

THE COMMONWEAL

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

POLITICAL NOTES.

THE Tories in office again and dividing the spoils won by their recent victory—such as it is. A purely Tory Ministry, with the assurance of the “benevolent neutrality” of the Whigs: that is to say, their complicity without responsibility in the game of reaction which the new Parliament is pledged to play. What are their chances in the game? In the first place it is only the Irish question which need be taken into consideration; on all other points the Tory Government will do pretty much the same as a Liberal one would; so we need only consider how they will deal with their Irish kettle of fish.

There are signs even in the more moderate of the Tory prints that they are expected to make *some* move in the direction of coercion; to take advantage of any opportunity the Irish may give them by riding rusty under their defeat. But after all, the Tory rank and file has to put up with as many disappointments at the hands of its leaders as the Radical rank and file has, and it is likely that this will be one of them. Lord Salisbury will do nothing at all as long as he can; and will at least try what he can do in the way of saying “Yes” and “No” at once to the Home Rule claim. He will bring in some “gas and sewage” Home Rule Bill, which the Irish need not fight against, but which of course will not choke their agitation; nay, many Irishmen think and have thought for some time, that any Bill for Local Government would be of use to them; that they would use the bodies so constituted to organise their agitation still further and more completely. Perhaps they are sanguine in this; but, at least, the most revolutionary Irishman need not be afraid that Lord Salisbury will offer Ireland so much or put what he does offer in such a dramatic manner that it will injure the sentiment for Home Rule among the people.

Of course, what the Tories would do if they could would be to offer such a “concession” as would irritate the Irish into open resistance, while it would seem a fair offer to outsiders. Happily this is scarcely possible after the frank and almost too effusive way in which Ireland received Mr. Gladstone’s incomplete and unsatisfactory measure. Indeed Lord Salisbury is much more likely to spoil his game by acting like a timid whist-player and being stingy with his trumps. So we may wait without excitement for the Tory Home Rule Bill.

Meanwhile how great is the relief from a sense of danger, which all Tories and Whigs are now feeling is shown obviously enough not only by the ordinary jubulations after a successful electoral contest in the party papers, but also in more grotesque and downright fashion. The prospectus of the Loyalist League of Great Britain (printed in true-blue) which has found itself at the Socialist League office, is a fair example of this terror calmed for the present. After stating in fairly plain terms that one of their objects was to further civil war if they could not have *all* their own way, they appeal for help “to resist to the utmost the disloyal and Socialistic associations in their persistent efforts to disintegrate society and weaken the empire.” Well, some people may laugh at their big words and their premature terror; but after all their instinct has not misled them. Home Rule doesn’t aim specially even at the weakening of the empire, still less at the disintegration of society, yet it is a sign that both these movements are going on. Friend “Loyalists,” it can’t be helped! An empire which is the empire of cheating and hypocritical traders cannot last for ever; “society” which is but a band of thieves has a tendency to disintegrate, you need not doubt that!

As to the “Cabinet-making” which has been going on lately, no one scarcely pretends to take any interest in it except so far as concerns the position of Lord Randolph Churchill. But we Socialists need not

trouble our heads about that either; the fact that such a man could be considered of any importance in Parliament does but give us a measure of the weight and depth of the others. It is scarcely worth while to say that he has all the faults of a reactionary demagogue, and not much else, since the man himself scarcely professes to be more than a machine, whose design has been taken from a much more exquisite piece of machinery, the late Lord Beaconsfield, to wit. One thing we may be pretty sure of, that the new Parliament will play a considerable part in sickening people of the whole business of Parliamentary Party Government, and help still further to discredit the knot of wire-pullers, landlords, money-lenders, lawyers, and professional politicians, who profess to represent the people of these islands.

While on the one hand the instruments of bourgeois domination are visibly wearing out, on the other there is a feverish activity arising against Socialism. In America, the determination, whatever may happen, to have some victims to middle-class revenge for the Anarchist outbreak at Chicago, and the suppression of freedom of speech generally; in Belgium the vindictive sentences against the rioters, in Holland the sentence against Domela Newenhuis, and the arrest of Fortuin and Vanderstadt at Amsterdam; the obstinate deadlock in Denmark; in France as the latest item, the approaching trial of Louis Michel and Jules Guesde for “inciting to murder and plunder;” and finally, with us, the attack treated in the English, or petty and hypocritical style, by setting the police at us as street nuisances, and pretending that opinion has nothing to do with it, and that they do not notice our utterances, though the police make elaborate notes of them. All this does specially and above all things show fear on the part of our rulers, a sense of insecurity, the origin of which is not so much the open Socialist agitation (that is an effect rather than a cause), as the crumbling away of the basis on which “Society” is built, to wit, the safe and continuous expansion of the exploitation of Labour by Capital.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

THE FALL OF DILKE.

THE Dilke case and the comment it has excited afford a curious and noteworthy illustration of the manners and morals of latter-day civilisation. We are not going to follow up this remark by descending, in approved style on the bestiality, the brutality, the criminality, etc., etc., of Sir Charles Dilke’s conduct in the matter in question, although treachery towards a professed friend, and double-dealing of the worst kind, there undoubtedly was—albeit, perhaps no worse than is common among the circles of high social position in which Sir Charles moved. What is curious and noteworthy is the attitude of “public opinion” and its press towards the case. The holy horror, the unspeakable disgust, professed at its mere sensual side is slightly amusing, when it is an open secret that bizarre forms of eroticism are by no means unknown among persons of high standing in official and governmental circles whom the horrified journalist most delights to honour. As for the lust-element itself, it is enough to say that while the mere animal side of the sexual passion still obtains in human nature—as it undoubtedly does to-day, and as it will as long as civilisation exists with its corrupt material conditions and its hypocritical personal ethics and canting of “purity” to fan the flame—just so long shall we find it manifesting itself, and no amount of head-shaking and name-calling will affect it. Not before many generations of rational social life have shaped man will it be modified—of that we may rest assured. Meanwhile “society,” which pretends, with its frowns and its ostracism, when scandal arises, to force men to asceticism, only succeeds in making them hypocrites. It may be a desirable thing that the coarser side of the sexual passion should be eradicated: in any case it will only be affected by a gradual succession of inherited changes in the human organism through the medium of its social and economic surroundings, and not by any amount of enthusiastic determination to be “even as the angels are.” Physiological miracles are as hard to work as any others. A strong inherent tendency must wear itself out by a process of exhaustion, so to speak; if you try to stamp it out, it will only

flourish the more luxuriantly. The best receipt for developing eccentric forms of lust is to dwell, like a St. Anthony or a St. Theresa, on the beauty of "purity."

But to our thinking the most noteworthy point to future generations in the Crawford case will be the horror and indignation called forth by a few sexual delinquencies, while the enormities of Dilke's public career meet with not only no word of reproach, but with approval. Let us remember what Dilke was as a politician. A friend of the arch stock-jobbing political adventurer Gambetta, his aim in public life was to emulate this worthy. Accordingly the whole of his political career was an attempt to pose as a commercial statesman, the end of his statecraft of course being the acquirement of markets and the "development" of "imperial resources." It is to him that we owe the whole Egyptian policy of the late Liberal Government. From the bombardment of Alexandria to the Soudan expedition, Dilke, it is now known, was the guilty instigator of the whole infamous series. In pursuit of his one object, personal ambition, he was utterly reckless of all else. What mattered it to him whether injustice and misery were poured out upon weaker races unable to defend themselves, provided he carried a successful "policy" which would henceforward be identified with his name? One of the papers described Sir Charles Dilke as a "heartless miscreant," and we quite agree with the sentiment, only we find his "heartless miscreancy" exhibited in a far more lurid light in the "public services" with which he is credited than in the comparatively paltry peccadilloes exposed in the divorce court—mean and treacherous as some of these were, in all conscience.

Anyhow, there is a certain satisfaction in the thought that we have heard the last of this blatant, swashbuckling jingo—this second-rate imitation of the French article—and that his unworthy ambition in life has been successfully blasted. Would there were no others of the same kidney to take his place!

E. BELFORD BAX.

EARL MORLEY ON SOCIALISM.

In spite of the trade depression and the increasing bitterness of the class struggle, the spirit of flunkeyism is rampant as ever in some working-class movements. This spirit, of course, is most obvious among the better-off part of the working-class. Too many co-operators and trades' unionists seem anxious to show that they are nearer to the middle-class than to the "common herd." This is one of the most dangerous, and at the same time disheartening, tendencies of workingmen who rise a little above subsistence level; and it behoves genuine co-operators and trades' unionists to repress this feeling as much as they can. If the working-class is split into two parts, one of which considers itself of a superior order to the other, there is little hope for either. If trades' unionists and co-operators can be hoodwinked into thinking themselves middle-class people, if they can be cajoled into aiding the middle-class in its defence of property, above all, if they allow themselves to be dubbed "respectable" and assist in keeping down the "lower orders," there is little hope for a working-class movement. Every effort is now being made to bring this about, for the last hope of the capitalist against Socialism is in the snobbishness of those workmen who think they are of a different order from fellow labourers who earn a few shillings less a week and are not "tradesmen."

