

Vol. VIII, No. 7

August, 1916

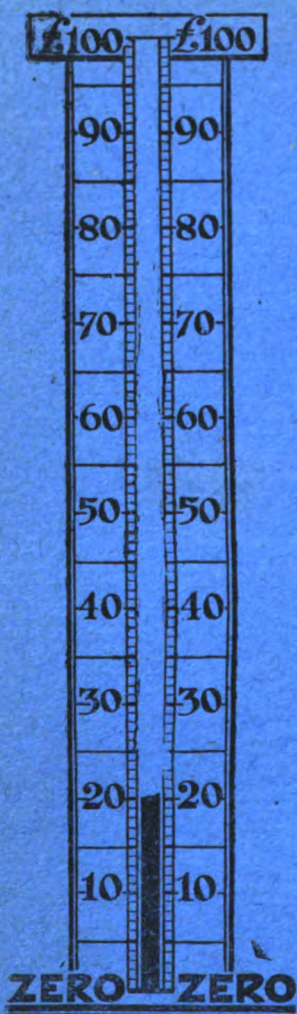
*The*  
**PLEBS**  
MAGAZINE



*Printed by Fox, Jones & Co., at Kemp  
Hall, High St., Oxford, & published  
♦♦ by the Plebs League ♦♦  
at the same address.*

**MONTHLY**

**TWOPENCE**



We have to  
get this  
down  
to



Zero

---

**IT'S NEARLY DONE.  
KEEP SHOVING!**

---

MEMBERS WHO ARE IN ARREARS WITH LEAGUE OR MAGAZINE SUSCRIPTIONS SHOULD ENDEAVOUR TO CLEAR THEIR ACCOUNTS BEFORE AUGUST 5:h, TO ALLOW OF ACCOUNTS BEING PREPARED FOR THE ANNUAL MEET.

# THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. VIII

August, 1916

No. 7

## CONTENTS

	Page
THE COLLEGE. - - - - -	145
HASHED ECONOMICS. By NOAH ABLETT - - - - -	146
ON ROSES. By J. F. HORRABIN - - - - -	149
THE ELEMENTS OF RECONSTRUCTION. By ROBT. HOLDER. - - - - -	151
MY YEAR AT THE C.L.C. By M.S. - - - - -	155
CORRESPONDENCE: By F.W.S. - - - - -	157
REPORTS: WORKERS' DEMOCRATIC EDUCATIONAL LEAGUE; WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF C.L.C. - - - - -	158
CUTTINGS - - - - -	160
THE <i>PLEBS</i> BOOKSHELF - - - - -	162

## THE COLLEGE

A BRIEF note on the present position of affairs at the C.L.C. will be of interest to *Plebs* readers. The preliminary arrangements for the taking over of management and control by the National Union of Railwaymen and the South Wales Miners' Federation have at length been completed, and, with one or two exceptions still (presumably) to be discussed, all liabilities have been settled. The new Board of Governors has met, and appointed Mr. Noah Ablett (S.W.M.F.) as its chairman, and Mr. Lowth (N.U.R.) as its secretary.

The immediate future of the College is, of course, complicated by the claims of the Military Service Acts, which necessitate the temporary suspension of activities so far as residential students are concerned. The Railwaymen's A.G.M. at Bath last month directed that the names of Mr. Craik (sub-Warden of the College) and Mr. Reynolds (secretary) should be included in the list of T.U. officials for whom exemption was to be claimed; but Messrs. Craik

and Reynolds have since been notified from Unity House that their claims are disallowed. Whether or not this notification is final we are not sure. We should have thought that the standing of the N.U.R. and the S.W.M.F. in the Trade Union world was sufficient to enable them to insist on the exemption of officials specially trained for, and with a long experience of, work which the two Unions have but recently recognized as of vital importance to their members.

We need hardly repeat again that there is no intention, so long as our friends rally round it, of suspending the Magazine. It is needed now more than ever. We appeal with confidence for redoubled efforts on the part of all Plebeians on behalf of our cause and theirs—Independent Working-Class Education. Plebs Leaguers in London will, we feel certain, respond to any appeal for assistance in the work of despatching, &c., which we may find it necessary to make. We ask readers in all parts of the country to do their utmost to gain new subscribers, and, in any and every way possible, to help us to “carry on.”

## Hashed Economics\*

**M**R. CLAY in this long book (476 pages) has attempted to explain to the working man and the general reader the whole subject matter of economics. His method (p. 17) is to ask two questions “What is?” and “What ought to be?” He claims to devote nineteen chapters to the first question, and presumably the other six to the second. I suppose we must take his word for it, though it seems to me that there was little of either in most chapters. In fact I am compelled to say that when I at last arrived at page 476, I was somewhat surprised to see the words, “The End.” It would have been artistically appropriate had they been “To be continued,” for Mr. Clay has the kind of pen that can commence anywhere, but never concludes—merely pauses.

There is nothing new in this book. It is a hash, the ingredients being one half (the sinister half) of Jevons and Marshall, and the other half of Ruskin, Fabian Tracts, and W.E.A. literature. Mr. Clay does not like Capitalism as it is; he likes Socialism still less; he has very scant sympathy with, but only with, the critical side of Syndicalism; what he would like, or rather “What ought to be,” is a world moulded from the W.E.A. clay of his own desire. He would legislate Omar’s beautiful aspiration:—

---

\**Economics: An Introduction for the General Reader.* By Henry Clay (Macmillan 3/6 net).

Ah Love ! could you and I with Fate conspire  
 To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,  
 Would we not shatter it to bits—and then  
 Remould it nearer to the Heart's Desire.

What is more, our author believes it could be done, if only most other people in the world agreed with him. I agree, but am glad to be able positively to assure him that much living clay will disintegrate into dust before that doubtful day dawns. There is a Quixotic as well as a sinister side to this book ; that is, there is a great amount of lofty idealism and desire to redress grievances combined with the firm conviction that the knight-errants of the W.E.A. are the firm to do the job. But let us first look at Mr. Clay as a student of Economic (or Jevonian) science. We cannot follow him all through the maze—space will not allow ; but I think the part most interesting to *Plebs* readers will be the chapters on Value and his criticisms of Marx.

The Marxian theory, it seems, fails because Marx does not know the difference (or rather can't explain it) between simple and skilled labour. Let Mr. Clay say a word or two on the point :—

Marx tries several explanations. At one time he says : " The quantity of labour, however, is measured by its duration, and labour time finds its standard in weeks, days, and hours"—which if true would make it profitable to employ unskilful workers, since by taking longer over their work they would produce more value.

Honest Clay. The first words Marx wrote after the quotation in *Capital* (page 5) were—" Some people (Clay is one) might think that if the value of the commodity is determined by the quantity of labour spent on it, the more idle and unskilful the labourer, the more valuable would his commodity be, because more time would be required in its production. The labour, however, that forms the substance of value is homogeneous human labour, expenditure of one uniform labour-power. The total labour of society . . . counts here as one mass of human labour power composed though it be of innumerable individual units." Please refer to your *Capital* in order to appreciate the W.E.A. Clay's sense of honour. Now, Clay, proceed :—

In another place he (Marx) takes unskilled labour as his standard : " We shall henceforth account every kind of labour to be unskilled, simple labour."

