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EDITORIAL

IN our last two editorials we have been dealing with some of the main difficulties in the way of understanding the educational outlook of our movement. We have endeavoured to demonstrate the existence of a conflict of ideas, of theories, and that it corresponds to, and is begotten by the economic antagonism which is imminent

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of the
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in the prevailing method of production—production for exchange. The effects of this antagonism are first felt, and later understood. This feeling of oppression and suffering spreads throughout the producing class in the degree that the capitalist method of production seizes hold upon more and more of the spheres of production. As a consequence the spirit of revolt deepens and the sphere of working-class organization widens. As the system develops, the antagonisms come more and more to the surface. Unemployment, reduced wages, victimization, among other evils, are seen to be common to all industrial workers and not peculiar to one or two spheres or departments of production. The pedling panaceas put forward at the inspiration of the master class, or through the failure to grasp the real nature of the problems on the part of some in our own ranks, are found in practice to be quite unable to meet the situation. The invitations to the wage-earners to become thrifty, sober, and industrious, so that they may become capitalists before they are gathered to their fathers, invitations so sympathetically issued by the sweet singers in capitalist Israel of the type of Professor Alfred Marshall, are becoming less and less acceptable. Why?

Because it becomes more and more impossible for a worker to become a capitalist. When the numbers at the top are decreasing, then the phrase "There is plenty of room at the top" ceases to have any meaning unless it be for those that utter it, and then it has reference to the "top" of their heads. With the development then of these circumstances, there arises the need for a laying bare of the causes of the whole round of social evils, for a clear and positive knowledge of that weapon, the downcoming force of which is felt over a widening area, but the nature of which until now has not been widely nor clearly apprehended. Out of this development there arises a growing questioning of the current ideas, the theories which justify the present order of society. There then comes to the fore as a counteracting force "The Higher Education for Workpeople," which looked at superficially, appears to be a labour of love arising out of a love for labour. But among the promoters of this subtle move a more "business-like" language is talked. We have before us a copy of that most respectable organ *The Speaker*, dated February 24th, 1906, containing an unsigned article on Ruskin College, entitled "A College for Workmen." The writer describes it "as the first successful attempt yet made to provide the working classes with at least the groundwork of University culture." But we want to specially refer to the writer's reason for the need of this "University culture." And we request our readers to note how it harmonizes so beautifully with the reasons given in the Oxford and Working-class Education Joint Committee's Report, and which we quoted in our May editorial. It is the "growth of this new force" that is the cause for anxiety.

Doubtless those Universities are busily considering how best to permeate this new force. But they move slowly; and in the meantime the Labour Party is likely to grow in stature. Will it grow also in wisdom and knowledge? How and where will its younger recruits obtain their education?

Needless to say *The Speaker* is not a paper that is read by working men. The "stature" and "wisdom" so much desired is measured by a standard that those among whom *The Speaker* circulates understand, and know well how to conceal, when they enter into the process of permeating the dear "workpeople." This article, so overlaid with anxiety, was written a little more than five years ago. Since then this "University culturing" has developed considerably. It has developed to the extent of finally awakening a consciousness in the ranks of the working class of the antagonism existing in the field of education, a consciousness which takes on concrete expression in the Central Labour College. With the coming into being of this new and epoch-marking movement, there is manifested the growing recognition that the mere sentiment of indignation against the present economic situation is not sufficient for the striking off the chains, but that we must have recourse to the armoury of knowledge.

WE have already, and at some length, in our previous editorials discussed the question which often arises, as to there being or not being two kinds of knowledge. We have shown at least that so far

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as the Social Sciences are concerned, different and conflicting conclusions are arrived at. Take for example, in economics, the case of wages. On the one hand it is claimed that wages are consistent with an equivalent to the labour performed, while on the other hand the conclusion is reached, that wages represent and can only represent a part, and that the smaller part, of the labourer's toil. Both cannot be true. Whichever is true, the consequences are vital. In order to arrive at true understanding, the working class are invited to turn to "University culture." If that authority is satisfied, then you are duly certified, as twelve Ruskin students were certified the other week, to have arrived at economic truth. We on the other hand hold, that to arrive at a true understanding of Social conditions, the only criterion of truth is the practice from which theories take their departure, that the truth of a theory is not dependent for verification upon the authority of Aristotle, or Alfred Marshall, or even Karl Marx, but upon its correspondence with the actual conditions to which it refers. But this is a truth for which the ruling classes are not ready, and which their particular interests prevent them from recognizing. A class that exists upon authority cannot be expected to promote a view that puts their authority out of court, while on the other hand, the working class who suffer through this authority, and whose suffering can only cease with the elimination of all authority, are best situated to appreciate and to apply the real and only standard of truth. What is Truth? What is the nature of Knowledge? How does the mind arrive at understanding? These are only different ways of stating the same question. And the answer to it is so important, so revolutionizing in its effects, that we feel justified in devoting to a consideration of the matter a series of articles, the first of which appears in the present issue of the magazine. It is the merit of Joseph Dietzgen, the philosopher of the proletariat, to have solved the problem of understanding, and to have as a result stripped the human faculty of thought of its fantastic garb. The works of Dietzgen have a very important bearing upon our educational movement, and if these articles succeed in stimulating the desire to a closer acquaintance with this deeply critical intellect, their publication at this time will have been justified.

W. W. C.

The civilization and justice of bourgeois order comes out in its lurid light whenever the slaves and drudges of that order rise against their masters. Then this civilization and justice stands forth as undisguised savagery and lawless revenge.—*Marx*.

Geoffrey Chaucer

FOREWORD.—The following is one of some articles Mr. Hacking has been good enough to write for the Magazine at our request. Mr. Hacking, as is known, is in charge of the Correspondence Dept. of the Central Labour College, and Literature is one of the subjects of which he is examiner for that Dept.—ED.]