The last Trades' Union Congress was patronised by Lord Roseberry, and the Co-operative Congress by Earl Morley. The individuals are not particularly objectionable. Roseberry, if a snob, is an amiable one; is an excellent fellow for an after-dinner speech, and with his harmless small jokes, inoffensive irony, and mild, albeit inconstant, Radicalism, is not altogether intolerable. He has never done anything worth notice, but being the friend of a famous old statesman, by whom he is occasionally judiciously flattered, great things are expected from him; indeed, he is reputed a genius with his light under a bushel, and only awaiting the right moment when he will shine forth as a luminary among England's statesmen. Earl Morley, however, is a man of another cut. There is nothing enticing about him. He is an insufferable mediocrity in the truest sense of that dismal word. Too witless to please, too dull to argue, too feeble to win supporters, too ingenuous to make enemies—on the whole, the worst kind of man to attack or defend anything. Since Mr. Bradlaugh gave up the battle, Socialists have become almost hopeless of getting an opponent with fight in him. If we cannot get an opponent who will argue with us, at least let us have one who will amuse us, or even abuse us. Earl Morley can do none of these things, and it is difficult to imagine what could have induced the co-operators to bring this harmless and uninteresting gentleman out of his appropriate obscurity as a member of the House of Lords. It is only fair to him to say that he did not know himself. He confessed himself "puzzled to know what qualifications he possessed" that could have guided them in their choice of a president. The only two reasons he could think of was the accident that he lived near the meeting-place, and the fact that he knew less of the details and practical working of the system than any other member of the Congress. Curious qualifications surely!

Anyhow, elected President he was, and delivered his inaugural address; was cheered by the audience, and complimented in the most reckless manner by the seven or eight leading co-operators, who moved seconded, and supported the inevitable evergreen "vote of thanks." The address was a kind of politico-socio-economic sermon got up to please all sections of the congregation. The Earl's knowledge of the subject was, as he frankly admitted, of the most limited order. After going through the usual high-flown eulogism of the democracy, he urged the need for "a sound knowledge of the principles on which our com-

mmercial prosperity is based." He got rid of the troublesome points by coolly announcing that he would not "pause to inquire" whether the national wealth had been justly shared between capitalists and workers, or whether the past fifty years increase of riches and population had added to the general happiness of the community. The contrast between rich and poor was deplorable, but inevitable, because "no human ingenuity can counteract the laws of nature, which work for inequality." There is nothing more frequent and more hopelessly stupid than this assumption that the "laws of nature" (a conveniently indefinite expression) make the loafer rich and the toiler poor. How curiously alike in his argument is the noble lord to the market-place crank who is always ready with the revelation that there must be rich and poor, and there must be inequality in social rights and duties because—the laws of nature have ordained it so.

Communism and State regulation are "false theories," "contrary to the experience of history," "would violate sound economic doctrines," and "could only lead to disaster."

Now, State regulation is not Socialism, nor has it been brought about by Socialists. The State interfered with the capitalist for the simple reason that capitalists showed themselves worse than slave drivers when left with "liberty" to do as they liked. State interference, in fact, would have been as yet unheard of but for the gross brutality of the factory lords, the chicanery of merchants, and the inhuman conduct of shipowners who heedlessly sent men out in rotten hulks, hoping by the loss of ships and men to put something in their own pockets. State interference in short is not Socialism, but simply the admission that the capitalist class cannot be trusted to observe the commonest feelings of humanity towards their employes, or the most ordinary principles of morality towards their purchasers.

The Earl's definition of the aim of Socialists was fairly good. He said "they desire to re-organise Society on a basis of common property and equality of enjoyment of the fruits of industry by all its members." This definition only requires the addition that all the members of Society would have to perform their duties, *i.e.*, do a fair share of work before they would have any rights. If the Earl had only seen this very obvious condition, he would have been spared the absurdity of assuming that under Socialism "the idle and shiftless would be as well off as the industrious and thrifty." Of course, Socialism would be impracticable if every one were allowed to lounge about or work just as he pleased and when he pleased. The Earl reminds me of an opponent who asked me the crushing question, "What would you do under Socialism if one-half of the people lay in bed all day and the other half went to France to amuse themselves?" In reply to these sage queries it can only be remarked that any form of Society would tumble to pieces if all the people went mad, but that, as the present system is doomed, there need be no fear of this happening.

One point urged by the Earl is that under Socialism we could not produce nearly so much wealth. This might be true if everybody went crazy, as the Earl seems sure they would. But leaving aside this contingency, the very opposite would certainly be true. First, the unemployed workmen now wandering about in enforced idleness, and the rich lazy capitalists and noble lords who now fritter away their time in nonsense and mischief, would be set to work. Secondly, the labour thrown away in entirely useless things—such as making and maintaining two lines of ships or railways where one is sufficient, or supporting twenty shops where one store would do as well—would be directed to useful production. These two alterations themselves would result in increasing our wealth far beyond our requirements, and it would become necessary to reduce the hours of labour and increase the general standard of living. Further than this, the inventive genius of men would be used more freely. At present an invention is only accepted if it will "pay" some one to bring it out. If it clashes with some vested interest every effort will be made by that interest to crush it out. Under Socialism an invention would be accepted—not as at present, if it profited some individual—but if it benefited society.

These are a few points of the Earl's address. The washed-out fallacy of the wages fund was also brought up. We are further told that the conflict between rich and poor always has existed from the earliest stages of society, and that "no reconstruction of society can ever abolish the distinction between the rich and the poor, or the discontent caused by that distinction." This prediction is hazardous, to say the least; and more hopeful people will try to abolish it before despairingly assuming that it is impossible. The best part of the Earl's address is where he points out that the "co-operative production" schemes are really unworthy of their name; that they are merely joint stock companies. For the rest, the general quality of the speech can only make one wonder whether it was tolerated because spoken by an Earl, or whether a rigmarole of discarded platitudes is congenial food for the co-operative mind.

What are congresses for? It is understood that they are a means of gauging the progress of a movement, of bringing its principles before the public, of comparing the health of its various sections and adjusting their relations, and above all of bringing the best minds into communion once a year. But alas! where is the congress or conference that does this? It seems as if the purpose of congresses nowadays was to exchange compliments, pass votes of thanks and abstract resolutions without number, get patronised by a bigwig, and talk endless twaddle with an air of owlish gravity. It is to be hoped that co-operators and trades' unionists will soon recognise that trifling does not suit in times like these; that a great question is pushing itself forward for settlement; and that they must earnestly consider what can be done, and do it, or forfeit all claim to be the teachers and guiders of the working class.

J. L. MAHON.

The New Age.

SCARCELY had the Genius uttered to himself these words, than an immense noise proceeded from the west, and turning my eyes to that quarter, I perceived at the extremity of the Mediterranean, in the country of one of the European nations, a prodigious movement, similar to what exists in the bosom of a large city, when, pervaded with sedition, an innumerable people, like waves, fluctuate in the streets and public places. My ear, struck with their cries which ascended to the very heavens, distinguished at intervals these phrases:

"What is this new prodigy? What this cruel and mysterious scourge? We are a numerous people, and we want strength! We have an excellent soil, and we are destitute of provision! We are active and laborious, and we live in indigence! We pay enormous tributes, and we are told that they are not sufficient! We are at peace without, and our persons and property are not safe within! What then is the secret enemy that devours us?"

From the midst of the concourse, some individual voices replied, "Erect a standard of distinction, and let all those who, by useful labours, contribute to the support and maintenance of society, gather round it, and you will discover the enemy that preys on your vitals."

The standard being erected, the nation found itself suddenly divided into two bodies of unequal magnitude and dissimilar appearance: the one innumerable and nearly integral, exhibited in the general poverty of their dress, and in their meagre and sunburnt faces, the marks of toil and wretchedness; the other a petty group, a valueless fraction, presented, in their rich attire, embroidered with gold and silver, and in their sleek and ruddy complexions, the symptoms of leisure and abundance. Considering these men more attentively, I perceived that the large body was constituted of labourers, artisans, tradesmen, and every profession useful to society; and that in the lesser group there were none but priests, courtiers, public accountants, commanders of troops, in short, the civil, military, or religious agents of Government.

The two bodies being front to front assembled, and having looked with astonishment at each other, I saw the feelings of indignation and resentment spring up in the one, and a sort of panic in the other, and the large said to the small body:

Why stand you apart? Are you not of our number?

No, replied the group; you are the people: we are a privileged class; we have laws, customs, and rights, peculiar to ourselves.

People. And what labour do you perform in the society?

Privileged Class. None: we are not made to labour.

People. How then have you acquired your wealth?

Privileged Class. By taking the pains to govern you.

People. To govern us! And is this what you call governing? We toil, and you enjoy; we produce, and you dissipate; wealth flows from us, and you absorb it. Privileged men, class distinct from the people, form a nation apart and govern yourselves.

