

THE COMMONWEAL

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ONE PENNY.

SOME BOURGEOIS IDOLS ; or IDEALS, REALS AND SHAMS.

THERE are certain catchwords which have a marvellous charm to calm the breast political, a magic power to levitate the mind captivated by them out of the regions of mere argument and recognition of facts. Such a hold do these words and the deified abstractions they cover, have on the average man of the nineteenth century, that they and they alone are worshipped as the ultimate manifestation of goodness, beauty and truth. To be opposed to these abstractions is to be condemned as blasphemous against the first principles of rectitude, moral and political.

Let us take Liberty. What a charming phrase that is, what a word to conjure with! What a thrill can be evoked from an average audience by the tub-thumper who waves his hand and pronounces the magic formula "liberty of conscience" or "liberty of contract." Little reckes the applauding Bourgeois whether he has the living reality itself, or merely the empty hull from which the soul has long since fled. Little reckes he whether the thing he clasps be human or not. Liberty as expressed in liberty of contract, of conscience, etc., as understood by the Bourgeois of to-day, has been dead wellnigh three centuries and buried since the French Revolution; the shibboleth that now stalks in its semblance is its vampire, and like other vampires, it has but one function, to suck the life-blood from its living kin—real liberty.

Time was when our modern "liberty of contract" was the expression of a living reality. Feudal oppression said in effect to the labourer, "You shall only work for one master, for him who is your lord, under whom you were born; you shall work for him for ever, even though he be unjust, harsh or cruel, and you shall render him his accustomed dues, whatever they may be." As against this principle of traditional *status*, the rising bourgeois world invoked "liberty of contract." "Liberty of contract" was then a reality as against its negation, the tyranny of *status*. The victory of *contract* over *status* having been once definitively assured, one might have imagined that liberty was thereby assured also. And this is what the Bourgeois thought and thinks still. He will not recognise the subtle change that has come over "liberty of contract" in the moment of its supremacy—that the tyranny to which it opposed itself is now absorbed into itself. So long as the barren form is there, it matters not to him that by means of the modern revolution in the conditions of production and distribution, its content, its living principle is no longer what it was, but the opposite of what it was—that the body of liberty is animated by the soul of slavery. Hence the horror of the ordinary Radical at the sacrilegious hand that would boldly transfix the vampire-body, notwithstanding the honoured shape it bears. He feels the blow struck at liberty of contract is a blow struck at himself, at the core of his being. For is he not himself the embodiment of a contract-system? What bourgeois sentiment really cares for and has cared for, in its revolt against *status* is not liberty, but the development of the bourgeois world. "Liberty of contract" was essential to this development in its war with *status*, and therefore received honour at its hands, not because of the *liberty*, but because of the *contract*—the power of contract being its only means of realisation. The liberty is the bait held out to the proletarian fish, which covers the hook of contract. Unless labour can be contracted for, *i.e.*, caught by the Bourgeois, it is of no more use to him than the fish that remain in the sea are to the fisherman. "Liberty" in the sense of the bourgeois economist is then, in brief, an empty abstraction which stands in flagrant antagonism to the real, the concrete, liberty of the Socialist. The abstract liberty of the economist is the liberty to die quickly of starvation or slowly of the same. The Socialist knows no such liberty as this. He cares not for the liberty to change masters with identical conditions in either case; he cares not for the liberty to refuse work and starve quickly or accept it and starve slowly. He would be glad to see such liberty for ever abolished. The liberty he values is the concrete liberty for individuality to assert itself, the leisure or freedom from work and care which is essential thereto, and which with comfortable circumstances and good surroundings, make up the *sine quâ non* of all real liberty. Thus the "liberty" which to the mind of the later middle ages was an ideal, became real in the earlier phases of the modern world, but its reality has long since evaporated, leaving a sham in its place.

"Liberty of conscience" is, again, another of the glib phrases so neatly rolled off the tongue, and which are supposed to crush an opponent against whom they are invoked, by their mere intrinsic weight. This too, as employed by the bourgeois Freethinker and Radical, is

often but a vampire, a semblance of a reality which has ceased to be. The typical British "Freethinker" would regard with horror as a violation of that sacred idol "liberty of conscience," any attempt under any circumstances to prevent the infusion into minds incapable of judgment of doctrines which he would admit to be injurious morally and perhaps even physically. His sheet-anchor is argument and reasonable persuasion—to which we say *à la bonne heure*, when the possibility of argument and reasonable persuasion is there. But let us take a case. A child, or person intellectually incapable either naturally or through ignorance or both, comes under the influence of the Salvation Army or the worst kind of Catholic priest, it matters not which, is terrified by threats of the wrath of God into "conversion," becomes the slave of General Booth or the "Church," is warped morally and mentally for life, and in the worst case possibly driven to religious mania. There's the result of liberty of conscience. The bourgeois Freethinker, hide-bound in this abstraction, is quite oblivious of the fact that though the form of liberty is there, it does but enshrine the reality of slavery; that it is a liberty to deprive others of liberty. It would be intolerant forsooth to suppress the Salvation Army—he will tell you; liberty of conscience demands that the Salvation Army and every other body or individual shall have the privilege of enslaving the minds of the young or the ignorant by threats or cajolery—of fooling them to the top of their bent. Against this the only weapon he permits himself is argument or persuasion. He forgets that argument is only a reliable weapon when employed against argument, *i.e.*, against a doctrine avowedly based on reason, and that against one which makes its appeal not to reason but to faith, fear and ignorance, argumentative persuasion must be a broken reed. The freedom to hold and propound any proposition, however absurd, as a theory to be judged of, and accepted or rejected at the bar of Reason, is quite another thing from the liberty of the hot "gospeller" who claims to hold a speculative pistol to the ear of ignorant and weak-minded people by threatening them with damnation if they reject his teaching. The one is of the essence of real liberty, the other is the vampire of a dead liberty of conscience which was only living and real when it was opposed to the positive power of the representatives of dogma over men's persons and lives. As our comrade Gabriel Deville well puts it, "The aim of collectivity is to assure liberty to each, understanding by this the means of self-development and action, since there can be no liberty where there is the material or moral incapacity of consciously exercising the faculty of will. . . . To permit by religious practices the cerebral deformation of children is in reality a monstrous violation of liberty of conscience, which can only become effective after the proscription of what at present passes muster for religious liberty, the odious licence in favour of some to the detriment of all." The vampire, Bourgeois liberty of conscience, must in short be impaled before true liberty of conscience can become a healthy living reality.

Let us take another idol. This time we tread on sacred ground indeed—equality between the sexes. Well may the iconoclastic hand tremble before levelling a blow at this new Serapis. Nevertheless here also—as the phrase is understood by the ordinary modern woman's right advocate—we are bound to recognise a vampire. In earlier stages of social development, woman was placed in a condition of undoubted social inferiority to man. The female was unquestionably in a position of disadvantage. Into the grounds of this inferiority this is not the place to enter. Suffice it to say it existed and that against the state of things it implied, the cry of "equality between the sexes" was raised, at first in a veiled and afterwards in an open manner. For some time it represented a real tendency towards equality by the removal of certain undoubted grievances. But for some time past the tendency of the bourgeois world, as expressed in its legislation and sentiment has been towards a factitious exaltation of the woman at the expense of the man—in other words the cry for "equality between the sexes" has in the course of its realisation become a sham, masking a *de facto* inequality. The inequality in question presses, as usual, heaviest upon the working-man, whose wife to all intents and purposes has him completely in her power. If dissolute or drunken, she can sell up his goods or break up his home at pleasure and play general havoc all round and still compel him to keep her and live with her to her life's end. There is no law to protect *him*. On the other hand, let him but raise a finger in a moment of exasperation, against this precious representative of the sacred principle of "womanhood," and straightway he is consigned to the treadmill for his six months amid the jubilation of the *D. T.* and its kindred, who pronounce him a brute and sing pæans over the power of the "law" to protect the innocent and helpless female. Thus does bourgeois society offer sacrifice to "equality

between the sexes." The law, on the other hand, jealously guards the earnings or property of the wife from possible spoliation. She on any colourable pretext can obtain magisterial separation and "protection."

