

THE COMMONWEAL

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

NOTES ON PASSING EVENTS.

THE Home Rule question is much where it was last week; the beginning of an outrageously dull debate in which the slain are slaughtered over and over again, has only shown what was obvious before, that Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain can no longer row in the same boat, and that Mr. Chamberlain in spite of all his fervid would-be Socialistic sentiment of last year, is quite as ready as other politicians to sacrifice the welfare of a people to his career of leadership.

The Bill, say politicians, will certainly be thrown out: in which case it is probable that a Tory Government will pass a Home Rule measure stronger than the present one, though perhaps with one or two pieces of sham precaution added. Meantime one noteworthy feature of the present hocus-pocus is the extreme eagerness of so many of the Radical members to label themselves Whigs, from Mr. Chamberlain downwards, even in the teeth of the fact that the Radical party outside Parliament is mostly Gladstonian. This is accounted for on the face of things by their conscious hope (not without foundation) of their being able to humbug their constituents; but there is a deeper cause than that for the enthusiasm of their rattling, the resistless march of events towards the formation of the Great Moderate Party. These quasi-Radicals fear their constituents much, but they fear the advance of revolution more, and they fear the advance of revolution more, and they are but acting naturally and after their kind.

The official disclaimer made for Lord Wolseley in Parliament was a sufficiently farcical incident in the great farce of the hypothetical Orange Rebellion. Nobody doubts that Lord Wolseley and the other barrack-room fools have been bragging in the usual swash-buckler style as to what they would do if only the circumstances were to hand: they again are but "doing after kind." But it is a little remarkable that the whole Tory press from the sober *Standard* to the romantic *St. James's Gazette*, have taken the matter so seriously, and with one consent have joined to egg on the Orangemen—if that were needed so long as the rebellion is only hypothetical. Has the result of the Socialist trial encouraged our Law-and-Order contemporaries? Anyhow, again we are shown how obvious it really is to all men's minds that physical force is the basis of our Society.

The Bourgeois, both directly through their Governments, and by their joint-stock associations artificially supported by the said Governments, are prepared to act steadily by open force more than ever. Bismarck in Berlin forbids all public meetings; while from Chicago comes this piece of news, showing that the triumphant capitalists are going to make their most out of the present situation and their recent police victory: "The Wholesale Clothing Association in this city has resolved upon a lock out against their employés; by this step twenty-seven thousand hands will be thrown out of employment."

The American capitalist is certainly a bold, even a reckless man, and deserves to succeed in a "survival of the fittest" world. But even brutality may be carried too far, and we hereby tender our thanks to the Chicago sweaters, who, if the above piece of news is true, are determined to show the American non-Socialist workers that their cause is one with the revolutionists, whom they are now denouncing under the influence of very natural fear inspired by the White Terror. A few more such brutal attacks on the lives of the workers as this of the Wholesale Clothing Association, and the whole mass of workers in America will see the hopelessness of incomplete and isolated attacks on monopoly by means of strikes and boycotts, and will be forced to set themselves to the one necessary work, the abolition of the classes of privilege.

In this age of fads there is a curious fad labelled by its supporters "Imperial Federation." Now, as we Socialists have learned to suspect all qualifications, even the most simple of us will be likely to smell out the "Imperial" qualification of that good thing Federation. Yet a word or two on the subject may not be untimely in these days of enthusiasm over the huge Commercial Puff at Kensington, besung by Court poets and dry-nursed by the boundless ignorance of Sir Philip Cunliffe Owen.

The point is that while the aim of Federation is the extinction of national rivalries, that of Imperial Federation is their artificial support. Imperial Federation means the bolstering up of the decaying supremacy of England in the world-market with the help of a worthless sentiment called patriotism; which, however, has done rather successful work as regards the leaders in this movement themselves, who can see nothing but through its mist. *E.g.*, the *Pall Mall Gazette* has been compelled by it to join the Hartington-Chamberlain Whigs, and is prepared to dragoon Ireland if she fails to see the beauty of neglecting her own business of making her people happy by allowing them the use of their own land, for the sake of nursing the trade in English shoddy wares all over the world.

The attempt, however, like that of other artificial revivals now current, is not very dangerous, because it is artificial. In point of fact that humbugging phantom, "the marvellous energy of the Anglo-Saxon race," covers at least the average amount of incompetence and laziness common to commercial mankind. The material of which "England" is composed, is doubtless good, since it includes contributions from so many races assimilated at so many periods; but it is not miraculous, nor capable, most happily, of forming a great predominant Empire.

In fact, the matter of the English markets is becoming serious enough to shake our "patriotic" hypocrisy; and some frank admissions of the truth are oozing out. The *Times*, *e.g.*, publishes, and the romantic *St. James's Gazette* reprints what amounts to an attack on our traders for their insolent stupidity, which is not quite the same thing as their stupid insolence, and does not serve their turn quite as well as that has done when war-ships and bayonets accompanied it. The text which this gentleman preaches upon, with a vigour which really inspires confidence, is as follows: "The universal complaint against them, from Auckland to Montreal, from Tokio to Smyrna, is that they are impervious to new ideas, and they act on the principle that it is the business of their customers to adapt themselves to their manufactures."

Yes, and it is the business of our Imperial Federation wise-men to force "our customers to adapt themselves to our manufactures;" and, in fact, we always play that game, Federation or no Federation, when we find it safe to do so.

Well, the *Daily News* also follows suit in a leader on the Consular reports: "Manufacturers are not so quick as they once were in adapting their products to the wants or prejudices of their customers." The truth will out. How long ago was it since the whole bourgeois Press was busily denying the depression in trade? Says the *Daily News* in its leader: "The first thing which strikes every reader of the Reports for the year 1885, is the universality of the depression from which trade and agriculture are suffering." This time last year I caught the following sentence in one bourgeois paper (I admit that it was the *Spectator*): "It is yet to be shown that there is any depression of trade."

Good news all this, good news! The obvious obstacle to the spread of Socialism is the commercial prosperity of England. That is now past praying for. Yet, if the centre of commerce only shifted, it would not help us much. That will not happen, England will not crush other countries as she hoped, as the insane fanatics of Imperial Federation still hope, but she will not be utterly crushed either. There will be no centre; the field will be left free for limitless cut-throat competition between the nations, which will lead the Depression of Trade out at the other end—Revolution.

Good people of Britain! when in times to come you are become modest about yourselves, and neighbourly to all the world (which may take place according to the proverb: "Only the unexpected happens"), when in those times some flattering visitor praises you, as guests in their kindness are wont to do, and extols the "famous men and fathers that begat you," for their cleverness and enterprise past all other people, will not truth compel you to exclaim: "Sir, and dear guest, you are somewhat mistaken; it was not we who were so clever, but our coals!"

WILLIAM MORRIS.

AMERICAN FINANCE AND ITS RELATION TO THE PRESENT LABOUR TROUBLES.

It is still the opinion of many Radicals that under a Republic financial scandals, and the oppression and degradation of the toiling millions are things altogether improbable, if not impossible; yet we have only to go to the Republic of the United States to see how little the mere form of government has to do with the economical conditions of society. There where there is neither royalty, nor aristocracy, nor State Church, nor a great standing army, we have the economical evils that are hastening the European States to a terrible social upheaval.

The labour troubles of America are partly the result of our modern system of production, and partly the natural outcome of the financial operations that followed the close of the great civil war. Looking at the arrangements made with the so-called National Banks, and with the European creditors, we find nothing during the last half century to equal them in villainy. The Government received in loans a total of 1,300,000,000 dols.; although the nominal debt in 1866 amounted to 2,773,236,174 dols., being more than double what the Government had actually received. Up to 1880 the Government had paid as principal 1,200,000,000 dols.; as interest, 2,780,000,000 dols.; there were bonds unredeemed, 1,800,000,000 dols., making a total of 5,780,000,000 dols., being a difference in favour of the bondholders of 4,480,000,000 dols. Since then (1880) more than 300,000,000 dols. have been paid as interest. Taking the accounts for 1883, there had been paid as principal 1,222,144,967 dols., and as interest 2,992,746,079 dols., total 4,214,891,046 dols., on a debt of 1,300,000,000 dols., and yet there remained to be paid 1,551,091,207 dols. What a swindle! And under the name of a Republic!

Take the arrangements with the National Banks, which, like the Bank of England, are national only in name. The banks lent the Government, 197,740,000 dols., for which the Government gave them 410,000,000 dols. in bonds, being a difference in favour of the banks of 212,220,000 dols. The Government paid the banks six per cent. interest on the bonds, which amounted to 24,600,000 dols. per annum. The banks also got the right to issue notes to the extent of 350,000,000 dols., at seven per cent., giving them 31,500,000 dols. The public deposits averaged from 1865 to 1880, 600,000,000 dols., on which they were allowed to make a net profit of 4½ per cent., or 27,000,000 dols. per annum—total, 83,100,000 dols. Now six per cent. on the 197,780,000 dols., the banks lent to the Government, would have been 11,866,800 dols., whereas they were able to realise 83,100,000 dols., which left 71,233,200 dols. in favour of the banks. In the sixteen years ending 1880, the banks realised an extra profit over and above their six per cent. on their own capital, no less than 1,139,731,200 dols. What plunder!

