

THE COMMONWEALTH

The Official Journal of the Socialist League.

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

NOTES ON NEWS.

THE great event of the last few days has been the attempt on the part of the *Times* newspaper to climb a step higher towards the place of irresponsible dictator of the United Kingdom by dint of what can only be called a piece of cowardly slander; and the name will apply whether the "accusation" is true or false, since a print that could plot an anonymous accusation of this kind has no longer anything to lose as to character or honour.

As to its truth or falsity, it certainly seems out of character with Mr. Parnell's astucy that he should have written such a document at the time; and that all the more as the killing of Cavendish and Burke was obviously aimed at the very party of which Mr. Parnell is the leader, in order to break up the alliance which was being formed between the Irish Parliamentary Party and the Gladstonites: it was a sore blow to Mr. Parnell. But if it would have been stupid to write such a note then, what can one say of Mr. Parnell if his denial of it now is false? Simply that he is the stupidest man that ever pretended to lead a party; which is far from being a likely story.

As to the challenge thrown out to Mr. Parnell by the Tory party to attack the *Times* in the law-courts under penalty of being considered guilty, this is illustrating our friend Bax's view, expressed in these columns, on the necessity of abolishing the libel law, with a vengeance! So it comes to this, that the enemy of any man, public or private, can trump up an accusation against him, and if the injured man does not submit himself to all the chicanery and uncertainty of a law-court, he is to be held guilty, although nothing whatever is proved against him; and that though his slanderer may have at his back almost unlimited capital to carry on the battle with!

But perhaps the malignity and dirtiness of the *Times'* attack is scarcely equalled by its stupidity. What honest man not blinded by party feeling would think the worse of Mr. Parnell if he had written the letter? Was it not at least a common opinion even in England at the time that Burke had got but what he had long been asking for? And was not this opinion expressed by numbers of people who were shocked at the murder of Cavendish, and thoroughly disapproved of the whole affair; who thought it in fact a disastrous business? I say that this was an opinion often to be met with among persons of by no means extreme opinions at the time.

It must be repeated that the whole business is one of the basest party moves ever made. A baseness in which Lord Hartington must henceforth share after his shuffling with Mr. Dillon the other night: his Whig worshippers must now leave off putting him forward as the soul of honour, as it has been their fashion to do.

It is to be hoped at least that even this dastardly episode may do some good in helping to disgust people with the tyranny of the anonymous press; future ages will scarcely believe the story of our having submitted so long to it. And how puzzled they will be in trying to square the ethics preached throughout society with the conduct of our most respectable, most majestically successful journals.

It is pleasant to turn from these sickening intrigues to the humanity of the Irish police-constables, who have resigned rather than dragoon their fellow-countrymen; as far as it goes it carries out the hope so often expressed by Socialists, that when the uniformed instruments of capitalism come to understand what it really is that they are paid to do, they will refuse to do it. All honour to our Irish friends for showing the way in this matter!

As to the position of the two parties in Parliament since the second reading of the bill, there is not much to be said about it. In spite of his letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Mr. Gladstone seems to be hanging back somewhat; as indeed he is wont to do in a crisis. He seems to think that the chapter of accidents may have something hidden in it which may turn out the Tories without his committing himself any more. The Tories have at least this advantage over their opponents, that they are in, and that the others are not very anxious to take their place. It will be curious to watch the lengths of cowardice that want of confidence in the principles which they profess will drive the Liberals to. Undoubtedly they need have no difficulty in bringing on a disso-

lution if they wish it; and if they shrink from doing what they can to deliver us from the disgrace of the Coercion Bill, they and their leader will earn a title to feebleness and cowardice which one may hope they would seek to avoid—though one cannot help fearing that they will not care much about it.

There may be some meaning in the arrest of the French Commissary on the frontier or there may be none. It scarcely seems possible that such a trifle can really be taken seriously in itself; but it may be a link in a chain of irritations which will lead directly to war. In any case the perturbation it has caused in Paris shows on what ticklish ground the peace of Europe stands.
W. M.

Mr. Goschen has brought forth a budget. Such things are usually got up in a sneaking hypocritical way, but, as might have been—and was—expected, the Egyptian juggler has surpassed most of his predecessors in office.

His performance however is far too clumsy to conceal the fact that the British Empire, like all overgrown things is "gone at the knees."

The "poor man's pipe" is a delicious touch of Tory humour, but as a strategical move is rather too late. If the people were already enlisted on the Tory side it would have been a good stroke to have cemented their friendship with a Grecian gift.

But to exasperate the people and put clearly before them in what light they are regarded and then to proffer a pipe of tobacco as a bribe! A pipe is a great soother of the ruffled spirit, but even it will fail to efface the memory of Tory trickery and brutality.

The following figures show the agrarian evictions in Ireland during the past quarter: Ulster, 145 families, 619 persons; Leinster, 143 families, 590 persons; Connaught, 189 families, 953 persons; Munster, 531 families, 2,880 persons. Totals, 1,008 families, 5,042 persons. In Kerry alone 306 families, or 1,766 persons, were evicted. What are the figures for England?

Modern "artists" of the successful type, are never at a loss for a full supply of flunkeyism. They are going in for a grand "Jubilee" costume ball next month, at which they tell us "all artistic London is to be"! Including the Prince of Wales and Sir Frederic Leighton.

What profitable things murder-machines are! The Hotchkiss Gun Company's shares are at 5¼ premium.
H. H. S.

THE NORTHUMBERLAND MINERS. DEMONSTRATION IN HYDE PARK.

(Abridged from *London Daily Chronicle*.)

A MEETING was held last Sunday afternoon in Hyde Park, under the auspices of the Socialist League, for the purpose of expressing sympathy with the Northumberland miners "in their resistance to the demands of their employers to further reduce their already starvation wage." The demonstration was fixed for three o'clock at the "Reformers' Tree," but a preliminary meeting was commenced near the Marble Arch entrance to the park, in order to attract a larger audience to the site announced for the demonstration. The promoters of the meeting carried a portable platform, and a red banner inscribed with the title of the League. This preliminary meeting, however, was interrupted by a terrific hailstorm that swept across the park, the banner being utilised as a shield, behind which a large number of persons took refuge from the violence of the elements. When the storm had abated, A. K. DOUGLASS, who has recently been on a lecturing tour amongst the Northumberland miners, asked those of the audience who had remained to follow the banner to the Reformers' Tree. At this point a fairly large crowd eventually assembled. The proceedings throughout were most orderly, and the attendance of about 40 or 45 constables, who stood in couples on the fringe of the gathering, seemed somewhat unnecessary.

H. A. BARKER, who presided, opened the meeting, which he said had been called to express deep sympathy with the Northumberland miners who were resisting the tyranny of their employers. The latter had combined to reduce the already starvation wage of the miners

12½ per cent. These incidents were common to the labour struggle throughout the world, and their duty was clear in a crisis like this. The miners were unable without assistance to present an uncompromising front to their, and the workers' generally, common enemy, and the reason was because the workers were in a disorganised state. It was their duty not only to give what they could to tide the miners over a time of difficulty, but to unite so that they might be prepared when the proper time came for sweeping away the common enemy. The Socialists were the only people who really had at heart the cause of the workers. The Socialist League had been formed for the purpose of federating the trade organisations and the workers throughout the world, so that when the real crisis came the struggle should not be alone in this country, but in France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, and in every other country where the iron heel of the oppressor was keeping down the workers. It was their duty to put an end to a state of society such as that which now prevailed. There was a delusion that it was necessary to have an idle class who performed no useful service to the community, and that a class of parasites should exist. The Socialists wished to convince them that such a class was not necessary. When the workers as a body realised this truth, they would sweep the class of parasites away. The present system of society, which allowed the oppression of the miners and other workers, would last so long as they were apathetic and indifferent.

WILLIAM MORRIS moved the first resolution, which was as follows :

"That this meeting of London citizens expresses its warmest sympathy with the miners of Northumberland in their struggle against the system of class monopoly and legalised robbery, by which they are deprived of the just reward of their labour and even of the means of labour."

He said he had recently come from the North and seen the friends on whose behalf they were appealing. All working-men were their friends; all exploiters of the working-man were their enemies. It might be thought that this dispute was a very small one, but it was an endeavour on the part of the miners to prevent themselves from being filched out of the miserable pittance they already received. When they heard of the large wages which miners got it was a lie from beginning to end. These men were earning not even a bare subsistence wage, but a starvation wage—13s. or 14s. per week for men spending their time in the bowels of the earth! Was that a due reward for labour? (Cries of "No.") At the same time, whilst the miners were so poor, were the employers poorer? No; they were riding in their carriages and having the best to eat and drink. He contended that they must get rid of the system. This strike was simply one of the incidents in the great warfare of labour against capital, which the present system rendered it imperative for the working man to carry on. The time would come when the worker will say, "We, who make everything, must own everything." They were there to sustain the revolution which would put an end to all strikes and the war between employers and employed. As long as there were employers and employed there would be war between them. They must be prepared to fight for peace, or they did not deserve to have it. The miners of the North were beginning to look at the matter from the Socialists' point of view, and as soon as the workers clearly understood that they must have their destiny in their own hands it would not be difficult to get rid of the present system.

