*), the leader-writer of the *Western Mail* (Cardiff: *Politics*, Coal-owning; *Recreations*, Hysterics about "Bloody but Unbowed!" Bolshevism)—all these, as well, of course, as a bunch of W.E.A. champions of various weights, have been high busy hurling brick-bats in our direction. The publication in rapid succession of *Proletcult*, the *Outline of Psychology*, and the Building Trade Workers' pamphlet on Education afforded unmistakable

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evidence that the I.W.-C.E. movement was alive and kicking. Hence this barrage !

* * *

The Primrose League, through the mouth of the above-mentioned noble Earl (its Chancellor), has formally declared war on "Proletarian Science" in general and the Plebs League in particular. His lordship has been

Patrician v. Pleb stumping the country, preaching another crusade. The Stern Strong (Business) Men and the Womanly Women of the Primrose

League have been moved to tears and indignation at his staggering revelations about "the so-called science classes run by the Plebs League and the Labour Colleges for the young men of the Trade Unions," where "the crude and fallacious economics of Karl Marx were taught." All over the country these "so-called educationists" were getting busy. Their object, though they were appealing to the Trade Unions for support, was to turn the Unions from their proper work (of paying unemployment benefits) and bring about a R-r-r-revolution in this England of ours (*sobs from the Strong Men*). "In a book recently issued by the Plebs League for the students of these classes, the theory of democracy was entirely repudiated, and dictatorship by a small minority was advocated." [The report that the Primrose League has invited Mr. Gerald Gould to deliver a series of addresses on this subject is so far without confirmation.] His lordship called upon the Primroses to be up and doing—to "wake up the country to what is going on," and to "expose" this so-called proletarian science wherever possible! . . . We await with interest further "exposures."

We must weally wage WAW on these—er—people !!



* * *

Perhaps the most interesting feature of all this sound and fury is his lordship's complete agreement with Mr. Gerald Gould, of the *Daily Herald*, as to the fundamental wickedness of the Plebs League. Queer pairs get together under the banner of "Democracy," don't they ?

"Democracy" It's a magic word. Lord Pembroke can bring lumps to the throats of Primrose League audiences by declaiming it with a catch in his voice. And Mr. Gould is evidently of opinion that he can do likewise with the readers of the *Daily Herald*—with a catch in his article. Because—O dear, yes!—there is a catch in it. Mr. Gould's *instinctive* dislike of the Psychology Textbook—like the Rev. John Lewis's, who did a column and a half of denunciation in *Forward*—is obviously due to his exceedingly swollen *religious* complex; and this instinctive dislike (see Psychology Textbook) he rationalises into a string of arguments about Anti-Democracy. Let us admit that Mr. Gould's religious complex does not prevent him from being worldly-wise enough to see that this "Anti-Democracy" stunt was an effective line to work with casual readers. But, we repeat, it was his religious-idealistic complex which was touched on the raw; and the way in which it got itself expressed in his review of our Text-

book was a very pretty object lesson for students of Psychology. For the rest, we refer our readers to T. A. Jackson's careful analysis of Mr. Gould's specific criticisms elsewhere in this issue.

* * *

Before leaving this fascinating subject of the Textbook and its reviewers may we mention the fact that the Second Edition (of 2,000) is now ready ; and that as a good proportion of it was ordered in advance, students who have not yet acquired a copy are advised to secure one at once. We have also to repeat our appeal to all our supporters to settle their accounts for the book without delay. There's an economic basis even to an outline of psychology ; and we're up against that basis—in the shape of the printer's bill. We rely on you.

**2nd Edition
Now Ready**

* * *

We must, in the small space left to us, refer to a recent onslaught by the *Glasgow Herald's* "Educational Correspondent" on "Neo-Marxism and Education." This gentleman, by making a noise like a Disinterested Lover of Truth, aims at winning over to his side in the fight against Independent Working-Class Education those people not likely to be moved by the cruder outbursts of the Primrose Lord. He polishes up his brickbat in the fond hope that it will look like real Scotch granite. "The situation," says he, "is serious . . . specious guise of educating the worker as a worker, specious because it educates him as a de-classed

*You de-classed,
de-educated, de-
cultured Ishmael!*



Ishmael. . . . Result of its victory would be a de-educated, de-cultured community. . . . As education the proletcultist presents the worker with *politically biased economics, a moral justification of revolution which he calls ethics, and the grossest perversion of history that ever disfigured paper—that and nothing else!* And, then, after remarking that rhetoric never hurt anybody, he concludes with a sounding peroration about "the sabotaging of a democratic evolution to the advantage of a tyrannous monarchy (*sic*)"! There are only two squeaks in all this noise worth a line or so of comment. One is the funny bit about "educating the worker as a *de-classed* Ishmael." As criticism of an education which aims, first and foremost, at making the worker conscious of his *class*, this, if it really means

anything at all, is rather more than usually wide of the mark! The other bit of patter worth noting is the allusion to "the grossest perversion of history that ever disfigured paper." This, mind you, in the columns of a 20th Century capitalist daily paper! We forbear comment.

* * *

As a footnote to the various columns, from Pugh, Craik, Gould and other correspondents, which have appeared in the *Daily Herald* lately on the subject of the National Council of Labour Colleges, the Workers' Educational T.U. Committee, and the Plebs League, it is worth

One Up to Us! putting on record here that the Herald League has just affiliated to the N.C.L.C. So that apparently Mr. Gould's effort to put the wind up Heraldites has not been entirely successful.

Where PROF. SODDY Went Wrong

We have received the following letter from Comrade L. B. Boudin on the subject of Professor Soddy's Economics and "A. S.'s" summary thereof in our January number.

IN his article on "Physical Economics" in the January PLEBS, "A. S." shows unmistakable signs of completely misapprehending the basic point of the Marxian theory of value.

"The chief point at issue"—he writes—"is the meaning and measurement of value. Professor Soddy advanced the opinion that, in view of the discoveries of physical science, the Marxist method of measuring the value of an article by the quantity of undifferentiated human labour incorporated in it is out of date and untenable, and that it should be superseded by the 'physical' method of valuing the article by the amount of energy dissipated in its production."

Now, as far as I know, there is no "Marxist method of measuring the value of an article." Marxists, as far as I know, and as far as Marx knew, measure the value of articles exactly in the same manner as do other people. There is a Marxian theory of *how value is determined under capitalism and the reign of free competition*, but that's quite another matter.

It is utterly absurd to tell the Marxists that their "method of measuring" value is "out of date and untenable," and that "it should be superseded" by some other method, since it is not they who are determining the value of commodities, this value being determined by a process quite independent of their volition or judgment. And should this advice be addressed, perchance, to the capitalist mode of production and exchange, that entity might appropriately answer that what is a "discovery" to Mr. "A. S.," Professor Soddy and other humans is no "discovery" to *it*—that the determination of value in the capitalist mode of production and exchange does not depend upon the state of the sciences, whether physical, moral, or economic. The laws of value may or may not depend upon the laws of physics, but they certainly do not depend upon our *knowledge* of those laws.

The fact is that "A. S.'s" entire discussion is based upon the common error—common, I am sorry to say, among "Marxists" as well as others—that the Marxian theory of value is a theory of what *should be*. But that is just what it is *not*. It purports to be a theory of what *is*—what *is* under the capitalist system under conditions of free competition. It has absolutely nothing to do with what should or ought to be either now or hereafter.

To say that Professor Soddy's theory has no application under capitalism, but may apply to some future society, and then affirm that Professor Soddy's theory is but a further amplification of the Marxian theory of value, is sheer nonsense. Professor Soddy's speculations (in the "A. S." version) may be very interesting to those who are interested in such things. Personally, I dream of a future society in which there will be no such thing as exchange-value. (Must readers of the PLEBS be reminded that the Marxian theory of value is a theory of *exchange-value*?) My dreams may never come true, and Professor Soddy's may; but as far as the Marxian theory of value is concerned Professor Soddy's speculations—at least as modified by "A. S."—

"Like the flowers that bloom in the spring, tra, la, la,
They have nothing to do with the case, tra-la,
Nothing to do with the case."

L. B. BOUDIN

THE WEBBS' YOUNG MAN

IT would seem that to be taken up by the Webbs is a sure road to ruin. There are quite a number of one-time clever young men who have been boosted by them and are now left helpless and useless. Sidney has spoken highly of them in public; Beatrice hissed about them privately in the ears of administrators. When they first appeared they wrote well and showed signs of surprising talent and usefulness to the Labour movement. They assisted the Webbs greatly. But as time went on, and the Webbs decided the young man could be let out into the world, something was seen to be lacking. First, his writings had no longer the same finish and spirit; then the matter began to run thin; finally he began to repeat the stalest tepidities of the defenders of the ruling classes, and ended up in the possession of a safe job and an apparently empty mind.

Perhaps the Webbs are baby-snatchers, or rather human vampires. Perhaps they suck the blood of the young men they "take up." Their vitality is certainly remarkable: Sidney is still happily going about gurgling and stroking his beard, Beatrice swoops down upon you and crows *Aha!* as merrily as ever, while ——— and ——— moon about London in their pleasant jobs as vacantly and uselessly as pithed frogs. Perhaps so. But the true explanation is probably simply this—that the Webbs spoil their bright young men. They tell them their writings are wonderful and they find them soft jobs. So the young men become conceited on very little grounds and earnest seekers after the good things of life. The rest is just an inevitable deterioration.

Harold J. Laski, who has just published two books,* was one of the

* *Foundations of Sovereignty*. (Allen & Unwin. 15s.) *Karl Marx*. (Fabian Society. 1s.)

Webbs' young men. He is partly pithed. But he is not beyond hope yet, and may be recalled to considerable usefulness, if violent hands are laid upon his literary output. It will be unpleasant to force upon a man who has—well—a considerable opinion of his abilities the lesson that some elementary care in writing is expected of him, and that he ought also to have read the books which he attempts to expound. If I undertake this work, he will undoubtedly put it—wrongly—down to personal spite, for no child likes being smacked. But afterwards, apart from the general value of such an examination, it is quite possible that it may have sufficient effect upon Laski personally to make him do the good work of which he is still capable.

There is less to cavil at in his larger book than in his smaller one—because there is on the whole less matter in it. It is a casual aggregation of politico-legal essays, unco-ordinated and unrevised. By their undistinguished “tired” style they would seem to be lectures taken down as they were delivered, and not polished up at all. There is a great display of pedantry made by the tacking on to each page of a number of unnecessary references, to show how many books Laski has read. The connecting idea of the book (which he modestly describes as the “scaffolding from which a general reconstruction of the State will emerge”) is the political theory of divided sovereignty as opposed to the omnipotent State. This theory has been infinitely better stated by G. D. H. Cole, and as in any case it is an academic dispute not of much interest to us, we may leave it at that. Laski's verbosity on the question is immense, but I cannot find anything new that he contributes beyond a copious citation of law cases. His competence as a political guide may be judged from his effusive salutations of the Whitley Councils as the basis of his new order and his naïve remark that the Sankey Commission meant a step farther in the same direction.

This book is just a bad piece of bookmaking; the study of Marx, on the other hand, is an impertinence. So far as I can discover after a fairly close scrutiny, Laski has read nothing at all but Beer's *Marx*, and on that basis felt himself entitled to lecture the world in general and Marx himself. There are two references to Vol. III. of *Capital*; where they were copied from I am not sure, but I am pretty confident, as I shall show, that Laski has never read *Capital* himself.

We notice at once that Laski has not troubled to study the life of Marx. For example, he writes of Bakunin and the International:—

By 1872 his influence had so increased that a frontal attack on him was impossible. . . . Marx therefore proposed the removal of the headquarters to New York.

Now, anyone who knows anything about the history of the International at all, knows that in 1872 Marx *did* make “a frontal attack” on Bakunin—at least I don't know what else moving and carrying Bakunin's expulsion could be called. Again, Laski writes:—

On Marx's victory Mazzini withdrew, though with characteristic selflessness he advised his followers to continue their support.

On the contrary, Mazzini withdrew his flock from the International and for five years there were practically no Italian members because of his veto. Laski hands this ignorant praise to Mazzini for a reason, because later he is going to accuse Marx of bitterness in exile and compare him unfavourably with Mazzini who retained his “sweetness.” Oh, la, la! Most charming, to be sure! That the whole duty of man is to be “sweet” is an aphorism which deserves to be recorded.