Let my readers note particularly that I am quoting Clay in the successive order in which he writes. The first quotation he gave from Marx was on page 5, the next one was from page 12. Perhaps you think, ' Oh, Clay may have skipped a page or so.' Reserve your judgment, and let Clay proceed : -

In another place, average labour : " The labour time socially necessary is that required to produce an article under the normal condition of production, and with the average degree of skill and intensity prevalent at the time"—i.e. the length of time actually spent by the labourer in producing an article has nothing to do with its value—its value depends on the amount of ' socially necessary labour ' that the worker succeeded in putting into it.

Honourable Clay; where was this last quotation which you describe as "In another place" from? It was from, if you please, page 6, and, worse still, in the same paragraph that I last quoted Marx from, and only four lines lower down. Is the intention to mislead now clear? But let the most honourable Clay go on:—

Finally Marx adopts 'simple, abstract human labour' or 'socially necessary labour' as his standard

As for "Finally," there is no page for that. It is simply a clayish touch, put in for the heroic purpose of showing that Marx after many failures arrives at long last—what, at a definition? Oh no, but at one of two which he is not certain about. Oh, Most Right Honourable Clay! why wasn't your name mud or slime?

Is it necessary to say, (it is not to the majority of *Plebs* readers who know their Marx) that clay is here caught mixing up different portions of one analysis by juggling with such words as "at one time," "In another place," and "Finally." What is it all for? Simply that he might plausibly say—as he does afterwards:—

He (Marx) is not however any more successful than Adam Smith in explaining why we must credit an hour's work of a cotton spinner with two and a half times as much 'socially necessary labour' as half an hour's work of a farm labourer; all he can say is that "the different proportions in which different sorts of labour are reduced to unskilled labour as their standard are established by a process that goes on behind the backs of the producers, and consequently, appears to be fixed by custom." (Incorrect quotation, as the word 'social' before the word 'process' appears in *Capital* p. 12).

Clay wittily comments on this—"There is no reason why it should 'go on behind the backs of' economic students." What shall we think of that as a piece of criticism? The kindest way is to think that Clay has never read any further than p. 12 of Marx. All Marxists know quite well the elaborate and exhaustive analyses of differences of labour in different industries and countries which occur in parts V and VI of *Capital*, and are strewn throughout the work of Marx. They also know that p.p. 1 to 14 of *Capital* are devoted to showing that value can only be created by the energy of living human beings. What else can it possibly be created by? But charitably assuming that clay is ignorant of all this let us follow him to his dismissal of poor Marx. He discovers that Mr. Hyndman, "Marx's chief English exponent," has solved his great enigma of the reduction or equation of skilled to unskilled labour by saying (truly enough) that the process takes place by competition and the higgling of the market. Ha! Ha! laughs clay, why that's the same old tale that Adam Smith used to tell, only in a more round about away.

Value depends on the socially necessary labour in a thing, but the amount of socially necessary labour in a thing can only be settled, by bringing the thing into the market, and seeing how much of other things it will exchange; but the *rate* at which it exchanges for other things is *its value*, so that all the argument has proved is that Value depends upon Value.

I can only say with the Cockney—Go' blimey! What a brain! I have italicised the words 'rate' and 'is its value' to show the surely obvious mixing up of Rate, or measure of Value, with Value itself.

Now I have no time for clay on marginal utility. If the Editor permits I will return next month to him. Though there be not much instruction, I think I can promise some amusement.

NOAH ABLETT.

## On Roses

WHAT more appropriate subject to write about at mid-summer?—even though, in summers gone by, Mr. Blatchford did his best to bore us all to tears with it. But I am not going to describe my garden. The roses in this case are metaphorical.

Recently, in the course of a discussion on The Workers and Education, I heard a W.E.A. apologist put forward the old plea for "general culture" by means of a little parable. "The worker," said he, "is like a man set down in the middle of a dense forest. He must first clear a little space for himself. But, having cleared that space, is he to be denied the opportunity of growing a few roses in it, and taking pleasure in them? Won't he be all the better for that small glimpse of beauty—wouldn't he be, in some sense, *starved* if it were denied him?" He then went on to explain that the roses in his parable symbolized the "humanities" which the W.E.A. is anxious that the workers should appreciate. He did not explain exactly what the forest symbolized, or how it came about that the worker, willy-nilly, found himself in the thick of it. Nor did he say how the worker contrived to clear that little space for himself; whether he did it all by himself, or whether any sort of co-operative effort—any sort of trade union of foresters or woodcutters—was needed. One must never press a parable too far.

But since the "heavenly meaning" behind this particular "earthly story" is obviously that the W.E.A. is genuinely concerned for the well-being of the workers, we are entitled to devote a little critical consideration to it. We gather from it that the W.E.A. admits that the first essential is to get the forest cut down. That being so, we may proceed to ask how the W.E.A. proposes that the workers should go about the job? Organized Labour is up—very much up—against that forest. Its pressing business is to clear the ground—that, in fact, is precisely why it is organized. And no-one is likely to be of much value in the "guide, philosopher, and friend" line who cannot offer some practical suggestions as to the best way of tackling this urgent business. Does the W.E.A. merely offer the worker an occasional sniff at a rose by way of

refreshment? Or does it suggest that the best way of demolishing the forest would be to choke the forest trees out of existence by planting roses among them? This latter, so far as I can grasp the situation, seems to me to be the nearest thing to a practical suggestion which the W.E.A. offers.

It does not impress one as a remarkably brilliant suggestion. I don't see the forest giants going under in a struggle for existence with rose-bushes. Admitting the beauty and desirability of the roses, it would seem a sensible plan for us all to concentrate, first and foremost, on clearing the ground so that they will have a chance of growing to perfection. I want—and I am writing as a C.L. Ceer—all the workers to enjoy these roses. I maintain that all the workers can have ample leisure and opportunity to cultivate roses if they will first unite to clear the forest once and for all; and not be content each to sit in his own little patch among his own roses, cultivating a sense of superiority. I have no sympathy for the worker who expresses contempt for roses; but I do assert that his class may have the right to demand of him some sacrifice of his own taste for roses in order that he may assist in the class-business of clearing the forest.

It is all a question of "putting first things first." "The better," said a wise man once, "is ever the enemy of the good." That, in a nutshell, is why the C.L.C. is bound to oppose the W.E.A. Roses are good. But the business of wiping the forest out of existence is better. We want to clear the ground in order to grow the other things besides roses—things to eat, for example. And so long as things to eat are almost as much of a luxury to a certain proportion of the workers as roses are to the rest—so long, in fact, as *all* the workers are at best uncertain as to their future security in this department (the "kitchen-garden," shall we say?)—it is somewhat futile to come offering them—roses.

Roses are desirable things; but they are a mighty poor substitute for freedom and decency and self-respect. The man who, living in a miserable hovel, devotes his spare time to growing flowers in a window-box, rather than to finding out *why* he has to live in a hovel and *how* he can get out of it, is a fool. And the kind people who come encouraging him in his foolishness have only themselves to blame if, having realised the folly of his ways, he begins to suspect their motives.