Again, we have the same principle illustrated in the truly bestial howl raised every now and again by certain persons for the infliction of the punishment of flogging on men for particular offences, notably "assaults on women and children." As a matter of fact in the worst cases of cruelty to children, women are the criminals. Some few months back there was a horrible instance in which a little girl was done to death by a stepmother in circumstances of the most loathsome barbarity, yet these horror-stricken advocates of the lash never venture to support flogging as a wholesome corrective to viragos of this description. It would be opposed to middle-class sentiment, which would regard such a proposition as blasphemy against the sacred principle of "femality." No other explanation is possible, since it can hardly be assumed that even the bourgeois mind is incapable of grasping the obvious fact that a man pinioned and in the hands of half-a-dozen prison-warders, is in precisely as helpless a condition as any woman in a like case, and that therefore the brutality or cowardice of the proceeding is the same either way. The bourgeois conception of "equality between the sexes" is aptly embodied in that infamous clause of the "Criminal Law Amendment Act" which provides that in case of illicit intercourse between a boy and girl under sixteen years of age, though the girl escapes scot free, the boy is liable to five years' imprisonment in a reformatory.

Even the great Radical nostrum which is supposed to involve the quintessence of political equality, is when closely viewed, the hollowest of shams. The Revolutionary Socialist doesn't much concern himself about questions of the suffrage, esteeming but lightly the privilege of electing men to help to carry on the present system of society, which he believes destined to perish before long. But looked at from the Radical point of view, it is quite clear that considering the fact that the female population of England is in excess of the male by about a million, female suffrage, in spite of its apparent embodiment of the principle of equality, really means, if it means anything at all (which may be doubtful) the handing over of the complete control of the state to one sex. These are only a few of the illustrations which might be multiplied almost indefinitely, of the truth that the tendency of the modern middle-class world, is, while proclaiming the principle of "equality between the sexes" in opposition to the feudal subjection of woman, to erect the female sex into a quasi-privileged class. The real equality between the sexes aimed at by Socialism is as I take it, as much opposed to this Brummagem sentiment and sham equality, as it is to the female-slavery of ancient times, of which we do not wish to deny survivals remain even at this day. With the economic emancipation of woman and the gradual transformation of the state-system of to-day into an international league of free communes, the feudal subjection of woman to man and the middle-class subjection of man to woman will be alike at an end.

Yet another Bourgeois idol—the rights of majorities. The Radical mind instead of placing before it the concrete ideal—Human Happiness—erects an abstract idol in its room as the supreme end of all endeavour. The Radical's first question is not does such or such a course conflict with social well-being, but does it not violate one of our supreme dogmas? There is no more frequent charge brought against the Revolutionary Socialist than that of despotic interference with the right of the majority. Socialism, it is indeed true, in pursuit of its central purpose, treats with scant reverence the household gods of the Radical. The abstract principle of the right of the majority is of as small concern to the Socialist as the equally abstract principle of "liberty of contract" or "liberty of conscience." And why? Because like the rest the Bourgeois "right of the majority" is the vampire of a dead reality. Feudalism, and the centralising monarchical tendency which succeeded feudalism proper, opposed the will of the feudal few or of the monarchical one to the will of the majority of propertied persons, *i.e.*, the rising middle-class. The ascendancy of this rising middle-class then represented the extent of popular aspiration. The decaying principle was Feudalism and the monarchical Absolutism it left behind it. As against the privilege and traditional *status* upon which this based itself, Liberalism asserted as its ideal, the right of the majority of the people—*i.e.*, of the middle-classes—to self-government. Hard upon the realisation of this ideal has followed its reduction to sham. Conditions are changed in the Western Europe of to-day. With the entrance upon the arena of the modern proletariat of capitalism and the differentiation of class-interests therein involved, the old popular sovereignty has become a meaningless phrase. The old majority has ceased to be the majority—has become a minority, and the new majority is in the thrall of this minority (the franchise notwithstanding). Capitalist fraud has succeeded to feudal force—the castle has given place to the factory.

The new majority, consisting of the proletariat and all those who suffer from the present system, are in the thrall of Capitalism. With no leisure for thought or education, they are necessarily the victims of every sophism of middle-class economists and politicians, even where they are not directly coerced or cajoled by their masters. The majority know that they suffer, they know that they want not to suffer, but they know not *why* they suffer and they know not *how* they may cease to suffer. The majority therefore under a capitalistic system will necessarily for the most part vote for the maintenance of that system under one guise or another, not because they love it, but out of sheer ignorance and stupidity. It is by the active minority from out this stagnant inert mass that the revolution will be accomplished. It is to this Socialist minority that individuals acting during the revolutionary period are alone ac-

countable. The Socialist leader or delegate, as such, does not take account of the absolute majority of the population, which consists of the two sections of those who are interested in the maintenance of the present system and those who are blind or inert enough to be misled by them. To disregard the opinion (if such it can be called) of these latter is no more tyranny than it is tyranny to hold a drunken man back by force who wants to get out of the door of a railway carriage with the train going at full speed. The man does not want to be maimed or killed; he is simply misled by his drunken fancy as to what is conducive to his welfare. In the same way the workman who sides with one or other of the various political parties against Socialism, does not want to be the slave of capital, never certain of his next week's lodging and food. In coercing him, if necessary, that is, in negating his *apparent* aims, you are affirming his *real* aims, which are if nothing more, at least to live in comfort and sufficiency. Yet to grant him the semblance of right, the right to perpetuate his own misery through blindness and to deny him the *reality* of right by keeping him a slave—the slave of free contract—this is the object of the Liberal and Radical, an object he hopes to accomplish by, among other things, flaunting in his face the nostrum of the inalienable "rights" of numerical majorities to control of the executive machinery of the state, at all times and in all circumstances. Of course, as soon as Socialism becomes an accomplished fact, the inert mass of indifference which now clings to the *status quo* merely through ignorance and laziness, will be dissolved, and its elements pass over to the new *status quo* of Socialism. The Socialist party will then cease to exist as a party and become transformed into the absolute majority of the population. Then and then only will the right of the majority and the sovereignty of the people be transformed from a sham into a reality—a fuller reality than it ever was before.

A few words on one more "idol"—on "justice," as embodied in the "rights of property." It is *unjust*, the Bourgeois will tell you, to nationalise or communise property now in the hands of private persons, since they as individuals have received it in the natural course of things as guaranteed by social conditions present and past. This notion of the right of every man to the exclusive possession of wealth he has acquired without breach of bourgeois law, and of the injustice of depriving him of it, is part and parcel of the system of vampire-dogmas and nostrums of which Liberalism and Radicalism are composed. It has been, like the rest, the ideal principle of the middle-class world in its conflict with Feudalism. In the days of the "small industry," the artificer and the merchant asserted this principle in opposition to the feudal lord. The middle-class world affirmed the absolute right of the individual over all his belongings as against the claims of the overlord and his prescriptive dues, and as against tenure in fee generally, but above all as against the dearest right of the mediæval baron, the right of plunder and dispossession by force of arms. Security of personal property has ever been the middle-class watchword. Hence this new notion of justice.

In the ancient world it would have been deemed "unjust" for the "tribe," the "people," or the "city" to suffer, so long as an individual citizen possessed aught that could relieve that suffering. In the mediæval world it would have been "unjust" for the inferior to retain aught that his feudal superior required; while it would have been "unjust" for the rich man to refuse to give alms to the needy. But as we have said, to the corruption and rapacity which characterised the decaying feudal classes at the break up of the mediæval system, the Bourgeois opposed his thesis of the inviolability of private property and of the ideal of justice consisting in the absolute control of his property by the individual. But like the rest, this principle unimpeachable as it seemed, had no sooner realised itself than its reality began to wane. Now in this last quarter of the nineteenth century it is dead and stalks the world as perhaps the ghastliest vampire of all the shams. The immediate cause of its transition from the living to the lifeless, is the change from small individual production to the manufacturing industry, a change which has reached its consummation in the "great industry." Yet strange to say, the Liberal or Radical can still mouth about the injustice of expropriating the wealthy few for the good of the whole. To him there is no "injustice" in the chronic starvation of myriads of his fellow-men, in the robbery of their labour and health and lives by the rich man by means of his wealth; yet there is "injustice" in depriving the Vanderbilt of a single hundred or the Duke of Argyll of a single acre!

But it is time to drop the curtain on the grim procession. Veritably this last of the bloodless spectres—bourgeois "Justice"—will not bear looking on. It is death on the pale horse habited in nineteenth century humbug. The hope and aim of the Socialist must be to lay these troubled ghosts—to consign them to their lower resting-place. Then will "liberty," "equality," "right," and "justice," once more flourish living and real—not in their old forms indeed, which are henceforth for ever dead and meaningless—but in higher and nobler ones. The evolution which we have traced in them through their seeming negation to a higher reality, is but an instance of the inherent *dialectic* of the world, in which death and destruction evince themselves the inseparable conditions of life and progress.