But there was another arrangement with the bondholders even more infamous. To anyone depositing with the Treasury of the United States 100,000 dols. in bonds, the Treasury advanced 90,000 dols. in greenbacks free of interest, while paying him 3¼ per cent. on the whole of 100,000 dols. in bonds. Now suppose the banks had deposited the whole of 410,000,000 dols. worth of bonds, the Treasury would have paid them as interest 14,350,000 dols., and would have advanced them 369,000,000 dols. in greenbacks, on which, at seven per cent., another 25,263,000 dols. would have been realised. Or the banks, with the 369,000,000 dols. in greenbacks, could have bought more bonds, deposited them with the Treasury, and could have repeated the operation till from 150 to 200 per cent. interest per annum had been realised. Need we wonder at the present crisis? All the industry in the world could not for long sustain such a system of wholesale plunder.

But worse still remains. The bondholders stipulated that they should be paid in gold, and to do this the Government had to establish a gold standard as the basis of the currency. The result has been a fall in values of over 60 per cent., even from the values of 1873. By this single operation the debts of the United States have been virtually doubled. Let us see its effect up to 1878-9. Mr. Ewing, speaking in the House of Representatives during the Session of 1879, said that the four years of preparation had practically increased the debts of the country one-third in amount. That the public debt was 3,308,000,000 dols.; railway and canal debts, 2,564,000,000 dols.; and corporation and other debts, 4,000,000,000 dols., being a total of 9,872,000,000 dols. That had been virtually raised to 14,808,000,000, and all private debts in the same proportion. To enable the Government to establish a gold currency, and thus keep faith with the so-called "public creditor," the currency was reduced from 55 dols. to less than 20 dols. per head of the population. Mr. Ewing declared in the House that the four years of preparation for resumption had stripped millions of their hard-earned savings; had turned hosts of willing workers into idle vagabonds; had filled the *Gazettes* with bankruptcies and sheriff's sales, the country with suicides, and the gaols and asylums with the victims of a law more diabolical than had ever before been enacted or enforced. That in 1878 the number of tramps was not less than one million, and those out of employ not less than three millions. That all this was the inevitable result of keeping faith with the public creditor. That the contraction of the currency naturally led to the contraction of trade and commerce, and the consequent loss of work to millions.

We have referred to the arrangement with the national banks. Let us give the arrangement with the European creditors, Messrs. Rothschild and Co. Mr. Robert J. Walker was sent to Europe with United States bonds to the amount of 400,000,000 dols. In return for those

bonds the Government received 165,000,000 dols., making a difference in favour of the bondholders of the nice little sum of 235,000,000 dols. The bondholders, therefore, paid 41¼ per cent. of the value of the bonds they received. But what the bondholders gained the people lost. During all the years, and until the whole is swept away, the bondholders draw interest, not on the 165,000,000 dols. lent, but on the 400,000,000 dols. in bonds. Was ever such a system of plunder as is carried on by the Governments and financial rings of the present day? The evils of the present system cannot be removed by any compromise, however great. We seek the utter extinction of this gigantic system of robbery, and not a mere modification. The railway public—the general shareholders—were the first to feel the terrible effects of the contraction of the currency, and by 1877 had sustained a loss of £360,000,000 sterling. As for the working classes the wages began to go down by 20, 30, and 40 per cent. at a time. But all classes whose incomes depended on labour felt the evils. At the close of 1879 we read that the farmers of Illinois had mortgaged their farms to the extent of 300,000,000 dols., those of Iowa to 180,000,000 dols., and those of Wisconsin to over 100,000,000 dols. It is in this system of plunder, coupled with our modern system of production, we have the grand causes of the present labour troubles in America. Here we have the grand sources of the extremes of wealth and poverty, the curse and scourge of the human race. And nothing but revolution can free the people from these monster evils. Neither compromise, nor expediency, nor modification, but the thorough extinction of the present system. The press may howl and the pulpit may curse, but usury and production for export and profit are doomed, and cannot be much longer sustained. To the workers we say Grasp hands and spread the Light the wide world over! Down with tyranny, down with usury, and success to the Revolution!

J. SKETCHLEY.

INSURRECTION IN BELGIUM.

III.

(Continued from page 46.)

AFTER the 25th of March the insurrection assumed much larger proportions by suddenly transferring itself to the west of Belgium. A strike broke out among the colliers of Ransart, another among the stone quarriers of Feluy, both in the Charleroi basin. Immediately the troops were called out, and commenced their detestable work. The gendarmerie of Seneffe killed one of the men on strike, simply because he would not walk fast enough. In less than two hours, the workmen in shafts No. 7 and No. 8 of the Gouffre collieries at Chatelineau, and the miners of the Bois communal at Fleurus all abandoned work. The Government, trembling and paralysed with fear, not knowing which way to turn, called out the soldiers from all parts of the country. They arrived from Tournay, Namur, Louvain, Antwerp, and Hasselt. The civic guard is called out for the defence of the towns thus deprived of their troops. This does not prevent the workers of Delloye, Montigny, Acoz, Ormont, Bourbier, Marcinelle, and Bois de Caziers from joining their fellow-workmen. The men on strike form themselves into bands of several hundreds in number and traverse the whole arrondissement, everywhere persuading their comrades to unite with them, and threatening those who continued to descend into the mines that they would cut the ropes. At Châtelet, the insurgents destroyed the telephone and cut the telegraph wires. At Roux, and afterwards at Chatelineau, the troops fired, wounding many of the men; the workmen retaliated by demolishing everything on their route. At Lodelinsart, they pillaged everything they passed and put to flight the soldiers, who were powerless to control them. On the 28th, the glass-works at Moudron were destroyed, Binard's brewery, the timber-yard of Piette, at Chatelineau, and Baudoux's colossal glass-works at Tunet became a prey to the flames. Everywhere throughout the whole arrondissement the strike spreads; hourly fresh insurgents come to join their companions in the struggle and in misery, and, a certain proof that they know what they want, they do not fear death. The bands of rebels march through the towns and villages singing the *Marseillaise*, and shouting "Vive la Révolution Sociale!" They are full of ardour and courage, and in several places, as at the establishments of Paris and Providence, they repulse the troops.

At Charleroi a panic seized the inhabitants; all the shops were precipitately closed; re-inforcements of soldiers were everywhere demanded. The Council of Ministers met at Brussels, and decided that all the troops in the capital must hold themselves in readiness to start for Charleroi at the first signal. General Van der Smissen having taken the supreme command of all the forces stationed in the department, gave pitiless orders to the soldiers to fire without hesitation whenever the least crowd collected. The monster suppressed on his own private authority, and in defiance of all custom, the preliminary summons to disperse.

General Van der Smissen, who may with reason be called the Belgian Galiffet, is a brute, whom it will be well to describe in a few words. He is the son of that other General Van der Smissen, who, in 1831, was condemned to perpetual banishment, as a traitor to his country, for having attempted, FOR A BRIBE, to sell his country to the Orange dynasty. Allowed by favour and mercy to return to Belgium, he renewed this attempt in 1841, and was this time condemned to death. It must be remarked that it has been *judicially* proved that it was for the sake of money that this wretched man tried to sell his country.

It is the son of this dishonest man who has just distinguished himself by such cruelty in the district of Charleroi. It is the same Hector

who, in 1864, went to Mexico to further the ambitious designs of an Austrian prince, who married the sister of the King of the Belgians, and to crush a free, independent, and happy people, and impose on them at the point of the bayonet imperial and despotic institutions. This audaciously criminal invasion was not only, as a historian observes rightly, an attempt on the liberty of the Mexican people; it was also a series of executions, fusillades, violent deeds, conflagrations, ferocious massacres, assassinations, and infamous horrors worthy of the Vandals and Northern Barbarians; and it is to this series of abominable actions that the sanguinary and ferocious *souard* who commanded the troops at Charleroi, went to associate himself!

Here the proverb is true: "Like father, like son;" both are vile scoundrels!

Meanwhile, notwithstanding the pitiless orders of this general, the strike continued to extend, and at the end of the month all the industrial region of Charleroi had ceased to work. The troops were in continual conflict with the insurgents. At Roux seventeen workers were killed at one volley, and three times that number severely wounded. At Chatelineau many others fell under the bullets of the saviours of order.

After having set fire to the factories, the insurgents proceeded to carry the incendiary torch to the chateaux of the masters of the factories; these barons of finance were treated just as a century ago the French revolutionists treated the feudal barons. "You see," says an important Belgian journal, "it is a social war, a war carried on by people who fear neither blows nor death." It is said that on seeing the civic guard prepare arms, they advanced baring their breasts to receive the shots, and crying out: "Shoot, you band of cowards! Shoot! we are not afraid of you!"

In the district of the Centre and that of Borinage, the workmen of nearly all the factories followed the example of their comrades in the basin of Charleroi, by striking, and trying to destroy the industrial establishments; but General Van der Smissen, who had immediately occupied the threatened places with numerous troops, succeeded in confining the movement to the Charleroi district. Except at Mariemont, where the insurgents and the soldiers came to blows, the former leaving fourteen of their number on the battle-field, at Tournai, where the quarry-men demolished the house of the director of the quarries, and at Carnières, where in their struggle with the military three of the men on strike were killed and about fifteen wounded, the popular insurrectionary movement did not extend much in the Centre or in the Borinage districts.