J. F. HORRABIN.

"Man does not live by bread alone, and it is true also that a publication can not subsist on compliments. If you will take the Editor's word, no compliment reaches the heart like a renewed subscription."

MICHAEL MONAHAN in *The Phoenix*.

(And so say all of us!—Ed. *Plebs*.)



## The Elements of Reconstruction

ONE notable effect of the present European war is that it has made the majority of people feel that we are on the eve of great changes in our social life. More particularly does the Trade Unionist feel, instinctively if not consciously, that the Labour Movement will be tested as never before by the problems which will confront it when this great slaughter is ended. For the present, we are told, all our activities and energies must be directed to the winning of the war; nevertheless the Labour movement will make a great mistake, for which it will have to pay heavily, if it allows itself to be lulled into a neglect of its own immediate interests at home. It is of vital importance that all Trade Unionists should be on the alert, noting the changes which are being wrought in our industrial life whilst the mighty conflict is proceeding, so that they may be ready to meet and deal effectively with the new problems as they arise. Our governing class are certainly not waiting for the war to end before discussing and devising new tactics whereby to safeguard their interests in the new conditions of the future; it behoves Labour to do likewise.

On this question as to the need for a reconstruction of our social life after the war, two letters appeared in *The Times* of July 17th and 19th, under the title with which the present article is headed. The author of these letters signs himself "D.P." and informs us that they are the outcome of a conversation between two friends in which was discussed "a policy for the development of the Empire after the war." They make very interesting reading and indirectly provide proof of the necessity for a reorganization of the Trade Union movement on the basis of industry as opposed to the old 19th century craft methods. In his first letter "D. P." is deeply concerned about the lack of science in British education and industry. He points out that this is due to the small scale standard of British business and manufacture as compared to the large scale industry of Germany and America; this, in turn, being due to the fact that "the British economic system developed some generations before the German did", and hence is bound by the traditions of the past. He goes on to argue that the British industrial and business problem is to scrap the methods of 1850-60, and not to imitate Germany by copying her 1890-1900 methods, but to go right ahead to the 1920 pattern. It is this "1920 pattern" which is of importance to, and proves the correctness of, the theory of Industrial Unionism.

Our author, after mentioning that "the experiment of controlled establishments, the experiences of trusts and combines, German State Socialism, the theories of Guild Socialism, are all in the solution," goes on to advocate as a cure for the present ills of British manufacture "a replanning of scientific education and research,

concurrently with, and as a part of, a systematic amalgamation and co-ordination of industries, so that the same men who plan the plant may have a decisive voice in the education of the men who will work the plant." He rebukes Sir Ray Lankester and his friends of the British Science Guild, and informs them that "if they wish to be anything more than an academic voice crying vainly in the darkness they must set out and take counsel with and understand those captains and organizers of industry and those labour leaders, (! !) whose primary concern should be the reinstatement of the national economic life after the war." He contends that "those who are attacking the problem of the industrial reorganization of the Empire and those who are working for educational reconstruction need to join hands." In the same way, one must point out, those who are advocating the industrial reorganization of Labour need to make an independent working-class education for the rank and file part and parcel of their new policy if it is to be a success. The Workers' Educational Association occupies in relation to Labour the same position which "D. P." says the British Science Guild occupies in relation to the capitalists, viz., "an academic voice crying vainly in the darkness."

In the whole of his first letter "D. P." is unwittingly acting the part of a testamentary executor to the forecast made by Marx on the "Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation" in *Capital*, Vol. I, Chap. XXXII, as to the centralization of capital with its conscious technical application of science &c. Our letter-writer admits that modern conditions demand the abolition of small competing capitalists, that the days of individual businesses are past, and that these must be replaced by "a systematic amalgamation and co-ordination of industries."

After he has reasoned on these lines in his first letter it is highly amusing to scientific socialists to find his second letter opening with this statement:—"It is probable that historians will mark the year 1914 as the end of the Socialist movement." Reading a little further, we discover the reason for this idea of his. He admits that the bulk of reasonable men in the Empire have come over to the primary Socialist assertion that food production, transport, &c. are matters not for the profit-seeking of private ownership, but for public administration; but that they also realize that these services cannot be suddenly wrenched from the hands that control them to day. "D. P." agrees with the Socialists in so far as the economic development tends towards nationalization, but this is "a development not by the Socialist's panacea of 'expropriation' at all, but by amalgamation, by co-ordination and co-operation, by bringing the State into partnership." We are now able to grasp his position; he is an advocate of State Capitalism pure and simple. We can agree with him when he says that industry cannot be suddenly wrenched from the hands

that control it to day, and also when he points out that the revolutionary schemes of the early Socialists failed to realize that "*you cannot suddenly create whole new classes of men*;" but when he deduces from this that "the deadest part of Socialism now is all that centred about the idea of 'expropriation'" we beg to differ. Although industry cannot be "suddenly wrenched" from its present owners, nevertheless it can be wrenched, and will be wrenched, as soon as the working-class are properly organized and fully conscious of their true relationship to the State.

The origin and function of the State and the relation of Industrial Unionism towards it has already been dealt with in the August and October numbers of the *Plebs* for 1915. Far from "expropriation" being "the deadest part of Socialism," it is in reality the very opposite. The working class in order to accomplish their freedom will be compelled to abolish the State, and to replace it with a real industrial democracy by means of their industrial unions, systematically amalgamated and co-ordinated.

The systematic amalgamation of industry in partnership with the State as sketched by "D. P." has been rendered necessary by the immanent laws of capitalist production itself. These laws operate independently of the wishes and desires of our captains of industry, and will so operate after the State takes hold of production. Our critic shares the common illusion that the State is the people - a fallacy held by the Labour Party in Parliament and the majority of our Labour Leaders, and also largely responsible for the breakdown of the second International when the European War broke out. The experiences gained in this war, together with the direct control of the State in our industrial life, will break down many illusions of the working class, and enable them to grasp more easily their true relationship to the State and also to each other. We can agree with "D. P." as to the necessity of a scientific education for those who will work the plant of State Capitalism; but the working class require something more than a *technical* education the object of which is to render them more efficient wage-workers in the service of the State. They also need an education in social science which will enable them to control the plant, and through that control the whole of the social life. This latter education the State will not provide; the working-class will have to develop it independently, concurrently with their Industrial Unions.

Just as "D. P." points out to the *Times* readers that "syndicating businesses and organizing scientific education are two aspects of the same job," so Industrial Unionism and independent working-class education are inseparable. Industrial Unionism demands for its success that the initiation and control of the policy of the organization shall be in the hands of the rank and file. In this way the members learn to govern themselves and to prepare for the time when they will replace the political government of the

State by the self-government of Labour. But how can the rank and file initiate and control a policy without knowledge? How can they ever attempt to control and regulate our industrial life unless they first control their organizations, which will eventually govern this industrial life? The problem of the Trade Union movement, like the problem which, according to "D.P." confronts British business, is "to scrap the methods of 1850-60" and adapt its organizations to the new conditions of the 20th century.