A. K. DONALD, in seconding the motion, alluded to the brave manner in which the Northumberland miners were bearing the hardships from which they were suffering. Although they were earning a little under 13s. a week, the mine owners formed a combination to reduce their wages 15 per cent., that being the first proposal. He alluded in strong terms of indignation to the tactics which had been adopted by the mine owners, who had threatened to evict the men from their huts, but they knew well they would not dare to evict the miners, who were determined that they would not die in a ditch. The miners were anxious to remain out a fortnight or so longer, because the Baltic ports were just opening and the mine owners were afraid of losing orders, and they would pocket their defeat rather than lose those orders.

FRANK KITZ also addressed the meeting, pointing out that they were pleading for men who were receiving errand boys' wages for risking their lives. What, he asked, was the glory and greatness of the British Empire to these men, or to those who were living in miserable rack-rented rooms? He complained of the police surveillance to which they were subjected, and which was not extended to other assemblies. He warmly denounced the men who degraded and debauched the class from whom they got their wealth, and said that boundary commissions were required at home to give back to the poor property from which they had been robbed.

T. E. WARDLE, referring to an incident which was distracting the attention of some of the audience, said, "It's only a policeman at the back trying to make a disturbance." It was said that the police were going to have a reduction of wages, and that Sir C. Warren proposed to create a fourth-class at £1 per week, instead of 24s. If the police would only be civil to the Socialists, they would try to benefit their position.

The resolution was then carried.

W. UTLEY next moved :

"That this meeting is of opinion that the only permanent remedy for the existing state of things among miners and amongst all other workers in the community is the collective ownership of the mines, the land, and all other means of production by the State, and their exploitation for the common weal."

J. LANE seconded the resolution.

S. MAINWARING gave a terrible picture of the condition of Welsh miners, and the resolution having been carried, it was announced that the total collection had reached the sum of £3 8s. 6½d.

Three cheers were then given for the Northumberland miners, the meeting was declared to be at an end, and the assemblage dispersed.

To the above report little requires to be added. There was a fair sprinkling amongst the more earnest men of middle-class respectabilities, attracted thither by curiosity, and it was noticeable that scarcely any of these contributed to the collection. One of the tall-tiled gentry on being requested to give, asserted, evidencing thereby both his ignorance and stupidity, that he had "no sympathy with the miners. Why didn't they work like other people?" Considering the state of the weather the demonstration must be esteemed a success. There can be no doubt that if the day had been fine a much larger number would have been present. Most of the speakers were drenched by the storm of hail and rain which fell at the beginning of the meeting, and spoke only with great discomfort and inconvenience. Little notice was taken of the demonstration by the newspapers. They are all too busy with Jubilee Jingoism and the squabbles of foreign states to pay attention to the wrongs of the workers at home. But the day is coming when the cry of the wronged for justice will silence all other sounds, when the miners of Northumberland and all other workers of the world will rise in their might to overturn the cursed society that denies them bread.

W. U.

NOTES FROM NEWCASTLE.

We are now entering the fourteenth week of the strike, and it seems as far from settlement as ever. In spite of the half-heartedness of their leaders, the power of the masters, and the poverty of their financial resources, the men have made a splendid stand. They have fought one of the longest strikes under the most depressing circumstances that has ever been recorded. The miners of Wales and Lanarkshire gave in in far less time.

Of course it is not wise for men to strike too long without a settlement in view; and every well-wisher of the miners would be glad to see an end—but an honourable end—of the dispute. So far, the miners are as dogged and determined as ever they were. The recent vote shows a sweeping majority for no surrender, although many large collieries declined to send in their ballot-papers. The reason for the complexity of the situation is that the miners are fighting their own leaders as well as their masters. The feeling against the leaders is very strong, and well founded,—but that subject is better left alone till after the strike.

Mr. Burt has been "explaining." His journey round the collieries has not been a pleasant one. Everywhere he has been met with a spirit of suspicion and antagonism, for which he has himself to thank. At Bebside most of the miners walked out of the meeting when a vote of thanks was proposed.

The fury of the caucus party against the Socialists is increasing every day. The *Newcastle Leader* lends its columns to all manner of silly attack and scurrilous abuse. The rage of the caucus dodgers is a compliment to the cuteness of our tactics and the success of our propaganda. The *Newcastle Chronicle* has been very fair indeed.

The Hyde Park meeting has made a very favourable impression on the miners here. The speeches of Morris and Donald were well reported in the next morning's *Newcastle Chronicle*. Altogether, the two months' work here has been very successful, and should stimulate our comrades all over the country.

J. L. MARON.

EARLY COMMUNAL LIFE AND WHAT IT TEACHES.

(Continued from p. 135.)

WE have seen what the village communes were, and how they may even now be found in Russia and Java, and in the remote parts of India, while our own country shows the most unmistakable signs of having once been covered by similar associations. We must now pass on to examine the family communities which so often succeeded them in course of time, probably by the plots of land remaining in the hands of various families and not returning for repartition. In this way has grown up the family life of the Servians, which will, I think, afford us the best example of this system which is now in existence.

In Servia the land is held by family communes, consisting on the average of 20 to 25 people, though there are sometimes as many as 50 or 60; each commune cultivates a farm of about 37 to 45 acres. The buildings are all situated within an enclosure. There is the main building, including the large hall, in which all the members meet for meals and to spend the evenings in singing or telling stories. Round this hall are four or five bedrooms, inhabited by the chief's family, and often another couple and their family. The private rooms of the other members are dotted about the enclosure, often built on piles; within the enclosure are also built stables, barns, and other farm buildings. The chief is elected to manage the commune, and generally resigns when he gets old, being succeeded by the one who is deemed best able to manage the affairs. He is a much less despotic ruler than the head of a Russian commune, at least than modern ones. He is expected to consult the other members on all matters of importance. It is his business to buy what things are needed from outside; these are few, most of the necessities of life being produced at home. He has to sell any surplus produce they may have, and represents the community in any dealings with a third person or with the State. His power is very

much the same as that of the manager of a joint stock company. The wife of the chief, or some other woman elected to take her place, has charge of all the domestic work and sees to the education of the children, she allots the work to the women and is supposed to be consulted in all marriages. A woman leaving the association to marry is allowed a dowry in proportion to the wealth of the community. Occasionally, if labour is needed, the husband is received into the wife's family, but generally the wife passes to the husband's. It is a general custom to allow a newly married couple the exclusive use of a field for one year, in which they grow flax, &c., so that the wife may spin and weave clothes for them and their children. Small home industries are often carried on by individual members, and anything they make by them is their individual property, they are even allowed sometimes to buy a cow with these earnings and to keep it on the common pasture. Members leaving to join the army or to go into the towns have always the right of returning under certain conditions.

The members of these communities are, as a rule, happy and contented, they are not over-worked, and live in rude comfort. Their affection for the family is fostered by the common meals and the evening gatherings, where the children play about their grandfather's knees and listen to stories of the struggles of their race against Turks or other invaders, the women spin or ornament their garments, which they do very beautifully with bright coloured embroidery, and the men are busy mending their tools or making some of the toys and nicknacks which they do so well; all take their turn at entertaining the company with music, singing, or the telling of stories. The social life of these families is a pleasant contrast to the joyless lives passed by so many peasants and agricultural labourers in our own and other countries. They have the further advantage of gaining leisure by the division of labour which they are enabled to practise. There is only one lot of cooking to be done for all the community, only one lot of poultry to feed, or one herd to be watched: the men go out and work for the common good under the leadership of the head man, and they can always summon all the members to help at specially busy times such as harvest. There is in these communities every facility for the introduction of any machinery or other improvements which might be found useful, and for a happy country life it will be difficult to find a better system.

Family communities, exactly similar to these, have existed in France, Italy, and Germany, in the Middle Ages. In France some of them lasted until the end of the last century. One hamlet called Pinon was formed of one of these societies, modified in constitution; it contained 19 persons and 13 servants in 1788. Some idea of its wealth will be gathered from the fact that it gave £600 dowry to any of its women marrying into another commune. Many of these French communities carried on other work in common as well as agriculture; there was a good deal of cutlery done by them. All through the statutes, registers, and documents of the Middle Ages there is undoubted proof of the existence over a very wide area of these family communes. It is only within the last few hundred years that the definite idea of individual ownership of land has grown up, and it is not much longer that the idea of individual ownership of the implements of production has been at all generally accepted.

These are not isolated cases which have been cited, but instances representative of a course of development which in its main features seems, from evidence already collected, to have been almost universal. There can no longer be any doubt that almost all nations have passed through a very long period, the characteristic feature of which was the common use and ownership of land and other means of production by associations based more or less on the family relationship.

Before passing from these examples, to consider what they teach us of the past course of development and of the future, it will be well for us to take a glance at the common lands of Switzerland, for here we find the modern form, if we may so call it, of their primitive customs. There has never been, in the history of the world, so far as we know, a more radical democracy than has existed in Switzerland for a thousand years. In six of the cantons, namely in Uri, Schwytz, Glaris, in the Appenzells, and in the two Unterwaldens, the people govern themselves directly without the intervention of any representative body. In the spring all the citizens of full age meet in the open air to pass laws and to appoint officers charged with the execution of them. Speaking of this ancient democratic government Laveleye says, "Nations did not start with a patriarchal royalty, as has too often been thought from a too exclusive study of heroic Greece, but rather with republican institutions." There is probably a good deal of truth in this, and it reminds us that the kings of Saxon England were elected by the Witan in old times.

