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# THE PLEBS

AGITATE EDUCATE ORGANISE

IT WOULD BE better for men to be deprived of education, than to receive their education from their masters; for education, in that sense, is no better than the training of cattle that are broken to the yoke.

*Thos. Hodgskin (1823).*

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# THE PLEBS LEAGUE

**is an organisation of class-conscious workers who believe that Education is one of the most pressing needs of the Labour Movement. ¶ Not, however, Education of any description; but Education of a particular kind, and with a definite aim. The Education the League stands for is Education designed to help the workers fight their**

## CLASS BATTLES

**and to wage successful war on**

## CAPITALISM and WAGE-SLAVERY

**If you are in sympathy with this object, send a shilling to the Plebs Office, 162a, Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W.1., get enrolled as a Pleb, and be put in touch with other like-minded workers in your locality. Do it NOW.**

The Organ of the National Council of Labour Colleges

# THE PLEBS

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

Vol. XIV October, 1922 No. 10

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## OUR POINT of VIEW

THE words of the "motto" on our front cover this month were penned by Thomas Hodgskin just 99 years ago. 99 years—one year only short of a century! "In 1823," G. D. H. Cole tells us in his brief introduction to Hodgskin's *Labour Defended*, "Hodgskin joined with a Scot named Robertson in founding the *Mechanics' Magazine*, and in it he at once began to work for the foundation of a Mechanics' Institute, where working men could 'learn all that is really indispensable for a worker to know in chemistry, in mechanics, and in the science of the production and distribution of wealth.'.. From the first he

*99 Years Ago—*

*A blue X in this square means that your subscription has lapsed. Please renew without delay, and if you can send on a subscription for a friend as well, we shall love you all the more!*

urged that *the workers would never get the education that they needed until they provided it for themselves and under their own control.*" A pioneer, indeed ; to whom at least one vital side of the class-struggle was clear as daylight. " Better for men to be deprived of education than to receive it from their masters ; for education, in that sense, is no better than the training of cattle that are broken to the yoke ! "

*And To-day*

Hodgskin's Institute was founded—but not at the expense or under the control of working-men. " Middle-class Radicals " financed it, and controlled it. For even in those days, the days when such things were happening as those described in the Chapter of Working-Class History in South Wales elsewhere in this issue, there were far-seeing men among the masters ; men who saw as clearly as Hodgskin himself did the value of the educational weapon, and who made use of their economic power to secure its use for themselves. Not until another century had begun, until advancing capitalism had spread a consciousness of their real position among wider circles of the workers, did the idea of Independent Working-Class Education become embodied in a workers' movement, with clear and conscious aims. To-day, ever-increasing numbers of workers are providing for themselves the education they need, and themselves controlling that education. Refusing any longer to accept the status of cattle, they will no longer be trained for the yoke.

*Business as Usual ?*

The movement for Independent Working-Class Education—our movement—has found its feet. It has, or ought to have, grown out of babyhood. It has made clear its aims and its point of view. Is it to develop still further—not merely in numbers, but in effectiveness, in scope, in range of appeal ? For although clear-cut aims are the first essential of any movement, mere reiteration of those aims is not of itself sufficient for their achievement. We aim at using education as a means towards the full emancipation of the workers. We regard education quite simply as a means towards an end. Are we convinced that all our methods are the means best suited to that end ? Are we satisfied that, so far as we are able, we are making full use of all the means available to us ? To put it in a clear and concrete way—Are we, the active workers in this movement, satisfied with the rate of our progress ; and now, facing a new year of work, are we content to follow the old routine ; to handle the old subjects in the old way ; to make use only of the old methods ; to take, in fact, as our motto, " Business as Usual " ? Or are we, in any way whatsoever, going *to break fresh ground ?*

Now whenever this suggestion of breaking fresh ground is made, there are some folk who shake their heads sagely and say "Be careful. Ours is a strait and narrow path. Don't stray from it. Don't do what we charge our opponents with doing—fill the workers' heads with This and That and the Other, and let them forget the fundamental things." Excellent advice—so long as it is not merely an excuse for mental timidity, indolence, conservatism. There is a quite real danger that if we go out to "break fresh ground" for no better reason than that we feel disposed for a change, we should reduce our effectiveness. But if we break fresh ground with the set purpose of shewing afresh the importance of "the fundamental things"; of stating fundamental truths in new ways and bringing home a realisation of these to new people—can a single authentic argument be brought against this? If there be one, we have never heard it stated.

*The Conservatives*

For, let us repeat, education, in our view, is a means to an end. That end is the spreading and deepening of class-consciousness among the workers. And any and every educational means to that end should be a weapon in our armoury. A knowledge of the science of the production and distribution of wealth is merely a means to that end; it is not an end in itself (though God knows some of our economists talk as if it were). It is simply as a means to that end that we give it a primary place in the scheme of our studies. So also with History. The mere apprehension of certain facts, or of certain theories based on those facts, is not what we are, ultimately, out for. *We are out to make class-consciousness, and to deepen it.* And the test of all our studies, and of all our methods, must be the extent to which these succeed in this primary aim.

Our movement must go forward. Let us take as our battle-cry this winter—*Extension*. Extension of the range of our appeal; extension of the range of our studies. (Both indeed, are linked together.) The first involves the overhauling of our *methods*. It includes possible *simplification* of phraseology, as well as simplification of subject-matter—in the sense of concentrating on essential points and cutting out irrelevancies and matters of secondary importance. (And let us remark here, *apropos* of a phrase used by the writers of a review in last month's issue, that we, too have "a strong dislike of simplification at the expense of truth." The point is that fundamental truths can be expressed simply; if they cannot, then our task—*workers'* education—is hopeless indeed.) Extension of the range of our appeal may also mean the running of shorter lecture-courses or study circles on a greater variety of subjects, instead of

*Try New Methods—*

a single long course on a single subject. It may mean more "popular" lectures; a greater use of lantern-slides, or of other pictorial aids. It ought, most emphatically, to mean a certain amount of *experiment* on the part of every teacher and organiser; and no waiting for a lead, from the "centre" or anywhere else!

*—And New Subjects*

Linked up, as we have already said, with this extension of our range of appeal is the extension of the range of our studies. It appears to us that this latter is desirable, indeed essential, for two main reasons. First, as a means of approaching other types of working-class students than those we have in the main appealed to in the past. More than once in The Plebs the value of a study of Literature has been urged on this very ground. Before we can make a man class-conscious we must first gain his interest; go, in fact, halfway to meet him. And the more avenues of approach we are able to use, the better for our chances of a wider appeal to our fellows. (Those "avenues," of course, will be limited to subjects between which and our goal class-consciousness, we can establish some connection. But have we reached the limit set by this condition yet?)

The second reason which makes an extension of the range of our studies highly desirable is one that concerns ourselves—as workers or as students in our movement. We need, if we are to continue as effective propagandists—if, indeed, we are to be effective in any way other than as awful examples—*to go on learning*. The moment we regard our own education as completed, we are done for. We cannot afford to stagnate. Nor can we afford to specialise—at any rate to the extent of losing touch with our fellows and their day-to-day problems. We must use the key our knowledge gives us for the opening of other doors. We must never cease to be learners if we are to be effective teachers. In however small a way we have, every one of us, to be explorers; or the odds are that we shall end up as something more like gramophones. And there are enough of them already.

It's 99 years since Hodgskin saw, and stated, the need for Independent Working-Class Education. Our job is to make that education more effective, and to carry it farther afield, than ever before.

## MARX'S GRAVE FUND

THE amount required for the restoring and renovating of Marx's grave was last month stated in error to be £5. It should have been £10 5s. We have to acknowledge with thanks the following contributions, which, it will be noticed, do not quite make up the total required. We appeal with confidence for a few more small subscriptions so that we may put the work in hand without delay:—M. Philips Price, £5; Barachi, G., £1; Plebs E.C., £1 1s.; G. A. R. Sargent, 5s.; F. H. Beavis, 2s.; M. Westrope, 1s.; E. Johns, 6d.; J.T.D., 6d.; Messrs. Boyd, 2s.; Lamb, 5s.; Ferrier, 5s.; Bromley, 2s. 6d.; Armstrong, 3s.; Thorne, 2s.; Leach, 1s.; Elliot, 2s. 6d.; Anon (Shipley), 2s. 6d.; total, £8 15s. 6d.

# An AMERICAN LABOUR COLLECE

*The following account of a Labour College in the States, by an American comrade who spent some time in London this summer, will be read with interest by all Plebs.*

BROOKWOOD Workers' College is at Katonah, New York, about forty miles north of New York City. It was established as a result of a conference of union leaders and labour educationalists held on March 31—April 1st, 1921. The first session opened in October of that year.

Brookwood takes the position that we must have a new social and industrial order in place of the present capitalist system, and that the organised movements of the working-class are the vital forces upon which we must depend to bring in that new order. It aims not to educate workers out of their class, but to " train workers to work in the workers' movements." For the rest, the College is not dogmatic nor doctrinaire in its teaching method, seeking to train students to think rather than to tell them what to think.

Only resident students are taken. The course is a two year course, the first year work consisting of more general courses in The Use of the English Language, History of Civilisation, Social Psychology, Economics, etc. ; the second year courses being more practical and technical and preparing students to work either as organisers, speakers or officials for the unions ; or as statisticians ; or as journalists; or in the field of workers' education either as teachers or as organisers of educational schemes.

The financial support of the College comes at present partly through scholarships established by trade unions, partly from lump sums contributed by the unions, partly from individual contributions made by students or other workers or by middle-class persons interested in the movement. We hope in the course of a few years to have American unions educated up to the point where practically all the support for current expenses will be derived from scholarships granted by them to their members.

There are two matters about which it may be worth while to speak in some detail ; the one is Control and the other Educational Method. As to the former, the property of the College is being held—for reasons it is not necessary to go into—by five people who have executed a deed of trust to use it for workers' education. They rent it for one dollar per year to the College—and exercise no control over its policy and activities.

Then there is a Co-operating Labour Committee which was originally appointed by the conference in 1921 above referred to, to which members have since been added by joint action of the Committee itself and of the College, so that now on the Committee are representatives of the Chicago and Pennsylvania Federations of Labour, the Women's Trade Union League, and the Miners', Machinists', Teachers', Garment Workers', Timber Workers' and Railway Clerks' Unions. This Committee, on the one hand, vouches for the College and enlists the support of the Unions ; and on the other hand keeps in touch with the work of the College in order that it may be of real service to the labour movement. The Committee is thus of very great influence, but it does not exercise legal control over the institution.

The legal control of the College is vested in a voluntary association called the Brookwood Co-operators and consisting of all those living and working at the College, students, teachers and administrative officials. In the meetings of the Co-operators the one-man one-vote principle obtains so that students can outvote teachers. The Brookwood Co-operators have recognised that there are some functions, such as student discipline, which belong properly to the students as such and the students are organised for dealing with them. Other functions such as keeping the accounts or organising courses are recognised as belonging to the Faculty and Administrative group who are organised in turn for dealing with them. Matters pertaining to the whole community are dealt with in meetings of the Brookwood Co-operators who also have the final decision as to where the responsibility for dealing with any given question lies whether with students or faculty or the school as a whole.

The daily conduct of affairs is in the hands of an Executive Committee of five members, two elected by the students, two by the faculty and one by the Brookwood Co-operators as a whole. The latter is *ex-officio* chairman of the Executive Committee and of the Co-operators and may be either a student or a teacher—during each of the three terms of last year a student member occupied the position, twice a man student and the last term one of the young women.

Every effort is made to enlist the activity of the students, so that they may not be mere recipients of knowledge but joint-builders with the teachers of a great working-class institution. For example, the accounts of the school are audited by students. As there is no hired help, the work of keeping up the place, cooking, cleaning, etc., must be done by the members, each of whom puts in two hours per day, except Saturday and Sunday, at manual work in or out of doors. This work is organised and assigned to various members by a student committee. (Let me add that the Faculty contains a domestic science expert who supervises the cooking so that our system of voluntary work does not mean that our stomachs are at the mercy

of a fresh amateur cook every day or week !) At the end of our first year half a dozen conferences of students and teachers were held at which the latter freely expressed themselves about teachers, text-books, relative value of courses, administrative problems, etc. At these conferences decisions were reached which were later adopted officially and will to a great extent constitute the basis of the school's policy during the coming year.

Finally, as to Educational Method. For one thing, our Faculty tries to approach its task from an organic point of view. We do not think of ourselves as giving a certain number of separate, unrelated courses or lectures. Some of the work of course, especially in the second year, is technical, concerned with book-keeping or organising an office or " making-up " a paper. But for the rest, in our work in English, History, Economics, Sociology, Psychology, etc., we think of ourselves as giving *one course* rather than many, of all our work as being intimately related, having but the one aim of enabling the student to find himself and to evaluate his world. The work in Logic is part of the course in English and given by the English teacher, thought and expression being not two but one. The themes or essays for the English course are assigned jointly by the various teachers and are on subjects connected with the history, economics and psychology courses. Our course in the Problems and Tactics of Labour Organisation will be organised by one of the teachers but the entire faculty will attend the sessions and take active part in them. In the first year considerable emphasis is placed on a course in The History of Civilisation which on the one hand seeks to give the student an idea of the story of mankind as a whole, and on the other hand to suggest how all the " sciences " from mathematics, astronomy, chemistry and physics through biology to social psychology, economics, etc., are ideally one and jointly contribute to knowledge of man and his world.

