

THE COMMONWEAL

The Official Journal of the Socialist League.

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

NOTES.

The *Pall Mall* the other night contained, as indeed most papers do wellnigh every day, some striking examples of the working of the present system. "Immorality," "cruelty," "self-seeking," are terms in themselves vague and meaning little beyond what we are compelled to recognise as the inevitable result of a "society" such as that we are compelled to form part of. Does it never strike anyone as curious that, of the thousand wrongs every day endured by millions, none but the most violent examples find comment, and those only as to the effect, while the causes are left to Socialists to talk of? Even the "New (!) Journalism" is discreetly reticent as to the reason of drowning sailors being regarded as indifferently as "a litter of puppies"—that they are cheap, and easily replaced.

The perennial "copyright" question has been to the fore again, and much rhetorical mud has been flung at certain publishers—English and American—for "piracy" of books. What have they done, other than modern morality allows? So long as you can keep within or evade the law, there is no limit to the rascality which may be included within the limits of "business enterprise." It is only because authors have more chance to "squeal" than most men that one hears so much of copyright. Every craft has its own way of increasing the profit at other folks' expense; and publishers, while certainly no better, are no worse than other tradesmen.

At Bolton there has been much discussion by the Sanitary Congress of the many and various evils that "civilised" human flesh is heir to, but so far as we have noticed there has been no word as to the real why and wherefore. Many papers and speeches have elaborately shown what *should* be done and *could* be done—is it not about time for some of these learned men to get up and speak the truth, the whole of it? They could explain all over again what they have been explaining, and then go on with what *will* be done and *why*. By the time they got through with it they would find out many interesting truths, and would accomplish more good in a week than they do now in a decade.

We Socialists are so often met with the boast of "British freedom," and the rest of it, that it is almost with a chuckle of malicious pleasure that we look on at the row there is being made over the application to ordinary political meetings of the methods long reserved for our especial behoof. A little of the sneaking brutality that is called "vigilant performance of duty" when employed against us by the police, will make the "advanced politician" consider whether "law and order" is not rather dear at the price, and whether, in order to be rid of it, the overthrow of the system of monopoly-plus-exploitation does not appear to be necessary? Such questions are being now asked—and will one day be answered.

Reading of the great success which has attended the parcels post' one is irresistibly led to think of the ease with which a similar plan could be arranged and set going for the transfer of folk. Why could I not go and buy a stamp and be taken where I please? There is nought in the way but—private property!

Imperial Federation—or Jingo writ large—is a fascinating subject for the Briton who believes in "his" empire. It has been made, according to a late number of the *Journal of the Imperial Federation League*, a theme for essays, poems, and discussions at many public and other schools in the past year. "Train up a (bourgeois) child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it"—unless he becomes a Socialist, which is getting increasingly probable.

One important fact that has come out in the evidence at the Exeter inquest is that the architect, with the expressed consent of the inspecting magistrates, sacrificed an important, even necessary, exit in order to gain the rent of another shop. Coffin-ships, race-week trains, death-trap theatres, all run on the principle of getting a constant profit and "taking the risk"—only the risk and the profit pertain to different people. The *Daily News* for cure wants "a more compulsory law"; *Jus* wants the opportunity for "enterprise" enlarged; but it seems to a Socialist, irrational being that he is, only possible to ensure care for public safety when the public are the caretakers, when theatres and all else are in the hands of the people and by them administered. S.

THE TRADES CONGRESS AND A LABOUR PARTY.

THE Trades' Congress just closed has done some useful work. It is, however, to the address of the president, Sept. 6, to which I beg to refer. The president calls for the formation of a labour party—a party distinct from the two great political parties of to-day. The proposition is condemned as tending to create class strife and as still further complicating the political question—as being altogether impracticable. The *Daily News* assures the Congress that the proposition stands condemned by history, and is therefore impossible. Other Liberal organs tell the delegates that such a proposition does not come within their legitimate sphere of action, and that the Congress must lose the confidence of the respectable classes.

The formation of a labour party was sure to be condemned by the commercial even more than by the Tory press. It was sure to be condemned by the representatives of class interests, both in the House, in the press, and on the platform.

The formation of a labour party is a revolutionary measure. It is a declaration of war against the non-producing classes of the community; against the present institutions of society. It is a declaration of war against the dominance of the classes, against the supremacy of class interests. No doubt the Right Hon. John Bright will condemn it as fostering class interests, and therefore to be deprecated. But the words of the right hon. gentleman have lost much of their weight with the masses of the population. And if the workers are to succeed they must look to themselves. If the labour party is to be a genuine one it must be based on principle, not on expediency. It must be revolutionary in its nature, and seek the supremacy of the toiling millions, of the wealth-producing masses, and the extinction of all class privileges, of all monopolies, of all mere class interests.

The president condemned the monopoly of the land as the primary cause of trade depression. No doubt the president is right. The monopoly of the land is a most fruitful source of trade depression, and will ultimately lead to national decay. When we take into consideration the fact that from 1871 to 1881 in England and Wales alone the number of farmers decreased over 25,000, of market-gardeners over 32,000, and of agricultural labourers over 90,000, while the general population increased over 14 per cent., it is time to enquire into the monopoly of the land. And when practical men like the late Mr. Mechi declare that our agricultural produce can be increased to nearly three times its present amount, it is time this monstrous monopoly ceased. It is not the money loss only that we have to take into account, but the loss of labour and our dependence on foreign supplies for the very bread that we eat. The president condemned rents, royalties etc., and was quite right in so doing; and if we add to the £180,000,000 in rents, royalties, etc., etc., the £400,000,000 we get less from the land than we might (Mr. Mechi), making not far from £600,000,000 per annum, we may well condemn the monopoly of the land as the primary cause of trade depression.

But there are other monopolies equally monstrous. There is the monopoly of the currency, which is also very largely responsible for periodical trade depressions. This is a question very seldom discussed and very little understood; yet it is a question of the most vital importance, and ought to be well considered by those who seek the regeneration of society by and through the supremacy of labour. The monopoly of the instruments of labour is also a matter of the highest importance. When the president referred to the extensive use of labour-saving machinery, he dealt with the effects only of that monopoly. The monopoly of the land, the currency, and the instruments of production are the three great curses that crush to the earth the wealth-producing classes. It is on these monopolies that our modern system of production rests, by which the plunder of the masses takes place, and on which their slavery depends. Labour-saving machinery is not of itself a curse, but it is its monopoly, its use for the aggrandisement of the capitalist classes, that makes it a curse to the masses. Let the trades learn that it is not machinery as such, but the abuse of that machinery, its use against instead of for the workers, that makes it an apparent curse instead of a real blessing.

The president also condemned foreign competition, foreign bounties, piece-work, etc., all of which are mere effects, and are inseparable from, our modern commercial system.

The president declared there is no hope for the workers from the present House of Commons. He was quite right. There is not, and

cannot be, any hope from a House composed of land-thieves, of stock-exchange gamblers, money-lenders, railway directors, lawyers, and military adventurers, all living, and intending to live, on the plunder of the people. The president said "the salvation of the masses could only be secured by a distinct, a robust, and an outspoken labour party." If the new party is to be distinct, it must organise the masses against the classes; on no question whatever must there be any compromise. If it is to be robust, it must raise the standard of revolt against all class privileges and class interests. It must take its stand on principle. It must war against royalty as an institution; against the principle and spirit of aristocracy, through all the ramifications of society; against the claims and the pretensions of capital, and proclaiming to the world the supremacy of labour, on which depends not only the wellbeing but the very existence of society; it must organise and prepare the workers for the one great struggle of the masses against the classes.

The president also declared in favour of international action as far as the European States go; "When the workmen of Europe united on a common line of action they would be all-powerful, and their lives would thenceforth be brightened." These words are true. Will the workers accept them, accept the principle involved therein? The words are true; let the workers embrace them. The words are important to-day; let the workers think of them and be guided by them. Liberty, dignity, and independence can spring only from the supremacy of labour, from the triumph of eternal right, of eternal justice; and the brotherhood of the human race can spring only from the organisation and supremacy of the wealth-producing millions throughout the civilised world.