But it is with the common property of Switzerland that we are now concerned. In the course of modern development much of the lands has got into the hands of private individuals, but there still remain large tracts of common lands, called Almends, which are in many cases enough to provide with the first necessities of life those who have a right to share in the benefits derived from them. The Almends may be divided into three chief kinds, the cultivated lands, the pasture, and the forest. On the cultivated land they can grow corn and vegetables, the Alp supplies them with pasture for sheep, cows, and goats, while from the forest they get timber to build and repair their houses, to make furniture, tools, &c., also firewood, dry leaves, and turf. In Stony every occupier is entitled to a little over an acre of cultivated land. In the Canton of St. Gall the village of Buchs allows each of the cultivators an acre and a quarter of good land, firewood for all the year, and Alp pasturage for a considerable head of cattle; in addition to which it derives from its common property a revenue sufficient to

support the schoolmaster and pastor, and to meet all public expenses without imposing any tax. In the village of Wartow each received about two acres of land.

There are various ways of using these common lands, in some Cantons they are let out and the rent goes to defray all communal expenses, to pay for the church and the school. In one district they are chiefly used to provide common repasts, like the old common meals of Sparta, or the early love feasts of the Christians. But however their common property is used the result is always greatly beneficial to the people: their common forests make them the best housed peasantry in the world, and in many cases they are entirely guaranteed from starvation or absolute destitution by the produce they can get from their common lands.

RAYMOND UNWIN.

(To be continued.)

AN ARGUMENT.

A "gentleman" was vehemently denouncing the action of certain strikers for driving from work certain other men who had taken the places of the strikers at lower wages. "Why," said this gentleman, who, if he had been as noisy in defending the action of the strikers, would have been dubbed a loud-mouthed demagogue, "no man has any right to interfere with another in his honest work in any way. The man or men who would prevent by force or intimidation, or any other way, any other man from earning his daily wages, is a villain, an outlaw, and deserves to be shot. He—" "Hold on, friend," said I (and in spite of myself I was getting a little hot); "that won't do. You are too profuse with your hard names. Did you ever stop to think the thing over?" "Think!" he contemptuously repeated, gazing angrily around on the admiring crowd of honest labourers, "ain't the thing evident on the face of it? What right has one man to say to another that he shan't work, and then to drive him away by force if he persists in doing something for his family? If you don't like the wages you are getting, you are at liberty to quit. This is a free country, this is!" And he flashed a triumphant look over his admirers, as if there were no more to be said. But I was hot enough to be thoroughly in earnest, and so proceeded to give him a new view of the matter. "Yes, this is a free country, and so it was before the war. A black slave had the same choice as me—he could work like a mule for his bare living, and if he didn't like it he could do the other thing. What does it matter how a man dies, so he ceases to live—whether by the cruel whip of the slave-owner or the more cruel method of starvation by the present class of slave managers? What right has a man, indeed, to interfere with me? If I deprive him of his place and wages, no matter how, then I'm an outlaw, am I? Just so;—what's the difference between getting his place away from him by means of a club or by means of an offer to work for lower wages? The effect is exactly the same." The contempt with which he turned and regarded me was amusing. The men around us, some of whom had not long before been supplanted by cheaper "hands," were too astonished to say anything. One meek-looking man on the outskirts of the little crowd ventured that "the feller was right, after all," but was frowned away by my now angry opponent. "Do you mean to say," he gasped at last, "that I haven't the right to hire a man to take another's place if I choose?" "To a certain extent," I replied; "if he is incompetent, or dishonest, or for any good and just cause, you have that right. But to offer your present employe lower wages, as a pretext for discharging him so that you may hire another in his place, you have no more right than he has to use every means in his power to thwart you. His daily labour has helped you to your present position far more than has your capital; for without his labour your capital would have let you starve to death." "But when I pay him he gets his share," he argued. "His share ends with his receiving his pay out of my capital." "He doesn't draw one cent of his wages from your capital," I answered. "The work he has performed more than increases your capital to the extent of his wages, or you would not hire him. More than that, his share does not end with the receipt of his daily wages. He has helped to build up your business,—he has given his time and best efforts in your behalf—and he is fully as much as you entitled to the resultant benefits of his application." Several of the listeners mustered up courage to nod their heads approvingly. "No he ain't!" retorted my opponent, excitedly. "I don't hire him to—" He stopped. "To what?" I asked. But as he was about to turn away from the encounter in lofty disdain, I supplied the words he was about to say. "You don't hire him to help you! Then what do you hire him for? Just to give him employment? Quite philanthropic, truly," I added, not caring to let slip a good chance for a bit of sarcasm. He walked into a saloon not far away, followed, I am sorry to say, by a number of men who ought to have known better. Passing by on my way homeward, a moment later, I saw them all standing at the bar. That was an argument which I was wholly unable to dispute.—KNIGHT, in *John Swinton's Paper*.

THE CHARITY ORGANISATION SOCIETY.—All societies and individuals who have been interfered with by this organisation are invited to write to Mr. F. Johnson of the National Refuge Harbours Society, 17 Parliament Street, S.W., with a view of meeting their charges in the most public way possible.

Persecuting imprisonments and rough police handling have had their effect on the health of J. E. Williams of the S. D. F. At the Marylebone police court on Friday his counsel had to hand in a medical certificate for his absence from the trial arising out of the last piece of petty tyranny on the part of the protectors of the citizens.

A TRUE BRITON.—Mrs. E. H. Britten gave her splendid limelight illustration of views in New Zealand, "The Paradise of the Southern Seas," at Pendleton Town Hall. A gentleman from the Emigration Society, handed Mrs. Britten a letter, asking her to speak in favour of emigration; but Mrs. Britten said she could not, neither would she until the land became the land of the people, which was now in the hands of a few.—*The Medium and Day-break*.

"Cornelius Vanderbilt is erecting a magnificent 80,000 dollar building, at his own expense, for the benefit of the employes of the Vanderbilt railroads centring in New York. It will be complete with gymnasium, baths, swimming baths, bowling alley, class rooms, library, etc., and will be in charge of the Railroad Department of the Young Men's Christian Association."—*Young Men's Magazine*. It would be a good deal better if he paid his employes better, so that they could have more home comforts and make such buildings unnecessary.—S. S. G.



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

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

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

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

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

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday April 27.

ENGLAND	Chicago (Ill.)—Vorbote Labor Enquirer Albina (Oreg.)—Weekly Courier Detroit (Mich.)—The Advance and Labor Leaf Milwaukee (Wis.)—Volksblatt	ITALY	Milan—Il Fascio Operaio Brescia—Lo Sperimentale Naples—Humanitas
Justice Jus Norwich—Daylight Londoner Arbeiter-Zeitung Glasgow—Pioneer Brotherhood Worker's Friend	FRANCE	SPAIN	El Productor Madrid—El Socialista Cadiz—El Socialismo
INDIA	Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily) Le Reveille Guise—Le Devoir Lille—Le Travailleur	AUSTRIA	Arbeiterstimme Vienna—Gleichheit
Bankipore—Behar Herald SOUTH AUSTRALIA Adelaide—Our Commonwealth	BELGIUM	HUNGARY	Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik
UNITED STATES	Liege—L'Avenir Antwerp—De Werker	ROMANIA	Jassy—Lupta
New York—Volkszeitung John Swinton's Paper Der Sozialist Boston—Woman's Journal Denver (Col.) Labor Inquirer New Haven (Conn.)—Workmen's Advocate	HOLLAND	SWEDEN	Stockholm—Social-Demokraten
	SWITZERLAND	NORWAY	Kristiania—Social-Demokraten
	Zurich—Sozial Demokrat		

to be met with, nor a beast, or fruit of the earth. Those not slaughtered died of starvation." Hollingshead goes on to say that the famished people might be seen to creep forth "out of the woods on their hands, for their legs could not bear them; they looked like anatomies of death; they spoke like ghosts crying out of their graves. They were driven to eat, not only horses and dogs, but the carcasses of dead men." He adds, "the land up to then was populous and rich, plenty of corn and cattle, is now become so barren, both of man and beast, that whoever did travel from one end to the other of the one hundred and twenty miles, would not meet any man, woman or child, except in the towns and cities." Here is a picture of rapine and murder. Can any Englishman be proud of such doings? Can the Irish forget such deeds?