Obviously all this implies constant consultation among the teachers. This we sought for in our first year, and shall emphasise much more in the coming year.

We have also kept away as much as possible from the cut-and-dried lecture method. Such lectures as are given are informal, and may at any moment be interrupted by questions or discussions. The discussion method is largely employed. A student is given a subject or problem on which to report. His report raises questions and criticisms which occupy the time of the class. Or the teacher puts a question at the opening of the class, the answers reveal various points of view perhaps, or indicate gaps in the knowledge of the students, which they can then make good after class by study and research, until they are in a position to frame an answer to the question that has been raised.

This is a very fragmentary statement, but it could not well be otherwise in such brief space. I trust it may give to our comrades, the readers of The Plebs magazine, some idea of the contribution Brookwood is trying to make both to the organised working-class in their day to day struggle with capital in the United States, and to the development of a new education that will be fitted and adequate to the needs of the human spirit in a social order in which we trust that spirit will have full opportunity at last to realise and express itself.

A. J. Muste
(Chairman of Faculty, Brookwood Workers' College).

# CHAPTERS from WORKING-CLASS HISTORY in SOUTH WALES.[1]

*The following article, dealing with conditions in the mining valleys of South Wales during the earlier part of the 19th century, consists of some extracts from one of the chapters of a book on "The Industrial History of South Wales," by Ness Edwards (S.W.M.F., Labour College Student, 1919-21). It is to be hoped that the book will find a publisher in the near future. Meantime, the publication of certain chapters in The Plebs will provide valuable illustrative material for class tutors.*

OF all the horrible things that existed in South Wales at this period, the employment of little children and women in the mines was the worst. It is an evil that strikes one with horror, more particularly so when one remembers the conditions in which they were employed. Robbed of the sunlight, in winter never seeing the light of day, and crawling like beasts along the wet slushy roads of the mines, the children of those days suffered lives of bestial wretchedness. In the dark recesses of the mines, working for twelve or fourteen hours per day, the youths were made into twisted and stunted savages, human work-beasts. In many cases the employers encouraged the employment of little girls and boys of four, five and six years of age : in practically all cases they permitted it. The Commissioner says in his report that South Wales was noteworthy in this respect and was worse than any other district in the country. The following evidence taken from the *First Report of the Commission for Enquiry into Children's Employment in Mines, &c.* (1841), will give the reader some idea of what was really happening at the time :—

*John Richards*, aged seven, collier :—Has been down the pit three and a half years.

*William Richards*, aged seven and half :—" I have been down about three years. When I first went down I couldn't keep my eyes open. I don't fall asleep now ; smokes my pipe : smokes half a quarter a week."

*Samuel Jones*, clerk, Waterloo Colliery :—When work is dull fathers carry the boys below when four or five years old.

*William Jenkins*, agent, Gellgan Colliery :—Children are taken down as soon as they can crawl.

*Susan Reece*, six years old, Merthyr :—Been below six or eight months.

*Mary Davis*, nearly seven years :—A very pretty little girl who was fast asleep under a piece of rock near the air-door underground. Her lamp had gone out for want of oil : and upon waking her, she said the rats or someone had run away with her bread and cheese so she went to sleep. The overman who was with me, thought she was not so old, though he felt sure she had been below near eighteen months.

*William Strange*, surgeon :—They (the people) certainly had a bad practice of taking children down as soon as they could crawl about, many as early as five years of age.

Not only were these children employed in the mines, but often they were put to perform the most dangerous tasks in the mines, that is working at the coal face. The majority of accidents occurred, then as now, at the coal face, and it was to such death haunted places that the mineowners sent girls and boys.

Probably it will be asked why did the miners take, and allow, their little sons and daughters down the mines at such an early age. The answer is not apparent as very little is said about the cause in the reports. But here and there the real reason comes out in the evidence. It appears that the miners were paid their wages on a basis of so much for each tram of coal filled. The trams were distributed for filling in such a manner that a man and boy would obtain more trams than a man alone. When trade was dull and consequently empty trams scarce, the rule governing the distribution of trams was more rigidly enforced. So a married man, working by himself would obtain very few trams, and as a result, very little money. Now if he had a child at home, whom he could take to work he would have extra trams, and thus more wages. And any reluctance of the father to allow his children down the mines for the lighter tasks could easily be overcome by the all powerful employer.

*William Skidmore*, aged eight, collier :—Don't know how old I am : father thinks he's eight : doesn't know when he went to work : it is a long time since. (Steward says at least four years).

*William Richards*, aged twelve, coal-cutter :—Works with his father : has been at work ever since he was four years old. Was taken by his father because times were poor, and he was worth an extra tram.

*R. D. Andrews*, overseer :—" Colliers take their children to work below ground at a very early age. There is a little fellow..... helping his father, who is certainly not more than five years old. It is not infrequent for colliers now to take them down even in petticoats to claim a tram."

*Elizabeth Williams*, aged nine :—" Been below ground six months : assists to fill father's trams : does not remain underground more than six or eight hours : does not like the work at all : was first taken by father because he could get an extra tram for me : a good many girls besides me work in the mines, pushing and tipping (trams)."

*R. D. Richards*, aged seven, collier :—Helps to fill father's coal : sometimes works with father cutting coal : father gets a dram (tram) for me now and then.

*Henry George*, seven years old :—Twelve months below : assists Davy Jones to pick (dig coal).

*William Freeman*, aged eleven, collier :—Been working at coal six years : very hard work : I have often got hurt : have had my arm cut open twice with a mandril (pick) : the rock fell upon father and me, I got much crushed.

*John Evans*, aged eight years, collier :—Father took me down to claim a tram : has been two years below : has often fallen asleep : father pulls me up when he wants me.

*Thomas Jenkins*, ten years old :—Father took me down to claim a tram when I was six years old : have worked below ever since : I work with John Jones now, who pays father two shillings and sixpence a week for my labour : when I fall asleep they wake me up : I work as long as John Jones, from six mornings till six evenings, or three mornings till five evenings.

*Evan Jenkins*, Cwmdows Colliery, agent :—" We have no limitations of age in our workings : many of the children for whom we allow an extra tram, are taken down very young."

*Fd. Evans*, Dowlais Collieries, clerk :—" Girls are not brought to work at quite so early ages as the boys : girls generally begin to work about seven years old, and they are few in number in comparison to the boys : probably about one sixth. In most cases it is the extreme poverty of the parents that compels them to send their young females down to work."

Hardly any discrimination was made between the boys and girls and women, and at the risk of harrowing the readers' feelings still further, we reproduce some evidence on this question from the reports. In the summary prepared by the Commissioner, he says that in his district the females are taken down into the coal mines and both sexes are employed in precisely the same manner together, and work the same number of hours ; that boys and girls, and young men and women, and even married women with child, commonly work almost naked, and the men in the mine quite naked.

*Hugh Owen* :—" Females riddle the coal and wheel above and wind below : adults only can perform this operation as it requires great strength."

*Robert Brough*, manager, Begelly Colliery :—The women work very hard, above and below ground. (Captain Childs, one of the proprietors then present, stated that women worked in the mines and on the banks harder than the slaves in the West Indies.)

*Ann Davis*, thirteen years old :—" Sister and I haul skips from the men to where the women wind : it is a good bit away. Boys and girls work together where we work. The time is long and the work very hard indeed : sad, tiring sort and I feel very glad when over..... sister and I pull six score skips daily, three score each.....cannot say how many three score are, but know the men wouldn't pay unless the work was done."

*Mary Reid*, twelve years old, air doorkeeper :—Been five years in the Plymouth mine. Never leaves till the last dram is drawn past by the horse. Works from six till four or five at night. Has run home very hungry.....does not like the work in the dark.

One could go on quoting extract upon extract of this type, showing how chivalry to women expressed itself in relation to working-class females. The rising capitalists, with the words Freedom, Liberty and Equality on their lips, condemned the most feeble section of the

working class to conditions worse than those of the American slaves.

*General Work Conditions.*—The conditions obtaining in the mines and iron works in the early days are stunning in their brutal disregard for the safety of human beings. The opening of mines and the erection of iron works was carried on in the most short-sighted manner, and the lack of previous experience increased, to a great extent, the dangers attending both industries. This applies more particularly to the mining industry. The desire of the merchant venturers to obtain great profits in a little time was the cause of insufficient examination of mine workings, insufficiency of timber for supporting the roof and the roadways of the mine, lack of ventilation with all consequent possibility of explosion, and in the case of the iron works, lack of protection against the dangers of the machines. The very low piece rates forced the workers to frenzied efforts in order to execute a lot of work, and this reflected itself in the lack of consideration for the dangers which more particularly attend mining operations. Compensation for accidents to the workers was an unknown thing in those days, and seeing that the deaths of workers didn't affect the finance of the capitalists, from their point of view it wasn't necessary to spend much money in protecting the lives of the workers. There were plenty more to fill the places of the dead and injured.

Many instances occur, in the reports, of mines being found without any attempt at artificial ventilation. Time and again the evidence seems to emphasise the fact that where artificial ventilation was resorted to, it was for the purpose of keeping the candles alight to allow the men to work, rather than for providing the miners with breathable air. That mine workings were abandoned because of the accumulations of gas there is plenty of evidence to prove. Very frequently explosions occurred owing to these gas accumulations being ignited by the candles used by the miners. The accidents resulting from these explosions were horrible. In many cases only one road offered ingress and egress to the miners, and, if an accumulation of gas ignited outside or nearer the mine mouth than the place where the men and women were working, they were trapped and often roasted alive. From this cause the deaths of men, women and children occurred frequently. After some of the larger explosions, the number of deaths compelled the attention of the authorities. The resulting inquiries were conducted in a most hypocritical manner, and the blame for the explosion laid upon the recklessness of the miners.

Inadequate ventilation also affected the workers in other ways. The fœtid atmosphere, heavily laden with coal dust, seriously affected the lungs, heart and consequently the whole constitution of the miner. Asthma and shortness of breath were common complaints ;

lungs saturated with coal dust could not function in a proper manner. Combined with the lack of oxygen, this caused a peculiar type of consumption which generally ended in the early death of its victims. The following evidence throws some light upon the point:—

*Mary Williams*, aged thirteen, Ebbw Vale :—" I work the same as the colliers."
*John James* :—The labour is excessive, and many of the young people drop off (die) from eighteen to twenty years of age of a species of consumption.
*Edward Davies*, surgeon, Cyfarthfa Works :—The miners and colliers, in a much larger proportion than the other workmen, become, as age advances, the subjects of a chronic bronchial affection, probably caused by the inhalation of an atmosphere charged with carbon, the smoke of gunpowder, etc.
*James Probirt*, surgeon, Plymouth Works :—The diseases incident to, and prevalent amongst the miners as a class are chronic diseases of the respiratory organs, specially asthma and bronchitis.

A little more expense in ventilating the mines would have materially altered that state of affairs. It is quite plain that in order that the coalowners should obtain their profits, the lives of the miners were shortened and the health of children ruined.

The piece-work system, with its low rates, compelled the workers to work at a great speed, and produced a rich crop of ruptures, sprains, and bruises which are the general results of hard injudicious work. That deaths were often caused by the heedless haste of the miners there is no doubt, but one has to remember that low piece rates made this haste necessary.

Commencing work at six o'clock in the morning and continuing until six or eight in the evening, the miners were quite exhausted before the shift was over. Accidents were much more frequent at the end of the shifts than at any other time. Exhaustion made the workers less concerned about dangers, which at the same time they were not so quick in observing. Often accounts are given of both adults and children going to work at three o'clock in the morning and not returning until as late as six, seven or eight o'clock in the evening. In addition to the ordinary twelve hours of work, overtime lasting three or four hours was worked three or four days a week. In this long stretch of toil no meal times were fixed, the workers having to eat their meals of bread and cheese when the work would allow, or when their physical condition made it necessary. Indigestion, heart-burn, loss of appetite, and other ailments of the digestive organs were the results of this practice, and very often both men and children were so exhausted through lack of food and overwork, that they fell asleep, being even too tired to eat.

The cramped position of the miners working in low seams, was bound to lead to physical deformity, and over development of some parts of the body at the expense of other parts. Twisted legs and gnarled arms, bent backs and pigeon chests, battered heads and short sight—these were the results of low seam work. The lack of

pit drainage caused the miners to become victims of rheumatism and aggravated all the other complaints to which the miner is heir.