Let the trades, then, organise the new labour party. Practically it will be a national party. It will embrace all that are necessary for the essential operations of society. The workers are more than two-thirds of the population. The labour party must be revolutionary from principle. It will embrace neither princes, priests, nor peers; neither stockjobbers nor capitalists—none who seek to perpetuate the robbery of the masses by the classes. It will war against the monopoly of the soil, and proclaim the land for the people. It will declare in favour of a national currency, and the national organisation of currency. It will proclaim to the world that as labour is the only source of wealth, the instruments of labour belong to the workers, and should be national property. Then will machinery—labour-saving machinery—become a blessing to all, because working for the benefit of all,—increasing the nation's riches while decreasing the hours of labour. And then will be possible the reconstruction of society on the principle of equal liberty, of equal social advantages to each and all in all the relations of life and through all the ramifications of society. And then will be possible the holy alliance of the peoples, and the brotherhood of the human race.

Will the trades form the new Labour Party—"distinct, robust, and outspoken"—revolutionary in spirit and in principle? We shall see.

J. SKETCHLEY.

MEN WHO ARE NOT SOCIALISTS.

III.

"Poor old Weaver! who would have thought he would have come to this bad end? There he was—once a Radical of Radicals—the ancient enemy of the House of Lords, perpetual pensions, monarchy, faggot votes, game laws, and church establishment,—right on the front platform seat of a Tory meeting; a Tory fop on one hand, and an Orange clergyman on the other; Tories to the right, left, front, and behind him, volleying and thundering!" This was my mental exclamation as I entered a Tory meeting during the last general election, with the view of studying "human nature," so as to meet the accusation of opponents of Socialism.

Yes, there old Mr. Weaver—the life-long reformer, Radical, and Republican—sat, stuck like a thistle among dockens, supporting the candidature of a Tory landlord. He did not seem altogether quite at his ease in his new environment, and when he applauded he was apt to do so before the speaker's sentence was completed, thereby frequently signifying approval of what the succeeding words of the speaker meant to disapprove. This awkward habit, I observed, brought suspicious glances upon him from his neighbours, particularly from the chairman, a florid-looking old gentleman with a powerful presence and a weak voice.

Mr. Weaver, who has only recently retired on a small trades' society alimnt from hard daily toil, is a man of over sixty years of age. He has keen-cut Calvinistic features, and is of slight but very wiry frame. He always carries a thick blackthorn stick about with him, which has become quite as much a part of his anatomy as his arm or his leg. When speaking he emphasizes his remarks by thumping it vigorously upon the floor, and when walking he puts it to the ground in a way that indicates how distinctly his mental habit of disputation has impressed itself upon his bodily character.

Mr. Weaver may be said to have been a Radical from birth. His father was a Chartist, and when only six years of age his boy marched side by side with him at the great Reform Demonstration of 1832, carrying a small banneret bearing the words, "The Tories are more knaves than fools!" From that time onward Mr. Weaver boldly held aloft the banner of his political creed. Regarding his vote as a solemn trust, he faithfully recorded it at every election. Had the Radical party been called upon at any time to vindicate their principles by an

appeal to arms, Mr. Weaver would have been amongst the first to march to the field. Methinks I can see him sally forth early in the morning, with his clothes carefully brushed and his boots neatly polished, with his pike or musket over his shoulder, his lips sternly pressed together and his eyes peering anxiously ahead. Why it is, I don't know, but I cannot imagine Mr. Weaver returning from the conflict. No, I am perfectly certain he would not have returned; there is something about Mr. Weaver that tells me he would have been amongst the first to get popped down. I never knew of men of Mr. Weaver's type returning from the wars; they always get killed at the very outset. They never turn up as old pensioners. Had a Radical riot taken place and half-a-dozen persons been shot, I am sure those persons would have been two infants in arms, a small boy, a young woman, an old woman, and Mr. Weaver. Had only one person been killed, Mr. Weaver would inevitably have been that one. There is a something, I don't know if it is a divinity, that doth edge men like Mr. Weaver right into the track of spent bullets and falling brick-bats.

Mr. Weaver, besides being a Radical, is a strict teetotaler and a staunch Freethinker. As a Freethinker he attends secularist meetings every Sunday with a regularity that savours of piety. There is another point in his behaviour that almost entitles Mr. Weaver to be regarded as a religious man, despite his Atheism—his frequent presence at Freethinkers' funerals. He never misses one within a radius of ten miles. Christians will note with regret, probably tinged with a pious satisfaction however, that the number of these funerals have increased much of late years. So often indeed is Mr. Weaver to be seen plodding forth with craped hat and white-cuffed sleeves, that many of his neighbours who know not his evil reputation as an infidel, cherish the idea that he is a Free Church elder or a city missionary of some sort. It is not to be imagined that this characteristic of Mr. Weaver's springs from his having any peculiar fondness for funerals, Freethinker or otherwise, but from a perfectly amiable desire to testify, as he himself puts it, "that men may respect their dead friends even though they are not morally certain that their souls have gone to roast in hell-fire."

The story of Mr. Weaver's political apostasy is a pathetic one, and has a high moral for political partisans. Mr. Weaver, like Radicals in general, had a supreme admiration for Mr. Gladstone. When a few years ago Mr. Gladstone denounced the Irish as rebels and robbers, Mr. Weaver did so likewise.

Some of Mr. Weaver's secularist friends, who were then Land Leaguers, and who subsequently became Socialists, denounced both Mr. Weaver and Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Weaver vindicated himself and his political chief by standing up righteously for "law and order," and protesting his belief that the Irish were utterly bad in all their ways!

I remember the Sunday morning after it was announced that Mr. Gladstone intended bringing forward a Home Rule measure for Ireland. There was a political discussion on in the secularist hall. Mr. Weaver was at his post, looking anxious, and, I thought, somewhat older than usual.

I am sure he had not slept much for several nights previously, thinking over the terrible news of his chief's conversion to the side of the "assassins." Of course Mr. Weaver was twitted by his opponents about his chief's turn round. Mr. Weaver professed entire disbelief in the news, and in his indignation at some of the sallies against himself, defiantly asserted that even if it were true that Mr. Gladstone had changed his mind, he at least had not, and even his respect for that great and venerable statesman would never constrain him to grant concessions to traitors and assassins who were marching through public plunder to the disintegration of the empire. Mr. Weaver, who is usually very circumspect in debate, became very angry and even rude that day, and had to be admonished several times from the chair.

This was the turning-point in Mr. Weaver's political career. He went all wrong after that. He modified his views upon manhood suffrage, because he could not admit that Irishmen had a right to political freedom; he discarded his land nationalisation principles, because the Irish people were leagued against landlordism; and he had even a good word to say for the House of Lords, because he perceived that the lords were likely to prove a powerful obstacle to "rash and treasonable legislation."

He had previously affected a kind of tolerant sympathy for Socialism, but now, seeing Socialists were all for Home Rule, he diligently studied Mr. Bradlaugh's 'Objections to Socialism,' and vigorously declaimed them upon all suitable and even upon unsuitable occasions.

Nature was eagerly waiting some such opportunity to give Mr. Weaver's mind a halting-place. She hadn't intended him from the beginning for a pioneer; she didn't expect that he would have gone even so far as he did. She had endowed him with but a limited amount of initial velocity freedomwards; but Mr. Weaver had contrived to make the most of it, all honour to him, and external circumstances had tended to give it additional impulsion. When it did come to a stop, it is no wonder then that its thin-worn mechanism easily yielded to the force of reaction and ran ricketty down-hill.

After the Tory meeting, to which I referred at the outset, was over, I could not help, from a feeling of kindly sympathy, going forward to speak to Mr. Weaver—for who could but pity him now, forced by an unkind fate to associate with those whom he could not but still despise and who secretly detested him. He met me with some self-consciousness of disgrace in his face, but took my hand warmly as one who meets a friend in a foreign land. I didn't wish to jeer him, but rather wished to cheer him up a bit, poor soul!

"You've had a good meeting," I said.

"Yes," he replied, with a faint smile; "you see everybody has given up his own judgment in politics."

"Come, now, Mr. Weaver," I said, "don't slide on to an argument on politics. You'll be sure to fall if you do!"

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "I am not ashamed of my opinions, nor afraid to discuss them, now, any more than I was when I advocated true Radical principles—the same principles that I maintain to-day—before you were born."

"Tell me, Mr. Weaver," I said, "did you creep backward when you were a child?"

Mr. Weaver was called away at this juncture by a member of committee, and did not answer me. No doubt he thought I was joking with him, but, if the editor will allow me, I will show that there is a deal of philosophy underlying the question. Like all social philosophers—Plato and Rousseau, for example—I take a deep interest in the early uprearing of the race.