IT is my purpose in this article to give some account of a poet who preceded the age of Shakespeare, and thereby point to what is apt to be overlooked, the existence of an important literature in England before the days of the Renaissance, in the end of the fifteenth century. It is not that this poet is our only worthy writer previously to that period, but he is the one in whose works we see our language becoming, in very important respects, that of our own times. Geoffrey Chaucer is, in fine, the Father of our modern English, and is thus, though to a necessarily lesser degree, like his greater successor, the representative of a literary epoch.

In treating of the life of Chaucer, it may be well if we glance shortly at the history of the troublous, yet significant period in which the poet lived. The great revival—*political*, as seen in the signing of Magna Carta and in the branding and establishment of the House of Commons; *intellectual*, as seen in the brilliant discoveries of Roger Bacon, and in the learning coming from the East owing to the crusades; *social and industrial*, owing to the opening out of trade with the East by the same cause, and the rise in importance of the towns and guilds—which characterised the fifteenth century—had left its mark; while its best year, 1300, adopted by some writers as the opening year of the "re-birth," was, in fact, pregnant with ecclesiastical degradation and decay. A Jubilee was then celebrated at Rome whose glories pointed to the triumph of the Church, and the Pope, Boniface VIII., who had proudly borne himself in the procession, preceded by a herald, who cried, "Peter, behold thy successor! Christ, behold thy vicar upon earth!" was destined, in a struggle with France—whose king could hardly be then styled the "eldest son of the Church"—to die, dishonoured and despised, with curses upon his lips, and unfortified by the sacraments of that religious body of which he was the earthly chief. After the disposal of his successor, according to the rough-and-ready methods of the day, the vicar of Christ became the vassal of the French monarch.

Knighthood and feudalism were about to pass away. To quote one writer, "Learning, wealth, knowledge, arts and sciences, were henceforth to have as much weight in the Commonwealth as the hoisted pennon and strong-armed followers of the steel-clad warrior."

The old order changeth, giving place to new,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world,

The heavy armour of the knight had hitherto wrought marvels in his protection. Against an unarmed, untrained mob, a few mail-clad warriors were invincible, though they may have had also the moral shown nowadays by the authority of the police constable when backed by the forces of the State; they having behind them those of the feudal lord or monarch. And this had proved to be the case up to the opening of the fourteenth century. In the second year thereof, there was shadowed forth, in the entire overthrow of knight and gentleman, by the citizens of a Flemish manufacturing town, an approaching end to the security hitherto afforded by suits of steel; while the Order of the Knights Templars was early wiped out in blood and rain. "Cannon were first used," says White, in his *Eighteen Christian Centuries*, at the siege of Algeciras, in 1343, and with the first discharge knighthood fell for ever from the saddle," while the successes of the English bowmen at Crécy and Poitiers, at which battles indeed it has been conjectured cannon were also seen, need not be dwelt upon further.

The Church had at first extended its protection to the poor and lowly, and had been listened to and obeyed in all dutiful reverence, but the rise of the towns caused a change. This was owing to the necessities of the nobles who granted these municipalities privileges in return for money to waste in crusade or debauchery, aided by the thousand and one circumstances and tendencies of the times, the awakening of mercantile enterprise, progress of the arts, and the deterioration of morals of priest and baron. "The Bible was first translated into a national tongue by Wycliffe, in 1383, and Popery fell for ever from its unopposed dominion."

The Church fell, as did the baronage, owing to the utter corruption of its morality. The priests of God, as said Aquinas—who lived in the 13th century—were wooden, while their coffers teemed with gold wrung from the blood and tears of the down-trodden. In concluding this phase of my subject, I may refer to the Great Plague of 1348, followed by the later visitations of 1361 and 1369, and the Peasant's Revolt of 1381, which last marked, most significantly, the real beginning of the conflict between Capital and Labour in England.

It was then, at this era, that we find, in Europe, Italy, and England, four such conspicuous literary men as Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and last, but not least, our own countryman, Chaucer. The first-mentioned three indeed did for their country, its language and literature, what the Englishman did for his tongue.

Geoffrey Chaucer was born in London, as conjectured, about the year 1340. His name has been derived from the French form of the Latin *Calcarius*, a bookmaker, and some of the family, including his father, lived in Cordwainer's (Bootmaker's) Street, being of that trade, though the last-mentioned had become a vintner, and his wife, Chaucer's mother, was the niece of Hamo de Compton, a Frenchman,

hence our poet was of Frankish blood, and this may have helped to a preference shown by him for French models and ideals, as seen in his earlier work.

Oxford and Cambridge have both claimed him as a student, and, later on, he became a member of the Inner Temple, and was fined for excess—shall we say of reforming zeal?—in beating a Franciscan Friar in Fleet Street! It is the character of genius to be sanguine and eminently responsive to environment, good or bad, and of this Shakespeare was also an example, so we can easily conceive the hot-headed youth, helped perhaps by some good home-brewed, belabouring the ecclesiastic!

Chaucer went abroad, at the age of nineteen, with Edward III's army, on its invasion of France in 1359, and it was during this campaign that he was made prisoner by the French at Retters near Rheims, but, being ransomed, the king contributing thereto £16, a much more considerable sum than its modern-day equivalent, he returned to England and seems to have become sickened of the military profession. He was, however, fortunate enough later to gain the royal regard, and to become "our beloved valet" to that monarch, receiving an annuity of what would be now equal to £200.

In June, 1370, Chaucer went abroad in the service of the King and on the 12th November, 1372, being then King's esquire, he was one of a commission with two Genoese citizens to treat with the Duke and Duchess of Genoa with regard to a Genoese settlement in England.

On this his first journey to Italy, he was unacquainted with much Italian, but he had proved himself a good diplomatist on previous continental visits, and was well versed in French and Latin, the latter of which was then the chief international language. Chaucer's pleasant little meeting and intercourse with Petrarch are said to have taken place at this time, but are possibly fabulous. This journey, however, bore some fruit as will appear later, in the influence which his Italian surroundings produced upon his works.