Then, deliberating on their new situation, some among the group said: "Let us join the people, and partake their burdens and cares; for they are men like ourselves. Others replied: "To mix with the herd would be degrading and vile; they are born to serve us, who are men of a superior race." The civil governors said: "The people are mild and naturally servile; let us speak to them in the name of the king and the law and they will return to their duty. People! the king decrees, the sovereign ordains."

People. The king cannot decree anything which the safety of the people does not demand; the sovereign cannot ordain but according to law.

Civil Governors. The law calls upon you for submission.

People. The law is the general will; and we will a new order.

Civil Governors. You are in that case rebels.

People. A nation cannot be a rebel: tyrants only are rebels.

Civil Governors. The king is on our side, and he enjoins you to submit.

People. Kings cannot be separated from the nation in which they reign. Our king cannot be on your side; you have only the phantom of his countenance.

Then the military governors advanced, and they said: "The people are timorous; it is proper to threaten them; they will yield to the influence of force. Soldiers, chastise this insolent multitude!"

People. Soldiers our blood flows in your veins! Will you strike your brothers? If the people be destroyed, who will maintain the army?"

And the soldiers grounded their arms, and said to their chiefs: "We are a part of the people, we whom you call upon to fight against them."

Then the ecclesiastical governors said: "There is but one resource left. The people are superstitious; it is proper to overawe them with the names of God and religion."

Priests. Our dear brethren, our children, God has appointed us to govern you.

People. Produce the patent of his commission.

Priests. You must have faith; reason leads men into guilt.

People. And would you govern us without reason?

Priests. God is the God of peace; religion enjoins you to obey.

People. No; justice goes before peace; obedience implies a law, and renders necessary the cognizance of it.

Priests. This world was intended for trial and suffering.

People. Do you then show us the example of suffering.

Priests. Would you live without gods or kings?

People. We abjure tyranny of every kind.

Priests. You must have mediators, persons who may act in your behalf.

People. Mediators with God, and mediators with the king! Courtiers and priests, your services are too expensive; henceforth we take our affairs into our own hands.

Then the smaller group exclaimed: "It is over with us; the multitude are enlightened." And the people replied: "You shall not be hurt; we are enlightened, and we will commit no violence. We desire nothing but our rights; resentment we cannot but feel, but we consent to pass it by; we were slaves, we might now command; but we ask only to be free, and free we are."—From Volney's "Ruins of Empires."

The business of a barrister depends on the good opinion of attorneys; and attorneys never could think well of any man who was troubling his head about reforming abuses when he ought to be profiting by them.—Sir Samuel Romilly. The true virtue of human beings is fitness to live together as equals, claiming nothing for themselves but what they as freely conceded to every one else, regarding command of any kind as an exceptional necessity, and in all cases a temporary one, and preferring, whenever possible, the society of those with whom leading and following can be alternate and reciprocal.—John Stuart Mill.

IN HEAVEN.

(By FERDINAND FREILIGRATH. Translated by J. L. JOYNES.)

It chanced in heaven a while ago, old Fritz stood up and slapped his thighs, And rubbed his hands, and shook his sword, and glowered with his piercing eyes, Stalked up and down the shining floor, and stretched and stiffened out his spine, Stepped quickly up to Blücher then, and to the famous Herr von Stein.

He signed to Ziethen to approach, and summoned Winterfeldt by name, To join the group of chattering lords, and Gneisenau that instant came; And Schwerin hurried up as well, and Scharnhorst too, and Keith in state, And all the famous Prussians else, of ancient and of modern date.

Then when they in the presence stood; "Deuce take it all!" the monarch said; "This state of things will drive me mad; 'tis too provoking to be dead! Deuce take it that I cannot now be in my palace at Berlin! 'Twould be the very time for me—ha! isn't that the fact, Schwerin?"

"I'd make the most of such a chance! But not as autocrat again! No, no, my lords, another age brings other methods in its train. I lit myself too large a light, too much of fruit my actions bore, To let me now play o'er again the very part I played before.

"Nay, all I did, and all that made my deeds of weight upon the scene, And all that epoch of events beginning with the year 'thirteen, Would merely my foundation be—broad-based, 'tis true, and grand and great—Whereon I now would firmly plant the timbers of the modern State.

"But modern States want something more than treachery and black deceit, And modern times ask something else than nets of lies to snare men's feet; Yea, men need something other now than empty noise of wordy strife—To draw deep draughts of freer air, and live a larger, fuller life.

"Poor German folk, betrayed and sold—with no one to avenge your wrong— With no one to demand at last the rights withheld from you so long— With no one to exact in full repayment for each broken vow, Tread Karlsbad under foot in scorn, and Austria's compact disallow!

"I'd do it! All their rotten nets I'd tear in twain with this right hand— Then equal laws, and open courts, and justice free through all the land, And everywhere free speech for all! By God, I'd carry through the thing! By God the Lord, I'd make it work, as sure as I am called a king!

"'Twould be a bomb-shell! What of that? Things might go badly for a year— I'd put it all to rights ere long, and work it smoothly, never fear! And if storm-clouds came rolling up, and kings in arms against me stood, A king myself, I'd face the kings, and fight them for my People's good.

"Then when the clouds had cleared away, we straight should see on every hand Our grand old country strong and free, one great united German land: Yea, after all the storm and stress, like Iris on a parting cloud, One bond of unity and love between the princes and the crown."

"Our folk are like a noble stream! Whoe'er its danger boldly braves, Whoe'er with unaffrighted soul commits him calmly to its waves, Him will it on its bosom bear, and carry down its course with pride; The coward and the knave alone die strangled in its angry tide.

"But me it would have borne on high—ha! Blücher, is't not as I say? True hero of the People still, I should have won their love to-day; And then lamented died at last with all men's blessing on my head!"— The old lords acquiescent bowed: "'Tis true, your majesty!" they said.

WORKMEN AND HORSES.—Nothing is more instructive from a Socialist standpoint than the way the Paris "Company of Omnibuses and Tramways" treats its men and its horses. The men don't cost the Company a farthing, they are to be found in all places ready to fight one another for the privilege of working for the Company, but the directors don't find horses running about the streets anxious to be harnessed. They have to be bought at a cost of from £48 to £60, and hence they are treated in a different manner from the men. From the accounts of the Company the cost of food, stabling, and grooming is 3s. 9d. a day per horse; the average wages of the drivers, conductors, and employés of all kinds is 3s. 2d. a day. It will be seen that the Company gets the service of a man for 7d. a day less than a horse, and in addition it is to be noted that the men work three and in some cases four times as many hours as the horses. The horses work four hours a day, the men from twelve to sixteen hours. When the horse is ill he is carefully attended to in the stable, and sent to the country to recover his health; if the employé is ill, for all the company cares he can go to the d— if he likes.—Paris *Le Socialiste*.

An article in the *Daily News* the other day, called "School in Prison," is well worth attention. The ordinary middle-class person, who is not likely to see the inside of a prison except as a visitor when he is sitting on a grand jury, is not more sure of anything than of the perfection of our prison system; he regards it as the culmination of all reason, and is absolutely convinced that if there are still any criminals in existence in England it must be on account of their inherent wickedness, since the last twenty years of our prison system, with its mingled fineness, mildness, and forethought, must have converted all those who were so ill-judged as to become inmates of a prison. "School in Prison" should be rather startling to this optimism. Although it only draws up a very small corner of the curtain, it shows a picture of petty tyranny and torture, almost the more hopeless because it is the result not of malice, but of hopeless imbecility and dishonesty. The truth is, that in this matter of prison life, as with work-a-day life, the society of to-day has become hopeless of any real progress, though habit will not allow it to confess as much. It is almost becoming conscious that it is but waiting till the Revolution shall sweep it away, and that meantime it is not worth while to try to do anything. Apply the official rules, since they are ready to hand, and will ease us of all responsibility; let them take the place of hope, desire, emulation, and sense of duty—of life in short.—W. M.



"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 ACCRET IT—AND THE CAUSE IS WON!"

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 FARRINGTON ROAD, E.C. They must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication.

As all articles are signed, no special significance should be attached to them because of the position they may occupy in these pages. None, therefore, are 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.

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

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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.

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday August 4.

ENGLAND	Boston—Woman's Journal	Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily)
Church Reformer	Denver (Col.) Labor Inquirer	CANADA: Montreal—L'Union Ouyriere
Justice	Little Socialist	INDIA: Madras—People's Friend
Freethinker	Detroit (Mich.)—Labor Leaf	BELGIUM: Brussels—Le Chantier Clair
The Present Day	Cleveland (O.)—Carpenter	HOLLAND: Recht voor Allen
Hull—Express	Toledo (O.)—Industrial News	HUNGARY: Buda-Pest—Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik
Norwich—Daylight	San Francisco (Cal.)—Truth	PORTUGAL: O Campino
UNITED STATES	Chicago (Ill.)—Herald	Lisbon—O Protesto Operario
New York—Volkzeitung	Vorbok	SPAIN: Madrid—El Socialista
Der Sozialist	Petersburg (Ill.)—Voice of Labor	SWITZERLAND: Zurich—Sozial Demokrat
Freiheit	New Haven (Conn.)—Workmen's Advocate	
Progress	Milwaukee (Wis.)—Volkblatt	
Truthseeker	Paterson (N.J.)—Labor Standard	
Boston—Liberty	FRANCE: Paris—Le Socialiste	

RECEIVED.—"Moderation"—"The Axe is Laid unto the Root"—"The Emigration of Capitalists"—"Oxygen."