The total physical effect of these conditions was to shorten the normal life span of the miner. Very seldom did any miner live to the age of fifty, either being killed in the mines, or dying as a result of overwork combined with ill health. The following testimony is valuable in this connection :—

*Edward Davies*, surgeon, Cyfarthfa Works :—" The average duration of a collier's life is considerably less than that of other workmen from the frequency of fatal accidents."

*James Bowen*, Pembrokeshire :—" The average life of a collier is about forty ; they rarely attain forty-five years of age ; in the entire population of Begelly and East Williamson, being 1,463, forming strictly speaking a mining population, there are not six colliers of sixty years of age.....Has not been able to ascertain for want of sufficient data the average duration of a collier's life in the counties of either Glamorgan or Monmouth, but it is admitted that such average duration is less than that of a common labourer."

The conditions of those employed in the iron works was somewhat better than those of the miners, owing to the nature of the work itself, but in overwork, long hours of employment, disregard of the necessity of safety, etc., form quite as bad a picture as those details in mining.

The total disregard of the lives of the workers was an outstanding fact, and betrays a callous behaviour upon the part of those in authority. Persons who were killed in the mines or works were treated with as much attention as was necessary to get them buried out of the way. Even the Coroner disdained to either view the body or the place of death. Sometimes as long as six or seven weeks would elapse before the usual formal and farcical inquiry was held into the cause of death. On this point the Commissioner says :—" When a man dies, the viewer looks at the body, and sends for the Coroner, and unless a case of suspicion is made out to the Coroner he does not come, but sends an order to the Constable to bury, and frequently the Coroner does not attend until there are five or six cases to clear."

These were the conditions in which the great-grandfathers of the present generation were compelled to earn a living, and which caused the spirit of revolt to spring up in their hearts which manifested itself in the riots of 1800, 1816 and 1839.

Only five years ago a particular colliery was called the " Slaughter House " by those living near it. One wonders what they would have called those death traps which existed in their district eighty years ago. The men, women and children, whose work conditions we have attempted to describe are the stock from which the C3 population of these days are descended. The wonder is that they left any offspring at all.

NESS EDWARDS.

# TWO "PARTIAL" HISTORIANS

WHEN we Plebeians say that we are "partial" in writing history, we do not mean that we are partial in the sense that we tell all the good stories about our own side and all the atrocities about the others. Dr. Johnson, in writing his early anticipation of Hansard "always let the Whig dogs have the worst of it." If we wrote history "partially" like that, then we should deny that there was ever a Terror in the French Revolution. We should spend good ink attempting to defend Carrier of Nantes. We should be arguing always that the workers who cheered Bottomley were at the same time possessed of remarkable qualities of restraint, judgment, intelligence and tenacity. We should very soon, in fact, find ourselves talking worse rubbish than our opponents.

What we do mean by our partiality is this—that we recognise there is existing in society a fundamental cleavage——the class war. We recognise that the past history which we study is fundamentally the history of that and other class struggles. We insist on writing and reading history with that knowledge in our minds—the knowledge that all the conflicts which are recorded in past history under the label of some political principle had their roots in some social and economic clash.

This means, then, that *all* history written from the point of view of one side or the other is of value to us, so long as it recognises this clash. For example, Phillips Price's history of the Russian Revolution is excellent. But one can equally well imagine a history written by a full-blooded White which would have been of use to us if Price had not written. An out-and-out reactionary, though he might make us roar with rage at his comments, would not hide the fact that a class war was on, that the two classes were in conflict. We should see the battle from the angle of the enemy's G.H.Q.—but there would be no attempt to conceal the fact that it was a battle. The sort of history, however, that would be utterly useless to us would be a history written by one of Kerensky's followers. There would be all muddle and confusion. Everything slimed over and altered in an attempt to bring it into relation with "the essential unity of the nation," "the national spirit," "the ideas of democracy and nationality that transcend class"—with every sort of imaginary nonsense that clouds the ordinary textbook.

Briefly, what we want is what an idiotic cant calls a "partisan

history." It does not matter much which side the writer takes, if he takes it honestly. Two fairly well-known historical works, written from the point of view of a class that is not ours, illustrate this excellently.

The first book is *The Early History of Charles James Fox*, by Sir George Otto Trevelyan. I imagine it is in most decent public libraries. Sir George is a Whig of the old school, belonging to an old Whig family. He writes like this—the passage deals with Lord Holland :—

> Intent upon keeping up a colossal fortune, which his sons were to dissipate even more quickly than he had amassed it, he tamely consented to abandon everything which makes ambition honourable and self-seeking respectable. He sank from a Cabinet Minister into an underling, and from the spokesman of a Government into the mute occupant of a remote corner of the Treasury bench. Rich and inglorious, he played Cassius to his rival's Cæsar, until an unexpected turn in politics tempted him to quit that comfortable obscurity from which it would have been well for his memory if he had never emerged.

After such a passage the diligent reader, like Amelia, " exclaimed suddenly, *Oh ! Sir !*" Though Lord Macaulay would not have expressed his feelings in those terms, he would certainly have admired the conscious dignity of his imitator and biographer.

Sir George's style is like that of a follower of the Marquis of Rockingham ; his partisanship is equally undisguised. For that reason he has written an excellent history. Right at the beginning he avows his prejudice — or rather, makes a general statement of facts that seem obvious to him.

> Moral considerations apart, no more desirable lot can well be imagined for a human being than that he should be included in the ranks of a highly-civilised aristocracy at the culminating moment of its vigour. A society so broad and strongly based that, within its own borders, it can safely permit absolute liberty of thought and speech ;—whose members are so numerous that they are able to believe, with some show of reason, that the interests of the State are identical with their own, and at the same time so privileged that they are sure to get the best of everything which is to be had ;—is a society uniting, as far as those members are concerned, most of the advantages and all the attractions, both of a popular and an oligarchical form of government.

Both the praise and the qualifications of that paragraph give us fair warning of the character of our host. He shows us the life of the later eighteenth century through the windows of Holland House, from Almack's, or from the benches of the House of Commons behind Edmund Burke. We might perhaps have preferred to see it from John Wilkes' comfortable cell in prison, but what Sir George tells us is good enough, for with only a little thought we can imagine how the Wilkites saw all the events that he has told us from the point of view of the Marquis of Rockingham.

Because he is secure in his own convictions, and has no trouble to disguise them, Sir George conceals nothing. Take, for example, the case of the Duke of Portland. Perhaps the severest check to the system of personal government through corruption of the Commons, which King George III. was endeavouring to complete

in this period, was suffered in 1768. In that year, the King's Government was unwise enough to lend its support to an attempt to seize, by a legal device, some of the great wealth of the Whig Duke of Portland, and transfer it to a supporter, the infamous Sir James Lowther. Upon this question Edmund Burke and George Savile rose to their fiercest efforts of oratory. Upon this question—a question merely of the security of a parcel of land—the Whigs, defenders of the people's rights, of liberty, of honest and clean government dealt out heavier blows than ever before. Imagine how an ordinary historian would cover it up. How our school textbooks would talk and talk of Burke's idealism until all memory of it had disappeared. The central point, the greatest victory of these liberal reformers a plain question of keeping estates pilfered from the Church —impossible.

Nothing like this in Sir George's history. As a man of property —and if you are not the same he urbanely assumes your sympathy— he takes it for granted that nothing can be more serious than for a government to call in question a landed gentleman's right to his revenues, and tells the whole story straightforwardly, seeing nothing to hide. Indeed, remarking on the defeat of the Government's shelving motion for an inquiry, he adds, " Even political rancour was driven to confess that there were subjects too sacred for a parliamentary inquiry." These subjects, as he has previously explained, were the origin of the fortunes of the large noble families. Can you ask your history written plainer than that ?

I have not much space left to deal with the second book—Mr. C. Gill's *The Naval Mutinies of* 1797—which is less usually found in public libraries. It is perhaps even an odder phenomenon than Sir George's history. Mr. Gill wrote then—I do not know if he would still write—with a partisanship that gives me a more violent revulsion than perhaps any other would. His attitude was that of an admirer of the lower and more insolent official. We all know the upper-clerk person that swarms in Government and business offices. The sort of creature whose delight is in insulting the unemployed, whose only victories are over applicants for relief. Both the high and low ranks of Government service have always contained a notable proportion of men who lacked talents, generosity, or humanity, but were of value for their delight in petty tyranny. To insult fallen greatness, to torment the helpless, to lie to and bully the simple—these tasks they do with gladness. Let them have an opportunity to humiliate a great scientist, to dismiss an office-girl, or to drive a farmer to ruin and they are equally happy.

Such bureaucrats must have, I presume, their admirers. Mr. Gill, when writing this work, admired them. If Dundas, or some jack-in-office even lower than Dundas, made some cowardly and spiteful

attack on the Nore mutineers, Mr. Gill admired his Parliamentary courage. If the Government of Pitt prepared, not to grant their just demands, but to inveigle and murder the men that afterwards won the battle of Camperdown, Mr. Gill commended their firmness. Yet, with all this, he wrote an excellent history. Because he believed the Government officials to be incontestably right, he did not attempt to tell us that the seamen of Nelson's days won their victories in transports of patriotic enthusiasm. He tells us instead that the salt pork handed out to the average sailor was hard and polished through age and saltness, also that he had to take 14 ounces as a pound.

Here, then, we have two good and valuable histories—both "partisan," but not on our side. This I claim does not matter, so long as they have definitely taken a side. It is, of course, not merely the taking of a side that matters. Historical scholarship is the first essential. Without the accurate and admirable historical knowledge of Mr. Gill or Sir George Trevelyan, their works would have been valueless. But without their frank partisanship they would have been almost certainly worse than valueless—misleading.

R. W. POSTGATE.

# WHAT WE STUDY—and WHY

## Easy Outlines for New Students.

*The first two outlines (on Industrial History and Economics) in this series of six talks for beginners appeared last month. Next month the subjects dealt with will be The History of Trade Unionism and The Science of Reasoning.*

### OUTLINE III.—ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY.

IN our earlier talks we have been speaking of man in society, of the relations between men, the methods of production, the political institutions and the mental outlooks which mould the lives of men. But man and his work are also the products of the natural conditions into which man is born. It is on this earth and in the conditions of this earth, that man has had to live and build up his civilisation ; and his life and the character of his civilisation have differed according to these conditions, which themselves have differed in various times and places.

The rise of civilisation itself offers us an example of how man is limited by circumstances outside himself. Why did civilisation arise in certain particular countries ? Why did it not arise in other countries, but had to be taken to them ? Was all this a matter of mere chance ? We hope that we have said enough in previous talks

to shew that things do not happen by chance—that there is a reason for everything that happens or exists—if only we can find it. And so with the rise of civilisation. It is not mere accident that Egypt was the seat of the most ancient of civilisations; and when we examine the geography of Egypt, we begin to understand the why and the wherefore.

In the first place, Egypt is situated in the warm temperate zone. This is a very important point. Climate exerts a great influence over the physical energy of man and also over the use to which that energy must be put. In the frozen north, the whole of man's energy must be devoted to the satisfaction of his bodily needs ; the securing of food, clothing and shelter occupy the whole of his time and attention. On the other hand, in hot tropical regions, where vegetation is riotously abundant, little energy is needed to obtain the necessary food, while the amount of clothing needed is negligible. Perhaps it would hardly be true to say that, in the tropics, men simply shut their eyes and open their mouths, and take what Nature sends them ; but certainly, life is too easy to call forth any great or sustained physical activity. The temperate zone lies midway between tropics and arctic regions, and its effects upon man are likewise midway between those of the two extremes. Here energy is called forth for the satisfaction of man's bodily needs, but is not wholly consumed in securing these things. A surplus of energy is left over for other purposes. Here, then, the temperate zone possesses an advantage over the others in providing the conditions for the rise of civilisation. But there is another equally important advantage.

In the tropics there is little change of seasons ; on the Equator, none at all. Life is much the same day after day, and this sameness, taken together with the ease of satisfying bodily requirements, is not calculated to stir men to thought and mental activity. In fact, the result is rather a " come day, go day, God send Sunday " frame of mind. These are certainly not the conditions to evoke civilisation.

It is widely different in the temperate zone. Here men are faced with the swing of the seasons—summer and winter. Here they must take thought for the morrow what they shall eat—lest, peradventure when the morrow comes, there is nothing to eat ! It is this necessity to look ahead, to plan beforehand, which stimulates thought and develops man's mental powers. It not only calls forth bodily activity, but also mental effort. Man is prepared for advance.

One other condition for a " cradle of civilisation " is essential. It is little use for a community to make progress in the arts of peace, if the next day or year some more backward race, by sheer weight of numbers and brute force, invades the country and destroys the advances it has made. The country must be *protected* while it continues its march of progress. Egypt was again most favourably

placed in this respect. On every side were what, at that time, were almost impassable barriers. On the north was the sea, still unmastered by man ; west and east were deserts and to the south lofty mountains.

