



# MR. ALEXANDER'S VIGOROUS FIGHT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MR. ALEXANDER continues to press the workers' cause in the House of Commons. It is impossible to give all his work in detail, but we think our readers should have more information on some of his recent speeches than the Sheffield Press has given. Take, for example, Mr. Alexander's speech on

### The Tea Duty.

It will be remembered that last year Mr. Snowden made considerable reductions in tea and sugar duties. The Labour Party on this occasion made a vigorous attempt to reduce the duty from 4d. to 3d. Mr. Alexander, in a fine speech, pointed out that the result of indirect taxation of this kind was always to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. His idea of the amendment made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the reduction in tea duty granted last year had been extinguished by higher prices.

### Last Year's Reduction.

Mr. Alexander further contended that whatever the price of tea might be today, the price to the consumer would have been 4d. more had it not been for the reduction in duty provided for in last year's Budget. The consumer had therefore gained very substantially. As soon as the remission was announced last year the whole trade reduced the price by 4d., although by doing so they would have to lose two-thirds of a penny on the actual output and sales, and the consumer benefited in that way. The estimated shortage of supply in relation to the anticipated demand was one of the factors responsible for the increased price of tea; and the other and more important factor was that very large firms in the trade were engaged, actually two or three months before last year's Budget was framed, in making heavy purchases of crops that were only then growing. That, he contended, was the main reason for the heavy fluctuation in the tea market during the year.

### Inequitable and Uneconomic.

Continuing, Mr. Alexander pointed out that the Irish Free State had entirely abolished the tea tax. In conclusion, he said, "We should judge the retention of this duty by what is the standard of a good tax. Such a tax, we think, should be equitable, it should be economic, it should be productive, and it should rest upon the necessities of life. The duty upon tea, which we are asking the House to reduce, does not comply with any one of these conditions. It is certainly not equitable. That has been demonstrated by the mover and seconder of the amendment. It is not upon an *ad valorem* basis; and therefore it presses most heavily upon the poorest people, and the cheapest kind of tea. It certainly is not economic, for it is quite certain that the consumer does not only pay the duty but pays a good deal more—the financing of the duty and the profit added from stage to stage. The process of collection makes that, I think, absolutely inevitable. It is not now really very productive."

### Another Combustion.

It will be remembered that Mr. Alexander, in his evidence before the Food Commission, stated that an attempt

had been made to create a corner in the tea market. Mr. Alexander is always watching the formation of trusts and combines, price fixing associations, and so on; and in this connection he asked the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention had been called to the formation of the "Grocers' Proprietary Articles' Association," for the purpose of fixing minimum prices and controlling supplies of important food commodities; and whether he had requested the Royal Commission on Food Prices to take evidence from the Association?

### Building Prices.

Mr. Alexander made an interesting contribution to the debate on the Building Materials (Change and Supply) Bill, which had for its purpose the prevention of profiteering in building materials.

Mr. Alexander was a member of the Building Prices Committee set up by the Ministry of Health in the last Tory Parliament. He was able to see some of the evidence of profiteering thus obtained in a very convincing speech in the House. He pointed out that whilst the Government may repudiate Socialism, Tory supporters were not so ready to accept the social sobriety for housing, precisely all of which had gone to builders and to firms supplying building materials.

Furthermore, he pointed out that whatever be their particular theory about Socialism, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Churchill), admitted during the war that the Ministry of Munitions had practically convinced him that Socialism was the only remedy. Further, he pointed out to Mr. Chamberlain that when he introduced his 1923 Act, he not only appointed a committee,

but promised that if necessary he would take full powers to deal with building prices. He then quoted from the committee's report as follows:

"We feel bound to report that we find ourselves inadequately equipped to ascertain the facts in regard to the reasonableness of prices."

"I submit," said Mr. Alexander, "from the actual facts that have transpired since his message to the committee in 1923, and the committee's report in 1924, that he has a full case for coming to this House for additional powers to deal with the situation. The present position is that the committee is sitting. It watches; it makes certain inquiries; it does its best, but its position still is, that it has no adequate powers to obtain such information as we believe the Minister ought to have. They are unable to advise him to the extent they ought to be able to advise him, if they had the full power to obtain all the facts."

### Bricks.

Quoting from a book that Mr. Alexander had read in manuscript written by a master builder, he showed the necessity of the present Bill, because of the limited output of bricks, which worked out at only 350 bricks per day per bricklayer. It was not a question of co-annoy for the bricklayer, but an absolute lack of supply of bricks. This Bill would give power to investigate in these cases, and, if need be, to set up Government brick yards in order to augment the supply and cheapen the price.

### Cement.

He next dealt with another important factor in building material—cement; and again quoted from the master builder's book, as follows:

"Another commodity which has always

failed to meet any extensive demand is cement, and very similar conditions obtain in that industry. The manufacturer and supply is largely in the hands of one huge over-capitalized combine, and although the trade facilities committee recently, after first declining to do so, have given some assistance to new works, the Government attitude is mainly one of apathy towards increased production."

### Over Capitalized.

Mr. Alexander also supported this statement about the real trouble with cement, quoting from a report of the Associated Portland Manufacturers, where the chairman said:

"The greatest difficulty they had to deal with was the high capitalization of the company, and this, shareholders would realize, was a burden which the management had to carry, but for which they were not responsible. The company started with works which were obsolete, were too much for them, they in addition paid £200,000 for rotary kiln plants which afforded no economic advantage. It was fortunate to encounter early a period of lean years. . . . The over-capitalization must have been obvious from the start. It was not a policy that was practicable, and these adverse factors were felt to weigh, although with diminished force."

### Light Castings.

Finally, Mr. Alexander pointed out that the Light Casting Association gives protection to every member of the ring, the effect of which is to keep prices high, and if need be, limit the supply to the public.

### Mr. Alexander's Bill To Check Profiteering.

Mr. Alexander is to introduce a Bill very shortly for the definite purpose of checking profiteering and curbing the powers of trusts and combines. The Bill will provide for the collection of information relating to these organizations. It has already been drafted, and will be backed by George Wedgwood and Mr. Petrick Lawrence, Commander Kenworthy, Mr. H. Dalton, Mr. A. Barnes, and Mr. R. C. Morrison.

The Bill provides that where the Board of Trade thinks that any person or any associations of persons is exercising a monopoly or substantial control over any trade, industry, or business so that serious prejudice is likely to be caused to any person or trade, &c., the board may hold an inquiry and can compel witnesses to attend and produce any necessary documents. Realities would be imposed for failure to produce the required information, but presumably as a safeguard to the trade and in order to quieten the opposition which would be caused by a proposal to publish trade secrets, the information given to the board will not be made public. Where the board decides that monopoly or control of industry is being exercised contrary to public interest, it may prohibit or restrict the exercise of that power generally and unconditionally. If there were any objection to the objector could appear to be represented before a public inquiry held by the Railway and Canal Commissioners, and witnesses could be examined on oath.

