

Correspondence

MISERE!

Editor: Western Clarion.

It is a common assertion, especially among the Celtic fringe, that the English generally, lack a sense of humor. But what shall we say of the Scots in this regard? Or some of them at least.

On presenting a copy of the Clarion, containing The Nation reprint, "Presidential Art," to a Scot who immigrated to Canada in 1889, with a request for his opinion on the letter, I was astonished when he informed me "that he could not see anything in it." Not only the Harding "head" of the pin, but the well-sharpened Coolidge "point" failed to penetrate our Scot's faculties, mental, risible and political.

For all that, my Scottish fellow-worker—if not exactly a fellow of infinite wit—can wax hilarious at times. Though he is in the "sere and yellow leaf," nevertheless, he is a devotee of the "funny page"; the highly colored Sunday supplement receives his special attention. Barney Google, "Skeezix," "Jiggs," "The Duffs" and the other "Just Folks" who inhabit the picture strips of our leading journals never fail to arouse his sympathetic risibility.

He had an admiration however, that "Presidential Art" had some connection with politics. And volunteered the statement "that he was sick of politics,"—the events of the past few months—oil scandal, graft, etc.—causing him to lose all his former interest in state affairs. Further, he had cast his ballot, electing "good" men to office ever since he became a citizen, some 20 years ago. Now that his "good men" stood revealed as crooks and plunderers despoiling him of "his" oil fields, etc., he was through with politics.

This worthy Scot is the descendent of four generations of Lowland shoemakers—not common cobblers—a distinction on which he places considerable emphasis. I had been under the impression that the Knights of the Last were not only endowed with a flair for philosophy, but had a reputation for sagacity as well.

In the days of yore, have they not sat in the war councils of besieged cities, among the warriors and the statesmen? Did not a member of their ancient and honorable craft, participating in the deliberations of such a council, considering ways and means towards defending a city, the walls of which were crumbling under the gunfire of the enemy—valiantly assert—"that there's nothing like leather" to withstand the ravages of shot and shell.

How then are we to explain the obtuseness in the matters of state exhibited by the descendent of four generations of philosophic craftsmen, and a Scot to boot? Perhaps an explanation may be found in what "R" terms "enviroming circumstances," and at the same time incidentally support the theory of those who claim that environment is the dominating factor in human development—considered in its broadest aspect—rather than heredity. For did not this energetic Scot abandon the craft of his fathers, simultaneously with his departure from the land of his nativity? And for close on 35 years thereafter engage in a dour struggle with nature and capitalism in an endeavour to raise wheat on the drylands of Alta. and Montana?

Now, at the age when the Savings Banks advertisements inform us we should be able to "retire" if we save our money this impecunious ex-farmer recently abandoned his farm to his creditors, and set forth with high hopes to achieve his "ideal," independence, in another field of endeavor—the Labor Market!

It was only after he confided to me his secret—that he was "radical" and that the bankers were to blame for his present low estate—that I offered him the Family Journal, a sort of psychological test as it were.

In some quarters the Clarion editor has a reputation for Solomonic wisdom, even if he lack the other attainments of that ancient ruler. Here is an opportunity for the composer of "Here and Now" to enhance his reputation by answering these questions: "If after studying 'Presidential Art' for the space of five minutes—and spectacles in proper focus—our honest Scot was unable to see the "point," how long would it take him to "get" and distinguish the concept value from the percept Price? Or the Dictatorship of the Proprietariat from the Reign of the Saints?" FRANK CUSACK.

Editor's Note: In the course of his peregrinations Cusack has at length caught up with one humorless Caledonian! And now he proceeds to a sort of futurist, speculative mathematics as to the time it may take for his fellow man aforesaid to see certain other "points." Now a certain Euclid has declared a point to have no dimension any way. In this way we strive to save a fellow innocent from Cusack's unforgiving wrath.

Should you ever run across a good joke don't injure it by explanation—and don't be so optimistic as to offer it to a 35 year settler from Montana. And, by the bye, reputations are largely hocus-pocus and are hard to pack around. They ought to be abolished.

