Acquiring a Reputation

The Artsman, then, recognizes only the same necessity he has faced all the way up the school-ladder—to pass. If he have entrance conditions, there are mortgages to be paid off, . . . beyond this he must garner enough courses and half-courses, semester hours or points to purchase the indispensable sheepskin. Further effort is superogatory so far as concerns study, **per se.**

(Clarence Britten: "Civilization in U. S.)

READING the Neo-American literatti, such as the contributors to "Civilization in the U. S." a person gains the impression that our colleges and schools are devoted to the pursuit of "athletics, dances, fraternities and such."

The critics of the higher learning are too sweeping in their statements. There are individuals among our university folk who have a mind above Bill Hart, Ty Cobb, Dr. Frank Crane or Ruby Valentino. Proof: Just look at the last issue of the "Clarion," There you will see an article pertaining to the "dismal science," betitled, "A Reply to F. J. McNey," and bearing the modest superscription "By L. T. Morgan, Arts '24, University of British Columbia."

On reading the "Reply" for the first time, I seemed to have read the article before. On the second scanning, the parable in the Book of Genesis came to my mind, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." Was it possible that a well-known Vancouver socialist had become rejuvenated, a la "Black Oxen", and was at present "taking" Arts at the U. B. C.?

Now, "The Clarion" scribes are not overly adverse to "lifting" **per se.** There are, however, some reservations to the general application of the principle. The chief of which is, that the "lifting" must not be done from a member of the tribe, by a stranger, who will not even leave a "note." The violator of the code is considered a robber.

Our "estate" consists of that intangible property known as reputation. When that "reputation" is appropriated by a literary marauder, "Well!" as the descendant of a Highland cattle-thief poignantly exclaimed, "It's hard to bear."

As a matter of fact, "A Reply to F. J. McNey," consists of wholesale pilferings from "A Review of the Plebs' Economics,"* and a series of articles "Concerning Value," contributed by "Geordie" to "The Clarion" within the past year or so.

Mr. L. T. Morgan, donning the mantle of the economist, and birch in the hand, proceeds to "carry the war into Africa" for the purpose of punishing a presumptious person, one F. J. McNey, who had, when examining Professor Fairchild's lucubration on the "Theory of Marginal Utility"; the temerity to state that the Professor "would become a laughing stock for future generations."

This was too much. Notwithstanding the fact that other learned professors in the same field of endeavor as Prof. Fairchild had added to the gaiety of the dismal science, this did not deter L. T. Morgan from adding his contribution.

In his "Reply to F. J. McN." Mr. Morgan proceeds to read a lecture on Marxian economics to F. J. McN. and others who may be like minded. And he does it very well indeed. But the only original matter he contributes to the discussion is his name, and the grand pedagogical manner befitting his role.

It would seem that not only is McNey hopelessly confused between the concept value and the percept exchange-value or price, but the inference is obvious that Clarion readers in general must be in the same condition of confusion. Why do we make such an inference? Because in no part of Mr. L. T. Morgan's "lecture," "A Reply to F. J. McN.," does he indicate that "The Clarion" columns, even in recent times, contained any matter relative to the subject which he discusses so learnedly. Perhaps he was ignorant of the appearance of "A Review of the Plebs' Economics" and "Concerning Value" articles in "The Clarion." Well we will now produce the evidence to convict him of the grossest plagiarism! Compare L. T. Morgan's "intellectual labor" with that of "Geordie," I now quote L. T. M.:

"In the second place Marx made a clear distinction between concrete or useful labor on one hand, and abstract or social labor on the other . . . . . The producer, according to Marx, expends useful labor on appropriate material, and, effecting a qualitative change produces a useful object. (Here L. T. M. omits a very important sentence! Why?) At the very same time, and by the very same act, the producer, by incorporating a certain quantity of abstract labor, creates Value, not Value in Exchange. (Here the sentence, "The useful object is a commodity" is ommitted.) This Value, though thought of as an entity—as a substance having actual existence in the commodity—is only conceptually existent,—in the mind only. (Are you still with me?) Thus Value is created in the act of production, and—note carefully—exists prior to and independent of, the act of Exchange—where Exchange Value and the Marginal Utility theory come into being. This is the principal difference between Value and Exchange Value. Thus Value, being materialized and undifferentiated labor, can have no other quality than magnitude, and since it has been created in response to a social want, it can be no more materialized—than the amount "socially necessary" for the production of a commodity. Marx clearly states the Law of Value in the following manner:

"We see then, that that which determines the magnitude of the Value of any article is the amount of labor socially necessary, or the labor time socially necessary for its production." (Capital, Vol. 1, pp. 46).

"The value of a commodity, therefore, varies directly as the quantity and inversely as the productiveness of the labor incorporated in it." (Capital, Vol. 1, pp. 47).

As a matter of fact, F. J. McN., the Law of Value is only another way of saying that labor produces all values. Do you get it?

Marx further distinguishes between Labor Power and Labor. The worker, given appropriate instruments can produce more in any given period than is necessary for his maintenance during that period. Stated in terms of the Law of Value, this appears as follows: the value of the product of Labor, allowing for the value of the constant capital consumed in the process, is greater than the value of the Labor Power expended. This difference is known as Surplus Value."

(Clarion, Feb. 1st—"A Reply to F. J. McNey)

Are you still with me Mr. L. T. Morgan?

Clarion space is valuable. Yet there may be readers who are not in possession of back numbers of this journal, so we are compelled to expose the source of your profoundity, Mr. L. T. M.