A few words in conclusion as to the "death of Socialism." "D. P." fails to realize that the very industrial changes which he advocates will also bring into existence a class of wage-workers with a totally new outlook, a class which could not be suddenly created by the early Socialists. The Socialism which got its death-blow in 1914 is the nationalistic pseudo-Socialism which the British Workers' National League is attempting to resurrect; and the political Socialism, also, of the various Socialist sects who stand outside of the real industrial movement of the workers, and preach to them a social regeneration to be accomplished by means of the capitalist political machinery at Westminster. It is quite true that the working-class must participate in political action; this the Industrial Unionist fully recognises, but it must only be used as a means to an end, not as an end in itself. The end is the substitution, for political government by the State as established at Westminster, of the self-government of Labour through its Industrial Unions amalgamated together for the common administration of their industrial life. It is the fundamental fallacy of Guild Socialism that it retains the State when it is no longer required, and to that extent Guild Socialists also are "an academic voice crying vainly in the darkness."

Out of the nationalistic ruins of the second International will arise a third International of Labour whose members will be conscious of the fact that just as the craft barriers must be abolished between the workers within a nation in order to get a national class unity to fight and defeat the national State power, so must the national barriers that divide the workers of the various nations be broken down in order to get an international class unity capable of withstanding the international power of capital. The immediate task of the modern working-class movement the world over is first to bring about an industrial unity of the workers within the various national groups and to educate them as to their true relationship to the State. Once this understanding has been attained by the workers of the various national groups, an International class unity would logically follow of itself. Up to the present the various Socialist bodies have sought to obtain an International unity whilst the working class within the various nations have remained divided among themselves. They have been making the common mistake of building the roof before laying the found-

ations. The great fight of the future will be between Labour and the State. No doubt it will be a long and bitter struggle, but that Labour will be victorious is as certain as that night follows day. In the words of John A. Symonds :—

These things shall be ! A loftier race  
 Than e'er the world hath known, shall rise  
 With flame of freedom in their souls,  
 And light of science in their eyes.  
 Nation with nation, land with land,  
 Unarmed shall live as comrades free ;  
 In every heart and brain shall throb  
 The pulse of one fraternity.

ROBERT HOLDER.

## My Year at the C.L.C.

BY A STUDENT.

ALL of us are glad to know that the *Plebs* is keeping going during the present critical period. Some of us are facing the future with little knowledge of what may befall us ; but we feel sure that the work of the *Plebs* and the C.L.C. is only just begun. The movement and thought which they represent must grow. The conditions which brought them into being will not be destroyed by the war ; on the contrary the development of those conditions is being considerably hastened and the militant working-class movement will need, more than ever, that educational lead which the College and the Magazine are trying to give.

Plebeians are critical folk, and they do not generally resolve their meetings into mutual admiration societies. But as one who has only recently come into contact with the movement I write to reassure all its friends, in these unsettling times, that they are the bearers of the truth which will make us free. Working-class education from the " class " view-point is the means by which we shall attain to a fully conscious development.

A year ago, the *Plebs* and the C.L.C. were unknown to me. The economics of Marx, with its inseparable correlations the Labour Theory of Value, the class-struggle, and the Materialist Conception of History ; the mind-clearing logic of Dietzgen, and the valuable books of Kerr & Co. were undiscovered continents of enlightenment. I had never understood the difference between technical and social science and the need of education in the latter from a working-class view-point. Education and knowledge in general seemed to be good things in themselves and the property of all classes. Now the struggle on the intellectual field stands revealed—a struggle which must be fought before the working-class can achieve its emancipation from wage-slavery. Dissatisfied with the

old ideas, perplexed with many modern problems, attracted by the mysteries of technical science and the beauties of nature and art, lost in the longings of idealism amidst sordid surroundings, and lacking a definite knowledge of the way out of the present sorry scheme of things, my acquaintance with the C.L.C. has given point and purpose to my views of life and furnished me with a guiding thread whereby the complete development of society—that tangled skein—can be understood. Light has shone in dark places. Contradictions are understood and reconciled. The new can be seen evolving from the old; the solution is contained in the problem. Not simply by the strength of our wishes and desires shall a saner society arrive, but by the very development of present-day society which is producing its own grave-diggers. Ours not to sigh and wish that things were different, but to try to understand the laws of development and act in accordance with them.

This enlightenment did not come all at once by any means. The old ideas did not go into the melting pot without a struggle. The native pride of the ego rejects at first the assertion that it is but the agent of conditions, the channel through which these mightier economic forces work. I once tried to maintain that happiness was largely a condition of the mind; but when invited to hand over all the "universal equivalent" and other material goods which I possessed, I had to acknowledge the material basis of the idea and recognise that psychology does not go deep enough in its explanations. "Ideas do not fall from heaven." Again, one felt inclined to challenge these cocksure Marxians and their M.C.H. Could they really sum up and explain all the developments of history by their theory? Were our Cromwells, Luthers and Napoleons mere creatures of their age? Perish the thought! Get down the history books and find if the facts are explained by this theory. Alas for one's hopes! even the orthodox historians unconsciously revealed the part played in development by class antagonisms—the dynamic of history—and one soon got into the habit of reading between the lines in orthodox history and discovering this factor when it was not openly stated.

Dietzgen's philosophy, however, helped to connect the ideal and the material world into one. At first, his sentences were hard to understand; they seemed to be each trying to catch their own tails in puzzling repetition. Often the dinner-whistle was heard with relief; one felt that down in the dining room, at any rate, was something which could be understood and appreciated. Nevertheless, repetition was the mother of learning, and in time the seeming riddles were solved and the tanner's logic received its deserved appreciation. "To understand the understanding is to clear away all misunderstandings." The metaphysician's and the mechanical materialists' mistakes were explained; the idea and the object possess existence in the world of reality.

It is not my intention to enumerate in detail the benefits received from the education taught in the C.L.C. They must be experienced to be fully appreciated. The teaching of the Marxian theories will have a profound effect on the future of the workers; for they are not only sound scientific theories in the study and the classroom, but they will guide the worker in his choice of the most effective weapons in the everyday practical struggle. They support the modern advocacy of Industrial Unionism with direct action on both political and industrial fields to win the control of industry.

The mental revolution and the consequent enlightenment experienced in my own case is, I believe, only a particular instance of what the C.L.C. will do for many thousands of intelligent wage-earners. It would tax the imagination to estimate the immense possibilities and the likely effects which will result if only the C.L.C. can get into full swing, and by means of correspondence, postal lectures and residential facilities create that class-consciousness which is so vitally necessary to the modern worker. The future is ours.

I have only roughly described the experiences of a comparative outsider on coming into contact with the C.L.C. Things will never be the same again and the new outlook received can never be lost. Power to the College and the Magazine! May the circulation go up, and the debt go down, and a long and healthy life be enjoyed by the *Plebs* in which it shall witness the fruition of its endeavours.

M. S.

## Correspondence

### "THE RED FLAG."

F. W. S. (Manchester) writes as follows, apropos of a reference in a recent number of the *Plebs* to the singing of "The Red Flag":—

After thirty years of trying to sing it to tunes to which it was not composed, "The Red Flag" proves futile as a rally or inspiration, for the reason that it has no sound Socialist basis; alter the Red to Green, Blue, or Yellow, and it can be sung by any crowd of Nationalistic reformers.