Laski's verdict on Marx in the end is this: "It is essentially by the qualities of a prophet that he is distinguished." What on earth he means by that phrase no one knows. He explains that he does not mean that Marx was able to measure evidence, think correctly, appreciate the thought of others or be fair to them. Maybe he means he was a sort of Old Moore—in which case he is wrong; Marx "as a prophet" considerably antedated the revolution. Nor was he a prophet in the ordinary vague sense, because (Laski says from his profound ignorance) his philosophy did not spring from men's "deepest emotions." More probably, therefore, Laski means nothing; as in most of this shoddy sketch he is just writing at random without much care of what his words mean.

In dealing with Marx's whole philosophy, including the materialist conception of history, he concludes:—

Indifference to suffering, selfishness, lack of moral elevation, it was for these defects that he indicted the class from which he sprang.

In other words, Marx was just another sermoniser against the wickedness of the rich. So foolishly ignorant is this statement that it baffles refutation. If Laski cannot understand that Marx's whole work consisted in the abandonment of pious rhetoric in favour of a reasoned historical analysis of the growth of the bourgeoisie, in which he expressed on occasion real admiration for some of its past work, then he has understood nothing about Marx at all. On page 40, in connection with this, we see (in his reference to "a secretly armed minority assuming power at a single stroke") that he has completely confused Marxism with Blanquism. However, as getting this clear would have probably involved him in some original research, we will not press the point. Nevertheless, he is not excused for writing that Marxism is historically "an attempt to explain the growth of movements and institutions entirely in economic terms." Rubbish: see Engels' *Feuerbach*.

Laski, not having read *Capital*, does not understand Marx's economics. After saying coolly that his theory of value represents only "a narrow interpretation of some loose sentences of Ricardo" (wow!) he remarks:—

Nor did Marx mention that in addition to labour, all commodities to have value must have this at least in common, that they satisfy some need. Utility, in other words, is a necessary factor in value.

Will you be good enough, Mr. Laski, to turn to *Capital*, Vol. I., Chapter I., Section I., and read just the first page? There are only nine lines on it. When you have done that, perhaps even you will have the grace to be ashamed of that sentence.

I am exceeding my space, however, and must close down. One more quotation, and that near the heart of Marxian economics:—

It must not be forgotten, moreover, that in the Marxian analysis whatever does not appear as wages is always regarded as unearned profit. . . . But it is outside the evidence to argue that the task of directing business . . . does not create value.

To call this a lie would be wrong. Lying presupposes knowledge of the truth, and Laski has never read Marx. Let him now take down the first volume of *Capital*, and read Chapter XIII.

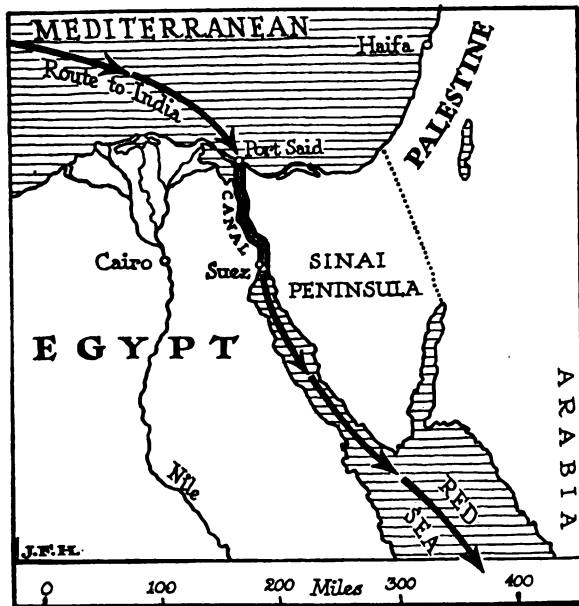
And, come to think of it, while he is about it, he might as well read the whole book, you know. It really is worth reading, Mr. Laski.

R. W. POSTGATE

GEOGRAPHICAL FOOTNOTES to CURRENT HISTORY

I.—Egypt, and the Way to India

IN the PLEBS for November, 1920, appeared a "Footnote" dealing with Egypt, Palestine and the Suez Canal. At that date it seemed probable that the British Government was about to make a "generous" settlement with the Egyptian nationalists, terminating the British "Protectorate" and guaranteeing Egypt's "territorial integrity." Now, a year and a half later, the Egyptian problem is still acute, and "generous" concessions are still where they then were—in the air! What has happened in the interval?



In the "Footnote" referred to, we suggested that the change in British policy as affecting Egypt—if it materialised—would not have been dictated by purely altruistic motives. Britain's primary interest in Egypt was then, as it is now, the Suez Canal, that vital link in Imperial communications. Before the Canal was dug the British high road to India and the East was *via* the Cape. Once the new and shorter route *via* the Mediterranean and Red Seas was thrown open by the cut through to the Gulf of Suez, that route became of the first importance to this country, and *the safeguarding of that route* was Britain's main concern. So long as that was ensured, Egyptian independence was a matter of small importance; the more so since British economic interests in the country itself were less than those of some other nations. Egypt as merely the base from which the Canal was defended.

Our "Footnote" went on to point out that the main reason for the suggested British "generosity" towards Egypt was the fact that, as a result of the after-war settlement, Britain had established herself on the other bank of the Canal. With a Mandate for Palestine, she could afford to be generous. Palestine, on the whole, was an even better base for the defence of the Canal than Egypt had been; moreover, Palestine commanded the land-routes from the Mediterranean to Mesopotamia and Persia, both countries in which Britain had acquired important interests—likely to become still more important in the near future. Palestine, then, was to "take Egypt's place as the bulwark of the Canal"; and Egypt could safely be granted "independence."

But events have not worked out that way. The British "concessions" were suddenly withdrawn, and a period of rigorous repression and government by brute force followed in Egypt. Why the sudden change of front? The reason is not far to seek. Rival French and British interests played havoc with the beautifully devised "settlement" of Palestine, Syria and the Near Eastern lands. British diplomacy, antagonised the Arabs. Palestine, it became apparent, was not—yet!—a safe base for the British garrison. Egypt, therefore, must remain under British "protection"—and, if necessary, the Egyptians must be compelled to accept that protection at the point of the bayonet.

Now, once more, there is a change of front, amounting, indeed, almost to a change of heart. The British Government is again making advances to the Egyptians. Free Egypt, it would seem, is going to succeed Free Ireland. Why? An excellent article in the *Communist* (February 11th) gives the reason:—"Egypt must be kept quiet and safe . . . because Egypt is on the road to India." India, too, has a nationalist movement, and that movement is a bigger threat to British interests and British prestige than the Egyptian one. British cotton magnates and British aristocrat-bureaucrats are alike prepared to fight to the last drop of British (proletarian) blood to preserve the British rule in India. So, as a means to this, Egypt must be conciliated, and the road to India kept secure.

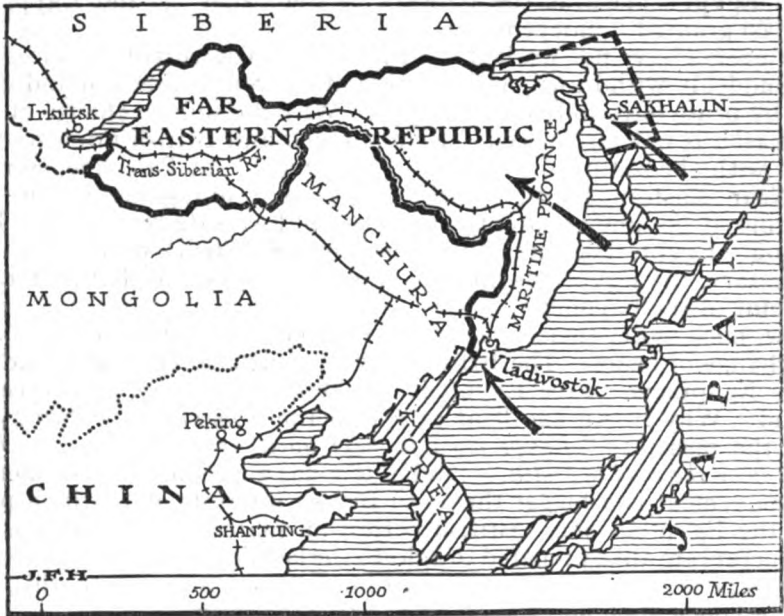
The case of Egypt affords a striking instance of the *interdependence* of the modern world—as well as of the workings of 20th century Imperialism.

II.—Imperialism in the Far East

Our second map (overleaf) shows the boundaries of a new State, not yet, we believe, marked in any atlas. This is the Far Eastern Republic, the "democratic" (non-Soviet) State which has been established in four of the provinces of Russian Eastern Siberia—Transbaikal, Amur, Maritime Province and Sakhalin. (For an account of the Republic's industries, mineral wealth, etc., and of its friendly relations with Soviet Russia, see *Russian Information and Review*, February 15th.)

The map covers the main area of Japanese aggression on the mainland. That aggression began in 1894, when Japan went to war with China for the purpose of "eliminating Chinese influence" in Korea—a war, in short, for the "rights of a small nation." The small nation, as sometimes occurs in such cases, was annexed to the victor a few years later. Meantime, in 1904-6, Japan defeated Russia and made good her title to "spheres of influence" in Manchuria and Mongolia; thus wresting from Russia the control of the shorter (southern) railway route to Vladivostok, through Manchuria. The November Revolution in Russia (1917) gave Japan an

excuse for advancing along the Trans-Siberian railway, in order, of course, to check the spread of Bolshevism eastwards. To-day, despite Washington Conferences—and altogether apart from her activities in China—she remains in armed possession of Vladivostok (the Pacific terminus of the Trans-Siberian railway), and of the Maritime Province and the northern (Russian) half of the island of Sakhalin (*see arrows in map*). She has promised to withdraw when there is a stable government. But, as H. N. Brailsford has remarked (*Daily Herald*, February 7th), “there can and will be no such thing while her troops remain.”



Students should note the peculiar importance of the Far Eastern Republic as the territory through which runs the great railway connecting European Russia with the Pacific; and should bear in mind also that this entire area (including Sakhalin) has enormous, and as yet largely undeveloped, deposits of mineral wealth—gold, iron and coal.

J. F. HORRABIN

A TWO-MINUTE TALK *with a NEW* STUDENT : *On* BOOKS

BOOKS—what for? Timekillers? Soothing syrups? Mind-developers? Or *weapons*? Knowledge, we know, is Power. Yes, but what sort of Power are you after? Power for yourself, or Power for your class—the workers?

We take it, since you're reading the PLEBS, that you're out for the latter. Then you want books that will help you in your aim. And if you'd like to save time, and equip yourself for the work in hand as speedily as possible, you'll listen to the advice of some of us who've taken ten, twenty, thirty

years to pick up our knowledge—struggling on our own, wasting much time and money, and sometimes losing heart.

The PLEBS is out to save your time and money. That's what we're for. We want to help you to do in two or three years what has taken the pioneers ten times as long. We want to point the way to *books that matter*. Two or three books, well read and understood, are of more use to a worker than a book-case full of gilt bindings.

You say you can't afford the cash? Have you thought of a co-operative plan? Surely you can get, say, a couple of pals to stand in with you on a scheme like this:—Three of you make up your minds to know something of History; not the history they taught you in schools, but history as it really happened. You want some books. Here are four:—

Starr's *A Worker Looks at History*.

Postgate's *Revolution, 1789-1906*.

Craik's *Modern Working-Class Movement*.

Pauls' *Creative Revolution*.

Total cost (with postage) 26s. The three of you put up 8s. 8d. each, and you've got six or eight weeks' reading, sharpening one another's brains by discussion as you go along. At the end of that time you'll be equipped to form your own opinion on present-day happenings—the history of your own day. And ten to one you'll go back to those books again and again, and find more "meat" in them every time.

We have the books. We keep the stuff you want. But we don't want to keep it—we want to hand it along to YOU!

C. TERRY

The WORKINGS of MODERN CAPITALISM

Hilferding's "Finanzkapital" is one of the many recent books which English students are hoping one day to see translated. Its main conclusion is that supreme power to-day is in the hands of an oligarchy of finance-capitalists, whose dictatorship can only be wrested from them by the organised, international working-class. Cahn's "Capital To-day" is the only work in English which attempts to cover the same ground. Hilferding the man ranged himself with the Mensheviks when a revolutionary situation developed in his own country; but his book nevertheless profoundly influenced the policy of the Russian Bolshevik leaders—or, at any rate, gave theoretical expression to the ideas which they carried out in actual practice. Mark Starr's article is a brief summary of some of the leading ideas of the book. Students will find printed as an appendix to Hilferding's "Boehm-Bawerk's Criticism of Marx" (S.L.P. 1919) another summary by Otto Bauer.