E. BELFORT BAX.

"Give me the land and you may frame as many laws as you please, yet I can baffle them all and render them null and void. Prohibit child-labour if you will, but give me land and your children will be slaves." Yes, and give the right to reap profits, through the existing wage-system, from the workers, and they may have land as free as air, and I will hold them in slavery. Abolish rent, and interest, but continue the iron law of wages, and the rich will always be getting richer and the poor, poorer.—*Denver (Col.) Labor Enquirer.*

BAD TIMES.

THE present condition of England's workers could surely not have been imagined by the slipshod economists who taught that the people would become better off as their country grew richer and greater. So long as England was "expanding," the condition of the working-class was little heeded. When the present depression in trade began a few Socialists were insisting that the people were as badly off as ever they had been in spite of the nation's enormous trade. Of course such "ridiculous assertions" were easily refuted. Figures galore were cited to show the vast strides that had been made in the comfort and general prosperity of the people. Bright gave us glowing pictures of the results of fifty years' progress. Bradlaugh thundered against those who would dare infringe the sacred rights of property. Brassey showed, from the memoirs of his enterprising father, how the British working man could hold his own against the world. Giffen and Levi floundered about in a chaos of figures which were drawn from suspicious sources and gave conclusions entirely opposed to all practical experience of everyday life. Socialists industriously argued away these elaborate sophisms but got very little thanks for their trouble, as well-to-do people didn't want to be convinced and badly-off people didn't need to be. Now the glaring facts are sufficient to convince all that England's commercial prosperity does not mean that her people are happy. What now of Mr. Bright's statement that the country is "better worth living in and more worthy of our affections"? Would the great reformer repeat this now in Trafalgar Square? What now of Brassey's irresistible British working-man? What of the statistician's 200 per cent. improvement?

The workers have been very apathetic of late, and deserve a good deal of blame for their indifference to the future of their own class. But now that they feel the pinch more keenly they will become more intelligent. As their wages fall their manliness will rise. And once the people do take this matter in hand there need be no doubt of their settling it in a satisfactory way.

The first thing to make itself plain is that our trusted economists are unable to deal with the situation. They are now at their wits' end to account for the great paradox of modern economic conditions—universal famine and superabundance of wealth appearing as twin evils. Men wont starve in a rich country, and Mansion House Funds, be they ever so well stimulated by street riots, will not ward off the evil.

It is every day becoming more plain that the capitalists are unable to handle our great industries without plunging the mass of the people into misery which is quite unnecessary in a land so wealthy as this. In the first place, the capitalists are only anxious for their own enrichment and are regardless of the welfare of the community. In the second place, the system of competition will not allow them to be otherwise. Competition among capitalists makes it above all imperative that goods should be produced cheap. Cheap goods can only be had by cheap labour. We have learnt the important lesson that profits can be increased by lessening wages. (The capitalists knew this before any one told them, and all of them are fully conscious of it to-day without the aid of any political economist.) Cheap labour may be got in two ways: first, by paying small wages to each workman, and second, by introducing labour-saving—that is wages-saving—machinery. By the aid of this machinery the capitalist can raise wages and get his labour cheaper at the same time: he employs fewer hands to do the same amount of work. By this means the artisans have been gulled into thinking they are improving their condition, and even Robert Giffen has been bewildered—or pretends to have been—into stating that the working class are getting a larger share of the national wealth than formerly, whereas in reality they are getting a smaller share of what they produce than ever. That this should be so is inevitable under the present capitalist system, which can only sustain itself by the most rigid cutting down of the labourer's share of wealth.

So long as English capitalists have the monopoly of the world's markets, and so long as trade goes on increasing, the workers might never become miserable enough to make revolution a necessity. But our trade is now declining. English commercial supremacy is decaying—and more power to the destructive forces! More than a century ago Adam Smith said—what we can now see the truth of—that when a society begins to decline, the first and cruelest suffering must fall on the labouring class. As our markets are being wrested from us, the capitalist is compelled to reduce wages that he may sell his goods cheaper; and thus hastens the destruction of the system by trying to save himself. For when wages are low property is not secure, as McCulloch naively assures us. Even Giffen now admits that wages must be considerably reduced, and appeals to the workers to accept the reduction in order to save our commerce, upon which our greatness as a nation rests. When patriotism means a reduction of wages, we may look out for the speedy collapse of jingoism. But this patriotism by smaller pay will be made compulsory, and the free Briton brought nearer to starvation that the integrity of the empire (*i.e.*, the unbridled licence of the enterprising trader) may be maintained.

The only way out of these evils is for the working men to take the industries of the country under their own direction and produce goods to supply the wants of the population. The time is ripening very fast. Already the results of the reign of enterprising individualism are being seen in the armies of unemployed, which are steadily growing larger in all our big manufacturing towns. What to do with these men is a question which neither economists, capitalists, nor politicians can settle. But settled it must be, for if the capitalists cannot settle the unemployed, the unemployed will settle the capitalists. No doubt some

makeshifts for toning down the present distress can be found, but it is certain that all, from the fund started at the Mansion House, to the Relief Works proposed by the Social Democrats, will prove of very little use. Society has come to a miserable state and civilisation is a sham when men have to starve because their toil has been too productive. Out of the evil there is but one way, and that is for the workmen—and especially the trades' unionists—to be in readiness, so that when a crisis comes they will be able to seize upon the factories, mines, railways, stores, and other means of making and distributing wealth. How this can be done is what they must now consider. If the different craftsmen would discuss among themselves how they could "sack" their employers and manage the workshops, etc., in the interests of the community instead, the matter would soon become easy of settlement. But this at all events we must make up our minds to—the time is not far off when there will be but two courses open to us. Either to stand by quietly, and allow "law and order" to assert itself by butchering the hungry and turbulent masses, or make a determined effort to seize hold of the machinery of industry and manage it for the common good of all.

J. L. MAHON.

The Ballade of "Law and Order."

A Song I sing to celebrate
Our nation's chiefest glory;
Oh, that I had the language bold
Of ancient allegory!
What tho' upon hyperbole
My words might sometimes border?
Know that the stalwart theme is mine
Of British "Law and Order"!

Our battles won on land and sea,
Have bards enough to sing them;
New anthems greet our victories,
As fast as heroes bring them:
And must our nation's nobler fame
In verse have no recorder?
Shall not a loyal song be sung
In praise of "Law and Order"?

Our venerable church and state—
These are its glorious trophies!
It keeps the monarch on her throne,
The minister in office.
From prince and peer and prelate
down

To poor parochial boarder,
There's not a British heart but feels
The power of "Law and Order."

It binds the social fabric firm
From knavish twists and twitches;
Protects the poor man's poverty,
And guards the rich man's riches.
It wraps its might round Freedom
fair,
From Treason's knife to ward her;
Rebellion hides its hideous head
When stand forth "Law and Order."

'Tis true some trifling blots are seen
Upon its bright escutcheon,
But these, no loyal subject would
Now think of dwelling much on.
What tho' a few facts here and there
A little untoward are—
Spots can be seen upon the sun—
Thy emblem, "Law and Order"!

Alas! how oft the people have
Proved purblind and ungrateful!
(What care we how our fellows fare
When we have got our plate full?)
And so, in past times deeds were done
Greatly to be deplored, ere
The mob was tutored in the love
And fear of "Law and Order."

King Edward, partial to the Scots,
True "Law and Order" gave them,
Somehow they barbarously thought
He meant it to enslave them;
So him, and his philanthropists
They drove right o'er the border,
And said, "Sir king, we do not want
You, or your "Law and Order"!"

King Charles "Law and Order" made
A mighty state appliance,
Indeed it may be said that he
Reduced it to a science.—

When to the block they led him forth,
He spake thus to his warder:
"Alas! I die a martyr in
The cause of 'Law and Order.'"

King James on pious things intent,
A church reform projected;
He "Law and Order" wisely thought
The best means to effect it.—

He crossed the channel in a smack,
And when he went aboard her,
A bright star left the firmament
Of British "Law and Order."

Now all our institutions are
In danger at this moment,
From notions which those Radicals
There utmost do to foment.
Against all their vile principles,
Which truly most abhorred are,
Let every patriot invoke
The power of "Law and Order."

When factions bawl about the wrongs
To which they are subjected,
From press and platform shriek the
cry:

"The Law must be respected!"
For if we firmly would maintain
The power of king and lord, or
Privileged class, we must proclaim
Loudly for "Law and Order."