NOTES ON PASSING EVENTS.

A brilliant and spirited foreign policy has for long been the speciality of the Marquis of Salisbury, and now that he is again in office we may expect some display of his capacity for exciting the public mind by some startling disclosures of Russia's attempt on the Indian Empire, and so forth. In the minds of some Tory editors these pranks fail to get sufficient attention from the working-class electors, but they do not despair of interesting them by-and-by in foreign politics. It would be a very hopeful sign to us if they could not be interested in foreign politics, that is to say until their own affairs were in a more satisfactory state than they are now. Unfortunately when we recall the immense hold Jumbo took of the public mind, we are prepared for anything. So long as the working-class can be led from considering their own miserable lot by red herrings of this kind, so long they will be poor and over-worked.

The chairman of the Great Eastern Railway Company announces the amount of the gross revenue of the company for the past half-year to be £1,687,084, and of the net revenue, £729,869—not a bad bit of plunder! Every penny of this money was earned by the railway servants, who, we are credibly informed, have often to work more than twelve hours a-day. Clergymen who preach about the duty of rendering unto Cæsar his due should make a practical application of their text and advise shareholders to refrain from taking other people's labour without giving them any return for it. Railway servants should help the Socialists to form a strong working-man's party to enable them to retain their own.

A certain Sir Joseph Lee, a witness called before the Commission to enquire into the depression of trade, says that "combinations of working men put restrictions on the way in which work was to be done, and encouraged medium rather than superior-class labour." This is pure invention. It must be known to Sir J. Lee that what manufacturers demand at present is cheap labour, in order to produce cheap commodities. Cheap wares are the artillery employed to conquer new markets; and it is not the fault of the working class that commodities nowadays are of a very bad quality, but of capitalists like Sir Joseph Lee, who in their greed for profit make any article that will sell, dis-

regarding altogether whether it is of good or bad quality, or whether it is harmful or beneficial to the community. Sir J. Lee would like all trades' unions broken up to make it good for trade; but note, what Sir Joseph means by being good for trade is a state of affairs wherein capitalists get large profits. Workmen don't need to care much about that kind of good trade. What they should look after is good wages; and high profits and good wages don't go together always.

A Russian paper, the *Novosti*, has recently shown that the number of suicides has doubled in Russia since 1813, after allowing for increase of population. How is it that where one person put an end to his life seventy years ago, two do so to-day? The *Novosti* writer thinks that pessimism is as much to be blamed as want. Perhaps, but why do men become pessimists? Because of want—not only want of food but of want of real enjoyment in life, caused by the miserable system of individualism which at present is the creed of the civilised world. This miserable system makes every one's economical position insecure, and prevents most of us from leading a decently-ordered life. Until we resolve to bear one another's burdens, I fear the proportion of men that destroy their lives will continue to increase.

Mary Ann Britland, thirty-nine years old, a factory hand, was recently condemned to death for murdering her husband, her daughter, and woman friend. The lives of the three victims were insured, and the object of the murders appears to have been to get the insurance-money. A case of this kind helps non-Socialists to realise the horrible state of society to-day. A woman, for the sake of a few paltry pounds, murders three fellow-creatures, two of them nearest relations. Factory-work blunts all the best feelings by continually keeping the hands insufficiently supplied with the necessities of life, until at last any means are resorted to to supply them. In a rational state of society such a horrible event could not occur, as it would be found a pleasant and easy task to obtain by honest work a good livelihood. Many will strongly reprobate this woman, and say hanging is too good for her; but I venture to think we are all culpable in this matter. These deeds are possible only through our failing to reform society; and so long as we are slothful in reform, we must bear the odium of such deeds. I regard the grocer that adulterates his butter and sugar, the butcher that sells rotten meat, the sausage-maker that sells diseased sausages, and the jerry-builder that sells unsanitary houses, all for profit, just as bad as this woman. Unfortunately, she will be hung, they will be left alive to slowly poison thousands of citizens.

The police interference with our meetings has not been quite so great during last week. I am afraid that many citizens will begin to think that Socialists exist solely to quarrel with the police. Socialists usually come into public notice, not as social reformers and as the apostles of a better system of society, but as obstructors of the Queen's highway. This is very unfortunate, and Socialists should do all in their power not to court police interference. Our aim should be to disseminate our views as widely as possible with the least exertion. Every row with the police is so much energy diverted from the true object of our mission.

A. K. DONALD.

ORTHODOXY SPEAKS.

THE *Dublin Review* for the current month contains an article from the pen of the Rev. W. Barry, D.D., on "The Progress of Nihilism," which is doubly interesting as being the expression of opinion by a cultured Roman ecclesiastic, fully alive to the sham and brutality of our present system, though of course his remedy for it all is a wholesale seeking of refuge in the bosom of the Catholic Church. With the singular inconclusiveness, to which we are so well accustomed in those among "men of light and leading," who do, with apparent honesty, endeavour to grapple with social problems, he states again and again the most part of the premises and blinks the conclusion, because of the obliquity of mental vision which a conventional education has developed in him.

The strange deductions that he makes have little interest for us save as examples for the study of mental atavism, but there is yet much to interest us in the frank admissions he makes in passing. Speaking of our latter-day civilisation and its effects, he says: "I am tempted to say that it resembles Midas, not only in his power of creating the precious metal, but in the pair of asses' ears with which mythology has garnished him. As much talk as gold, and little wisdom with either. Franchise, free trade, compulsory education, whatever be the worth of these things, it remains true that, in a world teeming with resources, endlessly fruitful, with a blue sky over it, and the great ocean-ways bringing wealth to every land, the multitudes must not only work, but too often must work and starve. Or say merely, that the relations between work and wealth on one side, and work and want on the other, appear at first blush to many in the highest degree anomalous and unjust. It is this feeling which has called up the red spectre of Nihilism. Here is the problem. One set of men accumulate wealth by their hard labour, and another much smaller set, distribute it more or less according to their good pleasure. The new religion—call it anti-religion if you please—begins by asking, 'Why should I toil that thou mayst eat? Is it not fairer that both thou and I toil, and then we may both eat the fruit of our labour?' Each man should live for himself and for his fellows, and no man simply for another who happens to have chained him up in a mill and bidden him grind!"

Dives has long gone clad in purple and fine linen, while Lazarus lies, full of sores, at his gate. True; but Lazarus during many, many ages, could only lie at the gate; he was helpless, ignorant, isolated. A mighty change has come over the world. There is a social organism forming in the depths, with its own laws, instincts, powers, and sentiments. We may, if we will, see these new barbarians—for so they have been called—rising up towards the light, armed and confederated, aware that they have been nothing, and convinced that when they choose they can be everything. It is part of their creed that the aristocracy overturned the throne, the middle-classes the aristocracy, and that fate has chosen them to overturn the middle-classes. They look down upon a soldier as the vile creature who forgets that he is a man, and suffers himself to be made a machine and a weapon in the hands of injustice. And a priest is to them only a baser species of soldier, wanting in the courage to face artillery, but seduced by the prospect of an easy life to become the defender on the altar steps of institutions which perpetuate slavery. A logic as clear as it is pitiless compels them to recognise in the preachers of any and every supernatural doctrine their resolved opponents. Priests, they say, offer the people Heaven as a bribe to be quiet and submissive; the churches take this world to themselves and leave the next to any one who can get thither."

All this, with which few of us would be disposed to quarrel, and much more in the same strain are, as a matter of course, blended with many misrepresentations. One who read the above sentences gathered from the Rev. Father's article would imagine the writer one who saw with us eye—but no! he says of our creed that it "is not good but evil." Of the noble women who have in this degraded time given us examples of heroic self-sacrifice, and patient, loving endurance, not even to be matched in legendary "Lives of the Saints," he says, "The revolutionary frenzy has its Mænads, its Furies, its loathsome Harpies, unfeminine bearers of the dagger and flaming torch, to whom murder, fire, and rapine appear the natural means of inaugurating a golden era." *Tu quoque* is hardly an argument, or we might remind him of some among those venerated by his Church, against whom were made charges fully as foul, and with quite as conclusive "proof," as any of those formulated against heroines of the revolution by the tools of a government, or its allies on a corrupt and venal press.