In 1374, Chaucer appears to have married; his wife being Philippa, who has been a maid of honour in Queen Philippa's household. This marriage, began happily enough, resulted in much infelicity, and it is for this reason probably, perchance a union of the eagle with the sparrow,—so often seen in cases of the wedlock of geniuses,—that his love-strains become more and more ironical. His patron was John of Gaunt with whom he became allied by this union. Within the next few years, Chaucer received various offices which brought him in considerable revenues. He became associated also with others in negotiations of a treaty with regard to the marriage of the Prince of Wales, who, afterwards became Richard II.

In 1379, Chaucer paid a second visit to Italy upon State business; his fortune seems—after the accession of Richard II—to have

declined, though he still retained many of his lucrative employments, he having become implicated with a political party in a dispute between the Court and the City of London, in 1384, the year of Wycliffe's death. The party in question was headed by John of Northampton, a wealthy merchant who had been mayor and was an ardent Wycliffite and partisan of John of Gaunt. Chaucer was compelled to flee out of England, and finally settled in Zealand, reappearing, however, as M.P. for the county of Kent in 1386. He, later, was deprived of the office of Comptroller, and confined in the Tower of London and there he began to write his *Testament of Love*, an allegorical prose composition wherein he lamented his lot. He was afterwards released from prison in consequence of a confession made, honourably or otherwise, as to the doings of the party mentioned. He was, still later, compelled to surrender some of his pecuniary grants, and finally retired to Woodstock, and in that seclusion, composed, probably, his *Canterbury Tales*, producing, Milton-like, his best and crowning work in the evening of life.

In 1389, upon the return of John of Gaunt from a long sojourn in Spain, Chaucer's fortunes began to revive, and he obtained some pecuniary appointments, having a hand, among other work, in the roofing of Westminster Hall. After varying fortunes his last days were cheered by considerably improved circumstances. Henry IV. who was the son of Chaucer's patron, John of Gaunt, upon his accession in 1399, augmented his revenue. The poet, however, did not live long to enjoy this change of fortune, but died in London on the 25th October, 1400, being then about sixty years of age. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Of Chaucer's character much has been said in praise unstinted, as if he were a saint! much, as if he were—the opposite! He was probably enough "a man of the world," in the broad sense of the words, possessed of the virtues and the vices of his age. He thus carried out the "Preacher's" injunction to be neither over-righteous nor over-wicked, and hence fulfilled a reasonably honoured destiny.

It is significant that he played no decisive part in the broils of his times, and he shows no sympathy with the people in their struggle after better things. He, like great Shakespeare, in later years, stood aloof and surveyed the conflict, the hurly-burly of life, its turmoil and confusion, with a bland sympathy, a smiling cynicism, or a weary indifference. His best attitude towards his countrymen and their upspringing thought was that of an Erasmus, a Sir Thomas More,—not of a Luther or of a Latimer. We cannot have, or indeed ought we to desire, all men to be ardent reformers and head-splitting patriots, we need the calmer element in society, and of such this man was an example.

I hope, next month, to enter into a discussion of his chief works, and of the *literary* significance of their environment.

Gleanings and Gleams

HER face was haggard and drawn. Rings under her eyes and a pallor upon her cheeks bespoke of long hours in an unsuitable atmosphere. It was not an atmosphere weighted by the fragrance of exotics, or the heated breath of a ballroom or fashionable gathering that was the cause. No. She was returning to the wool-combing shed after the mid-day meal; probably to make up the scanty earnings of her husband who, a week before, had asked the Woolcombing Combine to give him a rise, but had found the serried forces of Capitalism too strong as yet for his organization. She passed out of sight round the street corner.

Click, click, resounded across the Green as the bowls ran against each other. The sun was shining brilliantly, and enjoying its friendly warmth were several groups of people seated in various attitudes upon the benches at the side of the Green.

Behind was to be heard the whirr of the lawn mower, directed by the hands of a healthy specimen of manhood. The gentle hum of conversation is occasionally broken by a cry of "Feet!" which tells the unwary one that he is in the line of the running bowl.

The scene calls to mind "The Harbour of Refuge." Here are old men playing bowls in the eventide of life. Others less active, bodies and minds alike ravaged by industrial stress, look on. Children play here and there, and one little Miss more inquisitive than the others, steps on the Green to pick up a bowl, but mother's voice checks her and the serenity of the bowlers is undisturbed. The birds are chirping in the grove of trees ahead, and the hillside looks peaceful in the afternoon sun. An occasional roar of a train, a trail of smoke from a distant chimney tell of the world from which many of the watchers, readers, bowlers, have sought a respite in the pleasant surroundings of the City Park.

With the sun's genial rays and a soft balmy air to assist a fascinating novel of Alexandra Dumas, I was soon transported with a facility that rivalled Aladdin's Lamp to seventeenth century France.

A most marvellous magician, whose wand is the pen which conjures these brilliant scenes from oblivion, making them appear in all their colour and beauty. You pour the contents of fiction's philtre down our willing throats and we dream anew sweet dreams of the Imaginative. We lie unmeshed in Fancy's web.

Heigho, sirrah! What say you of Athos, Porthos, Aramis, and the incomparable d'Artagnan scheming, fighting, intriguing? Hear the ring of their weapons, see the flash of their swords, ever in the service of the wronged queen and oppressed lover, dainty lady and

would-be king! See the men with whom they measured wit and weapon, His Red Eminence, Richelieu, Puritanical Cromwell, and the cunning Mazarin! They rode desperately, drank deeply, fought "one for all and all for one," and crossed the seas like Perseus and Jason in fables old. They conceived the impossible and carried out the improbable. Yet we would not have them otherwise.

A truce to these wanderings! There's work to be done before yon brilliant orb throws his rays a-slant the moorside. Even a glance at the moor is sufficient to send us riding the heather with Red Ratcliffe or Rycroft of Withens. Begone! ye visions of the mystic Past. The capitalistic Present and Socialistic Future call us!