Some talk of "Right," "Equality,"
And other such like phrases;
To hear them speak, why really me
It perfectly amazes!
Do good forsooth! I tell you what,
They apples of discord are!
Ah, nothing like the good old plan
Of thorough "Law and Order"!

Some people may have different views
Of how best to enforce it,—
Now Buckingham's opinion was—
And firmly I endorse it:
"Of all the methods I have tried,
The hangman and the sword are
The stoutest means to propagate
Respect for 'Law and Order.'"

Now let the clergy inculcate
In all their prayers and sermons,
How blest peculiarly are we
Above the French and Germans;
And let their admonition be:—
"These blessings the reward are
Of our unbanded loyalty
And love of 'Law and Order.'"

In every nursery and school,
And barrack room and prison,
Let sheets be stuck upon the walls
Conspicuous to the vision;
On which, in ornamental text,
With neat appropriate border,
Set forth the words, "Sedition shun,
And reverence 'Law and Order.'"

And let us sing, "God save the
Queen,"
We could not do without her,
And all the peers and gentlefolks
She likes to keep about her:
And while our voices and our heart
In glorious accord are,
Acclaim the peerless apothegm
Of "Long live 'Law and Order"

J. BRUCE GLASIER



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J. H. JOHNSON and **W. BLUNDELL**.—May be used later on.

W. TAYLOR.—We may be able to do what is wished in after issues.

KNIGHTS OF LABOR.—For all information as to this order and steps to be taken in organising assemblies, address the General Secretary, Frederick Turner, Lock Box No. 17, Philadelphia, Pa., U.S.A.

C. M. M.—Have not time to send anything more than our good wishes to you in your struggle.

VERITAS.—Canvassing with all its attendant evils, of which not the least is the method of payment of the canvasser, is a necessary part of our miserable commercial system. Join us in the endeavour to get rid, not only of canvassing but of the system.

RECEIVED—*England*: Anarchist—Worker's Friend—Daylight (Norwich)—Christian Socialist—Church Reformer—National Review—Republican—Journal of Vigilance Association—Justice—To-Day—Der Rebell—Freethinker—Practical Socialist—Leicester Co-operative Record. *Belgium*: La Guerre Social (Brussels). *Canada*: L'Union Ouvriere (Montreal). *France*: Paris: Cri du Peuple (daily)—La Revue Socialiste—Le Révolté—Le Socialiste—La Tribune des Peuples—Revue du Mouvement Social, Le Devoir (Guise)—Le Forçat du Travail (Bordeaux). *Germany*: Neue Zeit (Stuttgart). *Holland*: Recht voor Allen. *Hungary*: Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik (Buda-pest). *Italy*: La Question Sociale (Turin)—Il Fascio Operaio (Milan)—*Morocco*: Almoghreb Al-aksa (Tangiers). *New Zealand*: Watchman. *Portugal*: O Campino—Voz do Operario—O Protesto Operario (Lisbon). *Romania*: Drepturile Omului (daily, Bucharest). *Serbia*: Tchas (Belgrade). *Spain*: El Angel del Hogar—Revista Social—Acracia (Barcelona)—Bandera Social (Madrid)—El Socialismo (Cadiz). *Switzerland*: Sozial Demokrat (Zürich). *U. S. A.*: (New York): Volkszeitung—Der Sozialist—Freiheit—Progress—John Swinton's Paper—Spread the Light—Our Country. (Boston): Liberty—Woman's Journal—Index. Denver (Col.): Labor Inquirer—Chicago (Ill.) Alarm—Detroit (Mich.) Labor Leaf—Muskegon (Mich.) Social Drift—Princeton (Mass.) Word—Cleveland (O.): Carpenter—Chronicle. Cincinnati (O.) Unionist—San Francisco (Cal.) Chronicle—Stockton (Cal.) Mail—Petersburg (Ill.) Voice of Labor—New Haven (Conn.) Workmen's Advocate—St. Louis (Mo.): Die Parole—Altruist. Kansas (Mo.) Sun—Philadelphia (Pa.) Socialist—Pittsburg (Pa.) Labor Herald—Paterson (N. J.) Labor Standard—Baltimore (Md.) Labor Free Press—Valley Falls (Kan.) Lucifer—Atlanta (Ga.) New Working World—Newfoundland (Pa.) La Torpille—Litchfield (Minn.) Radical—Manchester (N. H.) Weekly Budget—Portland (Oregon) Alarm.

Notes on Matters Parliamentary.

Big as the passing days are with hopes of events to come, hard as the times are now, and troublous as the outlook is, there has seldom passed a month in which there is so little to say about the proceedings of that "representative" body called Parliament, which according to the views of some worthy persons is the only instrument by means of which the reconstruction of Society can be carried out. It has as usual manifested its mingled tyranny and impotency, and for the rest has been doing nothing but trying hard to sit on two stools at once, with apparently little fear of the consequences, which however duly follow in the shape of a more peremptory dismissal than the ordinary "dissolution"—a final one, to wit.

Its impotency was well shown in the matter of the £50,000 lopped off the estimates by Mr. Labouchere's successful resolution. The august assembly was gravely told that though it was its undoubted duty to watch the outgoings of the national purse, it must exercise that duty reasonably—i.e., not at all. Then presently the Government uttered its official "can't be done," and relegated Mr. Labouchere to the making of a funny speech on the subject next year, and every year as long as the farce of Parliamentary Government lasts. This incident is a good measure of the real power of the Radicals in Parliament, and if they are encouraged by its results, they are sanguine men indeed.

While we are on these small matters, we may note the petty piece of tyranny exercised by our popular House in forbidding the people to use the national property on a Sunday. The House of Lords had just discovered that the world would not come to an end if the museums and picture galleries paid for by the people could be seen by the people. When it is attempted to endorse this opinion in the Commons, the attempt will probably be defeated by an opposition led by the pious Broadhurst and the still more pious Arch. Perhaps after all, then, the Primrose Habitation of Buccleuch,

who petitioned the House of Lords to abolish the Commons' House, were democrats in disguise, who wished to get rid of the Hereditary House by beginning first on its only support, the House of Commons.

For indeed Society need not tremble at Mr. Labouchere having nearly achieved a second success. The second or third generation of money-bags elevated to seats in an upper house by means of various cajolery and bribery exercised on servility, will be quite "hereditary" enough to be safe men, especially when helped by a good cohort of successful bamboozlers and mud-dlers up of facts, under the name of lawyers.

One thing has happened in Parliament of some importance to the party faction-fight, though of little otherwise: Mr. Bradlaugh has practically declared his adherence to the Whigs. I congratulate the Whig Party on their gain of a really able man, and Mr. Bradlaugh on having at last reached his level. He now stands on firm ground after much floundering through sham democratic mud.

To come to matters of more importance. There is Mr. Chamberlain's circular to the Boards of Guardians, which is as complete an exemplification of the helplessness of our present governmental system as could be. We may fairly assume his wish to do all that can be done under the present circumstances. Considering his position, he may be said to admit the existence of hard times to the full, and to be anxious not to say anything offensive to the feelings of the working-men. But, after all, phrases will not feed folk, and it seems to me he gives them little else. I should like to ask Mr. Chamberlain if he really thinks that useful work (and he clearly aims at that) can be given to the unemployed "without competing with that of other labourers now employed"? And also how long such hybrid work as he proposes can go on if the present distress goes on, or only betters a little? It is after all only playing at finding productive or serviceable work for the unemployed. Surely Mr. Chamberlain knows this. Is he thinking nothing more exalted than, "After me the Deluge"?

Well, at least he is resigning his place, and his motives for doing so are being much canvassed. One can easily imagine them. Perhaps he thinks Mr. Gladstone will not carry his Irish measure, as he probably will not. Perhaps he is not very anxious to see the Irish landlords rather more than compensated for their land, which pleasure Mr. Gladstone's bill will probably do for them. Perhaps also he sees that the arrangements made, the Irish peasants will decline to pay this "compensation" to the landlord, unseen, indeed, but still existing; and that the English taxpayer will have to pay it; and Mr. Chamberlain may well dread the English taxpayer.

But perhaps, again, he sees that Mr. Gladstone's scheme means separation simply, in the long run, and that when this is found out, the "great heart of the English people," of which we sometimes hear, will be ready to burst with rather undignified rage, and will serve out those politicians who brought matters to this pass, and Mr. Chamberlain naturally does not want to be served out. Yet it would scarcely answer his purpose to find himself the representative of the stupid prejudice of Englishmen against Irishmen, which is quite as strong among Liberals and Radicals as it is with the other side.