"They believe in reading and writing, in science, in a social philosophy of which the outlines, to their thinking, may be clearly sketched; and they do not believe in religion, art, culture, refinement, manners, marriage, political forms, inequality of birth, poetry, or anything whatsoever of the ideal order." Truly, in this passage the good cleric has apparently striven to bind together for rhetorical purposes a hopelessly incongruous collection of unrelated things! We do—we of the revolutionary school—believe in art, culture, refinement, manners, poetry, and many other things of the "ideal order," for this is but another phrasing of our oft-repeated demand for a free, full, and happy life for every human being. Yet is there some truth in the sweeping phrase, if only the words be taken with the meaning our ecclesiastical friend would give them, for under "religion" he would class what we know as superstition; under "marriage" what to us is legalised prostitution, the selling by a woman of her body for years instead of for a night; under "political forms" he would include what to us stand out in their true colours as monopoly-power and class-injustice; and under "inequality of birth" he would defend not alone the inevitable inequality of mental and physical faculties between individuals, but the "inequality" of material position which gives into the hand of one a power of life and death over thousands of his fellows. We say that these things *must* perish. If the good inwound with them must passively perish also, even then must the evils of Society be smitten unrelentingly. We know that whatsoever of truth and goodness there is in the institutions of to-day, will survive the revolutionary fire that shall purge away all that is base or unworthy, the spurious and temporary outgrowths of an effete civilisation.

"Poverty and obedience, say the Socialists, have been the necessary conditions under which a few have flourished on the toil and sufferings of the multitude. And the Gospel makes of poverty a beauty, and of obedience a counsel. Does it, then, perpetuate a servile past? Let history, a faithful witness, give the answer." Whereupon are adduced the myriad instances in which the Church, after battling until beaten against some advance of mankind, has adapted itself to the new conditions, and arrogated to itself the credit of having brought them to pass. But, "Testem quemquis inducit pro se, tenetur recipere contra se," and when the Church is once more arraigned for persistent obstruction of human progress, and History is called as witness, deposing to the treatment accorded Hypatia, or Bruno, or Galileo, let not her testimony be impugned by the men who now call upon her to lie on their behalf!

"Now comes this dangerous, enthusiastic, secret propaganda, abounding in sympathy and troubled with no scruples of conscience, asserting that the whole order of things is unjust, that it is nothing but organised selfishness in State policy, organised hypocrisy in religion, offering the round world and the fulness thereof to men whose bread has never been sure, declaring that the obligation to labour carries with it the duty on the part of rulers to find work, and reiterating Fourier's demand, that employments shall be made proportionate to capacities; in fine, scorning the golden age of the poets as a fable, laughing at Eden as a myth, and bidding all men look forward, instead of backward, to the true golden age that is yet to come. Is not this a religion in its power to move, to excite, to create man in its own likeness, in its bold affirmations and swift diffusion, and readiness for the combat, and tremendous anathemas, and appeal

to what is deepest in the human heart—to love, and pity, and hunger?" Whatsoever it be, this it is that shall rive asunder all chains binding mind or body, that shall overturn all thrones, "spiritual" or "temporal," and shall "create man in its own image"—the image of one able to live with his fellows happily, in a community based upon the principles of Freedom, Justice, Brotherhood—a community not needing "the consolation of religion," or "the protection of the State."

H. HALLIDAY SPARLING.

SOCIALISM AMONGST THE LANARKSHIRE MINERS.

A Propaganda Excursion.

ANY Socialist reckless enough to attempt an experiment in social revolt could not find better material for his purpose than the miners of Lanarkshire. The gospel of discontent—profound discontent—has sunk deeply into their souls. They feel more acutely than perhaps any other body of men that they are the victims of society—that society confers no benefit upon them, and that they owe nothing, therefore, to society. Law, they regard merely as the lash of their oppressors; and they respect it no further than an Indian respects a locomotive when he steps off the railway track on its approach—knowing that if he disregards it, it will crush him.

It is not difficult to account for this attitude of the miners. In the first place, they are an intelligent, if by no means an educated, class of men. The very nature of their employment, and the fact that they are associated together in large bodies, make them naturally quick of apprehension, critical, and at the same time strongly sympathetic. Though somewhat rude of speech and manner, it is impossible to converse with them on equal terms without discovering a genuine ring in their notions and sympathies. Further, they live mostly outside of the cities and larger towns—in villages that partake of none of the conveniences of large towns and none of the beauties or amenities of the country. Their dwellings are long low monotonous rows of slated houses containing two apartments. Thus they feel that they are peculiarly outcasts of civilisation—that to the great mass of their fellow-men their existence is apparently unknown or at least disregarded. Nor can we wonder at, or blame, this indifference on the part of outsiders. There is an association of beauty and historic interest attached to the tenant farmers of Ireland and the crofters of Skye and Tiree, that enlists the sympathy of the average public in their struggles against social oppression, which is entirely absent in the case of the miners. Their name suggests nothing attractive in nature or art, but rather ugliness—dark, unwholesome mines, explosions, squalid rows of houses, and grimly-garbed men. Another element in accounting for the disaffection of the miners, is that they are largely composed of Irishmen, who have a wholesome chronic antagonism to the constituted order of things. But perhaps a stronger element still, is the fact that the miners as a body have for years been battling against their employers in no spirit of the "mutual advantages of capital and labour," but in a spirit of inveterate enmity. The production of coal is not a complicated process; and the jugglery by which the earnings of the miners are transferred into the pockets of the capitalists and landlords cannot be kept occult as in many other branches of production. The miners know that they receive, according to the state of the market, 4d. or 6d. for digging and filling a ton of coal, and they also know that their masters receive from 6s. to 8s. for each ton at the pit head; and the fact that they are fleeced grossly and impudently, cannot be disguised from them by all the craft and *besse* of modern economic legerdemain. It is not difficult to understand, therefore, why the war between the miners and their masters has been of such a persistent and bitter character.

Strikes amongst the miners are of continual occurrence. Indeed, the district is scarcely ever entirely free from them. Owing, however, to the want of concerted action, not only amongst all the miners of Scotland, but even amongst the miners of Lanarkshire itself, these strikes seldom achieve any advantage to the men. There is, however, one consoling feature in them, which is, that the masters suffer during a strike almost as much as the men. What with the "crushing in" of the coal, and the expenditure necessary to put the mine again in working order, and, sometimes more important than both, the rent or "royalty" to the landlord running on—the master or company seldom comes out of a strike without bitterly rueing the contest.

Last Saturday, the Glasgow Branch of the League made its first Saturday afternoon Propaganda Excursion to Blantyre, one of the most important mining districts in Scotland, situated about nine miles south of Glasgow. In this district there is a strike. The men working in one of Messrs. Dixon and Company's pits some time ago, came out on strike against a reduction of wages. The masters yielded and the men returned. It was found, however, that the manager had refused to allow the leaders of the strike to descend the pit, and the miners refused to a man next day to lift their lamps and go down until their comrades were also permitted to descend. Thus matters stand at present. It is surely encouraging to note this solidarity amongst these poor fellows, who when working earn only about 2s. per day, and can have literally nothing "laid by" for such emergencies, and who can expect only a pittance of support from their employed fellow-workmen. The price paid to the miners in this pit per ton of coal is, I understand, 3½d. to 4d. By making big "dargs," or outputs, they could even at this rate earn from 15s. to 20s. per week, but bitter experience has taught them how disastrous large outputs have been to themselves by "flooding the market;" and they have resolved, come what may, to restrict the output to the very lowest minimum that will enable them to live. The animus against the manager is very strong, as he is believed to be their chief foe. I had a somewhat grim evidence of this when I addressed the strikers a couple of Sundays ago. I had referred to the assassination of the manager of the Decazeville mines, and when I had done speaking one of the miners in exceedingly plain language, recommended that they should follow the example of the Decazeville strikers. This proposition met with unbounded applause, as did also a subsequent reiteration of it in more ingenuous words, "You believe in prayer, then pray morning and night, pray standing and pray kneeling, that God may 'remove' this man." I must confess that I felt almost as if I were a contemptible reactionary when I interposed my advice against any such notion, and pointed out that the "removing" of one man or another would not improve their condition one whit, but possibly make it worse. The meeting of the League was held on an open piece of ground in the centre of the village. Many hundreds of miners were present, and Mr. Small, the Secretary of the Miners' Union, introduced the League in a thoroughly socialistic speech. A miner, named Fury, who was voted into the "chair," pronounced himself at the outset a Socialist, and evinced in his speech a

thorough knowledge of the problem. I next addressed the meeting, and was followed by comrade Downie, who made his *debut* as an open-air orator, and spoke with exceeding pith. The miners listened throughout with the greatest attention, frequently applauding and interjecting remarks that showed they were thoroughly in sympathy with our teaching. One could not help feeling that the men required not so much to be instructed as organised and directed—that they are already Socialist enough, and are ready at our hands to form into line with us and join the “people marching on” to the Revolution.

We sold all the *Commonweals* we had with us—about two dozen copies—as well as a large quantity of Socialist pamphlets. Before going away many of the men came and shook hands with us, and made us promise to revisit them at an early date.

As a hint to other Branches, I may state that we took a paste-pot and brush with us, and in making our return journey on foot placarded the telegraph poles and walls on the roadside with leaflets, back numbers of the *Commonweal* and ‘Chants for Socialists.’ We intend doing this in all our future journeys, so that the roads leading into Glasgow will give wayfarers a notion that they are about to enter a veritable city of Socialists.