HILFERDING opens his book with a masterly analysis of money, and the reasons for its indispensability under the anarchy of capitalist production. A sentence well worthy of a place beside Marx's "Gold circulates because it has value; paper money has value because it circulates" is Hilferding's "Gold is not by nature money, but money is by nature gold." Money tokens are like the moon which, long grown cold itself, still reflects the glow of the hot sun! Thus the tokens reflect the glowing exchange value created by labour.

He goes on to show, by quoting endless historical examples, that the State cannot fix value ; and that the Quantity Theory of prices cannot be true where free coinage and a free gold market exist.

But modern capitalism could not have existed if it had been tied down to real gold money. Credit money nowadays not only facilitates circulation ; it directly helps the industrialist. It is no longer a case of the cheque and the bill of exchange making gold unnecessary in trade, but of the banker giving the industrialist sufficient credit money to *start* a concern. Because the proportion of fixed capital is always becoming greater, the initial capital must always be greater, and hence the greater dependency of the industrialist upon the banker. It is even wrong to speak any longer of them as separate individuals because there is a marked strengthening of the tendency to concentrate in bigger units and interlock the directorates of the banks and the big concerns.

Hilferding devotes one chapter and a considerable amount of statistics to prove that while the rate of *profit* is falling, the rate of *interest* is on the increase. The shares in limited liability companies (in reality, claims on surplus-value to be created by workers) are bought and sold without reference to the actual industry itself. Their price is based upon the dividend being yielded by them. (All the complications of preferred, cumulative preferred, ordinary shares, etc., are but the different positions the respective shares hold in the "line-up" for the appropriation of that same surplus-value.) This makes possible fictitious capital, watering of stock and "founders' " profits. If for example a company is paying 10 per cent. when the average rate of interest is 5 per cent., each £1 share can be sold at £2. The founders can if they like recast the company and increase, say, its £5,000 capital into £10,000 nominal capital, and simply put the £5,000 extra into their own pockets. This also opens the way for the few who are "in the know" (as to whether reserve profits are going to be distributed as bonus shares, and what dividends certain concerns are going to pay) to speculate advantageously to themselves. Indeed, by control over newspapers, rumours can be set afloat to favour the "bull" or "bear" desired. When the founders refloat the company, they usually still keep enough shares to retain their control, and in order to pocket directors' fees in addition to the benefits of inside knowledge. The preferred and debenture shares are often kept by the select few.

The more banks aid in the starting of industries, the more they share in the founders' profits. Their aid was necessary earliest in such recently developed countries as Germany and America : now banks and industry are interlocked in every country.

Speculation on the stock exchange market is the latest means to anticipate the direction into which capital will flow in order to get its average rate of profit or more ; the fluidity of capital is thus secured despite the growing proportion of fixed capital. Sometimes the banks enter into this themselves and buy shares, to sell them at a higher price. Speculation on the commodity exchanges is again based on an anticipation of price variation. The source of value is truly buried deep when men sell shares they do not possess or buy wheat yet ungrown ! (Read the vivid picture of exchange gambling in Frank Norris's *The Pit*.) These later speculators share the risk of the circulating capitalist and often precipitate changes ; they skin each other. Both kinds of speculators rely more and more upon the credit money of the banks, who can thus control them.

When Hilferding wrote (1909) he was able to show that the great six banks of Berlin possessed between them no less than 751 places on the directorates of various industries. As early as 1906 the firm of J. P. Morgan and Co. had representatives on the boards of five banks, fifty railways, three shipping companies, eight trust companies, eight insurance companies and forty industrial undertakings. The result of the acceleration that has taken place since then can be imagined. The big men (like a Stinnes, for example, who is reported to control 170 enterprises and 60 newspapers), equipped with huge credit facilities, can inaugurate large-scale undertakings so superior in their technique that the little firms exist only on sufferance or as useful auxiliaries to their greater rivals. Concentration in industry makes for concentration in banking, and *vice versa*. The logical culmination of the movement would be one World Bank Trust consciously regulating and controlling world production. (Is the Cannes scheme the nucleus?)

All this amounts to an ultimate suspension of the laws of competition which have hitherto been the dynamic force of capitalist production. The obstacles to the working out of the Average Rate of Profit have been increasing; the coming of the trust is the greatest obstacle of all. It ranges from complete amalgamation to a "kartel," or price ring, made by individual firms. The banks favour this movement, for they are in danger when their customers are competing suicidally with each other. The amalgamation may be of like firms (horizontal) or it may be a movement (vertical) reaching back to the raw material and controlling every process, e.g., from the iron ore mine to the finished machine. But the results are always the same. Prices are regulated. The less profitable works are shut down and the same output maintained, or, by means of higher prices, the same return secured on a smaller output. The separate merchant capitalist is excluded, or made a mere selling agent at prices and profits already fixed. The speculator is frozen out. But the usurer—who shared with the merchant the honour of inaugurating capitalism—comes in on a higher footing, *via* banking capital, to take his share in the highest Trinity—Finance Capital—industrial, commercial and banking—three in one, and one in three.

Then, by monopoly prices, the organised capitalists squeeze the unorganised and unproductive layers of capitalist society. These latter, the professional class, the civil servants, the higher-paid teachers, and the little middle class, begin to organise their middle-class unions, which Big Business will exploit for political purposes.

The export of capital spreads capitalism over the world, and Hilferding suggests that the old acute crisis becomes milder, but can never entirely disappear outside a complete world trust. The political needs result in Imperialism; for export of capital means territorial occupation, and the diplomat and all the armed powers of the State become the tools of rival groups of Finance Capital.

The future will decide whether a supernational amalgamation will be made and perpetuate capitalism a little while or whether, when rival Imperial groups attack each other, the workers will seize the opportunity of coming into their own.

MARK STARR

☐ EVERY N.C.L.C. CLASS SHOULD SHOW A PLEBS POSTER

DIETZGEN'S FIRST LETTER to MARX

This letter will be of considerable interest to all Marxian students, more especially to those who have recently been reading the Plebs "Outline of Psychology."

[Writing to Kugelmann under date London, December 7, 1867, Marx encloses a letter ("which please return") just received "from a German-Russian workman—a tanner by trade. I agree with Engels that the self-taught philosophy of this tanner marks a notable advance upon that of Jacob Boehme the cobbler. I also say *ditto* to Engels in his opinion that only German workmen are able to use their brains like this." It was just three years after the founding of the International, and Marx, who had now been living in London for twenty years, was evidently beginning to find the South British mentality a trifle heavy! Here is a translation of Dietzgen's letter.—E. & C. P.]

• Vassili Ostrov, St. Petersburg.

October 24/November 7, 1867.

From Joseph Dietzgen, Master of the Vlasimir Tannery, to Herr Doctor Karl Marx in London.

HONoured SIR,—Though I am not personally known to you, I will ask you to allow me to express my homage to you for the inestimable benefits your studies have conferred upon science in general, and upon the working class in particular. In early youth I made my first acquaintance with the invaluable wealth of your writings, being then only able to guess at, rather than to understand, their import. But I was enthralled by them, reading and rereading them till satisfied that I had fully grasped their meaning. The enthusiasm aroused in me by the study of your book recently published in Hamburg [the first volume of the German original of *Capital*] emboldens me, perhaps somewhat forwardly, to testify my admiration, esteem and indebtedness. When your *Critique of Political Economy* was published (1859), I studied it diligently, and I can assure you that no other book, however bulky, has ever brought me so much new positive knowledge and enlightenment as this slender volume. Naturally, therefore, I awaited the sequel with extreme impatience. You gave expression for the first time, in a clear, irrefutable and scientific form, to what will henceforward be the *conscious* trend of historical evolution—namely, THE SUBORDINATION TO THE HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS OF WHAT HAS HITHERTO BEEN THE BLIND NATURAL FORCE OF THE SOCIAL PROCESS OF PRODUCTION. To have endowed this tendency with reason, to have enabled us to realise that our methods of production are brainless, this is your imperishable achievement! For this, time will and must bring you general recognition. Between the lines of your book I read that the presupposition of your solidly-based economics is a solidly-based philosophy.

Since I have had to work very hard in order to think out such a philosophy for myself, I cannot suppress the desire to give you a brief account of my own scientific endeavours—premising that I am a tanner by trade, and that all my education was that of the elementary school.

From the first I have wanted to secure a systematic philosophical outlook. In this, Ludwig Feuerbach has been my guide. I owe much, however, to my own efforts, so that I can now say of myself that *general things*, the nature of the general, the "nature of things," have become scientifically

clear to me. The things concerning which I still lack knowledge are *particular things*. Since of these, too, I know something, I say to myself that no one can hope to know everything.

THE FOUNDATION OF ALL SCIENCE LIES IN A KNOWLEDGE OF THE THOUGHT PROCESS.

To think means to develop the general out of the data furnished by the senses, out of particulars.

The phenomenal forms the *necessary* material of thought. The phenomenon must be given before the essence, the general, or the abstract, can be discovered. An understanding of this fact contains the solution of all philosophical riddles. For instance, questions concerning the beginning and the end of the world are seen to lie outside the field of science, once we have recognised that the world must be the presupposition of thought or knowledge, and cannot be the result of thought or knowledge.

The essence of thought is number. All logical distinctions are purely quantitative. All being is a more or less continuous seeming; all *seeming*, a more or less continuous being.

All causes are effects, and conversely. Within a series of *successive* phenomena, the *general* antecedent is termed the cause. For instance, a shot is fired; of five birds, four fly away and one stays where it was. We then say that the *shot* is the cause of the flying away of the four, and that lack of fear is the cause of the immobility of the one. But if one flies away while four remain unmoved, then we say that *fear* was the cause of the flying away. A celebrated physicist writes: "We cannot perceive heat in itself, we merely infer from phenomena the existence of this agency in nature." For my part, from the fact that "heat in itself" cannot be perceived, I infer the non-existence of this agent, and I regard the phenomena or effects of heat as the materials out of which in our heads we construct the abstract idea of heat. If without any confusion of ideas we term the concrete, whatever is perceived by the senses, "matter," then the abstract from the same is "force." When we weigh a bale of goods we estimate the *gravitational force* in pounds, regardless of the material contents of the bale. The dull dog Büchner says: "Now what I want is facts," but he does not *know* what he wants: science is not concerned with facts, but rather with the *explanations* of the facts; not with matter, but rather with force. Even if in reality force and matter are identical, nevertheless there is superabundant justification for their differentiation, for the separation of the particular from the general. "But force cannot be seen." Well, well, both seeing itself and that which we see are nothing but force. We do not see the things "themselves," but only their effects on our eyes. Matter is indestructible; but this merely means that matter exists everywhere and at all times. Matter appears (is phenomenal), and the appearances (phenomena) are material. The difference between appearance and reality is no more than *quantitative*. The faculty of thought compacts out of the many, the one; out of parts, the whole; out of the destructible, the indestructible; out of the accidents, the substance.

Morality. By morality the world understands the respect a man pays himself and his fellows for the sake of his own advantage. The nature and amount of this respect varies with different individuals and with different human aggregates. Given the aggregate, the thought faculty can merely distinguish the general right from the particular right. What is end? What is means? In relation to abstract human welfare, *all* ends are

means, and to this extent the principle "the end justifies the means" is unconditionally valid.

Were it not for my lack of learning, I would write a book upon these topics, for I believe I have a great many new ideas concerning them.

Excuse me, dear sir, for my presumption in making such a claim upon your time and attention. I have done so in the hope of pleasing you by the demonstration that a manual worker's philosophy may be more intelligible than is as a rule the professorial philosophy of our day. I should value your approval more highly than the proposal of any academy to elect me one of its members.

I conclude with the reiterated assurance that I am intensely interested in your endeavours, whose import extends far beyond the contemporary hour. I am far more interested in social evolution, in the struggle to secure the dominance of the working class, than I am in my own private affairs. My only regret is that I cannot play a more active part in the movement.
Allons enfants pour la patrie !

JOSEPH DIETZGEN

NATIONAL COUNCIL *of* LABOUR COLLEGES

FIRST GENERAL MEETING, 4TH AND 5TH MARCH, 1922

THE meeting will be held at—

The Clarion Club House,
Outwood Road,
Handforth (near Manchester),
Cheshire.

Station—Heald Green, Cheshire (L. & N.W. Rly.).