LENIN'S LIFE AND WORK

(Continued from page 6)

minds of the advanced revolutionary elements of every country with which he was in connection. But despite the fact that Lenin had already, determinedly and unequivocally, adopted the attitude of the future Communist International, he nevertheless took part in the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences of the antimilitarist social democratic organizations. He understood quite well that it was necessary first to awaken the minds of the workers by forming blocs with the centrist tendency, to shake the unity of Social Democracy, and gather together considerable sections of the working masses, in order not to remain content with mere propaganda, but to commence the actual struggle.

Not only did he follow with careful attention the whole of the documents produced by the various trends of thought developing in the course of the struggle—and that he did this, without sparing his energies, is amply proved by the fact that, with a dictionary in the hand, he read from the first to the last word the pamphlet written on the war by the Dutch Marxist Gorter and published in the Dutch language, without knowing a word of Dutch—but he also followed every symptom of revolutionary self-activity among the masses, and attempted to ascertain what stage of political development they had really attained. When an old Leipzig comrade visited me in Berne for the purpose of bringing me a report—a comrade belonging to the extreme left wing of German Social Democracy, but ignorant on questions of principle—Lenin succeeded in obtaining from him a complete picture of the movement, in the most literal sense of the word. I recollect the astonishment of this comrade when Lenin left him no peace until he had told him what kind of interjections the working men and women made at the demonstrations. "They make the usual interjections," said the comrade, "such as are always made on such occasions." But Lenin insisted: "Still you must tell me exactly what interjections they make." And then he got the details which he required. With the greatest attention he followed the smallest matter dealt with by the labour press of Europe and America, in order that he might learn the trend of feeling among the masses, since this was no longer expressed in the political articles which were accorded ever-increasing attention by the war censor. And our great revolutionary leader sought also abroad, in foreign lands, for this intimate connection with the working masses, in which alone the lever to the movement can be found. He sacrificed whole evenings in taverns, in order to discover the real basis of the movement by means of conversations with Swiss workers, though these by no means could be reckoned as the flower of the revolutionary proletariat. When the comrades leading at that time the left wing of the Swiss labour movement vacillated, he insisted that every one of us should form connections with workers, if only with small groups, for these formed his sole hope.

As early as the year 1916, when we gathered together those sharing our views in different countries, and founded the organization known as the Zimmerwald Left within the confines of the Zimmerwald bloc, Vladimir Ilych insisted on drawing up the program of the future revolutionary international.

(To be continued)

EAST AND WEST.

(Continued from page 7)

had "too much of the Celtic element in them."

One is reminded on hearing some "patriot" sweepingly denounce those who, he thinks, are of alien blood from him, of Burns' epitaph on a humorist he knew in the village of Mauchline. By the way, it was a playful habit of the poet in this, as in other cases, to give vent to his sparkling fancies in the form of such rhymes on people who were then as alive and well as he himself was:

Lament him, Mauchline husbands a'—
He aften did assist ye;
For had ye staid whole weeks awa',
Your wives they ne'er had missed ye.

Ye Mauchline bairns, as on ye pass
To school in bands thegither,

Oh, tread ye lightly on his grass—
Perhaps he was your father.

So let us beware of how we speak of and treat the "foreigner" because perhaps, in reality, we are just as "foreign" as he. In the first editorial quoted, we find a Teuto-Celt, and anti-sectionalist, Mr. Meighen, upbraided for not reproving a French-Latin-Celt and sectionalist, Armand Lavergne. In the other editorial, we find a Highlander and Lowlander united in the noble endeavor to ruin the farmers of an immense Dominion to the north of them. All of the foregoing too are Asiatics but of Aryan origin. But by the irony of fate, the two latter Asiatics laid themselves open to an indignant lecture from another Asiatic, Aaron Sapiro, whose ancestors, however, for many centuries, hailed from somewhere in the neighborhood of Jerusalem!

Therefore, in the interests of a "united front" against the evil forces both of unregulated nature and of our own human species, let us, so far as nationalism is concerned, follow the unbeatable advice usually given to those who are prone to dwell upon the unfortunate and unalterable incidents in their past lives—FORGET IT!

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