We have in our august fingers *Reason and Belief*, from the pen of Sir O. Lodge. We have read the book, but at the present juncture feel a little disappointed with it. It may be said that we felt a little bored reading it; probably because we read under adverse circumstances. The book states, a little too rhetorical at times, the relations of Evolution and the Old Testament, and is largely expository of the author's already recognized position in the scientific world and the sphere of psychical research.

We prefer Dumas. Perhaps it would be better to drop this editorial and royal plurality and say egotistically, "I like Dumas," because it is known the editorial staff swear by Marx, so to like Dumas may be heresy. One never knows. We shall see at the Meet. I shall certainly move that Marx be excluded and Dumas inserted, and say, Lytton's "Rienzi" and others as collateral readings. That ought to be grandiloquent enough for any democratic Demosthenes.

However, there is a book here which every member ought to read. I heard it said that a gentleman of no mean reputation described it as "diabolical." Well, I thought a book which called forth such a criticism deserved to be read: hence the following remarks—

A new book is always welcome. Miss McMillan has given us "The Child and the State" as her contribution to the Socialist Library series, published by the I.L.P. One feels indebted to Miss McMillan, for only she could give us the knowledge acquired by a life's work in the educational sphere, the particular branch with which she is associated. Even she has a fear the people to whom the book is addressed will fail to read it. So she says in the summary.

The opening sentence is as follows: "On the question of Education Socialists have not as yet declared themselves." This is a fact painfully obvious. Educational Institutions are class superstructures, and if the Socialist spirit dominated, it would mean that the basis of Society had been changed. As it is however, the Socialists *have*

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their ideas on Education. The active propaganda is of their social position. The permanent educational institutions, the working-class superstructures, will follow in due

McMillan deals interestingly with the early ideas of Education of the School Board, and the gradual changing with regard to educational methods

"Workers' Child at Fourteen" should be read closely. It is in the nature of a rock which helps to divide the stream, upon which our educational idea-banks may split. The book goes on to give us some very interesting information of the schools, and in touching upon Evolution the Central Labour College, Oxford, is introduced as the Central College.

It becomes the *pièce de résistance*. Most of us could probably read nearly all the book as suggested up to this point, some of us agree with the writer onward; but, be that as it may, I think the majority of the readers will find themselves intensely interested in the latter portion of the book. The former portion deals with the child, the latter deals with the adult who has lost his moorings and is struggling in the chaotic swirl of the industrial maelstrom. A lot of information here given is repeated from "Oxford and Working-Class Education, 1909," if not actually repeated is paralleled. It is mainly to Endowments. Notice Lord Curzon's insight when he says that poverty is a relative term. A very distant relation too, to add, to some. It is pointed out that several educational experiments have failed, so far as the workers are concerned, by the middle-class. Then the W. E. A. policy is advanced. It is too well-known to need comment. It will be read with avidity that "Oxford within is a very democratic probably Greek democracy, patrician, plebeian and slave. Democracy of yesterday is not the Democracy of to-day.

We can give thanks, for it is now known from Dan to Beersheba that the caste system rules in the English educational world, and as often happens, it is not discussed, or whether it is freely admitted." Selah. Marx told us that the mode of production is the basis of all social superstructures. Yet the majority think that Science and Education are polarized expressions. "Wait and see the space is limited, but one cannot pass without noting the report of the Royal Commission on University Education. Why not Endowments? Again it would be helpful to quote pages 162

Thanks to Miss McMillan for again showing the line of the argument; although when she says the Central Labour College's "is not education—primarily, at least—but propaganda," she lays the grounds for misunderstandings which may arise from ideas of propaganda. She states with apparent confidence that the report of Ruskin College was not marked by aloofness from

the University. That has been said before—and denied. We *do* hope the workers will read this book. It is interesting when educational matters are discussed by a writer with Miss McMillan's qualifications and experience. Her work in the North, particularly Bradford, has been appreciated. Where the book offers points for discussion, no doubt further investigations will be prompted which will give rise to controversy. The Educational Question is vital, and much water will flow under the bridge upon which the working class is at present standing before it realizes that Independence in Working Class Education is practicable, desirable, and apparently inevitable. We commend the book. Meanwhile Dumas must go back upon the bookshelves and give way to "the younger generation which is knocking at the door," as Ibsen has it in the "Master Builder," because "The Future of our Educational Institutions," by Nietzsche, beckons, and so for a little while retirement to the hermit's cell is imperative, from which, however, one hopes to emerge in order to travel to the Plebeian Mecca in August. This good resolution is deferred. The tinkle of the teacups, the silver laughter and feminine rustle lure us. Shade of Omar!

MEREDITH F. TITTERINGTON.

The Law of Social Progress

THE effort to discover universal principles in the multiplicity of phenomena is a fundamental characteristic of the human mind; the success which has attended such effort is the distinguishing feature of modern science. There are six great discoveries of modern thought, whose combined effect has completely revolutionized man's conception of the Universe and of his relation thereto. These are:—

- 1—The Law of Gravity. (*Newton*).
- 2—The Nebular Hypothesis. (*Kant*).
- 3—The Indestructibility of Matter. (*Lavoisier*).
- 4—The Conservation of Energy. (*Mayer*).
- 5—The Theory of Natural Selection. (*Darwin*).
- 6—The Materialistic Conception of History. (*Marx*).

The first four of these theories are necessary to a proper conception of physical phenomena; the fifth gives the principle of development of the organic world; the sixth—which forms the basis of this essay—embraces the Law of Social Progress and of general historical development.

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aid of Joseph Dietzgen's Theory of the Human Under- all these theories may be fused and blended into one grand concept, so that all the diverse phenomena of the Universe are grouped under one general heading.

In place of the old theological and metaphysical conceptions of the Universe made up of a number of separate and immutable elements stands the newer, more logical conception of the Universe as a grand process whose inter-related and inter-connected parts are continually going through a never-ending series of transformations and evolutions. From out of the primal nebular was evolved the solar system which, in process of time, produced on at least one planet of the Earth—life and organic forms in innumerable varieties. After a long conflict in the struggle for existence, one species of animals overcame all competitors, assumed human shape, and in this way began the gradual utilization and control of natural forces for further advancement. The means adopted to achieve this progress so far made, and the possible lines of advance for the future, it will now be our purpose to investigate.