When I first alarmed my family connections by exhibiting a propensity for Land League and Socialistic principles, I remember my mother in admonishing me, said: "When you were a bairn, Johnny, you always crept backwards, and I aye mind an auld beggar woman at the door ance said on seeing ye stick fust against the wa', 'Weel fa' the callant! he gangs backward the noo, but, fegs! ye'll find he'll gang weel furret when he grows up!'" I reflected upon this remark, and perceived there was sound philosophy in it. There is a period of reaction, or creeping backward, I reasoned, inevitable in all men's lives, and it is well that it should take place in youth—it is a bad case when it overtakes the individual half-way or towards the end of his life. Recognising the intimate relation between physical and mental habit, I concluded that it is a good sign to see children creep backwards; they are sure then to go, as the old woman said, right ahead when they grow up. I even reasoned that it would be a wise plan to purposely train children to creep backwards, just as we now vaccinate them against small-pox. Besides, there is another advantage in children creeping backwards. Children who creep forward are continually cracking their little heads against chair-legs and bed-posts, whereby the youthful cerebrum suffers considerable cellular modification—a fact which, seeing most British children creep forward, probably accounts for the prevalence of lunacy and conservatism in this country. Children, on the other hand, who creep backwards, by a wise dispensation of providence suffer the concussions upon a part of their body upon which, according to the wisdom of the ages, repeated concussions, so far from proving harmful in any way, exercise quite a wholesome influence in determining the mental habit of youth in the straight and forward path of rectitude.

It is my firm conviction, therefore, that if due enquiry were made it would be found that all true champions of freedom who have gone on unswervingly to the end, started in life by creeping backwards, thus forestalling the inevitable law of reaction. Mr. Weaver, I am certain sure, began by creeping forward in the conventional way; consequently he had to make amends to fate later on. He is now doing so. And if truth were at all admissible in epitaphs, and if to me were appointed the task of writing Mr. Weaver's when he is dead (and far distant may that time be!), I would—in the light of the new philosophy of creeping which I have just endeavoured to elucidate—simply inscribe the words: "He died creeping backwards."

J. BRUCE GLASIER.

A CONSUMER'S COMPLAINT.—"Coal has gone up." "Is that so: coal-beds run out?" "No." "Miners struck?" "No." "Coal barons going to pay higher wages?" "No." "Seventy-five cents per ton duty taken off coal?" "No; that would make it cheaper, not dearer." "Extraordinary demand for coal?" "No." "Dealers looking for bigger profits?" "Well, no, not to speak of. Corner on Nature's bounty to all, that's what's the matter. The octopus, the coal barons, have been in consultation." Conspiracy and result! Have not the coal barons got their tentacles on all the coal lands; on all the means of transportation from the mines; on the representatives in legislatures and in congress; on the judges of the courts, and on the titles and deeds that they will sustain them in holding and claiming that which they never created? Have they not got the miners so starved into submission that they dare not call their souls their own (and they doubt very much if miners have any souls); and have they not got a hand in every consumer's pocket? Yes, and the Lord be praised!—*The Advance*.

Every man in this country is born a member of a great and powerful society; and we never hesitate to act towards him on the supposition that his being so born gives that society rights to be enforced against him. Equally true is it that he has a birthright by being born a member of society. . . . In the words of the greatest of political philosophers, he has "a right to all that society, with all its combinations of skill and capital, can do in his favour." In the words of one greater than man—the words in which is recorded the primeval sentence of our race—a sentence which contains at once the hard lot of the labouring man and the great charter of his rights, a charter prior to the authority of states or the rights of property—he has a right "in the sweat of his brow to eat bread." That society has forgotten its duties in which such a claim as this is not answered; in the social or economic system of that country in which men are willing to work and cannot eat their bread there is something radically wrong. The right of every man in the land is, to the utmost of all the power of the society that claims him as a member, to have the power of earning a livelihood secured to him. This is the first, the elder duty of society. It is vain to speak of the blessings of increasing national wealth, if to this you sacrifice the comforts of the poor. Better, far better for the country, would be the state of things which would give to every working-man in the country the assurance that his industry would command, for its reasonable exertion, the means of livelihood, than the most brilliant prospects which could be opened of wealth to our merchants, of magnificence to our nobles, or aggrandisement to our manufacturers.—*Isaac Butt, LL.D.: Lectures on Political Economy, delivered at Dublin University January 1846.*

THE UNION OF THE DEMOCRACIES.

(From the French of BERANGER. Translated by CHARLES J. GLADWELL.)

There came to me a vision as of Peace,
A Goddess bright, descending to the earth;
Hushed were the sounds of war, and in their place
Spread gladsome joy, and merriment and mirth.
"Arise," the Goddess cried, "in love fraternal,
French, German, English, peoples of all lands!
Form now in unity a bond eternal,
And grasp each other's hands.

"Unhappy men! E'en ye who seek to quell
The springs of hatred take but troubled rest;
Learn from your sorrows now in peace to dwell;
Enjoy the good with which your earth is blest.
While fastened to the Juggernaut of Power
Ye ne'er can learn what happiness demands;
Then free yourselves henceforth from this hour,
And grasp each other's hands.

"Against your neighbours now ye bear the sword,
With flames devour their cottages and homes;
And e'er the sun lights up the scene abhorred
O'er the sad field grim death in silence roams.
At your frontiers the blood of your own race
Upon each tuft of green your hatred brands;
Cease then this strife, these passions foul and base,
And grasp each other's hands.

"In insolence your rulers and your kings—
While burning cities desolate the plains,
And the still air with groans of dying rings—
Yet callously recount their bloody gains.
Weak, simple herds! How helplessly ye leave
Your heavy yokes for martial chains and bands.
Now quit your bonds, past errors now retrieve,
And grasp each other's hands.

"And since your rulers cease not war to wage,
Ye must among yourselves your peace secure.
Shed not your blood, nor in fell strife engage
For thankless kings or heroes of the hour.
By men of genius be not led astray,
The truly great iniquity withstands;
Then turn your thoughts towards a brighter day,
And grasp each other's hands.

"For ever, then, the happy peace prolong,
Casting o'er the past a heavy veil;
Pursue your toil to sounds of gladsome song,
Let victories of peaceful art prevail.
Hope smiling in the bosom of rich plenty,
You'll welcome the sweet fruits of marriage bands;
All nations dwell henceforth in loving bounty,
And grasp each other's hands."

We have received from Napoleone Colajanni a pamphlet on 'Collective Property' (Di Alciemi Studii recenti sulla Proprieta Collettiva), which students of Socialism will find of use to them. There are several careless and unnecessary printing errors in English words quoted in it.

"The labourer is worthy of his hire." Yes, but the word "hire" means not what he usually gets for his labour, but what he should really get for his labour. It is the violation of this simple law that has ruined several nations and is now breeding barbarians in our midst.—*Dr. M'Glynn*.

Henry George first preached "the land for the people"; then he recanted so far as to claim "the land-tax for the people"; now he fully crawfishes and swears that he will disturb "no right of property nor change the titles by which land is held." This is terrible rough on Galileo.—*Denver Labour Enquirer*.

'LONDONER ARBEITER ZEITUNG.'—This paper, like our own, is making heroic efforts to cope with great difficulties. Any reader who has a German friend who wants a Socialist paper in his own tongue, might direct his attention to this one. Its address is 49, Tottenham Street, Tottenham Court Road, W., and the subscription same as to *Commonweal*.

Society as it exists to-day will not continue. As instruction gradually descends to the lower classes, they discover the secret sore which has been gnawing at the heart of social order since the beginning of the world; a sore which is the cause of all popular agitations. The excessive inequality of conditions and fortunes could be endured as long as it was hidden on the one hand by ignorance, on the other by factitious civil organisation. But as soon as this inequality becomes generally recognised, its death-blow has been struck.

Recompose, if you can, those fictions of aristocracy; try to persuade the poor when they can read, when light is borne to them every day by the press, from town to town and village to village; try to persuade them when they possess the same knowledge and understanding as you, that they ought to submit to every privation, while neighbour so-and-so has, without working, a thousand times the wherewithal to live. Your efforts will be in vain. Expect not of the crowd impossible virtues.

When financial and commercial barriers shall have been abolished between different states, as they have already been between provinces of the same states; when wages, which are but a prolonged slavery, shall have become emancipated by the help of the equality established between producer and consumer; when the different countries, interchanging manners, abandoning national prejudices, abandoning the old ideas of supremacy or conquest, shall draw close to the union of peoples,—by what means will you then force society to return to worn-out principles? Even Bonaparte could not.