Finally Egypt was very productive, owing to the Nile floods bringing from the hillsides a rich deposit of fertile soil. And from the height of the Nile floods, and the amount of soil deposited, the Egyptians were at last able to determine the area of land and the amount of seed to sow. No wonder the Egyptians held that all life originated in water ; their own life was so largely determined by the rising and falling of the waters of the Nile.

It was under similar, though nowhere quite so favourable, conditions that civilisation arose elsewhere, namely, in protected river-valleys. There was, for example, the civilisation of the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates valley, and, again, that of the valley of the Hwang-Ho in far-away China. These cases illustrate the principle that the rise of civilisation is not a matter of chance. Nor is it dependent upon the superior qualities of the particular peoples in whose countries the progress was made. It was determined by natural conditions quite outside of man—conditions which gave to the peoples of these river valleys an advantage over less favourably situated races in other areas.

In the same way, when we look at the history of the Middle Ages, the fact that Italy occupied the first place among the countries of Europe was not due to accident, nor to the special qualities of the Italian people. It was due to her geographical position, half way between North-Western Europe and the East ; she owed her wealth and power simply to the fact that she lay on the main road of commerce. If this view seems far-fetched, we have only to glance at the decline of Italy to find its proof. What brought about that decline ? It was the discovery of new routes, the route to the New World, the sea-route to India. From that time, Italy was no longer on the main road of commerce, and her supremacy passed to nations occupying more favourable positions in relation to the new routes. It was now the countries on the west coast of Europe, on the Atlantic seaboard, that came into prominence. There were several such countries, and the next few centuries, so far as they were concerned, were chiefly occupied in the struggle among themselves for final supremacy.

The struggle ended at last in the triumph of Britain. This triumph was once more dependent upon geographical position. It was the fact that Britain was an island that made of her a sea-power, and, finally, *the* ocean-power of the world.

Nor did her natural advantages end there. Having gained ocean power, she found herself in a position to maintain her place, and even

for a considerable period to increase her lead, over the rest of the nations of the world. She had enormous resources of coal and iron, the raw materials which enabled her to become the workshop of the world. Moreover, these supplies were placed close together and near the sea. Britain's supremacy in the world of industry and commerce was not due to the inherent superiority of the British over all other people, but simply to her geographical position and her possession of rich natural resources.

To-day these same factors are playing their part in determining the position, policy, and aspirations of the various countries. We can best illustrate the matter by another example of the importance of trade-routes in the history of modern Britain. It is hardly too much to say that by starting from India and the roads leading to India, we have the key to the whole policy of Britain in her international relations. To guard the northern frontier of India from Russia we fought the Crimean and Afghan Wars, and in 1907, established Afghanistan, Tibet and Middle Persia as "neutral" States in order to prevent Russian access to India. To guard the Eastern boundary from France we maintained the "independence" of Siam in 1904. In the west, the purchase of a controlling share in the Suez Canal was security for the shortest sea-route to India; and to secure the security we occupied Egypt less than a decade later.

Still later, another Power challenged the road to India. In 1888, a German company—the Anatolian Railway Co.—obtained its first concessions to construct railways leading to the Persian Gulf—a direct menace to India once again. Britain therefore intervened and prevented the carrying out of this concession. But this Turkish policy of Germany was continued, though along rather different routes, and it formed one of the chief causes of the Great War.

Thus, in order to guard the roads to India, Britain has been involved in various costly and dangerous quarrels with the several European Powers. In order to protect India, we must protect the routes to India, and these again require further security: the final outcome would be a demand to control the whole world, lest India or the ways to India should be endangered.

These brief glances at the history of the past and the present will suffice, we hope, to shew the value of Economic Geography as an aid to a clearer understanding of history and of the real character of the international relations of our own day.

## OUTLINE IV.—IMPERIALISM.

In our last talk, we shewed that the struggle for the control of certain routes played a big part in the history of the last half century. That struggle was not merely the competition of rival firms of railway builders, etc., but became part and parcel of the political life of

the great European Powers ; and from time to time, mere politics and diplomacy failed to settle the problem, and open war broke out.

But while Economic Geography threw much light upon those ſtruggles it did not tell us everything. It showed the importance of the various routes to India, but it did not explain why the ſtruggle was so largely a ſtruggle between Germany and Britain, and especially why the ſtruggle between the two nations took place when it did.

What was it that brought Germany to the fore during the laſt half century, and placed her in rivalry and finally, in open war againſt Britain. Our talk on Economic Geography will, we hope, have taught us to avoid imputing it to the natural depravity of the Germans. As a matter of fact the Germans are, of course, closely related to ourselves in race. We are, so to speak, firſt cousins. So that if it's a case of racial depravity—well, we muſt be content to share the depravity with them. The real reason was the extraordinary development of German induſtry and commerce. While the Induſtrial Revolution had commenced in Germany before the foundation of the Empire in 1871, it certainly received a great ſtimulus as a result of that change, and it was soon competing, and competing successfully, againſt British goods in the markets, firſt, of Germany itself, later of the world.

Let us see how this took place. Before the Induſtrial Revolution in Germany, the German States, like the reſt of Europe, imported her cotton goods from England, which was at that time the " workshop of the world." Soon, however, she began to import machinery, and also skilled workers, in order to produce cotton at home. Later ſtill, having her own supplies of iron and coal for the making of machinery, she was able to dispense with England's help altogether. She made her own machines, and she imported and worked up her own supplies of cotton. And juſt as England had found it easily possible to satisfy far more than the demands of the English home market, so Germany was quickly producing far more than she required for herself. From that time, she who had once been a good cuſtomer for England, became a more and more serious competitor in the markets of the world.

Japan has undergone the same transformation even more recently. Capitalism is for ever changing cuſtomers into competitors. In fact, capitalism itself is being eſtablished in all the countries of the world.

Now what is the basis of capitalism ? It is precisely that Induſtrial Revolution of which we have spoken. And its moſt marked feature is the conſtant replacement of the ſtrength and skill of the human labourer with the power and mechanical accuracy of the machine. As the old Luddites, the machine-breakers of a century ago, complained so bitterly, " the iron men take the place of flesh and blood men."

True, some human labour is and always will be, required, but for the performance of any given task a decreasing amount is sufficient, and as the required elements of strength and skill decrease, women and children take the place of men, semi-skilled and un-skilled take the place of skilled workers. The result is inevitable. Wages fall to the minimum. Yet all this time, the power to produce wealth grows with every new discovery and invention. We are faced with the great contradiction of modern society—the vast wealth and the almost boundless possibilities of wealth production, and on the other hand, the misery of the masses. We can "produce wealth like water," yet millions go short of food, are clothed in shoddy, and have not a decent roof over their heads. Society to-day presents the spectacle of "progress and poverty."

The masses, while they are fortunate enough to have work, are producing far more than they can ever hope to buy back ; the amount they must provide in Rent, Interest and Profit far exceeds their share. And those other parts—Rent, Interest and Profit—are not wholly consumed either. They accumulate, and accumulate rapidly—more rapidly than they can find a sufficiently remunerative field of investment ; but they seek such fields in every part of the world. Capital, accumulated out of the surplus, unpaid labour of the masses, and for that very reason being incapable of finding employment at home, must emigrate. It must be employed to build railways in the Sahara desert or the unpopulated regions of the Near East.

Mr. H. N. Brailsford, the brilliant writer on International Affairs, whose articles appear regularly in the *Daily Herald*, gives some interesting facts in this connection. He describes his first journey on a Turkish railway. What struck him most was the curious twists and turns in the route. So strange were they that they seemed to him to be like a kitten chasing its own tail ! What was the reason for this ? He imagined that it must be due to the efforts of the constructors of the railway to reach absolutely every town, village and hamlet on the route. But as a matter of fact, they never seemed to touch any village. His next thought was that they were trying to dodge them ! It was only later on that he learned the real reason. And like a good many other things, it is perfectly simple—when you know why ! In building the railway, the contractors had received from the Turkish Government a guarantee of a certain sum per year *for every mile of line open to traffic.* That was the reason for making the railway as long as possible and avoiding straight routes.

Moreover, this illustrates another very vital fact in the relations between the advanced and the backward nations of the world. It is this; having exported capital into these countries, they demand a guarantee for the security of their property and for a sufficiently high rate of interest upon their capital from the Government of the country.

And these guarantees, as in the case of the railway, Brailsford describes form a first charge upon the revenue of the country. The economic interests of the advanced country demand political control over the backward nation. And that is the meaning of modern imperialism —the control of the political life of countries as a means of dominating their economic resources. Not, of course, that it is called by any such harsh names as "domination" or even "control." Until recently we spoke of a "protectorate" over the backward country. Nowadays it is called a "mandate," and is, in theory, "a sacred trust for civilisation."

We can see that such a position is easily capable of abuse ; and the possibility becomes a probability when we recall that it is not one nation alone, but all the Great Powers which are interested in "opening-up" these backward countries. All then are bringing pressure to bear upon the backward peoples and their rulers ; and in doing so the Powers come in conflict with each other.

When we reach this point—the phase of growing antagonism between the several Great Powers—the whole problem takes on a new significance. The process began because the masses at home were less and less capable of buying back the commodities they have produced. Nor do the capitalist and landowning classes consume it all, but seek to find remunerative investments abroad. This position leads to their domination over the countries to which this surplus capital is sent. Now, so long as no other advanced country comes on the scene, the problem is fairly simple. A gunboat and a handful of marines, armed with modern equipment, is capable of persuading very considerable populations in Africa, Asia, etc., of the advantages of welcoming civilisation. But it is a very different situation when another Power asserts its right to civilise the Africans or Asiatics. For then the real struggle comes between the two Powers. And if, say, Germany is to persuade Britain and France, that it is she whom Providence has called to the task of opening up Asiatic Turkey, it will require very much more than a gunboat or two. For this she must have a huge army and navy, must be equipped with all the latest forms of death and destruction dealing machinery. And thus arises the race of armaments.

And now it is possible to bring in the whole population of the Powers. Politicians and pressmen in this country point to the growing armaments of Germany. Whom is she building against? Why, obviously, against Britain. We must, then, be prepared. In Germany the same classes of people are urging their electorate to vote for ever greater increases of armaments and ships against the menace of the naval might of Britain. When matters reach this stage, when the feelings of the people in both countries are thus roused to resentment against each other, it is safe to predict that a

conflict is not far off, and that when it comes, the whole nation will join unitedly in the struggle.

But what a position! As we said, the very foundation of the whole problem is the exploitation of the masses at home; yet we now see them rushing to the slaughter of the equally exploited masses of another country. And the evil consequences do not end there. What is the whole object of the struggle? It is that the capitalists of one or other nation, whichever is victorious, may have the right to open up, "civilise" the backward country. Now what precisely does this mean? It means, as we shewed in the earlier part of this talk, that capitalism itself is going to be established in the new country. It means that the people of that country are to be converted into wage workers like ourselves: it means that, so far as our chief articles of export go, namely, manufactured goods, they are going to supply their own wants, and that finally, their goods are going to compete with ours in the remaining markets of the world.

Once upon a time, the British would have said, "Well, let 'em all come; let 'em compete; our goods are both better and cheaper than theirs; we can undersell them every time." Perhaps that was true—once upon a time! But is it true to-day? Who are these people against whom we have to compete? They are the dense, unorganised unprotected masses of Asia, for example. Beginning with a low standard of life, they have no organisations of their own for the winning of better conditions, while their protection from Government is altogether negligible. Further, in certain cases—for example the cotton workers in India—the raw material of their industry is on the spot, an additional advantage in producing cheaply. Thus the competition of Indian cotton is becoming a most serious danger to the cotton industry of Lancashire: the Lancashire cotton operatives are in danger of being driven down to the standard of life of the Hindu workers whose competition they have to meet; and this in turn must react upon that of all other workers.

In our own day Imperialism has extended its operations into Europe itself, and the masses of Central Europe have felt the full force of its fatal effects. Nor have the vanquished alone felt those effects. The victor-nations are now having their turn. It was no mere rhetoric to declare as was declared recently, that the British famine has begun. It is a sober fact. The disaster of the starving millions of Russia and Central Europe is finding its reaction in our own desperate plight to-day—the indifference with which we have seen our fellow-workers of other lands perish by cold and famine is bringing us a dread reward.

There is, then, no subject which will more repay the earnest study of the workers than this of Imperialism.

T. Ashcroft.

# DIETZGEN : A "Criticism" and a Reply

*The following letter was received some two or three months ago, and is now printed in full, with a reply by W. W. Craik.*

To the Editor, The PLEBS.

DEAR SIR,—To plunge straight into the subject :—I have met several difficulties in studying Dietzgen (and also Craik) on Philosophic Logic, and as these difficulties are shared by many of us here, I hope you will be good enough to put us straight.

A considerable portion of Dietzgen's book is taken up with the denunciation of speculation. Critical reference is also made to those scientists who drop the inductive method and take up speculation in Craik's *Outlines*, published by the Halifax C.L.C. Both writers seem to be unaware that speculation, or the framing of hypotheses, forms a necessary part of the inductive method of reasoning from the "particular" to the "general."