Distinction between Animal and Human Societies. Beginning at the boundary line which divides animal from human societies, the first question arises as to what raises man above it. In bodily strength, intelligence, and morality, there is no *essential* distinction between man and the animals immediately below him. The distinction is to be looked for elsewhere. The essential factor distinguishing man from animal societies is found in the production of tools. When our pre-human ancestor left his arboreal abode, assumed the upright posture, and with his liberated front paws began to shape and use sticks and stones and other objects of nature to serve him as weapons in the struggle for existence, he took the initial step toward that distinctly human career whose course has been subject to many vicissitudes.

As he developed with his inventive faculty, man was no longer the subject of circumstance; he could now, within reasonable limits, write his own social history. No longer was he to be absolutely dependent on his own physical organs: these he could now supplement by his own inventions. Not only was he able to add strength to his own organs, he could also give himself new ones, and each results formerly unattainable. Besides, the tool had a special advantage that it could be adapted for a single, definite purpose; when this accomplished, it could be put on one side while other tools were brought into use for quite other purposes. While the strength of man's limbs are limited, there need be no limit set to the strength of his tools.

Materialistic Conception of History. The recognition of the influence of the tools men use, and the methods their use necessitates in

procuring the material livelihood, are the prime factors in determining man's social and intellectual development—constitutes the Materialistic Conception of History.

This theory was first scientifically advanced by Marx and Engels, and forms the keynote of the *Communist Manifesto*, written by them in 1848—eleven years earlier than the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*.

Marx has explained his theory as follows :—

In making their livelihood together, men enter into certain necessary involuntary relations with each other.

These industrial relations arise out of their respective conditions and occupations, and correspond to whatever stage society has reached in the development of its material productive forces.

Different stages of industry produce different relations.

The totality of these industrial relations constitutes the economic structure and basis of society.

Upon this basis the legal and political superstructure is built.

There are certain forms of social consciousness or so-called public opinion which correspond to this basis.

The methods employed for producing the material livelihood determine the social, political and intellectual life of men in general.

It is not primarily men's consciousness which determines their mode of life ; on the contrary, it is their social life which determines their consciousness.

Enough has been quoted to enable anyone unfamiliar with the theory to get a grasp of its main essentials, and it will now be possible to apply it to the interpretation of general historical development.

Pre-historic Society. At the time when the theory of Historical Materialism was first formulated, very little was known—and less was understood—of man's pre-historic past. With the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* however, a great impetus was given to the investigation of the customs and institutions of the lower races whose surviving forms offered good material for getting an insight of pre-historic conditions.

One of the most fundamental books dealing with this subject, was that of Lewis H. Morgan's called *Ancient Society*, and which was published in 1877. Students of social history cannot afford to neglect the study of this work. In order to give consistency and completeness to our survey of historical development, we give below a summary of Morgan's classification of social developments before the historic period.

Accepting the materialistic basis of social progress, Morgan divides the two main epochs of Savagery and Barbarism into six distinct periods—three of each. Each of these periods is covered by some outstanding invention or discovery which fundamentally affected man's material existence.

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Lower Stage of Savagery. Starting with primitive man, the lower stage of the race, or the lower stage of savagery, was spent in tropical and subtropical regions where food was plentiful, and existence fairly easy, requiring on man's part no great skill or industry.

Due to an increase of population and other causes, would, after an immense period, make it necessary for man to surmount the geographical barriers which confined him to these more favourable conditions, and migrate to other regions. This was made possible by the discovery of fire, and the use to make and utilize fire. By this great discovery man became independent of climate and locality.

Following the rivers and water-courses, and using fish as food, early man began those wanderings which eventually led the race to all parts of the earth. The differences in climate, locality, and general conditions, were sufficient to give rise to the differences in colour, language, customs, and institutions, which afterwards distinguished the various races.

Middle Stage of Savagery. The middle stage of savagery extends from the time when fire was discovered, to the invention of the bow and arrow. This discovery directed man's activities into hunting pursuits. The hunting of the wild deer and other animals—game man, where others were scarce—opened up a vastly increased food supply, and provided greater variations of diet than had hitherto been possible.

Higher Stage of Savagery. The third stage of social progress—the higher stage of savagery—extends from the invention of the bow and arrow to the discovery of the art of making pottery. While contributing directly to increased production, this invention prepares a more or less settled village life, and a considerable advance in material culture; it is a convenient means of marking off the transition stage from savagery to barbarism.

Lower Stage of Barbarism. The lower stage of barbarism is marked in the Eastern Hemisphere by the taming and rearing of the dog, and in the Western Hemisphere by the irrigation of the land and the cultivation of maize.

In America, previous to the discovery of the llama, there was only one tameable animal—the Llama—suitable for domestication; this accounts for the backward state of its social development up to that period.

Middle Stage of Barbarism. The middle stage of barbarism is marked by the discovery of the art of smelting iron-ore, making possible the production of iron tools.

Higher Stage of Barbarism. The higher stage of barbarism is marked with the production of iron and merges into civilization with the invention of the phonetic alphabet and its use in keeping written records. Then begins the historic period proper. The production of iron represents one of man's greatest achievements. It gave him

the iron axe which made possible the clearing of forests; the iron plough-share, making possible agriculture on a large scale; and the iron sword, providing man with a more formidable weapon in war. Iron gave rise to the heroic period so graphically symbolized in the Homeric epics.

Rise of Civilization. With the domestication of animals, the discovery of the art of agriculture, and the manufacture of iron, all the principal elements needed for the development of civilization were at hand; they only needed to be further developed and extended. But, to carry forward these further developments was an arduous and difficult process, requiring far more continuous and plodding effort than the untrained barbarian was prepared to voluntarily undertake. To get over the difficulty coercion was necessary, and coercion, the most ruthless, was employed.