But of course he has a good opportunity for sitting on two stools. If the democratic side and Home Rule win he can say, "How could I consent to buying out the landlords on their own terms, with all the dangers obviously appertaining thereto?" If the Whig-Radical integrity of the empire wins, he can say, "How could I consent to the injury done to the great Anglo-Saxon race and its future—by admitting that a nation of Celts don't belong to that race?" The temptation towards shuffling is great; but it might be better not to yield to it. For after all, the question for *England* really is, "Shall Ireland separate with civil war or without it?" And for *Ireland*: "Shall we be allowed to deal with the land as we think good?"

WILLIAM MORRIS.

THE PILGRIMS OF HOPE.

X.—READY TO DEPART.

I SAID of my friend new-found that at first he saw not my lair;
Yet he and I and my wife were together here and there;
And at last as my work increased and my den to a dwelling grew,
He came there often enough, and yet more together we drew.
Then came a change in the man; for a month he kept away,
Then came again and was with us for a fortnight every day,
But often he sat there silent, which was little his wont with us.
And at first I had no inkling of what constrained him thus;
I might have thought that he faltered, but now and again there came,
When we spoke of the Cause and its doings, a flash of his eager flame,
And he seemed himself for a while; then the brightness would fade away,
And he gloomed and shrank from my eyes.

Thus passed day after day,
And grieved I grew, and I pondered; till at last one eve we sat
In the fire-lit room together, and talked of this and that,
But chiefly indeed of the war and what would come of it;
For Paris drew near to its fall, and wild hopes 'gan to flit
Amidst us Communist folk; and we talked of what might be done
When the Germans had gone their ways and the two were left alone,
Betrayers and betrayed in war-worn wasted France.

As I spoke the word "betrayed," my eyes met his in a glance,
And swiftly he turned away; then back with a steady gaze
He turned on me; and it seemed as when a sword-point plays
Round the sword in a battle's beginning and the coming on of strife.
For I knew though he looked on me, he saw not me, but my wife:
And he reddened up to the brow, and the tumult of the blood
Nigh blinded my eyes for a while, that I scarce saw bad or good,
Till I knew that he was arisen and had gone without a word.
Then I turned about unto her, and a quivering voice I heard
Like music without a meaning, and twice I heard my name.
"O Richard, Richard!" she said, and her arms about me came,
And her tears and the lips that I loved were on my face once more.
A while I clung to her body, and longing sweet and sore
Beguiled my heart of its sorrow; then we sundered and sore she wept,
While fair pictures of days departed about my sad heart crept,

And mazed I felt and weary. But we sat apart again,
Not speaking, while between us was the sharp and bitter pain
As the sword 'twixt the lovers bewildered in the fruitless marriage bed.
Yet a while, and we spoke together, and I scarce knew what I said,
But it was not wrath or reproaching, or the chill of love-born hate ;
For belike around and about us, we felt the brooding fate.
We were gentle and kind together, and if any had seen us so,
They had said, "These two are one in the face of all trouble and woe."
But indeed as a wedded couple we shrank from the eyes of men,
As we dwelt together and pondered on the days that come not again.

Days passed and we dwelt together ; nor Arthur came for awhile ;
Gravely it was and sadly, and with no greeting smile,
That we twain met at our meetings : but no growth of hate was yet,
Though my heart at first would be sinking as our thoughts and our eyes they
met :

And when he spake amidst us and as one we two agreed,
And I knew of his faith and his wisdom, then sore was my heart indeed.
We shrank from meeting alone : for the words we had to say
Our thoughts would nowise fashion ; not yet for many a day.

Unhappy days of all days ! Yet O might they come again !
So sore as my longing returneth to their trouble and sorrow and pain !

But time passed, and once we were sitting, my wife and I in our room,
And it was in the London twilight and the February gloom,
When there came a knock, and he entered all pale, though bright were his
eyes,
And I knew that something had happened, and my heart to my mouth did
arise.

"It is over," he said—"and beginning ; for Paris has fallen at last.
And who knows what next shall happen after all that has happened and
passed ?
There now may we all be wanted."

I took up the word : "Well then
Let us go, we three together, and there to die like men."

"Nay," he said, "to live and be happy like men." Then he flushed up red,
And she no less as she hearkened, as one thought through their bodies had
sped.

Then I reached out my hand unto him, and I kissed her once on the brow,
But no word craving forgiveness, and no word of pardon e'en now,
Our minds for our mouths might fashion.

In the February gloom
And into the dark we sat planning, and there was I in the room,
And in speech I gave and I took ; but yet alone and apart
In the fields where I once was a youngling whiles wandered the thoughts of
my heart,

And whiles in the unseen Paris, and the streets made ready for war.
Night grew and we lit the candles, and we drew together more,
And whiles we differed a little as we settled what to do,
And my soul was cleared of confusion as nigher the deed-time drew.

Well, I took my child into the country, as we had settled there,
And gave him o'er to be cherished by a kindly woman's care,
A friend of my mother's, but younger : and for Arthur, I let him give
His money, as mine was but little, that the boy might flourish and live,
Lest we three, or I and Arthur should perish in tumult and war,
And at least the face of his father he should look on never more.
You cry out shame on my honour ? But yet remember again
That a man in my boy was growing ; must my passing pride and pain
Undo the manhood within him and his days and their doings blight ?
So I thrust my pride away, and I did what I deemed was right,
And left him down in our country.

And well may you think indeed
How my sad heart swelled at departing from the peace of river and mead,
But I held all sternly aback and again to the town did I pass.

And as alone I journeyed, this was ever in my heart :
"They may die ; they may live and be happy ; but for me I know my part,
In Paris to do my utmost, and there in Paris to die !"
And I said, "The day of the deeds and the day of deliverance is nigh."

WILLIAM MORRIS.

LESSONS IN SOCIALISM.

XI.—THE LUST FOR SURPLUS-VALUE IN ENGLAND.

We have, following "Das Kapital," taken an example of the shameless devices of the exploiter to obtain unpaid labour from the exploitee, from eastern Europe. Now, under the same guidance, let us trace out some of the history of these same devices in England. To understand this terrible and disgraceful history, first let us remind ourselves of the general provisions of that Act of 1850, which in the first place marks the conclusion of one stage in the ceaseless struggle between employers and employed, and in the second place has been the basis for all those slight modifications in 1871, 1873, 1874, and other years that have left the 1850 Act virtually master of the situation.

As these papers are only a *résumé* of Marx' book, I do not profess in them to deal with any history later than 1867. Possibly, after this work is done, a summary of the factory legislation of more recent years, along the lines suggested by him, may be made. By the 1850 Act, the average working-day for a man is 10 hours. Oh Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday the hours are 12, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., with intervals of half-an-hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner, leaving for actual work 10½ hours a day. On Saturday the time is from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., with half-an-hour for breakfast, *i.e.*, 7½ hours of actual work. 10½ × 5 = 52½, and this + 7½ = 60 hours for 6 days, *i.e.*, 10 hours of actual labour on the average per day.

Every worker knows that these 10 hours are like committee men, with power to add to their number. By this device or that, in every branch of industry, in every factory, in the person of every labourer,

the 10 became 10 and a fraction, or even at times 11 or more. One of the commonest of these devices is that known as "nibbling." Thus work may be and often is begun at 5.45 a.m. instead of at 6 ; five minutes are "cribbed" from the beginning of breakfast time, 5 minutes from the end ; the morning work is continued 10 minutes beyond the moment of stopping for dinner, the afternoon is begun 10 minutes too soon ; 6.15 instead of 6, and 2.15 instead of 2, become the times for ceasing work on five days in the week and on Saturday respectively. For every man this means 15 + 5 + 5 + 10 + 10 + 15 = 60 minutes for 5 days or 300 minutes, with on Saturday 15 + 5 + 5 + 15, or 40 minutes of extra unpaid labour in a week. Suppose there are 50 weeks in the year, allowing two for holidays and accidental pauses. 340 minutes × 50 = 1700 minutes, and as the nominal working day is of 10 hours, each of 60 minutes, dividing 17,000 by 600, will give us the number of extra unpaid working days each man gives in a year to his master. It is over 28 days, wherever this nibbling obtains. And the system denounced with forcible use of the very figures just quoted, by Factory Inspector Leonard Horner, in 1859, is in vogue and in many places in full swing to-day.

