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The PLEBS MAGAZINE

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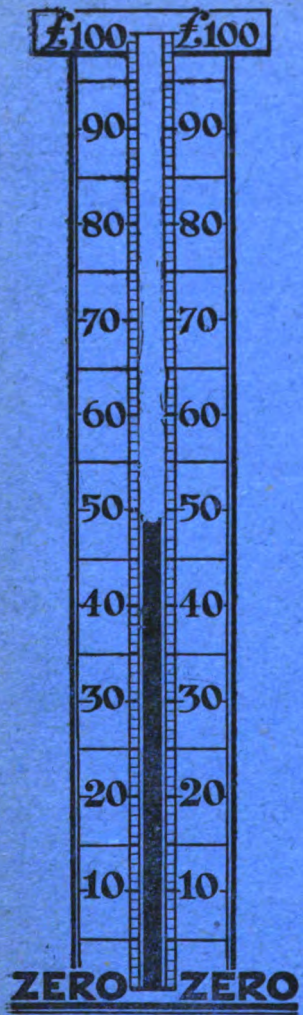
MONTHLY TWOPENCE



We have to get this down to

Zero

WE ARE DOWN TO THE HALF WAY LINE

Have YOU Helped ?

THE PLEBS MAGAZINE

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

Vol. VIII May, 1916 No. 4

CONTENTS

THE COLLEGE

"NOTHING *is*: everything is becoming." The profound truth of that generalization must have been brought home to a good many people during the past few months, when things have been "becoming" rather faster than usual—"becoming," indeed, at such a rate that panting historians have toiled after them in vain. What is written to-day may have to be revised pretty extensively to-morrow. So that, in making a brief statement as to the present position of the C. L. C., we must safeguard ourselves by pointing out that by the time these words are in print, the "becoming" process may have developed still further. Nevertheless, we feel that the many supporters of the College are entitled to know how things stand.

The present state of affairs may be briefly expounded in the form of a parable. As thus:—Once upon a time, two Sturdy Fellows, a Railwayman and a Coal Miner from Wales, made up their minds, after some deliberation, to adopt a Poor Orphan who had asked for their assistance. Having received their solemn promise, the Orphan was very glad; for he knew, having devoted all his time to study, that he would be able to help his protectors

in a thousand ways in the future, and thus amply repay them for whatever expense they were put to on his account. He told his other friends of the Miner and the Railwayman's promise; and these other friends, who were mostly Poor People, rejoiced with him at having found two such powerful and well-to-do protectors. Time went on, and the Orphan got hungrier and thinner than ever. But he consoled himself with the thought of the Promise, and said to himself, "I must be patient; for the Miner and the Railwayman are both busy men. Anyhow, I am quite sure that they would never go back on a Promise." So he went on getting thinner and thinner. At last, he plucked up courage to approach his protectors-to-be, and timidly asked them if he might expect a little help soon. "Certainly," they answered him. "But you must wait a bit. Adopting an Orphan is a very ticklish business. We have to Negotiate." So they went on Negotiating, and the Orphan went on getting thinner. "We don't want to adopt you in any old way," they told him. "The thing must be done properly, and it takes time." "But what am I to eat in the meantime?" the Orphan ventured to ask. "That'll be alright," they said. "We're coming to the rescue." "Thank you very much," said the Orphan in a feeble voice. "I hope you won't be long." And he went home again, and at meal times he tried to think of the Promise, and not get hungry; but he went on getting thinner and thinner. And the Miner and the Railwayman went on busily Negotiating. . . .

At that point we will end the parable, leaving Plebeians to find out the "heavenly meaning" for themselves. It is a sorry story, and one scarcely calculated to increase one's faith. Both the N. U. R. and the S. W. M. F., it should be mentioned, have advanced to the College small sums with which to "keep going"—sums, however, miserably inadequate for that object. To outsiders, the whole position must appear as a pretty example of "muddling through." It was in the summer of 1914, remember, that the A. G. M. of the N. U. R., and a Special Conference of the S. W. M. F., decided to take control of the College. Two years .... But we forbear further comment.

On one other matter our readers are entitled to some information. The Secretary of the College (Mr. J. Reynolds) and the whole body of students were of course liable under the Military Service Act. Mr. Reynolds appealed, but was refused exemption. He has again appealed, but his case has had to be adjourned owing to a breakdown of his health—due, as all his friends know, to the accumulated worries of the College during the last few months. The point to be settled in his case, as well as in the case of the N. U. R. and S. W. M. F. students, is whether, as workers in "starred trades," they should be sent back to their work, instead of into the Army. At the time of writing, their cases are still unsettled, so that comment is forbidden.

It only remains to add that, whatever happens (temporarily) to the College, we shall, by hook or by crook, keep the Magazine going. We have gained new friends during recent months, and we have been able, thanks to the hearty support of friends, old and new, to diminish our burden of debt very considerably. We very earnestly ask all those who believe in the principles for which both the College and the Magazine stand to rally to our support **NOW.** We are certain that we shall not ask in vain. It was never more important than it is now that we should keep the 'Education Idea' to the front. If the work of the College has to be suspended for the time being, the *Plebs* is more than ever needed. If you agree, will you kindly signify in the usual manner?

Another May Day

SOME of our readers may remember S. De Leon's article, published in the *Plebs* for May, 1911, entitled "Some May Days in History." De Leon began by quoting Oliver Wendell Holmes' observation that in order rightly to determine a man's position, it was not only necessary to note where he stood at a given moment; one must also note where he had stood at such and such times in the past, and then, "striking an arc," determine whether or not he had really progressed and whither he was tending. De Leon went on to apply this method to the course of human progress across the centuries. He took certain outstanding periods of history, beginning with the signing of Magna Charta, and, passing on, through the English Civil War, the American Revolution, and the French Revolution, to the Paris Commune; then he struck an arc "across the crest of these world waves." "Each crest," was his conclusion, "has lapped a higher mark than its predecessors, and rarely has a hollow subsided so low as to be lower than the troughs which went before . . . .The character of our centuries-long march spells progress . . . .The May Days of history have seen class after class arise against their oppressors, till to-day the bed-rock has been reached. Below the proletariat there is no other class. Not many more May Days shall elapse ere its victory shall strike the last remaining shackles from the slave."