James the First of England, who claimed to be God-like in his attributes, but who could never believe in paying royal debts, carried on the work of plunder to a great extent, taking six whole counties, and other smaller districts. He owed large sums of money to many of the London city companies, and as he refused to pay them, he gave them lands in Ireland as compensation. Thus the Company of Drapers became possessed of 27,140 acres; the Company of Mercers, 21,170 acres; the Fishmongers, 20,451 acres; the Salters, 19,291 acres; the Ironmongers, 12,113 acres; the Grocers, 11,678 acres; the Clothiers, 10,267 acres; and the Skinners Company, 5,062 acres, giving a total of 127,770 acres, with a rental of close on £90,000 per annum in 1879. At the present time about £70,000 per annum. But look at the enormous rise in the rents of the above estates. In 1691 the rental is given at £6,000 a year; in 1782 at £8,000. Here was plunder on a grand scale. Why should not the Companies be proud of their so-called "Property?" It is calculated that not less than one hundred thousand families, or about half a million of men, women, and children, were driven from the richer lands of the north to the barren regions of the south and the west by these forcible clearances. But the most terrible period of Irish history was that of the Commonwealth. During that period over 7,700,000 acres of land were confiscated. Sir Eustace Maurice advised the Government to burn all the crops and put all the people to the sword. General Munroe, in a single day, near the town of Newry, killed seven hundred country people. In West Meath and Longford he massacred the whole population. The people of several villages having fled to the furze on the top of a hill, Sir Arthur Loftus surrounded the hill with his troops and burnt the whole to death. Sir William Cole, an English officer, in one of his dispatches to the Government, says, "Starved and famished of the vulgar sort, 7,000." Six hundred and sixteen thousand perished during this period. What a glorious period for poor Ireland.

But the restoration of the Stuarts brought no restitution to the people of Ireland. In every age from the time of the Conquest, whatever the Government, the plunder of the Irish people has still gone on. A change of government made no difference to the people of Ireland. For seven hundred years she has been the victim of royal and aristocratic plunderers.

In 1675 took place the great so-called Land Settlement in Ireland. Up to that time about eleven million acres had been surveyed. Of that about four million acres were held by Protestants, and in the "settlement" the following arrangement took place:—

	Acres.
To Soldiers who had served in Ireland.....	2,387,915
To 49 officers	450,380
To Adventurers (who had lent money).....	787,321
To Provisors (to whom lands had been promised) ...	477,873
To Duke of Ormond and Colonel Butler	257,516
To Duke of York	169,431
To Bishops (Protestant)	31,596
Total.....	4,599,032
Leaving to the Catholic population	2,328,850

This was divided as follows:

	Acres.
To those who were declared to be innocent	1,176,570
To Provisors—lands promised	497,001
Nominees in possession.....	68,360
Restitutions	45,398
To those transferred to Connought under James I. (above referred to)	541,530

And this was called the grand settlement of the land question in Ireland. But we shall have to see many other settlements in that country.

But after this grand settlement, William III. after the glorious revolution of 1688 confiscated over a million and a half of acres, of which he gave Lord Bentinck, 135,300 acres; Lord Albermarle, 103,603; Lord Conningsby, 59,667; Lord Romney, 49,517; Lord Galway, 36,142; Lord Athlow, 26,480; Lord Rockford, 39,512; Dr. Leslie, 16,000; Mr. F. Keighley, 12,000; Lord Mountjoy, 11,000; Sir T. Prendergast, 7,083; Colonel Hamilton, 5,966.

Here, again, was plunder on a grand scale, truly right royal and aristocratic in its dimensions.

But the people of Ireland have never recognised these robberies and never will. But who are the confiscators? Who are the plunderers? To whom is compensation due?

Many people cannot understand why the Irish people cannot forget these things, and why they do not recognise the claims of the landlords. The late J. S. Mill, in the House of Commons, May 17, 1866, said: "The Irish circumstances and the Irish ideas as to social and agri-

THE IRISH QUESTION.

II.—THE LAND.

It is a true saying that the land question is at the bottom of the whole Irish difficulty. It is at the bottom of the whole Irish question. It is the same in England, it is the same in all the great States of Europe, of America, and throughout the civilised world. How to restore the land to the people is the question of the hour. To do so can never be confiscation, can never be robbery. The confiscation, the robbery, the plunder, exist to-day. That confiscation, that robbery, that plunder will cease only when the land is restored to the people, the public property of the whole people, not excepting one, even the feeblest, in mind or body.

"Before the time of the conquest," said the late John Stuart Mill, "the Irish people knew nothing of absolute property in land. The land belonged to the entire sept; the chief was little more than the managing member of the association. The feudal idea which came in with the conquest was associated with foreign dominion, and has never to this day been recognized by the moral sentiments of the people."

During the debates in the House of Lords on the Irish Land Act of 1870, the late Lord Clarendon described the landlord system of Ireland as legalised robbery. At the Town Hall, Birmingham, October 11, 1870, Mr. John Bright said, "Proprietary right in Ireland had its origin mainly in confiscation." Many other authorities might be referred to if necessary. In Ireland, as throughout the world, the possession of the land has ever been the grand aim of the conquerer, knowing that he who holds the land holds in his hands the lives and liberties of the people. The land once taken possession of by the conquerors, the subjugation and the slavery of the people is only a question of time.

In dealing with the land question in Ireland it is not necessary to go back beyond the middle of the 16th century. Queen Mary, although a Roman Catholic, seized a large tract of land in Leinster, known to-day as King's and Queen's Counties. But with the accession of the good Queen Bess, the work of plunder and extermination began in earnest. To destroy the Catholic religion by destroying the Catholic population was her great aim. In Ireland extermination was reduced to a system. To every English foot soldier who settled in Ireland she offered 120 acres of land, and to every horse soldier 200 acres. But in taking possession of the land they had got to kill off the Irish people, and to do so a war of extermination had to be undertaken. Hollingshead tells us that "the English killed in their advance all prisoners taken, putting to the sword old and young, not sparing the babies at their mothers' breasts. From Limerick in the South to Waterford in the East, a distance of 120 miles, not an Irishman was

cultural economy are the general ideas and circumstances of the human race. It is the English ideas and circumstances that are peculiar. Ireland is in the main stream of human existence and human feeling and opinion. It is England that is in one of the lateral channels." Now if Mill was right the Irish are right. And here it may be asked how many years, how many generations, how many centuries, must expire before plunder ceases to be plunder and becomes legitimate property?

Instead of the people of England condemning the people of Ireland, would it not be better for the people of Great Britain to look after the land-thieves at home, and, grasping hands with the people of Ireland, help onward the great social revolution, now so near at hand.

J. SKETCHLEY.

SOCIALISM FROM THE ROOT UP.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM.—THE PRODUCTION OF SURPLUS VALUE—THAT IS, OF RENT, INTEREST, AND PROFIT.

THE problem to be resolved is as follows. The owner of money has to buy his commodities at their value, and to sell them at their value, and nevertheless at the end of the process to realise a surplus. This is the end and aim of his existence as a capitalist, and if he does not accomplish it, he is as a capitalist a mere failure. So that his development from the mere money owner to the full-blown capitalist has to take place at once within the sphere of circulation and without it: that is, he must follow the law of the exchange of commodities, and nevertheless must act in apparent contradiction to that law. This problem cannot be solved merely by means of the money which he owns, the value of which is, so to say, petrified. As Ricardo says, "In the form of money, capital has no profit." As money, it can only be hoarded.

Neither can the surplus originate in the mere re-sale of the commodity, "which does no more than transform the article from its bodily form back into its money form." The only alternative left is the change should originate in the use-value of the article bought with the money in the first instance and on which the capitalist has to operate.

"In order to be able to extract value from the consumption of a commodity, our friend Moneybags must be so lucky as to find within the sphere of circulation, in the market, a commodity whose use-value possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value, whose actual consumption therefore is itself an embodiment of labour, and, consequently, a creation of value. The possessor of money does find on the market such a special commodity in capacity for labour, or labour-power."

By labour-power or the capacity for labour Marx understands the whole of the mental and physical capacities in a human being which are brought into action in the production of commodities; in short, the man and all that is in him as a wealth-producing machine.

Now in order that the possessor of money should find this necessity to the accomplishment of his end and aim—viz., labour-power as a commodity of the market, various conditions are requisite.

The man who is to exercise the labour-power for the capitalists' benefit—the labourer—must be "free," that is, his labour must be at his own disposal, and also he must have nothing else to dispose of for his livelihood but his labour-power. On the other hand, any one who has to live by setting commodities other than labour-power must own the means of production, and also the means of subsistence while the commodities are being got ready for the market, and being converted into money.

As to the value of this article necessary to the life of the capitalist, this labour-power, is estimated like the value of every other commodity by the average time necessary for its production or reproduction; that is the average time necessary in a given state of society; and in plain language this production of labour-power means the maintenance of the labourer. "Given the individual, the production of labour-power consists in the reproduction of himself—or his maintenance."

Labour-power is realised only in action, that is, when it has become actual labour, and is producing a commodity; so that, "the value of labour-power resolves itself into the value of a definite quantity of the means of subsistence. It therefore varies with the value of those means, or with the quantity of labour requisite for their production."

The minimum limit of the value of labour-power is therefore determined by the value of these means. If the price of labour-power falls below that minimum it is destroyed: a higgling as to its price has to be gone through between the buyer and the seller, and the price is fixed by contract though it is not realised until the article is consumed. From what is stated above, it will be seen that this contract is made between two parties; on the one hand the workman, or machine for production, who has no means of producing, on the other the possessor of money who as all the means necessary for working the machine and has therefore become a capitalist. "He who was before the money-owner now strides in front as a capitalist: the possessor of labour-power follows as his labourer. The one with an air of importance, smirking, intent on business; the other timid and holding back, like one who is ringing his own hide to market, and has nothing to expect but—a hing."