Before reaching this goal of a union of peoples, this goal of a natural democracy, we shall have to pass through a period of social decomposition, a period of anarchy, perhaps of blood, assuredly of weakness. This decomposition has begun; but has not yet advanced far enough to be ready to reproduce the new society.—*The end of Chateaubriand's 'Essai la littérature Anglaise et considérations sur le génie des hommes, destemps et des révolutions.'*



"HAVE YOU NOT HEARD HOW IT HAS GONE WITH MANY A CAUSE BEFORE NOW? FIRST, FEW MEN HEED IT; NEXT, MOST MEN CONTEMN IT; LASTLY, ALL MEN ACCEPT IT—AND THE CAUSE IS WON!"

Communications invited on Social Questions. They should be written on one side of the paper, addressed to the Editors, 13 Farringdon Rd., E.C., and accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication.

All articles are signed, no special significance attaches to them because of their position in these pages. None to be taken as more than in a general manner expressing the views of the League as a body, except it be so explicitly declared by the Editors.

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Business communications to be addressed to Manager of the COMMONWEAL, 13 Farringdon Road, E.C. Remittances in Postal Orders or halfpenny stamps.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

N. W. (Laurencekirk).—This paper is not larger because it is now as big—bigger in fact—than we can afford. It is even now produced at a weekly loss. If a few more friends would take the interest in it you evidently do, and point out its fulness of news and information on the labour problem, canvass for subscribers, and help on its circulation, we should be glad to enlarge it as fast as we could manage it. Other friends please take the hint.

T. F.—Want something to do? Read answer above, and push the paper—that will aid propaganda all round.

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday September 28.

ENGLAND		SPAIN	
Justice	St. Louis (Mo.)—Die Parole	El Productor	
Norwich—Daylight	Denver (Col.) Labor Enquirer	Cadiz—El Socialismo	
Labour Tribune	Hampton (N.J.) Credit Ponceir	Madrid—El Socialista	
Railway Review	N. Eaven—Workmen's Advocate	HOLLAND	
Londoner Arbeiter-Zeitung	Detroit (Mich.)—The Advance	Hague—Recht voor Allen	
Worker's Friend	Port Worth (Tex.)—South West	Amsterdam—Voorwaarts	
Die Autonomie	Buffaloer Arbeiter-Zeitung	GERMANY	
Jus	FRANCE		Berlin—Volks Tribune
	Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily)		
	Le Socialiste	AUSTRIA	
	La Revolté	Arbeiterstimme	
	Guisse—Le Devoir	Brunn—Volksfreund	
	Lille—Le Travailleur	HUNGARY	
	BELGIUM		Arbeiter-Weekon-Chronik
	Liège—L'Avenir	ROMANIA	
	Ghent—Vooruit	Jassy—Lufta	
	Antwerp—De Werker	DENMARK	
	Brussels—L'Avant-Garde	Social-Demokraten	
	Seraing (Ougree)—Le Reveil	SWEDEN	
	SWITZERLAND		Stockholm—Social-Demokraten
	Geneva—Bullein Continental	MALMO—Arbetet	
	ITALY		
	Milan—Il Fascio Operaio		
	Marsala—La Nuova Eta		

'LABOUR, LEISURE, AND LUXURY.'

A BOOK on economic subjects, that modestly displays within its boards twelve closely printed pages of laudation from the capitalist press, and opens with the statement that "the teaching of the most erroneous and subversive doctrines regarding property has been increasing and bearing fruit to an alarming extent," is sure to be regarded by a Socialist with suspicion, and likely to be read by him with rather a critical eye. Such a book is 'Labour, Leisure, and Luxury,' of which a popular edition has been issued recently. The author, a Mr. Alexander Wylie, who is said to be himself a large employer of labour, naturally enough approaches the labour question with not a few of the prejudices of his class, and arrives at conclusions likely to afford the greatest satisfaction to his capitalist friends.

He maintains that the rule of "that great commercial dictator, the capitalist," is necessitated by "the luxurious indulgence and consequent immorality of an industrial population," and that popular luxuriousness is a great cause of the concentration of property into few hands. He says a great cause, but all through his book an observant reader will notice he manipulates his subject and his words in such a manner that the unwary will not fail to conclude that it is THE great cause, if not the ONLY cause. Thus he states in the conclusion of his book that the whole question of economic progress is bound up in the question of the acquisition by the working-classes of property, which must be acquired by saving that which is now expended upon vicious luxuries. Seeing that Mr. Wylie has taken into consideration only one of the causes (if cause it be) of the appropriation by the few of the surplus labour and value gained by union, which, as he says truly, should have gone to the civilising of the whole mass, it is evident that his attempt to solve the labour problem must necessarily be an utter failure.

How far wrong he has gone is shown by his advocacy of thrift as the panacea for the ills we bear. Abstinence by the workers from vicious luxuries is, according to him, the only means by which the emancipation of labour can be achieved. Now, thrift is all very well in its proper place, but as a cure for poverty it is simply out of the question. One is tempted to doubt the sanity of the man that would preach such a gospel for the poor, even to workers that are far better

off than the many placed in the same economic conditions as the Dorsetshire labourer mentioned by Mr. Wylie—a worker whose rate of wages "on the average is rather less than ten shillings per week, including every perquisite in the shape of extra food, beer, money, firing, and extra pay at hay-time and harvest," of which miserable sum "one-sixth has to be paid for rent of house," so that "it is only by feeding on coarse bread, potatoes, cabbage, and rice in scant allowance, with occasionally a bit of pork, that he can contrive to keep himself, wife, and two or three children in life." Just imagine the diseased mental and moral state of the man who would advise poor, half-starved wretches like these to spend less on vicious luxuries, and to procure with their savings "respectable Sunday suits" (even "at the cost of considerable privation in their food supplies and other things"), then furniture, then houses, and lastly, "the tools, machinery, workshops, factories, lands, ships, etc., requisite for carrying on their daily vocations"! Is it astonishing that "the subversive doctrines regarding property" should be eagerly accepted in preference to doctrines that, like Mr. Wylie's, but mock the people and bring nothing but despair to hundreds of thousands of families?

Mr. Wylie's main idea is that "that moral condition of society which encourages abnormal accumulation of wealth by the few is the unfitness of the many for the use of larger means of life than the residuum left by their wealthier fellows," who are, however, as he candidly admits, "often men of much the same moral calibre as themselves." This ridiculous theory is best met by simply showing how false is the historical statement upon which it seems to be based. Mr. Wylie says: "The higher wages which followed the introduction of steam-power, and the countless mechanical inventions which turned it to account, in Lancashire especially, where it has been most taken advantage of, instead of enriching, strengthening, and educating, in the ignorant and immoral hands of the workmen positively helped to make them poorer, feebler, more sensual and ignorant; and well was it for the nation, themselves included, that the superior men amongst them were, partly by this very providence and ignorance, raised into such a position of power as capitalists that they could take from them with the strong and stern hand that which, while being wasted, would have wasted their own souls, and though devoting it generally to the maintenance of a huge system of refined luxury, rescue it from the tenfold worse abuse of gluttony, debauchery, and idleness." Compare that with the following account of the condition of the worker at the very same period, given in 'Six Centuries of Work and Wages,' by Professor Thorold Rogers, who is surely more worthy of credence as a historian than Mr. Wylie: "The factory hand was even worse off than the labourer, and, as machinery was gradually being introduced into the manufacture of textile fabrics, the handloom weaver was worst off of all. Great as was the demand for labour under the new system, it was, unfortunately, not counteracted by an increase of real wages, hardly of nominal wages, for the demand was for both sexes and nearly all ages. But the severest penalty fell on those who had been, in the older days of manufacture, the specially skilled artisans in textile fabrics." Again he says: "That the patents of Arkwright and Peel secured enormous fortunes for these inventors or purchasers of inventions we all know; that they ultimately cheapened production is equally clear; that they gave England wellnigh a monopoly in the supply of textile fabrics is as manifest; but it does not strictly follow that the English workman was better paid. The handloom weaver was undoubtedly impoverished, but I do not find that the machine weaver bettered his position. His wages remained low, his means were even straitened, and the misery of the manufacturing districts was even greater than that of the agricultural." So much for our author's knowledge of history and his application of it to the solution of the labour problem.