We have come to one more May Day in our "centuries-long march;" and if we thought of adding another to De Leon's series of historical vignettes, we would have to admit that it finds us in the trough rather than on the crest of the wave. The proletariat of Europe is divided into hostile camps. Everywhere reaction is, apparently, triumphant. Everywhere the movement of the internat onal working-class is held up by the bitter fact of war. Everywhere the enemies of the working-class— their exploiters and oppres-

sors are speaking plausible words about patriotism and national need, while they grasp at every opportunity afforded them by that "national need" to fasten the shackles yet a little more securely on their slaves. One need not hold any such crude theory as that the ruling classes of Europe precipitated the conflict with the deliberate object of stifling the revolutionary movement, in order to account for their all too obvious eagerness to make use of the crisis for their own class ends. The war has given them their opportunity; they would not have been true to type if they had not made the most of it. And despite all their half-sincere cant about a "common national purpose," and the ending of all class hostilities and prejudices, the real spirit of our lords and masters comes out in the snarling references, in the more outspoken organs of their Press, to the Clyde workers as "scum," and in the unconcealed glee with which they hail the deportation or the prosecution for sedition of men who dare to go on fighting for their class at a time when it is the patriotic duty of that class either to cross the sea and shed its blood for its masters, or to stay at home and be robbed by them. We are deep enough in the trough in all conscience. There is more than a little justification for those who find the issue doubtful, who fear lest it be long—if ever—ere we top the crest of the wave again.

At such a time we need to remind ourselves that our movement has its roots in the past—far back across the centuries; and that even though our rulers might "put back the clock" of progress for five years or fifty, to crush that movement, to keep us down in the trough of the wave, is a thing altogether beyond their powers. We can look back, as De Leon did, on the way we have travelled, in order to "drink deep of hope and courage for the future." Our hope is based on something more tangible than a vague idealism. It is based on the facts of history; and the course of history "spells progress."

But even if we look no further than the facts of the moment, and face them squarely, there is surely no cause for discouragement or doubt. The war we are told, has practically destroyed the international movement. I do not believe it. If it has turned the heads—such heads as they had—of a few leaders, it has made ten ordinary men and women, for everyone who did so before, ask themselves what quarrel they have with the men and women of the "enemy countries." One result of the war will certainly be that the International Socialist Movement, *backed to a far greater extent than hitherto by the rank and file*, will set itself to thresh out the questions of war and peace and nationalism with an immeasurably greater sense of urgency and responsibility than was shown in the days before the war. Whether this is to be "the war that will end war" depends and depends alone, on the organized working class; and this war is making the working class increasingly conscious of that fact. And it is making them conscious of another fact, also—the bitter fact that to work for "the benefit of the community"

under our existing social system means to work for the profit and aggrandisement of the few. Woolly-minded observers like Mr. Frank Dilnot may declare that "the fundamental thing which the war has revealed among the millions who fill up the ranks of organized labour is an intense nationalism."* It would be truer to say that the fundamental thing which the war has revealed *to* those millions is the rottenness of the social order under which they work and live. Men and women are talking and thinking "sedition" of that sort now who had accepted Things as they Are unquestioningly enough before. The capitalist Press may contain no hint of such things—nor is it likely to: Messrs. Dilnot and A. M. Thompson would find no market for their effusions if they noted such things. But against the former's smug assertion that "the war has demonstrated that the policy of class warfare preached by extremists (!) is impracticable and impossible in the modern conditions of this country," one can place the simple, significant fact that the railwaymen have just rejected a policy of conciliation. Not an earth-shaking event, perhaps, but one sufficient to show—for men with eyes in their head—which way the wind is blowing.

The First of May, 1916, may find us in the trough of the wave. What of it? The crest may not be so far off as sometimes appears. The "scum" is beginning to ask itself questions; and it will sooner or later find the answers.

J.F.H.

The S. Wales Non-Unionist Agreement

THE recent agreement entered into between the South Wales Coalowners and the South Wales Miners' Federation, under the authority of His Majesty's Government, dealing with the non-unionist question in the collieries of South Wales needs some explanation and comment.

In the first place it must be clearly understood that the agreement entered into after twenty months of war does not represent any keen desire on the part of the coalowners to prevent stoppages at the local collieries on the non-unionist question; nor does it reveal any particular celerity in the Government departments to follow up and compel the acceptance of the recommendation of a Government committee dealing with the coal-mining organization. In May, 1915, this Government committee made the following recommendation:—

> In the highest interests of the nation it is especially desirable that during the period of the war the employers should co-operate with the representatives of the workmen on such questions as non-unionism, or other questions likely to lead to friction or stoppage during the present unprecedented circumstances.

**Westminster Gazette*, April 10, 1916.

It has been the ambition of the South Wales Miners for many years to impose upon the employers the principle that the *sine qua non* of the employment of any workmen in or about the mines should be membership of the Miners' Federation. The propaganda for the realization of this ambition has largely been in the nature of strikes at local collieries. There are scores of collieries where it has been realized. But the owners as an Association have resisted it tooth and nail. In 1915 they intimated to the men that they would agree to a scheme of compulsory Trade Unionism if the men would allow the 1910 Conciliation Board Agreement to continue for the duration of the war. For years they had said that they could never accede to any request of the men to assist in preventing stoppages on non-unionism. To them it was a point of principle of first-class importance. But the monetary advantages of the old agreement were so wonderfully attractive as to compel them to set aside their professed unalterable principles in the hope of a golden harvest out of increased prices of coal. When the workmen rejected this altruistic offer, the owners in their anger fell back again upon their fundamental principles, and there they have stuck until the last few days. The lesson to be drawn from this is that the coalowners, like other capitalists, as a class have no unchangeable principles except the all-powerful one of profiteering. Since those days nothing has been done. Stoppages of collieries have been frequent. Admiralty collieries have in some instances been kept going by the urgent and repeated requests of the Admiralty, and the restraint of men who refrained from taking drastic action in the hope that something would be done The only reward for the men's patience was a growth of the pestilence of non-unionism.

At last it became unbearable, and important collieries producing Admiralty coals were threatened with a complete stoppage. On the very eve of the final catastrophe the Government intervened.

May, 1915, saw the publication of the coal-mining organizations Committee report.

March, 1916, saw the Government's intervention.

Thousands of tons of coal have been lost to the nation in the interval. Such is the miraculous prevision of a Government department !

Yet another truth emerges from this, and that is, that the only thing to influence the Government is an actual crisis. It is apparently the only language it understands, and the only fact it is capable of recognising. It has now compelled the owners to accept the Federation scheme in all the essential particulars brought to their notice nearly a year ago.

But that does not end this pretty comedy by any means. There is still another side-splitting joke in the piece. The owners have covered their concessions in a blaze of patriotism. This yielding up

of their ancient traditions is for the love of the Motherland and the glory of the Empire. But the minutes of the Conciliation Board agreement will not permit us to forget that they have already offered to give up the same traditions for the very mundane consideration of a continuance of the old agreement. After plunging the South Wales coalfield into a six-days' stoppage, the owners gave in for patriotic grounds. After precipitating a crisis on the ostlers' bonus turn, the Sunday-night shift payment, and the rates of surface craftsmen, the owners, under Government pressure, agreed to accept a conciliator to dispose of the disputes for patriotic reasons! Their co-operation on the non-unionist question likewise is inspired now by patriotic reasons. Patriotism and compulsion go hand in hand.