The regularly recurrent crises in our capitalistic method of production only alter the lust of the capitalist after surplus-labour in degree. His anxiety to prolong the working day becomes at these times more marked. With interrupted production, short time working, less time spent in work, the more of that working time must from the capitalist's point of view be surplus working-time. Hence the worse trade is, the more unscrupulous are the masters. Thus, Horner reports that when in his district 122 factories were closed, 143 were standing still, and all the rest were working very short time, work was prolonged beyond the legal limits. The same thing occurred habitually during the cotton crisis time of 1861-65.

Masters consciously and men for the most part (as yet) unconsciously recognise the formation of surplus-value by this surplus (unpaid) labour. "Let me work my factory 10 minutes a-day over the legal time," says one manufacturer, "and you will put £1000 a-year into my pocket." And the men and children call one another "full-timers" and "half-timers," as their hours are the 12 or only 6 a day. Unconsciously, they in the very names, recognise that they are to the capitalist and under our modern method of production, nothing but personified labour.

Press of other matter in the *Commonweal* this month makes this article shorter than usual. I am the more content with this, as the next number of the journal will be the first of the weekly series, and the detailed history of the cruel exploitation of English workers can well begin in our issue of May 1.

Act of 1850 (legalised limits)	Monday to Friday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.
of working day	Saturday 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Meal times	½ hour, breakfast ; 1 hour, dinner.
Nibbling and cribbing	... Encroachment on meal-times at both ends. Beginning earlier, leaving off later than legal times.
Full-timers, half-timers	... The names for those whose working-day is respectively 12 and 6 hours. The phrases embody the idea of the worker as personified labour.

EDWARD AVELING.

THE IMBECILITY OF WHOLESALE THRIFT.

PERHAPS the coolest specimen of "chaff," the most perfect illustration of "insult added to injury," is now being perpetrated by certain of our bourgeois friends. The reason for the present depression in trade, for thousands of working men being absolutely without the means of subsistence, for young girls taking to the streets in shoals—so numerous indeed, that even here competition has asserted its dread supremacy, and a woman's person is so cheap as to be barely worth the selling—for all this misery, this starvation, this prostitution is the *extravagance of the working classes!* In other words, the British workman should no longer be content with living on nothing, but should curtail his necessities, so that he may live on something less than nothing.

Such a theory propounded in an epoch of universal self-denial and hideous privation, might be expected to have been promptly laughed out of existence. Emanating, however, from a bourgeois source, the middle classes, frightened, perplexed, and possibly slightly conscience-stricken at the present state of the labour-market, have caught at this flimsy doctrine, partly to justify them in the eyes of the victims, but chiefly with a view to wield it as a potent argument in their projected attempt at a universal further reduction of operatives' wages.

As the denouncers of the habits of luxury and prodigality at present so evident among the labouring classes, support their sophistry by a spurious logic, it is as well that we examine a little into the merits of the case.

It is argued by a large fraction of bourgeois society that the whole solution of the social question lies in the drink question. Every year, say the sapient ones, between 350 and 400 millions of money are spent in Great Britain in drink, of which a large proportion is consumed by the working classes. Now supposing each working man, on an average, to spend £10 annually in liquor, if each working man turned abstainer (of course the worker must always set the example of virtue to his betters) he would be £10 a-year richer, and could afford £10 worth more clothes, bread, meat, etc.

Of course, other economies are also suggested. Thus the labourer is advised to discard his pipe, to walk to his work instead of riding, to shun the theatre and eschew the music-hall. These very social reformers, be it remarked, would oppose tooth and nail any attempt to open the museums, etc., on Sunday.

Such, then, are the means whereby these philanthropists would set the world on its legs again. They skilfully ignore the fact that the stoppage of the liquor-traffic, the tobacco-trade and others which contribute to the small ray of sunshine that occasionally brightens a labourer's life, would have the effect of throwing thousands more into the already bursting ranks of the unemployed. But we will not consider that point. We will suppose that, by some miraculous means, every operative in the country economises £10 annually on his present expenditure. Let us see how it affects him.

Now it is evident that however severe competition for employment may be, it has its limits. No man will work for a wage with which no conceivable amount of squeezing and pinching will suffice to eke out his existence (with women, for obvious reasons, the case is different). Male labour-remuneration never descends below one degree above starvation-point, for if it did so, if the labourer were literally starved on what he earned, he would soon be physically incapable of continuing work. All mine and factory owners and other large employers of labour, therefore calculate the remuneration they will give, taking as a basis the needs of the labourer. We will call starvation-point¹ n , and the point above that x .

Now we will imagine A and B competing with one another for a certain office only yielding sufficient employment for one. A and B are of equal capabilities and usefulness, and the livelihood of each for the nonce is dependent upon his securing the vacancy. It is clear then that the employer who has the vacancy to offer can only lower the rate of remuneration to x . For if he goes still lower, A and B being without other means, could not maintain themselves at such a wage, and would both refuse the post. But if A has a private income of £10, he can afford to and will compete with B down to $x - 10$, which will probably come below what to B is n .

It is this illustration that we have now to apply on the large scale. Through unlimited competition, labour-wages (I am speaking generally, as some exceptions are still sustained through trades-unionistic efforts) may now be considered as having sunk to x , i.e., the minimum at which a working-man can subsist without denying himself one or more of what are considered the necessities of life, and which may include (for we are speaking of men and not of animals) not only bare dry bread, but beer, tobacco and recreation. But if all the workers agree to resign such recreation, such beer, such tobacco, they simply shift the points x and n lower down. In other words, competition would reign among them exactly as before, and the extra £10 which pseudo-economists speak of, instead of going to buy the wretched labourers more bread and more meat, would go into the pockets of their astute exploiters without ever reaching them at all.

Of course we know the majority or even any considerable number of working men would not be so senseless as to adopt the theory of operative extravagance, but individual workmen with the, under the circumstances, stupid trust in their "superiors," which characterises their class, have already been and are being entrapped, and such men, by lowering their own standard of life, force their fellows, by the law of competition, to lower theirs. It is not our business to show our employers upon how little we are able to live; any more than it is his to submit the books of his business to the inspection of his trade-rival. It is not for us to economise in order to keep up middle-class profits or dividends. Let the operative pause before he agrees to still further diminish the small sweets that existence yet retains for him. Let him frequent the few temples of art or pleasure which are still left stranded in the capitalistic wilderness, let him recreate himself as much as his scanty means allow, and forget occasionally, for an hour or two, that he is but the impersonal and degraded tool of a heartless and no less degraded taskmaster.

KARL L. LAUNSPACH.

SOCIALISM IN THE PROVINCES.

I AM asked by some comrades to give a brief of report of my lecturing tour to Sheffield, Liverpool, and Norwich. I do so, therefore, believing it of some use to give the impressions of a Londoner as to our prospects in other parts of the country.

I gave two lectures at Sheffield on Sunday February 28th, in the Secularist Hall: both were well attended, although I was told that the religious rancour which runs high in Sheffield would keep many people away from the Secularist Hall. Both lectures were well received, the evening one, the more plain-spoken and less historical of the two, particularly so: indeed I have never stood before a more sympathetic audience; and it seemed to me that the interest in the subject had much increased since I was last in Sheffield about a year and half ago.

On the day following, I attended a private meeting of about thirty sympathisers, called to discuss the possibility of starting a definite Socialist body. Of course I went as an advocate of the League. I found much interest in the subject amongst these friends, also some doubts and hanging back from that step of association, a step undoubtedly harder to take in a provincial town where people are so much more known and as it were ticketed than in London. The doubts had reference, some to the religious question, but

¹ It must be understood that by "starvation-point," I mean that situation where a man has to dispense with what, in the eyes of a European, are considered necessary to life, though as a matter of fact, not necessarily literally so; e.g., meat, etc. Of course, a Chinese or a Hindoo might live on a few handfuls of rice a day. Their "starvation-point" is consequently lower than our own, and they are paid accordingly.

mostly I think they turned on our repudiation of the Parliamentary method, the reasons for which I did my best to explain. However it was determined to set on foot a Socialist body, of which I hope we shall hear more soon; as undoubtedly several will join it who are both intelligent and eager to do something. Sheffield, I was told, is a specially good town for open-air meetings; and those who gather at them have every reason for listening to speaking which offers a remedy for the present state of things, as labour is very badly off there, and as far as I could make out from what I heard, political matters are sufficiently mixed up. It is worth noting in relation to the matter of would-be Parliamentary Socialism, that an advanced Radical association with a semi-Socialistic programme, which had been established in the town, was swept away by the General Election, the Radicals belonging to it joining the regular party, as they are pretty sure to do under such circumstances.