During the whole of the contest, and for some time after, the civil and military "authorities" proceeded to make numerous arrests. The prisons at Charleroi and Mons were emptied of their ordinary occupants, in order to receive the insurgents. The number of arrests until now is estimated at a thousand at least. General Van der Smissen, disregarding all the laws which are in force in Belgium, issued a circular, in which he said that in all the localities in which troops were required to maintain order, any one who should publicly utter words contrary to the spirit of the Belgian laws and institutions should be arrested on the spot, and that all Anarchists, not being residents in the locality, who should set foot in any of the places occupied by the military, should also be immediately arrested. This brutal *souard* doubtless believed himself still in Mexico, at that fine time when, in presence of his officers and at the head of his regiment, he had the inglorious courage to cut off a Mexican's ears! And while the workmen and soldiers were still fighting, the tribunals had already commenced their work, which consisted of avenging the damage which had been done to "property." The magistrates condemned the insurgents with the utmost severity permitted by law. A number of workmen have already been sentenced to from one to five years' imprisonment; and these, by what the judges say, are only the least culpable; the others, who have been directly concerned in "incendiarism and pillage," will be tried at the Court of Assize, and will doubtless be inmates of the prisons for many a long year.

And then—after having effected this good and salutary blood-letting among the workmen, and after having sent to rot in the goals of the Bourgeoisie those who have been unharmed by the balls of the saviours of property,—then it will be said everywhere that order is re-established! And in truth, if by *order* is meant the most abominable economical disorder that can possibly be imagined, the Bourgeoisie is right—order is re-established. But as for us, who know how to estimate the deadly system of the official maintainers of order and defenders of sacred property, we are quite persuaded that tranquillity only reigns on the surface; that the profound uneasiness which affects the working-classes all over the world will only become greater every day; that the number of unemployed will increase without ceasing; and that only Revolution is able to restore to this corrupt society a new life and fresh fruitfulness.

The governments are incapable of doing anything in aid of work and workers. The example of Belgium will prove this, once more, in an absolutely striking manner.

(To be continued.)

VICTOR DAVE.

The first and most important thing to be learned by every farmer, wage-worker, producer, is that nothing can be accomplished without organisation. The few have robbed the many in all ages by dividing them up into factions and then robbing them in detail. When once organised to a certain end, the ways and means of attaining it can be discussed and the sinews of war can be provided. Let all who are not cringing slaves and cowards at heart, enroll themselves under the banner of organisation, bearing the two mottoes: "United we stand, divided we fall"; "An injury to one is the concern of all."—*Toledo News*.

A VISION OF CIVILISATION.

I stood last night
Upon a hill-top, whence afar I saw
The red glare of the city in the clouds,
Like lurid blood spilt o'er the cloak of night;
And, as the dark racks came upon the wind,
Methought they seemed burdened with a tale
That made me shudder as they wailed it out:
"Oh, what a fool is man that he should rear
The hells that crush him! In the city there
Men live for gold, yea, though their fingers be
Dark-wet with blood in seizing it; unrest
And haggardness brood in their hearts, and strife
Sits in the clouds and laughs to see his slaves."
And then methought a wandering crowd of ghosts
Swept shrieking by; gaunt men with wolfish aspect
And haggard hunger glaring from mad eyes;
Pale women moaning over tiny babes,
Span-long and strangled at the unconscious dawn
Of life; and others, scarcely women yet,
But wandering in the dreamy fields of youth,
Where visions of young love should wait for them.
But ah, methought the visions that they saw
And grasped at with all eagerness, became
Fierce fires to scorch their deep-seared hearts with woe,
And when they thought to grasp young Love's bright hair,
Some horrid fiend grinned at them through the dark.
And little children were amid that crowd—
Children that should make hell itself seem fair,
But these were added terrors, for their cheeks
Were thin and colourless, and their young limbs
Bent with the premature sad load of toil;
And so with backs distorted and with eyes
In which there sat no glimpse of children's joy,
They made a horrid nightmare horrid;
And from the throng a sad wail ever rose,
While from the clouds that scornful voice again
Rang thus: "Oh, fools, how long, how long, how long?
These are earth's toilers. See those haggard men,
They built the mansions where the rich to-night
Hold sleep at bay and feast with smiling friends.
They reaped the harvests that prepared that feast;
These women spun the garments for the lords
Who, lapped in silken slumber, stretch themselves
Under a rare and curtained canopy
Woven by these whose eyes are famine-struck;
These span-long babes, unconscious fruit of love
On her part who has slain them, but of lust,
Foul, bloody lust of some proud titled fool,
Who, with a careless, jocund air, now sits
Amidst his equals, hurling nameless jests
And ribald laughter at her memory
Who trusted him with her most sacred gift;
These children, broken with long dreary toil
In darksome mines and whirling factories,
Even from these the blood must be drained out
To gain more gold—more gold for idle pride
To pamper up with lazy luxury
Those who would scorn to touch these pallid cheeks.
How long, how long? When will the dawn arise?"
And still the long wail broke from that sad crowd,
And still the hunger stared from out their eyes,
And still the sorrow brooded round their hearts,
And all the night seemed full of wails and cries,
And withered faces ever driving on
Into the darkness of an awful gulf,
And still the city's red glare fired the clouds.

FRED HENDERSON.

CHEAPER.

You wonder why they take such pains
To turnip our horse-radish,
To terra-alba all our sweets,
To make a good a bad dish;
To logwood wines, to slate our coals,
Make pepper of dried berries,
Use cabbage for tobacco-plant,
For raisins run in cherries?

They strive for gain, they make it pay,
And men of every nation,
They "sit up nights," and rack their brains,
For new adulteration.
Each time a substitute is found
They pile it on the steeper,
For there's nothing in this world so cheap
But that there's something cheaper.

—*Northwestern Miller*.

The best state of human nature is that in which, while no one is poor, no one desires to be rich, nor has any reason to fear being thrust back by the efforts of others to push themselves forward.—*John Mill*.



Communications are invited from all concerned with social questions. They should be written on one side of the paper only and should be addressed to the Editors of the COMMONWEAL, 13 Farringdon Road, E.C. They must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication.

Rejected MSS. can only be returned if a stamped directed envelope is forwarded with them.

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All business communications to be addressed to the Manager of the COMMONWEAL, 13 Farringdon Road, E.C. Business communications must NOT be sent to the Editors. All remittances should be made in Postal Orders or halfpenny stamps.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

NOTICE TO ALL SOCIALISTIC NEWSPAPERS.—The *Commonweal* will be regularly sent to all Socialistic Contemporaries throughout the world, and it is hoped that they on their side will regularly provide the Socialist League with their papers as they may appear.

QUESTIONS bearing upon the principles propounded and the objects had in view by the *Commonweal*, will be welcomed by the Editors.

WORKINGMEN and women in factories, workshops, stores or mills, are requested to go around among their comrades and get up a list of subscribers for the *Commonweal*, and lend a helping hand in the struggle for labour's freedom.

S. S. G.—Letter on the waste of fuel in present stoves too long for the importance of subject; besides, Count Rumford, whose name is invoked on the question, was only useful in our present condition of artificial famine. It will scarcely be believed that his sordid thrift could ever have been preached when we once begin to live decently.

RECEIVED—England: Anarchist—Worker's Friend—Daylight (Norwich)—Christian Socialist—Church Reformer—National Review—Republican—Journal of Vigilance Association—Justice—To-Day—Freethinker—Practical Socialist—Leicester Co-operative Record. Belgium: La Guerre Social (Brussels). Canada: L'Union Ouvrière (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). India: Voice of India (Bombay)—Hindu Patriot (Calcutta)—People's Friend (Madras). Italy: Il Fascio Operaio (Milan). New Zealand: Watchman. Portugal: O Campino—Voz do Operario—O Protesto Operario (Lisbon). Spain: El Angel del Hogar—Revista Social—Acracia—La Justicia Humana (Barcelona)—Bandera Social—El Socialista (Madrid)—El Socialismo (Cadiz)—La Perseverancia (Huelva). Switzerland: Sozial Demokrat (Zürich). U. S. A.: (New York): Volkszeitung—Der Sozialist—Freiheit—Progress—John Swinton's Paper—Spread the Light—Our Country—Amerikanische Arbeiter-zeitung. (Boston): Liberty—Woman's Journal. Denver (Col.) Labor Inquirer—Little Socialist—Chicago (Ill.) Alarm—Detroit (Mich.) Labor Leaf—Princeton (Mass.) Word—Cleveland (O.): Carpenter—Chronicle. Cincinnati (O.) Unionist—Stockton (Cal.) Mail—Petersburg (Ill.) Voice of Labor—New Haven (Conn.) Workmen's Advocate—St. Louis (Mo.): Altruist. Kansas (Mo.) Sun—Pittsburg (Pa.) Labor Herald—Paterson (N. J.) Labor Standard—Baltimore (Md.) Labor Free Press—Valley Falls (Kan.) Lucifer Newfoundland (Pa.) La Torpille—Litchfield (Minn.) Radical—Manchester (N. H.) Weekly Budget—Portland (Oregon) Alarm—Evansville (Ind.) Neue Zeit—Milwaukee (Wis.) Volksblatt.

PUZZLES.

