LANDLUBBERS TRY TO BECOME JACK TARS

Koch Writes of Difficulties College Men Have in Making the Grade—Sailors Wise Old Chaps

That experienced seamen are wary of landlubbers, particularly college men, is illustrated by the following story from Raymond Koch: (This was written before the boys had "landed" jobs).

For more than a week Zeuch and I have been here in New Orleans, the port of the South, unraveling the mysteries of maritime job-hunting. As yet we have no job, but we do feel that we have learned much of ports, of shipping, and in particular, of the avenues through which to seek a job on the sea. Also we have learned how to approach and how not to approach these avenues—more often, sad to say, how not to approach them.

Rooted to the soil by birth (our sires were farmers in Iowa and Oregon), Zeuch and I are landlubbers in every sense of that word. Also we are college men, but we knew enough about hand not to parade that fact before prospective employers. The word college so they say, will promptly antagonize a shipping master.

"Scrape off the varnish if you want a job at sea," one chap told us, "College men have disgraced themselves on board boat."

We were prepared, then, to emphasize our manual skill—Zeuch as a cook with six years' experience, and I as a carpenter.

Learning the Ropes

In the course of a week we have discovered that there are many agencies one might approach for work on the sea. None of these, so far as I know, are permitted to charge sailors a fee.

First, there are the shipping masters working for their respective shipping companies. Much like these shipping masters are persons who work independently—who keep sailor hangouts, or sometimes seamen

Thanks, Friends

CASH
E. N. Durland, Chicago, Ill. $80.00
Louis N. and Mrs. Robinson, Swarthmore, Penn. 25.00
David Englestein, Montreal, Quebec 10.00
Mrs. Merrie Wilson, Pleasant Lake, Ind. 25.00
David Kaplan, Newark, N. J. 10.00

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES.
O. O. Wagner, Millerton, Penn.
J. Chesterfield, Boston, Mass.

HOLIDAY OBSERVANCE

American Independence and Volsteadism were gaily celebrated at Commonwealth on the evening of July 4 with fiddles, guitars, and flying feet. The big square dance, in which five sets, each with its own stentorian caller, were on the floor at once, lasted until nearly midnight. A few couples "round-danced" for a short while but this form of the lively art engendered but little enthusiasm or perspiration.

Neighbors and friends to the number of at least 250 attended. Our mountain primroses came out in dresses just as short and just as pretty as those of their city cousins; their husky big brothers wore their cleanest overalls; while their elders, if they were not on the floor showing the youngsters how, were on the side lines gossiping with their friends from the next township, whom they had not seen "since Jemima's funeral."

Lemonade ad libitum was provided by the College, and, all in all, it was a very successful affair.

hotels. One shipping master here in the French quarter has 500 cots for seamen. The sailors usually take rooms for a week. If he can get these sailors out in less than that time and re-rent their beds, business is more profitable. A third agency is the United States Shipping Board. At this place the majority of sailors find jobs. A fourth method of getting work on a boat is to board each ship

OUR LITTLE STORE MILDLY BURGLARIZED

Thief Takes About Five Dollars' Worth When He Might Have Taken One and One-Half Times That Amount

For the second time within its history the Commonwealth store has been burglarized—both times after dark. The latest nocturnal prowler, however, was modest and considerate in making his levy. He—we presume he was he—look only about five dollars' worth of goods, wares, and merchandise when he might have taken much more.

The Fortnightly rushed its staff writer to the scene early the next morning and, through an exclusive interview with the management, he learned that the business will continue.

The store is not as large as, say that of our competitor's, Sears-Roebuck & Co., and it is not believed that the burglary was the result of business rivalry, since the Commonwealth store is maintained for the accommodation of the kitchen and for the convenience of the students and the neighbors and makes only a nominal profit on the goods sold but effects quite a saving on the goods bought, securing to the community wholesale prices.