Let's have done with it and the Marseillaise and learn the International class slogan with its basic declaration:—

No Saviours from on high deliver,  
No trust have we in prince or peer;  
Our own right hands the chains must sever. . . .

Sure we may be that the Master-class (or the Quakers) will never try to use this as a conventional patriotic lullaby or Christian rallying-song.

F. W. S. also adds a footnote to the line, 'No Saviours from on high deliver':—"Eh? Ashington." We must leave Ashington to decide for itself whom or what he is getting at.

## Reports

### WORKERS' DEMOCRATIC EDUCATIONAL LEAGUE.

An inaugural Conference was convened by Mr. Syd. Jones (Blackwood) and Mr. W. J. Hewlett (Abertillery) on Saturday, July 8, at Brynhyfryd Restaurant, Pontllanfraith, of the five classes now in existence in Monmouthshire—Bargoed, Oakdale, Wattsville, Blackwood, and Abertillery—which have been studying Industrial History and Economics. A representative gathering enthusiastically discussed the advisability of linking up the classes now in existence into a closer organisation, for the purpose of furthering the cause of Democratic Education among the working-class.

Mr. Syd. Jones, of Blackwood, was unanimously voted to the chair. In a short introductory speech, he emphasised the necessity for such an organisation. He pointed out that it was by the study of the historical development of human society and human institutions that we, as a proletariat class, would understand our true position in society. He drew attention to the Central Labour College, and the relationship existing between that institution and this conference. He went on to say that he had derived a great benefit by following his studies there for two years, yet he did not desire to rest contented with that, but he wanted the institution to live, grow and thrive. This could be ensured by the support of this organisation in the form of preparing students for the institution, and by fearlessly propounding and carrying the principles which the institution stood for over the length and breadth of the industrial community. Everyone knew that there were certain individuals, some of them Trade Unionists, who were not favourably inclined toward the Central Labour College. That was another reason why we should fearlessly guard the institution which, he would make bold to say, was an institution of the rank and file.

The agenda was then taken, which brought forth some very definite resolutions :—

1.—The organisation shall be called the Workers' Democratic Educational League.

2.—It shall advocate the teaching of the Curriculum of the Central Labour College when the institution was founded.

3.—This conference of representatives of the five classes pledges itself to become affiliated to the Plebs' League, and to support the same by every means in its power.

4.—We undertake to organise the sale and distribution of the *Plebs Magazine*.

5.—A small Executive Committee to be appointed, to consist of one member from each class with officials. Each class to select its own member.

*Objects* :—1.—To provide facilities for giving adequate expression for the Industrial and Political Activities of the Workers.

*Methods* :—1.—The formation of classes at various centres in Monmouthshire and South Wales. 2.—The direction and control of classes to be decided at periodical conferences.



*Aims* :—1.—The positive expression of the needs and aims of the Working Class Movement. 2.—The ultimate taking over of industry, and the scientific control of same.

The following officers were then elected: *Presidents*—Dennis Hird, (C.L.C.) and George Barker, (S.W.M.F.). *Vice-presidents*—Councillor W. Hancock, (S.W.M.F.) and Messrs. A. W. Perry, (N.U.R.) and W. L. Cook, (S.W.M.F.). *Chairman*—Sydney Jones, (C.L.C.). *Secretary*—W. J. Hewlett, Abertillery. *Treasurer*—Geo. Walters, Bargoed.

Any friends desirous of forming classes, or classes in existence which are desirous of becoming affiliated to the above organisation, will please communicate with the Secretary, who will be most pleased to give all the information required.—W. J. Hewlett, 87 Oak Street, Abertillery.

(We take this opportunity of wishing all success to the new League; and—incidentally—hope to see the circulation of the Magazine in South Wales go up considerably as a result of its activities.—Ed., *Plebs*.)

#### WOMEN'S LEAGUE ANNUAL MEETING.

The Annual General Meeting of the Women's League of the C.L.C. was held, by kind premission of the new Board of Governors, at the College on Thursday, July 27th. Miss Beatrice Pattenden was elected to the chair, and the reports of the Secretary and Treasurer (summaries of which we hope to publish in next month's *Plebs*) were read and adopted. Mrs. Horrabin was re-elected Hon. Secretary, and Mrs. Kirkham (Miss Grace Neal) as Hon. Treasurer. The following members were elected to the Committee for the ensuing year:—Mrs. Butler, Mrs. Chaytor, Mrs. Mason, Miss Pattenden, and Mrs. Westrope.

#### THE PLEBS' THERMOMETER.

We are pleased to acknowledge the receipt of 30/- towards reducing the debt on the Magazine, from Mr. E. Edwards, Secretary of the N.U.R., Conference of District Councils, on behalf of the following District Councils:—West Midland, Glasgow and West of Scotland, Yorkshire, Bishop Auckland, North Eastern Federation, Eastern, North Lancashire and Westmoreland, Liverpool and District, North East-Lancashire, Manchester, North Staffs, Sheffield and Chesterfield, London, Bristol and West of England, South Yorks, Edinburgh and East of Scotland, Leeds Joint Committee, Midland.

Thanks to the efforts of our many friends the thermometer is gradually reaching zero, and also the circulation of the Magazine has been rapidly increasing during the last few months.

**ONE "BIG PUSH" AND WE CAN REACH ZERO BEFORE THE ANNUAL MEET ON AUGUST 6th.**

## Cuttings

### IF —

If you can keep your head when all about you  
 Are losing theirs and blaming it on you :  
 If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you  
 But make allowance for their doubting too :  
 If you can wait and not be tired by waiting  
 Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
 Or being hated don't give way to hating,  
 And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise :

If you can dream— and not make dreams your master,  
 If you can think— and not make thoughts your aim ;  
 If you can meet with triumph and disaster  
 And treat these two impostors just the same ;  
 If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
 Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
 Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,  
 And stoop and build 'em up again with worn-out tools :

If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
 With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
 Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
 And —which is more— you'll be a MAN, my son !

RUDYARD KIPLING.

Messrs. Macmillan have recently issued the complete poem, printed on card, with decorative border, at 3d. net. (obtainable through booksellers)

### THE MAORILAND WORKER SPELLS IT LIBERAL.

Michael Monahan, in one of his side-talks in the *Phoenix*, tells a story of Mitchel, the Irish rebel who was sentenced to transportation in 1848:—  
 " In the dock undaunted by the sentence, he asked if, like the Roman who gave his hand to the fire, he might promise that others would follow his example ; whereupon his fellow-rebels, fearless of the might of England, reached out their hands to him from the galleries, crying ' Promise for me, Mitchel!—Promise for me !' "

### WAR PROFIT-MONGERS IN RUSSIA.

The clergy will to-morrow publicly anathematize the " freebooters of the rear," who are amassing huge fortunes at the expense of the public.—*Times* (Petrograd correspondent) July 5th, 1916.  
 (And after the service, one supposes, the clergy will go home to lunch with the " freebooters.")

### ON AN AUSTRALIAN LABOUR STATESMAN.

" There's gas that's meant for killing,  
 There's gas that gives the blughes,  
 There's gas that's very filling,  
 There's gas that empties pughes,  
 Gas of cooing, gas of Billing,  
 And gas of little Ughes."

