

## Western Clarion

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and Current Events.

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S. O. S.

**C**LARION readers, being perspicacious folk, are better able than ordinary people to see a point of importance when it appears before them, particularly so when it concerns the Clarion itself.

Over the past year or so we have wheedled, cajoled, threatened,—all to the end that the pitiable state of Clarion finance might receive more serious attention; we would have used eloquence too had that been at our command.

With what result?

Well, the truth is that our income has not met expenditure. Our subscription list is not big enough.

We are not without appreciation of the efforts made to get subs by comrades all over the country nor of the results of those efforts made, at times, under rather strenuous circumstances. Present requirements call for redoubled effort.

We have two courses open to us. One is to issue the Clarion monthly, instead of twice-a-month as at present. The other is to continue to issue it twice-a-month but to print only four pages instead of eight. Advertisements have been suggested, but it would appear from the masthead appeals made by the papers that carry advts. that, with the increased help needed to look after advertisements properly they are poor financial fodder—and all hands will agree they are not pleasant to look at.

We have had some complaints among the letters of appreciation of Clarion matter that have come our way. We have been asked to pass the word along to the Clarion writers that they should try to explain difficult matters in a simple way. Our complainants aver that hunting a dictionary all the time is an unpleasant task, and no doubt it is. But dictionaries cannot be altogether avoided, either by readers or writers and, while simplicity is a good thing at times, some effort on the reader's part is necessary also. It must be remembered that the Clarion is not now and never has been in the field as a labor newspaper. It deals, as its captions state, with history, philosophy, economics and current events, analysing the last mentioned through consideration of the others. Its good work in this field has drawn appreciation from all parts of the world and is acknowledged on all hands.

We are not disposed to make a long story out of this. We simply wish to advise readers that the continuance of the Clarion regularly at its present size is uncertain on the present revenue. We receive many appreciative letters—letters, in the main, from people in outlying districts who are in slim straits themselves and who continually hope the Clarion will find more readers.

So we pass the problem up to the readers we have now. An effort is necessary, and if the Clarion readers don't make that effort who can?

### HERE AND NOW.

**O**UR problem Here and Now is how to make ends meet? Our S. O. S. is out,—see above remarks. We must elude the baillif somehow. The following figures indicate the reason whereof:

Following \$1 each:—J. M. Sanderson, Martin Ophus, W. Bennet, F. H. Leavers, J. Pollock, W. H.

Herrmann, C. W. Blair, Geo. Silk, J. J. Egge, D. J. Sullivan, W. Clarkson, L. G. Atkins, H. C. E. Anderson, A. Gillespie, C. Saunders, "R.", A. M. Neelands, Isaacs Benson.

Following \$2 each:—Walter Ridout, H. T. Spencer, Wm. Livingstone, Jim Cartwright, C. J. Kolden, J. H. Moon.

M. E. Burger \$2.15; W. Hoare \$4; O. Erickson \$1.50; W. A. Pritchard \$3; Samuel Clements \$1.50.

Above, Clarion subs from 30 Dec. to 11th January, inclusive, total \$42.15.

## Book Review

AN OUTLINE OF MODERN IMPERIALISM. The Plebs League, 162 Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W. 1, Eng. 2s 6d. net.

**W**ITHIN the past decade many students of the materialistic interpretation of history have been induced to make a special study of Imperialism, with the result that their efforts in this particular field are shown in the increasing literature bearing directly on the activities of the master class in various parts of the world. These activities are the outward manifestations of Imperialism—a term of ancient lineage, once associated with the power of the imperators of Rome, who could assemble a force formidable enough to beat an army ten thousand strong. But since imperators went out of business the power was transferred to or rather acquired by, a class whose ownership of the natural resources, the means of production, and the appropriation of the wealth produced by the workers from these two sources, gives this class a power no imperator or emperors ever possessed in known history. And such is the magnitude of this wealth which they appropriate that a surplus can only be disposed of in a world market filled with many competitors. In this market under such conditions as competition imposes, the natural spirit of rivalry and feelings of hostility are stimulated to an unusual degree; friction, due to many economic antagonisms, is engendered, and squabbles take place between them which require the assistance of the State to settle. So, viewing the history of Imperialism over a long period of time we can say that, despite our vain notions of progress, it is even more sinister in character today than it was in Ancient Rome. It threatens at all times the civil rights and liberties and the very lives of millions of workers; and the present indications are that it will become the arbiter of the fate of civilization and the social institutions. For, strongly impregnated with imperialism as all capitalist nations are, we do not see any signs that a spirit of co-operation will ultimately arise and change its course of development.