In fact it is not believed by the management that any real capitalist had anything to do with the robbery. Pointing straight to this conclusion is the fact that a pair of blue overalls was stolen (or at any rate, taken seriously). No modern capitalist, it may be safely assumed, could afford to neglect his own business and come this far in the night for a pair of blue overalls. Our intelligence department, therefore, is reluctantly on the point of drawing the conclusion that the burglar, possibly an amateur, was an honest workingman. As confirming this theory it is pointed out that the burglar either was hungry and thirsty himself, or threatened with hunger and thirst, or knew of some
Commonwealth College Fortnightly

Published twice a month at Meno, Arkansas, by Commonwealth College, a school for self-educating, non-propagandistic education for workers. Subscription, one dollar a year. Entered as second class matter, January 26, 1914, at the post-office at Meno, Arkansas, under the Act of August 24, 1912. Signed anuates express only individual opinion.

Editors, particularly, labor and farmer papers, are welcome to make free use of material appearing in these columns. A line credit the Commonwealth College Fortnightly will be appreciated.

Vol. V. No. 11. August 1, 1929

BOOK REVIEW

PROLETARIAN LITERATURE.

One Hundred and Twenty Million. Michael Gold.—International Publishers.

This book is a collection of graphic sketches of proletarian life—life in the grime and dirt, on a garbage dump, in a section gang; life during unemployment, hunger, cold; during strikes, the suffering of the agitator who sees his family starve.

Into these sketches of the lowly, Michael Gold weaves the contrast—the greed, smug complacency, cruelty, and dissipation of Capitalism. “Faster, America, faster!” he writes, and pictures a special train bound for Hollywood, on board the children of wealth who, “screamed, wrestled, frazzled, muddied, rubbed, goosed, and ate huge chicken and bacon sandwiches.”

In the latter part of the book, Michael Gold has included a collection of proletarian chants and recitations offered as a means of welding the masses into solidarity.

Insofar as he has portrayed Pro... (Continued on Page Three)

An Anglo-Saxon Strike

By Walter Wilson.

IV.

There was a temporary lull in the battle when strike leaders and company representatives came to an agreement on May 4. Union leaders insisted that the agreement of the company not to discriminate against union members was a signal victory for organized labor.

Very soon afterward over three hundred workers, the most active union members, were discharged, precipitating another strike. On application of about half a dozen business men, the National Guard was ordered in.

The National Guard was composed of about 85 per cent industrial workers, many of them friends of the strikers. Several appeared at union headquarters armed with rifles and tear bombs, wanting to “jine” the union. No acts of violence can be charged to rank-and-file members of the Guard. Many of them resigned on the ground that they were supposed to be policemen and could resign at their pleasure. (Since the strike, Secretary of War Good, has ruled that the use of troops in the strike was illegal.)

V.

What appears to be another temporary agreement was entered into May 25. A witnessed agreement on the part of the Company that there would be no discrimination because of union membership is the important concession gained by the union.

Since the second agreement, unrest, instead of disappearing, has increased. Girls in the mills say that they are forced to work harder than ever before; that discipline is harsher; that signs are up, reading, “In case of fire or strike, see the foreman before leaving the plant.” While the second agreement specified that all hiring would be done by the new personnel manager, E. T. Wilson, there have been many violations already. Foremen controlled by local politicians continue to hire favorites. It was specified that the union members could not agitate in the mill but since the settlement, the “Loyal Workers,” a company-organized union, has been trying to secure members.

Though no discrimination was to be made against union members and though Dr. Mothwurf said that all workers would be taken back by June 10, when the morning of June 11 dawned, W. J. Kelley, organizer, said that not more than 20 per cent of the strikers had been taken back. Those working are resentful that all have not been taken back; others have been asked to go back to work by the Company but refused till all are called. A union organizer explained this attitude by saying, “They are soampion they figure an ‘injury to one is an injury to all.’”