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# CITY COUNCIL NOTES.

By "CO-OPTICUS."

**No Labour Candidate Need Apply.**  
At the Council meeting held on May 13th the Labour Group endeavoured to secure the election of Councillor E. Snelgrove as a representative on the council of the Sheffield University, but were unsuccessful.

In our opinion, the Citizens' Party are very narrow in this respect. Other attempts have been made in past years to secure Labour representation on this council, but there is a definite boycott against any of our nominees taking the position. After all, why should not our University have democratic representation on this Council? We are always being told that education is free, that the workers stand in need of education, and that the best antidote to revolution is education; yet whenever we have sought representation in this way the Citizens' Party has never been big enough to drop one of its nominees in favour of a Labour representative. We venture to suggest that Councillor Snelgrove, an ex-schoolmaster, is quite as fitted to sit on the University Council as any one of the three appointed.

### The Abattoir Scheme.

Councillor Hamberstone protested against the long delay of the Markets Committee in putting this scheme into operation. The Labour Group is anxious to see the scheme operative, believing that its effect will be beneficial and will guarantee a good supply of clean, wholesome meat for the people. The present methods of slaughter and the delectable, unwholesome slaughter-houses ought to be brought to an end at the earliest possible moment. The butchers, however, are protesting against the charges for killing and dipping of cattle, asserting that this would increase the price of meat. The attitude towards the butchers' representatives is of very sweet condescension, resulting in long delay. When a trade union, however, speaks for the same spirit, quite another story was told by the Citizens' representatives.

### De the "Citizens" Want Industrial Peace.

A very interesting discussion took place arising out of a letter received from the District Council (No. 2) Electricity Supply Industry recommending that the best interests of the industry could only be served by all the men employed being attached to an organisation represented on the District Council. The amendment, moved by Councillor Snelgrove, and seconded by Councillor Watkins, suggested the posting of a notice at the electricity works pointing out that a number of men were not in a trade union. Councillor Watkins contended that the adoption of this principle would achieve a combination representing the feelings of every member, and thus prevent disputes over individual cases.

After the "industrial peace" speech of our Premier, after the continuous pleas for collective bargaining as against sporadic strikes and lock-outs, after the plea for co-operation between employer and employee, one would have expected that the request of the trade unions for the assistance of the City Council to fix up proper negotiating bodies for all the employees would have met with approval.

As a matter of fact, the non-trade unions is prepared to take all the benefits obtained by the organisation of his fellow-workers. Every municipality, as every employer worth his salt, has found it better to negotiate with employees who are organised inside a union than with the "rank" who is prepared to accept all the benefits and none of the responsibilities. Our own experience is that the man who will not pay his "union" is invariably a "sponger" on any fund that may be going. He is the man who used to object to the hospital penny (until it became practically compulsory), to the subscription list for a contrivance fallen on bad times, and so on.

The Labour Group in this amendment did not ask for compulsion; they asked that the City Council, as employers, should recommend the employees who should share the election to pay for it, and to accept the discipline consequent upon organisation. The lawyers, who are legally protected against any one who brings in their profession, were sympathetic in their protestations against what they called "compulsion," and the amendment was defeated by a considerable majority.

### Higher Rates for Sheffield.

The Council was very concerned about a clause in the new Bill now before Parliament. Alfredus Styring reported that the Rating of Machinery Bill would have considerable effect upon Sheffield; would, in fact, mean a very large increase in the rates. It had been suggested as large as 5s. 6d. in the pound; subsequently the amount was estimated at 2s. in the pound. It will be remembered that the effect of the Bill (if the Council's recommendations are accepted) will be to relieve considerable amounts of machinery from rates, with the result that householders, shopkeepers, and others would have to make up this deficit.

### Labour Amendment.

The Labour Group supported an amendment "That this Council protests against such provisions of the Rating and Valuation Bill now before Parliament as provide that large classes of machinery are to be totally exempt from rating." The Council are advised that the passing of the legislation would impose on the general body of ratepayers an increase in the rates of 2s. in the pound. That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Ministry of Health and the local M.P.'s, with the request that the latter be asked to endeavour to secure the omission from the Bill of the provisions referred to.

This amendment was carried by a large majority, and the information was telegraphed forthwith to the Sheffield Members of Parliament, as the matter under discussion in the House on the same day.

It is worth noting that Mr. Cecil Wilson, M.P., was advocating the same principle in the House of Commons at the same time. Thus we had the Labour Group endeavouring to relieve the Sheffield ratepayers of excessive rates and a Labour M.P. putting the same point of view in the national assembly.

### More Information for Councillors.

As a result of the Labour Group's agitation, each member of the Council is now supplied with the address of the Council of the Association of Municipal Corporations. This enables members to compare local government administration in other towns and cities, and also to combine their activities with other cities for Parliamentary purposes. The gist of it is that the representation on this association is largely of the Liberal and Tory type; there ought to be a greater percentage of representatives from the Labour Party. Whatever else one may say about the Labour representatives, they are extremely anxious to get all possible information, and there seems to be some degree of conservatism in the part of permanent officials, old-established administrators, and councillors, to keep this information within a comparatively small group. More and more light is being thrown on the administration of this and other cities' affairs by the pressure of Labour members.

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# THE STATE OF RUSSIA.

There are some very able people in Russia who feel that the world needs to know something of Russian internal affairs, and who are capable of telling the world. They have done this produced a "Commercial Year Book of the Soviet Union," (sic, not any book of order), which is specially for "those interested in the constitution, education, labour problems, and co-operative movement of the U.S.S.R.," and co-operative movement in general. We hope some of our readers will read to the conclusion that we desire to see the Soviet system of government established in this little Russia exactly like heaven. But it is a part of your red education, and an essential in any man's outlook, that he should be impartial as far as he can, and be fair to the things he may not like. It is with this in mind that we draw our reader's attention to this very useful Year Book, which is intended to be the first of an annual series.

### The Constitution

of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics is given in full. This is valuable as information, and essential to all students of political organization. There are four republics within the Union, with a total population of 135 millions (about three times that of Great Britain), so they will some day be felt to be worthy of consideration. So far as we are concerned, it is gratifying to see that Great Britain led off by the recognition of the Union on February 16, 1924 (by the Labour Government), this lead being followed three months by Italy, Norway, and Austria. Since then several other states have followed, notably France.

### Agriculture and Industry.

One fact is very noticeable: Russia is developing fairly rapidly. She is making progress in the recolonization of her immense wastelands, and in industrial, grain production is on the increase, and the Soviet Department of Agriculture has worked out a five years' plan for the recolonization of agriculture in the regions liable to famine, by which it is hoped to reassume a position by which harvest failures should be put out of her for ever. We hope our own Board of Agriculture will "denude copy." The tables given show that crops of cotton and flax (as two examples of "recovery") were—

Cotton.....	Flax.....
1920..... 0,550 tons	93,000 tons
1921..... 0,590 "	91,000 "
1922..... 14,500 "	125,000 "
1923..... 18,300 "	123,000 "

Before the war the export of fruit from Russia was almost negligible. Successful experiments were made in 1914, however, and 1,700 tons of cherries, apricots, apples,

pears, and grapes were exported. This is considered a first, and will be repeated in 1925. These are not large figures, but they are growing.