Tramping homeward in the dusky evening, we startled the dreams of the trees and wonder of the village folks with lusty renderings of the “March of the Workers” and the Marseillaise.

J. BRUCE GLASIER.

THE PEOPLE'S PRESS.

The knotty problem in the Home Rule issue is, how to make the Irish believe they have Home Rule and at the same time keep the Land Thief Rule of robbery.—*Industrial News*.

Give us this day our daily press, is the wish of many a workman. When a sufficient number get to wishing hard enough to make great sacrifices for it, their wish will be answered.—*Workmen's Advocate*.

The average brainless press scribbler is very busy now telling what he would do with Anarchists. At the same time were boss Anarchist Gould to chance into his sanctum he would kiss his big toe and boast of it afterwards.—*Industrial News*.

In labour organisations as in most other societies there are men of little minds and selfish purposes who regard their own spites and interests in preference to the good of their fellows. These are the men who by stooping to contemptible methods eventually ruin where they fail to rule. It behoves all good men to see that such persons are driven to the rear.—*Paterson Labor Standard*.

The forty-five millionaire senatorial lawyers are not inclined to make a law that will prevent lawyers from taking bribes in the shape of fees from corporations. It may be interesting to the ignorant dupes of the political bosses to know that Democrats and Republicans vote together on this just the same as they vote on all questions of interest to monopoly.—*Industrial News*.

PROFIT-SHARING.—Working-men have the sop of profit-sharing thrown at them once in a while. Profit-sharing with capital to divide the share awarded to labor is an *ignis fatuus*, a fraud. Labour is past, or getting past, profit-sharing, and demands all the profit. It produces everything, even capital, and should, therefore, have all it produces. Why not?—*Puget Sound Co-operator*.

If the poor starved factory girl could leave her garret these fine evenings and visit Newport or Saratoga, she would see the fat paunched factory lord and his libertine son paying homage to the flirting butterflies of fashion. How gallant and polite they are! No one would suppose to see them now that they are engaged in the very profitable business of robbing helpless women and children.—*Industrial News*.

When a man or woman or child starves to death or dies from privation, as they often do, every man who upholds the system of government under which they perished, amid wealth and plenty, should feel himself responsible. There is generally a remedy for every wrong and it is the duty of all mankind that a remedy be sought and found for this terrible state of affairs.—(San Francisco) *Truth*.

Mrs. Mackey, wife of the great American monopolist, who maintains a palace in Paris and another in London, has set the whole army of American toadys and brainless dudes on their heads, by giving a dinner to the Prince of Wales and seventeen other land thieves and mongrel monopolists. Mrs. Mackey can give a million dollar present to each of the little Mackeys every Christmas morning, while the children of American toilers who produce it all are dying for want of fresh air. What a glorious thing a free government is!—*Industrial News*.

One of Jay Gould's dispatches from Washington says that the “wholesale immigration of European Anarchists, Socialists, Communists, and dynamiters, is thought to be the underlying cause of most of our domestic difficulties.” This is the old trick of turning attention from the real cause of bad business and riots. It is social inequality and injustice that makes men violent in their language and their acts, and it is the plunder of the many by the few that paralyses industry and creates poverty and vice. The law to-day in this and all other countries legalises the plunder of the producing classes, and until this ceases to be so we must expect bad business, social uprisings, and criminal acts.—*Paterson Labor Standard*.

People who feel satisfied with the world as it is may pooh-pooh the aspirations and aims of Socialists, but it is well to remember that a large proportion of the vast multitude which makes up the population of the civilised world is not so satisfied, and sooner or later this fact will have to be reckoned with. It is well, therefore, in view of impending social changes, that all who wish to aid in directing the social forces, now gathering strength everywhere, should equip themselves for the task by acquiring full information and knowledge concerning the ideas and aims of the democracy.—*Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*.

ÆSOP'S FABLES REVISED.—THE LANDOWNER AND THE MULE.—A rich man had a piece of land on which a young mule was grazing. “I shall harness you,” said the man to the mule, “and make you plough this land to grow melons on, of which I am very fond, while the stalks will amply supply you with food.” To which the mule replied: “If I consent to toil on your teams, you will have all the melons and I shall be worse off than now, inasmuch as I shall have to eat dry stalks instead of feeding on the fresh green grass. I'll not do it, sir.” “How unreasonable you are,” remonstrated the landowner; “your father never had any other food but thistles, and yet would work sixteen hours and even more a day without grumbling.” “Alas! that is true!” retorted the mule, “but then you know my father was an ass.”—*Our Commonwealth*, S. Australia.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST AND LABOUR NOTES.

ITALIAN WAGE-SLAVERY IN LONDON.

It may not be generally known that in many parts of the metropolis, notably in the neighbourhood of Leather Lane, there obtains amongst the Italian population a system of exploitation which is almost incredible. I should say that among the plaster-figure makers and manufacturers of ornamental work the system is to be seen at its worst. The master employs generally about fourteen or fifteen lads, who are kept at work at hours ranging from 75 to 90 per week. The room in which they work is usually a kitchen, cellar, or some such miserable tenement. The workers are all lodged in the same room, the bedding consisting of straw or sacks. Their food consists almost entirely of a very poor kind of soup, which is kept over a fire in a large iron kettle for two or three days together, and to which these poor fellows apply when so inclined. It is needless to say that the sanitary conditions under which they live are something terrible. The weekly sum given them in wages is from 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d., according to the caprice of their task-master.—W. W. B.

AMERICA.

NEW YORK, July 15.—There is increasing indignation against the capitalist Judge Barrett on account of his vindictive sentences against the boycotters, and meetings of denunciation are still being held in this city and in Brooklyn. We had an illustration last Thursday of the way in which the arrests are being made. Seventeen men had been held for nearly two months on the charge of boycotting the Landgraaf bakery, and when the cases were brought up before Barrett for trial, eleven of the accused had to be immediately discharged, on the ground that there was not a shred of evidence against them. The police had simply grabbed a crowd of innocent working-men, to appease the rage of the capitalist class and their judicial tools. But for the protests that are being made by working-men against Barrett's malice, these eleven men would doubtless have been thrown into the penitentiary for two or three years.

The journeymen house-painters of Brooklyn are preparing for a conflict with the bosses, who have concluded that they will either lengthen the day or shorten the pay. The painters, like the other building trades, have the nine-hour system, and they will be sustained by all the building trades.—*Cincinnati Unionist*.

The secret boycott against Ehret's beer is assuming various shapes. Here is one:

“New York, July 7. To the officers and members of the Tin Can and Pail Makers' Union.—Whereas, It has come to our knowledge that five men were stricken down last week by a malignant disease, believed to have its origin in the neighbourhood of George Ehret's brewery, Ninety-Second Street and Third Avenue. Therefore the board of health of the union hereby warns all members of the union to refrain from drinking any lager beer made in that brewery; and the board desires every member to heed this warning. Any neglect to do so will surely result in a serious mortality among the members of the union.—By order of the health board of the Tin Can and Pail Makers' Union of New York and vicinity.”—*Workmen's Advocate*.

BALTIMORE, July 15.—The Bricklayers' Union here, by a unanimous vote, decided on Thursday night to connect with the International Union.

On Monday July 19 the Furniture Workers' Co-operative factory will commence operations under most favourable auspices.

One Bauernschmidt, a brewer, made boast some two weeks ago that he didn't care anything for the action of organised labour. After a vigorous boycott of his beer for over a week he discharged his non-union foreman and made retraction of his boast in the German papers here. His beer is not objected to now.—*Cincinnati Unionist*.

WHEELING, July 15.—The streets are being excavated for the laying of natural gas mains. Although it gives many men employment, yet the number of unemployed seems to be undiminished. It seem to attract the surplus labour from other points.—*Cincinnati Unionist*.

FRANCE.

“The members of the Executive of the Socialist Electoral Committee of the Seine, in anticipation of the municipal elections of the IVth and Xth Arrondissements, have decided that, in order to protest against the imprisonment of Roche and Duc-Queray, continued in spite of the will of 100,000 citizens expressed at the last election in May, it will be advisable to choose Duc-Queray as a candidate for the district of L'Hôpital Saint-Louis.” Again we say of this, as of Cipriani's parliamentary election, that as a possible means of releasing these two men from prison (for if one is out, the other will, we presume, go along) we wish his friends success, and hope that the committees of the arrondissement will take the intimation of the Socialists, and select Duc-Queray as candidate.

M. des Isnards, a Legitimist of high birth, was sentenced to a month's imprisonment by the Correctional Tribunal of Marseilles for inciting to riot in the recent disturbance there, but was immediately set at liberty. Really, this is but a sorry and slighting treatment to subject a French nobleman to! In comparing his case with that of Roche and Duc-Queray, M. des Isnards cannot but feel a dash of humiliation at the slight esteem in which he is held. The bastilles of past days were deemed scarcely strong enough to hold safely the dangerous spirits of the noble prisoners of the realm: now, alas! the authorities will scarcely offer them hospitality for a month!