From Sheffield I went to Liverpool and delivered my lecture at the Concert Room in Nelson Street, on March 2nd. The hall was crowded with an audience mostly of working men, who not only listened with very great attention, but took up all the points which they caught and understood with very hearty applause. After the lecture I had the group round the platform eager to ask questions, which one always encounters in these more northern towns, and there could be no doubt of their eagerness to learn. It is much to be regretted that the League has no branch at Liverpool: although the members of the Workers' Brotherhood are doubtless intelligent and in earnest, they seem to shrink from the full consequences of the change which they advocate: I must ask them to excuse my pressing on them the advisability of their forming themselves into a branch and rallying to them energetic people from the working classes. From all that I saw and heard at Liverpool, half-a-dozen, nay two or three energetic and uncompromising men pushing our principles there would soon have a following, especially if they spoke quite roughly and plainly to their listeners whether working or middle-class men.

On the 8th March I went to Norwich and lectured to a very good audience, some 800 I should think, at the Victoria Hall. Again the audience was mostly working-class, and was or seemed to be quite in sympathy with the movement. There was no opposition except from a clergyman, who I was told was a worthy man; he however only said that he disagreed, without giving his reasons.

It was strange to me for once to be preaching Socialism in a city like Norwich, with its beautiful architecture and strange half-foreign old-world aspect. But from all I can learn it seems as likely a place as any in England for the spread of Socialism. The working-classes there are in a sad plight; the old weaving industries are fast perishing; the modern industry of mechanical shoe-making is hard pushed by foreign competition, and the "hands" are terribly exploited. Like all other industrial towns its "reserve army of labour" or something more than that is all but disbanded. The magnates of the town have been forced to give them some employment, but it is a good illustration of the helplessness of the authorities in such a crisis that they are chiefly setting them to tumble the hillocks into the holes on Mousehold Heath, a rough uncultivable tract of land near the city and which now belongs to it, and where these sturdy bodies are producing under the bourgeois organisers of labour nothing at all, except—ugliness, and literally, platitude.

I had the pleasure, which was a real pleasure and not a mere conventional one, of meeting our branch before the lecture. And here there was no room for the regret one felt at Liverpool, for they seemed just the men wanted in such a place, with their hearts in the business, and with no thought of compromise, thoroughly understanding the futility of Parliamentary agitation. Here again they told me there was good opportunity for open-air work, and they intended to set about it as soon as the weather permitted.

Altogether it is not as a partisan but as an observer that I say that every where people are willing and eager to listen to Socialists, and that the doctrines will take root; and as a last word I appeal to all who are not afraid of the expression of opinion, to help us, whether they call themselves Socialists or not. Some of those who are better off, if their position or their sensitiveness, whatever that may mean, prevents them from joining us, or working actively, can at least help us with money; and let them remember that these people who want to know about that Socialism which is beginning to stir the world, and which offers them a remedy for their hardships and degradation, are poor and daily growing poorer. Some day they will assuredly move in a way which will shake everything and overturn much: surely it will be better even for you well-to-do people if they have an aim and a policy in their movement. And to help them to this is our purpose; therefore in our turn we ask help of all thoughtful people.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

"YE GENTLE BOY-CAT."

"They who would be free themselves must strike the blow."

EVERY mail brings additional evidence how thoroughly the workers of America, male and female, grasp the fact that their emancipation can only be achieved by their own united efforts—by acting in the spirit of the noble motto of the Knights of Labour, a motto that should be the rallying cry of the workers throughout the world, "The injury of one is the concern of all." We have lately received a handbill issued by the Can Makers' Mutual Protective Association, of Baltimore, Md., containing an engraving of their registered trade mark. Accompanying the handbill was a circular letter, which we reprint, in the hope that it may serve as a stimulus to our somewhat sleepy unions:

"To all Assemblies, Knights of Labor, Trades Unions and Labor Organisations, greeting. We come to you with this appeal to aid us in our struggle to get living wages. Since the introduction of child and female labor at inadequate wages, and machinery, with the use of acids, oils and other poisons, our wages have been reduced to under five dollars per week since 1833. Brothers and sisters, we do not ask you for financial aid, but appeal to you, to help us in this just cause of gaining and maintaining living wages, by creating a demand for the 'Canned Goods preserved in cans bearing the Union Trade Mark, "C. M. M. P. A., Hand Made," stamped in the tin in circular form on the bottom of the can. This Can is manufactured only by employers of Union hands, and as it is made with pure resin, it is therefore recommended to the consuming public as the only safe can on the market; our action was approved by the Executive Board, G. A., in 1884, and also by the same, May 9th, 1885. Boycotts have been issued by D. A. 41, K. of L.—see *Journal United Labor*, June 25th, 1885—and Federation of Labor, Baltimore, Md., August 12th, 1885, and endorsed by the National Federation of Trades and Labor Unions at Washington, D. C., December 8th, 1885, against all cans not bearing this Trade Mark. We earnestly request you to place a copy of our hand bill, with our Trade Mark upon it, in conspicuous public places; in your meeting or assembly halls and in your kitchens, and see that your wives and all

members of your families create a demand for this Union Trade Mark Can, and that they buy no other. Trusting you will aid us, as above, all in your power,—We are fraternally yours,—W. H. MARINER, President; WM. C. OWENS, Secretary C. M. M. P. Association."

Everywhere across the Atlantic is heard "the sound and rumour" of the marshalling of Labour's forces, and the generals seem fully to recognise their responsibility and the gravity of the situation; but what are our "dull and muddy-pated" leaders doing in "these times that try men's souls"? Prattling of "jubilees" and "royal progresses" as if we were still in the middle ages; pottering and peddling with some miserable makeshift, such as leasehold enfranchisement and the like; winning the praise of smug, middle-class monopolists for their "moderation," and the contempt of all honest, earnest men, for their cowardice and servility; giving evidence before sham royal commissions; and stupidly bragging of the ability of the trades unions to maintain their own unemployed, when it is notorious that large numbers of the members of various unions are now on half relief, and many others have received all the out-of-work pay allowed by their societies, and are now in the direst straits of poverty.

There is one point to which I would especially call the attention of my brother coms, and that is to the slow costly strike at Waterlow & Layton's. Is it not time that we discarded our old rusty worn-out weapons? Our American cousins have not been slow to adopt and improve upon an effective instrument used by our Irish brethren—the boycott—with the result that during the time the strike at Waterlow & Layton's has been dragging its slow length along, scores of firms in all the big towns in America have succumbed to the pressure of organised labour. Fellow-workers, let us go and do likewise. Let us have done with the cant of moderation—the picking up of crumbs from the capitalist's table—the "half-a-loaf" doctrine preached to us by the canting rogues who profit by the system which robs us of the result of our labour. Join with the "poets and idiots" to boycott the Capitalist, the Landlord, and the Middleman, and so get rid once and for all of political quacks, royal commissions and royal everything else, Mansion House funds, and all the other shams which make life scarce worth living, except to those who consecrate it to the emancipation of labour and the realisation of the noble ideal which the *Commonweal* is established to advocate.

T. B.

CELEBRATION OF THE COMMUNE.

On the very anniversary of the outburst of the glorious Commune of Paris, its children in England held festival in remembrance and in honour. At the same day and hour in the various countries of Europe the like meetings were held. Ours was at South Place Institute. This was crammed before the actual proceedings began by an audience that was throughout the whole evening as enthusiastic as it was densely packed. After certain revolutionary singing,

Joseph Lane took the chair, and in opening the proceedings, said they had met to commemorate one of the most glorious events which had ever occurred in the annals of history, and to render homage to those brave men and women who had sacrificed their liberty and their lives for the benefit of the working classes and of mankind at large. Another reason why they met was to confer together that they might take lessons from their failures and successes, so that when the time came for them to make a struggle in the same direction, they might have no failures.

Frank Kitz (Socialist League) in moving the following resolution, spoke of the odium heaped upon the Commune when it fell amid the jubilant execrations of the bourgeois press. Despite all this it lived on in the hearts of the people as a great and grand example and as an inspiration to renewed effort.