Having detected such a glaring misrepresentation of a historical fact, we cannot be expected to place much confidence in the other statements Mr. Wylie makes in proof of the gross immorality of the working people, even if we have no other reasons for believing them inaccurate. According to his account, Dumbarton, which he does not say is worse than other places, appears to have been a regular pandemonium in prosperous times. The great majority of the riveters there, earning during these times from five to ten pounds a-week of 51 hours, spent all their fabulous wages in riot and debauchery, often swallowing up, in addition, the smaller gains of their wives, whom they sent without scruple to do their 56½ hours in Mr. Wylie's own works. Without enquiring why the latter—believing strongly that the immense majority of the working people require "the strong guidance of the capitalist, or to use the good old-fashioned word, 'the master,'" whilst disapproving of men making slaves of their wives, and holding that the true sphere of the woman is in her own house attending to her children and the domestic comfort of her husband—did not refuse employment to them, we cannot but think that our friend is apt to be carried away by excess of zeal into the domains of fiction. It is certainly true that many of the working-class (and quite as large a proportion of the other classes) indulge in what are called vicious luxuries, among which drink occupies the first place, but it is not true that the great majority do so. Moreover, the greater number of these so-called "immoral" workers are driven to drink by their economic condition.

This was shown clearly in an able article on "Consumption," which appeared recently in the Scotsman. It was stated on the authority of Dr. Andrew Smart that in this country there are 850,000 souls engaged in manual labour that causes a startling abbreviation of life—consumption being the test disease, that by which is gauged the comparative unhealthiness of the work engaged in by a tenth part of our industrial

population. "Consumption is not like cholera, it does not kill in a night. It may be feeding on its victim three, six, or even twelve months, before finally destroying him. Let us suppose the case of a workman engaged in one of these unhealthy trades. At first he does not feel anything amiss; but, by and by, the poisonous nature of the atmosphere surrounding him, or the constraint of the bodily position in which he has to work, or the keen-edged dust he is forced to breathe, or any of the other causes that suffice to make work unhealthy, begins to tell upon him. The human frame is good for resistance up to a certain point; but pass that point, and the recuperative power is gone, and the strength of the man runs down like a clock with the weights off. Within a period of time then, varying, of course, with the constitution of the workman, he finds that he is not so apt for labour as he used to be. Why, perhaps, he cannot tell. A depression of spirits steals over him. His labours become a burden, not a pleasure. This lassitude growing not lessening, he in time finds his strength not sufficient for his day's work. But the man must work or he will starve. It will not do for him to be ill. Strength must be got somehow. How? Now, as we do not wish to be suspected even of a temporary lapse into the cant of teetotalism, we will try, in stating the case, to err, if at all, on the side of moderation. But look at the question fairly. Let us put ourselves in the workman's shoes, and then say where we would go for stimulus. It is all very well for men who have never been tempted (note this, Mr. Alexander Wylie) to preach against the "sin" of tasting ardent spirits. Let us suppose, however, a case in which the man does not resort to drink after he begins to feel the budding of the germs of consumption that have been sown so plentifully by the work he is engaged in. *If he still keeps to his work, and does not use alcoholic stimulants, one of these two things must necessarily happen. He will either work less or work worse.* His labour will be inferior either in point of quantity or in point of quality. In either case his wages will be reduced, while his home expenses increase, and thus the hope, much less the act, of saving rapidly becomes a thing of the past. Not being able to save while he is at work, it necessarily follows that when the disease grows upon him to such an extent as to disable him for work altogether, he must become a burden either to the parish or to his friends." Now, the 850,000 workmen referred to, leave on a very moderate estimate 212,500 descendants who will, in the course of time, develop the hereditary disease, and require to use "the same means as their fathers to stave it off. Then the number of drinkers is reinforced by those whose daily work incapacitates them for enjoying any but the coarsest pleasures during their brief period of cessation from toil. If temperance reformers took a reasonable view of the case, they would readily admit that in most cases drunkenness is not the cause of poverty, but poverty of drunkenness. It is strange Mr. Wylie does not see this, the more so that he makes the following statement. "Drunkenness is the delusive refuge into which, in the Anglo-Saxon race especially, human nature, working below its proper healthy, moral, and consequently happy tone, almost inevitably rushes."

On the assumption, then, that the working classes have a bigger share of original sin than their "superiors," and are therefore unfit to make a proper use of the wealth they create, the author of 'Labour, Leisure, and Luxury' justifies the appropriation of as much of that wealth as possible by the upper classes, and the expenditure of it on themselves—a doctrine that makes short work of the eighth commandment, and is, therefore, above all others pernicious and immoral. While it is undoubtedly true that too little attention has hitherto been paid to the subject of what wealth it is most beneficial to produce for consumption by the race, there is every reason to believe that ignorance on this point is as prevalent among the wealthy as among the working classes. Be that as it may, Mr. Wylie rejoices that his class has the power of abstracting from the workers the greater part of the wealth the latter produce. To his credit, however, he believes that property has its duties, and insists that it is the first duty of his propertied friends (*after* those which they owe to themselves) "to strive as much as lies in their power to ameliorate the condition of the toiling millions whose industry enables their capital to fructify." Unfortunately the effect of such wholesome teaching will likely be nullified by the saving clause, for the leisured classes have rather inordinate notions as to what they owe to themselves. Still, Mr. Wylie tries to remove every obstacle self-interest may lay in the path of duty. In case they may be afraid of undermining their present position of privilege by attending to the duties of property, he informs them that when the working classes have with the help of their "masters" realised Mr. Wylie's ideal social state, when the working classes have "by higher intelligence and morality" acquired a larger share of property, the numbers of those enabled to lead the lives of luxurious sinecurists through the present concentration of wealth will not be curtailed. Philanthropy with no worse result than this is by no means "dangerous," and ought to be rather popular among the classes. The masses, however, will understand what sort of friend they have in Mr. Wylie, on learning that he looks forward with equanimity to their being saddled for all time with the annual payment of the £550,000,000, which as he himself shows is at present secured for the entire and special luxury of about 750,000 families.

Taken all in all this book will certainly not help in the very least to stem the tide of Socialism. Its author hopes, it is true, that it will "help to dispel those Communistic ideas so prevalent in neighbouring countries from the minds of our working classes," but how can he expect this result when he has not taken the slightest trouble to learn what those ideas are? He not only neglects to examine Socialism and criticise it, but carefully avoids considering the pressing economic

problems of the day; indeed he is to be condemned not so much for what he says, as for what he leaves unsaid. He does not show how dull trade, scarcity of work, starvation wages, adulteration, and similar evils are to be remedied. Fearful of exposing the weakness of his position he ignores these problems—problems which the working people feel must be settled without delay, and which Socialism alone boldly grapples with and successfully solves. J. HALDANE SMITH.

NOTES BY A TRADES'-UNIONIST.

THE *Labour Tribune* has a more than ordinarily stupid leader on the recent vote of the Northumberland miners *re* Messrs. Burt and Fenwick. It is gravely argued that, because the men refuse longer to support these political jelly-fish, therefore all progress is to be stayed and the workers to be left helpless in the hands of their enemies. "Who will fight the battle of the poor man in Northumberland if the withdrawals take place? What will prevent the middle-class man from being chosen and returned?"

As if as far as fighting goes, middle-class men like Graham and Labouchere have not shown far more pluck and energy than any of the so-called labour M.P.'s, who misrepresent the workers at present.

It is strange that our contemporary should remain so blind and deaf to the ferment of the "new wine" of Socialism that is quickening the impulses and aspirations of "organised labour," in whose name it claims to speak. Here is a sentence which one might expect to find in the *Daily Telegraph*, or other plunderer's paper, but which seems oddly out of place in a *Labour Tribune*:—"It will be a bad day for England when feeling runs so high against capitalists as it is doing now in America, in connection with the condemned Chicago Socialists." Will the editor in his great wisdom please to "enlighten our darkness" in regard to this?

Mr. Pickard, M.P., has been delivering himself before a meeting of Yorkshire miners, in regard to Mr. Burt, the Socialists, and direct labour representation. He appears to have been suffering under an acute attack of spleen that still further muddled his not over brilliant brains. Yorkshiremen are generally credited with being pretty 'cute, and they must have sadly deteriorated since I lived amongst them if they listened without laughing at the ludicrous assertions of Mr. Pickard, viz., that the aims and interests of Socialists and Tories were identical, and that they were striving to form a labour party for the purpose of destroying the power and influence of the trades' unions.

Instead of making these senseless, blundering statements, it would be better for Mr. Pickard and his colleagues, if they expect or desire to remain "leaders," to make some enquiry into the doctrines they denounce and into the character of its exponents. It might surprise them to find that a large proportion of Socialists are as active and earnest trades' unionists even as themselves, and considerably less entitled to be classed as Tories, or at least the friends of Tories.