The first principle of importance in the scheme is the fact that every workman employed at the collieries must be a Trade Unionist; not necessarily a member of the Miners' Federation, but a member of one of the recognized Trade Unions, of which there are three in the South Wales mining industry. The Government, even when at war, will not permit itself to be used as the propagandist of industrial unionism, pure and simple. In other words, for the period of the war, the continued employment of any workman depends upon his "paying his union." The owners themselves are to give the intimation to the workmen that they are required to become Trade Unionists.

Already it has been said that this is compulsory Trade Unionism. The only difference in the new arrangement and the past will be in the use of the weapons. The bludgeon of the local strike is changed for a stroke of the manager's pen. The conscientious objector might act conscientiously and logically and refuse to accept a single benefit that has been secured by the efforts of the Federation since 1898. He might go further, and refuse to accept any Union benefits since 1875. This would, indeed, be logical, but I know of no non-unionist who would push his conscientious objections to any further extent than the usual protest against the expenditure of sixpence per week.

This Agreement is for the period of the war, The South Wales Miners' Federation will fight for its perpetuation after the war. Here's a chance for the anarchists who prefer the limited freedom of capitalism to the "coercion of the democracy."

FRANK HODGES,
(Miners' Agent, Bridgend, Glam.)

"As in religion, man is governed by the products of his own brain, so in capitalist production, he is governed by the products of his own hand.—MARX.

Socialism and War

Socialism and War. By L. B. Boudin. (*New Review* Publishing Co., New York. 4/2 net. Postage 2d extra.)

MOST of our readers are, doubtless, the proud possessors of the *Theoretical System of Karl Marx*, by the above author. So far as we know it is the most clear and concise of the few popular expositions of Marxian theory in the English language. On the growth of our school in England this work has exercised a very considerable influence. And now the literature of our science has again been enriched by Louis Boudin's latest production, which bears the title *Socialism and War.*

Not only in this work does our author succeed in laying bare the inner causes of the War, and in showing their connexion with the external events as well as the ideologies which envelope them, but in so doing he exhibits the Marxian method *at work*, thus deepening our conviction as to its fruitfulness, and helping us to perfect its application in our own hands. *Socialism and War* is one more irresistible proof of the soundness of historical materialism as a method of sociological investigation. And as a clear recognition of social development, in the midst of which the proletariat stands, is indispensable for the progressive conduct of the proletarian struggle, Louis Boudin has, in this his latest contribution, very substantially helped to strengthen the foundation for the correct tactics to be pursued by the Labour Movements in all lands.

Some there may be who would express regret that our author did not offer us his valuable guidance before the outbreak of the world war. That he did not do so is still another justification of the method which he so ably applies. The history of the world, wrote Hegel, is the judgment of the world. In other words, history generates its own comprehension and criticism. Understanding is not above history, but of it. It is circumstanced, like all else. So with the understanding of the War. The recognition of principles which apply to particular problems can grow just to the extent that the problem has developed. The root causes of the present crisis were developing for some time prior to the outbreak, but the recognition of these causes and, therefore, the conception of what should be the correct attitude of the workers of the various countries when war threatened, was necessarily limited by the immaturity of the developments leading to the war. The war signalises the maturity of the forces which engendered it, and the course of the war serves to bring out those circumstances and facts before our cognition, which formerly were more or less concealed. "It is easy to be wise after the event." That this is still the only way to wisdom, however much it may seem to our idealists as an intolerable restriction for which, it would appear, some wicked Marxians are responsible, is proven by the occurrence of the *event* itself. That is why the war enligh-

tens us on matters which were formerly vague and undefined. That is why our author can help us to-day, better than he could the day before the war. And as he says, "there can be no doubt but that the present war will bring forth an enormous amount of Socialist literature which will serve to bring this phase of Socialist theory into clear relief these lectures being part of a general effort now undoubtedly making in all parts of the world."

The book contains six lectures which were originally given at Arlington Hall, New York City, toward the close of 1914. As now presented to the public, these lectures remain unaltered in substance except for some modification in the order in which the various points are treated, and with the addition of one or two points which the author could not touch upon when delivering the lectures. Finally, he omits from the last lecture "a review of the attitude taken by the Socialists, in the different warring countries, to the war." And it is a testimony to the rare self-critical spirit of the author that he makes this omission partly on the ground that new circumstances which had arisen since he first delivered the lecture made him feel that his "original treatment of the subject" was inadequate.

The six lectures are as follows:—(1) Clearing the Ground. (2) The Economic Causes of the War. (3) The Ideologic Causes of the War. (4) The Immediate Causes of the War and the Stakes Involved. (5) The War and the Socialists. (6) Socialist *versus* Bourgeois Theories.

The first lecture is a very fine lesson in the logical art of elimination, the elimination of all the rubbish that has accumulated around the subject. The correct formulation of a problem is very important if one is to arrive at the solution of the problem. Our author shows how the problem is not correctly stated if the point of departure be merely the question: Who started the War? This leads only to the further question: Why the aggressor started the War? Just as it takes two to make a bargain, it takes two to make a fight. We must, therefore, ask: —Why the other side took up the challenge of the aggressor and for what object. When we begin in this way we are better able to avoid all those one-sided and superficial explanations of the War with which we have been deluged since August, 1914, e.g., that the Kaiser is the cause of the war, that the Czar caused the War, that the Prussian military caste, British Navalism, or secret diplomacy are at the bottom of the "bloody business."

Starting from the principle that "we must find an *efficient cause* —efficient to make both sides go to war," Comrade Boudin takes up one after another of the belligerent parties, exposes the flimsiness of each of the official pretexts, and, in every case, shows how the course of external events points to some object, some "*vital interest*," which led the nations involved on to the battlefield. But nowhere on the surface can this *efficient cause* be found. All the so-called explanations found in the mouths of the combatants are

[illegible] explanations which are only to have eyes for nothing outside the circle of their own interests—or they are explanations that require further explanations.

In the second lecture, our author takes us to the economic ground floor of the social structure in order to discover the hidden "object," the "*efficient cause*." He faces right away the Socialist critics who are in opposition to the view that economic development is at the root of the war. It is not enough, however, for him to merely assert that economic conditions or capitalism caused the War. The matter requires specification. It would be just as great an error to assume that capitalism, under all circumstances, is warlike, as to assume the contrary, that, under all circumstances, it is peaceful. The thing cannot be generalized in this way. In evidence of this, he refers to the pacific character of England in the 19th century, as contrasted with the 17th and 18th centuries which show John Bull in a bellicose mood. From a survey of all the facts, he draws the conclusion that these different moods are rooted in different phases of economic development. He distinguishes three of those phases :—

(1) Capitalism in its youthful or formative phase. Then it is warlike.

(2) Capitalism in its prime, or established phase. Then it is pacific.