The earliest victims of this coercion were the women, and the prisoners taken in battle. Instead of slaying the captured victims of war, they were now kept alive and enslaved. Once the utility of slave-labour was realized, its extension followed as a matter of course, and wars for the possession of slaves were now freely undertaken. Thus was slavery, as a social institution established, and society, hitherto resting on the communal basis of kinship, now became divided into two antagonistic classes: masters and slaves, oppressors and oppressed, exploiters and exploited.

This great social cleavage destroying the former tribal solidarity became reflected in man's moral and religious ideas. "The ruling ideas of any given age have ever been only the ideas of its ruling class." Under the former tribal system, rights and duties were indistinguishable: now the distinction was made only too plain, for one class had all the rights and the other class had all the duties.

The Era of Class-Struggles. This break-up of the old communal system, and the division of society into classes, introduced a new factor to all further social development. Henceforward, all progress must come by way of class-struggle: contests between rulers and ruled. Any new development bringing forward a new economic form and a new economic class controlling it, could only proceed in opposition to the hitherto prevailing mode and the dominant class in control of it. Class-antagonisms being the basic factor of all civilizations, the history of civilization simply represents a series of class-struggles. This class-struggle theory of development is of fundamental importance to one seeking to understand the history of our own times. The establishment of slavery, and the rise of a privileged class, made possible those higher developments usually associated with civilization. Freed from the drudgery of production, and with every material want satisfied, members of the leisured class now began to interest themselves in the development of the arts, sciences, philosophies, &c. The fact that society has hitherto been

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dependent on its privileged class for its theoretical knowledge, seen an unmixed blessing. It is largely responsible for that divorce of theory from practice, which has been a great hinderance to the development of rational thought. It will be much greater and more orderly when the thinkers are workers, and the workers, thinkers. Then theories will be the outcome of practice, and practice the conscious means for testing theories.

Civilizations of antiquity were all founded on slavery, and the grandeur which made them famous were monopolized by the expense of the exploited masses. The lot of the many was most cases far worse than anything that prevailed under barbarism or savagery. That is, to a large extent, true even to this day.

The cruelty and coercive drudgery involved in the development of civilization, can only be justified on the principle that "the end justifies the means"—a principle, by the way, which has ruled throughout the whole of human history.

In the Roman Empire, slavery was extended until it reached the remotest portions. Millions of slaves were driven daily into fields and mines and compelled to engage in arduous drudgery to produce wealth which made the Roman lords so famous, and was ultimately the cause of their undoing.

There are limits, however, to what even slaves will stand, and even on an extensive scale occasionally took place. We are told by the author of *Ancient Lowly* that at least five of these great strikes took place under the Romans. These were suppressed with the utmost cruelty; multitudes of the rebellious slaves being crucified along Roman highways as a warning to others.

C. WATKINS.

To be continued.

The Idlers

SOLE within the market place he stands,
Jostled and pushed aside by hurrying throng;
With brooding brow, and clenching, nerveless hands,
A soul enshrouded in its sense of wrong.
A prey for busy people high and low;
The chink of gold always beyond his reach,
While hunger gnaws, and chill winds pierce and blow,
The human agony that has no speech;
The tragedy that mocks our social plan,
Robbed of his birthright, work,—due every man.

Beside the hearth another crouches down
 With sinking heart and dulling sense of pain,
 With patient helplessness that meets the frown
 Of busy, hustling lives that rule and reign.
 A spirit that could soar to eyried height,
 A vision that could range horizons bold,
 An ear for song stars tuned to sensuous night,
 Yet in a century gauging men by gold,
 Fettered to earth, galled by a crushing bond,
 Useless and blinded, hoping naught beyond.

A parasite that saps and sucks, that clings
 To others' bounty, caring but to feed
 Whether others sow and plant, a hand that wrings
 As if by right, what others hoard by greed.
 A waif without a country, home or friend,
 A life devoid of purpose, seeing naught
 But each day's food, and fire, and death to end
 The little rounding of his narrowing thought ;
 Sinking below dumb brutes that drag and plod ;
 A blot upon the Universe of God.

With narrowed brow, and cringing, sneaking mien,
 Or loud bravado and half-muttered curse,
 And drunken swagger, is another seen,
 Who stalls existence with his horse,—and worse,
 Feeds on his husks yet boasts his titled line,
 Whose name once rang with martial deed or joust,—
 A nothing, fit for herding with the swine,
 Without a tithe of manhood, but its dust,
 Worthless and foul in thought, and speech, and ear,
 Whose very breathing taints God's atmosphere.

Mistaken souls, who work life's sovereign rule
 Of love,—demand its law, each circling sun,
 All things in time and space are yours,—the tool
 Within your grasp, or pressing on each one ;
 The earth is yours, the seed, the germ, the soil,
 The dawn, the song, the rain, the seasons' call,
 God given honour to all honest toil,
 And manhood's crown of living, best of all.
 We make all wrong. God's plan is just and true,
 To make man Christlike means so much to do.
 Why stand ye idle, labourers are so few ?

EMMA PLAYTER SEABURY.

THE "PLEBS"

The Hegelian Theory of Understanding

What is Truth?—PILATE

comes into existence without having made any pre-arrangements. Pre-arrangement pre-supposes pre-existence. Man comes into existence without any recollection of having existed. Indeed, we are here sometime before we are conscious of being here. There are, we know, those who do not stop at "here and now" after the fashion of the clowns at the annual pantomime who say "we are *again*." The clown of the pantomime has the experience for his "*again*," but the same cannot be said of the "here and now" of metaphysical clownishness.

Man comes into existence without having been consulted as to what he would like to be born, and of whom he would like to be born, whether he would like to be born in capitalist Europe, feudal Mexico, or feudal China. He finds himself placed in a given situation independent of his volition. Into this environment he is born with no knowledge, without any consciousness. Neither does knowledge sprout all at once. Man is born with the germ of understanding, with the possibility of cognition. In that germ of consciousness is innate in man, and that is no less true than that water is liquid, or that circles are round. Man comes into the world with some hidden cavern in his mind, in which are stowed certain intellectual gems, which he discovers from the primitive way in which man uses his understanding.