From MANCHESTER (London Road Station) book to Heald Green Station—five minutes' walk from Club House. Good train at 2.20 p.m., Saturday. (Handforth line not good—2½ miles from Club House.) Or take Palatine Road car to terminus, then bus to Cheadle, and another bus to *The Griffin*—then 10 minutes' walk.

From STOCKPORT, car to Cheadle, then as above. Meals for delegates not sleeping at the Club House can be supplied by arrangement.

The meetings will commence on Saturday at 3 p.m. and Sunday at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA

1. Chairman's opening address.
2. Secretary's Report.
3. Discussion : N.C.L.C. Constitution.
4. " Methods of organisation.
 " Report on American experiments—J. P. M. Millar.
5. " The relation of PLEBS magazine and League to N.C.L.C.
6. " Leaflets, etc., arranged for and proposed.

7. Discussion : Monthly Return Forms of affiliated activities.
8. „ Provision of Summer Schools.
9. „ National Provision for Charts and Lantern Slides.
10. Other Business.

Delegates should be provided with credentials, so that only affiliated bodies can record their votes on vital questions of policy, etc. But it is hoped that as many districts, classes, etc., as possible will be represented, even if unable at present to affiliate.

In accordance with the decision taken at the Birmingham Conference last October, the railway fares of *one delegate* from each *affiliated district* will be pooled and shared equally. *Delegates should ascertain whether weekend tickets to Manchester are available, as these would considerably reduce expenses.*

PLEBS PLEASE NOTE

The PLEBS ANNUAL MEET will be held on the Saturday evening. The Agenda will include Secretary's Report ; Treasurer's Report and Balance Sheet ; Editor's Report, and discussion of general Plebs plans and prospects.

N. C. L. C. NOTES

Things for Delegates to N.C.L.C. Meet to remember :—

1. Bring a display of locally issued Syllabuses, Leaflets, etc.
2. Don't forget your credentials.
3. You should bring a spare copy of any suggestions put forward by your group for N.C.L.C. Secretary's use.
4. Work in a notice of N.C.L.C. Meet in your local paper.

For information of delegates to the Meet the tariff at Handforth Clarion Club is appended :—

	Non-Members.		
	s.	d.	
<i>Meals.</i>			
Breakfast	2	0	
Dinner	2	6	
Tea	2	0	
Supper	1	4	
Bed	2	0	
<i>Day Tickets.</i>		s. d.	
Comprising four meals and a bed :			
	Ladies ..	9 6	
	Gents ..	9 6	
<i>Times of Meals.</i>			
Breakfast.	Dinner.	Tea.	Supper.
9 a.m.	1 p.m.	5 p.m.	10 p.m.

Visitors compelled to leave early may have breakfast served to suit their convenience on application to the Steward.

The Publicity Campaign proceeds merrily. BIRMINGHAM takes advantage of a passing reference to the N.C.L.C. by a local paper scribe to forward, by its Chairman, Mr. Fred Silvester, a long letter putting our point of view. LIVERPOOL gets a regular column and a half report of Comrade McKay's lectures in the Southport news. EDINBURGH District lecturer, J. P. M. Millar, seized the opportunity of replying to Mr. Pugh's *Daily Herald* article on the work of the Workers' Educational Trade Union Committee, to make out the case for real independent working-class education.* Likewise Edinburg keeps the journals of affiliated Trade Unions regularly informed of their class work. That's the stuff to give 'em !

The name of the CHELMSFORD Class Secretary is JOSLIN, not Joblin as reported in the directory of classes last month.

TUTORS, PLEASE NOTE.

A syllabus for a short course in Modern History has been prepared based on R. W. Postgate's book, *Revolution from 1789 to 1905*. It should prove of the utmost value as a finishing course for the Winter Classes, a Summer School Course, and for Home Study and Correspondence Classes. It will be published in next month's PLEBS, space

* Since this par. was written several other I.W.-C.Ers have effectively put the case for "Non-Copartnership in Education" in the columns of the *Daily Herald*.

permitting. In any case it will be open to inspection at the Handforth Meet.

The Executive Committee of the Amalgamated Union of BUILDING TRADE WORKERS have asked us for information as to our ability to meet any demands of their membership for classes. If any branch of the I.W.-C.E. movement has not received a copy of the N.C.L.C. circular letter on this subject please reply as soon as possible giving information: (1) of classes already established; (2) of towns, etc., near their centre where they could arrange to start classes if requested to do so by the N.C.L.C. Head Office. URGENT.

LEIGH and District Council for I.W.-C.E. have been running four classes this season—Plank Lane, Leigh, Bedford and Atherton with Comrade T. Ashcroft (London Labour College) as tutor, the local Labour Clubs providing the meeting rooms. Founded as a Social Science Class in 1917, with our indefatigable Comrade J. Leach, of Bolton, as tutor, the class by 1919 numbered 120 students, with J. T. Walton Newbold as tutor—mainly owing to the propaganda of the Leigh and District Branch of the Plebs League. Next season further extension of activities is assured. The Council are now carrying on propaganda among the local organisations with a view to providing the necessary funds to establish a scholarship at the London Labour College for the purpose of obtaining the nucleus of a local lecture staff. Comrade J. Brett of the Plebs, the present Secretary of the Council, who has acted in an official capacity for the Movement since its inception, writes: "We have the goods and will deliver them: our opponents have the chance of a celluloid cot in hell!"

CLEVELAND and District Labour College (Secretary, Edgar Turner, 103, Waterloo Road, Middlesbrough) are calling a Conference of Labour bodies in and around Darlington, the Hartlepoons, Stockton, Middlesbro', South Bank, Eston, Redcar and Skinningrove (300 in all) for March 4th to be addressed by Principal W. W. Craik (London Labour College) and Comrade Sidney Jones (Executive, South Wales Miners' Federation). The resolutions on the Agenda speak for themselves:—

(1) That a Committee, to be named "The Darlington and District Labour College Committee," consisting of two representatives from each town named at the head of this circular, be appointed to take the necessary steps to establish a Labour College in the district. (The Committee to elect its own President, Secretary, and Treasurer.)

(2) That Trade Union Branches, Labour Parties, Socialist Parties, Co-operative Societies and Guilds, and all bodies that are eligible for affiliation to the National

Labour Party, be invited to affiliate to the Committee on the basis of a minimum yearly fee of £1 is.; affiliated bodies to be entitled to send two delegates to the Annual General Meeting, when the Committee's work will be reviewed, and the Committee for the following year will be elected.

(3) That the Committee be instructed to apply for affiliation to the National Council of Labour Colleges, with a view to working in co-ordination with the other Labour Colleges in the country.

[PLEBEIANS NOTE.]—It is highly important that every Labour organisation in the district should be represented.

For information of delegates to N.C.L.C. Meet the following AFFILIATION FEES to Colleges, etc., obtain at present:—

Edinburgh District, S.L.C.: 2s. 6d. and 2d. per membership of affiliated organisation, per annum, covering free tuition of all members.

Rochdale Labour College: 5s. and one free scholarship.

Leigh and District I.W.-C.E.: 10s. and two free scholarships.

London Council I.W.-C.E.: £1 is. and two free scholarships.

Liverpool and District Labour College: £1 is. and two free scholarships.

North Kent Plebs League: 5s. affiliation fee and 10s. for scholarship to all classes.

Sheffield Labour College: 2s. 6d. minimum fee.

West Riding Labour College: No fixed fee. 5s. inclusive fee for students.

ROCHDALE Labour College are running three classes in this second term of the Winter Session, viz., Materialist Conception of History (26 students); Industrial History (30 students), and a similar course for a class of the local Sheet Metal Workers' Union (14 students). They have four fully qualified lecturers, Messrs. B. Feeney and H. Kershaw, A.S.W., J. Bamford, A.E.U., and C. Fouchard, Weavers. They are also running a few public lantern lectures, the latest one being "The Evolution of the Ship" (from the raft to the "Aquitania"). Lecturer, Mr. J. Manus, of the Liverpool Labour College.

TRANENT Co-Operative Society has granted £5 to the EDINBURGH (S.L.C.) District. The Nat. Union of Clerks (Edinburgh Branch) has linked up with the College, which now has 60 affiliated bodies—a record?

District secretaries should note that the block of the "Boss's Education" cartoon published in last month's PLEBS (p. 34) can be lent for use on propaganda leaflets, etc. Remit cost of postage when you send for it.

The GOULD STANDARD

The following reply to the various charges brought by Gerald Gould ("Daily Herald," February 9th) against the Plebs Psychology Textbook has been written by a Pleb who had no hand at all in the planning or writing of the book. Since it was obviously impossible to get sufficient space in the "Herald" to answer Gould's criticisms, the Textbook Committee in its short letter (February 13th) made no attempt to do anything of the kind. But we naturally think it desirable that his criticisms should be answered; and T. A. Jackson has accordingly "filled the bill."

THE essence of Gould's complaint against the Textbook was summarised (in his rejoinder appended to the Textbook Committee's reply) thus: "If its own words, merely quoted by me from its own pages, do not show it to be a thoroughly self-contradictory performance, nothing will."

Let us examine this charge of "self-contradiction." The authors, Gould asserts, "admit on p. 60 the existence and use of 'conscious, intelligent choice' which they have repudiated on p. 2." A grave charge—if true. Let us to the book itself and verify—remembering Gould's claim to use "its own words."

On p. 60 we find this:—

The more elaborate instinctive actions become modified in the course of life to form vast complexes embodying all sorts of habits and ideas. In such cases the co-operation of conscious intelligent choice may be necessary to the proper functioning of the "instinct."

So. And now to p. 2 for the "repudiation":—

Impulse, not conscious purpose, is the prime motive of action.

I don't want to do Gould an injustice. There may be some other sentence, invisible to me, to which he is objecting. I have selected the *only* sentence on the page that by any sort of careless reading could be supposed to involve a "repudiation" of "conscious intelligent choice." And the result is before you!

"On p. 89" (says Gould) "they tell us there is no place in psychology for chance; on p. 77 they use chance as the basis of their whole psychology."

On p. 89 "they" (the authors) quote *Bernard Hart* as saying: "Chance has no more part in psychology than it has in physics." On p. 77 occur these paragraphs (which I give in full so that the full force of Gould's criticism may appear):—

When a dog or a horse learns to open a gate, the acquirement is the result of association by contiguity, of intelligence.

A chance movement of the latch results

in the gate opening, and a direct association is formed between the act and the result. The intelligent animal profits by chance experience. This is quite different from the reasoning which adopts means to an end with foresight of that end—the reasoning characteristic of man's higher mental operations—as when a man discovers how to work a new machine or tool by examining it and finding in it some point which it has in common with a machine which he knows.

Association by contiguity is the mental equipment of the "practical man," the "rule-of-thumb" craftsman. It is the basis of common sense.

I have given the whole section because the word "chance" occurs several times and the word "basis" once. If Gould will show me upon which of them he relies for proof of his preposterous assertion that the authors "use chance as the basis of their whole psychology," we may be able to discuss the matter further. Till then I shall remain convinced that he has in that assertion made another utterly and entirely false statement.

He says again: "*What is the relation between the psychological processes of the mind and the physical and chemical processes of the body? Nobody knows—except the authors of this book. And they know several answers and think they are all the same. On page 45 they think that mental phenomena are caused by physical phenomena. on page 86 they think (a) that thought is a physical process, (b) that thought is the manifestation of a physical process, (c) that thought is the accompaniment in consciousness of a physical process.*"

On its face value this looks like a crushing exposure of a contradiction by an acute and painstaking critic. It was almost in a sweat of anxiety that I turned to the textbook to see what had gone wrong.

On p. 45 the authors say: "In surveying psychology in its relation to the Materialist Conception of History we adopt a materialistic standpoint." And then, having discriminated between this and 19th Century "materialism," they go on to quote *Bertrand Russell's* definition of present-day "materialism" as "the view that all mental phenomena are causally dependent upon physical phenomena." This is quite different from the crude statement substituted by Gould; but even if that point be waived, when we turn to p. 86 to look for the "contradictions" we get a further insight into Gould's controversial methods. The only pertinent sentence I can find is this:—

According to this view, thought is not something different from the rest of the bodily processes, but the manifestation of the working of a part of the ordinary nervous and muscular equipment of man,

the operation of which is accompanied in consciousness by a process which, to distinguish it from, say, feeling, we call "thought."