(3) Capitalism in its old age or dissolving phase. Then it is again warlike.

Comrade Boudin shows how these phases are most clearly distinguished in the history of this country, precisely because this country led the way into the era of capitalist production, and thus traversed the whole of the road. The first phase, broadly speaking, dates from the time when, in the language of the Elizabethan medal, "God blew, and they were scattered,"—*they* being the Spanish Armada—until the close of the Seven Years War. The author, later on, shows very clearly the organic connexion between the building up of capitalist economy and the warlike policy of those two hundred years. The second phase begins with the closing years of the 18th century, and continues until nearly the end of the 19th century. After the Industrial Revolution had accomplished a certain degree of extension, "capitalism grows pacific." It settles down to the work of improving the internal forces of production in order that Britain might become the workshop of the world, trading freely with her colonies and all countries. The political policy required for this phase of capitalistic economy, found its first formulation at the hands of Adam Smith, and was, later, expanded by men like Bentham, Hume, and Spencer. Summed up it was the economic, political, and philosophical creed of the Manchester School. Manchester was then the centre of the leading industry—textiles—not only in England, but in the world at large. And Manchesterism was the political and social expression of the needs of the textiles. From this point

of view, peace with the world was the best condition for industrial and commercial prosperity. The third phase begins to manifest itself in this country, between the 80's and 90's of the last century. Then Manchester begins to give way to Birmingham, and the policy of Free Trade is challenged by Tariff Reform. This change of policy from pacific Liberalism to combative Imperialism, which was signalized by the entry of Joseph Chamberlain into the Cabinet, as the director of a new Colonial policy, externally expresses the transition from the phase in which textiles were the leading capitalist products, to that in which iron and steel have risen to the front rank. Modern Imperialism " means war," because " iron and steel mean war."

The author proceeds to show why the sale of iron and steel necessitate a different policy to that which sufficed for the sale of textiles. And here he touches the very core of the whole problem. A different policy is required because iron and steel cannot be sold in the same way as textiles.

The essential fact of capitalist economy is the production, by the workers, of a surplus. The capitalists, in whose hands the surplus accumulates, must find a market for the disposal of the surplus. So long as capitalist production has not become general in a country, this market is found in the backward unindustrialized districts of the same country. But in the course of time these districts are drawn into the vortex of capitalism. They, too, produce a surplus. Sooner or later, the whole nation has a surplus. Then a market for absorbing this surplus must be found outside the home country, in some less-developed country. This outlet, however, as in the first case, is only available for a time. It comes about that these countries which served as a market for the surplus of the capitalist country, catch the contagion of capitalism, and begin to manufacture their own supply of consumable goods. They, too, soon come to have a surplus on hand, for which markets outside their own country must be found. The capitalist nations are more and more impelled to " create new markets . . . . by stimulating the development of undeveloped countries, civilizing them hot-house fashion, by means of all sorts of ' improvements,' such as railroads, canals, &c." For this " civilizing " enterprise, heavy iron and steel goods are required. This leads to the growth of the industries producing iron and steel. As these develop, so also the " exportation of capital " increases in volume and extension.

Furthermore, the increase in the number of capitalist countries competing with each other in the sale of *means of consumption*, has the consequence of turning the more developed parts of the capitalist world to the production of *means of production*. The accumulated surplus, in these spheres, is invested more and more in industries producing iron and steel, and it is in this way that the iron and steel industry becomes *the* industry, *par excellence*, of capitalist economy Textiles cease to be the leading and typical commodity.

While textiles are compatible with free competition, iron and steel *excludes* free competition "You cannot just ship a cargo of this kind of goods (locomotives, vehicles, rails, &c.) in charge of a sales manager, and sell them to the natives. The only way to do that is to build the railroad yourself. And here the question of the flag becomes a matter of the utmost importance." The same Britain, whose policy did not interfere with German capitalists trading freely in her colonies with textile wares, would most certainly object to German capitalists building railroads through her colonies, or, indeed, in any backward country in any way connected or likely, in the future, to be connected with British industrial and commercial prosperity. To act otherwise would be to close the door against the export of the surplus in the hands of her own iron and steel magnates.

What is more, as our Comrade Boudin makes exceedingly clear, these "improving" operations in backward countries cannot be carried on by individual capitalists, as in the case of the production of consumable goods. Investors are not in business for their health. And the investors in "civilizing" enterprises want something more than the inward satisfaction of contemplating the beauties of their culture-bearing works and the blessings they have bestowed upon the "pore benighted 'eathen." They require a speedy and profitable return. That glittering ideal, however, could not be realized if the payment for the iron and steel, put into the railroad, depended upon the fares and freight charges collected for the conveyance of passengers, goods, and minerals through these backward lands.

Those who want to undertake such railroading projects must apply to the government in charge of the country through which the railroad is to be laid down, for a "concession." "They may either receive a direct money-subsidy from this government . . . .they may be given grants of large tracts of land, particularly valuable mineral lands, the exploitation of which would bring an immediate return, or they may be given monopolistic rights to the trade of the country, or at least some branches of the same." This is the essential meaning of a "concession." It means handing over the future of the country to the "concessionaires."

Here arises a need for a strong line being taken by the government of the country to which the men of iron and steel belong. First, because the natives may have an objection to such works of civilization, and may, indeed, require to be convinced by means of the matter-of-blood logic of the bayonet. Secondly, because the applicants and aspirants after "concessions" belong to different capitalist nations, in which case the victory for iron and steel will go to the government capable of exerting the "greatest pressure" or, in other words, to the country pursuing the most developed Imperialist policy.

We have given a somewhat extended summary of this second lecture, for the reason that it is the most fundamental part of the whole volume. Herein, the author applies his keen faculty of analysis and reduction, and discloses, what is not to be found "floating on the surface of the troubled waters," viz. the answer to the question which the whole range of events upon the surface dictates :—What was the vital interest, the "*efficient cause*" which moved all parties into the war ?

The third lecture is to be highly recommended to the two camps who have, for a long time now, quarrelled over the question as to whether the physical or the mental, the body or the soul, was the sovereign power in the making of history. Then there are the "eclectics" with their patchwork conception of history,—Belfort Bax, for example, with his "double causal series,"—who may also find a corrective in this part of the volume. And, lastly, there are some of our "Marxists" who by their half-baked conceptions of historical materialism, have liberally furnished the supposed critics of Marx with a fund of crudities and extravagances—for them, too, there is sobering thought in the third lecture.