Take as an example from physics. It is found that when a volume of gas at a certain pressure is subjected to double that pressure the volume is halved. That is one particular. On doubling the pressure again the volume is again halved. Another particular. Ten similar phenomena yield a similar result. It therefore appears probable that the "general law" for all particulars is that volume varies inversely as the pressure. But ten particulars have not made it certain ; will any number of particulars make it certain ? They only make it more probable. The point is here, that when we have obtained a number of particulars, we frame, or select, a hypothesis or theory which appears to fit them. That is, we *speculate* that this hypothesis or theory is a "general law" and will apply to other particulars not yet experienced. This "speculation" is thus an essential part of the inductive method of reasoning.

Dietzgen appears to have missed the point of Kant's "synthetic judgements *à priori*" altogether. Take the statement "two straight lines cannot enclose a space." We admittedly have *à posteriori* knowledge of a straight line and also of space. But it is not necessary to have *à posteriori* knowledge of the "relation," the connection of the two concepts as expressed, and which can be immediately seen to be a necessary truth, a truth that does not require inductive proof (?), and a truth of a relation that we may never have experienced before. We know that it must be true, and since that knowledge is of something not before experienced it must be *à priori*. The knowledge is of the "relation," it is admitted that the knowledge of the concepts "lines" and "space" is *à posteriori*." By deductive reasoning from such *à priori* truths we obtain the exact or deductive sciences of mathematics and formal logic.

Another considerable portion of Deitzgen's book is taken up by the endless repetition with infinite variation, that "large is small, cause effect, the whole a part, error a part of truth, etc," as per Hegel. And Craik says "What is Truth ? ; The General. What is General ? Existence. What Exists ? The Universe. Therefore the Universe is Truth." A lucid piece of reasoning, perhaps ; but where does it take us ? There and back !

Whatever exists, is true, I read. The following statement exists : "Black differs from white in no respect." I ask "Is that true ?" I get the reply, "It is true that it exists." Then it appears to me that the statement "Whatever exists, is true" should be modified to "Whatever exists, it is true that it exists," which I think you will admit is merely one of the much derided laws of formal logic, *viz.*, "Whatever is, is."

But if error is a part of truth, I should be glad to know how the above statement regarding black and white is a part of truth. Please don't say "because it is a part of the universe." We don't need Dietzgen to see that.

These are a few of the difficulties I am up against, and which seem to strike hard at Deitzgen. As a matter of fact, there is a growing opinion amongst many that he is an impostor, a quack of the Yankee type.

Halifax. Yours truly, A. FISHER.

IT is very difficult to believe that the difficulties of your correspondent are genuine ones, especially when one reads the last paragraph of his letter. But even the first alleged difficulty is so transparent that it is difficult to escape from the conclusion that your correspondent is deliberately distorting the sense in which Dietzgen used the word "speculation." There can be no excuse for any misunderstanding on this point, since there is no ambiguity about Dietzgen's criticism.

Speculation is defined by your correspondent as the "framing of hypotheses," which, he says, forms a "necessary part of the inductive method of reasoning." *Ergo*, Dietzgen was denouncing a method of science. That kind of argument certainly bears a striking resemblance to the reasoning of the "quack," of which type, it would appear, the Yankees do not possess a monopoly. What Dietzgen criticised as speculation was precisely the attempt to arrive at understanding, not by induction, but *independent* of induction, not with the help of the senses, but by "pure reason."

Dietzgen is alleged by your correspondent to have missed the point of Kant's synthetic judgements *à priori*. Not once but many times in the course of his philosophical works has Dietzgen clearly shown the flaw in this vital point of the Kantian philosophy. See, for example, the closing paragraph of the section on "Cause and Effect" in the first part of the *Positive Outcome of Philosophy*. Hume and Kant are shown to be equally one-sided. Kant certainly made immense progress beyond pure empiricism when he demonstrated the impossibility of basing experience upon pure sensibility. In his *Prolegomena* he says, for example:—

> When the sun shines on the stone it grows warm—this judgement is a mere judgement of perception and contains no necessity, no matter how often I or others have perceived it. The perceptions only find themselves usually so combined. If I say the sun warms the stone, the conception of the understanding, cause, is superadded to the perception which with the conception of sunshine necessarily connects that of warmth, when the synthetic judgement becomes of necessity universally valid, consequently objective, and thus a perception is transformed into experience.

The drastic character of this example would have been still more emphasised had Kant added that sun, sunshine, stone, which enter into the judgement of perception, are already no mere perception but are themselves synthetic; *i.e.*, they presuppose objective acts of thought which not only transform the sense-perceived material into experience, but in which the peculiar nature of thought necessarily reflects itself.

This applies to all the so-called synthetic *à priori* propositions, *e.g.*, two straight lines cannot enclose a space; "straight line" and "space" are already no mere perceptions but synthetic and relative concepts, won by induction in the first instance. So long as straight line has a definite meaning and space a definite meaning, then it necessarily follows that two straight lines cannot enclose space, just as it also follows that there cannot be a valley without two hills. Certainly, in every judgement the nature of the faculty of judgement or mind is reflected. There is not only the relation of straight lines to space, but also the relation of thought to both. The general is the nature of thought.

But in every judgement, the nature of thought is only a part condition. It is nothing in itself. Thought does not only stand as subject in relation to natural things as objects, but is itself a natural object and phenomenon, bound by ties of kinship with all other phenomena. Otherwise our reason would be impotent to understand all other phenomena. Without intelligible things outside our heads, no intelligence could be active inside them.

The foundation of synthetic judgements is laid not merely in the peculiar nature of the intellect but in the still higher and more comprehensive nature of the cosmic commonwealth. All the so-called categories of thought, the relation of genus and species, cause and effect, premise and conclusion, are nothing but different forms of expression of this final unity of interrelations, which thought applies in different spheres of investigation. Philosophy before Kant had made thought revolve around the object. Kant, *à la* Copernicus, reversed the relation and made thought the law giver of nature. We know now that both standpoints remain one sided.

Thought *and* its object revolve around their common axis, around the all embracing and living unity of the cosmos. And for that standpoint there are no synthetic judgements *à priori*. Only when the object is torn out of its living context and clad in abstract form, can it appear as if the intellect has the faculty of functioning in *à priori* fashion.

The third paragraph of your correspondent's letter exhibits the case of a man for whom "the letter killeth." Just as he thinks disjointedly, so words are torn by him out of their context and given his own meaning. He then complains of confusion. How can error be a part of truth? But the confusion is all his own. TRUTH and true understanding are not identical. We can know truly, but the TRUTH is more than knowledge. Everything can be understood but understanding is not everything. We can picture more or less truly the phenomena of the Universe, but the latter does not pass into our pictures. Our pictures, ideas, knowledge, be they more or less true, more or less erroneous, are themselves relative parts of the

Universal phenomena. Thinking is an attribute of Being, one state of Being among many. Your correspondent says that he does "not need Dietzgen to see that." The fact is that his eyes are so filled with the dust which he himself has kicked up that he is unable to see anything, least of all his own confusion. And should anyone suggest that by removing the dust from his eyes he could see better, then, forsooth, such a one must needs be "a quack of the Yankee type."

Erroneous understanding is not true understanding. But they are not so far divorced that one belongs to the black world of the Devil and the other to the pure white world of God and the angels. They have something in common even as the Devil and the angels. Our errors are never wholly errors and our truths never wholly true. Only one requires something more than a textbook on formal logic to understand that fact. And of the fact that erroneous understanding lives under the same roof as true understanding, your correspondent offers us a painful reminder.

W. W. CRAIK.

# The STUDY of HISTORY

*In our review of the Labour College Curriculum recently we urged the importance of a "general view of world history" as a necessary background for more intensive studies of special periods. That suggestion (which like others in the same article was put forward for the consideration of our movement as a whole, and not merely as applicable to one particular educational centre) is supported in an interesting way in the following article by a history teacher who is not a Pleb, and who has little or no first-hand knowledge of the Pleb movement. He has, nevertheless, a good many things to say of interest and value to us. The point which he does not make, but which is perhaps the most important (to us) of all, is that, as Marxists, we have—if we choose to use it—a method of interpreting history which will enable us to make a general outline of history which really does concentrate on the essential and significant facts.*

HISTORY is an august word. It connotes Pageants and Processions and the Pompous Past; also Lessons and Warnings and Teachings. But like so many other Majesties its majesty consists largely in its vagueness and intangibility. The actual practical use of the vast mass of records and traditions that we have inherited is a very different—and a very difficult—business.

J. R. Seeley, in the first chapter of his *Political Science*, tackled this

formidable task with characteristic courage. He reminds us that in the earliest days History was merely a miscellaneous collection of observations, myths, traditions, travellers' tales, scraps of nature lore (or natural history) all jumbled up together as we find them in Herodotus or Livy. But in the course of time this glorious mixture begins to get sorted out, and so we reach the beginnings of the sciences ; the 'ologies, which relieve the original mass of much of its matter, leaving behind simply the records of Man. But these records in their turn are subject to a similar process, and more 'ologies take their toll of the remainder. Anthropology, Ethnology, Physiology, Pyschology, Sociology and so on are all sciences dealing with various aspects of the human animal, but even when all these, including Economics and even Economic History have been withdrawn and put upon the lines of their own separate development, there is always a residuum. And the question is — What is the nature of this residuum ? What is the Bovril of History ? What, in other words, is its essential element which cannot be withdrawn as a new 'ology.

"Politics" is Seeley's answer. Man, as Aristotle reminded us over two thousand years ago, is a political animal ; and the essential element which Seeley finds in History is the political element. History is the Politics of the Past ; Politics is the History of the Present—History in the making.

History, then, is a practical subject ; it is to be used as an aid to the management of the affairs of our own day, *i.e.*, to Politics.*

Out of the mass of matter available we are called upon to select that which bears upon the question we are handling at the moment ; and in the very act of selection, partiality, bias—call it what you will—is inevitable. Even if it may appear to have been avoided in the preliminary selection, it is nearly sure to become evident in the subsequent arrangement of the matter selected. Emphasis, an essential of all exposition, is almost inseparable from bias.

But though we are at liberty, and indeed called upon, to *select* what we need for our purposes, we must be careful to take up all that affects the question even remotely. Perhaps an illustration drawn from the allied subject Geography may help to elucidate this point.

Suppose we are standing on a height commanding a wide view. The foreground at our feet is clear to the smallest detail ; beyond that lie the middle and farthest distance, dimmer and vaguer. We notice a road or railway line and use our field-glasses to trace it as far as we can. We notice a river with its tributaries draining the plain beneath us. Again we trace it with our glasses, perhaps to its source. But even then the question arises—Where does the water come from

* Which is not necessarily concerned with *Parliaments* at all!

which keeps the river going? And to reach an answer we have to consider the fact of climate and the movements of the air over oceans entirely beyond our range of vision. Yet even here some limitation is possible. If we are standing on a height in Europe we need not trouble about the Pacific or the Antarctic for example. But wherever we may be stationed such ultimate facts as the drawing power of the sun, the spin of the earth on its inclined axis, since they affect climate everywhere, have to be considered. Similarly, if we are to get any guidance from our study of the Politics of the past we must be entirely honest with ourselves in working in *all* the factors that affect our problem, however remote they may at first sight appear to be. We must not only *look back* into the past; we must *think around* for bigger and larger influences than are always apparent at first sight.

Further, History—if it is to be of real practical use—must be of *world-wide* range. There is in no real sense a History of England or of France; there is rather History *from* England or *from* France; *i.e.*, the whole range of world development viewed from one point of view or another—the same mass, but with customs which vary with the position of the beholder.

It is this essential unity of History which is threatened by the specialised study of small portions and periods. Unless all these are definitely linked up into some broad scheme they degenerate into mere antiquarianism, devoid of living interest. We should therefore welcome and encourage all efforts to deal broadly—and therefore significantly—with History. The success of H. G. Wells' *Outline* is encouraging; though after all that success is chiefly an indication of our own backwardness. Perhaps the most striking "impressionistic" history came from France. Ernest Lavisse, the Paris Professor whose *History of Europe* (Lavisse and Rambaud) runs to twelve great volumes, wrote in 1886 a preface to a French translation of Freeman's *History of Europe*. This preface in its turn grew into a History of Europe, but a history as short as the twelve volume one is long. It consists of 36,000 words and covers the whole story from Ancient Greece to the end of the 19th century. This "Vulgarisation," or "popularisation," is indeed as important a side of historical work as the research of the specialist. Specialisation may mean such an absorption in the task allotted you that you have no eyes or ears for anything else.