ORDINARY human beings, who can only find a limited time for study and self-improvement in intervals snatched from hard daily toil, can hardly avoid a feeling of envy when they think of the happy lot of editors and reviewers, who seem to know everything by instinct, and without even taking the least trouble to understand what they are writing about, are prepared at a minute's notice to instruct the world on any subject coming within the range of human knowledge or speculation. There is one slight drawback, however, to the possession of such encyclopædic knowledge as the gentlemen referred to no doubt possess, and that is the tendency to over-estimate their own powers, and condescend to particulars on some subject which they only know by intuition—probably thinking that as it had not come within the range of their studies it was not worth knowing—when they inevitably betray their ignorance. Again, as very eminent mathematicians have, it is said, been unable to add up a column of figures correctly, so also some bright and shining lights of journalism seem to be very imperfectly acquainted with the meaning of the simplest words in the English language. Both these reflections arise on perusing an article in the *Spectator*, entitled, "A Puzzle for Socialists;" a production which it would be an insult to the readers of the *Commonweal* to treat seriously, were it not presumably a fair sample of what passes for reasoning on Socialistic questions amongst the "cultured" classes who read—and write—such reviews. As such, and as representing the style of objec-

tions which Socialists may expect to meet with, it may not be entirely waste of space to devote a few lines to an examination of it.

There are puzzles, and puzzles, but in the majority of cases they are only so because of the ignorance of the person to whom they are addressed; that is to say, the puzzler knows the subject, and the answer, whilst the puzzlee does not, as when a schoolboy of twelve with an air of great profundity asks his little brother just out of the nursery, If a herring and a half cost threehalfpence, what will six cost? But when a person totally ignorant of the subject in hand puts what he thinks a poser to one who understands it, we do not usually term it a puzzle. For instance, supposing our schoolboy friend asked his French professor whether "son frère" signified *his* brother, or *her* brother, the question would hardly, by anyone who understood either French or English, be dignified with the title of "A Puzzle for Frenchmen." Yet this is very much the character of the *Spectator's* Puzzle for Socialists. No one would be rash enough to assert that there was any subject in heaven or earth (especially the former) which was unknown to the editor of the *Spectator* or any of his staff, but when he out-Dogberries "Dogberry" by writing himself down an ass, we must even in deference to his superior knowledge accept him at his own valuation. That he has done so must be abundantly evident to anyone who will read what his puzzle is. It is, to use his own words, how to get over "the impossibility of preventing intellectual strength from asserting its claim to special reward." But that is no puzzle to Socialists, because they deny any such claim at all, and the writer himself gives the proof that it is no puzzle in the fact which he cites from the *Times* of the editor of *Le Peuple*, in Brussels, although he is a clever writer, and is making the paper a great success, taking no more salary than any of the compositors. The *Spectator* has the candour to admit that this "is a realisation of the ideal," but adds, "one has to inquire how long this perfect arrangement will last? The answer can only be, 'Just as long as the editor pleases.'" And again, "He cannot be prevented from fixing his share by any external force, and he will in the end fix it according to his enlightened self-interest or otherwise. but at all events he will fix it. . . . He is at least the equal in profit-producing power, and therefore in right to a share in profits of all the remainder (of the staff of workmen) put together." Thus we have a writer enlightening the world on Socialism, whose great difficulty is how *the profits* are to be divided.

Before passing on to the next illustration given, it may be as well to give in short the answer to the question he puts so forcibly, "How long this perfect arrangement will last?" Simply as long as the editor is a Socialist; and if he ceased to be a Socialist he would no longer be worth in such a position even compositor's wages. The *Spectator* might easily fill a puzzle column week by week for a long time by putting similar conundrums; as, for instance, a puzzle for military men: What would happen in a campaign if all the generals were Quakers? Puzzle for naval officers: How would a ship be navigated if all the sailors were sea-sick at once? Puzzle for medical men: How could London accidents be healed if all the hospitals were removed to more healthy localities on the Scotch moors?

After pointing out that the editor's case, although apparently exceptional, is not really so, Dogberry proceeds to take another instance, that of a large brewery, organised, as he says, on a Socialistic scheme, and says that the chemist, whose skill is indispensable to the success of the concern, would demand fifty times as much as any of the other workmen. As before, he forgets that in a Socialistic society the chemist would be as much a Socialist as any one else. So that to sum up the matter in a sentence, this profound puzzle, though nominally addressed to Socialists, who would see nothing puzzling in it, is really applicable to capitalists, and is the one they are constantly striving to solve, viz.: how, in a *capitalistic, competitive* system of society, to obtain the services of an able editor, or a skilled chemist, for the wages of a compositor or a drayman. It does not seem to have occurred to our setter of puzzles that he is going right in the teeth of other opponents of Socialism, according to whom the difficulty would be, not to find editors and chemists, for when education was open to all alike, every one would prefer such occupations—but to find draymen and stokers, who according again to one of Mill's *dicta* on the subject of wages, would have to be paid higher on account of the more disagreeable nature of their employment.

It is to be hoped that next time the *Spectator* sets a puzzle for Socialists, it will be one more worthy their attention—there are plenty to be solved yet—but, meanwhile, it might seriously consider whether, with all its ability, it would not be wiser to give up attempting one which has hitherto been deemed insoluble, viz.: to write rationally on a subject of which you know nothing.

FRANK FAIRMAN.

SOCIALISM FROM THE ROOT UP.

CHAPTER II.—MEDIÆVAL SOCIETY.

WE have now to deal with that Mediæval Society which was based on the fusion of ideas of tribal communism and Roman individualism and bureaucracy. The fullest, and one may say the most pedantic type of this society is to be found in the Mediæval German Empire; it was modified somewhat in other countries; in France by the fact that several of the other potentates, as, *e.g.*, the Duke of Burgundy, were theoretically independent of the King, and practically were often at least as powerful. In England, on the contrary, the monarchy soon gained complete predominance over the great barons, and a kind of bureaucracy soon sprang up which interfered with the full working of the feudal system.

The theory of this feudal system is the existence of an unbroken chain of service from the serf up to the emperor, and of protection from the emperor down to the serf; it recognises no absolute ownership of land; God is the one owner of the earth, the emperor and his kings are his vice-gerents there, who may devolve their authority to their feudal vassals, and they in turn to theirs, and so on till it reaches the serf, the proletarian, on whom all this hierarchy lives, and who has no rights as regard his own lord except protection from others outside the manor that he lives and works on; to him his personal lord was the incarnation of the compulsion and protection of God, which all men acknowledged and looked for.

It is quite clear that this system was mixed up with religious ideas of some sort; accordingly, we find that the Middle Ages had a distinct religion of their own, developed from that early Christianity which was one of the forces that broke up the Roman Empire. As long as that Empire lasted in its integrity, Christianity was purely individualistic; it bade every man do his best for his future in another world, and had no commands to give about the government of this world except to obey "the powers that be" in non-religious matters, in order to escape troubles and complications which might distract his attention from the kingdom of God.

But in Mediæval Christianity, although this idea of individual devotion to the perfection of the next world still existed, it was kept in the background, and was almost dormant in the presence of the idea of the *Church*, which was not merely a link between the earthly and the heavenly kingdoms, but even may be said to have brought the kingdom of heaven to earth by breathing its spirit into the temporal power, which it recognised as another manifestation of its own authority. Therefore, the struggles of the Temporal and Spiritual Powers, which form so large a part of the history of the Middle Ages, were not the result of antagonism of ideas between the two, but came of the tendency of one side of the great organisation of Society to absorb the other without rejecting its theory; in short, on the one hand the Church was political and social rather than religious, while on the other the State was at least as much religious as it was political and social.

Such, then, was the theory of Mediæval Society; but apart from whatever of oppression on life and thought was inherent in it, the practice of the theory was liable to many abuses, to which the obvious confusion and misery of the times are mostly referable. These abuses again were met by a protest in the form of almost constant rebellion against Society, of which one may take as examples the organised vagabondage of Middle Europe, the *Jacquerie* in France, and in England what may be called the chronic rebellion of the *Foresters*, which produced such an impression on the minds of the people, that it has given birth to the ballad epic known by the name of its mythical hero, *Robin Hood*. Resistance to authority and contempt of the "Rights of Property" are the leading ideas in this rough but noble poetry.

Besides these irregular protests against the oppression of the epoch, there was another factor at work in its modification—the *Gilds*, which forced themselves into the system, and were accepted as a regular part of it.

The ideas which went with the survivals of the primitive communism of the tribes were, on the one hand, absorbed into the feudal system and formed part of it, but on the other, they developed associations for mutual protection and help, which at first were merely a kind of benefit societies according to the ideas of the times. These were followed by associations for the protection of trade, which were called the *gilds-merchant*. From these the development was two-fold: they were partly transformed into the corporations of the free towns, which had already begun to be founded from other developments, and partly into the *craft-gilds*, or organisations for the protection and regulation of handicrafts—which latter were the result of a radical reform of the *gilds-merchant*, accomplished not without a severe struggle, often accompanied by actual and very bitter war. The last remains of these *craft-gilds* are traceable in the names of the city companies of London.

It should be noted that this tendency to association was bitterly opposed in its earlier days by the potentates of both Church and State, especially in those countries which had been more under the influence of the Roman empire. But in the long-run it could not be resisted, and at last both the *gilds* and the free towns which their emancipated labour had created or developed were favoured (as well as fleeced) by the bureaucratic kings as a make-weight to the powerful nobles and the Church.

The condition of one part of mediæval life industrial was thus quite altered. In the earlier Middle Ages the serf not only did all the field-work, but also most of the handicrafts, which now fell entirely into the

hands of the *gilds*. It must be noted also that in their best days there were no mere journeymen in these crafts; a workshop was manned simply by the workman and his apprentices, who would, when their time was out, become members of the *gild* like himself: mastership, in our sense of the word, was unknown.