*Nation*, June 10th, 1916.

## BIBLICAL CRITICISM UP-TO-DATE.

Even a comparatively good trade like shepherding may go down in competition with grain production. The grain-producer has to fight for the best soils, and crushes out his brother, perhaps, in the process. Well, the process is, apparently, a law of nature. "Where is Abel, thy brother?" Cain replies with the *sang froid* of Adam Smith: "Am I my brother's keeper?" But the Deity insists, as the Cobden Club does not, but as the author of *Unto this Last* does, on ethics as part of the economical equation: "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground."—*The Bible's Prose Epic of Eve and her Sons*. By Eric S. Robertson. (Williams and Norgate, 6/- net.)

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

The worker has no country to lose,  
And, therefore, no country to save.  
All his real estate is stuck on his boots—  
He don't own enough for a grave.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

## CANDOUR.

In the actual conduct of the War France has, indeed, had one advantage over us—she has had no appreciable trouble with any analogue of "the brother on the Clyde," though there was a fear of some such trouble at the beginning. The polluting presence of barbarians on the sacred soil made patriotic devotion an instinct even with the anarchical and unreflecting; while the system of universal service supplied, of course, the machinery for coping quickly with slackness in the factory as well as in the field.—*Times Literary Supplement*, July 27, 1916.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

There is such a thing as talking too much Hegel.—*Times Literary Supplement*, July 27, 1916, (Review of *The Theory of the State*, by J. S. Mackenzie, A. D. Lindsay, and other writers.)

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*            \*

Customs die hard in this our native land:  
And still in Northern France, I understand,  
Our gallant boys, as through the fray they forge,  
Cry "God for Harmsworth, England, and Lloyd George"

J. C. SQUIRE, *The Survival of the Fittest*, (Allen and Unwin, 1/- net.)

"I enclose 5/-—payment for three months' *Plebs*. You send me eight copies; I only sell six, but place the other two where I think they will do good. . . Put the balance to *Plebs* Fund, and if you can keep the magazine going I guarantee one 'umble shilling per month, and will try to cadge one from the missis now and again. Keep a stout heart!"

(The writer of that letter is an optimist of the right sort.)

## The *Plebs'* Bookshelf

Another Novel for Socialists Shaw's Sequel to *\*Pygmalion*—  
Rebecca West on Henry James— Common Faults in Writing English  
—A C.L.C. Textbook &c.

Another good novel to be added to that list :- *Comrades*, by Maxim Gorky (Hodder and Stoughton, 2/- net). I confess to never having been "gripped" by Gorky before (as a novelist, that is; his play, *The Lower Depths*, which Mme. Lydia Yavorska put on at the Kingsway Theatre three or four years ago, and which London playgoers carefully stayed away from, was one of the most impressive things I have ever seen in the theatre). But *Comrades*, once you get accustomed to those fearsome Russian names, "grips" you right enough. It tells the story of a little group of Socialists in a Russian factory-village; and despite all the differences and strangenesses of atmosphere and names and phraseology, one feels that one knows the various types of men and women portrayed. There is Yegor, for instance, the humorously practical revolutionist, always to be relied on gently to restrain the more hot-headed comrades :-

"The work of changing the present order of things, comrades, is a great work, but in order to advance it more rapidly I must buy myself a pair of boots." (They are discussing a First of May demonstration.) "My overshoes, too, are torn beyond hope of redemption, and I get my feet wet every day. I have no intention of migrating from the earth even to the nearest planet before we have publicly and openly renounced the old order of things; and I am therefore absolutely opposed to comrade Samoylov's motion for an armed demonstration. I amend the motion to read that I be armed with a pair of good boots, inasmuch as I am profoundly convinced that this will be of greater service for the ultimate triumph of Socialism than even a grand exhibition of fisticuffs and black eyes!"

There is Andrey, the lovable, great-hearted Little Russian, who has sacrificed all for the Cause, but who also is fond of letting a little of the cold wind of Reality blow on ultra-heroic Idealism. Pavel, the "hero" of the story, has been announcing his intention of carrying the banner in the forthcoming First of May procession, and has harshly answered his mother's tears by the brutal remark:

"You oughtn't to be grieved. You ought to feel rejoiced. When are we going to have mothers who will rejoice in sending their children even to death?"

Whereupon Andrey intervenes with some cutting remarks about certain heroes and their heroism; and then, of course, the mother pleads with him to be gentle with her boy.

"Don't be afraid, mother. I won't touch him. You know I'm a good-natured chap, soft as a stewed turnip. And then—you hero out there, don't listen—I love him. But I don't like the waistcoat he wears. You see, he's put on a new waistcoat, and he likes it very much, so he goes strutting about, and pushes everybody, crying, 'See, see what a fine waistcoat I have on!' It's true it's a fine waistcoat. But what's the use of pushing people. It's hot enough as it is,"

There is Rybin, the peasant, into whose slow suspicious mind an idea takes a long time to penetrate; but who, having once grasped an idea, holds on to it grimly whatever the consequences.

"I'll go all by myself through village and hamlet and stir the people up. It's necessary that the people should take the matter in their own hands and get to work themselves. Let them but understand—they'll find a way themselves. So I'm going to try to make them understand. There is no hope for them except in their own understanding. And that's the truth!"

Above all, there is the mother; understanding little of the Cause, and yet loving the "comrades," feeling in her heart that they are "good people," growing to love their Cause, and to hate their oppressors, because she begins in a dim way to realise that they will one day succeed in making the sort of life—of existence, rather—she has had to live, impossible for any man or woman. . . . *Comrades* is a great book.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have just finished the new volume of Shaw—*Androcles and the Lion, Overruled, and Pygmalion*. *Androcles* reads almost better than it acted—which is saying a good deal. *Overruled*, a short farcical comedy in the vein of *How He Lied to Her Husband*, would, I should imagine, be a good deal more amusing on the stage than in the book; though it does not seem to me as effective (I don't mean merely theatrically effective) as the earlier play. *Pygmalion*, as one might expect, reads as well as *You Never Can Tell* or *The Doctor's Dilemma* or any of the best items in the Shavian bill. As well as the Sequel (which I am coming to in a moment) it has a short Preface, in the course of which its author remarks:—

I wish to boast that *Pygmalion* has been an extremely successful play all over Europe and North America as well as at home. It is so intensely and deliberately didactic, and its subject is esteemed so dry, that I delight in throwing it at the heads of the wiseacres who repeat the parrot cry that art should never be didactic. It goes to prove my contention that art should never be anything else.

Does it? . . . . It may prove that a Shaw play can be both "deliberately didactic" and intensely interesting and amusing at the same time; but Shaw knows better than to suppose that anybody and everybody can do the same trick. Anyhow, I don't mind admitting that I read the Sequel to *Pygmalion*—which is certainly not didactic, but just a further instalment of the "story"—with a lot less effort and a lot more enjoyment than the long Preface (to *Androcles*) on Christianity. I was really anxious to know whether Eliza married the Professor, and if not, whom she did marry—more anxious than I was to know what Shaw thought of Christ; which "goes to prove," perhaps, only that I have an unsophisticated mind.