She has enormous resources in fuel and minerals, and this far out of one of these days to one of the richest countries in the world. And if the celebrated "Kuznetsov Treaties" had been adopted by us we should have ruled Russia to supply us with minerals, to our own very considerable advantage.

### Co-operation in Russia.

Our tenth of the peasant agricultural holdings in Russia (some two millions) are organized in 25,000 co-operative societies, which are again affiliated in 341 co-operative unions. These in turn are united in four central organizations. Co-operative publishing, insurance, and banking companies work hand-in-hand with these.

On January 28, 1924, there were 1,800,000 members of the workers' co-operatives in the United Soviet Republics, and every encouragement is being given for the development of co-operation.

### Getting a Grip on it!

There is a good deal of grip and driving force which is being put into the system of Russia, the exploitation of the people's "Commitment for Labour," and the arrangements made for education are admirable testimony to the worth of this. From childhood to old age the Russians are getting children in the way of education that they never had before. A State Publishing Agency publishes, amongst other works, forty scientific journals and works on popular science of three types: (1) For those of no education, but just able to read; (2) for those who have attended elementary schools, and are somewhat accustomed to reading; (3) for those readers whose education is up to the secondary school standard. There, it is affirmed, are in great demand by workers and peasants. Our own Board of Education does not tackle problems so simply and intelligently as this, and if their report is anything like a fair account of Russian State effort, they are going to achieve. We wish them every success in the working out of their own mission, and hope that enlightened statesmen here and in other countries will cease to show obstinacy in the way, and even join with them in what might very well be a triumph of the nations over the blindness of nationality. Stronger and older, we have all to live together on the earth of ours; and peace, forbearance, and goodwill may yet achieve what armies, navies, and Foreign Offices have been unable to obtain.

# Co-operative Party

Notes by "Co-op-Editor"

Non-partisan Co-operative Party has taken the initiative in an attempt to set up a meeting room in that district. A deputation waited on the Council of the Institute on the 21st to try to visit the premises, and report back to the executive with a view to getting a room for September.

The outdoor program of the Newcastle Co-operative Party has been fixed up. Meetings will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Thursday meetings will be held in the evening and will give reports of council work. The other meetings are of a purely political type. All the districts will be visited. Speakers, chairman, etc., are now being arranged, and we hope to announce the meetings shortly by month.

The first meeting will be held on May 26th, at Hillfoot. Councils Watkins and Beacroft, and Mr. Longden (the prospective candidate for November) will be present.

The Hillsborough Co-operative Party has given up a summer programme which includes evening rallies, visits to the co-operative society's various departments, and visits to various municipal undertakings. On the first five Mondays commencing in June, two will be given up to make time for an arrangement by the co-operative manager's secretary, to visit to the Brightside and Carbrook works, and the South Yorkshire Co-operative Laundry and another to the Brightside and Carbrook dairy department, where the process of milk pasteurization will be demonstrated. For the fifth evening, arrangements have been made to visit the electric supply department near station at Neepsend. Mr. Fiddem (general manager) has kindly promised to make all the necessary arrangements.

Other items in the summer programme will be announced from time to time.

The central executive of the party was delighted to receive the report of the new Hillsborough division. The report was most encouraging. He announced the steps that were being taken to organize up to the highest possible point of efficient and assured the maintenance by the party of five Guardian candidates, and four candidates for the Co-operative Council. He thanked and congratulated on his report, and on the work that is being done in this connection in the Hillsborough Division.

The "Sheffield Co-operators" social or distributors' Division was held in the Institute on Friday, May 8th. Mr. Norman Cooper arranged a splendid concert. The Ophelia Quartette Party gave selections. Mr. Cooper and Mrs. Marshall rendered songs for three articles, soups, and diets. Afterwards a dance was held.

the Institute orchestra being responsible for the music. During the interval, Mr. Bullard appealed for additional distributors. There was a very generous response to the appeal, and several of the interested have been fixed, with the result that we have little doubt that practically every house in the Hillsborough Division will be supplied with the Sheffield Co-operative each month in the future.

The arrangements of "Co-operators' Day" are proceeding apace. Three brass bands have been engaged to play in the Hillsborough Park for the demonstration has been definitely agreed upon. The topic of the month programme is "Through the Towns." Hillsborough Park for the demonstration has been definitely agreed upon. The topic of the month programme is "Through the Towns." Hillsborough Park for the demonstration has been definitely agreed upon.

One feature of the demonstration in the Park will be the competition of country dancing. Groups of co-operative children are being trained in all parts of the city, and judges will take place on the field. Prizes will be given to the children's class or circle giving the best performance.

Another interesting feature of the demonstration will be the tableaux, representative of some aspect of co-operation, which will be the feet of a competition. The solos in the gulls and other auxiliary bodies will take part.

The Central Co-operative Party, in collaboration with the Sheffield and Ecclesall Central Markets, has arranged a series of six addresses on "Civil Government." Various committees will be asked to describe the work of some particular council committees. Outdoors will be invited, as well as our readers. The meetings will be held in the Arcade, Ecclesall-road.

The Hillsborough Institute Fellowship have given up their meetings in the Institute for the summer period, but have fixed up an excellent programme in lieu of the usual meetings. On June 5th, a meeting will be held in the Copple, Hillfoot's Farm, Wesley Ridge, and on Tuesday, June 9th, a meeting in the Copple, Hillfoot's Farm, Wesley Ridge, on June 12th, Don Moor will be visited. Party meets Ecclesall terminus at 7.30. Visitors are expected to bring their own food and sugar. Tea and milk will be provided. For the use of adults, and for the children. On July 5th, a meeting will take place at Hillfoot's Farm, at 10 o'clock, as usual. For the use of all our readers. The program has been arranged to last. Particulars of this will be given later. On August 2nd, a meeting of the Hillsborough Division will be held in the Institute.

We understand that the meetings arranged for the firm will be given up if the weather is unfavorable, and the meeting held in the Institute instead.

The summer programme will be announced later.

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"Sell 'em!"

When purchasing from the Co-operative Society.

## FACTS FOR CO-OPERATORS.

## REPLY TO "CURRENT TOPICS."

On June 13th, members of the Sheffield and Ecclesall Co-operative Society Ltd. will be asked to appoint their directors. Also, they will be asked to elect a committee to be asked to prohibit the society from taking political action, to attain its objects.

This resolution will be discussed at the society's quarterly meeting to be held in the Montgomery Hall, on Tuesday, June 16th.