There is only one history—the history of man and his work. The mind of man enters into the work, and the consequences of that work impress themselves upon his mind. Man changes the material, and the transformed material changes man, his needs, aspirations, and ideas. The wants of man grow in complexity with the growing complexity of his work. But it is a multiplicity in unity. "The great harmonizer of human nature is a certain faculty with which man is endowed, which the German poet Schiller described as the capacity of 'transforming the work of necessity into a work of his free choice, and *of raising the physical necessity into a moral one.*' This faculty permits the individual to see his material needs in the glamour of spiritual and moral ones." And our author adds, what evidently Schiller did not recognize, viz., the social determination of what is necessary for the individual. In this way, the *socially necessary*, materially considered, becomes for the individual the *morally necessary*. He then goes on to show how the material necessities of capitalist society, in the three phases already indicated, are raised into appropriate moral conceptions, especially those conceptions which have reference to nationalism, race-relationship and culture.

"Ideologically, the reign of textiles is charactized by what might be called 'liberal ideas' . . . Politically,- republicanism and democracy ; in the domain of international relations,—the open door. and peaceful cosmopolitanism ; in philosophy.—classical political economy and utilitarianism." Nations and races are conceived not as of different kinds of human beings but as showing the different degrees of development of one common humanity. These conceptions expressed the needs of capitalist economy when textiles were sovereign.

The ideology of Imperialism, on the other hand, represents "*the raising of the physical necessity of welding iron and steel into a moral one.*" Essentially, this ideology is the negation of the "liberal ideas." Races and nations are not only unequal. They never can be equal because they were created with different capacity. There is a super-nation and a super-culture. And it is the destiny of this super-nation and super-culture to dominate the entire world. While Germany has developed this Imperialistic philosophy it must not be concluded that she stands alone in this respect. Both in England and France it has grown in favour in recent years. Germany is only the leader in the procession. She is not the whole procession. With the rise and extension of this ideology, grows also the reaction in favour of maintaining autocratic and semi-feudal institutions or of reviving them where they have largely disapppeared.

In the fourth lecture, the general causes of the War are shown operating in the concrete and immediate situation of the warring countries and in the particular objectives at which they aim. The economic position and requirements of each of the belligerents are discussed in their connexion with the crisis, and their community of contract or clash of interests, one with another, are unfolded.

Russia, Servia and Austria are still in the first phase of capitalist development. In order to free themselves from the exploitation of the more developed nations and establish independent economies, they require to "reach the sea." Russia's long struggle against the Turk, exemplifies her need in this respect. While Austria has reached the sea, her footing is a precarious one. Confined to a small corner at the top of the Adriatic, Italy has the advantage over her and hampers her development. Hence Austria's aspirations for a place on the eastern seaboard of the Balkan peninsula as well as on the northern coast line of the Aegean. Then Servia, hampered economically by Austria, has also been striving for an outlet to the Mediterranean just where Austria has had her eye fixed. Thus the policy pursued by Austria has been one of keeping back the unification of the Balkan peoples and of continually promoting intrigues and fostering dissensions among them. Neither, of course, does Russia desire a strong Balkan nation although for the moment her immediate interests lie in supporting Servia, so as to defeat the German-Austrian scheme.

Our author handles the position of Germany with very great skill and, in so doing, unravels for us many of the complications which have made her situation difficult to understand. Germany is to-day in the third and Imperialist phase of capitalist economy—the reign of iron and steel. Her leadership in Imperialism is grounded on her leadership in the production of iron and steel. On page 124, there is a very valuable table of statistics which shows, for

various years, the comparative progress made by some of the European nations in the production of pig-iron. In 1850, Britain's production of pig-iron was nearly seven times greater than that of Germany. In 1900, Germany was almost abreast of Britain. In 1912, Germany was turning out very nearly double the quantity. These are very eloquent figures. It is precisely since the beginning of the century that the war-spirit and the 'world-politic' has come to the front among the great capitalist nations and, foremost of all, in Germany. So rapidly has Germany developed that she passed into the third phase before she had completely traversed the first phase. The second phase of textiles, with its appropriate ideology of liberal conceptions, has been "skipped." Clear, therefore, does it appear why so many of the semi-feudal institutions have continued to exist in Germany, notwithstanding her capitalist leadership. *The institutions of the first period are preserved in the third period because they are adapted to the warlike mood of both periods.*

The ideal of a united German nation, before it could be materialized, gave way to the Imperialistic ideal of world-empire—Germany over all. And to this Pan-German scheme the control of the Balkan peninsula is indispensable. For through the Balkans lies the fastest route from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Hence Germany's support of the Austrian policy in the Balkans. Hence also Russia's championship of the Serbs. For the success of the German-Austrian scheme would decisively shut out Russia from the warm waters of the Mediterranean.

The Bagdad Railway, first projected by some German capitalists, towards the close of the last century, illustrates the designs of Pan-Germanism on the other side of the Balkans. The author gives a lucid sketch of the development of this project which lead up to the Koweit incident. By the time Germany had decided to extend the railway from Bagdad to Koweit on the Persian Gulf, and had received permission to do so from Turkey, Britain had also entered the Imperialist movement. Realizing the dangers to her iron and steel interests and, through these, the dangers to her entire economic life, involved in this German design, she stepped in and stopped the Koweit extension. Then followed the alliance between France and Britain, which inflicted another defeat upon German diplomacy, in the case of the Agadir incident, in 1911.

Germany turned her attention more to the Balkan side of the scheme, although in 1908, when Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, she was already clearing the road for her free passage to the East. But here again unexpected obstacles were thrown across her path. Russia joined in with France and Britain. The Balkan States defeated Turkey. Servia defeated Bulgaria. Serbian nationalism grew apace. Either the Pan-German scheme must be abandoned or forced by might of arms. And if force was to be the arbiter then "'twere well 'twere done quickly." Delay meant a strength-

ening of the opposition. While the danger of a break between Austria and Italy over the Balkan issues was becoming ever greater.

Then came what Herr Liebknecht described recently as "God's gift" to the German ruling class—the Sarajevo incident—and, on this pretext, the War.

Thus the first phase needs of Germany's opponents on the Eastern battle-front, became operative for the War only because the third phase needs of Germany and her opponents on the Western front, were actively dictating and developing the policy which demanded war for the realization of those needs—the needs of iron and steel.

The fifth and sixth lectures discuss, in the light of the foregoing critical analysis, the practical aspects of the problem. For, as our comrade points out, the scientific character of the problem does not exclude its human character. "Man makes his own history" and this involves, therefore, the reality of his responsibility for what he makes. The questions of condemnation or justification of his attitude are, hence, legitimate historical questions.

The author addresses himself to the question:—Was the War justifiable? From the militarist point of view it is justified. From the humanitarian point of view it is not justified. But the historical materialist *cannot take either of these points of view*. Says he, "I hold to the belief that war, while abhorrent in itself, may nevertheless become an engine of human progress. In fact, in the past it frequently has been so."

Is the present war justifiable from this point of view? Does it make for human progress? In answering these questions, the magnitude of the sacrifices made must not be allowed to pervert our judgment. So far, progress has necessitated sacrifices.

But just what do we understand as human progress? Here also there are different and conflicting points of view.