Eliza did *not* marry Henry Higgins. We should not need telling this, Mr. Shaw says, "if our imaginations were not so enfeebled by their lazy dependence on the ready-mades and reach-me-downs of the rag-shop in which Romance keeps its stock of 'happy endings' to misfit all stories." None the less he appears to enjoy telling us all about what happened afterwards, and he goes into quite considerable detail about it. He also admits—later—that "our

instincts " are not appealed to by Eliza's decision not to marry Higgins ; and proceeds to give reasons for her decision (though he is careful to point out that so far as Eliza was concerned it was a matter of instinct). Eliza married Freddy— the young gentleman, you remember, who at Mrs. Higgins' At Home provoked the famous " Not bloody likely " by his innocent query whether Eliza was walking home. She and Freddy eventually set up in a flower shop " in the arcade of a railway station not very far from the Victoria and Albert Museum " ; but not before various complications " economic, not romantic " ---had ensued. Freddy had no money and no occupation. Higgins, as an adviser, was irritating, -if unconventional.

Pleas as to Freddy's character, and the moral obligation on him to earn his own living, were lost on Higgins. He denied that Freddy had any character, and declared that if he tried to do any useful work some competent person would have the trouble of undoing it ; a procedure involving a net loss to the community, and great unhappiness to Freddy himself, who was obviously intended by Nature for such light work as amusing Eliza, which, Higgins declared, was a much more useful and honourable occupation than working in the City.

However, the flower-shop, after the preliminary struggle to make ends meet, solved the whole problem satisfactorily. As for her relations to Higgins

Eliza has never got out of the habit of nagging him that was established on that fatal night when she won his bet for him. She snaps his head off on the faintest provocation, or on none. . . . He storms and bullies and derides ; but she stands up to him so ruthlessly that the Colonel has to ask her from time to time to be kinder to Higgins. . . . She is immensely interested in him. She has even secret mischievous moments in which she wishes she could get him alone, on a desert island, away from all ties and with nobody else in the world to consider, and just drag him off his pedestal and see him making love like any commonman. We all have private imaginations of that sort. But when it comes to business, to the life that she really leads as distinguished from the life of dreams and fancies, she likes Freddy and she likes the Colonel ; and she does not like Higgins and Mr. Doolittle. Galatea never does quite like Pygmalion : his relation to her is too godlike to be altogether agreeable.

Even at the risk of spoiling that peroration I must just quote what happened to Mr. Doolittle—that glorious dustman : —

He became extremely popular in the smartest society by a social talent which triumphed over every prejudice and every disadvantage. Rejected by the middle-class, which he loathed, he had shot up at once into the highest circles by his wit, his dustmanship (which he carried like a banner) and his Nietzschean transcendence of good and evil. At intimate ducal dinners he sat on the right hand of the Duchess ; and in country houses he smoked in the pantry and was made much of by the butler when he was not feeding in the dining-room and being consulted by cabinet ministers.

He deserved better company than cabinet ministers. One would like to have overheard his remarks on them to the butler.

\* \* \* \* \*

Miss Rebecca West's little book on Henry James is, after what seems a long time in the press, at last published (Nisbets' Writers of the Day Series, 1/- net). I bought it and read it promptly —not, I freely admit, because of its subject

but because of its author. Of its value as a critical appreciation of Henry James I am not qualified to speak, though it may be relevant to confess that it has made me want to read some of him—sometime. Of its interest as an expression of Rebecca West, I should say that it is just a trifle over-weighted by its subject; Henry James—*he was* a heavy-weight—seems by sheer bulk to have crushed out of his expositor some of that refreshing irreverence and independence of view which one looks for in her writing. Not altogether, of course; but certain parts of the book read almost like unconscious parodies of James' own highly-wrought, somewhat precious style. So much so, that when Miss West gives us (p. 84) a deliberate parody of that style, it does not— for lack of contrast—strike one as being as good as it really is. But there are a lot of good things in the book. And though to quote a string of isolated sentences may not be a particularly intelligent way of criticising— or avoiding criticising—a book, I am going to do it:—

He had a tremendous sense of the thing that is and none at all of the thing that has been, and thus he was always being misled by such lovely shells of the past as Hampton Court into the belief that the past which inhabited them was as lovely. The calm of Canterbury Close appeared to him as a remnant of a time when all England, bowed before the Church, was as calm; whereas the calm is really a modern condition brought about when the Church ceased to have anything to do with England.

That is sound criticism—and it applies to other people besides Henry James! Here, too, is a bit of sound literary criticism:—

The de Goncourts, Zola, and even de Maupassant thought that an artist ought to be able to litt any subject into art by his *treatment*, just as an advertising agent ought to be able to "float" any article into popularity by his posters. But human experience, which includes a realisation of the deadness of most of the de Goncourts' and Zola's productions, proves the contrary. Unless a subject is congenial to the character of the artist the subconscious self will not wake up and reward the busy conscious mind by distributions of its hoarded riches in the form of the right word, the magic phrase, the clarifying incident.

One thinks of Synge, in contrast, say, to Zola; and one agrees wholeheartedly.

There are several references to the Aesthetic-Yellow-Book movement of the early nineties:—

. . . The aesthetic movement which had been remotely engendered by Leigh Hunt's Cockney crow of joy at Italy, and afterwards fostered by Ruskin as one of his wild repartees to the railway train, and which was then being given the middle-class touch by Oscar Wilde. . . . The literary life was written about in those days almost as much as it was talked about, and it was continually being used by the young decadents as the occasion for predictions of their own later squalor in which morphia and dark ladies, moulded in the likeness of beautiful young Mrs. Patrick Campbell, played parts which in the subsequent realisation were taken by plain beer and plainer barmaids.

Miscellaneous:—

Herbert Spencer, who wrote as though he were the off-spring of two *Times* leaders.

There are certain Victorian works of art which, however much esteemed by the many, are no more matter for criticism than a pair of elastic-sided boots.

(It is scarcely necessary to mention that the majestic figure of Mrs Humphry Ward is here looming in the offing.)

It was peculiarly unfortunate that, while Mr. James' subjects grew flimsier and his settings more impressive, his style became more and more elaborate. With sentences vast as the granite blocks of the Pyramids and a scene that would have made a site for a capital he set about constructing a story the size of a hen-house.

Always it was good, rambling talk, although fissured now and then with an old man's lapses into tiresomeness, when he split hairs until there were no longer any hairs to split and his mental gesture became merely the making of agitated passes over a complete baldness.

Lest these last quotations leave the reader with the impression that Miss West is not an enthusiastic admirer of Henry James let me conclude with this :—

These, (the books of his middle period) are not as fools have pretended, merely rich treatments of the trivial. For although he could not grasp a complicated abstraction, was teased by the implications of a great cause, and angered by an idea that could be understood only by the synthesis of many references, he could dive down serenely, like a practised diver going under the sea for pearls, into the twilight depths of the heart to seize his secrets.