Mr. "Current Topics" (of the "Sheffield Daily Telegraph") is now writing every morning on the co-operative movement, with a view to influencing the members in the election of directors, and in regard to this resolution. "C. T." has made certain charges which cannot be substantiated for a moment, but he is always extra enough not to make the charges against individuals, otherwise we are quite sure that many of his statements would be considered libellous in any Law Court.

## OUR MOVEMENT.

The co-operative movement in Sheffield is a stupendous movement. It is working people who have pooled their savings, and who are endeavouring by their own effort, and by co-operative effort, to control the supply and distribution of all their needs—moral and intellectual, as well as physical. So far they have managed their business very creditably without the assistance of "Current Topics."

## MISREPRESENTATION.

We purpose examining his present statements so far as he has gone up to the time of writing—

"Sheffield Daily Telegraph" (C.T.), May 15th, 1925.

"But it is, nevertheless, the fact that some of these societies have been 'nobbied' by a few active Socialist propagandists who have accumulated funds of the societies a gold mine whence they can draw almost unlimited wealth."

This is not a true half-truth; it is a wicked lie. NOT A FARTHING OF CO-OPERATIVE MONEY HAS EVER BEEN HANDED OVER TO SOCIALIST PROPAGANDISTS.

## THE CO-OPERATIVE PARTY.

"Sheffield Daily Telegraph" (C.T.), May 15th, 1925.

"For this purpose they invented what is called the Co-operative Party, a name which is in itself the parent banner. There is no Co-operative Party. It hasn't existed and never did."

Here again "Current Topics" is either ignorant or wilfully lying.

THE CO-OPERATIVE PARTY WAS FORMED IN DECEMBER, 1917, AS A RESULT OF THE CO-OPERATIVE CONGRESS HELD AT SWANSEA. This Congress, REPRESENTING THE WHOLE OF THE CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, decided by an overwhelming majority, to endeavour to secure Co-operative representation in Parliament and on all local government bodies; because it was found impossible to develop the co-operative movement, unless these bodies were packed with private traders, who were using their political power against our organisation. The Congress set up the first Co-operative Party, which subsequently became the National Co-operative Party. THE DECISION, THEREFORE, WAS A RESULT OF THE CAREFUL DELIBERATIONS OF DEMOCRATICALLY APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVES.

## THE SHEFFIELD PARTY.

The Sheffield Co-operative Party is constituted as follows, representing every section of the movement:—

1. The whole of the directors of the Sheffield and Ecclesall and the Brightside and Carbrook Co-operative Societies.

2. The educational committees of both societies.

3. A representative from each Women's Guild and each Men's Guild.

4. Twenty representatives appointed at the members' quarterly meeting of each society.

5. Three representatives of co-operators from each Parliamentary Division of the Sheffield area.

6. Two representatives of the employees of each society.

7. Sheffield Co-operative Representatives on the City Council, Board of Guardians, and in Parliament.

## CO-OPERATIVE CANDIDATES.

"Sheffield Daily Telegraph" (C.T.), May 15th, 1925.

"The only interest the Party has in the Co-operative Movement is measured by the amount of money it can extract from co-operative funds."

This is another lie and a LIBEL UPON HUNDREDS OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE GIVING VOLUNTARY SERVICE BY CANNYING, DISTRIBUTIVE, AND OTHER WORK IN THE PARTY. In fact, the only paid servants of the whole organisation in Sheffield are the secretary and a clerk. The secretary's salary is no larger than any Co-operative Divisional organiser in Sheffield, and the clerk's salary is paid according to the recognised rate of the Co-operative Employees' Trade Union.

Mr. A. V. Alexander, M.P., and our Co-operative councillors and guardians receive no payment whatever from the funds of any Sheffield societies, nor from the Party.

Not a farthing has ever been paid in election expenses and on behalf of any Co-operative Party candidate, constitutionally chosen by the Co-operative Party itself. EACH CANDIDATE FOR PUBLIC OFFICE MUST BE A MEMBER OF A CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY for at least two years prior to his (or her) election. Each CANDIDATE must be a fully paid-up, leading member of the society, and no OTHER CANDIDATES, EXCEPT DEFINITELY AND SPECIFICALLY APPOINTED CO-OPERATIVE MEMBERS, ARE FINANCED BY CO-OPERATIVE MONEY.

## NO COMPULSION.

"Sheffield Daily Telegraph" (C.T.), May 15th, 1925.

"The money of these Liberal co-operators is being used to subsidise and support a party that is sworn to destroy Liberalism."

In the Political Levy resolution of both the Sheffield co-operative societies, there is a conscientious clause exempting any who object to pay. Mr. Baldwin himself refused to be a member of any other system of political levy in the Trade Union movement, in spite of his tremendous wealth. It is, in fact, the accepted democratic method of all societies of this kind, that the levy should be carried by resolution and a conscientious clause inserted. Moreover, every facility has been given to conscientious objectors to the levy, and in the Sheffield and Ecclesall Society there are NOT YET 600 DIRECTORS OUT OF 26,000 MEMBERS.

## VOLUNTARY WORKERS SLANDERED.

"Sheffield Daily Telegraph" (C.T.), May 15th, 1925.

"The Socialists are the wildest money-grabbers on earth... They are clever, unscrupulous, perfidious. If it were not for their political greed, their underhand, shady methods, and their selfishness, should come forth and forbid them to loot the treasury chest of the co-operative societies."

This is "C. T.'s" method of fighting a political battle. This is the kind of cultured, educated journalism that

is thought quite suitable for the columns of the "Sheffield Telegraph." And it is written of a splendid band of working men and women who give their services, day in and day out, absolutely free, and who are carrying out the traditions of the Rochdale Pioneers.

## MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS.

"Sheffield Daily Telegraph" (C.T.), May 15th, 1925.

"If the members of the local co-operative societies are wise they will not only refuse to allow the levy to continue, but will see that delegates are sent to the Southport Congress pledged to vote against political alliances of any sort."

We suggest that if members of co-operative societies are wise they will make their own decisions without regard to "Current Topics'" opinions or advice. "Current Topics" is not a participant; he is meddling about the movement, and is certainly not in a position to advise the men and women who are keenly interested in the spread of co-operation and watching its interests day by day.

## "CURRENT TOPICS" GLARING CONTRADICTION.

"Sheffield Daily Telegraph" (C.T.), May 15th, 1925.

"To most of the members, apparently, the co-operative is nothing more than a shop. That is a pity, because it ought, and should, be a good thing for the members who are sufficiently interested to make it so."

What an admission, and what a contradiction. It is precisely because the co-operative movement is something infinitely more than a shop—that social, educational, and political activities are an essential part of the movement. However, this is an excellent contradiction to "Current Topics'" said a little less than a year ago, when we were asking for the Eudcliffe Park for the co-operative demonstration. Here are his actual words on that occasion:—

"After all, a co-operative society is nothing but an organisation that runs a large multiple store on a free-keeper on a large scale. And if this purely trading concern is to have the use of a park—and on a Saturday, too—why not Cockayne's of Cole Brothers', or John Walde's, or any other large, well-embellished emporium? We don't know that these latter saw the use of a park, but having the use of a park, why could it be refused them, seeing that the concession had been granted to their rivals and competitors?"