By about the year 1350 the *craft-gilds* were fully developed and triumphant; and that date may conveniently be accepted as the end of the first part of the Middle Ages.

By this time serfdom generally was beginning to yield to the change introduced by the *gilds* and free towns: the field serfs partly drifted into the towns and became affiliated to the *gilds*, and partly became free men, though living on lands whose tenure was unfree—copyholders, we should call them. This movement towards the break-up of serfdom is marked by the peasant's war in England led by *Wat Tyler* and *John Ball* in Kent, and *John Litster* (dyer) in East Anglia, which was the answer of the combined yeomen, emancipated and unemancipated serfs, to the attempt of the nobles to check the movement.

But the development of the *craft-gilds* and the flocking in of the freed serfs into the towns laid the foundations for another change in industrialism: with the second part of the mediæval period appears the journeyman, or so-called free labourer. Besides the craftsman and his apprentices, the workshop now has these "free labourers" in it—unprivileged workmen, that is, who were nevertheless under the domination of the *gild*, and compelled to affiliation with it. The *gildsmen* now began to be privileged workmen; and with them began the foundation of the present middle-class, whose development from this source went on to meet its other development on the side of trade which was now becoming noticeable. In 1453 Constantinople was taken by the Turks; the art of printing was spreading; Greek manuscripts were being discovered and read; a thirst for new or revived learning, outside the superstitions of the mediæval Church and the quaint, curiously perverted and half-understood remains of popular traditions, was arising, and all was getting ready for the transformation of mediæval into modern or commercial society.

E. BELFORD BAX AND WILLIAM MORRIS.

(To be continued.)

TRADE DEPRESSION.

THE Cobden Club is not exactly the sort of body that one would expect to find publishing arguments that simply reduce our industrial system to an absurdity. Such, however, is the case, as we shall very soon show.

In a tract on Trade Depression, written by Augustus Mongredien, and lately published by the said Club, we have an array of facts and figures that, if they mean anything at all, mean that blessings are calamities, that abundance is an ill, that there is nothing like scarcity to make trade good. We will just give a brief summary of Mr Mongredien's arguments, and then draw a conclusion or two of our own.

During the four years previous to 1884, Mr Mongredien tells us, our imports and exports together averaged £710,293,000; in 1884 they suddenly sank to £685,147,000, making our foreign trade in 1884 £25,146,000 smaller than the average of the four previous years, and £45,894,000 smaller than it was in 1883. The cause of this contraction was the very good harvest of 1884, which exceeded the average harvest of the previous years by 15½ million pounds sterling. The result of this was that we required to import 15½ million pounds worth of grain less in 1884, and consequently we had to export a proportionally less quantity of other goods. Thus, then, through having so good a harvest in 1884, our foreign trade contracted directly to the extent of 30 millions sterling. It really contracted more, as Mr Mongredien shows from the Board of Trade returns: the figures we have given, however, are sufficient to show the gist of his argument, and that is all we are concerned with here.

Mr Mongredien's position is further borne out by a reference to the trades that have suffered most severely during the present depression. It is apparent that a diminution in our foreign trade would affect shipping in a very direct manner, for there is so much less to carry to and fro. Ship-builders would also be affected, dock-labourers, and those industries connected with shipping. Now a reference to the facts shows that these are just the industries that began to feel the present depression first. In Mr Mongredien's own words: "On examination we find that the industries which really did most suffer during the 'recent and present' depression are precisely those which we have enumerated above. The loudest and most justifiable complaints of distress have proceeded from the ship-owning interest—the ship-builders and their artisans, the iron and coal industries, the dock-labourers, and a few other classes more or less dependent on foreign trade."

Such, then, is the explanation given by the Cobden Club of trade depression—and a very good explanation it is, once it is rightly interpreted.

The reason that the good harvest of 1884 led to bad trade is because it enabled us to get such commodities as we required easier—that is to say, it lessened the amount of work that we had to do to supply the market with commodities. The demand for labour being thus lessened, a great many people were thrown out of work and suffered all sorts of privations. They were hungry because nature was too bountiful—because she had yielded so plentiful a supply of food! Work was scarce because there were more things made than we could use; and because there were more things made than we could use, a great many people had to go without even absolute necessities. A fine state of matters this for an enlightened age such as ours!

Why have we starving men and women and children? Because work is scarce. And why is work scarce? Because there are more commodities already made than can be consumed. Our warehouses are full of goods, our docks are full of idle ships, acres of good land are lying throughout the country out of cultivation—all because we have such abundance of everything that can be used. And people have to starve because of this abundance. This is an incredible truth!

What is there except work that is scarce? Why, if anything else were scarce work would no longer be scarce, for employment would be opened up for people to make whatever was scarce. God has, apparently, not cursed the ground sufficiently. Nature is too good—too good, at any rate, for our present industrial system.

Of course, improvement in our methods of production have the same effect as a good harvest. The cleverer work-people are, the more efficient they are, so much the worse is it for them. Instead of having a rest when they have made all that is wanted, they are thrown aside to starve. It behoves workers, under such malign conditions as these, to fritter away their time, to do their work badly—to do it so that it will not last very long,—and then they will have to do it again, and thus be saved from starvation. That is, supposing they are determined to keep up the present régime.

R.

THE INTERNATIONAL OCTOPUS—MORE SUCKERS THROWN OUT.

PROBABLY few of our readers will know where Harrar is. We did not ourselves until we had consulted the atlas. For the benefit of those who are in a similar position, we may mention that Harrar is a district of Africa lying a little to the south-east of Abyssinia. This place, after being evacuated by the Egyptian garrison last July, was left under the control of a native prince. The Italian capitalists and their government, on the look-out for markets in this region, some months back fixed their eyes on Harrar as an eligible morsel. An expedition was accordingly sent by the Italian consul at Aden to reconnoitre. The sequel is obvious. The Emir and the Harrarenes alike prefer their independence to having their country made the dust-bin of Italian shoddy, so the "expedition" meets with a "warm reception." Some one is found to tell a horrible story of the "massacre" of said expedition. A leading Italian capitalist print, the *Rassegna*, shrieks for vengeance, while the brother organ of German capitalism, the *Cologne Gazette*, publishes a lengthy communication from its correspondent at Aden, evidently "inspired" by the Italian consulate, which depicts in glowing colours the horrible state of affairs in Harrar, and includes all the stock phrases, such as, "The present condition of Harrar is a scandal to England and a disgrace to all civilisation," etc., etc. "England" ought, in the writer's opinion, instead of ordering the evacuation of the territory, to have occupied it, and so kept it warm for Italian, German, or any other traders that might want it. The rédaction of the *Cologne Gazette* appends a note to this precious document (which, it appears, was written before the reported massacre of the "expedition"), couched in indignant phraseology, and urging upon Drepretis, the Italian minister, to take advantage of the present position of affairs to raise the Jingo wind, and float his ministry on a wave of patriotism and pillage. The "expedition" of Count Porro, which avowedly had for its object to survey the ground for the erection of factories and trading-stations, has met the fate which all such "expeditions"—be they English, French, German, Italian, or Russian—only too richly deserve, but seldom meet with. Did all barbaric powers treat traders and traders' agents in the summary manner of the Emir of Harrar, though it could not save them in the long-run, it might at least give them a respite by warding off the inrush of vultures for the time being.

Thibet is to all appearance doomed. An expedition "for commercial purposes" is being fitted out at Darjeeling, which is to proceed with all pomp and circumstance to Lhasa, there to overawe the native authorities into accepting British cheap goods, and possibly negotiating for the surrender of any lands that may be worth having. It remains to be seen whether the Thibetans will permit Mr. Maucaulay and his band to reach Lhasa, or compel them to divert their attentions from the undiscovered kingdom of the Lhamas to another undiscovered kingdom, which is not of this world, there in conjunction with the late Count Porro and his associates of Harrar fame, to endeavour to persuade the "great majority" to conclude a commercial treaty, with Mr. Sinnett as chief agent. The idea is worth thinking of, when the world-market is getting so rapidly worked out. We fear that the belief of the Bourgeois in the existence of another and a better world must have worn very thin, or he would certainly have taken some serious steps ere this to ascertain whether this other world could not be turned to account as a market. In fact, to speak truth, this is conclusive evidence to us that he has no belief in it at all, in any other sense than as an occasional field for State-aided emigration and the relief of surplus population, when, as in the case of the Paris Commune, the surplus population grows troublesome.

E. B. B.

Better for the many to remain rude, independent fighting barbarians, than to be civilised into mill hands and factory people, if they must work in stifling rooms day after day all their lives, live in squalor and wretchedness, hopeless of improvement either for themselves or their children—and yet in constant dread of having their miserable existence cut short by accident or disease, or rendered still more miserable by a discharge or the "shutting down" of the mill or factory, and without the spirit to resent a wrong or even seek to better their condition.—*Hayes Valley Advertiser*.

INSTRUCTIVE ITEMS.

LANDLORDISM AND HARD TIMES.—Every ton of iron manufactured in England pays a royalty of 12s. 6d. per ton. In Belgium the royalty is only 1s. 3d. per ton. The Hematite Steel Works at Barrow, Lancashire, last year paid £26,000 in wages to £126,000 in royalty. Fair-traders and Free-traders should look at home.