Now, if Gould cannot see the difference between the brain operation involved in "thinking," considered objectively, and the subjective consciousness of "thought" he may find some contradiction here. If so he brings it with him to the textbook and the authors must be exonerated. Even then his charge of contradiction, either within this page or between it and p. 45, rests on no foundation other than his own eagerness to be hostile.

About the rest of his review I need say little. On the most charitable view he is so slovenly a reader that he can hardly be a precise or accurate thinker. His objections in the main are no more than handfuls of metaphysical dust thrown into the eyes of his readers.

He tries to fasten upon the authors of the textbook the Jamesian doctrine of "Pragmatism"—simply because they use that word in its older and more everyday sense—as meaning, to put it shortly, that "practice is the test of truth." To this he adds this gem: "*Nothing can be efficient except for a certain purpose or end. Nothing can work except towards an end. Yet the very people who make 'working' the test, repudiate that absolute, that certainty, that end which alone can give meaning to their test.*"

The first part of this statement seems to me good sense. But will Gould or anybody else please tell me what the rest is intended to mean? Are "absolute," "certainty" and "end" words with interchangeable meanings? Or has an absolute and certain end anything to do with the truth of a particular and relative proposition?

Gould resurrects the mildewed old dilemma of 19th century theological apologetics—

"either 'Free' Will or no free choice." For the 10,000th time let it be repeated that in denying the "freedom" one does not deny the "will," or the consciousness of choosing. What is necessary is to gain a working concept of the processes involved in these operations. If there were such a thing as a "Free" Will or "Free" choice (in the metaphysical sense) a science of psychology would be impossible.

Gould reserved his righteous indignation for the section of the *Outline* headed, "Mental Levels and Democracy." Up to this point he adopted a superior and sarcastic tone. Here the vials of his wrath come unstuck. And all because he interprets the textbook as signifying that "really and literally, the average grown-up man is no more fit for self-government than a child of 13."

If he will invert that statement, making it read that the average child of 13 is just as fit for self-government as the average adult, I do not mind fathering it myself. Be that as it may, neither proposition can be found in the textbook. What that refers to is *not* self-government, but "the course of action in a political or economic crisis." I submit that even Gould, in the face of a crisis, looks for expert guidance if such can be found. And I am prepared to wager that herein his practice gives the lie direct to his professions.

It is not a pleasant thing thus to convict a fellow-worker in the Labour cause of flagrant and spiteful misrepresentation. In the case of a book less important than this, or a review less significant than one printed prominently in the *Daily Herald*, one would, perhaps, have let it pass. I may add that I had no hand in either the design or the execution of the textbook in question, being merely one of that Plebs League rank-and-file which Mr. Gould "profoundly admires."

THOS. A. JACKSON

An "Outside" Verdict on the Textbook

We should not have published yet another opinion on the "Outline of Psychology" were it not that this one comes from a writer quite outside the Plebs camp—a writer who strongly disagrees with the Plebs point of view, but who yet, as will be seen, praises the book highly. A. G. Tansley is University Lecturer in Botany at Cambridge, but is better known as author of "The New Psychology and its Relation to Life," a book reviewed at length in the PLEBS for December 1920.

The Plebs League may be very warmly congratulated on the *Outline of Psychology* recently published. It seems to me an exceedingly competent and well-judged exposition of the elements of the subject, especially of its more modern developments. The outline of the structure of the central nervous system is the best thing of its kind that has been done, and the illustrations are

not only clear but beautiful. The book is a miracle of compression, and balance and proportion are on the whole wonderfully well maintained.

To criticise at all adequately the points that call for criticism would be impossible without going into considerable detail. I think some little space should have been devoted to the light modern psychology throws on what may be called "conduct." The importance of Adler's work—though it certainly is important—seems over-emphasised. To say that "the inferiority complex is at the bottom of all the best creative work of the world" seems to me quite extravagant, though I should agree that "the discontented man is the hope of the world."

Finally the attempt to show that there can be no such thing as "impartial education" seems to me quite fallacious. We must

admit of course the strong effect of "bourgeois ideology" or of "proletarian ideology" on the developing mind, since each is bound up with strong human emotions. But to deny that there can be such a thing as impartial education is to deny that there can be such a thing as objective science in any field where human feeling is strong. The very existence of the new psychology contradicts

such a belief. One of the chief glories of man's mind is that it *can* rise superior to distorting emotional influences. That is what the love of scientific truth means—placing the discovery of reality before all other considerations. And training in that way of regarding the world and the whole of experience is the only meaning "impartial education" can bear. A. G. TANSLEY

STUDENTS' NOTES *and* QUERIES

"H. B." wants to know the meaning of bonus shares and how they affect the distribution of surplus-value.

A bonus share is one presented to people holding shares in the company. A premium bonus share is bought by the shareholder for a less sum than he can sell it for, e.g., the Imperial Tobacco Company in 1920 sold *pro rata* to every shareholder holding three shares a new £1 share for 40s., but that share was being quoted on the market at 55s. 6d. The *Monthly Circular* of the Lab. Research Dept. (Nos. 2 and 4, Vol. IX., 1921) contains some startling figures on the extent to which this has been carried in 1920. The records could not be fully completed but (in addition to £271½ millions of new capital issues) at least £65½ millions of bonus issue was made by 235 companies, while £70½ millions premium bonus issue was made by 225. (Should "buying out" or compensating the capitalists ever become a practical proposition such records would be invaluable.)

The results of such proceedings are, (1) a concealment of the real rate of profit, and (2) an evasion of super-tax, which is not paid by the receivers of bonus shares. The big controlling shareholders favour a small dividend, and a piling up of reserves, for their returns are correspondingly greater. The profits thus capitalised can be used to enlarge the undertaking or gain control over other companies. So concentration goes on.

"N. E." asks, *Why are general prices highest in the most developed countries?*

Assume two countries, (A) less developed, and (B) more developed:—In (A) one hour of S.-N.L.T. produces 1 lb. of yarn; in (B) 6 lb. of yarn. On the world market the pound from (A) will have no greater value than a pound from (B). If the price of a pound is a shilling, then the value of one hour's labour in (B) expresses itself in 6s.; in (A) of 1s. Because in the most developed countries the same amount of labour expresses itself in a greater mass of gold, prices are highest there. Compare America and England.

One student is puzzled by the fact that, although consumption of labour-power is the only source of surplus-value (and its divisions Profit, Interest and Rent) capitalists are always striving to lessen the amount of labour-power consumed; and that constant capital grows at the expense of variable.

Before viewing production from the point of view of the individual capitalist and finding out his incentive to use more machinery and employ less workers, it must be noted that, even if the amount of labour-power were lessened, surplus-value could be kept at the same point by an increased rate of exploitation. The necessary part of the working day could be reduced relatively by greater intensity, or by a fall in the value of labour-power, or *absolutely* by an extension of the working day. Again, the fewer workers retained would work at a faster rate and for less wages, partly because of the increased number of unemployed caused by the machine.

But the individual capitalist is not far-sighted enough to see these general consequences. He is battling against rivals, and he is out to get as large a profit as possible. He can do this by turning out a larger product at a proportionately smaller cost. Although the greater use of machinery demands a larger initial capital, yet the cost of its wear and tear must be less than the cost of the labour-power it saves. The individual capitalist has reduced his cost of production, and he can either sell his individual product at the same price of production as his backward rivals—and make a rate of profit greater than the average—or he can undercut them and sooner or later force them to adopt the same up-to-date methods.

Thus, by competition, capitalism decreases the value of the individual commodity, while increasing the quantity. It makes labour more productive, and workers more unnecessary. Contradictorily enough, the struggle to get greater individual profits causes a falling tendency in the Average Rate of Profit, because the mass of profits is reckoned upon *total capitals*, which are ever being increased. [£100 profit upon a capital of £500 is 20 per cent., but £2,000 profit upon £20,000 is only 10 per cent.] The *rate of exploitation* grows, and the *mass of profits* also, while apparently the capitalist is getting a smaller return.

Aberfan.—Don't let the W.E.A. lecturer worry you with what Gide says about Marx. Gide is the man who in order to smash the Labour Theory of Value states that *beefsteak* is sold at a higher price than the tail of the same animal, and argues that, "according to Marx," seeing that the same amount of

labour was spent on every part of the beast in rearing it, every part should be the same in value.

Marx would have been a simpleton if he had not noticed that the up-to-date individual capitalist always increased constant capital in relation to variable. His reasons are explained above. Put this question to your friend:—In what other way can the value of a commodity be lessened but by reducing the labour time necessary to produce it? Do not the capitalists in practice

acknowledge the Labour Theory of Value by every one of their methods of speeding up? If he wants proof that Marx was aware of this apparent contradiction (i.e., the lessening of mass of labour-power employed without a lessening of mass profit) refer him to Vol. I., pp. 293 and 306-11.

M. S.

(See letter headed "Spindles and Spinners" (p. 83) for discussion of points raised in "Students' Notes" last month.)

TRA LA MONDO : *Esperanto Notes*



HENRI BARBUSSE,

*the famous French author, who says
"Esperanto is the ABC of the International."*

To an Internationalist

DEAR COMRADE,—I have often heard you exclaim with pride, "I'm an Internationalist." But can you imagine that an International of which the vast body of members are as deaf-mutes to each other can be altogether satisfactory? Surely, it would be much more effective if it adopted a common language. "Oh," you say, "we shall get that right enough *after* the revolution is accomplished." I suggest to you that that is putting the cart before the horse. To neglect one of the most important means of international organisation—i.e., an international language—is surely to ignore one of the instruments which would make any International effective. Last year, there was founded in Prague the *Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda (Sat)*, an organisation which is absolutely *without* nationality and which seeks to apply the international language Esperanto to revolutionary purposes. Its organ is edited in Paris and printed in Leipzig. (Admin. L. Glodeau, 17, Rue de Bagnolet, Paris.) If, as you boast, you are an Internationalist, I suggest that it is up to you to make the effort necessary to learn Esperanto and become a SATano.

And, by the way, I hear that a class has been recently started at the Labour College.

Yours fraternally,

POPOLANO

Paris.

Ĉe la Kongreso de *Sindikatumunigo* el la departemento Seine, okazinta la 27 Nov. 1921, kdo Jacquemotte proponis la ĉi suban deziresprimon, kiu estis ĉiuvoĉe akceptita:—

"La Kongreso, rememorigante pri la deziresprimoj jam voĉdonitaj ĉe la Konfederaciaj Kongresoj en Le Havre (1912) kaj en Lyon (1919) favore al la internacia lingvo esp.o :

I. Instigas la Intersindikatajn Komitatojn, ke ili laŭeble partoprenu en la poresperanta propagando ;

II. Disponigante ejojn al la esperantistaj kamaradoj revoluciaj por iliaj kursoj kaj paroladoj ;

III. Konigante kiel eble plej multe al siaj membroj la principan intereson, kiun havas nun la praktika solvo de tiu demando :

IV. Difinante lokon en la korporaciaj gazetoj por pritraki la priesperantan demandon.

Portugalia.

En la anarkia gazeto "A Comuna" (La Komunumo) aperis artikoloj pri esp.o.—En "Despertar" (Veki), organo de l'Sindikalista Gejunularo, aperas esp.a fako.—Post klopodoj de l'esp. lab. organizo la fervojista konferenco aprobis on por eksteraj rilatoj en la estonta "Fervojlaborista Federacio."

U.S.A.

Samideano G. Saville, bakisto, proponis al sia profesia unuigo la akcepton kaj enkondukon de esp.o. La ĉefa sekretario, K-do Thuman, invitis la grupon *Esp. Lab. Centro*, ke ĝi sendu trikamardan delegitaron al la kunsido de la bakistunuiĝo. K-do Klagin konvinkis la bakistaron pri la neceseco de esp.o en unuigo konsistanta el diversnecianoj ne konanantaj la anglan lingvon. La 26. Nov., unuanime la ekzekutiva komitato akceptis la proponon pri enkonduko de esp.o, rekomdante al ĉiuj membroj, ke ili lernu la lingvon.—La unuigo de bakistoj havas pli ol 4,000 membrojn kaj apartenas al la *Amalgamated Food Workers*.

(El *Sennacieca Revuo*)

NEWS of the MOVEMENT

COMRADE JACK HAMILTON, the energetic LIVERPOOL Secretary, is giving a very interesting series of lectures on 19th Century Industrial History which includes three *lantern* lectures: The Industrial Revolution; the Russian Revolution; and the Irish Struggle. The course began on January 13th and finishes on March 31st. Dr. James Johnston's lectures, we are informed, are a great success. An enthusiastic supporter writes: "He captures new students for the classes every year."