The native workers were opposed to the second settlement. They even resented it but accepted the advice of their leaders. Many are suspicious of Miss Weinstock, the Federal Commissioner, and most are suspicious of the supposedly impartial person, E. T. Wilson, who, it is rumored, gets $50,000.00 yearly from the Bemberg-Glanzstoff corporation for being “impartial.”

The strikers understand that if the Company lets them organize, then, when organization is complete and plans have been perfected, an agreement on wages and conditions will be fought for.

If the Company lives up to its agreement, the strike is over temporarily; but, unless it does—and to the letter—labor trouble, including retaliation against brutalities, may break out at any moment.

VI.

Most progressive labor leaders and students think the settlement “poor.” The consensus of opinion seems to be that the time was opportune to carry the strike to complete victory. Relief was coming in; the Secretary of War had the use of troops under advisement; eminent lawyers were willing without charge; the strikers’ spirits were excellent; public opinion, thanks to the wonderful publicity, was favorable; a Senate investigation was likely; and finally the changed attitude of the Company in treating with workers’ representatives was significant. Many think it would have been better to have gone back to work without any agreement.

Union leaders who participated in forming the agreement say that the workers won the right of organizing, and that that was the only issue involved.

The local Chamber of Commerce was, and still is, violently opposed to the union. Since the strike they have formed a vigilance committee to fight the union. The churches and ministers were overwhelmingly hostile, including the Salvation Army. A
prominent churchman in the Presbyterian Church was one of the kidnapping gang which tried to kidnap another elder in the church, union organizer Penix. Workers and farmers were almost all sympathetic toward the strikers. Several lawyers of the section, notably John R. Neal, former dean of the law school of the University of Tennessee, were sympathetic. Capable labor lawyers have been retained by the Tennessee Federation of Labor to prosecute the kidnappers.

VII.

This strike has destroyed old misconceptions of the Southern worker. He can no longer be called docile, unorganizable, ignorant, lazy, selfishly individualistic, 100 per cent patriot, anti-foreign, etc., nor are native organizers required to organize him.

Labor conditions will change vastly in the South. The Southern worker is awakening. The American labor movement should, by all means, assist him in his efforts toward unionism. All Southern textile workers know the strikers. Several lawyers of the Presbyterian Church prominent churchman in the South, notably John R. Neal, former dean of the law school of the University of Tennessee, were sympathetic. Capable labor lawyers have been retained by the Tennessee Federation of Labor to prosecute the kidnappers.

PROLETARIAN LITERATURE.

[Continued from Page Two]

Letarian life, and portrayed it well, and actually by those who wished to see how matters progressed, but a general judgment was suspended until there was more to go by, although, naturally, among themselves there was plenty of comment. One old fossil used to look on and ejaculate, “By God, sah, what do you want to work so hard fer, sah?” in utter amazement at more activity perhaps than he had ever seen before. As a matter of fact, if the location of the College had been left to a vote of the district, it would never be, probably, where it is.

But imper turbably they went on, the College likewise, and opportunity arose for gain. Lumber had to be hauled, farm products were needed, and chance to barter or sell arose and the bailiff was not slow to take the opportunity. Through such means at least a few became better acquainted with the College than they had ever before been. Among these can be noted a few staunch friends some of whom have been a loud protesters by replying attacks of slumdwellers and liars which have since been inaugur-

SOCIETY NOTES

Harry Cohen, former student, erstwhile postal clerk at Elchanan Hospital (Colorado), and a ‘right smart’ chap, writes us he is on the way to Commonwealth from Buffalo, N. Y., over the following direct route: New York, Washington, Atlanta, Mobile, New Orleans, Shreveport, Little Rock and Mena. We expect him to arrive in time for supper.

Emily, the irrepres sible and enthusiastic offspring of our warm friends, Professor and Mrs. E. C. Willson, after a sojourn in Skaneateles, Tom’s River, New York, and other great centers of the East, writes us, in part, as follows: “Oh, the wonder of Commonwealth! There, I had to get it off my chest! I won’t wish the College happiness exactly, for that might lead to a rut, but I do wish you all that keeps you from becoming an ‘ordinary college.’ Excuse this reminiscent tear-drop.” Sincerely yours,

EMILY.