How fallacious are the charges made by Mr. Pickard may easily be seen by any one who will take the trouble to send to Mr. Mack, 4 Back Marlow Street, Blyth, secretary of the North of England Socialist Federation, for a copy of the constitution and rules of that association, which was founded as the result of the agitation during the late strike. Here are two items of the programme:

- (3) Helping Trades'-unionism, Co-operation, and every genuine movement for the good of the workers.
- (4) Promoting a scheme for the National and International Federation of Labour.

An M.P., writing in the *Pall Mall Gazette* on the vote of the Northumberland miners, pays fair tribute to the influence of the Socialist propaganda, and in an "occasional note" in the same paper, commenting on the subject and on Mr. Pickard's speech, the following pertinent observation occurs, which I commend to all those whom it may concern:—"Mr. Pickard, indeed, went on to abuse them [the Socialists] soundly, and even to ridicule them; but a cause which, in the opinion of its opponents, is strong enough already to effect a revolution in the relations between the miners and their representatives, can afford to bear a good deal of ridicule."

The following almost incredible act of folly is recorded in the *Pall Mall* of Tuesday:

"About three hundred men, employed by the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway Company, met at Mexborough on Sunday, and resolved to forego one week's wages with the object of assisting the company to pay the claims arising out of the Hexthorpe collision."

One's astonishment to find in these hard times a body of workers who can afford to be so munificent, is overcome by indignation as to the object of the outlay. Surely these men might have found amongst their own class more needy and more deserving recipients of their bounty. They might, for instance, have given a thought to their fellow-workers victimised by the rascality and rapacity of the Midland Railway Co. instead of wasting their charity on the dividend drones of the M. S. & L. R. C. It will be well for these "generous" workmen if the directors, perceiving that the employes have more money than wit to use it wisely, do not take an early opportunity to reduce their wages. Should such be the case, I for one, should almost be inclined to say, "Serve them right!" T. BINNING.

THE LABOUR STRUGGLE.

BRITAIN.

THE OLDHAM DISTRICT COTTON INDUSTRY.—The operatives' strikes in many of the mills have been settled by compromise. The mills at Castleton are running short time. The operatives at Messrs. Hopwood and Sons continue on strike.

MORE MISERY.—Considerable dismay has been caused at Portsmouth by two hundred additional men receiving notice of discharge from the dockyard. It was hoped, from Lord George Hamilton's recent statement, that all discharges had ceased.

THE SHIP-JOINERS' STRIKE AT ELSWICK.—There is no change in the attitude of the joiners at present on strike owing to a dispute in the sharing of the work at Armstrong, Mitchell, and Co.'s works at Elswick. The men are still waiting a reply from the firm, whom they have approached with a view to negotiations for a settlement.

SHIPBUILDING ON THE CLYDE.—About 200 workmen employed in the shipbuilding yard of Messrs. Caird and Co., Greenock, were discharged on Saturday. A fortnight ago the same firm paid off 120 men, and further discharges are expected when the new P. and O. steamer Britannia is fitted out. Messrs. Caird and Co. have at present nothing in the stocks and no order on hand. The outlook for the Clyde workers in connection with shipbuilding during the coming winter is of a dismal nature.

SOUTH WALES COLLIERS.—The announcement that the representatives of about sixty thousand colliers in South Wales have given notice to their employers to terminate the existing sliding-scale arrangements causes apprehension. The men urge that upon the existing basis they do not obtain fair remuneration. The agreement is of no effect in cases of dispute, because no provision is made for the adjustment of differences relating to matters not specified in the agreement. Moreover, the workmen receive no advance whatever unless the price of coal rises 4d. per ton, whereas, if the market fall to the extent of the smallest decimal, a reduction of 2½ per cent. is immediately effected in their wages.

STRIKE OF TAILORS IN DROGHEDA.—The tailors in the employment of Thomas Brady, Nationalist, T.C., Drogheda, having demanded an equal wage to that paid by other houses in the town, were locked out. An indignation meeting, in which all the local trade and labour bodies took part, was held, and for the first time in an Irish provincial town, the Socialistic view of the labour question was expounded. The strike will probably be a prolonged one, as both sides are resolved on holding out to the last.

THE PROPOSED CO-OPERATIVE GLASS-MANUFACTURING SOCIETY.—The suggested starting of this society has caused some little excitement at Stourbridge. The recent difficulty between masters and men has been practically settled, and the proposed starting of a co-operative glass-manufacture has come as a surprise upon the masters. The men, as is well known, have considerable funds in their trade society—as much as £10,000—and if the committee decided to apply any important part of it in a manufacturing concern the thing could be begun, as a matter of course. The promoters of the scheme are, however, looking beyond this to a large number of shares being taken up by the glassmakers themselves, and many of the men have promised to take shares.

MINERS AND THE EIGHT HOURS MOVEMENT.—The Welsh coal miners' delegates, having met to consider a report of the Trade Union Congress, passed the following resolution: "That this meeting is convinced, by practical experience, that eight hours is quite sufficient for miners to be in any mine in every twenty-four hours when working single shift, and seven hours when working double shift; and that we are of opinion that the produced wealth of the country is ample to permit the miners a moderate living for the said amount of labour: therefore we urge upon the miners of the whole country to organise and agitate for an Eight Hours' Labour Act."

NORTHAMPTON STRIKE—"ROUGH ON 'RATS.'"—Serious rioting has taken place in Northampton over the boot strike, which has now been in existence ten weeks, and at present shows no sign of abatement. Last week one of the men who is at work contrary to the women's union was so frightened at the demonstrations of hostility to him that he dropped down dead in the factory. He was surrounded by policemen at the time. The jury returned a verdict that death was accelerated by the menacing attitude of the crowd. On Tuesday night a crowd of about a thousand workpeople surrounded the factory of Messrs. Cove and West, and hooted and hissed the "accommodating" workmen as they left. Some were chased along the streets in different directions, followed by showers of mud. One man took refuge in a tailor's shop, and was some time afterwards found hiding in the cellar. He was escorted to his home by two policemen. Later in the evening, stone-throwing was commenced, and the windows of the factory, the house where the employers have been boarding some men, and the homes of some of the workmen, were shattered. Considerable excitement prevails, and a renewal of the stone-throwing and intimidation is expected every night.

THE STRIKE IN THE NAIL TRADE.—At a meeting of nailers on strike, held at Broomsgrove, there was a good attendance. Mr. Roberts presided, and in the course of an address said the present was the best strike they ever had in the nail trade, both at Broomsgrove and in the up-country districts. Mr. Powell advised the nailers not to be discouraged at anything they heard. He believed they would not be out long, for they had the public sympathy on their side. In explaining the low state to which they were reduced, he said they now received 1s. for work which a few years ago they had 30s. for, and, at that time trade was not a bit better than other trades, so that the public could judge of the extent to which they had been reduced. Mr. Collins wished it particularly to be known that the master by whom he had been employed had, since the strike began, been going about and buying up all the nails he could get at 10 per cent. less than the 1879 list—the price which the nailers asked for before the strike. The men were encouraged to continue firm, and the meeting adjourned.—At an open-air mass meeting of nailers at Halesowen, Mr. Price, president of the association, stated that the strike was the most general he had ever known in the trade, very few of the operatives being at work. None of the masters had agreed to pay the advance. A resolution was adopted deciding to continue the strike until all the masters had conceded the increase. *Later.*—At mass meetings on the 26th it was decided to submit the dispute to arbitration, provided the employers consent.

THE BOLTON STRIKE.—Although the masters announce that as far as they are concerned the dispute is at an end, the position of the men on strike is

in no way altered, except that whereas last week the door of compromise was open, it is now closed. The twentieth week of the strike will be entered upon with prospects of an amicable settlement even more distant than at first. The men have refused to accept arbitration, and the employers are taking measures to fill their workshops with imported labour. The arguments urged by the men as justifying their action in refusing arbitration on the terms offered are various. Of course, had they resumed work the subscriptions which have hitherto flowed in so liberally would have at once ceased. There are now, roughly estimated, 300 imported men in the various works. These the masters would not undertake to discharge. Consequently a large number of Bolton workmen would have remained in the streets chargeable upon the funds of their organisations at a time when no outside aid was forthcoming. The words "as required" in the masters' proposal might be construed into tens, fifties, or hundreds, according to the will of the employers. Further, the men entertain the opinion that the masters would do all in their power to cripple the society's funds by forcing them to maintain a large number of out-of-work members. It is also urged that the men having come out on strike in a body, if they agree to arbitration, should have the privilege, win or lose, of resuming work. The last notice of the employers appears to close the doors to any further negotiations, and so far as they are concerned the strike hands have no choice but to resume work on the present terms or remain out. The employers do not now hesitate to assert that they confidently believe if the men had consented to resort to arbitration pure and simple on the wages question, the umpire would have had no alternative but to decree a further reduction. The men have decided on local practical measures, and at a full meeting of the Bolton United Trades' Council on the 21st, it was resolved to contest every ward in the borough at the forthcoming municipal elections, as a protest against the action of the authorities in connection with the existing strike in the iron trades, that is the bringing into the town of a large force of extra police and military, and retaining them despite the decided opinions of the rate-payers to the contrary.

