

John Bellers and his Work

JN an article by Isaac Sharp (vol. xii. p. 117)—“John Bellers—Lost and Found”—the writer places among modern finders Karl Marx in 1867 and Edouard Bernstein in 1895.

In point of time, between these two should come Karl Kautsky, who refers to Bellers in 1892 in *The Class Struggle*, first published in German and since issued in America somewhat abridged, in English. The following is Kautsky's reference :

Pages 99 and 100 : “ It is now nearly two hundred years ago since a well meaning Englishman John Bellers submitted to the English Parliament a plan to end the misery which even then the capitalist system, young as it was, was spreading through the land. He proposed the establishment of communities that should produce everything that they needed industrial as well as agricultural products. According to his plan, each community needed only from two hundred to three hundred workmen.

“ At that time handicraft was still the leading form of production ; the capitalist system was still in the manufacturing stage ; as yet there was no thought of the capitalistic concern with its modern machinery.

“ A hundred years later the same idea was taken up anew, but considerably deepened and perfected by socialist thinkers. By that time the present factory system of mills and machinery had already begun ; handicrafts were here and there disappearing ; society had reached a higher stage, accordingly, the communities which the socialists proposed at the beginning of the nineteenth century for the purpose of removing the ills of the capitalist system were ten times larger than those proposed by Bellers (for instance, the phalansteries of Fourier).”

Since the Bernstein notice of Bellers, the Quaker reformer is mentioned in *A History of British Socialism* by M. Beer, written in German in 1912 and enlarged and rewritten in English in 1919 (London : G. Bell & Sons) :

Page 71 : “ The years from the beginning of the Civil War to the end of the seventeenth century produced also several social reformers. As we are concerned only with those reformers whose schemes contain socialistic elements, we must confine ourselves to the pamphlets of Samuel Hartlib, Peter Chamberlen, Peter Cornelius Plockhoy [sometimes written Plockboy, at other times Peter Cornelius Van Zurik-Zee] and

John Bellers. The most important of them is that of Chamberlen, whose social criticism is closely related to communism, inasmuch as he makes use of the proposition that the labour of the poor, *i.e.*, the wage workers, is the source of all wealth. John Bellers, a member of the Society of Friends, whom Robert Owen, as well as Karl Marx, greatly admired, represents a combination of Hartlib, Plockhoy and Chamberlen, making however a serious contribution to social economic speculation by proposing to make labour-time and not money, the standard of value."

CHARLES R. SIMPSON.

Early Friends in Nottinghamshire, 1668

THE names of such friends as are appointed for the service of truth in the monthly & Quarterly Meetings. 1668.

THE SAND MEETINGE

Richard Bo[a]re, Robert Murfine, Gervus Lambert, Thomas ffarnworth, Sammuell Nicholson, Roger Storr, Richard Newcome, Thomas Emley, John Camsell, John Birks.

THE CLAY MEETINGE

Thomas Samson, William Hudson, John Hasselby, Theophilus Eaton, Alexander Samson, John Gudridge, George Rogers, William Rogers.

THE TRENT SIDE MEETINGE

William Smith, Edward Langford, Thomas Elsam, Robert Carnell, John Theaker, Robert Shaw, Robert Storr, John Truswell, William Calvert, Joseph Walles, Thomas Ridge (Backslider).

WEST SIDE FORREST MEETINGE

Timothie Garland, Thomas ffarnworth, Richard Cooper, Matthew Bracknell, Oliver Hooton, George Cockram, Robert Grace, ffancis Clay, Sammuell Hooton.

EAST SIDE FORREST MEETINGE

Thomas Jngall, Ralph Bateman, Edward Asline, William Birkett, Richard Birkett, Thomas Oakeland, Joseph Wass, William Blanch, Edward Butler, William Watson.

NOTTINGHAM MEETINGE

John Reckless, William Watson, Thomas Hyfeild, Edward Poe, George Hopkinson, John Hart, Richard Richerson, John Hand, Humphrey Need, James Slacke, William Wood, John Marshall, George Oates.

VAILE MEETINGE

William Claytor, Matthew Markham, Robert Bullivant, John Barker, William Poole, Thomas Howitt.