One other use of History is worth a moment's consideration. We all know the large part played by the dissection of dead bodies in the training of medical students. Before they are qualified to operate on the living they must have had considerable practice on the dead. Similarly, if history is the dead politics of the past, the student who has practised himself in dissecting the various systems and developments embedded in its records has acquired a skill that

should stand him in good stead if ever he is called upon to handle the living problems of the present. Not because History repeats itself, as the body of his patient repeats the corpse of his college dissecting table, but because the essential factors are sufficiently the same in all ages for knowledge of their working at different periods of History to be enlightening when the problems of the rock-face of history—the political questions of to-day—are under consideration.

To sum up, then :—Study history *for a purpose.* Teach it *with a purpose.* Get to know *all* the facts you can—and learn to use your own judgement (not relying uncritically on anyone else's) as to which facts are important and which not. Finally, take a bird's-eye view of *the whole procession* of Man's History, and *get it into perspective*, before you proceed to learn everything that there is to be learnt about any one episode in the procession.

# MARXISM and LITERATURE.

WE have had several discussions in The PLEBS lately about art and propaganda, in which attempts have been made to examine the credentials of literature especially. There have also been speculations about the possibility of a new approach to literature and a suggested syllabus for this new approach. For literature to be introduced into the curriculum of the Labour College it must, it seems, be disguised as supplementary social history, or as propaganda for beginners, and creep and cringe into recognition under the cloak of one of the *useful* studies. Perhaps the correspondents are merely recoiling from the idea of a W.E.A. lecture on the beauties of Wordsworth, or a course in a professional literary history, but even this could not justify or even explain the ruthless contempt for literature when it is stripped of its protective covering of historical or propagandist importance and stands shivering naked in mere meaningless beauty.

If we can detach, and I am not such an æsthetic fanatic as to think we can not, that part of literature which might be used as supplementary social history and study it separately, then by all means apply to it the theory we would apply to pure history, *i.e.*, the materialist conception. But there are many reasons why a study from a historical point of view of that other and greater part of literature would not be profitable.

If PLEBS readers want to get anything at all out of a study of English literature, they had better put out of their heads from the beginning all notions about getting "still one more proof" concerning some

political change. No one doubts that speculative movements affect social and political movements, but less attention has been paid to the more profound effect of the reciprocal influence. I think anyone who has studied social and literary history conjointly would agree that whilst the effect of revolutionary thought and writings on political change could be exaggerated, the effect of political development on subsequent philosophy and literature could hardly be overstressed. However much we are told that Voltaire, Rousseau and Beaumarchais brought about the French Revolution, the real cause, we know, was hunger ; and we know also that although we may be told that the French Romantic Movement in literature was inspired by a revolt against classical tradition, it was really the appendage and direct outcome of the political revolution, and that Victor Hugo got the turn of his mind from Danton and not from Chenier.

*Piers Plowman* may be useful in giving students a picture of England on the eve of the Black Death ; *Tamburlaine* may be useful as showing the widened scope of the imagination fired by the discovery of new worlds beyond the sea, or *The Way of the World* may or may not be useful in giving us an accurate picture of its artificial and licentious age. But what little added knowledge the student would get from these and kindred works would not be worth the time. Whilst if he reads any of the three imaginatively his mind and whole life would be enriched. If the Plebs student thinks he can get more out of *Piers Plowman*, *The Deserted Village*, *Past and Present*, and *Unto this Last*, than, say, Edmund Gosse, he is most probably right ; but don't let him think that his skeleton key of a materialist conception is going to help him through the roseate gates of poetry into *The Garden of Persephone*, for instance.

It will be seen that I am not rejecting what added appreciation of a work one could command with a knowledge of movements, tendencies, influences, contemporary manners and all those other considerations not strictly connected with art at all, because these aspects are important in dealing with all but the purest imaginative literature. But I object, as I would to any other insult to the intellect of Plebs students, to the idea that *The Ode to a Grecian Urn* is of no value to him because it offers no scope for a materialist examination. If we turned a Plebs student loose on literature I feel sure that where his knowledge of social history was able to broaden his appreciation of a work of art, he would be given food for thought on the interaction of social and literary development, and that where the work was in that celestial and hypothetical world of pure poetry he would forget his Marxism for a moment and revel. As Postgate so easily showed in the *Communist* a month or two ago, the idea of applying the rigid compartments method to literature is ludicrous ; and Kautsky ought to have known that if the *Merry Wives of Windsor* had been no more

than the "exuberant shout of the advancing bourgeoisie" it would not have survived to have theories read into it at all.

It is distressing that the pitfalls in the path of the man who attempts to demonstrate "the importance of literature to the proletarian student" should be more numerous and deeper than those in the path of any other literary critic. When R. M. Fox writes in The Plebs "Byron was the trumpet call of the revolutionary bourgeoisie," which if not meaningless is certainly mischievous, and indulges in platitudes like "No artist can look at life entirely unaffected by his environment"—what must we think?

He who reads literature with an ulterior motive will be cheated of success. The result of his research will be infinitesimal and the flowers that he might have plucked by the wayside he has passed unheeded.

Having rejected as shallow the idea that literature and indeed all art germinates, buds, and blossoms in some ethereal world unaffected by mundane influences, let us also reject as narrow the idea that literature's sole claim on the Plebs student's attention lies in a certain importance as supplementary social history. Surely our conclusion must be that whilst purely cultural teaching of English literature is too much to ask of the Labour College movements, a course which treats literature as a poor relation of the useful sciences should be avoided like the plague.

W. P.

# STUDENTS' NOTES and QUERIES

ONE cannot get away from evidences of the struggle for oil supremacy and the "raw materialism" of to-day even if one is fortunate enough to have a holiday. Just as no village seems too small to have escaped the attentions of one of the Big Banking Five, so the smallest towns have now their yellow Pratt's petrol pump or their Shell storage tank. The British Petroleum Co. is endeavouring to push the B.P. spirit ahead of all rivals. Pratt's is the selling agency for the Anglo-American Co. Shell is partly British and partly Dutch. But the B.P. is the selling agency for Anglo-Persian Oil, which boasts of direct Government backing and of being British throughout; also of having at Llandarey, near Swansea, huge refineries which will make Britain independent of American and Dutch supplies. The Yankee oil-capitalists are still keen on supplying the British market, and so a rate war is probable before either an international Trust or a world war simplifies matters.

Q.—*Why does butter go up* 2d. *a lb. in term time at Cambridge, and why is there a general rise in prices during race weeks at Newmarket?*

A.—Surely one of the obvious results of supply and demand. The demand in those places comes in spurts, like the demand at seaside resorts. It is not, as our correspondent urges, a denial of the Labour Theory of Value, because price and value are two different things.

Sir F. Lewis's speech at the annual meeting of Furness, Withy and Co., Ltd., probably recalled to readers the articles on British and American shipping in our July and August issues.* Naturally the baronet, who is also Chairman of the British Chamber of Shipping, could not talk in the "stunt" phrases of the *Liverpool Courier*; but British fears and British threats were discernible behind his reassuring tone. Other sections of capitalism are now opposing the U.S. Mercantile Marine Bill because they are jealous of the preferential treatment given to shipping. The September *Fortnightly Review* has an article by Archibald Hurd, containing some useful information on the present tonnage possessed by the respective rivals.

We do not quite know what a correspondent, "S.", means by an "illustrated" Marx; but we suggest that simple illustrations of Marx abound. First and third class railway carriages, East and West Ends of London, rows of workers' cottages in contrast to the villas of the professionals, and the separate house of the colliery agent in any colliery village, are the illustrations we mean.

Comrade Littler asks—(1) "*Would it be "strictly Marxian" to state that if the total wealth of society were £1,000,000 (an arbitrary figure) out of which the workers got £200,000, the remaining £800,000 would constitute Surplus Value, of which a portion would be set aside for depreciation of machinery?*

Confusion between wealth and income underlies this question. In the division of *income*, rent, profit, and interest are Surplus Value; wages alone are not. Money undivided but set apart to *replace* machinery is not part of income, and hence not a deduction from S.V. The machinery was purchased when the industry began and its price became income. In order to ensure the persistence of the concern on a greater scale the controlling heads set aside money which otherwise would be consumed as Surplus Value, in order to make it unnecessary to appeal for new capital when new and larger machinery is needed.

Money set aside for real depreciation is not S.V., but often S.V. directly turned into capital by retaining a larger fund than the

* As would, also, the reports of the case of the American Consuls at Newcastle.

original outlay. The controlling few know how to work the "fattening" of a company for the benefit of themselves.

(2) *Would economic development have brought the problems we have today to the same extent had the World War never taken place?*

This smacks of the "what-might-have-been." The point is that economic development brought about the War as a part of itself. Then, also as part of the *process*, the War speeded on the obvious bankruptcy of world capitalism.

In reply to J.—We have been promised by a competent critic a review of *The Outline of Science*, which has been appearing fortnightly, and can only ask you to await that review for a full and considered expression of opinion.

Marxian students should not fail to read the admirable article by M. Francis Delaisi in No. 7, Special Reconstruction No., *Manchester Guardian Commercial*. He explains the policy of the French Government on the question of reparation deliveries of coal and coke, and the recent tendency exhibited in the Stinnes-Lubersac agreement in terms of the interests of the French Union of Metallurgical and Mining Industries, "which exerts on the French press and consequently on the Government an influence equal to that of Hugo Stinnes in Germany." M. S.

# REVIEWS

## A TEXTBOOK OF ORTHODOX ECONOMICS.

*First Principles of Political Economy*. By Prof. Gide. (Harrop, 2s.)

To the publication of books dealing with Economics there is no end—an interesting proof of present-day social conditions compelling a keener consideration of economic problems and phenomena. The book under review is by the well-known French economist with active co-operative sympathies.

The book is splendid value from the point of view of good paper and printing. Would that all cheap publications were printed in such clear type. But here our commendation ceases. The contents concern us mostly. True, Prof. Gide writes in an interesting and simple way, easy of comprehension as compared with most economists who cover up their lack of knowledge, or misrepresentation, by a jig-saw puzzle of words. Also, our author discards the Crusoe basis of the origins of capitalist economic phenomena, which is an advance on, say, Hartley Withers and others of the capitalist apologetics school.

But many of the usual fallacies are propounded, *e.g.*, "It is the desire

of others, then, that makes value." Gide says of civilised man, "I will provide for the needs of others, which do not affect me personally, and this will enable me to provide for my own needs in a far more advantageous fashion than if I tried to provide for them directly. .....This plan is known as the division of labour." How altruistic of the capitalist! And if Adam Smith could be re-incarnated how envious he would be of this explanation of the division of labour in society.

In explaining money as a measure of value Gide states, "And if the negroes are victims of the most shameless exploitation, it is partly due to the lack of money, which makes it impossible to fix a fair price. For them the coming of money will mean freedom." Will it? Money is not synonymous with freedom anywhere that I have heard of. The Germans have a saying "where money enters mirth disappears," which is nearer the truth. Later our author states "the value of money, in the last analysis, is *faith*," which is enough in itself to shake the faith of the most credulous in University economists. Millionaires are not so bad as they are painted because "these possessors of great wealth are only distributors. They have been likened to public fountains which receive waters so as to pour it out again."

The keynote of the book, then, is a mixture of fallacies, apologetics, and idealism; this mixture may be morally elevating, but is certainly not scientific.

The production of a steady stream of economic treatises emphasizes the urgent need for The PLEBS to get on with the job of producing our textbook on the subject. Of course, if the author or authors are labouring to write the last word on economics, or afraid to face the avalanche of criticism which will inevitably descend upon them, then the textbook will only make its appearance as an historical curiosity in Communist Society.* J. HAMILTON.

## ONE OF A CROWD.

*England To-day.* By George A. Greenwood. (Allen and Unwin, 5s.)

This book claims no more than a brief notice. It is badly written, vapid and verbose, the author having neither modesty nor knowledge. He believes, apparently, that Mr. George Lansbury is a member of the Communist Party, which he thinks consists of a number of Oxford men "hanging around the skirts of Sylvia Pankhurst." Notable among these, he tells us, are Mr. Francis Reynell (who comes from Dublin), and Mr. Arthur Macmanus. Well, well. Thus equipped, he feels himself completely authorised to lecture the workers on their behaviour and to dither on about such "construc-

* See announcement in "Bookshelf" this month.—ED.

tive proposals" as might be expected from a member of the staff of the *Daily News*.

Nor would the book deserve even this notice, if it were not that the author, lacking any real talent for observation (he thinks the revolutionary wave of 1919 is still going strong), has yet realised that the "lower orders" suffer considerably under the present system. He tries to press this fact home, in a glib journalist fashion, and it may be that he will shake the confidence and conceit of some members of his own class. Let us hope so, anyway: for it is useless outside that class and no Pleb need waste a penny on it. R. W. P.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION.

*Workmen's Compensation: An Outline of the Acts.* By W. H. Thompson. (Labour Publishing Co., 2s. 6d.)

Such a book as this has been long overdue, and many a Trade Union branch secretary has felt the need of it! Workmen and officials alike are handicapped by a lack of understanding of the legal technicalities of the Acts of 1897 and 1906.