"The City Council would be quite within its rights, and perfectly logical, if it refused the request on the ground that the co-operative societies are mainly trading undertakings and that it would be unfair to give them special facilities in the public parks for advertising their shops."

## THE ANTI-POLITICAL RESOLUTION.

Mr. "Current Topics" commends the resolution which maintains that the political resolution has in its practice proved disastrous to the Sheffield and Ecclesall Society.

## SHEFFIELD &amp; ECCLESALL INCREASED TURNOVER.

The resolution referred to was passed in March, 1923, and the POSITION OF THE SHEFFIELD AND ECCLESALL SOCIETY SINCE IS A TOTAL CONTRADICTION OF "Current Topics'" comments. Since that period until January, 1925, the SALES HAVE INCREASED TO THE EXTENT OF £14,395 8s. 12d. THE TOTAL HAS BEEN INCREASED £14,177 12s. 5d. during the same period.

## FROM SUCCESS TO SUCCESS.

At the present time we have the report for the quarter end May 20, 1925. We find that the SALES FOR THIS PERIOD HAVE INCREASED BY £3,200 12s. 6d. when compared with the corresponding period of last year. EVERY TRADING DEPARTMENT IN THE SOCIETY HAS INCREASED ITS CASH TAKING, with the exception of the coal department, which has lowered prices; but there has been an INCREASED SALE ON TONNAGE. THE TOTAL SALES FOR THE YEAR HAVE INCREASED TO THE extent of £57,060. The contribution to MEMBERS SHARE CAPITAL HAS INCREASED over the last quarter by £740 18s.

## A SURE SIGN OF CONFIDENCE.

When we examine the PENNY BANK—an indication of the members' confidence—we find an INCREASE OF £3,413 11s. 1d. compared with last year. MEMBERSHIP HAS INCREASED BY A NET INCREASE for the past three months of 145. BANK BALANCES AND LOAN INVESTMENTS show an increase of £13,273 5s. 10d. THE WHITSUNDAY HOLIDAY CLUB SHOWS AN INCREASE OF £547 8s. 2d.

## DIVIDEND INCREASED.

It should be remembered that when the political resolution was carried the dividend was 7s. in the pound. The last dividend was 12s. 6d. in the pound. So that the ANTI-POLITICAL RESOLUTION IS based upon a false ASSUMPTION, calculated to shake the confidence of the members in their own organisation, and certainly ought to be defeated.

## THE LONDON SOCIETY ANOTHER EXAMPLE.

Not only has the wonderful progress of the Sheffield and Ecclesall Society given the lie to the "anti-politicals," but the experience of the London Society is equally convincing.

The London Society has been "political" since the Swansea Congress resolution on the matter was carried. It is THE CO-OPERATIVE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ACTING AS DIRECTORS. During the slump period the CAPITALIST PRESS RAN A SIMILAR STUNT to "Current Topics'" present campaign, claiming that political action was ruining the society. At that time investments were £104,579. In March this year they have increased to £220,000. The cash balance at that time was £23,099. At the cash balance on present is £705,287. At that time they had a bank overdraft of £10,000. At present they have wiped out that overdraft, paid AN INCREASED DIVIDEND, PUT LARGE SUMS TO RESERVE, and INCREASED THEIR MEMBERSHIP DURING THE LAST HALF-YEAR BY 14,138.

## BRADFORD A FURTHER EXAMPLE.

The City of Bradford Society is "political." It is a Co-operative Party, and a Member of Parliament are Chairman of the Directorate. ITS DIVIDEND HAS BEEN INCREASED from 7s. 12s. 6d. to 25s. 10d. in March, 1925. ITS MEMBERSHIP HAS INCREASED from 23,212 to 191,570 by March, 1925. ITS TRADE HAS INCREASED from £36,453 2s. 4d. to £201,501 4s. 4d. Since the close of the half-year in March the membership has increased under 550.

## LETTERS SUPPRESSED.

Our readers may note why these things are not pointed out to "Current Topics" in the "Telegraph's" "co-

pendence columns. Our reply is that there is no guarantee of their publication. We ourselves have sent letters that have never appeared. In the "Sheffield Telegraph," May 28th, "Current Topics" admits receiving letters accusing him of attacking the society and interfering in matters that have nothing to do with him. BUT THOSE LETTERS WERE NOT PRINTED, only "Current Topics" comments thereon were allowed to appear.

**NO APOLOGY NEEDED.**

The facts regarding the Co-operative Party will stand the closest examination. We have nothing to hide, nothing to be ashamed of; and nothing to apologise for. We are proud of the work accomplished; proud of the splendid band of men and women who have gathered round us in that work.

**THE NEED FOR A PARTY.**

THE PRIVATE TRADERS HAVE A NATIONAL ORGANISATION to which thousands of pounds are contributed for political and propaganda purposes. They publish leaflets, posters, &c., slandering our movement and endeavouring to destroy our organisation. Why should not we defend ourselves against these unscrupulous depredations from the FEDERATION OF BRITISH INDUSTRIES, THE ASSOCIATION OF CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE, AND THE DRAPERS' CHAMBER OF TRADE have visited the Chancellor of the Exchequer REQUESTING HIM TO IMPOSE FURTHER TAXATION UPON CO-OPERATORS.

The Federation of British Industries represents 18,000 firms or companies, with £4,000,000,000 capital. The Associated Chambers of Commerce represents 125 chambers, and 50,000 manufacturers, merchants, bankers, &c. Why should not our organisation use its political power as well as these people?

**THE WORK OF THE PARTY**

THE CO-OPERATIVE PARTY IS DEFENDING THE MOVEMENT, representing its opinions, fighting its battles in public—on the Guardian, on the City Council, and most particularly in Parliament, where Mr. Alexander is, day in and day out, putting the co-operative viewpoint before the Government of this country. Already he has been of great assistance to the movement in general, and to Sheffield in particular. All this would be impossible were it not for the fact that hundreds of people have rallied to our support, giving voluntary services without any payment in any shape or form, because they believe that by these means, and only by these means, can they defend our great movement and secure the objects the founders had in view.

The Party Office is a bureau of information for members on Workmen's Compensation, Old-Age Pensions, War Pensions, Unemployment, Health Insurance, Relief, and so on. Research work is carried on, and information is furnished to the cause. This journal ("The Sheffield Co-operator") is printed out of the funds voted for the purpose.

The Political Grant is not paid over to the Party in bulk, but is given at the discretion of the directors. So that all talk about "looting funds" and so forth, is as false as it is unfair.