P. S. We are all well and hope you are the same.

E.

It Shall Be Attended To.—The callers at Commonwealth are many and they evince an immediate interest in all the things they find here. One in particular had hearty praise for everything she saw, except that she thought that “the herdman gives altogether too much attention to the cows which are either eating or laying around all day, wasting their time.”

OUR LITTLE STORE

MILDLY BURGLARIZED

[Continued from Page One]

one—perhaps a deserving Democrat—who was; for he took, besides the blue overalls, sugar, extracts, tobacco, etc.

But the rogue had better not let us hear him bragging about the job. In fact if we happen to learn his identity in any way, before the statute of limitations begins to run, we shall deal harshly with him. We shall demand the return of the overalls and payment, within ninety days, for the sugar, extracts, tobacco, etc.

And the next burglar who visits us at night had better beware our bull-dog and our artillery.

Commonwealth and Its Neighborly Relations

The country surrounding Commonwealth is very hilly and hills in Arkansas seem to produce a type all their own. Anyone who has been in Arkansas will know what is meant; and those who have not will have to make their own assumptions. Let me say here that the general idea of a “hill-billy” is cruder and rarer than the actual articles. In general, then, we will admit that the commonest type of country resident within fifty miles of the school is about as follows: Crude—from necessity; without the tools and the amenities of urban life and out of touch, more or less, with the world, what else could be expected? Admittedly, they are unlettered, poor, narrow, suspicious—but these last two qualities are perhaps consequences of the rest. On the whole, they are much better than would be normally expected and will compare well with slum-dwellers, educated snobs and priers or the idle rich, so far as the finer elements of honor and manhood are concerned.

Into such a puritie, then, came the College as an utter surprise. Not a resident knew how to take it and, until they found out, they stood off. Of course we were visited occasionally by those who wished to see how matters progressed, but a general judgment was suspended until there was more to go by, although, naturally, among themselves there was plenty of comment. One old fossil used to look on and ejaculate, “By God, sah, what do you want to work so hard fer, sah?” in utter amazement at more activity perhaps than he had ever seen before. As a matter of fact, if the location of the College had been left to a vote of the district, it would never be, probably, where it is.

But imper turbably they went on, the College likewise, and opportunity arose for gain. Lumber had to be hauled, farm products were needed, and chance to barter or sell arose and the bailiff was not slow to take the opportunity. Through such means at least a few became better acquainted with the College than they had ever before been. Among these can be noted a few staunch friends some of whom have been a loud protesters by replying attacks of slumdwellers and liars which have since been inaugur-
COMMUNICATED THROUGH THE MOUTH OF A HOUND

There was no established policy as such on the part of the College, but it was well understood that it should go its way, carefully and exactly, just to all, without fear or favor. It was not long before this was recognized and probably earned favorable comment. Next, simply and without flourish, the College was opened socially to its neighbors. Dances, socials, entertainments, especially at Christmas, were inaugurated and all bade welcome. (Parenthetically, it may be said that these last have been so successful and wonderful that not a child within a day's tramp of the College, so to speak, but would consider itself cheated if it should miss the fun at this time.) All in all, the idea gradually penetrated that "those College folks might be fools, in some ways they were trying to be good neighbors, anyway."

Sorrow and disaster come to all. There are no exceptions even in the hills. One day a quiet, sudden man appeared upon the campus and diffidently and apologetically but very earnestly announced: "My girl died yesterday; I can't pay town prices—will you take her to the cemetery in your truck?" Of course we did and we were able to help otherwise. Since then the College has thus served its neighbors three times in their sorrows.