There is the Nationalist point of view. From this angle, the progress of mankind is accomplished through the struggle of races and nations. Each nation has an individuality of his own and a culture of its own which it must struggle to protect and promote. "A nation's duty is towards itself." Even if it for a time supports the cause of some other nation, then that is justifiable only on the ground that, for the time, its own interests are thereby promoted. *A nation's duty does not exceed its interests.* If these interests require war, then it is the nation's duty to go to war. If they are best served by peace, then to pursue a pacific policy is the nation's duty. For nationalism there can be no question of an absolute *principle* commanding opposition to all wars. Circumstances alter cases. There can only be the question whether under the circumstances the *policy* of war or peace is best. And if war, "success is the supreme test of the rights and wrongs" of the policy.

When nationalism has ascended to the heights of Imperialism, then my nation becomes *the* nation and its culture *the* culture which it is its duty to impose on the whole world. In discharging this duty of world domination, necessity knows no law other than that which springs from the needs of *the* nation in imposing its domination. There can be no recognition of international law from this point of view, except it happens for the moment to favour the "destiny" of *the* nation. For how can *the* nation conform to rules made by nations which are not *the* nation and which are hostile to it?

Once accept the Imperialist premise and there can be no escape from accepting these conclusions. It, therefore, seems illogical for those in England and France, who hold this point of view, to criticise Germany for carrying out the logical consequences of that point of view. But on closer scrutiny it becomes evident that Germany is not alone in the Imperialist procession and that the criticism is not directed in opposition to the conception but only to the German application of it.

From the Socialist point of view, the conclusions of Nationalism are denied because the premise of the "Race-National" theory is completely rejected. This means opposition not only to Pan-Germanism, but to *any* and *all* Pan-nationalism. Nationalism cannot be reconciled with Socialism except by diluting Socialism, until it no longer can be so designated.

Does that mean that Socialism is absolutely pacifist? Some Socialists claim it to be so. This is not the case, however, with the Socialists of the increasingly predominant Marxian school. For, with them, the progress toward Socialism, which in its objective coincides with general human progress, is conditioned not only by the material development of capitalist economy, but also by the development and maintenance of a political superstructure which, at least in principle, acknowledges those rights and liberties essential to the growth of the working-class movement. The capitalist class in the building up of its own economy had to fight against autocracy on behalf of political freedom. To the extent that their work had this result, they were for the time the bearers of human progress. Wars against feudal or semi-feudal despotisms were thus in "the line of human progress." The French Revolution, and the war of North versus South in America, are notable examples of such progressive wars. The Crimean War was opposed by John Bright and the Manchester School, but approved of by Socialists, like Marx and Engels, and the Chartist, Ernest Jones.

(To be Continued).

We had hoped to be able to give the whole of Mr. Craik's review, but space compels us to hold over the remainder until next month. We ought, however, to quote his concluding sentences:— "We have given an extended summary of this most brilliant book, so that our readers may unhesitatingly and at once add it to their intellectual armoury. . . . . The long and finely woven thread of reasoning is never broken. It might have been written by the Master himself."—(Ed.

Correspondence

INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION ON THE RAILWAYS

Sir,—G. W. Brown calls for facts to counter his instance of the success of composite methods on the N. E. R., definitely stating that "sectional methods have failed to achieve that position on other railways." May I point out the incontrovertible fact that the A. S. R. S., by sectional negotiation, secured an 8-hour day for *some* grades on several railways; e.g., shunters and some signalmen on the G. N. And these concessions were won prior to the 1911 strike. How has this fact escaped his notice, and the further fact that these piece-meal methods weaken the general all-grade demand for an 8-hour day?

The craft question alone will postpone the general adoption of industrial organization. Cannot we evolve by joint action or federal methods to something better? At any rate, for the present, less talk about the superiority of industrial unionism by the officials of a sweated industry would be desirable.

(Doncaster.) G. W. CHAPPELL.

(We regret that for reasons of space we have been compelled to cut down the above letter to some extent. —Ed.)

WHAT TO READ FIRST

Sir,—To the student with time at his disposal, the list of books for beginners suggested by Mr. Cuthbert may be very useful. But in the case of workers like myself, it seems almost impossible to derive any benefit from reading of such a nature. You, of course, know that in the great industrial centres the workers are practically exhausted after their toil; and, much as we want to improve ourselves, we find hard study difficult, if not impossible. I wish Mr. Cuthbert or someone else would tackle our problem.

I am most interested in the *Plebs*, and wish very much that out of the Plebs League there could grow up an organization of study circles in every town. The isolated student is handicapped in a good many ways.

(Northampton.) T. B. SMITH.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT—FOR THE MINISTER OF MUNITIONS.

"The times of that superstition which attributed revolutions to the ill-will of a few agitators have long passed away. Everyone knows nowadays that wherever there is a revolutionary convulsion, there must be some social want in the background, which is prevented, by outworn institutions, from satisfying itself."—

KARL MARX.

The *Outlines of Political Economy* are held over until next month.

Reports, &c.

BLACKWOOD EDUCATIONAL CLASS.

A class has been formed in Blackwood (Mon.), with Mr. Sydney Jones (late student C. L. C.) as tutor. There is every prospect of its being able to do some successful work. Intending members should apply to Mr. J. T. Oakley, 45 William Street, Blackwood, Mon.

TOM REES.

All Plebeians will join in wishing the best of luck to Tom Rees in his candidature for the General Secretaryship of the A. S. E. Rees is one of " our " men ; and we are quite certain that anything any Plebeian can do to assist him will be done with a will.

RUSKIN COLLEGE PRINCIPAL.

Plebeians will smile faintly at the following announcement:—

The Executive Committee of Ruskin College, Oxford, have appointed Mr. H. Sanderson Furniss, M.A., to the post of Principal of the College, in succession to Dr. Gilbert Slater, now Professor on Indian Economics at Madras University.

Mr. Furniss was educated at Hertford College, Oxford, and in 1907 he became tutor and lecturer in economics at Ruskin College, where he worked until the out-break of the war. He has for the past year been acting as secretary to the South-Eastern District of the Workers' Educational Association.

(*Daily News*, April 15th, 1916.)

C. L. C. CONFERENCE AT NEWCASTLE.

On Saturday, March 18th, a conference of C. L. C. supporters and sympathizers was held in the B. S. P. rooms, Newcastle.

Mr. Ebby Edwards, Ashington, presided and pointed out that the Conference had been called with a view to placing before the workers of the North-East the policy of the College.

Mr. W. W. Craik in a fine speech outlined the history of the College, the nature of the forces it had had to contend with, and the prospects for the future. As distinct from other so-called working-class educational institutions it taught those subjects that directly affected the workers as a class, hence its teaching was and could not be otherwise than partizan.