The labour press necessary to Capitalism exhibits two characteristic phenomena: first the labourer works under the control of a capitalist, and secondly the product of the labourer is the property of a capitalist,

and not of the labourer, its immediate producer. This product appropriated by the capitalist is a use-value, "as for example yarn, or boots"; says Marx with a grin, "but although boots are in one sense the basis of all social progress and our capitalist is a decided 'progressist,' the capitalist does not for his special purpose look upon them as boots, or any other use-value. He has primarily two objects in view: first he wants to produce a use-value, not, again, for the sake of its use, but in order that he may exchange it; and next, in order that his exchange may be fruitful to him, he wants to produce a commodity the value of which shall be greater than the sum of the values used in producing it—that is, the means of production and the labour-power."

This he is able to accomplish as follows. He buys the use of the labour-power of the workman for a day, while a certain duration of labour in the day is enough to reproduce the workman's expended labour-power—that is, to keep him alive. But the human machine is in all cases capable of labouring for more hours in the day than is necessary for this result, and the contract between the capitalist and the labourer as understood in the system under which those two classes exist implies that the exercise of the day's labour-power shall exceed this duration necessary for reproduction, and it is a matter of course that the buyer of the commodity labour-power should do as all buyers of commodities do—consume it altogether for his own advantage.¹

It is on this industry, the buying of labour-power in the market, and the consumption of all the results of its exercise beyond what is necessary for its reproduction, that the capitalist lives, just as the industry by which the workman lives is the production of commodities.

E. BELFORD BAX and WILLIAM MORRIS.

CHARLATAN CHAMBERLAIN.

THE Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., has published with Messrs. Swan Sonnenschein and Co., at 1s., a collection of his speeches delivered between 1881 and 1887 under the title of "Home Rule and the Irish Question." The book is "issued under the auspices of the National Radical Union, Birmingham," a mighty body of the Three-Tailors-of-Tooley-Street type.

Not long since, when the quondam Radical was posing as a demi-semi-Socialist, we warned the workers against him. Those of them who get hold of this precious latest production of his will need no warning of ours to enable them to see how carefully he balances himself "upon the fence" and "kicks either which way suits him." From the ramping roaring "ransom" demander to the prim preacher of law and order is an easy transition for this versatile actor, who does not, however, do justice to this great power of his in the volume before us, from which all that could either offend a Tory or rouse a Radical has been carefully eliminated, or still more carefully balanced against something else. This would seem to mean that the book was colourless—on the contrary it is, like a celebrated coat, of many colours. Of so many mingled hues is the garment of his thought that it is not easy to distinguish any clear colours except those of priggish hypocrisy and indomitable self-assertion. His only consistency is in favour of coercion, which he has defended all along; in all things he has tried to gratify the popular mood of the moment, on this point it is only the excuses that he has varied, the thing itself he has never changed. His hatred of the Irish members, or any one who crosses him, is instructive to behold. Whining out Pecksniffian commonplaces when himself is criticised, he uses every vile artifice to defame or discredit an opponent.

Just now the pseudo-democrat is stumping the country in search of his lost popularity, endeavouring to persuade the people that it was only by optical illusion they saw a wolf when his sheep-skin slipped off—it was their old familiar friend and watch-dog after all! Whether the sheep will listen and be charmed, who knows? If they listen carefully to the honeyed voice the raucous undertone is fully perceptible, but they seldom so listen, and the experienced practitioner upon their gullibility knows it well. However, one would think those at least into whose hands this volume falls, and it is being given away by tons by the "National Radical Union" to all who will receive, should be able to recognise the charlatan for what he is and make his words prophetic, that he was "not going to enter any cave" by leaving him no cave to enter.

H. H. S.

A Bombay native paper referring to the condition of affairs in Europe, says: "We cannot from a distance realise the intensity of the crisis, but it is certain that many crowned heads must be trembling in their shoes."

If you don't put a labour ballot in the box, the time will come when you will have to wrap it around a bullet and deliver it that way.—*Labor Enquirer*.

The "personal rights" people are of course much enraged at the popular support that measures get for shortening hours of labour, etc. It is too much interference with a worker's personal liberty to prevent his being exploited beyond a certain point. His individual liberty to be coerced by his poverty into working himself to death for a parasite's benefit should be left untouched! Liberty was once defined as "the right to do as you damn please with everybody, and not have nobody meddle with you." This is about the standard set up by anti-Socialists.—H. H. S.

¹ Says Mr. Boffin in Dickens's 'Mutual Friend, when he wants to make a show of striking a somewhat hard, but reasonable bargain: "When I buy a sheep I buy it out and out, and when I buy a secretary I expect to buy him out and out," or words to that effect; and the reasonableness of the conditions are accepted on all hands.

THE LABOUR STRUGGLE.

This department is under the direction of the Strike Committee. Labour News and Contributions to the Fund should be sent to T. BINNING, at the Offices.

BRITAIN.

The strike of the fishermen at Scarborough is at an end. The men have assented to the more advantageous terms offered by the masters.

The strike in the building trade in Birmingham continues; but there is every possibility of an early settlement. Delegates have been appointed to meet the masters to arrange terms.

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE IRON TRADE.—The Mayor of Birmingham (Sir Thomas Martineu) as arbitrator, has decided against any alteration of the rate of wages fixed in 1886. Isn't the arbitration farce nearly played out?

A singular trade dispute has occurred in Dumfries. The women employed in the tweed mills of Messrs. Charteris and Co. have ceased work owing to the introduction of new machinery, which, they say, will be the means of greatly reducing their wages.

The ironworkers employed at the Ruabon Works of the New British Iron Company, the largest ironworks in North Wales, have given their employers notice for an advance of 10 per cent. in wages. The notices have been given in consequence of the revival of the Welsh iron trade.

An important conference of miners' delegates has been opened at Manchester, fully 400,000 miners being represented. The Mines Regulation Bill and the employment of women at the pit bank have been the chief topics of discussion. Mr. T. Burt, M.P., presides over the conference.

Three men and a boy have been sentenced to three months for mobbing and rioting on the occasion of the Blantyre riots. They are not convicted of theft, and had been waiting two and a half months for their trial. Rather smart sentence, this.

The employés of the various shipbuilding establishments in Belfast have given notice to the effect that unless a satisfactory arrangement is arrived at with respect to the demand to have the wages paid weekly instead of fortnightly a general strike will take place on the 28th inst.

From the report of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, it appears that nearly £41,000 was expended in unemployed allowance, an amount which has only been once exceeded in the Society's history—viz., in the year 1879. This gives but a slight idea of the number of men in this particular trade unemployed, as the relief is given only for a few weeks; and the majority of carpenters and joiners do not belong to the union.

The brick-makers of Homerton, Cowley, and Slough, have struck for an advance of wages of 6d. per 1000 bricks. The agitation is extending, and is causing much excitement. At a meeting of master brick-makers, held at Paddington on the 22nd, it was unanimously resolved to resist the demand, and to close the fields for the next fortnight. Through this resolution, about 1000 "hands"—men, women, and boys—are thrown out of employment.

A meeting of the Board of Management of the Midland Counties Miners' Federation has been held at Walsall. Great dissatisfaction was expressed with the communications received by the secretary from the employers in reply to the circular sent out from the last meeting with reference to the wages question, and it was resolved that the Federation should be represented at the miners' conference at Manchester.

THE EMIGRATION FRAUD.—LABOUR IN CANADA.—Last week in this column we warned workers against the attempt now being made by the Master Builders' Association of Toronto to flood the labour-market in Canada and to break up the trades' unions there by advertising for men in this country. Writing to the *Toronto Globe* the secretary to the St. George's Society, Toronto, says: "The city is full of destitute, unemployed men. The numbers are greater than I have ever known before; not only are they discharged in the cities, but all over the country. . . . Many apply for a committal to prison, so that they may not starve. What to do with all the young men who ask for assistance at the offices of the St. George's Society I am at a loss to know." The Secretary to the Toronto Trades and Labour Council writes (March): "There is no outdoor work in progress yet, and, from a full knowledge of the amount of work in prospective, I have no hesitation in saying that we have five men in every calling ready to work, while it will be only sufficient for one." Other Canadian labour organisations have also sent warning to the trades in this country.