As an instance of the way the work in different districts calls for different treatment, and a clear understanding of the best tactical policy to pursue, the two following extracts from letters are of interest:—

Comrade Okey writes from Ilford: "We have affiliated to the local Labour Party and would recommend that other Plebs' Branches do the same. Affiliation gives us the right to send a delegate to the General Management Committee where our delegate would be in direct touch with delegates from the trade unions, co-op. societies and the ward members of the Party."

The opposite point of view is expressed in this letter from Chesterfield: "A serious complication seems to me to arise from the affiliation of political bodies. The differences which manifest themselves between the Labour Party, the I.L.P., the S.L.P. and the Com. Party find expression at the business meetings of the College with loss of time and impaired efficiency as a result. I would personally favour ending the duplication of membership through the industrial and political channels, and confine the attention of the L.C. movement to the *industrial*. I would like an expression of opinion on this point."

Comrades in the BIRMINGHAM district are urged to rally round T. D. Smith and the gallant group of class leaders and students who are putting up such a good fight for the Midland division of the Nat. Council of Labour Colleges. They have linked up with Brum, Wolverhampton, West Bromwich, Walsall, Smethwick and Stourbridge. All the comrades are engaged in busily fighting for the unemployed, and though the classes are having a great struggle to keep going, sometimes hardly being able to pay the train fare of the lecturer, they have a good syllabus and are determined to keep the flag flying. T.U. members are urged to get grants or affiliations from their branches to these struggling districts. Where it is possible to pay lecturer's train fares and expenses it has been found that the unemployed members of trade unions are only too ready to form classes. Much could be written about the way in which a good class

puts heart (and backbone) into the unemployed. The classes give a *purpose* to meeting and a hope for future, act as a tonic, and the employed members of any union might do much worse than finance a class for their comrades in any district. BIRMINGHAM district especially needs support. Helpers, etc., write, T. D. Smith, 12, Old Meeting Lane, West Bromwich.

Like most other organisations, we are beginning to feel the effect of the widespread unemployment. We hardly like to raise our voices to beg from comrades who have so many calls upon them *but*—we have still a big stock of

PLEBS STAMPS

waiting for sale. They are very attractive looking and every penny spent on them directly assists us because we sold enough in the first booming of them to pay the printer's bill for them. If you can only send a very small sum we shall be grateful . . . or you might let us send your change in stamps. Very often comrades send a penny or two over their account. It is a nice habit! Cultivate it a bit and we'll send the stamps in return.

IMPORTANT

On the whole we are doing splendidly with the Magazine considering the great slump—in everything except Psychology Textbooks! We are going to get that 10,000 per month and no one is going to stop us. If you have any ideas about bucking up the sales in your district send them to W. H. at the usual address. The great point to get firmly fixed is that we are not just going to make an attempt to get a bigger circulation. WE ARE GOING TO GET IT. It narks us (Yorkshire for "annoys") to see the *Daily Mail* 1,000,000, for whatever the "official" view about the brain capacity of the democracy may be the writer believes that there are 10,000 folk fit to take the PLEBS. Help us to search them out.

Bundles of back numbers will be sent to any district for free distribution amongst the unemployed and also in branches of organisations. Also remember that we can send posters for display in club-rooms. Also, if you are a member of a class or a class tutor, and there is one man who does not take the PLEBS in your class, remember the great success of the angel with Jacob and wrestle with him till the morning! We don't mind if folk only buy the Mag. to get rid of you . . . they'll get to like it.

This is only the beginning and there is going to be no peace till we touch that 10,000 line, so look out! And note (see p. iii of cover) that the League subscription is now is.

W. H.

LETTERS *from* PLEBS

IS THE "PLEBS" ON THE WRONG TRACK?

DEAR COMRADE,—Comrade J. Lewis charges me (along with others) with being a "brainy specialist," who is doing "too much thinking," and not doing any "spade work."

The article he complains of arose out of questions put to me at the close of an address on the "Development of Technique" delivered to a Sunday School Adult Class composed of ordinary working men. It dealt merely with one part of a vitally important subject—Economic Determinism. I have never experienced any difficulty in making that subject intelligible to working men.

In my case, the reference to a "small advanced intellectual circle" is rather amusing. Actually, the article was written during spare moments at my work in a factory, my evening and week-end leisure being taken up by the ordinary "spade work" of a propagandist of Communism.

Apparently Comrade Lewis thinks that if a subject is "speculative," that is, if different views are held concerning it, we as workers must have nothing to do with it until the experts on the other side have found a solution. What Pleb will assent to that?

Now a word on principles:—

The PLEBS assists both students and teachers; the former by discussing the more abstract and difficult aspects of the vast subject of Social Science; the latter by providing *abundant* material, and indicating, through its reviews, etc., where more material can be found. I would remind Comrade Lewis that it is the special task of a lecturer to mould that material into a form suitable to the understanding of his audience. No one else can do it for him. The PLEBS helps its readers to *think*; that is its supreme merit. Our lecturers need to do something more than merely hand on material provided for them; anyone with a loud voice and a glib tongue can do that.

We need thinkers, original thinkers, to explore every available avenue of knowledge, and to put *our* view on *every* subject before our fellows. We can no longer rely upon the thinking of another class, and I for one am not content to hand out the crumbs they fling down to us carefully prepared for our mental digestion.

Finally, I am too grateful for the practical usefulness of the PLEBS to think of any criticism of its methods. Keep on as you are!

Yours frat., ARTHUR RILEY
Fence, nr. Burnley, Lancs.

DEAR EDITOR,—If some of your contributors have been hurt by the discharge of the "Lewis" gun, serve 'em right for losing contact with the masses! Surely the faithful

portrayal of existing bread-and-butter relations 'twixt workers and capitalists is more important than hair-splitting speculations on the origin of the Ego.

The revolution will be fought out on the fundamental issues of bread or no bread, the condition of all your "neurone patterns," etc., notwithstanding. If the PLEBS Editorial Committee and its accomplices in crime were leading the armed workers along Downing Street, now—! But evidently their environment is not conducive to revolutionary action.

It is certain that the average worker-student wants simple, direct statements, which he can grasp and assimilate. But who writes them in the PLEBS? Very few. English as it is *not* spoken seems to be the guiding motto of the E. & C. P. fraternity. What do the unemployed care about your pettifogging "stunts" in Finance, Psychology or "Human and Social Origins," or for "the PLEBS' point of view?" Does it work? Can they trust their lives to it? That's the point. What ship, what cargo, what flag, what destination? What grub will be provided on the voyage? They want to know!

Your teaching and preaching methods are all wrong. You are sailing under false colours. You aim to "equip the workers with the necessary knowledge," etc., in a period when ACTION, a revolutionary lead into the factories and workshops, is what History is calling for. To hell with your paralysing meanderings and maunderings anent working-class education. Results, results, what results?

Pool all your revolutionary resources. Scrap the Plebs League. Inaugurate a Revolutionary Council of Action. Burn your books, and blow your studies and colleges to Hades. Come out and fight under the Red Flag of Revolution! Dare to believe in the truths you propound! That's all we want, all that we expect of you. Do it now!

Yours for the front,

MARENGHOL

[Sorry we can't oblige.—ED. PLEBS.]

DEAR COMRADE,—Comrade Lewis's attack in last issue seems to me a plea for inaccuracy and muddled thinking—under the false labels of "simplicity" and "proletarianism." He seems to imply that the worker is so "ordinary and stupid" that he must have not education, teaching, *clear thinking* on social problems and *knowledge* of the social sciences from the workers' point of view, but a carefully served "bread and milk" of other people's preparation.

Proletarian social science will not spring full-grown like Athene from the head of Zeus, but can only be born in the travail of controversy and reared in the school of

discussion. This *must* come before we get "results of study"—"capable of being handed on to the ordinary man in a lecture," as Lewis phrases it.

But the point raised by him certainly indicates a double function of our movement, which is sometimes overlooked:—(1) The need for *creation* of a working-class theory in the social sciences, capable of pulverising and displacing bourgeois science (this Marx began); and of forming the foundation in theory of working-class practice. This is inevitably the work of a comparative few—advanced students, tutors, researchers. (2) The *imparting* of certain selected parts of proletarian social science in a popular, *simple*, propagandist form to those in the workshops with little time for extended study. Without (1) those engaged in (2) have nothing to impart. Without (2), (1) is purposeless and merely of academic interest. Lewis overstates (2) and seems to think (1) of no use at all, forgetting that if Marx had not spent time on "highly speculative stuff" and in "doing the thinking" in the British Museum there would probably be no I.W.-C.E. movement to-day. Those who do the "thinking" are as much doing "spade work" as those who impart what has been already thrashed out.

I would quote M. Starr in the December *PLEBS*:—"Lack of correct theory must translate itself sooner or later into faulty practice.

Marxism is a revolutionary world outlook, which must *continually strive for new knowledge*."

That specialisation on each of these functions I have mentioned would, on the principle of the Division of Labour, give better aggregate results is undoubted. But economic circumstances preventing that as yet, I think that hearty congratulation is due to the *PLEBS* for the admirable way in which it combines the two important needs of the movement in one paper—no easy task!

Yours frat., M. H. DOBB

SPINDLES AND SPINNERS

DEAR COMRADE,—In "Students' Notes" last month H. Sara gave certain figures relating to the number of spindles on a modern pair of spinning mules, and also the number of workers engaged on the same. He further assured us that his figures were correct. Having been reared amongst the cotton mills of Rochdale, and at one period of my life chased these mechanical pests for ten hours a day, I have some grounds for doubting their accuracy.

The modern spinning mills in Rochdale contain from three to four spinning rooms. In each are from eight to twelve pairs of mules, the number being determined by the size of the mill. On each pair of mules there are generally one minder, one big piecer and one little piecer; but when coarse counts are spun an extra little piecer is engaged. Not 5 per cent. of pairs of mules, however, employ four to attend them. With regard to the bobbin carrier

and oiler, the former is the connecting link between cardroom and spinning-rooms; he conveys the rovings (full bobbins) to the spinning-rooms, and returns the empty bobbins to the cardroom. The oiler and greaser does no oiling in either the cardroom or the spinning-room, but acts as under-engineer. The oiling in the cardroom is done by the under-carder, that in the spinning-rooms by the spinners, or minders, to the extent of their mule-gate. These statements I can vouch for, as applying in any modern mill in this district.

I have made inquiries concerning the number of spindles on a modern pair of twist mules, and the following figures have been given me: from 2,000 to 2,400. These figures vary in different circumstances, the difference in the size of the mills; some mules contain more headstock space, and therefore less for carriage space, being a difference in the design by the makers; and the *weft* mules contain slightly more than twist mules, owing to the former having a smaller spindle.

The highest average number of spindles for each person engaged in the spinning process on a modern pair of mules would be 800. Taking into consideration the exceptional cases where coarse counts are spun, the lowest average number of spindles per person engaged would be 500. Over the whole industry 700 would be near the general average.

I have also compared the dates when H. De B. Gibbins and C. Beard wrote their books with mills built at that particular period, or just prior to it, and I find that Beard's figures are correct.

I may also state that some of the weaver-students in this district declare that Beard is wrong on the number of picks per minute of the powerloom (p. 41). Beard gives the figure at 400; my informants state that 320 is correct.

In conclusion, I wish to state for the benefit of students outside Cottonopolis, that mule spinning is not the last word in the spinning process. Ring spinning of certain yarn is a higher developed form of spinning and employs more female (and therefore cheaper) labour, the male labour in this case being mostly that of boys. Thus the adult male labour—minder and big piecer—in the mule spinning-rooms is dispensed with.

Yours frat.,

FRANK JACKSON

Rochdale.

DOUGLAS

SIR,—After your promises in the December and January *PLEBS* of some comments on the Douglas proposals, Mr. Mainwaring's contribution is disappointing. On the basis of some generalisations about Money and social relations, remarks on *ideal units*, the gold standard, John Gray, Attwood, and seventeen lines small type quotation from General Walker, without even the grace of as much as a quoted phrase from or a paged

reference to Douglas, he calmly asserts, as I understand the bitterest defenders of High Finance assert, that Douglas is simply a "currency crank," modernised old style. Whether or not Douglas's views are the same as, or similar to, views previously published, is not relevant to the question whether they accord with facts. Marx also has a pedigree! But if Mr. Mainwaring will occupy space with extensive irrelevances, then at least let him do it properly.