W. S.

Messrs Rothschild are said to have invested 205 millions of francs in the new French loan. Except the Bourse Syndicate, they were the largest subscribers. As all the financial agents who bought did so on commission, the loan must have given them a good haul.—*Globe*.

FORCE A REMEDY!—A most instructive comment upon our leading article of last week is afforded by some utterances of the *N. Y. Nation*, a weekly paper which holds a position somewhat akin to that of the *Spectator*. After dealing in its own fashion with the struggle of organised labour with the exploiters, it says, with delicious naïveté: "As a matter of fact no large strike of unskilled or slightly skilled labour in this country would succeed for two days in stopping any kind of business, but for the prompt appearance of wicked outsiders to kick and cuff and maim and murder the persons who take the place of the strikers, and to break or harm or in some manner damage the machinery or utensils or stock-in-trade of the employers." May the workers lay this to heart!

H. H. S.

We hear much of the superior position of the American workman as compared with his European fellow labourer. No doubt the average level of comfort is higher in the United States than in Europe generally, and even than in England. But it seems to be rapidly sinking to the European level, and the poorer operatives are not a whit better off in the States than with us. Take, for instance, the working-women. In the report of the Bureau of Statistics of Labour for the State of New York, it is said of their condition in 1885 that it calls loudly for legislative interference. The Report speaks of "their excessive hours of labour," their "beggarly wages," and their "terrible condition," which is a disgrace to humanity. In another part of the Report the Commissioner gives a description of New York tenement houses, which shows that, in overcrowding and defective sanitary arrangements they are as bad, if not worse, than anything brought to the notice of the recent Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor. It is true that among the men wages are higher; but their hours of labour are longer and holidays fewer. Nor must it be forgotten that their wages represent a smaller relative purchasing power than those of the English workman.—*Echo*, May 14th.

In the Protection debate last night Mr Samuel Smith said that though we are losing trade with the protected countries on the Continent, and with the United States, we are gaining trade with the colonies and in neutral markets. Not relatively. One of the most ominous signs of the times is the growing trade of the foreigner with our colonies. The last three years for which we have returns show that the consumption per head of British produce and manufactures has decreased in every important British colony, with the exception of the Straits Settlements and Hong Kong. It is the same in India, where, in one important trade (beer), the German is already almost abreast of us. So with the neutral markets. Take China: the Americans are gaining ground on us; or Brazil or Sweden, the Germans are distancing us; or Egypt, where we are barely holding our own. Where is the set-off? Burmah, according to Lord Randolph Churchill, was to do much for British trade; but it has yet to do it, and the outlook can hardly be said to be promising.—*Echo*, May 15.

LEEDS has not hitherto been very seriously affected by the Trade Depression; partly because of the great variety of occupations, but chiefly because it is the town where the lowest wages are paid, even in busy times. The consequence of a low rate of wages in one town is, of course, to enable the masters in times of keen competition to undersell the masters of other towns. But even here there has been a great deal of distress, and the worst has yet to come. The iron trade is steadily getting worse, one large engineer shop having recently paid off several hundred hands. A large flax mill will soon be stopped altogether, the trade having gone to America. In this mill several hundred girls and women are employed, and their case gives us a forcible example of the criminal working of the present industrial system. In a few weeks their occupation will be (literally) gone—the very machinery they tend being carried over the Atlantic. What is to become of these creatures is a question which has never disturbed the minds of their employers. There is no other channel of trade in want of their labour; they need not travel elsewhere in search of work as long as the depression lasts—they go simply to swell the ranks of "the great unemployed." If some of the lazy ladies of the town think of earning cheap fame by getting up a charity movement on their behalf, then may these victims of the profit-grabber feel truly thankful. As it is there is no other outlook for them but charity from the class that has robbed them, or—the streets.

J. L. M.

Two hours added to the working-day of the miners at Furness have led to a strike, likely to spread to other districts.

Report after report of association after association of workmen tells the same sad story of deep, hopeless depression of trade. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers reported that 1885 has been the worst year since 1879. 1879 was the worst since 1866. 3240 unemployed per month; £12,845 less income than in 1884; £188,277 spent on benefits; income £144,639; expenditure £188,277; deficiency left £43,638—are signs of the times.

The notice of ten per cent. reduction of wages posted at Clough Hall Iron-works, Kidsgrove, North Staffordshire, expired on Saturday. The men have struck, to the number of 17,000. The masters talk of closing the works, as they have been carrying on the works at a loss. And yet none of the masters or their families are starving or likely to starve, and probably not a few of the workmen—alas!—will be ere long in this condition.

The foolish virgins and their male companions at Liverpool were gaping at the Queen, whilst at Manchester the unemployed were parading and resolving:

"That this meeting of unemployed men views with alarm the enormous multitude now out of employment in this and other towns throughout the United Kingdom through no fault of their own. It therefore calls upon her Majesty's Government to compel the municipal and parochial authorities to open useful public works at fair remuneration, and thereby to save honest toilers from the present poor-law relief, viz., half-starvation, and the useless, degrading labour-test now being imposed upon those who desire to live by their labour."

Ed. A.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WHY DON'T THE WORKER'S FREELY ADOPT SOCIALISM?

A correspondent from Norwich writes:—

Having spent several years in the building trade, and having laboured in those years with hundreds of my comrades, I will endeavour to point out some of the reasons why they don't rally round a cause the justice of which they must admit:

1. They have been so often sold in the political associations they have joined, and from which they have turned with disgust, that they are tired of being used to suit the purposes of a few wire-pullers, and are, therefore, chary of joining any new movement.

2. The active working-men politicians can scarcely realise their position, that they have worked years in a cause, the result of which has ever been to enrich the already rich, and to leave them in their poverty doing the dirty work of their associations.

3. Their minds are poisoned against the word Socialism by the vile vituperations of a hired capitalistic press, every ready to do the bidding of its mercenary and unscrupulous employers, who know but too well that when the workers become thoroughly acquainted with the principles of Socialism, their national robbery, by exploiting the workers, must cease. As evidenced by their action in not allowing the *Commonweal* in our Norwich Free Library, hoping by such dirty means to keep our literature from the reading public.

4. The great reason to which the others are subordinate, is that the workers do not realise their true position. This age of Capitalism has so bewildered them and paralysed their reason, that they forget that all this splendour they behold, but do not share, is the result of their industry; they forget they are the very salt of the earth.

How long are my fellow-workmen going to stand idly by, and see their offspring reared in poverty, misery, and degradation? Poor, puny wasters, they are a living reflection on your claim to be called men! Wake up, and assert your manhood! Tell the idle and voluptuous class that no longer shall they prey upon your very vitals, but that as producers of this enormous wealth you have a first claim, and as a small instalment of that justice you demand, as the only condition upon which you will tolerate rich men, that every worker shall be well fed, well clothed, well housed, and well educated.

C. R.

[The Editors regret that by inadvertence some notes, which certainly seem to be a personal attack on Mr. Fox Bourne, should have been allowed to appear in the *Commonweal*, and tender their personal apologies to him. A letter from Mr. Fox Bourne, which has been received too late for this week, will appear in our next issue.]

RECORD OF THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT.

AMERICA.

The striking switchmen on the Lake Shore railroad were brought face to face with "law and order" on April 20 in the person of Governor Oglesby. First, the Governor went to Chicago, where he was joined by the sheriff and several deputies, and by the principal officers of the railway, with whom he held a *secret* conference on the strike. These worthy plotters were soon joined by two of Chicago's millionaire merchants, who came to confer with the Governor as to the action of the military in case of a general strike in the city. A special train conveyed the party in the afternoon to the scene of the strike, where "Uncle Dick" made a speech to the "boys," full of "bunkum and soft sawder," which has been mercilessly shown up by "Cato" in the *Labour Enquirer*, some extracts from which are here quoted:—

"The Governor commenced his harangue with the usual sop: 'You are all American citizens—citizens of this state and of the United States.' That term—'American citizen'—has, as yet, an alluring sound. In some vague way it seems to invest the inhabitants of the western continent with a glory which, however unsubstantial, satisfactorily atones for any amount of actual poverty and injustice they may endure. 'To be an American citizen is greater than a king,' has been dinned into the ears of the American working-man so persistently that he has never thought to inquire into the political difference between himself and a more kingly 'sovereign.' Still in his deluded eyes, drudgery, poorly-paid labourers, men who dare not say their souls are their own for fear of losing their jobs, men tramping and begging in vain for a chance to earn a living, men who are chased out of towns, 'run in' by policemen and kicked and hustled about everywhere, because they are homeless—are still 'greater than kings' because they are 'American citizens!' . . . 'The people make the laws, and they elect men whose duty it is to enforce those laws.' Men are easily flattered with the idea that they have something to do with forming this incomprehensible but awe-inspiring thing called 'law.' They are willing to bear the hardest kind of toil and poverty while glowing with the consciousness of bearing this fictitious dignity. The labouring man does not know when or how he does it, but he is told by great men that he helps 'make the laws' and it must be so. Perhaps he 'walks in his sleep,' or a certain law-making element emanates from his body without his knowing it. . . . 'You know that the man who puts his hand in your pockets and steals your purse, violates a law, and can and should be punished.' But the man who does not allow your money to get into your pockets in the first place, who steals five-eighths of all you produce, does not violate a law and cannot be held accountable. Break a legal enactment and you are a criminal, but do what you please outside of this, and you are all right, though your 'lawful' transactions make countless thousands mourn. 'I dislike trouble of any kind and you probably think as I do. One trouble begets another, etc.' Of course he dislikes trouble. Nothing is trouble, however, unless it interferes with the methods by which wealth is accumulated from the products of labour. Long hours of toil, miserable tenement houses, unhealthy homes, wretched food, wearisome lives, care and grinding poverty are not 'troubles' to men like him. Only open revolt against these things, is recognised as 'trouble.' He spoke wiser than he knew when he said, 'Trouble begets trouble,' as he may find before he is much older. We thank Governor Oglesby or telling the people that the 'law will come fully armed and equipped.' Perhaps it will teach them that this same law is none of their creation—that it is their enemy when it comes to deal with their most vital necessities, and that they, the people, must prepare to meet it! 'I would like to see the labouring man get 5 dols. or 10 dols. per day. He gets low pay, but the law does not