THE CHAINMAKERS' STRIKE.—About two thousand small chain makers in the Cradley Heath district turned out on the 25th, in consequence of the non-compliance of the employers with a demand for a four-shilling list. A large number of the operatives have been on strike during the last thirty-seven weeks, but owing to the unsatisfactory arrangements made with the employers by those who have returned to work, it has been decided that a general strike should be declared. The *Glasgow Mail* says: "The association might almost be said to have been instigated to take this course by her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Factories. Mr. Redgrave says in his report last year, just issued: In my report for the year ended 31st October 1879, I described the manner in which the enactments of the Truck Act were evaded in the chain and nail districts of Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire. There existed no 'giving of lines' and no direct compulsion, but it was well known that work would only be given to those who would silently accept work on the only terms upon which it would be given by the employers. I pointed out in my report that in no case during my enquiry would a workman acknowledge that he was in any way coerced to deal for gleeds or provisions in any particular shop or warehouse. Workmen out of work would condemn the system and acknowledge that they had suffered from it, but no direct evidence could be elicited of its actual existence. I regret to state that there has been no alteration since I wrote. It has been impressed upon workmen again and again that they have the remedy in their own hands, but the remedy is so severe, the result so certain to be detrimental, that individual action is powerless, and it would require an amount of courage in an individual which can hardly be expected from one man to fight single-handed the battle of hundreds. Mr. Redgrave quotes the opinion of several authorities on 'the vile system of trucking,' and concludes with this remark: 'It thus rests with the sufferers themselves to come to an agreement not to take work unless their hands are free, as the only means under the existing law of defeating the iniquitous system which prevails.' Meetings have been held during the week under the presidency of Mr. Homer, when it was decided to continue the strike. Subscriptions had been received from the *Daily Post*, Liverpool, amounting to £7, 2s. 6d.; Bookbinders' and Machine Rulers' Consolidated Union of Liverpool, £5, 5s.; Colonel Stewart, of London, £35.

AUSTRALIA.

SYDNEY, March 17.—After a long contest the miners of Illawarra have gone back to work at the master's terms. It was hardly to be expected that a battle fought on such unequal grounds could be won by the miners, for despite the able support they received from all parts of the colonies, the mines were slowly being filled with blacklegs, and the end was as I prognosticated, defeat. The employés in the large works of Messrs. Hudson Bros. have just had their wages reduced 5 per cent. Although wages in many trades and professions are still good, it is counterbalanced by the difficulty to secure employment when once out, and it is no trouble to find men who have been unemployed for four, five, and six months. The unemployed question has now a good grasp on the public mind, and it is not to be pooh-poohed out of existence. Several hundred are employed upon the relief works at the Field of Mars, and various other localities. A young man named McCormick marches his little army of unemployed through the public streets every night; speeches are delivered, and subscriptions consisting of hard cash, tea and sugar, bread, and beef or mutton from the butchers are collected. They have a house in Woolloomooloo, where the food is cooked and distributed, and a shake-down made for as many of the destitute as the house will hold. Rations were given by the former Government, but the present administration are pledged to a policy of retrenchment so they stopped the rations, and here I may say that Parliament will be asked to consider such measures as may be put before them for celebrating Her Majesty's Jubilee. Comment is unnecessary. A deputation from the unemployed waited on the Premier the other day; he pointed out that neither the English or American Governments found work for their destitute. I was rather surprised that the Englishmen on that deputation did not point out that there was no necessity for them to go to the head Government in England, since they had Local Government Boards to appeal to. McCormick was not on that deputation, as the Premier would not receive him, and he (the Premier) also gave the deputation a lecture on the folly of being led away by violent agitators like McCormick, and they obsequiously promised that they would not. The unemployed, to their honour be it said, afterwards stated that no more deputations should go unless McCormick formed part of it. I have heard McCormick speak two or three times, and I have found no trace of that violence which Sir Henry Parkes denounced. He is a quiet, plain spoken man, and the only one in my opinion capable of leading such an agitation. He told his hearers that the direct cause of the unemployed was bad government; that it was the duty of a good government to remove those conditions which allowed the few to roll in luxury, while the many were on the verge of starvation. The Government had poured thousands of destitute Britishers upon the already overstocked labour market of this colony on behalf of capital, and it was the duty of the Government to find them work, not at clearing scrub on such places as the Field of Mars, where they could only earn 2s. 6d. per day, but to settle them upon the vacant Crown lands of the colony; in short, create State farms, so that they would be engaged in reproductive works at rates which would support themselves and families in comfort. Too many of the workers who were in comfortable circumstances were indifferent to the cry of their unfortunate brothers, but if they did not come forward to help them, they should soon advertise themselves open to receive work at a decrease of 30 per cent. upon the ruling rates. The papers, he continued, have lately been holding forth on the advantages of low wages, maintaining that lower wages would release capital at present lying idle. We shall act on that suggestion if you do not come forward and assist us to gain a little more equitable distribution of wealth; the bees are starving while the drones thrive. This is the sum total of his speeches, and they call him a violent agitator. It is a pity that there is no one to assist him in his work, for should he get employment the cause will fall for want of exponents. I think now could be laid the foundation of a solid Labour Party. Nothing could be done without a paper, for there is none in existence that would countenance such a formation. Our elections are just over, the usual meaningless policy of reform and retrenchment. Another government formed to legislate not on behalf of a nation but of a class. Sir Henry Parkes, the Premier, was one of the old Chartist party, but the atmosphere of the colonies did not seem to agree with the progressive ideas of his young days, for he became a sycophant, a groveller, and has received his reward in a K.C.M.G.-ship. He is an ardent admirer of the Queen; he believes that payment of members is not the way to retrench, but celebration of the Queen's Jubilee would be a good step in the path to economy. The House is composed of the usual rich assortment of lawyers, usurers, land grabbers, and capital mongers. Several nominees have been added to the Upper House, notably old Ebenezer Vickery, one of the richest, man-grinding, canting hypocrites in the Southern hemisphere. It is nearly time Mammon was compelled to abdicate. What a satire upon progressive democracy when such as he are put forward to bolster up that rotten institution, the Upper House. True it was of Kenealy when he said, "Liars and lies deceive mankind and rule them, and make them sacrifice the God of Truth to bedlam nonsense."—ANGLO-AUSTRALIAN.

[Our correspondent has fallen into error in supposing that because there are Local Government Boards in England that the English people have local government. This in any real, true sense of the word, is utterly wanting. Beyond the providing of a little stone-breaking or road cleaning at the rate of 1s. or 2s. a-day, nothing so far has been done for the unemployed, who are even worse off here than in New South Wales. The evil is universal, and so must be the remedy.]

FRANCE.

The campaign against the Registry Agencies in Paris is proceeding lustily. It is said that the authorities think fit to place a guard of police round most of the Bureaux de Placement.

ALAIS.—Fifty women employed in the Saillens spinning factory at Alais have declared on strike. They ask for the reduction of the working-day from 12 to 10 hours with the same wages. M. Saillens has replied that he cannot accede to the demands.

MEHUN-SUR-YEVRE.—It appears that the exploiter Pilluwyt is climbing down and inclined to capitulate. At any rate he has written to eight workmen from among the strikers to take them on at the old rate, that is to say without the 10 per cent. reduction which was the cause of the strike.

ARNAY-LE-DUC (COTE D'OR).—In consequence of the strike of file-cutters here, the managers have posted up large notices about Dijon advertising for workmen to replace the strikers. To which the workmen of the same trade in Dijon have replied by a plain-spoken and haughty letter to the managers, every line breathing defiance to the exploiter, loyalty to their fellow-workers, and not a little of that harmless rhetoric and pomposity so dear to the French workman's heart.

The Vierzon strike has come to an end after an eight months' struggle. The working men's syndicate issues a manifesto, tendering their thanks for the help received throughout the country. "No longer hoping for victory," they say, "we have dissolved the strike and rendered to the strikers their freedom of action." This manifesto, simply and clearly written, explaining the defeat, is consistent with the whole character of the strike, which has been all along quiet, firm and persistent in ignoring provocation after provocation to revolt. A tribute of commendation and sympathy is due from all countries to our friends at Vierzon.

BOURGES (CHER).—The condemnation of Baudin on Oct. 5 to two months' imprisonment and the loss of his rights as a citizen, has been confirmed by the Tribune of Appeal. Last week, being again elected to the General Council, he presented himself in the hall where the council was sitting, where after a warm discussion he was requested to absent himself. The Council was not unanimous in feeling as to how to act, and the president putting it to the vote, it was decided against Baudin by a slight majority. Being again requested to retire he replied by a few home truths, the scene ending dramatically by Baudin leaving the council-hall with the kind "assistance" of four or five officials.

ITALY.

MILAN.—The Tribune of Milan last week, condemned several labourers at Affori to various fines for taking part in a strike, attempting to better their condition.

TURIN.—The workers in the Royal Arms Factory at Turin make many and absurd demands of the management, supported therein by the League of Iron-workers of Turin. They maintain that the persistent reduction of wages brings many of the workers below the point of possible subsistence; that the working-day of 11 hours with 20 minutes rest is too much of a strain on them; that children are received too young into the works, gaining only 9d. a-day, etc. Among their demands is one that they the employés be treated with "common politeness and the civility that free citizens are accustomed to, and not as slaves." This is a modest demand, truly, from the unemancipated of nineteenth century Europe!

"The workman," says this correspondent, "who, in a district like ours without any industries, if he does not make up his mind to emigrate" (oh, the delusion of emigration!), "must stay on without work, or if he finds some, be content to earn the lira (10d.) or 1.50 a day, has to pay a rent equal to 150 lire a year," spending about a third or fourth of his "income" (so grandly to call it) on house room merely. With a view to bettering the housing of the poor—this has come to be a cant phrase to-day, carelessly used by kindly philanthropists—a Society for Economical Dwellings has been formed in one town, possibly by speculators; result as usual, moderately commodious and airy houses a world too costly for those for whom they were said to be built. This is a manifestation of one of the laws of the present economy, which the worthy people who honestly welcome any little reform as a "step in the right direction" will not recognise, though the whole operation goes on yearly under their noses.