Just as the lungs perform the function of breathing, so the brain performs the function of thinking. Man breathes because he must, and man thinks, not because he wants to, but because he must. One may, however, stop breathing for a while and retard or accelerate the thinking function. One may know what he shall think of, but he can soon arrive at the point that his freedom of the mind in thinking is no greater than the freedom of the lungs in breathing. These are nature-assigned boundaries. One may breathe, however, without knowing the nature of breathing, without any knowledge of the function of the lungs. Such an understanding, however, is of no use, and while it may fail to put weak lungs to right, it may in many cases lead to bodily strength and vigour through the application of this knowledge. In the same way one may have a faculty of understanding without any knowledge of its use, but never having heard of logic. The science of understanding is no less of fundamental importance as the laying

bare the workings of the mind clarifies those workings and warns us against straying from the field of inductive science on to the arid heath of speculative thought.

But why do we speak of a proletarian science of understanding? We will leave that matter to come up for discussion at the end. At that stage, if our analysis has been made correctly and completely, and has been followed clearly, the adjective will require little explanation. It will be seen that the proletarian logic differs, and in what it differs, from the conventional way of thinking.

The understanding, for which mind, reason, faculty of thought, consciousness are but equivalent terms, is a *democratic* instrument, not in that everybody uses it democratically but *in that everybody is possessed of the instrument*. It is not like the tools of production, monopolized by an aristocratic group, although the latter have ever sought to maintain that economic monopoly by aristocratizing the mental process. The dagger, the stake, and the poison bowl, and in more modern times the black list and the boycott, have been employed against those who departed from the ways of ruling-class thinking. *Aristocratic thinking is derived from an aristocratic condition of being*. Aristocratic thinking—a perverted way of thinking and turning the world upside down—derives aristocratic existence out of aristocratic thinking,—the material out of the ideal. No man ever became a capitalist by thinking that he was one. Nor do the capitalists depend upon the virtue and potency of their ideology when their material—base—capital is threatened. The soldier's bayonet and the policeman's club, if somewhat pointed and powerful, are rather peculiar ideals! This perverted way of thinking carries with it its own nemesis, as the practice of the privileged and plutocratic few plainly shows. The fantastic way of ruling-class thinking is so much a product of a definite material situation that, although after the fashion of Joshua it commands economic development to stand still upon the Gibeon of capitalism, the world moves and the word mildews. The phraseology of the ruling class becomes every day more emptied of meaning,—of all reality. And where are now those "eternal ideas" of "liberty, equality and fraternity," which in the mouths of the philosophers of the 18th century heralded the ascent of capitalism to the throne? Buried in the most acute antithesis of all history, in the anarchy of production and the despotism of the factory. Only their ghosts walk, and even they shrink before the approaching day of Demos.

It is of course true that although dividends are not derived from thought, the capitalist nevertheless thinks in terms of that which enables him to remain a capitalist. Besides, a considerable army of academic dignitaries are retained to tell the world that "profits are the reward of ability," that "interest is paid because capital is productive," and that "the productivity of the labour of the *many*

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altogether on the directive faculties of the *few*." And to-day, when the working class are refusing to be any brutally coerced in the production of wealth, does that class appropriate the greater part of this wealth lean more and more on their learned satellites to cover up the economic cheating by legal tricks. Indeed, so grave has the condition of capitalism become that we have before our very eyes the spectacle of men from the ranks of the workers themselves being decoyed into this mire of intellectual perversion, so that they pervert the minds of the masses to which they belong and arrest the uprising movement. The working class therefore stands in need of an educational revolution that will not only train men who can lay bare the tricks of these false priests, but who will permeate the Labour Movement with a scientific understanding of its task.

To think scientifically we must strive after clear ideas, after clear mental pictures of the world. To that end we must be clear upon the nature of these mental pictures are, how we arrive at them, and how they are related to objects which they depict. To use a scientific instrument we must first scientifically understand its nature. *We have to understand the understanding in order to rid the world of misunderstanding.*

In order to arrive at the truth about our social conditions it is necessary that we should truly understand the nature and conditions of the general instrument with which we seek for truth. The high aim of the Fourth Estate which is the emancipation of man from all economic oppression, the general salvation of mankind, can be attained without mental enlightenment. We shall see that the organ of enlightenment is *the organ of the general*, and that the man who represents the general interests, who strives for the general good, are the true exponents of this organ. On the other hand, the men who represent particular interests, the interests of a few, of the ruling class, are prevented from recognizing the demands of this new reason. Here there is to be found *the reason for that backwardness in education which to-day is coming to the front among the working class, and which is scientifically justified by the scientific method of understanding.* The basis of this analysis is an historical process which has required thousands of years of social evolution, the development of which is the expansion of the productive forces, before the necessary experimental material could be acquired to solve the riddle of the human mind. The liberation of the human mind is closely bound up with the liberation of the masses. The proletariat is the agent of both.

What is the truth? What is the true way of understanding? Where is it to be found? In Jericho or Jerusalem? Here, or there? This is the specific quest of philosophy for centuries. What is the true philosophy, or what is truly philosophy? That which is

general to the philosophers from the market-place of Athens up to the lecture halls of a modern University. *That which is general is truth.* Philosophers have had their special peculiarities. Hegel differed from Kant, and Kant from Socrates. But they had something in general. *To call the exceptional the general, the truth, the nature, is error.* This understanding is the positive outcome of philosophy and marks its close. "My philosophy is no philosophy."

Philosophy as a term, is derived from two Greek words *philos* and *sophia*, meaning a friend or lover of wisdom. Greece produced the earliest philosophers. Whoever sought wisdom was, in antiquity, a philosopher. Philosophy thus originally stood for all learning, whether it was sought in mathematics, astronomy, ethics or politics. Natural science with its specialized departments was as yet unborn. As these specialized sciences broke away from philosophy, the latter became narrowed down until its attention is confined to a special object. The philosopher, like the chemist and the physicist, becomes a specialist. Understanding becomes the special object of philosophy, not the indefinite understanding which sought to illumine everything, characteristic of the ancient philosophers, but the understanding itself, i.e., *the method by which we arrive at understanding.* With the solution of this problem philosophy becomes a special science.