A store was started not so much for the general purpose for which stores exist but in order to purchase wholesale for our own needs. There was not another one within two miles. Little by little the neighbors began to find that this little shop was convenient for getting their more usual necessaries and that they were not exploited unduly in their transactions. If children were sent, they usually returned enthusiastic—a gift of candy or gum is a pleasant event in the day for them and hinders not a particle any good opinion the parents may already have.

It is doubtful that some of these mountain folk handle $100.00 actual cash during a year; their trade is by barter. Corn, cotton, hogs, are their cash-in-hand in the larger affairs of life, but eggs are the standard coin when dealing with the College. They are frankly told that they will not receive as much by a cent a dozen as they could get in town and they or trade in goods for what they bring. are given the choice of cash-in-hand. At first they all wanted the money, then little by little, they began to trade back the cash for sugar, coffee, "caliker," and snuff. Now the practice is almost universal that the proceeds are taken up in store goods and little money changes hands.

Human nature is the same in the hills as elsewhere and that means once free relations are established, mountaineers talk. Perhaps it is to remark: "Jim is right purely this morning" or "that dang hound pup of mine has runnin' fits again." A little judicious questioning together perhaps with some previous knowledge of Jim may lead the storekeeper to suggest that he will send over a few pills which, he thinks, may do Jim good, and he drops a few C. C.'s into an envelope with the instructions that Jim try these for a day or two. Or the pup receives an extra dynamic dose of worm medicine sure either to kill or cure, for he is nothing but a dog, anyway. As a matter of fact, not a dog has died yet. They all still have their days.

And so the story goes. Now Father Zeuch is bothered to death that he may be prosecuted under the medical laws, and Mrs. Mills not a little by ragamuffins minus buttons or with torn coats who come to her for repairs.

Small farmers lacking a cultivator or a Georgia sweep borrow from the College. On return they invariably ask what is the damage and as invariably they are told, "Oh, charge it to profit and loss; we may need as much from you some time."

The library is another medium of contact and books of all kinds are going out five miles or more in all directions. Here as elsewhere is the ever-present human element. The customers are mostly women and one has but to suggest that perhaps they would not care for this or that work to be assured that that will be the very one they take.

Little incidents, intimate, pathetic, are all the time happening. We heard that a small boy some miles away had stepped on glass and was weak and dangerously ill from loss of blood. A practical nurse happened to be with us at the time. She was sent to the home, with finest results. Not long afterward, a little girl from the same family was overpaid a few cents in her change. She walked back those weary miles to make return because of the regard her family had for the institution!

Of course not all is beer and skittles. There have been individuals in our group selfish, opinionated, perhaps, who could never adjust themselves to the College brand of cooperation. Some of these sooner or later taking themselves away, have gone up and down the highways and byways, proclaiming us unworthy and ignoble. Among the gossips and the prejudiced they have found ready bearers; among many, thanks to the fair, frank policy of the College, they have been received with avarice and dislike and significant tappings of the frontal bone have, figuratively, rewarded their efforts.

All in all, what has been endeavored to be related here goes to prove that there is something in practical applied psychology.

G.

LANDLUBBERS TRY TO BECOME JACK TARS

[Continued from Page One]

at the docks, and, if you are to work on deck, to ask for the chief officer; or if in the kitchen, the head steward—or the captain directly. A fifth, and as we found, the most effective way is the American way—by pull. This method is not open to every seaman, it is true, but Zeuch and I were fortunate in having a "friend in court"—one who has influence with shippers.

COMMUNICATIONS

Los Angeles, Calif., July 19, 1929.
Commonwealth College Fortnightly, Esteemed Comrades:

Please find enclosed postoffice money order to cover renewal for two years.

All good wishes to Commonwealth and the snappy, humorous and educational bulletin.

It makes up in quality what it lacks in size.

Very sincerely,

WM MITTELBUSCHER.

What is celebrity? The advantage of being known to people who don't know you.—Chekhov.

There are big dogs and little dogs, but the little dogs should not be disheartened by the existence of the big dogs. All must bark.—Chekhov.