

Clarion Mail Bag

THE hungry printer has visited us with his wrath and curtly asserts that we are "over-set" already and that eight pages can't hold any more, even of that high-and-dry philosophy these queer people—Clarion readers—feast upon. A printer's head is full of "points," "lines," "ems" and "picas," and that's about all. However, we must accord with his rule and abridge our ambition for space, and it won't do either to be too "uppish;" it is somewhat like being cheeky with the landlord when you're behind with the rent, and this climate is not that of Palestine.

Comrade Goudie, as usual, is the first arrival in his (gracious) majesty's mail since last issue. He sends us a Burns poem, "The Divinity of Blunders," in which the religious credulity of mankind is set forth and special emphasis laid on the schemes of the priestcraft.

"To gull the mob and keep them under
The ancients told them tales of wonder,
A pious fraud, a holy blunder, a rainbow sign,
An earthquake or a blast o' thunder were held
divine
By those whose faith to swallow doses,
A wondrous story nothing loses.
Are proof as plain o' sleight o' hand is,
As Herman Bosche's leger' main."

Subs. from Ontario and Manitoba, but nothing contentious or disputative this time. Subs. from Saskatchewan also. We have not had a word from Harry F. Smith since away back, until now, and now he is not communicative. J. J. Egge, Humbolt, promises us an article to come, covering the advantages for improved method in propaganda that might follow from co-operation with other bodies in touring speakers. Very good. We await the plan of campaign.

A sub. from Geo. F. Ritchie, Meechee, Alberta. Alfred Jorgenson has succeeded Com. H. H. Hanson as secretary of Local Equity, and sends subs. and C. M. F. contributions. We don't suppose H. H. has died of frostbite or abandoned hope, or Com. Jorgenson would have told us. Roy Reid sends subs. and C. M. F. donations from Luscar, collected from the comrades there. It would appear to be the case that each copy of the Clarion finds a community of readers on the prairie, and it is apparently taken as a kind of general text book. Huxley once described himself (in a contentious period) as a sort of "maid-of-all-work and gladiator general for science," and, somewhat in the same way the Clarion reader arms himself with the family-journal on the prairie and serves as a consulting agency for all manner of "prying curiosities" in the questions of interest to intelligent men. W. H. Exelby of Calgary Local corrects our statement in last issue that he has succeeded Com. R. Burns as secretary of Alberta P. E. C. On the contrary, Com. Burns is still secretary of the P. E. C., and Com. Exelby is secretary of Local Calgary. We regret the error and have nobody to blame but ourselves, which is not very convenient (and not altogether usual).

A sub. from A. C. Stopp, and one from J. C. Budge, Edmonton. Budge thinks the Clarion is the best educational journal on the North American continent,—but why be so restrictive in the matter of areas? However, contrariwise, R. M. Alexander in sending sub. and C. M. F. donation says: "A Journal of Current Events, History, Economics and Philosophy is all very well for Highbrows like yourself and others, but no good for the rank and file whose support as readers and subscribers you—and we—want. Make the Clarion for the mob, the mass, the submerged, etc., and you will get readers and subscribers. So don't kick, ye brainy ones, if short of dollars. Come down to the level of the big bunch whose dollars are needed."

Now here's a man ("the professor" we used to call him) who has the weight of several generations of apothecaries behind him. He can read a drug store prescription in any text, from Bablyonic eun-

eiform to the Seaman's Medical Guide. He dispenses pills, peuks and physics to the physically unwilling and has a forlorn estimate of the working class standard of intelligence, judged from that angle.

But what will you have, if not History, Economics, Philosophy and Current Events? The people who need our material are not even yet in the dilemma provided for the donkey of the medieval Schoolmen, a donkey stuck between two inviting haystacks and dying of starvation through indecision as to, which to tackle first. Our great donkey, however, has not yet taken the notion to tackle any. He does not know the nature of the problem facing his kind. And, besides, concerning the certainty of readers and subscribers following in battalions upon a policy of coming "down to the level of the big bunch," the observable facts do not warrant any such conclusions. We could name right off the reel a score of labor and Socialist papers of various complexions, a perusal by anybody of whose pages will never give rise to any dangerous brainstorm. Positively simple! And what do we find? We find that they are one and all threatening to abandon the earth if they don't get more subs and get them quickly,—that is, those that are not up to the scratch in sporting news, or favorites among the guessing fraternity.