The distinguishing characteristic of philosophy, however, is not so much its object or its aim, as it is its method of accomplishing its object.

The various sciences occupy themselves with special things and wherever they concern themselves with the universal whole, it is only in so far as the special phenomena which they study are parts of the whole. The general results of the sciences are reached only by way of their contact with the special phenomena which they are investigating. The conclusions of science are generally arrived at *post factum.* With philosophy, however, it is quite the reverse. True, the faculty of thought or reason is the special object of its study; but it reaches its results by way of "pure" thought, it tries to discover without the help of the senses, the nature of reason. Its method is speculation. *Speculation is the nature of philosophy.* Hence its history is a history of failures, of unsuccessful attempts to solve the problems of existence without experience, by "pure" thought, which is thoughtless thought. It has, however, yielded a positive grain. By isolating thought from its interrelation with the senses, by cutting it off from the outer world so to speak, it laid bare the nature of the thought process. By the barrenness of its speculative results, it demonstrated that thought is nothing "in itself," nothing transcendental, that it is but one member in the democratic interrelation of existence, outside of which there is neither thought nor anything to think about. In yielding up this positive element philosophy gives up the ghost.

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ing of the Hegelian philosophy which is the last refuge of Haym says: "It was pushed aside by the progress of the d by living history." Thus the world avenges itself on those wise and neglect it. And speaking on the same point Dietzgen Speculation finally dissolved into the knowledge that under is by its very nature 'impure,' that the faculty of understand- ot begin its studies without a given point of departure, that s not absolutely superior to experience, but only so far as it nize numerous experiences." Thus are the last of the idols om their last abode, the house of reason.

WILL W. CRAIK.

To be continued.

The Central Labour College

icissitudes through which this institution has passed recently n of such a character that if the hearts and hopes of the of this phase of working-class education could be broken ld have been broken during the past year. The compulsory from Bradmore Road on the plea that the conditions of the uld not permit of an educational institute occupying the , added to the financial difficulties for the time being, but penses will be removed in the shape of a lower rental of the nises at 5 Park Town, Oxford. We are pleased to record Executive Committee of the A.S.R.S., carrying out the on of will of the A.G.M., which body decided over- gly in favour of supporting the Central Labour College, at ing last week, passed the following resolution:—

That having regard to the financial difficulties under which he Central Labour College is labouring, this Committee decides o make a grant of £50 to assist that institute in its struggle against those who are attempting to destroy it.

rs. Edwards, of the E.C., and J. E. Williams, General , were appointed to sit upon the Board of Management of ge, and it was announced that Bros. Hatfield, of the York Branch, A.S.R.S., and J. Allen, of the Bassaleg Branch, were nts selected to enter the College at the September Term for s' tuition.

oth, 1911.

The Railway Review.

der the postage stamp, my son; its usefulness consists in y to stick to one thing until it gets there.—*Josh Billing.*

THE "PLEBS" LEAGUE.

Third Annual Meet

AUGUST 7th, 1911,

AT

**TAPHOUSE'S MUSIC ROOM,
Magdalen Street, Oxford.**

Meeting will commence at 3 p.m. sharp.

CHAIRMAN: T. P. KEATING.

AGENDA :

1. Report of year's work.
 2. Financial Statement.
 3. Future of the Magazine.
 4. Other Business.
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N.B.—Members who are in arrears with League or Magazine subs. should endeavour to clear their accounts before July 25 next, to allow of the books being made up to the end of July.

THE "PLEBS"

Correspondence

To the Editor of "Plebs" Magazine.

THE MILKY WAY,
GREAT SPIRAL.

nce before have I essayed a criticism, and that was in the
ply to a letter from one of your own members I presume.
al fire which belched forth from his critical cannon is no
nt and I flatter myself that I successfully spiked his guns.
going to attack you. It is often said, "the pen is mightier
d." At the present moment I should like the sword to jab
ar plexus. As it is I prefer to attack the Editorial Chair; the
sts, even though the individual official may be like the gods
, or gone upon a journey.

Astronomy! That is the matter, sir! You say it should
obvious that astronomy has *nothing* to do with the Labour
Now it is not obvious. You say that earthly causes may
y and unemployment. That does not disprove Mr. Jevons'
t becomes of the plurality of causes, sir? Yet Astronomy
it. I presume you are a Rationalist. Then ponder on the
astronomy on religious conceptions. Again the German
r. Marx, who has propounded the materialistic conception of
clude astronomy as being a science of material phenomena,
probably subordinate, yet it has *something* to do with the
ment. Without astronomical knowledge one would not know
; thousands could not have seen the Coronation and others
able to find their way to the Mediterranean next winter
al data were lost. Then again, why is astronomy studied?
study this "higher education" for nothing. Why do Messrs.
ckerton and Blatchford keep telling us of the Milky Way and
f golden bees." Ah, sir! it is "something" to the workers
ing" as you suggest. Now you may reply tartly, even vitriolic
sely ignore me but you cannot refute what I said. My
ogically flawless and *I* have found the heel of Achilles.

Yours Astrally,

JULES BENEDICK.

hence and whither flown again, who knows?" Jules himself
astronomical knowledge notwithstanding. If we had the
das in the treasury we should offer a reward to any of our
would find Jules for himself and set his feet upon the earth.
we can only hope that someone may turn to the task out of
sion for this nebulous speech that has lost its way. As for
are neither philanthropists nor surgeons.—ED.]

l we should not be over scrupulous about niceties of
n the matter in hand is a dunce to be gibbeted. Speak
person may not understand you. He is to be hung?
im by all means; but make no bow when you mean no
nd eschew the droll delicacy of the clown in the Play—
, sir, as to rise and be put to death."—*Edgar Allen Poe.*