The three citizens who were imprisoned for the attempt to display a black flag in the Place de la République on the 14th July have only now been set at liberty. These small official tyrannies sound very trivial and laughable, but they are all part of the “great whole.” Tout va bien!

The trial of Guesde and Louise Michel for incitement to murder is fixed to come off on the 12th August.

Indeed “the old order changes,” when we have to record children raising their own voices to protest against their exploiters. Here is an instance of it in an agricultural colony of orphans and foundlings in Porquerolles, an island in the south of France, not far from Toulon. This colony is a speculation of a certain M. de Roussen, who bought the island for agricultural pur-

poses, and not caring to pay for full-grown labour to cultivate the same, he managed to get about 100 boys placed at his disposal by the Administration of Public Relief of Paris, ostensibly to instruct them and bring them up to earn their own living, though in reality to exploit their labour shamefully. The continued ill-treatment at this place caused four of the boys, whose ages vary from 12 to 20, to attempt twice to escape in a boat, falling into the hands of the gendarmes on reaching Hyères. Their deposition there led to an official enquiry into the state of things, which was found to be iniquitous in the extreme. They are over-worked and ill-fed; and in short it is no exaggeration to say that the colony of Porquerolles becomes a veritable convict-prison to the little waifs and strays who are sent there. The director was severely blamed on the discovery of the state of affairs, and, naturally enraged at the interference, he brought down the storm on his own head by increasing the customary severities. The insurgents went to work in picturesque style: they armed themselves with stones and sticks, and, mounting a little hill crowned by an old disused fort, they installed themselves therein, put it in a state of defence, and raised the drawbridge. At this appalling spectacle the poor director, M. Ferry, quite lost his head, and telegraphed to Toulon for military assistance. The authorities preferred to attempt a peaceful parley, which was successfully achieved by the sous-préfet of Hyères. The drawbridge was lowered, and the young insurgents left their "bad eminence" to resume work. Reform is of course promised them, but M. Ferry has been stupid enough to renew severities, which has brought on another *émeute*, followed by renewed telegrams for help from Toulon, renewed promises, etc., etc., and there the matter rests at present.

There has been an attempted revolt at the prison of La Roquette, this not being an isolated case, as several other penitentiaries of the Seine Department are in a disquieting state of effervescence. One paper declares that a mutiny at La Roquette was no more than what might be looked for; for though one does not expect a penitentiary to be exactly a bed of roses, yet the prisoners are left almost to die of hunger. I quote the bill-of-fare of the ordinary régime of the prisons of the Seine. It consists of two kinds of rations—"ration maigre" and "ration grasse," the latter being the régime of those who are in on a long term. "Ration maigre" consists of breakfast, $\frac{3}{4}$ -litre of soup; dinner, $\frac{1}{2}$ -litre dried vegetables and potatoes, or rice; and 500 grammes of bread per day. "Ration grasse," breakfast, $\frac{3}{4}$ -litre of soup; dinner, 25 grammes of beef, and bread. It is needless to say that all the food is of the worst quality, and badly cooked. It is sometimes put to a warlike use, as the director of Saint-Lazare, who, on visiting one section of the prison lately, was received by a shower of stony haricot-beans, can testify.

There is a special bureau for mendicity at the Prefecture of Police at Paris. All the beggars arrested during the previous day and night file before the head of the second division, who examines them and then decides as he thinks fit what shall be done with them. This functionary has his audiences quite privately, so that it is impossible to control his decision. The number of beggars arrested in Paris increases terribly from year to year.

A strike has just taken place in a factory near Saint-Dié (Vosges): 120 weavers have refused to work, complaining of the insufficiency of their wages.

Roche and Duc-Quercy have been visited by some of their friends, who are indignant at their treatment in the prison of Montpellier. These political prisoners are treated so differently from ordinary criminals, lodged in wretched unwholesome cells in an overcrowded prison—one of the worst in France. This is a "levelling of classes" with a vengeance!

Think of being denied the gratification of spirit derived from chanting the "Marseillaise"! So it happened to a certain small commune of the Oise Department, whose hard-hearted mayor has so deep-rooted an antipathy to this universally—if not wisely—accepted patriotic song, that last year he had an enthusiastic citizen arrested and fined for demanding its execution by the town musicians, and this year the folk sigh in vain for the sound of their national anthem. Seriously, something too much is made of the "Marseillaise" by latter-day Socialists *pur sang*. We are not "patriots," surely, thirsting for blood, or, as it is usually (more decorously) put, yearning for Honour and Glory?
M. M.

STRIKE AT COPENHAGEN.

The female workers, numbering about 240, of Mr. J. H. Ruben, of Copenhagen, steam-loom weaver, are out on strike. The average wages of these workers, amongst whom are several married women, are 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a-day. The working-day is from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., with an hour and a half's rest, thus making the wages about 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. an hour. This miserable gain is further reduced by a system of fines almost entirely at the will of the employer. For being five minutes late a fine of 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d., or more than an hour's wages, is due. The gates of the works close five minutes after the exact time for commencing work, thus exposing the workers, often residing at a distance, and having their house-work to attend to, to lose half-a-day's wages. The remainder of the bye-laws show a similar feeling of humanity. Mr. Ruben, who gains £10,000 a-year, thinks that his employes are gaining their dry bread too plentifully and easily, so he exacts a further reduction of wages. The women have ceased working. Mr. Ruben is trying to draw foreign workers to his factory. These facts speak for themselves, for those who consider the international union of the workers the weapon by which to fight for the common cause. Subscriptions are received by the *Strikekomiteen*, 22, Romersgade, Copenhagen; by the editor of the *Social-Democraten*, Copenhagen, and will be accounted for in that paper.

FOLLY OF DIVIDING MORAL AND PHYSICAL FORCE.—Two travellers were way-laid by a robber. They felt that united they were stronger than he, and fearlessly pursued their journey. As they walked on together, they discussed the manner in which they should pass him. The one said, "I will arm myself, and if he ventures an attack, I will repel force with force;" the other said, "No, not so, let us reason with him." Doubtless, both plans were very well meant; but they could not do less than quarrel. The bandit heard their dispute, and attacked the armed man, whose companion would render him no resistance. Singly, the traveller was no match for the bandit, and, though he gallantly defended himself, and severely wounded his assailant, he was at last slain. The bandit then turned upon the man of peace and stabbed him to the heart.—*Charitist Circular*.

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

OFFICES: 13 FARRINGTON ROAD, E.C.

Notices to Members.

Reading Room.—Open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

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

Branch Subscriptions Paid.

Norwich, to April 30. Bradford, Croydon, Hackney, Merton, to May 31. Hammersmith, Bloomsbury, Clerkenwell, Dublin, Leeds, Mile-end, N. London, Oxford, to June 30. Manchester, to July 31. Hoxton (Labour Emancipation League), Marylebone, to Sept. 30.—P. W.

The "Commonweal" Board Brigade.

Saturday 31st July four comrades with boards and three selling the paper met at the Office and started for the south of London, taking Holborn, Waterloo Bridge, and south to the "Bricklayer's Arms," where a meeting was held, and then returning to the Office. Sale of papers good. If only more members would join us, a great many more papers would be sold. To-day (Saturday) again we shall take route in the south, and all members out of work are earnestly requested to turn up at the Head Office and help by carrying boards or selling papers. Time of starting, 1 p.m.—THOMAS E. WARDLE.

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.)

BLOOMSBURY.—On Friday, July 30, at Arlington Hall, Rathbone Place, W., Charles Faulkner lectured to a good audience; some very weak discussion followed; sale of papers good.—Usual outdoor meetings were held with success.—T. E. W., sec.

CLERKENWELL.—On Wednesday, July 28th, D. Nicoll lectured to a good audience on "Law and Order," and pointed out very plainly that in our present Society there were plenty of bad laws and no order; a good discussion followed.—On Sunday morning, August 1, at the invitation of the secretary of the London Patriotic Club, Clerkenwell Green, W. Blundell lectured to a good muster of the members and friends on "Education," mainly dealing with the "passive obedience" doctrines of orthodox institutions, and the difficulties young men and women had to contend against in their endeavour to educate themselves on social (and even political) subjects; an able discussion followed, which was satisfactorily replied to.—Successful open-air meetings have been held during the week.—W. B.

MARYLEBONE.—On Saturday evening, a short meeting was held in the Harrow Road, which was addressed by comrade Nicoll, without any interference from the police.—On Sunday morning, comrade Donald spoke for about half an hour at the corner of Seymour Place, Marylebone Road. Several police and inspectors were present, but did not interfere.—In the afternoon we had a large audience in Hyde Park, in spite of the Church Army, who had taken up our position. The meeting was addressed by comrades Mainwaring, Morris, and Chambers. We had some opposition from a Hindoo, which was ably dealt with by comrade Morris. At the close, 8s. 4d. was collected for the Defence Fund.—H. G. A., sec.