Then what is the trouble? Well, on the one hand, with prevalent unemployment the dollar and the working man are strangers. That accounts for "non-support" of the labor press in general. On the other hand, and this applies to us, any writing that is charged with any sort of reasoned doctrine, or enough of it to be useful, is "hard to read." The average untrained mind can follow with interest a narrative, fictitious or historical. But let it be interspersed with analysis and the general interest is not sustained. Yes, sure enough—and we cannot emphasise it too strongly—we are "short of dollars," but after all the first need is readers. If we had dollars rolling in by the handful, a big circulation, and no readers, we could find no reason to be joyful. And then again, we are of the opinion that the socialist movement itself needs educating. It should keep abreast of current findings and current thought. Every event should provide for it instruction. It should be prepared and able to analyse every momentous happening and should be able to draw reasonable conclusions from international events, political and industrial, from time to time, for working class information. Besides cataloguing information it should strive to engender the reasoning habit, aided by historical understanding, so that as far as may be the path it treads shall be free from needless obstruction. It should welcome challenge to its opinions wherever that may come from, and it should be prepared to meet its responsibility. It must have an appreciation of the effects of alliances or breaks of one sort or another among the governments, and it must be able to render itself of some use to the working class in laying bare the reasons for such, and that not alone in general but in particular terms. There is a great deal more that might be said, but we had in mind the fact that the Clarion is seemingly found to be of considerable use in just such matters, not alone among general readers but in editorial offices where its interpretations are something of a guidance, and that through such channels it reaches a wider circle of readers. Knowledge is departmental, and human interest, so far as subjects of interest to individuals are concerned, is departmental also, in readers and writers alike. The several Clarion writers have their decided writing interests, and the readers have their decided reading interests also, which is as good as can be. And, before we forget, it is worth mention that we hate the term "highbrow" and we hope we'll never deserve it.

Comrade MacPherson of Wimbourne says the class there is worth the effort. The young students are showing results in study and interest. Mac himself finds the day too short to cover all the activities incidental to farm life and general meetings,

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THE NEED OF STUDY.

SOME of our readers disapprove of the attitude of writers in being too scientific with their contributions to the Clarion. Many articles are deemed to have no bearing whatever on the emancipation of the working class.

When a member of the working class enters the realms of sociology with the view to assist in placing society on a higher social basis than what at present exists, he cannot possibly confine himself to the surface of the subject. When capitalism required to have better communication with the world by laying the cable across the Atlantic the surface of the ocean was well known, but the obstacles that were to be encountered with at the bottom of the deeps had to be surveyed. Hence the harnessing of the ship "Challenger" with three scientists on board. The chemical composition of the ooze when raised to the deck of the ship made known to mankind the composition of the structure of the great chalk beds of the earth, also the production of a chart for the laying of the cable.

In order to steer the helm of the state into the proper channel the workers must have a chart of the Ocean from the surface to the bottom when they will lay their cable that will convey the message of working class emancipation without deception.

What has been long kept hidden from us is now easy of access, and what is more elevating to the worker than a little knowledge of the world in which we live? Our minds become more occupied with the deeper things of life instead of indulgence in foolish, speculative thought. Science has carried us over from the ancient field of philosophy and cast before our vision the modern spectroscope that directs light waves of our planet through its mechanism. From the spectrogram we view the various coloured rays that reveal a given element of a far off planet that has its counterpart on the earth. No matter what element is found on earth, the same exists on other stars or suns. To learn of our earth and other planets revolving on their axis around the sun is an achievement that thrills the worker and creates the impulse for still deeper thinking. The colour waves on the spectrogram not only reveal the element, but supply us with the knowledge that each color wave is a mass of miniature suns or atoms, with microscopic planets or electrons, revolving around the atom just like our planets around the sun.

The worker enters the coal mine and returns with a load of coal. When brought in contact with the rays of the sun the coal shows different colors indicating the stored up energy of the sun on plant life. Crude oil sailing on ponds or streams gives us the same result. Germany is a by-product extracting nation. Aniline oil, producing various colors for dyeing cloth, is a German product taken from coal. On cutting ice we again discover the electrical phenomenon in a beautiful transparent form. Our brain activity rises from the earth, and we gaze up into the unknown piercing through an atmosphere of dust particles producing a blue tint that otherwise would be unpenetrable darkness. We think of the almost incalculable distances between our earth and the source from which our movement have been directed. Science says that if a man died today his "soul" would, at the velocity of light, 186,000 miles a second, take 10,000 years to reach "heaven," in the milky way.

Socialism is the next step in the ladder of human development, when the working class will be responsible for the building of the superstructure. A knowledge of the methods used in the different social systems for the wellbeing of those living within is necessary; production, transportation, and exchange is the force behind the Capitalists, driving them into the field of Astronomy, Geology, Biology, and Sociology. Socialists will be compelled to begin where the Capitalists left off, and the more knowledge the workers have of the different branches of science, the better they will be equipped to direct the new social system. Speed the day.

GEO. PATON.