**DON'T FORGET TO VOTE.**

In conclusion, therefore, we trust that every member of the Sheffield and Ecclesall Society will attend to his and her business without regard to what "C. T." has to say. That they will appoint directors who will watch the business of the society in the best interests of the movement, and that they will lend their support to the Co-operative public representatives, and to Mr. Alexander in particular. The way to do this is to defeat the anti-political motion on June 10th by an overwhelming majority; and when the members' meeting is held, members must see that their hands are not tied by this action of the Tory Party.

**THE BRIGHTSIDE AND CARBROOK CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED**

have now  
**THE MOST UP-TO-DATE MILK PASTEURISING PLANT IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE.**

PRESENT WEEKLY OUTPUT IS OVER **14,000 Gallons.**

With our New and Enlarged Plant we have now the capacity to

**DOUBLE THIS OUTPUT.**

Our MILK is Supplied direct from the **DERBYSHIRE DALES.**

All dust, dirt, and possible disease germs are removed by our Special Pasteurising Process.

PURE RICH MILK OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY ONLY IS SUPPLIED. Recent experiments have succeeded in extracting 2 1/2% of fat and 5 1/2% from Milk in one day's supply.

DO NOT RISK IMPURE MILK.

GET THE PUREST AND BEST FROM YOUR OWN SOCIETY.

**SHEFFIELD & ECCLESALL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD. BESPOKE TAILORING DEPT.**

**YOUR NEW SUIT. YOUR NEW COSTUME**

FOR HONEST VALUE! Trade with Your Own Store.

OUR Stock is replete with all the Newest Season's Goods in every shade and pattern. We have the cloth you want. We can sew you the cut you desire, and we guarantee the workmanship. See our stock of Worsted and Saxonia, and allow us to quote you for a really good thing, made on your own premises.

**Ready-Made Clothing Dept.**

Call and Inspect our stock of Ready-to-Wear Clothing. We have the best selection in the City.

- MEN'S STYLISH SUITS . . . from 27/6
- MEN'S INDIGO BLUE SUITS . . . " 27/6
- SMARTLY CUT YOUTH'S SUITS . . . " 20/6
- NO BETTER VALUE ANYWHERE.

Boys' Suits in Tweed and Navy in a profusion of Styles, Colours, and Prices to suit all pockets.

BOYS' FLANNEL SUITS (all sizes) . . . 8/11.

RAINCOATS, LIGHT OVERCOATS, and SPORTS COATS in great variety.

**Hat Department.**

To be Smart you really must have a New Hat.

- BOILERS . . . . . from 8/11. (Half sizes)
- SOFT FELTS . . . . . " 7/6
- VELOURS . . . . . " 7/6

MEN'S AND BOYS' CAPS, in all the New Designs and Colours, from 2/6.

THE ARCHWAY, ECCLESALL ROAD.

**ATTEENCLIFFE DIVISIONAL LABOUR PARTY. HELLO!**

The 1st Labour Party aims to draw your attention to the following Weekly Programme:-

- Monday, 7.30 to 10.30 a.m. Relief-Dinner. . . . . Ed. J. BERRY'S SPEAKING AT A PUBLIC MEETING will be held.
- Tuesday, 7.45 a.m. Wake's Lecture Meeting . . . . . DORRISBURGH SCH. CHURCH.
- Wednesday, 8.30 a.m. Wake's Lecture Meeting . . . . . Ed. J. BERRY'S SPEAKING AT A PUBLIC MEETING will be held.
- Thursday, 7.30 p.m. Open Air Public Meeting . . . . . Ed. J. BERRY'S SPEAKING AT A PUBLIC MEETING will be held.
- Friday, 7.30 p.m. Open Air Public Meeting . . . . . Ed. J. BERRY'S SPEAKING AT A PUBLIC MEETING will be held.
- Saturday, 7.30 p.m. Wake's Lecture Meeting . . . . . Ed. J. BERRY'S SPEAKING AT A PUBLIC MEETING will be held.

Secretaries: Mr. W. H. HARRISON, 10, St. James' Street, Sheffield; (Women's Section) Mrs. A. HARRIS, 4, Hildon Road, Darnall.



**Cheerio!**

After entering a week's groceries a mutual friend inquired what you had failed him out of the list. "You see, my dear," explained the grocer, "I'm sorry to have to ask you to take them, but I've got one here—my right hand's away with a swollen foot."

**Gave Somebody Else a Chance.**

"You have saved my life," said the old man to the young hero who had risked him out of the fire. As a reward you shall marry my daughter. The young man glanced at the daughter, and then threw the old man back again.

**Safety First.**

OSCAR: "Better keep your head inside the window."

YOUNGSTER: "I can look out of the window if I like."

OSCAR: "I know you can. But if you drops any of our bridges you'll have to pay it."

**A Good Reason.**

It was a Jewish clothier who ran out of his shop after a customer who had tried on part of a suit and had asked to be called by the policeman whose he was preparing to see.

He said: "I thought you were a gent, Mr. Policeman; do not cut and vest us nice."

**Unemployed No Longer.**

"A man with all an beard went over the side of a rock and an impetuous village called on poor old bearded farmer, whose wife had been travelling in the bus, to sympathize with his people."

"What you worried about your wife, Jarrett?" asked the village.

"Well," replied Jarrett, "I was for a while, but her cousin in the village got a job out and she saw Sam get on the bus with her own eyes."

**The Postmist.**

On taking off his coat he was seen to be wearing both braces and a belt. Inscribed on the buckle of the belt, in bold letters, were the words, "Be prepared."

**On the Right Road.**

Two young couple were making their first long motor trip. They had looked out two new, rubber-tired clothes in a sudden rain-storm, and then had pulled out of a hedge, and then had pulled out with a flashlight to inspect a signpost.

"Are you on the right road, dear?" called his wife.

"We are," he replied grimly, "but we didn't know it."

The sign read: "To the Postoffice."

**As the Post Says.**

A man contemplating marriage should remember that a thing of beauty may be a law for ever.

**A Carey Story.**

"Can I see the lady of the house?"

"Yes, you can."

"Well, madam, I am selling a can opener which cannot be beaten. It opens any can that can be opened by a can opener, and says can be opened by this can opener that can be opened by any can opener. If you can open a can I can—"

"But the door had shut, and he could not."

**A Clerical Error.**

"WHAT does this mean, sir?" asks the boss of a clerk, who is sitting in his chair.

"It was an accident of the awful fog," explained the clerk.

"No, no," said the boss testily. "What has the fog to do with it? You do not see five miles away."

"No, sir, I know I don't, but you do, and I thought you'd be late."

**W.E.A. OUTINGS.**

We are pleased to notice that the Sheffield and Rotherham branches of the Workers' Educational Association are commencing their activities for a fine programme of outings.

From May 30th to June 2nd they are running a holiday school at Youlgreave, Derbyshire. Youlgreave is within a few minutes' walk of the beautiful Lathkill Dale, and also is in close proximity to Middleton Dale—sometimes known as Cannon Wood Dale, and even Bradford Dale. Haddon Hall, and even Thoresby Hall, are also within reasonable distance.