He does, however, achieve a little misrepresentation. In reviewing my book in January, he writes: "All we need to do, according to Mr. Cousens, . . . is to cut the claws of finance capital. . . ." The metaphor understates, and though I wrote not a *summary* or *digest*, but an *introduction*, other things necessary are stated or implied in Chs. IV. and VI.

In the last paragraph on p. 47 he now writes as though the abolition of the gold standard is the sole proposal Douglas makes. It is actually not even a principal but rather an incidental, proposal.

But the passages in which these misrepresentations occur tell us something about Mr. Mainwaring, and that is that chronology is a criterion of truth and desirability; he is proud of being up to date. This is rather hard on Marx, apart from all argument as to his economics appertaining to the handicraft period.

I will say no more except that in writing, p. 47, in America "the laws of currency and banking remained in a *very unsatisfactory* state almost up to the outbreak of the World War," he gives his approval to that triumph of Morganism, and of the gold standard, the Federal Reserve System. America, he says, had suffered a great deal with money controversies. He had better go and study the operations of the Federal Reserve Board from 1919 to date and see how tenderly it treated either the workers, the farmers, or the "capitalists."

Yours, etc., HILDERIC COUSENS

VIVISECTION

DEAR EDITOR,—To those comrades who, as appears from recent issues of the PLEBS, are anti-vivisectionists on humanitarian grounds, I offer the point of view of one who is both a lover of animals and a supporter of (and occasional participator in) vivisection.

Natural knowledge is a safer guide to the attainment of that "freedom" of which Comrade V. Wilson writes (January PLEBS, p. 21) than moral judgment. All moral and ethical values are relative to social and other conditions, which change rapidly. We need only think of the different ethics of homicide in peace-time and war-time to realise this. Natural knowledge, on the other hand, deals with values which, for all practical purposes, may be treated as absolute in the limited field of operations which is at present within man's control. If a method of investigation

materially assists us in acquiring that natural knowledge which makes for the greater control by man of his environment—and vivisection does so—we are on dangerous ground if we oppose it because it is repulsive to our instinctive sentiments. It is only a step from this attitude to that of those sentimental so-called Socialists who, because dictatorship and terrorism are ethically repulsive to them, revile the Bolsheviki revolution.

By all means let vivisection be duly *controlled*, to prevent the *unnecessary* infliction of suffering. For example, the case cited by "A. P. L.," where vivisection seems to be resorted to simply to ram elementary facts into the heads of young men of sub-normal intelligence, would not, I imagine, be likely to occur in a communist society. These young gentlemen are receiving a medical education, not because they are the most fitted to become the custodians of the health and lives of their fellow-citizens, but because a medical education provides a lucrative occupation to those whose parents have the wealth to purchase it for them. In a communist society, no doubt, jobs would be found for them of a kind more suited to the capacities with which Nature has endowed them.

But let us seek first the control of the economic sources of power; meantime we can afford to leave to the capitalist State the control of the bourgeois vivisection.

Yours frat., NORDICUS

THE PROBLEM OF CONTROL

DEAR SIR,—The problem of finding technicians in sympathy with a social change is not so great as some of your correspondents think. For many reasons it is impractical to propose that the Plebs-Lab. Coll. movement should leave its work of general social education to provide specialised technical education. It neither could nor should do this.

I do not think we are going to reconstruct the station and keep all the trains going; there must be some delay from the very nature of the task. Until by liberal educational provisions technicians are more plentiful, some toll will have to be paid to bribe them. But it would be a mistake to think them all in opposition. There are a good many "Silent Capables" in the Universities and in the salariat who will be actively on our side. There are many "non-politicals" whose inactivity would be short; they would find themselves hopelessly in want despite their technical skill. Organisation is not entirely absent among such brain workers and will expand. The Plebs education seems to me to be the means whereby the specialised worker in brain or brawn may get the larger outlook.

Capitalism is turning the intellectual and the "expert" into proletarians, and our work for an effective alliance will meet with increasing success.

Yours, K.

REVIEWS

THE GREAT SENTIMENTALISTS

The Social Philosophy of Carlyle and Ruskin.
By Frederick W. Roe. (Allen & Unwin.
12s. 6d.)

UNLIKE a well-known British professor who is able to explain the humanitarian movement without tossing a thought in the direction of economic causes, Professor Roe, in ushering in his study of the paradoxical doctrines of Carlyle and Ruskin, bestows considerable attention on the industrial revolution, whose resultant manifestations were the goad which spurred alike the scorching indignation of the "Chelsea Prometheus" and the more genial ardour of the "Don Quixote of Denmark Hill." Throughout his work the author ruthlessly represses his own personality, but his opening chapter—in which appears an unexpected tribute to Engels—reveals him as a writer who has a just regard for facts.

So far as it is humanly possible he has achieved his declared purpose, but his conviction that the social philosophy of Ruskin and Carlyle is a "trumpet-call" to present-day workers is ill-grounded. As Chesterton says: "Carlyle's two eyes were out of focus when he looked at democracy" and Ruskin's mediæval "Illiberalism" savours too much of patronage to appeal to the worker of to-day. The "trumpet-call" is the trumpet-call of alarmed Reaction and has more a note of warning than of hope.

Carlyle's distrust of "roaring, million-headed, unreflecting, darkly-suffering, darkly-sinning 'Demos,'" counterbalanced though it was by his contempt for the typical employer—Plugson of Undershot, as he called him—robbed all his radical sentiments of their value; while the contradiction between his hatred of universal suffrage and his desire that the workers should elect their Ablest Men to rule them, remains unsolved unless we accept his estimation of the masses as "greedy blockheads," incapable of anything but "beer and balderdash." Workers, therefore, are of different stuff.

To both Carlyle and Ruskin, as Professor Roe admits, "democracy was synonymous with anarchy and must be put down." Yet he finds points of resemblance, one rather curious, between Ruskin and the Marxians, and attributes the ideas of the Guild Socialists to a Ruskinian source.

M. W.

WHEN "LABOUR" RULES!

The International Labour Review. (Monthly,
3s. Allen & Unwin.)

This Review is issued by the International Labour Office (League of Nations), and deals with economic and social questions—unemployment, production, prices, labour and capitalist organisation, etc. Really it does

not so much deal with these problems, in the sense of prescribing remedies, as providing information concerning them.

In the December number, Unemployment is dealt with by Seebom Rowntree, who, admitting that "a certain reserve of workers is necessary to the successful functioning of industry," makes exhaustive and detailed suggestions for improving the system of State Unemployment Insurance; and by an American "Scientific Management" expert, who in an article, "Unemployment within Employment," starts out with the statement "Unemployment is in the large an insoluble problem," and devotes the greater part of his space to an exposition of methods enabling individual employers to set "a definite daily accomplishment for each and every worker." One of the methods recommended is "trial periods of employment"—"a mistake . . . may always be 'rectified' by a discharge before the end of the trial period." Any consideration of the standpoint of the worker, of the Trade Union, or of the social effects of a continual reduction of the time required to perform a given task, are not even hinted at.

Valuable information, including much statistical matter, is given on such topics as Wholesale and Retail Price fluctuations; growth of Trade Unions; Emigration; British Industrial Councils, etc. And there is a survey of meetings of National and International Workers', and Employers', Organisations.

As a work of reference, or for specialised reading, the Review is valuable. But it is no more likely to make for a permanent solution of the problems it deals with than is the League of Nations itself. And for the same reason—because a "nation" is composed of warring employers and employed, and the battle is to the (economically) strong.

W. J. L.

A BOOK TO BUY

The Foundations of Imperialist Policy. By M. Pavlovitch. (Labour Publishing Company, 3s. 6d. Post paid from Plebs, 3s. 9d.)

A useful elementary guide to the theories and practices of Imperialism; "elementary," that is, in the sense that its simple style makes it possible for even the beginner-student to get full value out of it. The most interesting part of the book is the summary of Lenin's arguments in his work, *Imperialism the Latest Stage in Capitalism* (not yet translated into English). Lenin gives five "fundamental characteristics" of Imperialism: (1) Concentration of production and capital, leading to *monopoly*; (2) the fusion of bank and industrial capital producing *finance capital*; (3) the *export of capital*, as distinct from the export of commodities; (4) the formation of *international world-monopolistic*

associations of capitalists; (5) the partition of the entire earth among the great capitalist nations. He also emphasises the part played by "parasitism" (interest-bearing investments) in Imperialist expansion; he asserts that the income, to English bondholders, etc. (pre-war), from foreign investments was five times greater than that derived from foreign trade.

We hope to return to the book next month, space in this issue being at a premium. The book is produced in the usual attractive form associated with the name of the Labour Publishing Company, and if it is not such an epoch-making work as *Socialism and War*, it is certainly a book which no Pleb can afford to miss.

S.

A TOPICAL PAMPHLET

Why this Unemployment? By T. Bell.
(Communist Party. id.)

To give within the limits of a 12-pp. pamphlet a clear, non-technical reply to the above question is not so easy as some might think. There is so much one can talk about. But this pamphlet would, in our view, have been more effective had Comrade Bell stuck to the question of the *cause* of unemployment. Since he recognises that "fixed notions and prejudices" are deadly enemies of proletarian progress, is it not more than generous of him to surrender the task of "arguing about" the origin of Capitalism to "the comfortable and well-to-do in the schools"? Could he not have made fuller use of his knowledge of Industrial History?

The feudal serf knew nothing of unemployment. He had definite rights to a holding and common land. How were these rights destroyed? By whom? Why? With what results? A simple and definite answer to these questions might make the question not only of the origin of Capitalism (and Unemployment), but of Private Property as a whole, worth "arguing about" from a workers' point of view.

The statement that "as long as there is a labour market there will be unemployment" is not as convincing as it might be, since we are also urged not to be "led astray by the sentimentalists (!) who say that it is the system that is to blame and not the individual." This is surely neither theoretically nor practically sound. We must encourage a hatred of the capitalist system, irrespective of the names of politicians or financiers, as Comrade Bell admits elsewhere in his pamphlet.

There is still room for a pamphlet on Unemployment.*

D. S. BROWETT

* And it seems to us that there is a magnificent opportunity for the students of the Labour College, working in "round table" conference, to prove their usefulness to the movement by producing such a pamphlet.—Ed., PLEBS.

Militarism after the War. By Dr. H. V. Rutherford. (Swarthmore Press, 6s.)

Dr. Rutherford is a member of the U.D.C. At least he ought to be: from which Plebeians will be able to judge tolerably clearly what manner of book this is.

It appears to have been written in a white heat of indignation against the prophets, priests and kings of militarism. A wide field is covered, but there is nothing new in the book to anyone who has kept half an eye on international affairs since the war.

Our Doctor makes no bones about his diagnosis: "The 'hidden hand' of Capitalism in the fabrication of modern wars requires no Röntgen Rays for its discovery and illumination." But this thought is not pursued, and students would have to interpret for themselves the almost exclusively political and military facts with which he deals. It is scarcely a book to be recommended to the student, for whom indeed we can hardly suppose it to have been intended; but it may well serve, with its evident sincerity and its vigorous, rather flamboyant, eloquence, to interest newcomers into the Labour movement in international affairs and especially in the implications of that particular brand of militarism and imperialism which is "made in Britain."

T. A.

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ROMAIN ROLLAND

Romain Rolland: the Man and his Work.
By Stefan Zweig. Trans. E. & C. Paul.
(Allen & Unwin. 16s. net.)

THE work of a man of genius is limited by material considerations in two distinct ways. They determine the subject matter of his thought, and also the acceptability of his work to his fellows. In the case of the politician the latter is all important; he achieves greatness only by interpreting the needs of an effective section of the community—genius does not confer on him the power to turn back the tides of history. In the case of art the issue is more complex.

The material needs of the public, the predominant social tendencies of the age, undoubtedly determine what form of expression shall be pre-eminently characteristic of the time. But an artist, particularly a literary artist, on whom the library confers a potential immortality, may achieve distinction by interpreting the feeling of a period already passed (except as a local phenomenon), or may acquire a posthumous fame because his work embodies an emotional background more intelligible to a later generation than to the bulk of his contemporaries.

The coincident rise of bourgeois culture and international communications towards the end of the 19th century matured throughout Europe and America in the minds of a small band of artists and savants the ideal of a Europe, a Western civilisation, integrated by a common culture: science and literature were alike impatient of the restraints which national boundaries placed on their progress. The ideal was rudely shattered in 1914 by the forces which bourgeois society itself liberated. Let us say that it was none the less a beautiful, if an idle, dream.