bring that about.' And we were told a moment ago that these same labouring men made the laws. Is it possible that 'making laws' after all cannot effect the most important consideration of their lives? What in the name of common sense does a man want with a power that cannot help him where he most needs help? . . . While the governor was speaking an attempt was made—as previously planned—to run an engine; but some of the strikers immediately boarded it, and a few words to the engineer was sufficient to take it back to the round-house, amid tremendous cheering. No doubt his excellency was very much surprised at this exhibition of unruliness on the part of the switchmen. A few moments after the close of the speech several of the strikers entered the car for the purpose of getting a nearer view of a real live governor, and as each man entered the car and stood before 'the presence,' he doffed his hat out of respect to the governor—not the man—which caused one burly fellow to yell, 'Keep on your hats, boys, he aint no king.' We may be sure that the organ of reverence in that man was wanting, though it will probably be brought out by a policeman's club unless he cultivates discretion."

At the non-partisan anti-Chinese convention held at Sacramento, March 12, John Bidwell, the Chicago millionaire, openly declared "that the laws were made and interpreted at the dictation of the 'respectable' classes," and threatened that "boycotting should be made a felony." On the 13th the Nicolans (California) boycotters were arrested and jailed by the United States marshal. At the same convention "Hon." A. A. Sargent, millionaire, ex-United States senator and state minister to Germany, "warned" the body that "Congress could easily restore us to slavery by giving the ballot to 125,000 Chinese, who would vote as 'respectability' demanded." The convention carried the boycott, however, and the game goes merrily on.—*Labour Enquirer*.

There is considerable talk among the printers of the country about the manner in which they are being used by the capitalist press as tools to heap abuse upon the working-men and their cause. The printers are only a part of the great body of the working-people, among whom only they find their friends, and they are becoming restive at being utilised by their enemies to prejudice the people against a cause in which all wage-earners are so deeply interested. It is probable this question will be brought up at the next meeting of the International Typographical Union to be held in Pittsburg in June next, when it is hoped measures will be inaugurated that will induce a certain class of newspapers to adopt a more respectful tone toward the most important question of the day.—*Labour Enquirer*.

It will be remembered that bloodhounds were put upon the tracks of the bridge-burners and train-wreckers near Marshall. But the papers gave no account of where those blood-hounds followed the trail. The reason for this silence is that the trail led to an officers' car upon the side track at Marshall. The blood-hounds were taken off under the notion that a mistake had been made; but, when again put on the trail, they brought up once more at the same place, proving clearly that those who set fire to the bridge did it at the instigation of the railroad officials. The facts show plainly that the villainy charged to the strikers was committed at the instigation of the railroad officials, to create public sympathy.—*Houston Labor Echo*.

"THE VOICE OF INDIA."

Extracts from Vernacular Papers on Affairs in Burmah.

The *Maharasttramitra*, of Satara (Marathi Weekly, February 18) states that the disclosure of facts in the Blue-books, lately published, does not substantiate the charges against King Theebaw.

"Burmah is now made a British province. For the sake of humanity we wish that the dacoity movement will cease to exist. If it ceases to exist, then doubtless we shall not hear of any bloody executions of the so-called dacoits. When we read the account of these executions in the Bombay dailies, our hairs stood on their ends. We heartily wish that we shall be spared the unpleasant treat of the account of the executions of the so-called Burman dacoits. The martial law will be in full force till at least the coming November, and this information makes us greatly uneasy, because the information of the unhappy executions is sure to be inflicted upon us. The unhappy people are to be left to the tender mercies of the military authorities and have an experience of them. We feel sympathy for those, who will have the sword of the martial law hanging over their heads."—*Dnyan Prakash* (Anglo-Marathi Bi-weekly), Poona, March 8.

The *Sarsudhanidhi*, of Calcutta (Hindi Weekly, March 1), remarks that Conservatives or Liberals—they are both alike to us. Our anticipations have not been realised. The Annexation of Burmah has been confirmed, and even the cost of the war thrown upon India—and all this comes from the Liberals!

The *Afsh-e-Panjab* (Urdu Weekly, Lahore, March 10), says that from the way in which the Committee is appointed to inquire into the state of Indian finance, native public opinion and the needs of India are not cared for. What can India expect from such a Committee? From one side famine is hanging over India, and on the other hand our Secretary of State is going to load tax-ridden India with 50 lakhs of rupees on account of the expenses in Burmah. This is a matter worth considering.

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

Notices to Members.

General Meeting.—On Monday May 24, at 8.30 p.m. The following resolution, of which notice has been given by Joseph Lane, will come up for discussion:— "The monthly meeting of London members of the Socialist League recommends to the Branches the adoption of the Constitution as drawn up by Lane and Charles, with such alterations as the majority of members may deem fit."

Library.—The librarians, May Morris and W. Chambers, attend on Mondays and Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m.

Reading Room.—Open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. All papers received by the Secretary are sorted and filed and are at the disposal of members.

Annual Conference.—Whitsunday, June 13. Attention of Branches is especially called to Rule V. (pages 3 and 4 Constitution and Rules). Any Branch not able to send a delegate from among its own members can appoint any member of the League to represent them.—*Agenda:* Delegates assemble at 10.30 a.m. and adjourn at 1.30 p.m.; resume at 3 p.m., and continue till business is disposed of. First sitting, 10.30 p.m.: (1) Appointment of Chairman; (2) Appointment of Scrutineers and Secretary; (3) Reports from (a) Executive Council, (b) Treasurer and Financial Secretary, (c) Secretary, (d) Editor, (e) *Commonweal* Manager; (4) Report of Branch Delegates for their respective Branches. Second sitting, 3 p.m.: (1) Appointment of Chairman; (2) Motions of which notice has been given, (a) by

Lane and Charles on Constitution of the League, (b) by Leeds Branch on Rules; (3) Election of Officers; (4) Discussion on Policy and Tactics.

Excursion.—Comrades Cantwell, Gray, and Lane, with Eleanor Marx-Aveling, May Morris, and Mrs Wardle, have been appointed a committee to arrange for an excursion to take place on Whit-Monday, the day after the Conference. Members desiring to take their children with them are invited to do so. The balance remaining in hand from the Christmas-tree will be utilised to provide for a special children's outing at some later time. Any one willing to assist in giving the little ones "a day in the country" is asked to send his contribution to one of the woman-members of the committee. Full announcement of place, time, etc., will be duly made in this column.

All members changing their address are earnestly requested to send notice either to Branch secretaries or to Secretary of the League.

London members not yet belonging to any Branch are informed that a Clerkenwell Branch is in process of formation at the Central Office, to which, or to some other Branch, they must join themselves if they desire to be represented at the coming Conference. H. H. S.

Notices to Lecturers and Branch Secretaries.

To avoid confusion and mistake, lecturers and Branch secretaries are requested to at once advise the Lecture Secretary of all engagements made by them. Branches will find it more convenient to make their arrangements with speakers through the Lecture Secretary, who will undertake to make all necessary announcements unless otherwise instructed.

A meeting of out-door and indoor lecturers will be held on Saturday the 29th of May at 13 Farringdon Road, to make all necessary arrangements for June. The Hoxton Branch (L. E. L.) is requested to communicate with the Lecture Secretary in regard to Kingsland Road and Hackney Road stations. Comrades who can speak or otherwise assist at open-air meetings, are urgently requested to send in their name at once. "The harvest, truly, is great, but the labourers are few." All interested in the cause of Socialism would help greatly by advising the secretary of suitable spots for establishing new stations.—C. W. MOWBRAY.

Executive.

EXPULSION OF MEMBER.

The Executive Council of the Socialist League, having fully deliberated, and received evidence, upon certain charges of furnishing information to foreign governments and the bourgeois press, of which due notice had been given the accused, did, at their regular weekly meeting on May 17, pass the following vote: "That Charles Theodor (Reuss) be expelled from the Socialist League, and that this be published in the *Commonweal*." H. H. S.

Branch Subscriptions Paid.

Marylebone to March 31. Bloomsbury, Hackney, Hammersmith, Leeds, North London, Norwich, Oxford, Dublin, to April 30. Manchester, Bradford, to May 31. Hoxton (Labour Emancipation League), to June 30. P. W.

The "Commonweal."

The *Commonweal* is published at 10 a.m. every Thursday. Branches are asked to note that each weekly sending of paper should be paid for at the end of the week.