After a good discussion, it was moved by Councillor D. Adams, J.P. (Newcastle), and seconded by Mr. Wilson, (Newcastle, N. U. R.) supported by H. Bolton, (Chopwell, I. L. P.), Will Pearson, (Marsden Lodge, Durham Miners Association), T. W. Orr, (Medowsley Lodge, Durham Miners Association) and T. H. McEwan (Wallsend A. S. E) " that each delegate go back to their organizations, urging them to support the Central Labour College."

Mr. Craik also addressed meetings at Lemington, Newcastle, Prudhoe, Ashington, Newcastle N. U. R., South Shields, Chopwell, Cornsay, and Consett. Everywhere the opponents of the C. L. C. or rather the exponents of " non-partizan education " were conspicous by their absence.

It is intended that an effort should now be made to bring the claims of the C. L. C. more prominently before the various elements of the Labour Move-

ment in the North. Classes will be commenced at various centres, and in the meantime all those interested should get into touch with Will Lawther, 6, Wear Street, Chopwell, Co. Durham.

W. L.

Review

THE ANARCHISTS.

Violence and the Labour Movement. By Robert Hunter. (G. Routledge & Sons, 2/6 net).

This is an exceedingly interesting albeit somewhat long-winded book Its author's own statement of his purpose is as follows :—

> I have endeavoured to deal with the history of the labour movement during the last half century, in so far as it relates to the advocacy and to the use of violence. It will be found that the discussions and dissensions over this question have divided the labour movement during nearly all of last century. In the Chartist days the "physical forcists" opposed the "moral forcists," and later, dissensions over the same question occurred between the Bakouninists and the Marxists. Since then, anarchists and social democrats, direct actionists and political actionists, syndicalists and socialists have continued the battle. I have attempted to present the arguments of both sides, and while no doubt my bias is perfectly clear, I hope I have presented fairly the position of each of the contending elements.

Mr. Hunter's bias *is* so perfectly clearly on the side of the purely political actionists that the earlier portion of his book, dealing with the origin and development of the gospel of Terrorism and the Propaganda of the Deed, is more satisfactory than the later chapters in which he discusses Syndicalism and other theories of industrial action. He discusses sensibly enough the "impossibility of Anarchism," but he is a little too apt to see Anarchism in anything which swerves by even a hairs-breadth from the straight and narrow (parliamentary) path. Which is doubtless why in certain quarters he is described as "one of the *sanest*" of Socialist authors.

He begins his book with a fairly full account of Bakounin's life and exploits —including that little adventure at Lyons which so tickled Marx.

> "Then arrived (wrote Marx) the critical moment, the moment longed for since many years, when Bakounin was able to accomplish the most revolutionary act the world has ever seen ; he decreed the *abolition of the State*. But the State, in the form and aspect of two companies of national bourgeois guards, entered by a door which they had forgotten to guard, swept the hall, and caused Bakounin to hasten back along the road to Geneva."

Succeeding chapters discuss the development of the idea of Propaganda by Deed ; the career of Most in America, culminating in the Chicago Haymarket tragedy in 1886 ; and the series of crimes committed by Ravachol, Henry, Caserio and others in France in the last decade of the century. The second part of the book opens with a chapter on the beginnings of modern Socialism, including an admirable account of the early careers of Marx and Engels. Then follows a detailed description of the battle between Marx and Bakounin for the leadership of the International. And finally there are

chapters on Syndicalism (" the newest Anarchism ") and on that particularly brutal form of terrorist Anarchism known to America -the " wielding of coercive military powers by individuals ;" by the lords of finance and of commerce, with their private armies of " Pinkertons " and their " system of subsidized violence."

Those who have read their Plechanoff will not pick up anything strikingly new, on the theoretical side, from Mr. Hunter. None the less, he can express himself clearly and forcefully. For example : —

> In all these acts (those of the Terrorists) we find a point of view in harmony with the dominant one of our day. It is the one taught in our schools, in our pulpits, on our political platforms, and in our press. It is the view, carried to an extreme, which declares that the ideas of individuals determine social evolution. Nothing could be more logical to the revolutionist who holds this view than to seek to remove those individuals who are responsible for the existing order of society. As a rule, the Socialist stands alone in combating this ideological interpretation of history and if social evolution. There is something of poetic irony in the fact that the Anarchist should take the very ethics of capitalism and reduce them to an absurdity.

The portraits of Marx and Bakounin help to make the book quite one well worth possessing. J. F. H.

The *Plebs'* Bookshelf

Mr. Sidney Webb appeared in a new role recently, as the author of an interesting " middle " article in the *New Statesman* (March 11th)on the uses of fiction as material for the student of sociology. I shall take the liberty of quoting one or two of his sentences :—

> In the hundred thousand or so of extant novels in the English language, to say nothing of the contributions of France, Germany, Russia, and Italy, there is buried a vast amount of observation and criticism, not only, as we are accustomed to say, of " human nature," but also of its social environment at all ages and in all parts of the world. Of course it is often badly done. . . . (But) It is time that a stand was made on behalf of the value, as scientific material, of works of fiction. The novel, taken in bulk and scientifically digested, affords stuff in the nature of descriptive sociology far more valuable than the elaborate collections of newspaper cuttings to which Herbert Spencer applied that term. . . . . Naturally it is not always the best novel that yields the most useful sociological material. There are novelists who, in this way, have builded better than they knew. . . . . All this " Descriptive Sociology," of which a great deal more exists than any one of us remembers, needs cataloguing and classifying—

not only according to place and period dealt with, but also " to the social strata and industrial tissue described." So—to get a start on the job in a small way —I once more invite *Plebs* readers to break through their accustomed reserve, and send along the names of any novels which they have found useful or interesting. To my own previous lists I will add Mark Rutherford's *Revolution in Tanner's Lane* (Hodder & Stoughton, 7d.) which to students or readers of Mr. Craik's course on " The Modern Working-Class Movement "

will, I think, be of some interest. There are also some pretty vivid pictures of early 19th century industrial conditions in Arnold Bennett's *Clayhanger* —not as yet published in a cheap edition.

* * * * * *

I have been reading an article by Cedar Paul in the January—March issue of the *Socialist Review* on "The Appreciation of Poetry," hoping that it would give me some clue as to what exactly my feelings were about a book of verses by Mr. Albert Young, sent us some little time ago by the Northern Division "Herald" League, (75b, Grand Parade, Harringay, N.). Cedar Paul suggests that :—

> The essential elements of our appreciation of poetry are threefold. There is first of all the appeal to the ear, the appeal of rhythm, cadence, and rhyme. Secondly, there is the appeal to the sensual imagination. Since, for the fully equipped human mind, the fundamental sense is the visual, we find that in poetry the visual sensual appeal is predominant. . . . . Lastly, we have the appeal to the intelligence, this element, in so far as it is separable in analysis, being obviously one of purely rational appreciation, whereas the second appeal (that to the sensual imagination) is transitional between the non-reasonable or exclusively emotional element of sound, and the purely rational element in which appreciation depends on the understanding.