"That this meeting of International Revolutionary Socialists, assembled in London on the 15th anniversary of the Commune of Paris, has met to commemorate the heroic devotion of the Parisian working-classes in the spring of 1871 to the cause of the people, as embodied in that forerunner of the socialised administration of the future—the Paris Commune, and to record its gratitude to those who fell in defence of freedom and the emancipation of labour. That it declares its determination to strive without ceasing for the overthrow in all countries of the system of class-domination founded on force and fraud, and maintained by the folly of the workers, and to establish instead thereof a condition of society based on principles of social justice and international brotherhood. That it fully recognises that the lesson to be learnt from the events of 1871, is that this can only be achieved by simultaneous and organised forcible action, and, therefore, it calls upon the wage-workers of the world to unite. Furthermore, it desires to record its abhorrence of the malicious lying of the capitalist press with reference to this struggle of the people for their own emancipation."

T. Mann (S.D.F.) in seconding the resolution, said he was a wage-slave and the son of a wage-slave, that he recognised there was no hope for his class save in such brave attempts at the inauguration of a new system as that made in 1871.

The resolution was then read and spoken to in German by Trunek (I.W.M.C.), in Italian by Dr. Merlino, in French by Bordes (C.R.F.), who also read several resolutions of French revolutionary associations addressed to the toilers of all classes without distinction of school or nationality, expressing regret for the slain workers of the 18th March, and approving of the revolt of the communists against the bourgeois. He hoped that the events of 1871 would be closely studied, that they might afford us a lesson of what in the future to avoid, and that the example of Paris would be closely followed by many other places, one of them not far from here. All peoples were now becoming animated by the sublime truths of Socialism, and through its influence upon them the Commune was, though vanquished, victorious.

Eleanor Marx-Aveling (Socialist League) said the time we looked for was coming swiftly, and then the severest punishment that could be inflicted on our enemies would be to turn them all into good hard-working citizens. She reminded them that there was more to be done than to demonstrate there on one day of the year, which had 365 in it. Speaking eloquently of the good work done by women in the past, she urged the necessity of combined and resolute work. When the revolution comes—and it *must* come—it will be by the workers, without distinction of sex, or trade, or country, standing and fighting shoulder to shoulder against their common foe. She ended by quoting the last words of the Communist manifesto of 1849.

The Chairman next announced that telegrams had been received from the Dublin branch of the Socialist League and the Glasgow branch of the Social Democratic Federation, assembled for a like purpose, conveying fraternal greetings to their London comrades, and that the Committee had despatched a telegram to their comrades in France conveying an expression of their sympathy and sentiments of solidarity.

Pierre Krapotkine was the next speaker. Addressing the meeting in French with great vigour and fluency, he said that he happened to be in Geneva in 1872, at the time of the first anniversary of the Commune, when Ferry and Rossel had been shot in cold blood on the plains of Satory, and he witnessed the arrival at Geneva of men of the Commune who had been stigmatised by the press of Europe as thieves and vandals. What did they do when they arrived there? Did they live in luxury on the wealth they had stolen? No; they sought the places in honest labour among the proletariat. Fourteen years had elapsed since that time—a great deal in the life of a man but very little in the life of a nation. But what

had been accomplished in those fourteen years? In spite of all the calumnies hurled against that noble rising, throughout the whole of the world, in America, throughout Europe, yea even under the violence of the Czar, to-night they were celebrating its fifteenth anniversary. After all, the Commune did but little, but the little it did sufficed to throw out to the world a grand idea, and that idea was the working-classes governing through the intermediary of a Commune—the idea that the State should rise from below and not emanate from above. The social revolution would teach them there was no such thing in nature as the rights of private property. It was approaching rapidly and it was being brought about by giant strides, not so much by us as by the bungling and avarice of the governing classes. The commercial condition of Europe was so strained, that it was clearly demonstrated that the present condition of society could not continue for long. While they had not clothes to wear sufficient to keep out the weather, it was not the pleasure of the working classes to manufacture fine robes for Indian rajahs or Russian princes. They had to learn at the next revolution that they must make clothes for themselves, and that grand economical revolution would not be checked even at the cannon's mouth.

After brief speeches from Headingley (Fabian), Quelch (S.D.F.), Lessner (Communistischer Verein), and Mowbray (S. L.), the meeting ended with the singing of the Marseillaise.

RECORD OF THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT.

RUSSIA.—The capitalist press is so constantly assuring us that Nihilism is "played out" (the wish is father to the assertion!), that the few facts which I take from a Russian correspondence in our fellow-organ the Paris "Socialiste," may be interesting.

A new number of the *Narodnaia Volia* has just been printed—under what difficulties I need not remind my readers—and it begins with a long, a terribly long list of the martyrs of the Russian government. Next, this paper gives us details as to the absolutely rotten internal condition of the Empire, its imminent bankruptcy. "In several provinces famine and misery are chronic . . . but nowhere are the peasants in so terrible a condition as in Siberia. The population is literally dying of hunger there. Moreover, the industrial situation of Russia is no better. . . . In many provinces the collecting of taxes gives rise to revolts, and migrations to other portions of the Empire, where the emigrants found prosperous villages. But as soon as a village begins to thrive, and the soil is cultivated, the government drives out the inhabitants. Such, e.g., was the case in 1884, in a village of 950 houses, on the Don."

Agrarian risings are the order of the day. In the province of Woronege the peasants have burnt the goods of a rich landed proprietor; and at Kiev is an association whose object is the devastation of the cultivated land of the large landlords. "This Society was composed of peasants, and the police has been powerless to deal with it." It happens not infrequently that the police sent to restore "order in a village" find themselves forced to fly before the rebel peasants. In the already-mentioned province of Woronege, 325 peasants were brought up on a charge of destroying a dyke that caused them damage, whereupon all the rest of the villagers demanded that they should be accused along with their comrades. "Last year there were 192,000 prosecutions for damaging forests—for the government refuses to admit that the forests are the property of the Commune."

There are also many strikes; at Iwanswo-Woznessensk 8,000 men went out on strike last September rather than accept a reduction of wages. At Alexandororsk the workers on a railroad struck; eleven men were arrested and condemned; 200 others immediately went and demanded the same treatment as their fellows.

The working-men are beginning to organise, and only those who have carefully followed the history of the Nihilist movement can appreciate the full significance of this fact. The correspondence from which I have taken the above statements concludes with these words: "These few facts are sufficiently eloquent to characterise the frightful condition of the Russian people, to show at the same time that the people, no longer able to suffer in silence, are awaking to resistance. The sacrifices of the revolutionists have not been in vain. Russian Society is not at all indifferent or hostile to the revolutionists, as is shown by the sums subscribed "in good society" during this year for the revolutionist propaganda. These sums amounted to £1,600."

HOLLAND AND BELGIUM.—Large meetings are being held all over Holland by the unemployed, and in several cases public meetings have been dispersed with the utmost brutality by the police, while numerous arrests have been made. In Belgium, too, there are "disturbances." At Liege a public meeting was called on the 18th of March, which ended in a fight between the gendarmierie sent to suppress the meeting, and the people. Several policemen as well as many of the crowd have been seriously wounded; some eighty or ninety people have been arrested. "Quiet was re-established by midnight," we have been informed by a Reuter telegram, but, as a matter of fact, the utmost "uneasiness still prevails." There is a large strike among the miners of Seraing and Jeneppe, growing daily more threatening, and a "descent" on Liège by the strikers is hourly expected. "If," writes a correspondent of the *Cri du Peuple*, "if the miners of Jeneppe try to enter Liège to make another manifestation, a collision, which if the Government do not take care will be a bloody one, is to be expected."

SPAIN.—From Spain, as from the rest of the world, comes news of struggles between unemployed and police, while meetings are constantly being dispersed with more or less brutality. At Alicante a meeting in honour of the 18th of March was forcibly suppressed; further details of this affair are not yet to hand.

FRANCE.—It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of the splendid movement of the Decazeville miners. In the next number of the *Commonweal* there will be a full account of all that has gone on there. Meantime, only a few facts. Of these the most significant perhaps is the solidarity shown by all the workers in France to their brethren at Decazeville. Every day different towns and villages are sending sums of money to enable the miners to carry on their heroic struggle against all the Watrins of the Company, while others are sending sacks of potatoes and other contributions in kind.

That every form of petty trickery and brutal intimidation is being attempted by the Company goes without saying. But to no use. The miners are determined to resist *à outrance*, and some of the mine-proprietors are beginning to confess that "Decazeville is lost to the Company." It is expected that all the mines will be closed next week. This means 600 more men out of work. The 18th of March was taken advantage of to hold—for the first time at Decazeville—a meeting in honour of the Commune.