Copies of the cartoon by Walter Crane given with the first number of the weekly issue, can now be had printed on fine hand-made paper for framing, price 6d., postage 1d.; protection roll, if desired, 2d. extra.

Boards for the use of newsagents can be supplied to Branches at 1s. each. H. H. S.

Branch Reports.

(Reports and Notices should be addressed to the printer, and to insure insertion in the current issue must reach the office not later than 10 a.m. on Tuesday.)

MARYLEBONE.—On Saturday evening we held our third meeting in the Harrow Road (near the Royal Oak Station). After speaking for some time, we were visited by three policemen, who, in a bullying manner, told us that the inhabitants had complained, and that we should have to move off at once. This action of the police gained us many sympathisers, and we moved to another turning and went on with our meeting.—On Sunday afternoon we took up a position near the Teetotalers' Demonstration, and comrade Donald commenced to address a large crowd; but the demonstrators interfered, knocked the speaker off the platform twice, and we were somewhat roughly hustled, but in the end managed to get out of it pretty safely. The police drove three of our comrades and two of the Federation away from the gates, and followed us for some distance.—In the evening we held a meeting at the corner of Seymour Place, Marylebone Road. While comrade Burcham was speaking an attempt was made by a drunken ruffian (who, we ascertained, had been hired for the purpose) to break up our meeting.—H. G. A.

MILE END.—On Tuesday, May 11, H. Davis lectured on "Capital and Labour," a criticism of Mr. Bradlaugh's lecture at Northampton of the same title. He very ably dealt with it, showing the absurdities of the latter, and that Socialism was the only cure for the present evils. There was a very fair audience. No opposition was offered. Members of this Branch are requested to attend a meeting on Saturday, May 29, at 7 p.m. sharp, for the purpose of appointing a delegate for Conference.—J. FISHER.

BRADFORD.—On Sunday, May 16, at the Newmarket Hotel, comrade Bland read a paper on "The National Debt," in the course of which he showed that it was simply a huge example of one form of the robbery of labour, past and present. The paper formed a suitable introduction to some thoroughly Socialistic speeches by comrades Mintz, Mitchell, and Henderson.—F. P.

GLASGOW.—We have, after much trouble, secured suitable premises for a reading-room and library. They will be opened immediately, and the Branch will now be in a position to carry on a vigorous propaganda. An open-air meeting of unemployed was held on the Glasgow Green, on Monday (May 10th), for the purpose of demanding work from the Corporation at wages that would enable men to live, and to protest against the stoppage of outdoor relief to the destitute. Although the meeting was held at the early hour of 10 a.m., over 1000 persons were present. A pithy letter from our friend William Morris, denouncing the system that permitted men to starve, and pointing out that little good could be done until workmen became their own masters, was read and applauded. The result of the meeting was that the magistrates agreed to keep open the soup-kitchens for a week longer, but refused to start relief works of any kind.—J. B. G.

MANCHESTER.—Two successful meetings were held on Sunday evening by comrades Snowden and Unwin, one at "The Grey Mare" corner, the other at the Lamp, Gorton. There seems to be much sympathy with Socialistic teaching amongst the workers in this district. If we can find a room there is little doubt but that we shall make members. Some interesting discussion was raised at Gorton.—R. U., sec.

LECTURE DIARY.

HALL OF THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE 13 FARRINGDON ROAD, E.C.—Lectures every Wednesday at 8.30; Sundays at 7.30. Admission free; discussion invited. Sunday May 23. A. K. Donald, "The Prophecy of Socialism." Wed. May 26. F. Kitz, "Sketches from the Lives of Famous Working-men." 30. Mrs C. M. Wilson, "The Future of Radicalism."

LONDON BRANCHES.

- Bloomsbury**—Business meeting at central office every Wednesday at 7.30.
- Croydon**—Royal County House, West Croydon Station Yard. Sunday, May 23, at 7.30 p.m., Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, "Christian Socialism." Business meeting at Parker Road every Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock.
- Hackney**—The Hackney Branch meets at the Kenton Coffee House, Kenton Road, Well Street, every Monday at 8 p.m., for the enrolment of members and other business.
- Hammersmith**—Kelmescott House, 26 Upper Mall, W. Sundays at 8 p.m. May 23. Edith Simcox, "Sober Socialism."
- Hoxton (L. E. L.)**—Exchange Coffee House, Pitfield Street, opposite Hoxton Church, N. Sunday evenings at 7.45. May 23. H. A. Barker, "Land, Labour, and Capital."
- Merton**—11 Merton Terrace, High Street. Sundays and Wednesdays at 8 p.m.
- Mile-end**—I. W. M. Educational Club, 40 Berner Street, Commercial Road. Tuesdays at 8 p.m. May 25. D. Nicoll, "Law and Order."
- North London**—Communications to R. A. Beckett, St. Mildred's House, Poultry, E.C.
- South London**—Business meetings at 103 Bird-in-bush Road, on Sundays at 7.30.

COUNTRY BRANCHES.

- Birmingham**—Bell Street Coffee House. Every Monday evening, at 7.30.
- Bradford**—Soott's Temperance Hotel, East Parade, Leeds Road. Meets every Wednesday at 8 p.m.
- Dublin**—30 Great Brunswick Street. Every Tuesday at 7.45 p.m.
- Edinburgh (Scottish Section)**—4 Park Street. Meets every Friday at 8.30 p.m.
- Glasgow**—Neilson's Hotel, Ingram Street, every Saturday at 7 p.m. Lectures and discussions. Members and friends are invited to assist in selling *Commonweal* at Green (Jail Square) Saturdays, 5 p.m.
- Leeds**—The St James' Café, Briggate (end of Swinagate). Meets every Tuesday at 7.30 p.m. for business and at 8 p.m. for lecture. May 25. T. Maguire, "Equality."
- Leicester**—Radical Club, Vine Street. Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.
- Manchester**—County Forum. Fridays, at 8 p.m.
- Norwich**—Gordon Café. Every Monday at 8 p.m.
- Oldham**—Mrs. Wrigley's Coffee Tavern, 9, Old Market Place. Wednesdays, 7.30.
- Oxford**—Temperance Hall, 27 Pembroke Street. Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.
- Royton**—"Greyhound Inn." Every Sunday evening at 7.30.

Open-air Propaganda for the Week.

LONDON.

Date.	Station.	Time.	Speaker.	Branch.
Sat. 22.	Harrow Road—opposite the "Prince of Wales" Stratford—near the Church	7	W. Chambers	Marylebone.
		7	A. Barker, Banner, and Lane.	
S. 23.	Canning Town	11.30	H. Barker	Central.
	Edgware Road—Bell Street	11.30	F. Kitz	Marylebone.
	Hammersmith—Beadon Road	11.30	T. Wardle	Hammersmith.
	Hoxton Ch.—Pitfield Street	11.30	C. W. Mowbray	Hoxton.
	Mile-end Waste	11.30	A. K. Donald	Mile-end.
	Regent's Park	11.30	H. Burcham	N. London.
	St. Pancras Arches	11.30	W. Chambers	N. London.
	Hyde Park	3.30	F. Kitz	Marylebone.
	Victoria Park	3.30	T. Wardle	Hackney.
	Merton—High Street	7	A. K. Donald	Merton.
Tu. 25.	Euston Road—Osselton St.	7.30	W. Chambers	N. London.
	Soho—Broad Street	7.30	R. A. Beckett	Bloomsbury.
Th. 27.	Hoxton Ch.—Pitfield Street	8	D. Nicoll	Hoxton.

PROVINCES.

- Hulme**—The Viaduct, Chester Road. Sundays, 7 p.m.
- Leeds**—Sunday, May 16: Vicar's Croft, 11 a.m. Woodhouse Moor, 3 p.m.
- Manchester**—Grey Mare Corner, Ashton Old Road. Sundays, 11 a.m.
- Oldham**—Curzon Ground. Sundays, afternoon and evening.

MEETINGS OF OTHER SOCIETIES.

NOTTING HILL DEBATING SOCIETY, "Monarch Tavern," Manchester Street (near Latimer Road Railway Station).—May 23. William Wynne (S.P.E.L.), "Will Socialism Benefit the Working Class?"

Birmingham—On Sunday morning Wm. Morris delivered an interesting lecture on "The Aims of Art," and one in the evening on "Socialism." In speaking of Art, the lecturer did not mean the arts of painting and sculpture, but everything which adds to the happiness of life. Why men cherish art, and why they spend their lives in the pursuit of art, is to increase the joy of life and to add to the sum of human happiness. Art has been continuous in all ages of the world's history; all men have practised art. The meaning of history is not the overthrow of this king or dynasty, but the happiness of the people in being able to work from the inner man to the things which delight the eye and charm the sense with their innate beauty. The lecturer then contrasted the age of art with the age of commerce, and depicted Rouen and Oxford as they were forty years ago and as they are to day. All the glory of each is fast passing away to make room for the shoddy-built brick villas, which are a disgrace to the century. The art of the Middle Ages was progressive. The mediæval craftsman was free in his labour; his time was his own, and of little value; whereas the mechanic of to-day was more of a machine, and his time was reckoned and paid for by minutes. Slavery lies between us and art to-day. The lecturer then gave an interesting sketch of the optimist and pessimist views of life, and concluded by appealing to those present to assist in promoting the altruistic life of Socialism. There were two or three interesting questions asked at the close, and the audience was highly pleased with the replies. D. W. R.

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