\* \* \* \* \*

A very useful (and interesting) little handbook has just been published in Messrs. Jack's People's Books—*Common Faults in Writing English*, by H. Alexander, M.A. (6d. net.) I recommend it to every Plebeian. The main body of the book consists of two chapters : the first on the Choice of Words, which includes sections dealing with words used wrongly, slang and commercialisms, incorrect variations of ordinary words, mixed metaphor, tautology, &c. &c.; the second on the Rules of Grammar. There is an introductory chapter on General Principles, and a concluding one entitled A Few Words on Style and the Arrangement of Ideas. From this last I take the following sensible remarks on " colloquialism " :—

Just as for the selection and acquisition of ideas the writer has been recommended to turn his attention to the life around him, so in the question of expression the same advice holds good. The spoken language is the living word. To it the writer must look for inspiration and guidance. It is not an infallible guide ; by following it the unwary are often led into error, but their very error is a sign of salvation. The danger of following the spoken language is, as we have seen, that through its influence the writer may occasionally become too colloquial. By totally ignoring the spoken language, on the other hand, the writer may develop a style which is utterly unlike anything which would be uttered in natural, every-day speech. This is by far the worst danger of the two.

Mr. Alexander has a good many things - all bad - to say about " journalese," and he ends his book by advising the writer, so far as he studies the average newspaper -

to turn his attention to the advertisement columns rather than the leading article. The former, by their very nature, have to be written so as to appeal, simply and directly, to great masses of people ; on this their very effectiveness depends. They are therefore very much more likely to present such ideas as are contained in them concisely and picturesquely, and to have more of the essentials of good writing



than an article written by a man, who is, as a rule, far too busy to think, for a public whose minds are already made up, and who only want to find support for their firmly established convictions.

Good advice—especially for propagandists.

\* \* \* \* \*

A month or two ago I mentioned Mr. Miles Malleon's play, *Youth*, published by Mr. Henderson, at the Bomb Shop, 66 Charing Cross Road. I have just been reading *Paddy Pools*—A Little Fairy Play by Mr. Malleon (same publisher, 7d. net.) It tells how a little child discovered that "the only way you can really have a thing is by loving it." The conclusion is delightful:—

TONY. That field—and the wood across and the little silver river and the blue hills beyond—that's all mine. . . . The whole world might belong to everyone like that . . . without any barbed wire or quarrelling. Wouldn't that be nice for everyone?

GRANDPA. Tony come here. (*Kissing him with a wise shake of his old head.*) What nonsense you're talking!

The "Little Old Man" who taught Tony his lesson knew, of course, that the grown-ups would think it "all nonsense." It is quite a charming little play, and much more than merely "pretty." But I should say that it would make some demand upon its stage-producer. It is all very well to direct that girls representing the Spirits of the Sunset should "invade the stage," and that "the scene should be a great paean of joy." It might so easily be a great fiasco.

\* \* \* \* \*

It will hardly be necessary to urge Plebeians to send in their names—and sixpences—to W. T. A. Foot (119, Harvist Road, West Kilburn, N.W.) for copies of Mr. Craik's *Outlines of the History of the Modern Working-Class Movement*. At last we have got one C.L.C. textbook. There will be room on all our bookshelves for more. The articles on which this book is based (they have been revised with a view to greater simplification) made the *Railway Review*, during the time they were appearing, a journal which no working-class student could afford to miss. They were well worth reprinting, and the London District Council of the N. U. R. deserves the best thanks of all keen Trade Unionists for undertaking the work of publication. It is a new and hopeful sign of T.U. activity. May this little book prove to be the first of a long series.

\* \* \* \* \*

From the *Maoriland Worker* I learn that Jack London has recently resigned from membership of the American Socialist Party, his reason being that the Party "does not stick closely enough to the class struggle." I don't know whether this means that the author of *The Iron Heel* is going to join the S.L.P.; or whether, as the *Milwaukee Leader* puts it, his idea of the class-struggle "is a free-for-all fight—the novel writers' view, who can think only in terms of heroes and heroines," and who finds in the actual problems confronting organized Labour "too little spirited action and too little sensation." The *Leader* goes on to remark that "the Socialist Party has not had much luck with its literary geniuses. They sit back in their cosy retreats, far from the madding crowd, and send us from time to time blazing and scorching

appeals for fiery action!" and it ends by observing, a little caustically, that "the appeals always make good advertising for the genius that writes them."

\* \* \* \* \*

I hope some day to be able to get hold of Edward Carpenter's autobiographical volume, *My Days and Dreams* (Allen and Unwin, 7.6 net.) Meantime, one has to be content with reviews of it; from one of which I take the following (quoted from the book itself) describing Carpenter's feelings about university life:—

These everlasting discussions of theories which never came anywhere near actual life, this cheap philosophizing and ornamental cleverness, this endless book-learning, and the queer cynicism and boredom underlying—all impressed me with a sense of utter emptiness.

In fact, as a lady of my acquaintance once remarked, what these people need is to "go out and do a day's washing."

J. F. H.

BOOK RECEIVED.

*The "Socialism" of New Zealand.* By R. H. Hutchinson. (New Review Publishing Association, New York.)

---

## PLEBS' LEAGUE ANNUAL MEET,

**SUNDAY AUGUST 6th, at 3 p.m.**

---

13, PENYWERN ROAD, EARLS' COURT,  
LONDON, S.W.

---

### AGENDA :

**Secretary's Report**  
**Financial Statement**  
**Election of Officials**  
**Other Business**

**All Members and Sympathisers are requested to notify  
the Secretary on or before August 3rd, if they  
intend being present at the "MEET."**

# The "Plebs" League

---

## Object

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

## Methods

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

## Membership

Open to all who endorse the object of the League.


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

## Management

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

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

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

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

P.O.'s to be forwarded to

**J. REYNOLDS, Secretary-Treasurer,**

43 Penywern Road, Earls Court,  
London, S.W.

# The "Plebs" League

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

---

## Executive and Officers of "Plebs" League :

### SECRETARY-TREASURER

J. REYNOLDS .

---

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MRS. W. HORRABIN, 127 Hamlet Gardens, Ravenscourt Park,  
London, W.  
J. F. HORRABIN, " " " " "  
O. KEIGHLEY, 25 Black Lion Lane, Hammersmith, London, W.  
B. S. MACKAY, 28, Oxford Gardens, Notting Hill, London, W.  
J. REYNOLDS, 13 Penywern Road, Earls Court, London, S.W.  
J. V. WILLS, 10 Layard Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.

---

### ORGANIZERS

NOAH ABLETT, 44 Glanville Street, Mardy, Glam.  
G. W. BROWN, 112 Bishop Road, Bishopston, Bristol  
FRED BURGESS, 47 Clonbrock Road, Stoke Newington, London, N.  
W. E. CRAWFORD, 33, Mutual Street, Doncaster  
EBBY EDWARDS, 3 Duke Street, Ashington, Northumberland  
W. T. A. FOOT, 119, Harvist Road, West Kilburn, London, N.W.  
T. P. KEATING, 80 Clarendon Road, Luton, Beds.  
J. LEACH, 15 Church Street, Bolton  
R. MELL, 54 Carlton Street, Hull  
F. B. SILVESTER, 8 Evelyn Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham  
CHARLES WATKINS, 3 Laverack Street, Richmond Road,  
Handsworth, Sheffield  
W. M. WATSON, 341 Broad Street, Cowdenbeath, Fife  
H. WYNN-CUTHBERT, "The Ferns," Pavilion Road, Worthing.