ITALY.

The Labor Party of Italy held its third Congress at Pavia on Sept. 18th and 19th. Among the subjects for discussion on the programme were the re-organisation of the Labour Party itself; the practical means for securing Parliamentary representation; abolition of political struggle; the establishment of a centre for oratorical instruction for propaganda; the propagandist press, etc. We have received no details of the sittings as yet. The programme is of interest, and the discussion upon it should be fruitful.

SOCIALIST CO-OPERATION.

ONE of the largest and most successful meetings ever held at the hall of the Socialist League, 13, Farringdon Road, took place on Wednesday, Sept. 21, when A. C. Varley delivered his lecture on the above important subject. The following resolution was passed by a large majority:—"That in the opinion of this meeting it is desirable to start a Co-operative Society on Socialist lines." In accordance with this resolution a Provisional Committee has been formed to draw up the scheme to be submitted for acceptance at another meeting, which will be duly announced. Several persons who think well of the proposal, have already promised to contribute towards the necessary capital, receiving neither interest nor dividend, but secured by debenture bonds on the property of the Society. The Provisional Committee consists of the following:—H. A. Barker, T. Binning, W. Binning, D. C. Dallas, E. C. Fox, Mrs. S. Gostling, F. Kitz, J. F. Murray, J. Turner, A. C. Varley, and T. E. Wardle, with power to add to their number. The Committee will meet at 13, Farringdon Road, at 7.30 p.m., next Tuesday, Oct. 4. It is earnestly requested that the whole Committee be present on that occasion. A. C. Varley will deliver his lecture at the Bloomsbury Branch of the League at the German Communist Club, in Tottenham Street, Tottenham Court Road, on Thursday, October 13th, at 8.30 p.m. An opportunity will thus be given for further discussion. D. C. D.

The "Chambre Syndicale Ouvrière de la Cordonnerie de France" recently opened a subscription-list for the benefit of the shoemakers on strike at Northampton, and voted a sum of money from its own funds, "as evidence of the international solidarity of the workers."—E. T.

We hear that our comrade John Neave who has suffered in the German prisons before for his activity in the propagation of Socialism, will be brought up on October 3, to go through the farce of a trial on the charge of high treason.

CITY OF LONDON COLLEGE, WHITE STREET, MOORFIELDS, E.C.—POLITICAL ECONOMY.—We are glad to learn that the Council of this College, recognising the value of this subject to their students and young men generally, have established a course of lectures in political economy, which will be free to all the students connected with the college. Mr. Sidney Webb, LL.B., barrister-at-law, the distinguished Professor of Political Economy at the College will, it is expected, attract a large number of members to his class. The first lecture will be delivered on Monday, October 10, at 8 p.m.

MORE ENCOURAGEMENT TO "THRIFT."—An extraordinary scene was witnessed on Monday evening at a meeting of creditors and depositors of the Sheffield and South Yorkshire Building Society now in liquidation. The members largely belong to the working classes, and have lost their savings in the society's collapse. The liquidators called a meeting to present their report of the first year's working. While a director was addressing the meeting a member, who declared that he had lost the savings of a lifetime, rushed from the body of the hall to the platform, and made towards the director to assault him. Several people seized the man, but he struggled violently, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he was restrained.—When next Messrs. Bradlaugh and Footscott sing the Song of the Savings Bank—if the theme isn't about worn to rags now—perhaps they will give this scene a corner in the rosy picture. We are all weary of hearing of the losses of the poor unfortunate exploiter: suppose the losses of the wealthy wage-slave have a turn?—W. B.

Murder by Law.

A PUBLIC MEETING will be held in CLEVELAND HALL, CLEVELAND STREET (near Portland Road Station), on Friday October 7th, at Eight o'clock, to protest against the proposed murder of the seven Chicago Anarchists upon the false and unsupported testimony of the police. A larger meeting, specially of English workers, is being arranged. Details next week.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE SCOTTISH PLOUGHMAN.

DEAR SIR,—Having been handed one of the issues of your very interesting and excellent paper, bearing date August 27th, I am surprised to see a paragraph signed "J. L. M.," criticising our benefit society. This Unity was never meant for anything else but a benefit society. It was started about 22 years ago, when such grand doctrines as those of Socialism had not been planted except with few seeds, and these, though growing, had not any fibres of grit amongst Scottish or English people, either rural or urban, at that time. No hopes were ever entertained that the "International Ploughmen's Society of Scotland" would ever develop into a thoroughgoing labour organisation. Personally, although I have done as much if not more than any other ploughman to assist the branching-out of that society, I had nothing to do with the baptising of it. In 1872 I thought, and think still, that the Scottish ploughmen, though scattered hither and thither over the land, could be united into one general combination, and at the same time I began to stir the minds of my brethren of wage-slavedom, but have never succeeded in getting more than a few to help in pushing any kind of unity.

It was in the autumn of 1872 that this society began to sprout its branches. Now seeing that a few have been paying their contributions for 22 years, and with numbers additional from 1872, with membership slowly increasing, and although none of the officials has shown any tendency to Socialism as yet, it is not to be wondered at if those funds of the "International Ploughmen's Society of Scotland" are not allowed either by members or their office-bearers to be spent upon any propaganda of general emancipation or amelioration. My brethren have had no spyglass to see anything but wage-slavedom and their ever-increasing heavy burden of capitalist farmers, landlords, etc., with all their male and female flunkies stuck on, always fixing themselves tighter upon the shoulders of us as a class of workmen. By and by we will begin and think out ways and means for the purpose of being allowed to till the soil under an honest system. This society is not in a very great financial condition; and J. L. M. is at liberty to title this society "International Union" or "slate union"; and at same time I thank J. L. M.—I am, etc.,

R. DEMPSTER.

THE "SWEATER."

It is supposed by many that the sweater is only to be found in the East-end, and that he necessarily lives in a filthy slum, down a dark dirty alley, or at the top of a dilapidated building, or over a stable. This is the description that is given by our novelists and sensation-mongers. But the above description is only a rare exception. Then again there is a misapprehension as to what a sweater really is. The editor of the *Anti-Sweater*, in answer to a correspondent who wrote asking for a definition of the word, said that a sweater was a person who lived on the sweat of his workers, and that the worker was the sweatee. I thought at the time that this was rather a peculiar answer, considering that there are many trades and occupations where the workers sweat a great deal more than a tailor, presser, or machinist under equally unhealthy conditions, and their employers are not called sweaters. Now what is a sweater, and how did the word come to be used? About thirty years ago nearly all the good tailors worked inside the various West-end shops. When some of the shopkeepers found that it was too expensive or inconvenient to keep their journeymen on the premises, they offered to give the men the work at home to make. By this means they reduced the cost of manufacture, as the men had to buy their own fuel, light, machine, etc. So long as these men made only as much as before, they were not reproached, but when, through some reason or other (and these are too numerous to mention), they got more garments to make, they employed male or female help (principally female, for obvious reasons), then they were called sweaters, that being the name that was given to such persons who originally started in the East-end, where most of the Government contracts were executed. Now it is easily seen that there is actually no difference at all between a sweater and any other exploiter of labour. Consequently all persons, in any trade, that employ others for profit are sweaters. Messrs. Maple, or Crosse and Blackwell, for instance, are just as big sweaters as Rich. Phillip in Whitechapel; and more so, because they employ a hundred times as many women and girls, whose average weekly wages are less, and who suffer from all kinds of chest-diseases through inhaling copper and other minerals that are used in the manufacture of pickles, potted meats, etc. I know of many places in the West-end that are quite as filthy and insanitary, etc., etc., as any "sweater's den" in the East-end. When one considers that there is often only one room, and there he works, with a blazing coke fire, a rattling machine, etc., and with two men and three women, and there his wife cooks the "food," keeps the children, washes, and sleeps, etc., it is not to be wondered at that these victims of the capitalist system look like so many unwashed corpses. And these single-breasted masters, as they are called, are increasing in the West-end with alarming rapidity, and competing with each other to such an extent that they have forced down the prices for making coats 40 per cent. in the last few years, and the sweater himself has to work day and night to be able to "live" and pay the extortionate rents that is exacted from him by the landlord. Of course his miserable employes are just as bad off, and perhaps worse, than other "hands." What is the remedy for this state of things? Put a tax on the foreigner? Combine to get a twelve-hour working day; (as Mr. Lewis Lyons says), or get an eight-hour bill passed, or make these masters take out licences and not employ less than a dozen hands? What good would these be, when they can earn such miserable wage now, working sixteen hours a-day? How much could they earn in twelve or eight, working as they do on task or piece-work? These are not remedies; they could only tend to aggravate the present state of affairs. The only remedy and the only hope for the workers is Socialism, when the land and the machinery and the capital are in the hands of the whole community, and every one does what he can and gets what he needs. Then away with all such quack remedies, and let us teach the workers, who are all exploited, sweated, and slowly murdered, that as long as this infernal competitive system lasts, so long will we be sweated. That will only be impossible when the majority of the workers are educated as to their moral and social condition, and make up their minds to live and work for their own class, leaving the idle and useless classes to shift for themselves.