Here is a reprint from "A Review of the Plebs' Economics," Clarion May 1st, 1923:

"At this point Marx takes up the problem: He makes a distinction between concrete or useful labor and abstract or social labor. Useful labor being expended on appropriate material effects a qualitative change and produces a useful object. In a society such as ours the production of goods is a social act looking to the satisfaction of a social want. Our producer, then, at the same time and by the same act incorporates a certain quantity of social abstract labor and creates Value. The useful object is a commodity. The value thus created, although only conceptually existent, is to be thought of as an entity, as a substance having actual existence in the commodity. It is created in the act of production and exists prior to and independently of the act of exchange. Being materialized undifferentiated labor it can have no quality other than magnitude and having been created in response to a social want no more can be materialized than the amount socially necessary, for the production of the commodity.

Marx therefore states the Law of Value in these terms:

"We see then that that which determines the magnitude of the value of any article is the amount of labor socially necessary, or the labor-time socially necessary for its production." (Capital, Vol. 1, p. 46).

"The value of a commodity, therefore, varies directly as the quantity, and inversely as the productiveness, of the labor incorporated in it." (Capital, Vol. 1, p. 47).

Marx further pointed out the distinction between labor-power and labor. The fact that, with appropriate instruments the worker can produce more in any given period than is necessary for his maintenance for that period when stated in terms of the Law of Value appears as the formula that the value of the product of labor—allowing for the value of the constant capital consumed in the process—is greater than the value of the labor-power expended. The difference is surplus-value."

"GEORDIE."

If you are still with me, Mr. L. T. Morgan, I might ask you why you dropped the very important sentences, "In a society such as ours the production of goods is a social act looking to the satisfaction of a social want;" and, "The useful object is a commodity?" We will now make an excursion into the field of Exchange-Value, where at least, you, as a Marginal Utilityite, might have given us a new presentation of the subject.

Let us see:

"Exchange Value—take note, F. J. McN.—may be regarded as the phenomenal form of the substance Value. It does not follow that there is any causal connection between the two—nor is there any mechanism by which Value can make itself effective in the field of circulation. It is precisely in the field of circulation (the market) that Exchange Value necessarily emerges. Exchange Value, then, is the quantitative ratio in which commodities exchange. When one of the quantities to be exchanged happens to be the money-commodity, Exchange Value appears as Price. It is the Law of Prices, not the Law of Value which is now in question.

Now this Price is clearly arrived at without reference to the Value or the Cost of Production of the goods. These goods, when once exposed for sale are at the mercy of the market. Taking the market for any given commodity, at any given moment, we find that the supply of that commodity is—for the time being—a fixed quantity. Now the average seller must sell. That is his business, and the goods will be therefore sold at such a price as will make the demand equal to the supply (this is very important). That is to say, the Selling Price is a Price which will find purchasers for all of the goods. If the Price is so low as to cause a withdrawal of goods from the market, this would show the influence of Price upon supply. In any case, the supply would equal the demand."

(L. T. Morgan:—"A Reply to F. J. McNey")

Again the deadly parallel, which blights a budding reputation:

"Exchange-value may be regarded as the phenomenal form of the substance Value. It does not appear, however, that there is any causal connection between the two nor is there any mechanism by which Value can make itself effective in the field of circulation. Now, it is precisely in this field, that is in the market, that exchange-value necessarily emerges seeing that it is the quantitative ratio in which commodities exchange, or in other words "the proportional quantities in which it (a commodity) exchanges with all other commodities." When one of the quantities to be exchanged happens to be the money-commodity, which is now invariably the case, exchange-value appears as Price. It is, therefore, the Law of Prices which is now in question. We may note in passing that the Cost of Production and Marginal Utility theories are not now theories of Value in the Marxian sense of that term. They are theories of Price and as such do not necessarily conflict with the Law of Value.

If we take the market for any given commodity at any given moment we shall find that the supply of that commodity is for the time being a fixed quantity. Now, it is the business of the seller to sell; he will sell if he can and in many cases must sell. The goods, therefore, will be sold and at such a price as will make the demand equal the supply. That is to say at a price which will find purchasers for all the goods. We may observe in passing the influence of price in the determination of demand. If the price should rule so low as to cause a withdrawal of goods from the market this would show the influence of price on supply. In any case supply would equal demand."

("A Review of the Plebs' Economics."—"Geordie.")

Our space is almost exhausted, but one more repetition before we close:

"All of which can be condensed into the statement that Exchange Value and Prices are NOT to be explained by reference to the Law of Value, Value and Exchange Value therefore, are very distinct and separate things and unless you clearly recognize and emphasize this, F. J. McN., the Marxian theory of Value is indefensible—not even intelligible."

(L. T. Morgan:—"Reply to F. J. McNey)

"All of which boils down to the statement that exchange-value and price are not to be explained by reference to the Law of Value. Incidentally it may be observed that if any student finds that the marginal utility theory is useful to him there is no reason why he should not use it as a serious contribution (albeit somewhat obsolescent) to the study of the formation of prices.

Value and exchange-value are therefore very distinct and separate things, and unless this distinction is recognized and emphasized the Marxian Theory of Value appears to do violence to the facts of the case and is indefensible. It cannot even be made intelligible."

("Geordie": A Review of the Plebs' Economics")

"The conclusion is inevitable," L. T. M. You started out with definite objects in view, First: to gain a reputation—In that you have succeeded beyond your most sanguine anticipation. Second: to prove that there is a complete unanimity of opinion between Marginal Utility theorists and Marx on

(Continued on page 8)

* "A Review of the Plebs' Economics" by "Geordie," Clarion, May 1st, 1923.