The author's aim has been to give a simple, but brief outline of the Acts. His wide knowledge of their working should commend the book to all Trade Unionists. He has succeeded, moreover, in making it interesting, and I would strongly recommend all officials and workers to get hold of this most useful publication. F. L.

## LAND PROBLEMS.

*The Land Question Solved.* By Robert Murray. Foreword by Robert Smillie. (Labour Publishing Co., Ltd. Paper, 1s. 6d.)

The book is addressed to those who already accept the principle of public ownership of land. In scope, it is deliberately restricted to a consideration of means by which the advocacy of the principle may be strengthened, and the hostility of those who rent and use the land reduced. The farmer, the factory owner who has an expensive leasehold, and the middle-class man who pays ground rent, are the people whom the author has in mind.

Two proposals are put forward. All existing rentals are to be reduced by one-tenth their present value. Land which has been held by the present owners for less than fifty years shall continue to be held, free of rent, until fifty years from the date of purchase shall have elapsed; otherwise it passes at once to the State.

In this way, it is claimed, £20,000,000 per annum now going to landlords will be diverted to land-users and used productively, thus stimulating industry. The second proposal is claimed to have the advantage of simplicity, obviating the necessity for inquiries into titles, rates of compensation, etc. The author condemns Land *Purchase*.

Within the declared scope, the book deals usefully with the practical problems of Land Nationalisation. Too much is claimed, however, when it is argued that public ownership of land would ensure co-operation between "industrial labour" and "agricultural labour....from the largest farmer to the humblest farm servant." This, and a few similarly challengable claims are, however, incidental to the main theme. W. J. L.

## THE CHRISTIAN REVOLUTIONARY.

*The Battle of the Flags.* By Conrad Noel. (Labour Publishing Co., 3s. 6d.)

In this book Conrad Noel writes as a revolutionary who sees neither sense nor virtue in trying to reform the present capitalist system of society. To him the flags hung in Thaxted Church are symbols of the revolutionary teaching of Christ and His sympathy with the oppressed of all nations.

The flag of St. George is the flag of old England before it was superseded by the Union Jack, "a modern flag of brute force dominion," *i.e.*, over Scotland and Ireland. The Irish tricolour, orange, white and green, stands for a united Ireland, the white standing for a peaceful union between the orange of Ulster and the green of the rest, "the flag of a Christian country and a Christian movement." The red flag he regards as standing for "equality within a nation, and also for the federation of free nations in a world community" (though he mentions also that it was "the old flag of a Christian nation—mediæval France.")

The author claims that the "origin and meaning of the three flags are Christian." He refers to "Christ's objective as a golden era, here on earth"; and to the kingdom of heaven as a "freely chosen fellowship of God-inspired men and women—a commonwealth where God's will is done."

So far as is apparent he differs mainly from most Plebeians in that his revolutionary attitude takes its departure from Christian doctrines, whereas we take ours from the Marxian standpoint. That his outlook, whatever its cause, is disquieting to some of the capitalist elements is quite evident from the opposition he has provoked—and no one can deny that he is a bonny fighter!

The book is brightly written with here and there a touch of humour that is very acceptable. A. P.

## THE TRUTH ABOUT INDIA.

*India in Transition.* By M. N. Roy. (Target, Geneva. 2 rupees).

The book on India which Marxist students have been waiting for—a brilliant example of applied Marxism. Shades of Kipling and Mrs. Besant, what a fog of half-truths and superstitions is swept away by

this book! It is not merely an analysis of the present situation—of Gandhi's reactionary philosophy and of the forces now in process of readjustment—but it is also a masterly analysis of India's industrial development.

Roy thinks that in order to get autonomy Indian capital and nationalism will have to use the aroused masses—the peasants and the rapidly increasing workers of the towns, and nationalist agitation will be widened into a conscious class struggle. Bearing in mind how the industrialisation of India is already affecting the world situation and that the conditions of her workers are of immediate concern to sections elsewhere, this book should receive the attention its merits deserve.

K.

# LETTERS from PLEBS

MARXISM AND LITERATURE.

DEAR EDITOR,—In last year's September issue of The PLEBS there appeared a letter on "Marxism and Literature," signed "Myfanwy Westrope." In a footnote the Editor wrote: "Our correspondent's letter deserves, and will get, in forthcoming numbers of The PLEBS, a longer reply than we have space for here."

I await that longer reply with interest —I have not seen it yet.

Yours, etc., A. P. L.

[In The PLEBS for June last we printed "A Short Syllabus on Historical Materialism and Literature," which, however sketchily, did attempt to reply to Mrs. Westrope's letter in the only way worth while; *i.e.*, by endeavouring to show (1), that all creative art was something more than mere *self*-expression on the part of an individual artist; ; and (2), that Historical Materialism did afford a basis for a critical interpretation—and enjoyment —of literature. This "Syllabus" was followed by an article in the July PLEBS on similar lines. ("The Middle-Class in Literature.") We think it is the turn of Mrs. Westrope, or anyone else who disagrees with the above propositions, to take up the cudgels.—Ed. PLEBS.]

LABOUR COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS.

DEAR EDITOR,—I should like to ask a few questions regarding the examination for the Labour College, through the columns of The PLEBS.

(1), Why are the competitors at the examination not given their marks, and some comments upon their papers? (2), What are the qualities which intending candidates should cultivate to be successful? (3), Has the result of previous examinations proved successful in finding out (*a*), the men with best knowledge of the Labour movement; (*b*), the men who have best served it, and (*c*), those who will help it in its struggles?

I think we ought to know our progress at the exams. Those exams. in the past have not called for much knowledge of the Labour movement. A fairly constant reader of the newspapers, who was also a good grammarian,

and could spell well, seems to be the successful type of candidate.

Men who have firsthand knowledge of the movement, but can't put it down; who have spent too much time on committees, organising their union, etc., and have played their part in the work of the movement generally, don't stand much chance. Is it because they lack "polish"?...

Are there not other tests, other than those used in the past, for the selection of students for the College?

Again, take controversial questions. How would a person unorthodox in his views, fare by giving his views? Example, a question set in the last examination, "Name one important reform which a Labour Government should immediately introduce on assuming power?" I suggest that the present Labour party could do nothing better than abolish itself. But what if I said so in my examination paper?

Yours fraternally,

Glam., S. Wales. Z.

INFORMATION WANTED.

DEAR COMRADE,—Could any of your readers give me any information about a book entitled *The Life of Thomas Wanless, Peasant*, and its anonymous author? I have dropped across it quite by accident. It is a good description of peasant life in England from the year 1819 up to Wanless's death at a "ripe old age." Amongst other things are described the laying of the first railways, at which Wanless worked, the Reform Bill, and the Chartist Movement.

I cannot say when the book was written, but the author makes mention of Charles Bradlaugh. The publishers are Wilson and Milne, 29, Paternoster Row, who also advertise another book by the same writer—*Nicol Thain, Materialist*, of which I am unable to get a copy.

May I quote a few lines from the Preface:—"Can I hope to interest you in this man's history? I confess I have my doubts. There is tragedy in it; it is mostly tragedy, but then it is the tragedy of the low born. I shall not be able to introduce you to any arch-plotter; to groups of refined adultresses clad in robes of satin, or to deal in mysterious horrors such as cause the flesh of dainty ladies to creep with a delicious excitement. No; the incidents of Thomas Wanless's life are mostly those of a plain English villager, doomed to suffer and bear his share of the load of our national greatness. Those who cannot bear to read of such had better close the book."

Yours fraternally,

H. S.

MARX AND MARSHALL.

DEAR COMRADE,—In his letter in the August PLEBS, Comrade Dobb makes the statement that "utility *is* measured in the mind of the consumer in terms of price."

Now, since Price is the name of a quantity of gold, whose utility, according to Dobb, must be measured in the same way, then, according to Dobb, Utility must be measured by Utility, which is clearly fallacious. Can he not see that what he calls utility, merely expresses the intensity of a ***qualitative*** degree?

He desires to know what I mean by supply and demand being equal. I merely mean, in his own words, that they "balance"; my former criticism being that the theory of Supply and Demand does not explain why they balance at one price instead of another.

As regards spoiling "our" case by putting forward unsound criticisms, I am quite prepared to leave that to the judgment of Plebeians.

Yours fraternally,

C. JACKSON.

# ESPERANTO NOTES

*First Steps.*

This modest title disguises an excellent textbook by the Secretary of the British Esperanto Association. Mr. Butler attacks the subject in unorthodox fashion, but his methods are very effective. No beginner will regret spending ninepence on this book.

*The Congresses.*

" Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda " was represented under the presidency of Romain Rolband by 220 delegates at Frankfurt. The International Federation of Arts, Sciences and Letters is mentioned as one of the organisations which took part. The Helsingfors congress was attended by 1,200 persons.

*Francio.*

En Troyes ĵus okazis la dua kongreso de Franclingvaj Revoluciaj Esperantistoj. La Federacio intencas eldoni pogrande ĉiujn flugfoliojn, broŝurojn, lernolibrojn kaj afiŝojn necesajn por propagando. La nova adreso de la sidejo estas ĉe René Cap, 32 rue aux Moines, Troyes (Aube).

*Germanio.*

En Dresden instruistoj unuiĝis kun laboristaj kaj burĝaj Esp. associoj por komuna propagando en lernejoj. Ili disdonis al la lernantoj flugfoliojn kun aliĝiloj, kaj laboristoj admonis prokrastemajn gepatrojn. Rezulte, aliĝis preskaŭ 1,200 geknaboj.

*Holando.*

La Nederlanda Federacio de Laboristaj Esperantistoj havas 200 membrojn. Kune kun Nederlanda Societo Esperanta ĝi eldonas ĉiusemajnan " Holanda Esperantisto." Antaŭan jaron ĝi aperigis broŝuron " La Esp. kaj la lab. movado." Propra lerno-libro kaj. Intermembra Informilo estas eldonotaj.—*Nederlanda Lab. Esp. Servo.*

*Italio.*

Novaj fervojistaj grupoj fondiĝis en Roma, Voghera, Cremona, Rivarolo, Venezia, Treiste kaj Mantova.—*E. Triumfonta.*

*Svisio.*

Fervojistoj en Svisio ĉe sia 4a kongreso decidis apogi la movadon por lingvo internacia kaj rekomedi al ĉiuj membroj la lernadon.—*E.T.*

# The PLEBS Page

WE are getting ready for a busy winter campaign, and anticipating a rush of orders for books. Class secretaries and book stall secretaries should place orders promptly, as we can't (yet!) afford to print or handle big editions purely "on spec." The various centres are busy organising classes, and it is from these that recruits for the Plebs League will be drawn—and also from these that our doubled circulation will come. But this means work on the part of Plebs Leaguers and a closer drawing together of our organisation. From everywhere come letters urging the necessity of the League, and comrades calling in at H.Q. tell of a desire to join classes and League groups, even in places where apathy and disheartenment is playing havoc with other organisations. We must be ready to rope in all comrades who express any willingness to help, or any interest whatever in educational affairs.

The work that a group of Leaguers can do is enormous at the present time. DON'T wait for ideas or suggestions from headquarters. (We've got more than enough to do.) Initiative and a thorough understanding of local conditions are essential; and the "lines of demarcation" of work once laid down (as we are hoping to lay them down at a round table conference of representatives of the N.C.L.C., the Labour College, and the Plebs League on September 23rd —24th*), the League can advance towards the goal of a much bigger membership organised in active groups to push the Magazine and the ideas for which we stand.

Here is an excellent idea adopted by one branch secretary for getting into touch with all local sympathisers. He writes—"I am advertising our Plebs Group by placing slips containing particulars of our local activities in all Plebs publications sold at the local bookshop, and the bookseller has promised to display a poster."

Conditions vary to such an extent that it is impossible for us to lay down anything but broad hints! But if every locality got out its own typed leaflet, giving local details, and inserted these in all copies of The PLEBS on sale locally, it could not help but be good for local organisation.

Four groups have recently re-organised and are promising well for the future—Swansea, A. Claridge (70, Rhondda Street); Cardiff, A Pope, (1, Ruthin Gardens, Cathays); Birkenhead, J. Birkett (23, Mornington Street); Hull, D. Aldabella (41, Mill Street).

London Plebs are also active and will work with the London Council in the establishment of classes. There is a big demand in the London area but as usual the lack of tutors is a big disadvantage. This lack of tutors can only be overcome gradually and the publishing of textbooks for the classes is one means of helping. Therefore the quicker textbooks are sold the sooner we can hurry on the publication of others, and so we progress.

A Pleb who has been unceasing in his efforts to get support for I.W.C.E. from the Co-operative movement has succeeded so far that a delegate has been appointed to the London Council. The Co-operative Societies are so far interested in education that they grant very large sums for this purpose, and it is for our members who are also Co-operators (a very large proportion) to do their utmost to induce their society to support financially the organisations which supply independent working class education.