So far, the activities of the master class of the world invariably result in intrigues for the balance of power for the overthrow of each other in the world market, and in war. As a military power it is more wantonly destructive than any barbarian horde that ever swept down upon civilizations of the past, while in the field of politics it has never yet risen above the mean puerile and vicious policy of Protection, a device which breeds corruption and lends life to the damnable illusion that competition between nations is necessary for trade. The McKinley tariff served only the interests of the American financiers and the steel and textile operators, promoting for years the keenest competition between American and British producers in many industries, just as the Fordney Bill is designed to help the American financiers, the shipbuilders and woolen manufacturers, but the great mass of producers and consumers must bear the cost of this protection for a few. While the few themselves, receiving larger gains from such a policy, will always pay the politicians for the maintenance of this political pull. It is the same with the British Imperialists who dream of a time when trade within the Empire is only possible for themselves.

Lacking a social purpose, universal in its extent, and incapable of any great constructive policy in

politics this development of modern capitalism is worthy of the greatest attention, not only by the workers,—who should be chiefly concerned in investigating the numerous causes and effects of imperialism—but it deserves equal attention from merchants and industrial supervisors. He who would write an outline of modern Imperialism must take all of these factors into his purview; he must have imagination, vision, ambition, capacity to take the great mass of knowledge at his disposal and so mould it that everyone, the general reader, the unattached student, as well as the student in the class room of a labor college will understand Imperialism for what it is. Frankly, we must confess to a keen disappointment in the "Plebs" new text book, "An Outline of Modern Imperialism"; it has suffered more from "community production" than any previous work from them. In design it is like a crazy patchwork quilt—if there has been a design then we, candidly, confess to having missed it. The treatment of this subject by the writers leaves an impression that "community production" is a blight on craftsmanship. The writers take us to all parts of the capitalist world, wherever the great economic interests of opposing groups of the master class are at stake, to Europe, the Near and Far East; Africa, from Cape to Cairo is traversed with startling speed leaving no time to review in detail the many material factors in the various problems of the master class in any one of the forementioned countries. British operations in China are disposed of in two paragraphs—under the sub-caption "Britain in China"—the only factors mentioned are British control of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking corporation and the joint British and Japanese control of the great province of Manchuria and the South Manchurian Railway Co., which, by virtue of its ownership of lands "telegraphs, steamships" (!) "coalfields and electricity, has become the centre and mainspring of a vast co-ordinated organization of capital which is the economic and political dictator of the province." Rather than tell us, even in brief, the story of such an interesting and remarkable development of this part of China, we are taken back to Europe again to consider "Anglo-German Peace Overtures," which are dealt with in two short paragraphs. We are next introduced to Germany where we are allowed to remain for a moment to take in the great expansion which marks the period of 1888-1914. Having caught our breath in this chapter we are made acquainted with the ambitions of the German imperialists in the Middle East, Morocco, Somaliland, Madagascar, the Congo and South Africa, still in the same chapter. With a suddenness that plays hell with our nerves, we are taken back again to China to see the extent of French Imperialism in Asia, which covers another paragraph, then back to Europe again to examine the antagonisms existing between France and (pre-war) Russia. The Balkan wars, 1912-13 are reviewed in three short paragraphs as the prelude to the great European conflagration of 1914-18. What we should like to see stated is a summary of the Balkan situation, comprising the economic, historic and political causes in that tangle of conflicting interests, and the same method applies to the problem of economic development of China.

The great shortcomings in this book are not those of material, of carefully ascertained facts, but in the construction of the work itself and in the absence of historical and political factors which must always be included if we are to understand imperialism. The activities of the imperialists in too many countries are considered which leaves no room for the special treatment of one group. If we get the workings of Imperialism of any one of the great powers today we can understand Imperialism in all countries. It would, from our point of view, have been quite sufficient to have treated the history of British Imperialism throughout the world, leaving other members of the Socialist and Labor movement to do likewise with the history of their countries. Yet, despite our cavillings with the presentation of the matter we can sincerely commend the book to students and propagandists in English speaking countries.

ROBERT KIRK.