From that source came the inspiration of Romain Rolland's life. It is natural, therefore, that the good bourgeois howls him down as renegade, while the average Socialist will dismiss him as not writing for the Man in the Crowd. He spoke mainly for a coterie. Professor of musical history in the Sorbonne, biographer of Beethoven, Michel Angelo and Tolstói, author of several works on art, criticism and dramas, one of which, *Danton*, was enthusiastically commended by Jaurès to the French workers, Rolland had at the age of forty achieved neither fame nor pecuniary reward. Only shortly before the war did the publication of the eighth part of his monumental novel, *Jean Christophe*, bring him into prominence in artistic circles. "From the hour when his most cherished ideal, the unity of Europe, seemed bent on its own destruction, he emerged from his retirement to become a vital element of his time, an impersonal force, a chapter in the history of the European spirit." . . .

Stefan Zweig writes as a panegyrist, or at least a disciple, rather than a critic. It is poetic justice that Rolland should find a biographer with his own defect in the same

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rôle—that of being too overwhelmed by enthusiasm to evaluate with a sober perspective his hero's achievement. Had Rolland himself been as genuinely concerned with fact as intent on developing an edifying theme, he could not have persuaded himself that Tolstói made any original or profound contribution to European thought. That Tolstói was a great artist is beyond question. That a man whose mental life in the one direction in which it was really active never developed beyond "liberal Christianity" should be regarded as a sage is a grotesque suggestion. That Rolland saw Tolstói's life as the tragedy of a man persecuted by an inexorable desire for truth rather than an exaggerated Nonconformist Conscience at least illustrates the necessity of liberating one's mind from moral and aesthetic preoccupations if one is anxious to arrive at the truth.

One may sympathise with Zweig's enthusiasm for a man of singular nobility of character and singleness of purpose, but it is difficult to concede to this enthusiasm such a glowing estimate of Rolland's intellectual achievement. For the mild and tolerant influences of his art a Europe distraught with class antagonisms has little ear. But it does not follow that his art is a dead force.

P. L. E. B.

YOU CAN SAVE 2s. 6d.!

Physical Economics. By L. Southern, M.A., B.Sc. (Labour Publishing Co. 67 pp. 2s. 6d.)

As I hope to be saved, here is a book on economics, published by a Labour publishing company, in which the word "commodity" is not once used! The writer uses the title "Physical Economics" to indicate that he is dealing with concrete economic factors in

the shape of goods, rather than dealing with the purely abstract theories. All that is good, but surely to do that there is no need to have the word "Entity" coming in on almost every second line. The Marxian terminology is often stated to be difficult, but "Labour Power," "Means of Production," and "Commodity" are certainly not more difficult terms than "Primary Entity," "Secondary Entity," and "Tertiary Entity."

The writer holds the view that money is not an "entity" but a symbol, and in this connection declares: "Gold as a raw material . . . is clearly an entity. . . . I may make a piece (of gold) absolutely identical in all respects with a sovereign but *it will not be money*." Yet he says "if we do not clearly resolve this question we shall never think rightly on Economics"!

If a piece of gold is treated as he suggests it may not be legal tender as an actual minted coin, but it will be just as much a medium of exchange as any other piece of gold of the same weight, and will bring as many commodities, so that the point made is of no importance.

The sections on "Abstinence" and "Interest to perpetuity" are useful and suggestive, but the book as a whole misses the point and does not deal as it should with simple mundane nuts, bolts, trousers, hats, etc.

W. McLAINE

COMPERSISM

Full up and Fed up. By Whiting Williams (Allen & Unwin. 12s. 6d. net.)

To find out what is at the bottom of the "labour problem," the author (an American) spent some months with the labour gangs of America in 1919 and Britain in the summer of 1920. The first part of the volume contains his experiences with the man on the job and in the pub. He portrays the revolutionary psychology of the Rhondda miners and the psychology of the mild Midland miners. Seven days as a "butty" in a Welsh mine—when the "Bolshies" had control of a local dispute. What a change—then and now! Did such things really happen in 1920?—they seem to belong to some far-distant future!

His experiences of the soviet city of Glasgow (written in real Pat McGill style) are very interesting. Describing a meeting of Glasgow Trades Council:—"One of the most conservative men in the meeting proved to be with the Workers Educational Alliance"—old "friends" in a "new" name. "One of the meeting's more radical leaders is with the Labour College." By their deeds ye shall know them! After describing a Sunday afternoon on Glasgow Green and a Saturday night in the Cowcaddens district, he comments: "Of this at least I am sure—Glasgow is certainly the most revolutionary and also the most rum-ridden city I have ever seen."

Our Yank lacks knowledge of the British Labour Movement. Writing in 1920 he

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speaks of "the Sankey Coal Commission of some years ago." Again, "the coming of the Minimum Wage law in 1911." And he tries to reproduce cockney, Welsh, Glasgow, Tyneside and Yorkshire dialects—the result being Dutch!

Now comes his interpretation—the trouble is due to bad housing conditions, insecurity of the job and misunderstanding between employer and employee. The remedy—the scrapping of one- and two-roomed tenements, more technical and less classical education, and the regulation of jobs by an international clearing house set up by the League of Nations. Then, all's right with the world!

S. L.

FOR ENGLISH STUDENTS

A Manual on Essay Writing. By Henderson and Freeman. (W. E. A. 3s. 3d.)

A brightly-written and useful guide for the student and the propagandist. We might alter the illustrative matter in places, but the general method employed is excellent. The original issue was eulogistically reviewed by "J. F. H." in PLEBS, December, 1915. His views can only be endorsed, for the benefit of new readers, on the publication of this latest edition.

There are really very few rules needed to write and speak convincingly, but those few are important, e.g., one must understand the most commonly used Parts of Speech; learn directness of expression in the conveying of an idea; study, by experiment, how best to arrange the arguments leading up to a generalisation; and practice a *natural, easy, conversational style*—in short, learn to "say what we have to say as well as we possibly can." Advice "can help you, but ultimately achievement depends upon yourself alone." It's all so easy! Yet so few of us "get there." This book gives us pointers—we must do the rest.

G.

The PLEBS BOOKSHELF

THE *Daily Herald* (January 24th) had an eminently sensible leading article entitled "Books in Bad Times." This article discussed the present slump in the book-producing industry, and commented upon certain views as to the causes of that slump which had been put forward by publishers. It pointed out that, by the great majority of publishers, "books are frankly regarded as a class monopoly . . . an 'extra,' a luxury, a thing for those who are so rich that they are too silly to want them"; and that these particular "captains of industry" for the most part utterly ignored the existence of the working-class public, which constitutes well over three-quarters of the population.

All of which is profoundly true—and needs well rubbing in; although doing this involves the giving of advice to capitalist-publishers as to how they can increase their profits! The ordinary captain of the publishing industry still apparently labours under the delusion that the working classes are illiterate; and when he issues a book of serious interest to students prints so few copies of it that he is compelled to price it at a figure beyond the purses of all students but those few who live on surplus-value

instead of creating it. This cannot be due to any deliberate conspiracy to prevent the workers from getting knowledge; for to assume this would be to credit the publishers with far more brains than there is any evidence that they possess, and, moreover, with a self-sacrificing class-consciousness impelling them to forgo their individual profits in order to safeguard the position of their fellow-capitalists. No. It's just stupidity, short-sightedness, and crass snobbery—not uncommon failings in captains of industry.

* * *

The *Daily Herald*, I was saying, rightly castigated the publishers for this stupidity, etc. But what has the *Daily Herald* done towards making publishers realise that there is a working-class public, and a working-class point of view? It reviews books—"features," indeed, a weekly Literary Page. It has had, therefore, a real opportunity, by its choice of books and of reviewers, and by the setting up of more or less clearly-defined standards of judgment, of giving expression to a working-class point of view, and of making the existence of a working-class public clear even to publishers. It has signally failed to do either. Its

THE WORKERS' LIBRARY

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This volume contains translations of two recent French pamphlets—one by Monatte on the Future of Trade Unionism, the other by Argence and Herlet on Workers' Control and Workshop Committees. There is a foreword by George Slocombe, the Paris correspondent of "The Daily Herald," on French Trade Union Organisation.

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A study of the economic basis of the great empires of to-day and of their influence on the lives and welfare of the working classes. Pavlovitch is one of the clearest and deepest economic thinkers that Russia has produced.

MEN AND STEEL. By MARY HEATON VORSE. 3s. 6d.

This book gives a vivid and poignant portrayal of the conditions in the American steel works and in the slums round them, and details of the circumstances which led up to the big steel strike of 1918-19, and of the terrorism and treachery which ultimately caused its collapse.



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Literary Page may have interested the inhabitants of Chelsea and the Hampstead Garden Suburb—worthy folk, no doubt, but not preponderantly proletarian; it can rarely have failed to disappoint, even to irritate, the working-class reader of books. [Let me say at once that I am not writing this because the Plebs Psychology Textbook has received hostile treatment from Mr. Gerald Gould in the *Herald*. These notes were planned and partly written before his review appeared].

* * *

I don't know how far it is necessary to give "chapter and verse" for these criticisms. I imagine that those responsible for the *Herald's* Literary Page would not claim that they had expressed a working-class point of view, or had even attempted to do so. It is indeed pretty clear that they have had quite other aims. Of their kind, *Herald* reviews have been good enough, though certainly not better than those appearing in certain other dailies or in the "literary" weeklies. That is to say, they have had no distinctive note. Now the *Herald* itself obviously has such a note. It is the solitary workers' daily, amid a cohort of capitalist journals. Its leading articles, though they may not always satisfy the most fervent Left-Wingers, could at any rate scarcely appear in the *Morning Post*, or even in the *Daily News*, without exciting some comment. But most of its book reviews could. And this, quite apart from the expression or otherwise of a working-class point of view, is a serious fault in them. For even if you take it for granted, as the conductors of the *Herald's* Literary Page appear to do, that Literature is a thing altogether apart from the everyday life of your readers, it is still a bigger achievement to strike a distinctive note in purely aesthetic criticism than to be content with the same stock pattern favoured by the majority of your contemporaries. The *Herald's* dramatic criticisms have left the *Herald* reviews miles behind in this respect. In them one does get a point of view, and one does get social criticism.

* * *

Some time ago, indeed, it appeared to strike somebody in the *Herald* office that the Literary Page was not exactly written for proletarians; and accordingly the "Great Names" series was inaugurated.

Space was to be found, among the serried rows of reviews of minor novels (at major prices), for short critical biographies of the great writers, which would serve to introduce working-class readers to the masterpieces of literature. A quite excellent idea, which might well have redeemed the rest of the Literary Page from comparative futility. But this opportunity, also, was largely missed. The particular "Great Names" included in the series appear to have been chosen far oftener for the sake of giving some one of the younger writers a chance of airing his views on a particular literary school, and of claiming the authority of the "Great Name" for the "movement" in which he was especially interested, than of interesting beginners in literature in the books that matter. Of what importance to workers, for instance, is Francois Villon—or Bishop Berkeley—or F. O. Morris? And why, anyhow, have we had a biography of Ben Jonson but not of Shakespeare—of Fanny Burney but not of Scott—of Crashaw but not of Milton? From the standpoint of purely aesthetic criticism some of these little biographies have been cleverly enough done. But I can recall in none of them any attempt to relate the writer under consideration, or his work, to the social conditions and influences of his time; any attempt, that is, to meet *Daily Herald* readers halfway, by discussing an author from the point of view most likely to arouse their interest.

* * *

If I were asked to suggest definite ways and means of making the *Herald* Literary Page more like the literary page of a workers' daily, I should say:—Cut out nine-tenths of the reviews of novels, since these novels are very decidedly neither written nor published for a working-class audience. Publish, instead, information about cheap reprints of good novels, poetry, etc. Aim at giving, in the reviews of books on history and social subjects, a clear summary of points of special interest to workers. Arrange for some sort of continuity of treatment, if not of chronology—in the "Great Names" series, so that a certain number of these, reprinted, would make a useful little literary handbook for proletarian readers.

The PLEBS has had to stand a tidy bit of criticism lately; so why shouldn't we pass some on to other people?

J. F. H.

The PLEBS invites contributions on Labour problems in general and on subjects of interest to Working-Class Educationists in particular. No contribution should exceed 2,000 words. (This is a maximum—not a minimum.) Articles or letters intended for following month's issue should be sent in not later than the 15th. Will correspondents also remember to write on one side of the paper only, and to enclose full name and address, whether for publication or not?

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