Now I don't suggest that this analysis is either complete or unassailable. But it at least has the merit—rare among attempted definitions of poetry or analyses of what constitutes its appeal—of being more or less definite and, so to speak, tangible. It gives one solid ground to stand on. And re-reading some of Mr. Young's verses in the light of this analysis, I arrive at the following conclusions :—His appeal to the ear, by rhythm, cadence, and rhyme, is not strikingly impressive. There are few 'haunting' lines or memorable passages. Some of his rhythms and turns of speech suggest that he has read Kipling. Nevertheless, there is little of Kipling's vividness ; and I think that is explained when we go on to the next head—his appeal to the visual imagination. His images are for the most part hackneyed—images got from other books of poetry, not 'new-coined' by himself. "Proud empurpled princes ;" "the cursed Ship of Gold" which "rides on a Sea of Red," but which one day will "crash on the Rocks of Right ;" "vulturous vampires," "vulture kings," "lecherous lords," "gold and purple parasites"—these are would-be 'literary' images, rather than images drawn from the poet's own observation or experience. They are rhetorical—and rhetoric is seldom as moving as personal appeal. It is vaguer, more generalized, less precise; and essential poetry, so it seems to me, deals in precisely (and personally)observed images rather than in rhetorical abstractions. Omar's

> "Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou
> Beside me singing in the Wilderness"

has that direct, personal touch. I cannot help feeling that Mr. Young would have written something about "purple vintages" and "words of wisdom, truth and beauty from sweet singers of the past" and "the sad-sweet sound of maiden's voices echoing in the cosmic void." I know, of course, that it is hardly fair to compare a modest man's work with Omar ; but I am honestly trying to explain just why, though I like some of Mr. Young's work, and

sympathise with the spirit behind it, I do not think it is *poetry*. His appeal to the intelligence (to come to the last head) is the appeal of a " rebel " to fellow rebels. There is little in his verses to suggest that he has got much further than simple rebelliousness—however sincere. One little poem beginning

" If God were dead in Heaven
And Reason reigned on Earth,"

—though it is simpler, and therefore more effective, than some of the others —suggests that he is hardly what good Marxians would call 'sound' in his analysis of the forces we are up against. His book, by the way, is entitled *The Red Dawn*, and is obtainable (by post 8½d.) from the " Herald " League at the address given above.

* * * * * *

Messrs. Allen & Unwin have recently published an English translation of the " classic of Syndicalism "—Sorel's *Reflections on Violence*. From the *Times* Literary Supplement's review of the book (March 16th) I take the following :—

> He (Sorel) is a remarkable Socialist writer. He has two qualities —originality and modesty—which are exceedingly rare among Socialists since Marx. Their most constant attributes are repetition and arrogance. . . . They take after their idol Marx, who was a typical German. He had a great capacity for assimilating other men's ideas, which he worked up into a treatise of imposing bulk and obscurity and presented as a new gospel of his own with an air of insufferable arrogance. His followers have adopted his pontifical manner as well as his arguments.

Whereas the writer of that passage has adopted a pontifical manner, and dispenses with arguments. Sombart (another German) catches it too.

> . . . the particularly ill-informed chapte in Sombart's *Socialism and the Social Movement*. . . Sombart thought Syndicalism was a movement started and led by middle-class theorists, like Marxian Socialism, and that M. Sorel was the leader—the Marx—of the movement. That was a complete misconception. Syndicalism was a spontaneous trade union movement, and a revolt against middle-class theorists.

One wonders whether the writer is equally interested in " spontaneous trade union movements " in this country—in South Wales, say, or on the Clyde. But probably ***their*** independence of " middle-class theorists " annoys him. Can the explanation of his attitude towards Sorel and the Syndicalists be that they are Frenchmen—gallant Allies ? While Marx. . . . .

* * * * * *

By the way, " Solomon Eagle," in the *New Statesman*, was recently suggesting that a good way of celebrating the Shakespeare Tercentenary would be for people to 'dedicate a few days to the perusal of his works.'

> I firmly believe (he went on) that Shakespeare is nothing like as much read as is usually supposed. I do not suggest that his fate resembles that of Karl Marx, who, though thousands of people assume thousands of other people to have studied him profoundly is really an author who is never read at all."

One had always suspected that in certain circles everybody was anxious to appear quite conversant with the works of Marx, without the trouble of

reading him. But I feel I am in a position to assure "Solomon Eagle" that there *are* circles where Marx is really and truly read, and that—naturally—people in these circles have rarely any great difficulty in "spotting" the sort of Marx "student" he describes.

* * * * * *

I have been reading *What Fools These Mortals Be*, a play in four scenes by Hermon Ould (National Labour Press, 6d.). It was written, the author tells us, as "some sort of antidote to that mass of war literature which seems directed mainly towards increasing the ill-feeling which exists between nation and nation." The play is certainly admirable in spirit and intention; but it does not strike me as a particularly powerful antidote. I should have thought that the author of *Between Sunset and Dawn* would have written a more effective play than this. But War, regarded from the purely humanitarian point of view, is hardly a subject on which there is anything much left to say.

* * * * * *

Boudin's *great* book is being dealt with elsewhere in this issue. But I may perhaps be allowed to make reference to one minor matter in connection with it here. How is it that its pages—like those of the *New Review* itself—are disfigured by so many printer's errors—mis-spelt words, transposed lines, &c. &c.? I got weary of making corrections in the margins. I wanted to settle down to undisturbed enjoyment of the book. But I was pulled up short on almost every page by some stupid misprint. The *New Review* really ought to see that its proofs are read a little more carefully. Even amateurs (I speak with all due modesty) *can* learn to do this moderately successfully.

* * * * * *

Mr. A. C. Fifield is shortly to publish *The History of the Fabian Society*, by E. R. Pease, which, judging from the advance Table of Contents will contain a good deal of very interesting matter. The history of the Fabian Society is after all no small part of the history of Socialism in this country. And there are to be, moreover, two Appendices by G. B. S.—one on the History of Fabian Economics, the other on Guild Socialism—which whet one's appetite.

* * * * * *

I have not the least idea who "Jack Cade" of the *Labour Leader* is, but I would like to commend certain recent articles of his to the notice of any Plebeian who may have overlooked them. "Trade Unionism in the Socialist State" (March 30th) and "Development of Socialist Theory" (April 6th) were both quite interesting; it was refreshing indeed to find some reference to Daniel De Leon and Industrial Unionism in the I. L. P. organ. I can't help wondering whether W. W. C's recent course in the *Railway Review* may not have had something to do with it. J. F. H.

BOOK RECEIVED.

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

The "Plebs" League

Object

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

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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.

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

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

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

P.O's to be forwarded to

J. REYNOLDS, Secretary-Treasurer,

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

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