H. S., Chelsea.

The Labour movement is the indication of unrest born of unjust conditions. The Labour organisations the factors to secure the necessary change by peaceful means.—*Union Advocate*.

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

OFFICES: 13 FARRINGTON ROAD, E.C.

London Members.—The Monthly Meeting of London Members will be held on Monday next, October 3rd, at 9 p.m.

Library.—The Library is open to members of the Socialist League and affiliated bodies. LIBRARY CATALOGUE, containing the Rules, 2d. D. J. NICOLL and W. BLUNDELL are the Librarians.

"COMMONWEAL" PRINTING FUND.

Donation.—H. A. B., 5s. **Weekly Subscriptions.**—W. B., 6d.; Llednub, 6d.; K. F., 1s.; C. J. F., 2s.; Oxford Branch, 2s.; Langley, 2s.; E. B. B., 1s.; P. W., 6d.; T. B., 6d. P. WEBB, Treasurer, Sept. 27.

THE NORWICH PRISONERS' AID FUND.

For Mrs. Mowbray.—A Few Fabians, per Annie Besant (weekly), 10s.—C. W. Mowbray will be released on October 15, and it is requested that all monies and subscription-lists be returned by that date, so that the fund may be wound up as soon as possible after that time. J. LANE, Treasurer.

Strike Committee.—Collected in Regent's Park, Is. 7.—J. LANE.

REPORTS.

BLOOMSBURY.—Hubert Bland lectured on Thursday last on "State Intervention." The branch held good open-air meetings on Sunday at St. Pancras Arches and on Monday at the Polygon, Dalziel, Neilson, and Bartlett speaking at the former, and Parker at the latter.—U.

CLERKENWELL.—Wednesday, Sept. 21, A. C. Varley lectured on "Socialistic Co-operation." (See page 318). Last Sunday, W. Hardaker lectured on "The Harvest of the Sea." Good open-air meeting held on the Green, addressed by Blundell and Barker. Literature has steady demand.—A. T. and W. B.

HOXTON.—On Thursday, Parker spoke to a good meeting. Sunday morning demonstration very successful, Messrs. Morris, Wade, Grout, Pope, Allman, Barker, and Jas. Allman addressing the meeting. Resolution at close carried unanimously. Evening in hall, W. C. Wade lectured on "Will Socialism benefit the English People," followed by discussion.—C. J. Y.

HACKNEY.—On Wednesday evening, owing to our usual station being occupied by costers, we held a meeting by the Canal bridge, Kingsland Road, where a large and attentive audience was addressed by Allman and Cores. Graham, Brooks, and Cores addressed a good meeting at Warner-place on Sunday evening.

MILE END AND BETHNAL GREEN.—On Tuesday, Davis and Allman addressed a large meeting on the Waste. Opposition was offered by Mr. Eagle, a Free-thinker, who was answered satisfactorily. Two names given in. We held our usual meeting in Victoria Park on Sunday. Opposition was offered by a local tailor, who was well answered by Davis, Brooks, and Matthews. Good sale of *Commonweal*.—H. M.

MITCHAM.—Good meeting on Fair Green on Sunday morning, addressed by Kitz and Blundell. In the evening by Kitz and Parker. About 400 present on both occasions. One new member made, and *Commonweal* sold well.—R. C.

NORTH LONDON.—At Regent's Park on Sunday morning, Cantwell, Arnold, Brooks, and Lane spoke, and 1s. 7d. was collected for propaganda.—T. C.

IPSWICH.—Meetings very satisfactory, increased audiences paying marked attention to Morley and Outing, from Norwich. J. Thomas of our branch, made a neat maiden speech. A fair sale of literature. One new member enrolled.—R.

BRADFORD.—Good meeting last Sunday evening at "Royal Oak," Shipley, when Jowett lectured on "Socialism v. Reform," supported by Minty and Mitchell. Mr. Bamford and Mr. George (Radicals) also spoke.—F. P.

GLASGOW.—On Saturday evening at Jail Square, Glasier and Paterson gave vigorous speeches to a considerable crowd. On Sunday evening also, we had a first-rate meeting at the same place, when addresses were given by Glasier, Downie, and Bullock. On Sunday afternoon, Glasier lectured to a branch of the Irish National League. The members of this branch always show great interest in our doctrines, and we believe that a large number of them will become active workers with us.—A. M'K.

NORWICH.—Last Thursday evening, a good meeting was held on St. Mary's Plain, addressed by Reynolds. Nicoll, of London, addressed a very large meeting in the Market-place on Sunday at 3, speaking for an hour and a half, also on the Agricultural Hall Plain at 7, then lecturing in the Gordon Hall at 8 on the "Political Parties." Mills and White went to North Walsham, Houghton and Morley to Ipswich, Slaughter, Turner, and another to Lowestoft, where two good meetings were held. The evening meeting was interrupted by the police. We intend to defend the right of free speech whatever comes of it, as there is no question of obstruction, the place of meeting being the old market.—T. M.

NOTTINGHAM.—On Thursday, Proctor addressed enthusiastic meeting of Clifton miners on "Labour Organisation." On Sunday in the club-room, a debate was held on the Trades' Union Congress. We are this week moving to larger and more convenient premises in Tokenhouse Yard, Bridlesmith Gate.—A. M. C.

NORWICH.—Nicoll and Henderson held a good meeting on Saturday evening in the Haymarket. Henderson also held meetings during the week at Carrow, St. George's Plain, and the Market-place on Sunday morning and evening.

ST. FAITH'S.—Henderson spoke on the village green on Sunday afternoon to a very good audience. The parson of the parish came out in opposition, and implored the labourers not to listen to us. In consequence of his efforts to stop us, we had a larger meeting than usual, and the *Commonweal* sold better.

YARMOUTH.—Good meeting on the Quay on Thursday, addressed by Henderson.

BLOXWICH.—Good meeting on Friday, addressed by Weaver.

DUDLEY.—A large audience assembled in the Market-place on Tuesday, to listen to address by Weaver. No interference from police on this occasion, although they came and looked on.

DARLSTON.—Weaver spoke here on Saturday to a very attentive audience. A good impression made.

FELSALL.—Weaver and Deakin visited the branch on Wednesday, and spoke to a few comrades.

WALSALL.—A very attentive audience was addressed by Sanders, Weaver, and Deakin on Monday. Two new members made. The Rev. Stewart Headlam will lecture for the branch on October 6th in the Exchange Rooms.—J. T. D.

WEDNESBURY.—Weaver held a good meeting in the Market-place on Thursday.

WOLVERHAMPTON.—An audience of 800 or 900 people was addressed by Weaver in Queen's Square on Saturday. There was considerable interruption, and several questions asked, which were replied to and opposition vigorously dealt with.

SHEFFIELD SOCIALISTS.—On Monday, Sept. 12th, we commenced our winter sessions with a tea and entertainment. About 40 sat down to a good tea, and after seemed thoroughly to enjoy the evening's entertainment. On Monday the 19th, Mr. Story opened a discussion on "Socialism," Mr. J. Fox replying, after which others took part, causing much interest. Adjourned till the 26th, when "The best means of Nationalising the Land" will be the opening question.—M.

WOOLWICH.—Last Sunday Utley failed to put in an appearance, but B. and Banner held a very good meeting. Broad delivered his first Socialist speech, which was a good one, and gave evidence that he will be of good service to us. Literature sold very well, and collection made for propaganda. We are going