Sent along by a Lancashire Pleb:—As the train stopped at Low Moor on its way to Halifax, the solitary occupant of a compartment had his reverie disturbed by the entry of four or five young men, apparently engineers going home from work. They fell to discussing a T.U. meeting they were to attend that evening, and from their remarks it was clearly to be a stormy one. After mentioning the names of several people likely to be present, one remarked, "And yo mun look aht, chaps, for there'll be some o' them bloody Plebatorians theer!"....The Halifax lads have evidently earned a reputation! W. H.

* Report next month.—ED.

# WORKERS' EDUCATION ABROAD

*International Conference on Workers' Education.*

ON the 16th and 17th of August the first really international conference on Workers' Education was held in Brussels, on the invitation of the Belgian Workers' Central Education Committee. There were delegates from Britain, Germany, France, the United States, Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark, Czechoslovakia, Luxemburg, Holland and Australia, as well as from the Amsterdam International. Neither Russia, the left-wing parties in Germany nor the left-wing Trade Union movement in France were represented. The British delegation was the largest, consisting as it did of representatives from Ruskin College, the W.E.A., the W.E.T.U.C., the Co-operative Union, the Labour College, the N.C.L.C., and the General Council of the T.U.C.

The best part of the first day was devoted to the hearing of reports on the bodies represented, the delegates being asked to describe aims, constitutions, methods and results. The reports showed that very considerable progress had been made since the conference that took place in 1913. The Belgian workers' educational movement is the most highly organised, for the industrial, political and co-operative movements unitedly support it. It conducts classes throughout the country for educating the workers in their spare time, and, in addition, supports the magnificently equipped residential College for men and women in which the Conference sat. Like the majority of the bodies represented the Belgian educational organisation is Marxist in character.

Mr. MacTavish (W.E.A. and W.E.T.U.C.) endeavoured with some skill to make the W.E.A. look as revolutionary as possible by carefully explaining to the delegates that it ran classes on Marx, but this did not prevent the Labour Colleges' delegates from making clear to the Conference the real nature of the W.E.A., which as one of the French delegates afterwards remarked had not previously been understood on the continent. It is perhaps worth mentioning here that Mr. MacTavish told the Conference that when he approached the Board of Education with a view to getting financial assistance for the W.E.T.U.C., the official he interviewed stated that he did not anticipate any difficulty, provided the W.E.T.U.C.'s work was *similar to that of the W.E.A.*

A long discussion took place on the need to stimulate the growth of an international working-class outlook, and as a result it was decided to urge the Workers' Colleges to exchange students, teachers and textbooks.

The most exciting moment of the Conference—on the whole a very quiet and business-like one—occurred on the second day when a resolution was submitted which defined the aim of workers' education to be to further the "intellectual and cultural education of the workers" and "the economic and political progress of the working-class." The delegates of the National Council of Labour Colleges and the Labour College, London, led a scathing attack on this resolution, describing it as one which Mr. Lloyd George could easily support. The result was that the resolution was substantially altered to read: "The International Conference on Labour Education held in Brussels in August, 1922, welcomes the important work which, as appears from the reports given, is being done in the various countries for the education of the working-class. The Conference appeals to the national and international Labour Organisations—industrial, political, and co-operative—to continue the work with all their energy *for the furthering of the emancipation of the working-class.*"

The Conference resolved to meet again in two years' time; to request the Belgian organisation to act as a connecting link until then; and to instruct it to consult with the Amsterdam International on the possibility of creating a permanent clearing house for the international workers' education movement.

J. P. M. M.

An appeal in an Esperantist journal has brought us from a building worker at Rosenheim, some interesting information concerning Trade Union educational work in Germany. There as here the building trade workers are to the fore. Their union has a special department for members under 18 years of age, which not only protects them during their apprenticeship, but provides training opportunities whereby they become technically more efficient. Special supplements are issued with the weekly journal of the union and nine students have been maintained at the Workers' Academy at Frankfurt.

A syllabus has also been sent us by the " Betriebsräte-Zentrale " of classes run in certain German towns last winter. Like ourselves this Council is trying to steer clear of " news from the grave yard." Among the subjects taken are Money, Banking, Stock Exchange, Future Factory Organisation, Bookkeeping, Commercial Law, Application of Workers Control, Problems of Socialisation and Trade Unionism.

Study groups on the look out for new subjects might run a course similar to that of some Trade Union Schools in Berlin last year—" Critical Newspaper Readings." The aim was to train students to discover the methods, intentions and the angle of the capitalist attack from the ordinary press; to recognise from Trade and Stock Exchange reports the true capitalist position, and generally to use the daily press as a barometer of capitalist weather.

Applied Psychology and Economic Geography are also widely taught there. The " seminar " method replaces the lecture after the first half-year in many of the subjects. Generally the whole educational work is in immediate contact with current problems.

# N.C.L.C. NOTES

A TOUR of the whole of the No. 2 Divisional area of the A.U.B.T.W. is now being conducted by C. T. Pendry and D. Wyndham Thomas. The reports to hand are of the most satisfactory character. The plan followed is town by town conferences, at each of which a local Provisional Council is set up. The work of the latter body is to secure affiliations of local labour organisations and to enrol individual students outside the A.U.B.T.W. The extent of such support will decide the degree of educational facilities that can be provided. Similar tours are being arranged in No. 6 Division by T. D. Smith and A. D. M. Taylor; in No. 7 Division by the Mansfield and District L.C., the West Riding Council and the Sheffield Labour College; and in the No. 4 Division by W. J. Owen, W. J. Lewis, and D. J. Williams. When the other Divisions have been similarly worked the whole of the country will have been touched by I.W.C.E. propaganda, thanks to the A.U.B.T.W. and great developments should result in the very near future. In connection with No. 4 Division (Wales) Cardiff and District Council have already inaugurated an ambitious programme of classes, the lecturers being C. L. Gibbons and J. M. Williams. We do move!

*Darlington and District Labour College* have just held a very successful annual meeting. Classes are being held in Middlesbrough—Temperance Institute, Woodlands Road, Sundays, 3 p.m.; and South Bank at the Co-operative Hall on Fridays, 6.45 p.m. Classes are also being formed at Redcar and Darlington. Further particulars from the Secretary, Edgar Turner, 103, Waterloo Road, Middlesbrough. *Leeds Labour College* are also out with a rousing programme of subjects for study for the Autumn Session. Full particulars from the College General Secretary, Shop Assistants' Institute, 2 Central Road, Leeds. *Barrow Labour College* Session starts again on October 1st; for particulars write the Secretary, R. Purcell, 67, West View Road—Tutor, J. Leach. *Ashton Labour College* are looking forward to a very busy winter season. Affiliations of local labour bodies good, including the Trades and Labour Council. All willing to help write the Secretary, Richard Waters, 52, Furnace Street, Dukinfield. *Fleetwood District I.W.C.E.*, Secretary, H. Brownjohn, 15, Styan Street, Fleetwood, and *Hull and District* Labour College, Secretary, G. Capper, 30, Little Mason Street, Bourne Street, Hull, are both doing well, thank you!

A joint Labour College and N.C.L.C. demonstration was held at Southport on the Wednesday of the Trade Union Congress week. Mr. J. Marchbank, President N.U.R., was in the chair, and the speakers included George Hicks, General Secretary, A.U.B.T.W., W. W. Craik, of the Labour College and J. Hamilton, N.C.L.C. A well attended meeting attested its appreciation of the speeches made and the result should be much in evidence in the way of additional Trade Union and Labour support for the I.W.C.E. movement. Copies of the August number of The PLEBS, containing the article by Millar on the various adult educational organisations appealing for the support of the organised Labour Movement and Holder's article outlining the case for I.W.C.E. were distributed to the delegates at the Congress. This free distribution by the Plebs League should do much to clarify Labour ideas on education. Class secretaries everywhere should make a special effort to increase the sales of the magazine which is making special efforts to provide us with material for our work. The articles on our principal subjects of study by T. Ashcroft make fine propaganda matter apart from their usefulness in the classes—it's up to us to show our appreciation by specialising on the securing of new readers and Plebs members. Our growing membership should be measured by the increase in the sales of the Magazine and Plebs Publications. Don't neglect the literature sales!

*Will all N.C.L.C. Districts please note that Saturday and Sunday, December 30th and 31st, are provisionally fixed for the Annual Conference. Particulars later.*

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# The PLEBS Bookshelf and the PLEBS Book Department

TURN your money over carefully—what there is of it!—for there are some real good book lines going just now. Plebs Textbook No. 2, *An Outline of Modern Imperialism*, has been through the hands of an Editorial Committee, and Thos. Ashcroft's original draft, revised, amplified, and with much additional matter, will, by the time these words are in type, have gone to the printers. This method of Committee discussion and revision was, it will be remembered, that adopted so successfully in the case of the Psychology Textbook, and it will be followed in all succeeding volumes. We hope to have the book on sale by the early part of next month at latest, and intending purchasers will help very considerably by placing their orders *now*.

Textbook No. 3 will be *An Outline of Elementary Economics*—won't the critics and the authorities rage furiously together!—and we hope to have it on sale before Christmas. The "basis" on which a Committee is now working consists of Wm. McLaine's series of articles, "Economics without Headaches," which appeared in The PLEBS last year. Let us at once state, firmly and defiantly, that this book will aim at being a book for beginners—not for theorists. It will try to put essential elementary facts in everyday language. It will not indulge in academic discussion. Hardshells, accordingly, are hereby warned *not* to purchase it!

Then there are the two books just issued by the Labour Publishing Co., Barton's *World History for Workers* (2s. 6d.), and Casey's *Thinking* (3s.), which should be widely used as class textbooks. If you want to realise how good Barton is, compare him with the "stunt" *Story of Mankind*, by Van Loon, just published at 12s. 6d. Van Loon's pictures are certainly interesting and, at times, startling. But his standpoint is that of the slick journalist, handing over "sob-stuff" and "colour" and "uplift." I'm not suggesting that Barton's book completely fills our bill; my own opinion is that there's a little too much moralising in it, and therefore not quite enough history. But it's a fine attempt at a broad outline, and anybody with any serious interest in history at all, more especially working-class history, will secure a copy without delay. Don't forget in connection with Casey's book, that the Chart specially designed by the author for the use of classes, can be obtained from the Plebs Book Dept., price 1s. (postpaid 1s. 2d.).

By courtesy of the publishers, Messrs. Leonard Parsons, Ltd., a cheap edition, in paper covers, of Max Beer's *Social Struggles in Antiquity*, which has been arranged for by the W.E.A., will also be available for Plebs and N.C.L.C. students through the Plebs Book Dept. It will be ready on the 20th of this month, and the price will be 3s. 6d. postpaid. *Cash must accompany orders.*

In a paragraph last month urging Plebs to get acquainted with *Moby Dick*, I mentioned that an ideal edition of it was obtainable in the World's Classics, Pocket Series, and quoted the price as 2s. 6d. A note from the pub-

lishers informs me that the price of this series is now reduced to 2s. net per volume. Well, sixpence is sixpence in these hard times, and I can only say that while *Moby Dick* was a treasure at half-a-crown he is an Absolute Bargain at a florin. As are several other volumes in this excellent series — including Tolstoy's *Twenty-Three Tales*, Buckle's *History* (in three volumes), a volume of *Selected English Short Stories*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Tristram Shandy*, and (for those who can read such things), Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (in two volumes).

PLEBS readers will have a special interest in a forthcoming volume by R. W. Postgate, entitled *Out of the Past* (Labour Publishing Co., 3s. 6d. Postpaid from PLEBS, 3s. 9d.) The book contains a series of biographical sketches of lesser-known revolutionary leaders, many of which first appeared in our pages— Parker (the Nore Mutiny man), Smith (one of Robert Owen's lieutenants), Ferré, the Communard, and Louis Blanc. The hitherto unpublished part of the book is a biographical study of Blanqui, and this alone should make the volume worth possessing, for singularly little is known, even among Marxists, of the personality, the life, or the influence of this remarkable figure in working-class history.

The Labour Research Dept. are issuing shortly four syllabuses for students which, even though they may not entirely take the place of textbooks in their respective subjects, should yet prove of very great value to class tutors and all serious students. They are *Biology*, by C. P. Dutt; *English Economic History*, by G. D. H. Cole; *Finance*, by E. Burns; and *The Development of Modern Capitalism*, by Maurice H. Dobb. Each syllabus runs to 30 or 36 pages, and is not merely a book-list, but a real "introduction" to its subject, with hints to students and tutors on the best methods of study. Moreover, the books chosen for recommendation are, so far as possible, those obtainable at a price within the means of an ordinary worker—no unimportant point, since few things are more discouraging than to have a string of books labelled "Indispensable" dangled in front of one's nose, half of them, for financial reasons, utterly unattainable. The price of these syllabuses is to be 6d. each (7d. postpaid) or 5s. per dozen postpaid, and they will be obtainable from the Plebs Book Dept.

J. F. H.

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*Printed at the Athenæum Printing Works, Redhill.*