On June 20th a ramble has been arranged to Stanborough Hall. Train leaves Sheffield (Victoria) at 2.4 p.m. Visitors are asked to bring food with them.

SHEFFIELD AND ECCLESALL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD.  
**FURNISHING DEPARTMENT.**  
 THE ARCADE " " " " ECCLESALL ROAD.

From Lands End to John O'Groats Cycling will soon be in full swing. Round about Sheffield there is some of the prettiest scenery of Great Britain, which is easily accessible to the Cyclist.

**RIDE A FEDERAL CYCLE.**  
**3d. Per DAY**  
**BUYS ONE.**

**RIDE THE MACHINE WITH A GUARANTEE**  
**THE CYCLE OF RELIABILITY**

For Terms apply the Department.

SHEFFIELD AND ECCLESALL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD.  
 DECORATING DEPARTMENT, CEMETERY ROAD.

**PAINT**  
**The CHEAPEST and BEST**

OUR New Derby Factory is now turning out 1,000 TONS per annum, and can claim to be the best equipped factory for Paint manufacture in the world.

C.W.S. PAINT at 9d., 1lb.; U.S. 2 1/2, 2 1/2, 4 lb.; and VARNISH PAINT at 1/- per pound, and at your own Store, is unequalled for Quality.

Buy your Paint at the Stores, and share the Profits.

LET US QUOTE YOU FOR THAT DECORATING JOB, A GUARANTEED JOB AT A REASONABLE PRICE.

SEND A POST-CARD, AND WE WILL CALL UPON YOU.

—TO—  
**THOSE IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES**  
**THIS WHITSUNDE!**

The BRIGHTSIDE & CARBROOK CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY will allow members

**£1 to £5 WORTH OF GOODS.**

(Larger amounts by special arrangement only.)

DRAPERY. HARDWARE. BOOTS.  
 FURNISHING. COALS. FANCY GOODS.  
 CROCKERY. MILLINERY. COAL.

YOU MAY REPAY 1s. to 5s. per week AT YOUR OWN BRANCH.

ASK YOUR BRANCH MANAGER FOR FULL PARTICULARS TO-DAY.

**Sheffield Co-operator.**

JUNE, 1921.

**CO-OPERATIVE POLITICS.**

THE issue re co-operative politics is being raised once again in Sheffield, not by those who contribute to the fund, but by a Press diametrically opposed to the co-operative system—a Press which takes not the slightest notice of interest in the movement except when it can oppose it. A political light gives to the opportunity, as it does an industrial dispute, and these are the only occasions where the "Sheffield Telegraph" takes the slightest interest in the well-being of co-operators.

The political question was decided by an overwhelming majority at a specially-summoned Congress; the advantages of political action are well known to the interested members of the movement, and so well known to our opponents that they lose no opportunity of defeating our purpose—sometimes by the vilest of misrepresentation.

A great movement like the co-operative movement, doing a trade of £20,000,000 a year, wholesale and retail, interested in every kind of industry in the country, cannot leave politics alone, any more than the Federation of British Industries.

The report of our Parliamentary Committee shows that since we took political action we have representatives on all the most important Government Committees, whereas we could not get a single representative during our period of neutrality.

We have two representatives each on the Board of Trade Advisory Council and National Milk Advisory Council, and one each on the Department of Overseas Trade Advisory Committee, Committee on National Debt and Taxation, Ministry of Agriculture, Advisory Committee on Co-operative Credit, Post Office Advisory Council, Coal Advisory Committee, Building Prices Committee, Advisory Committee re Women Police, Railway Rates Tribunal, Committee on Industry and Trade, Royal Commission on Food Prices, and Imperial Economic Committee, besides several on the various Trade Boards.

We cannot afford to neglect any opportunity of presenting the case for co-operation in the local and national councils of government. It is part of our philosophy of life that co-operation should be an accepted principle of government and administration. We, as a movement, set up with the object of changing the conditions of the State into a co-operative system. Whatever changes are to be made we believe they should come through the considered will and ordered judgment of the people. That will, and the formation of that judgment, are essential parts of our work, and consequently politics is today an essential part of co-operative organization. Whether it was so or not in the past is really beside the question. That is that we cannot afford to neglect it any more than we can neglect propaganda, advertising, education, or even the modernising of our productive factories or distributive machinery. To be up-to-date we must be where our opponents—the multiple shop, the Proprietors' Articles Association, the trusts, the combines, and the great financial concerns—are represented in the House of Commons. We make no apology for our action, and we trust that co-operators will not be misled by this latest Tory attack.

**LEICESTER 'SELF-HELP'**  
 BOOT & SHOE MANUFACTURING SOCIETY, = Deans Rd., Leicester.

Manufacturers of all kinds of  
**LADIES' & GIRLS' BOOTS & SHOES.**  
 TRADE INDUSTRY EMPLOYED. All Patterns made and Cut out. Part of your Store for "SELF-HELP" Brand.



"CARAVAN," by John G. St. John, 75, St. John St., London, E.C. 4.

It is long since we reviewed a work of this kind, and so, when we saw this book, we were glad to read it. It is a collection of fine quality. Of course, the author is well known to our readers in general, especially to those who have followed his educational activities of our university days. The "Caravan" is a collection of "Box" have had high appreciation.

**A Fanciful Title.**

There is a quiet fancy in the title of the book. It has chosen for this volume of about 100 pages, the title of "Caravan," which is a word of familiar origin, but which has been used in a sense which is not familiar to the general public. The author has chosen to use the word "Caravan" in a sense which is not familiar to the general public. The author has chosen to use the word "Caravan" in a sense which is not familiar to the general public.

**Galsworthy's Outlook.**

If we were to attempt a judgment of Galsworthy's "Outlook" we should say that he is well satisfied with individual man and woman, but disapproves of the society and the conditions of our unrestrained emotions. His lack of imagination and his insouciance. His finished style is the chief reason for its success. It is a book that is well worth reading.

**Mystery Plays.**

There is something of the spirit of Galsworthy's "Mystery Plays" which is a collection of plays that are well worth reading. The author has chosen to use the word "Mystery" in a sense which is not familiar to the general public. The author has chosen to use the word "Mystery" in a sense which is not familiar to the general public.

**The Master Hand.**

Despite the wide variety of subjects treated in this book, there is a certain unity of purpose. The author has chosen to use the word "Master Hand" in a sense which is not familiar to the general public. The author has chosen to use the word "Master Hand" in a sense which is not familiar to the general public.

**Economy.**

In these days of popular science and progress it is rather surprising that the word "economy" is not more often made in a book of this kind. The author has chosen to use the word "Economy" in a sense which is not familiar to the general public. The author has chosen to use the word "Economy" in a sense which is not familiar to the general public.

**Replying to advertisements.**

In replying to advertisements please refer to the "Sheffield Co-operator."

**MR. ALEXANDER AT THE LABOUR HALL.**

MR. ALEXANDER spoke to a crowded meeting at the Hillsborough Labour Hall, Sheffield-road, on Sunday, May 24th, taking for his subject "The Budget."