A correspondent of the *Emancipazione* (organ of the Roman Labour Party) gives in the last issue a bitter description of the hopeless condition of the poor folk in Veneto, asserting that in the last few years the population has increased out of all proportion, while instead of their housing extending likewise, house demolition goes on largely. Possibly to reconstruct the same? By no means. Some bourgeois count with a long tail to his name wants to extend and beautify his villa, so down come whole streets of tenement houses to make way for "English grounds," carefully-tended wildernesses, mock ruins, cascades, and all the eighteenth century idiocies that delight the vulgar Italian bourgeois mind, for whom the grace and beauty of his native vine-gardens and fruit orchards are not good enough. The result is more of that hideous over-crowding, which, bad as it is in our large cities, makes the width and breadth of Italian country, which should be an earthly paradise, an earthly hell instead, brutalised out of any knowledge of or love for its own beauty.

For listening at a Socialist meeting held a few days ago at Rosewell, near Edinburgh, five miners have been dismissed from their employment. How long will workers hang back from the movement and thus make the few suffer for the benefit of the many? The more Socialists there are the more difficult it will be for the masters to make this mean use of their power. When all are Socialists the masters will not be dismissers, but the dismissed.

"NATIONAL HARBOURS."—The National Refuge Harbours Society sends us from time to time its reports and appeals. With any such work we have of course great sympathy, but can hardly advise Socialists to take much part in the raising of subscriptions for work of the kind. We believe that this and kindred undertakings should be public in the full sense, and not rest on the precarious "benevolence" of the "tender-hearted" bourgeois or the scant pence of the proletariat. They will never be so undertaken while commercialism lasts. The workers' bodies are so cheap that it costs less to spend them remorselessly, taking all risk of other loss also, than to guard against their wholesale drowning. The bourgeois gains his wealth by virtual murder, and his "charity" is but the salve for occasional twinges of conscience. Not until the people take all in hand will any workers' lives be looked after.—H. H. S.

CLASS INDIFFERENCE TO MISERY.—The London newspapers which report at great length the fashionable doings of the great metropolis, are scarcely able to find an inch of space to describe the terrible sufferings of the miners on strike in Northumberland. One cause of the present lowness of wages in the coal districts is the coal tax levied by the corrupt Corporation of the City of London. The struggle in Northumberland is only a forewarning of what is about to happen in other industries. The relations between capital and labour are everywhere breaking down, and their place must be supplied by some Co-operative Labour Commonwealth, in which the workers will be their own capitalists. Meanwhile, it is suggestive that the French workmen have adopted the successful American organisation, the Knights of Labour. Could not something be done in that direction in England? The Knights of Labour here would be a pure labour democracy, in which all who labour would stand on an equal footing.—*Pioneer* (Glasgow).

In our societies, established upon a very rigorous idea of property, the position of the poor is horrible; they have literally no place under the sun. There are no flowers, no grass, no shade, except for him who possesses the earth.—*Renan*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WORKERS JUDICIALLY MURDERED.

In the *Commonweal* for July 10 last year, under the heading of "Some Instructive Facts," the stoppage of Messrs. Marshall's flax-mills at Leeds, was commented upon, and the probable disastrous result to the workers considered. The statements contained therein were denied *in toto* (with the exception of one paragraph) by one of the partners—Mr. John Marshall—and the article in question dismissed as false and untrustworthy. But unfortunately for this gentleman, the facts were collected by one who had spent many years in the service of the firm, and was in a position where access to all the information—utilised in the *Commonweal*—could be had. The fact that comrade Mahon challenged Mr. Marshall to a discussion in these pages of the points at issue is a substantial factor in determining the truth of the charges. The effect upon the workpeople of the time, by its appearance, was thoroughly satisfactory, but owing to their forced migration throughout the country in search of employment, no visible results were observed.

The disorganisation of the hands was taken into account by an exploiter, who upon the closing of the works made overtures to rent and carry on that part of the business devoted to the weaving of linens. This cormorant's first act was to lower wages all round, knowing that if any demur were made plenty of the unemployed were only too eager to step into the places of the discontented. But the great majority of the workers cast into the streets—what of them? A few hundreds are scattered about the country, or gone to America, in search of work. Those who have reached middle-age, or beyond that, with families dependent upon them, and knowing only the one trade to which they have been brought up—for these the outlook is dark indeed. A few are earning a precarious livelihood by hawking household commodities from door to door. The greater number are drifting aimlessly into beggary. Out-door relief is denied them, and from a sense of shame they are deterred from entering the portals of that English bastille, the poorhouse. One unfortunate fellow has taken such a gloomy view of his probable future that rather than face it, he preferred to drown himself. Some five others have literally died through excessive grief and despondency at their condition.

Released from the "cares and anxieties of business," the members of the erstwhile firm are enjoying that recreation and leisure which is the reward of the "fittest" in the race for wealth. One is disporting himself in the United States, another making heroic efforts on behalf of his country to maintain the Union. Solicitude for the nation's welfare and honour animates the whole batch, and the local Jubilee fund has been considerably augmented by their donations.

The story is one of daily occurrence. The stoppage of a firm; a thousand or two of workers thrown into the streets to become what they may; the lives of a few "hands" shortened; chaos and misery for a time; and then affairs begin to drift into the old state, only to see the same condition of things sooner or later re-enacted. Will the wealth-producers benefit by the lessons, so forcibly brought home to them day by day? Or does it need the dumb victims of Capitalism to rise from their very graves and demand justice at the hands of their fellows? If experience—ripe in misery for the workers—is of any avail, they will read these lessons aright.

T. PAYLOR.

A correspondent writes us several suggestions as to the conduct of the co-operative grocery recently set on foot by the League. It may be well to state that it is by no means intended to let this business take such proportions as would overshadow our real work; "to leave the word of Socialism to serve tables": the idea is only that we should supply ourselves in such matters in which it can be easily done, and that all gain resulting therefrom instead of going into the pockets of indifferent persons, or even enemies, should go directly to the funds of the League: there will be no profit to any private member of the League.

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

OFFICES: 13 FARRINGTON ROAD, E.C.

Annual Conference.—The Third Annual Conference of the Socialist League will be held at 13 Farringdon Road on Whitsunday, May 29th. Branch secretaries are urged to send in at once return of membership and subscription to 31st March, which must be paid by May 1st. in order to entitle Branch to be represented at the Conference.

Co-operative Store.—The Committee attend at the offices at 8.30 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. See advertisement on last page.

Lessons in French.—Comrade Victor Dave is now giving lessons in French at the offices of the League on Tuesday evenings, at 8 o'clock. The lessons are free to members, and those desirous of profiting by them should send their names at once to the secretary of the League.

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

Bound Volumes of 'COMMONWEAL' for 1886 can now be had. Price 5s. 6d.

BRANCH SUBSCRIPTIONS PAID.

Birmingham, Hackney, Hull, Leeds, North London, to August 31. Manchester, Merton, Norwich, to Oct. 31. Bradford, to November 30. Croydon, Leicester, South London, to December 31, 1886. Lancaster, to January 31. Clerkenwell, Hammersmith, Hoxton (Labour Emancipation League), Oxford, Walsall, to March 31. Bloomsbury, North London, to April 30, 1887.

THE NORWICH PRISONERS' AID FUND.

Delver, 7s. 6d. Arthur, 6d. P. Webb, 1s. Lansbury, 1s. For Mrs. Mowbray—A few Fabians, per Annie Besant (weekly), 10s. Glasgow Branch (six weeks), 12s.—£1, 12s. J. LANE, Treasurer.

STRIKE COMMITTEE.

P. W., 1s.

T. BINNING, Treasurer.

"COMMONWEAL" PRINTING FUND.

Hammersmith Branch (weekly), 10s. T. B. (weekly), 6d. W. B. (three weeks), 1s. 6d. E. B. B. (two weeks), 2s. Ph. W., Treasurer, April 26.

Northumberland Miners.—Collected in Hyde Park, £3, 8s. 6½d. Regent's Park, 6s. 4d. Croydon Branch, 3s. 9d. Collected by J. L., 1s. 4½d.—Total, £4. JOSEPH LANE.

BRANCH REPORTS.

CLERKENWELL.—On Wednesday, April 20, a very lively and humorous lecture was given by Dr. Drysdale on the subject, "Malthusians and Socialists." Numerous questions were asked and replied to. Discussion followed, Dr. Alice Vickery, Sidney Webb, Stewart Headlam, Herbert Burrows, T. E. Wardle, and others, taking part. W. Blundell was in the chair. The lecturer evidently "fenced" in his reply to the arguments put forward by those holding different views. Last Sunday evening, we held preliminary meeting on Clerkenwell Green, and invited those present to come to our lecture-hall, at which an interesting debate took place on the subject: "That individual ownership of private property should be maintained in its entirety." John Badcock, jun., of the "Party of Individual Liberty," took the affirmative; H. Davis, Socialist League, the negative. The audience, which was fairly representative, listened attentively, but it was soon apparent, judging by the applause the Socialist received, which way "the wind blew." The "Party" must try again, but with stronger proof of the correctness of their views. Literature has sold well.—W. B. and T. E. W.