MILE-END.—On Tuesday, July 27th, at the East London United Radical Club, 143, Mile End Road, at which address the meetings of this Branch will now be held, C. W. Mowbray lectured on "Woman: her Position To-day and under Socialism," to a large and interested audience. He dealt at length with the anomalous position of woman to-day, and showed the advantageous one to be obtained under a Socialist régime; a good discussion followed; a small collection was made towards the rent of hall. If we can hold on to this hall, and members give a little more of their time and energy in the coming winter, we shall have a very vigorous Branch.—H. DAVIS.

GLASGOW.—On Sunday evening at the Rooms, 84, John Street, comrade McLean (late of Jamaica) gave an interesting account of the social condition and recent history of the Island of Jamaica. He exposed the wholesale system of plunder carried on in the interest of British officials, and gave a graphic description of the habits of the negro population, who, in his opinion, understand better the use of life, and are in many respects more truly civilised, than the people who send out missionaries to reclaim them from "heathendom."—J. B. G.

HULL.—The first public meeting was held on July 30th, when J. L. Mahon lectured on "What Socialism Means." Owing to the rain there was only a small audience. Fair sale of literature.—T.

LEEDS.—Last Sunday morning we held our usual outdoor meeting on Hunslet Moor. Comrade Maguire addressed a very attentive audience on the "Condition of the Featherstone Miners," showing that there was no hope for the miners unless they demanded the nationalisation of the mines. After the lecture, one of the audience asked some questions relative to Earl Morley's address to the Co-operative Conference, and said that "Socialism was impracticable, inasmuch as it went against the laws of nature." Comrade Maguire answered the questions to the satisfaction not only of the audience in general, but of the questioner also.—In the evening we held an open-air meeting in Vicar's Croft. Comrades Sollett and Maguire spoke to a large and sympathising audience on "Passing Events."—Sale of *Commonweal* about two and a half quires for the day.—F. C., sec.

"Commonweal" Printing Fund.

A SMOKING CONCERT will be held on SATURDAY AUGUST 14th, in the HALL OF THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE, 13 FARRINGTON ROAD, E.C., in aid of the COMMONWEAL PRINTING FUND. All members are particularly asked to take a Ticket, and to sell as many as possible among their friends. Tickets, 6d. each, can be had at the Chief Office, and of all Branch Secretaries.—T. W.

The COMMONWEAL has hitherto been carried on with considerable difficulty, and only by heavy personal sacrifices in time and money, which are seldom, perhaps, taken into account by those who only think of getting a "big pennyworth." For the information of all whom it may concern, we state that the COMMONWEAL is in no sense a commercial speculation. The editors and contributors receive no pay for their work on it, and whatever gains may be eventually made by its publication will be wholly devoted to purposes of Socialist propaganda. We therefore ask for pecuniary help from those who believe in our Cause, to tide us over the early days of the struggle.

The Treasurer of the Socialist League, 13 Farringdon Road, London, E.C., will gladly receive Subscriptions from all friends willing to aid in carrying on our Paper.

LECTURE DIARY.

London Branches.

Bloomsbury.—Arlington Hall, Rathbone Place, Oxford Street, W. Friday, August 6, at 8.30 p.m. Adam Taylor, "Things as they are, and Things as they should be." 13. George Bernard Shaw, "Socialism and Malthusianism." Music before and after the lectures.

Clerkenwell.—Hall of the Socialist League, 13 Farringdon Road, E.C. Sunday August 8, at 7.30 p.m. B. Somerville, "Emigration and the Capitalists; a Bitter Experience." Wednesday 11, at 8.30 p.m. A Lecture.

Croydon.—Royal County House, West Croydon Station Yard. Business meeting at Parker Road every Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock.

Hackney.—Kenton Coffee House, Kenton Road, Well Street, every alternate Tuesday at 9, for the enrolment of members and other business.

Hammersmith.—Kelmescott House, 26 Upper Mall, W. Sundays, at 8 p.m.

Hoxton (L. E. L.).—Exchange Coffee House, Pitfield Street, opposite Hoxton Church, N. Sunday, August 8, at 7.45 p.m. D. Nicoll, "The Benevolent Bourgeois." 15. H. Davis, "Socialism and the Worker."

Merton.—11 Merton Terrace, High Street. Sundays and Wednesdays at 8 p.m.

Mile-end.—East London United Radical Club, Mile-end Rd. Tuesdays at 8 p.m. August 10. H. A. Barker, "Socialist Morality."

North London.—Communications to R. A. Beckett, St. Mildred's House, Poultry, E.C.

South London.—Business meeting every Tuesday at 8.30 at 112 Hill Street, Peckham, S.E.

Birmingham.—Carr's Lane Coffee House. Every Monday evening, at 8.

Bradford.—Scott's Temperance Hotel, East Parade, Leeds Road. Meets every Wednesday at 8 p.m.

Edinburgh (Scottish Section).—4 Park Street. Meets every Friday at 8.30 p.m.

Glasgow.—Reading-room of the Branch, 84 John Street, open from 10 a.m. till 10 p.m. every day. Saturday afternoon, 7th August, Propaganda Excursion to Coatbridge. Members to gather at Rooms at 4 p.m. Sunday 8th, at the Rooms, 84 John Street, at 7 p.m., lecture by J. Bruce Glasier: Subject, "The Ethics of Plunder."

Hull.—Foresters' Hall, Charlotte Street, every Friday at 7.45 p.m. August 13, William Morris's lecture on "Misery and the Way Out" will be read.

Leeds.—No meeting-room at present. Out-door stations notified below.

Leicester.—Radical Club, Vine Street. Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

Manchester.—145 Grey Mare Lane, Ashton New Road. Contributions of books, pictures, and money for furnishing the Reading and Club Room will be gratefully acknowledged by Raymond Unwin, sec., at above address.

Norwich.—No. 6 St. Benedict St. Lecture and discussion every Monday at 8. Reading-room of the Branch open every day from 8.30 a.m. to 10 p.m. August 9. T. Morley, "Socialism and Freethought."

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.

Open-air Propaganda for the Week.

LONDON.						
Date.	Station.	Time.	Speaker.	Branch.		
Sat. 7.	Euston Road—Ossulton St.	7	D. J. Nicoll	N. London.		
	Hyde Park (Marble Arch)	7	W. Chambers	Clerkenwell.		
	Regent's Park	7	H. H. Sparling	N. London.		
	Mile-end Waste	8	C. W. Mowbray	Mile-end.		
	Harrow Road ("P. of Wales")	7	T. E. Wardle	Marylebone.		
	S. 8.	Croydon	11	H. Davis	Croydon.	
		Marylebone Rd., Seymour Pl.	11.30	A. K. Donald	Marylebone.	
		Hackney—Well Street	11.30	J. Lane	Hackney.	
		Hammersmith—opposite Walham Green Station	11.30	The Branch	Hammersmith.	
		Hoxton Ch.—Pitfield Street	11.30	H. A. Barker	Hoxton.	
Tu. 10.	Mile-end Waste	11.30	Wade & Westwood	Mile-end.		
	Regent's Park	11.30	D. J. Nicoll	N. London.		
	St. Pancras Arches	11.30	W. Chambers	Bloomsbury.		
	Hyde Park (near Marble Arch)	3.30	The Branch	Marylebone.		
	Victoria Park	3.30	W. Morris	Hackney.		
	Clerkenwell Green	7	The Branch	Clerkenwell.		
	Croydon	7	H. Davis	Croydon.		
	Euston Road—Ossulton St.	7.30	H. Charles	N. London.		
	Soho—Broad Street	8	C. W. Mowbray	Bloomsbury.		
	Th. 12.	Hoxton Ch.—Pitfield Street	8	C. W. Mowbray	Hoxton.	
Mile-end Waste		8.30	H. Davis	Mile-end.		

PROVINCES.

Hulme.—The Viaduct, Chester Road. Sundays, at 7.30 p.m.

Leeds.—Hunslet Moor, 11 a.m.; Vicar's Croft, 7 p.m.

Manchester.—Grey Mare Corner, Ashton Old Road. Sundays, 11 a.m.

Oldham.—Curzon Ground. Sundays, afternoon and evening.

Notice to Workmen's Clubs and Institutes.—The Lecturers for the Socialist League will visit any part of London free of charge. Special arrangements must be made for the provinces. Early application should be made to the Lecture Secretary, at the offices of the League, 13 Farringdon Road, E.C.

FREE SPEECH DEFENCE FUND.

Our comrades and friends are asked to bestir themselves to secure freedom of speech in our public ways, in contradistinction to freedom of speech for certain classes and sects only. The spirit of Socialism is at war with class interests: officialism is giving its support to class interests only. For endeavouring to assert the right of free speech the Socialist League has been heavily fined; and the Council of the League hereby asks that all friends of freedom should support the League with subscriptions in aid of this righteous cause. The Treasurer of the Socialist League, 13 Farringdon Rd., E.C., will gladly accept, and acknowledge the receipt of, Pence, Shillings, or Pounds from friends of the Right of Free Speech in Public Places.

RECEIVED.

Previously announced, £3, 12s. 1½d. July 29, North London Branch, 5s. 2½d. July 30, "G." (donation), 10s. Total, £4, 7s. 4d.—P. W.

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