Mr. Jarvis presided, and before calling upon Mr. Alexander stated that the Hillsborough Labour Party had the fullest possible confidence in their representative. He (Mr. Jarvis) was proud to live in Hillsborough and to be represented by one of the finest members in the country.

The crowded hall was a tribute to Mr. Alexander's continued popularity, and also an evidence of appreciation of the splendid work he was doing.

Mr. Alexander said he was not there to make a propaganda or a fighting speech in the ordinary accepted sense of the word. He was anxious that everyone of his constituents as far as possible should understand the present Budget and all its implications. Labour could never govern unless the people were educated up to the Labour standard.

He then dealt in careful detail with the whole of the Budget estimates. He showed that the 22 Marks duties and the silk duties were the beginning of a tariff policy; that the taxes were arranged to fall more heavily on the poor than on the rich; that, in fact, it was a rich man's Budget. He regretted the stupendous amount of money that was being spent in the fighting services, and showed that the Tory Government's pension scheme was totally inadequate and misleading.

Mr. Alexander was accorded a hearty vote of thanks at the conclusion of his address.

Men's and Youth's High-Grade Footwear.

**The "Blandford" Brand**

WALKING, TENNIS, CRICKET, HORTS, FOOT, FOOTBALL.



Manufactured by the Midland Boot Manufacturers Ltd., WELLINGBOROUGH.

**FOOTWEAR**

FOR GENTS AND BOYS.

**Holyoake Brand**

IS THE MOST RELIABLE.

TRADE UNION STAMP No. B.

can be purchased from any co-operative shoe Department in Sheffield.

MANUFACTURED ONLY BY THE KETTERING CO-OPERATIVE BOOT SOCIETY.

HAYLOCK WORKS, KETTERING.

**"OUR CIRCLE"**

Monthly, 1d.

A Clean and Popular Magazine for Young Folk Full of Stories, Pictures, and Controversies.

Published by the National Co-operative Ltd. Writing for the United Linn Millers, Warrington.

**ASK AT YOUR STORES FOR "IVY" BRAND**

**BOOTS AND SHOES**



Made by **HIGHAM FERRERS CO-OPERATIVE BOOT SOCIETY Ltd., Northampton.**

**The 'Cat' astrophe.**

SHORT STORY BY EDNA PENNY.

"DARE them little varnishes. I'd give 'em what for if I could catch 'em. Wonder what they'll throw in next. They want some-whipping, that's what they want."

"Why, whatever's the matter?" said Mrs. Smith, when Mr. Smith finished his remarks about the young varnishes, and had slammed the black door very vigorously.

"Better indeed!" replied he. "Why them young Brown has dropped an odd bit in our garden, right spot of them chrysantheums. Brightest sort of 'em, parents are sure, judging by their names."

"And the cat dead?" asked Mrs. Smith.

"Why, of course it is. You don't suppose I'd stop there if it wasn't."

At this Mrs. Smith discreetly withdrew into the back kitchen, leaving Mr. Smith muttering and guessing about what he would do if he could "catch 'em."

Mr. and Mrs. Smith were an elderly couple, who did not waste much kindness on any one, especially on the young. The cat of their garden adjoined a piece of waste land with just a corner meeting the end of another garden that was of a higher level than the Smiths' garden. The "young varnishes" abounded to meet the two healthy and vigorous young sons of a Mr. and Mrs. Brown. The Brown boys had incurred the wrath of the Smiths on various occasions owing to their ball having dropped into the garden on the lower level, consequently everything that descended into the Smiths' garden was laid on the credit, or debit, of the Brown boys. Mr. Smith's wrath on this occasion was due to his having found the body of a much-hated black cat on his pet chrysantheums.

Mr. Smith ever supped that night, was doubtful as to what he was going to do about the cat on the next day. He hesitated making Mrs. Brown take the blame of the garden, replacing the chrysantheums that had been broken, and, in addition, was going to give Mr. and Mrs. Brown five shillings for two boys ought to be brought up. Mrs. Smith put in a word when she could, now and then, such as "Disgraced!" "Serve 'em right too," degrading Mrs. Brown on a lady-good-for-nothing, &c. In fact, the Smiths had, for them, quite a lively supper-time.

When Mr. Smith came home at dinner-time, she wanted to know "how much longer he was going to be before he went to Brown about the cat," to which he returned, he "hadn't had time yet."

Next morning at dinner-time, Mrs. Smith wanted to know "when he was going to see about that cat," "The fair side of seeing it," he said. "Whenever I get into the yard, I see nothing but that cat. All the time I was out there, I was looking for it. I don't know as Mrs. Anzley'd think it was our cat, the time it's been there. The prerogative!" asked me why her husband's buried it."

As a matter of fact, that cat was getting on Mrs. Smith's nerves, and Mr. Smith was getting the benefit of her "nerves."

"Well, you go and tell the Browns to take it out," retorted Mr. Smith, "you've got more time than me. My overalls having somewhat abated since he had slept. He had suddenly remembered, whilst requesting his speech for the Brown's edification, how Mrs. Brown had laughed at him once before when he had demanded reparation for two letters placed that had been broken by the boy's ball. He could almost fancy he heard his own cry: "if he hadn't ever been a boy," although as he told himself, "a dead cat was different, the somehow didn't fancy the interview."

That evening on Mrs. Smith was taking the milk, the milkman suggested to receive the cat. "If he hadn't ever been a boy?"

"No, someone poisoned your cat?" he queried.

"'Tain't our cat," snarped Mrs. Smith. "It's other folk's rabbit."

"No, you're for lack, make," replied the milkman, who was used to the Smiths' groups.

"Then they'd better have kept such luck." "Well, I should bury it, if I were you, or you'll have it, or give the milkman a copper or two to take it away."

"I shall do as such thing. Them at has thrown it over will have to bury it," returned the irate lady.

It seemed as if everyone in the neighborhood would soon know about the cat, for when Mrs. Smith called in the little cooper shop at the end of the street kept by Mrs. Jenkins, the first thing that Mrs. Jenkins asked was:

"How have you gone on about the cat?" Mrs. Smith felt approved. She had gone along to the shop, ostensibly for a handle of wood, but really to tell the story, and to find she was entertained was too bad.

"What's the matter?" she demanded.

"Why Smith told our Tom last night," replied Mrs. Jenkins.

Over supper that night, Mrs. Smith wanted to know "why he wanted to tell everybody in the street about the cat. The Browns would soon get to know and think he was afraid to make them talk it out." Mrs. Jenkins's reply suggested to drop in and when the story of the black cat had been recounted, and, after covering the Brown's reputation and agreeing with the views of the Smith family: "Still, a black cat always brings luck, so I've heard."

(Continued in our Next Issue.)

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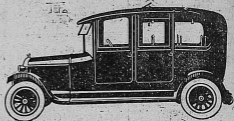
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