CROYDON.—On Sunday last, W. H. Utley lectured on "Socialism and the Miners." He took a most hopeful view of the chances of the propaganda in Northumberland, and gave a sketch of the way in which the miners are fleeced by their employers.—A. T.

HACKNEY.—On Sunday morning, a meeting of about four hundred people was held at the Salmon and Ball. Graham and Allman spoke. In the evening, J. Lane lectured at the club on "Socialist Schools of Thought," his remarks being much appreciated.

HOXTON.—Last Sunday, F. Verinder, E.L.R.L., lectured on "The Queen's Jubilee and the People's Jubilee." The lecture was followed by an animated discussion.—E. P.

MERTON AND MITCHAM.—The two Branches held a meeting against the Crimes Bill on the Fair Green, Sunday morning last. The weather was against a large attendance. About 400 gathered around, and passed the following resolution unanimously: "That this meeting, whilst protesting against the Government Coercion Bill directed against the right of free speech and action in Ireland, and deeply sympathising with the heroic Irish race in their struggle against the landlords, asks the Irish people not to allow the present agitation to develop into means for creating another class of landlords from amidst its own ranks, but to boldly claim the soil of Ireland as the inalienable right of the whole Irish people, to be used for the benefit of all and not a class." The speakers were Kitz, Eden, and Dalchow.

NORTH LONDON AND MARYLEBONE.—On Sunday morning, Mainwaring spoke to a large audience in Regent's Park, and explained the miners' position at the present time in England and Wales from his own experience, and we collected 6s. 3d. for the Miners' Strike Fund. Members please observe Branch notice and attend to discuss important business.—T. C.

EDINBURGH.—On Sunday afternoon, we held a meeting in Queen's Park. The audience were evidently interested. Tuke, Smith, Bullock, and our secretary spoke. Fair sale of *Commonweal*. We expect a much larger meeting next Sunday.—J. G.

GLASGOW.—A male voice choir to sing revolutionary songs has been formed in connection with the Branch, comrade Moffat acting as leader. The first practice took place on Wednesday night, at which there was a good attendance. From the hearty spirit with which it has been supported, the choir promises to be a success. On Sunday, at noon, comrades Curran and Glasier addressed a good audience on Jail Square. In the evening, a meeting of members took place in our rooms.

HAMILTON.—A meeting of members took place in Paton's Hall, on Thursday. The subject of organising a vigorous summer propaganda was discussed. An open-air meeting, which was to be held on Saturday, had to be abandoned on account of the rain.

LEEDS.—On Sunday morning at 11 a.m., we held our usual open-air meeting on Hunslet Moor. Braithwaite, Maguire, and Hill were the speakers. The audience listened very attentively. At the close of the meeting about thirty copies of the pamphlet entitled "A Plea for Socialism" were sold. In the evening, Maguire lectured at the Royal Oak Inn, Shipley, on "The Irish Question from the Socialist Standpoint."—F. C., sec.

NORWICH.—Interesting report received too late.

BOARD BRIGADE.—Last Saturday afternoon, a *Commonweal* Board Brigade (i.e., *pro tem* "sandwichmen") went out, and made a fairly successful beginning for this year, though this result cannot be said to be due to any response made to the appeal last week for volunteers. Lay members will do well to shake themselves up a bit, and not let such a useful institution flag this summer for want of volunteers. The work is pleasant, and as no special ability is required for its successful performance, none have any excuse for neglect.

SOCIALIST UNION (NOTTINGHAM SECTION).—At a meeting of the above last week, it was decided to commence a vigorous propaganda campaign in Nottingham and District, and to engage a room to hold meetings in and form a club in connection with the section. A room for this purpose has already been engaged 30 ft. by 14 ft., and we are now making an effort to raise funds to furnish and decorate the same, 5s. being collected on Saturday amongst friends, while several members have promised 6d. per week towards making it a success. A large open-air meeting, ad-

dressed by Proctor and Peacock, was held in Snewton Market on Sunday morning, when 3s. 2d. was collected for our club room. In the evening, Peacock, Proctor, and Wane addressed a large meeting, about 3,000 being present, 5s. 6d. more being collected towards our movement, many inquiries being made respecting membership, and everything points towards a grand success of the movement in Nottingham. Some thousands of leaflets were distributed.—T. P.

LECTURE DIARY.

London Branches.

Bloomsbury.—Communist Club, 49 Tottenham Street. On Thursday 28, at 8.30, Business Meeting.

Clerkenwell.—Hall of the Socialist League, 13 Farringdon Road, E.C. Sunday May 1, Business Meeting (important) 7 p.m. prompt. FREE CONCERT for members and friends at 8.30 p.m. Wednesday May 4, at 8.30, H. Halliday Sparling, "The Iron Law of Wages."

Croydon.—Royal County House, West Croydon Station Yard. Sunday at 7.15 p.m.

Hackney.—23 Audrey Street, Goldsmith Row. Club Room open every evening from 8 till 11.30. Business Meeting every Tuesday at 8.30. On Sunday May 1, at 8.30 p.m. D. Nicol, "The Benevolent Middle Class."

Hammersmith.—Kelmescott House, Upper Mall, W. Sunday May 1, at 8 p.m. Walter Crane, "The Architecture of Art."

Hoxton (L.E.L.).—Club Room, 2 Crondall Street, New North Road. Committee meeting on Friday April 29, at 8.30 p.m. May 1, J. L. Lyons, "Objects of the Liberty and Property Defence League." An Elementary Singing Class on the Tonic Sol Fa system, will commence on May 4, at 8.30 p.m. Free to members.

Merton.—11 Merton Terrace, High Street. Club Room open every evening. Committee every Thursday. Discussions held every Sunday morning at 11.

Mitcham.—Corner of Merton Lane and Fountain Place. Club Room open every evening from 7.30 till 11.

North London and Marylebone.—Members will please attend meeting on Friday April 29th, at 96 Judd Street, King's Cross, at 8 o'clock prompt.

Country Branches.

Bingley.—Coffee Tavern. Every Monday at 7.30 p.m.

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

Bradford.—Morris's Dining Rooms, 114 City Road. Wednesdays, at 8.

Edinburgh (Scottish Section).—4 Park Street. Meets every Thursday at 7.30 p.m. to transact business. Class for the study of "Das Capital" at 8.15. In Free Tron Hall on Tuesday May 3, at 8 p.m. J. L. Mahon will lecture on "The Political Economy of Socialism." Collection for Northumberland miners.

Glasgow.—Reading-room of the Branch, 84 John St., open from 10 a.m. till 10 p.m. daily. On Sunday, open-air meetings (see below). Wednesdays, at 8, choir practice.

Hamilton.—Paton's Hall, Chapel Street, Thursday May 28, at 7.30, John Adams will lecture on "The Commune of Paris."

Hull.—11 Princess Street, Sykes Street. Lectures on Sunday at 7 p.m. Thursday at 8 p.m., Political Economy Class.

Lancaster.—Addresses every Sunday morning on the Quay Jetty.

Leicester.—Spiritualist Hall, Silver Street.

Manchester.—145 Grey Mare Lane, Bradford, Manchester. Club and Reading Room open every evening 6 to 10 p.m. Lecture and discussion every Wednesday at 8 p.m.

Norwich.—Gordon Hall, 5 Duke Street. Free Lectures every Sunday and Monday at 8 p.m. Reading-room open every evening. See open-air meetings below.

Oxford.—Temperance Hall, 25½ Pembroke Street. Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

LONDON—Sunday 1.

11.30...Hackney—Salmon and Ball...Hobb & Flockton
11.30...Hammersmith—Beacon Rd.The Branch
11.30...Hoxton Church, Pitfield St.The Branch
11.30...Hyde ParkT. E. Wardle
11.30...Garrett—Plough Inn...Harrison, Gregory, Bull
11.30...Mitcham Fair Green...Kitz, Eden, Dalchow
11.30...Regent's Park.....Cantwell & Mainwaring
11.30...St. Pancras ArchesW. H. Utley
11.30...Walham Green.....The Branch
7 ...Hyde ParkNicol & Mainwaring
7 ...Clerkenwell GreenT. E. Wardle

Tuesday.

8...Broad Street, SohoW. H. Utley

Wednesday.

7.30...Broadway, London Fields.....Graham

Thursday.

8 ...Hoxton, Pitfield StreetWade & Pooe

PROVINCES.

Edinburgh.—Sunday: Queen's Park, 5 p.m. Monday: East Meadows, 7.30 p.m., J. L. Mahon, "Socialism and the Northumberland Miners." Wednes-

day: Leith Links, 7.30, J. L. Mahon, "Socialism and the Labour Movement." Collection for Northumberland Miners at Mahon's meetings.

Glasgow.—Sunday: Open-air meeting on Green at 12 o'clock, when comrade J. L. Mahon will speak. Members invited to accompany Mahon to Hamilton at 1 o'clock, where he addresses the Miners.

Hamilton.—Mass Meeting of Miners will be held in the Low Quarries at 4 o'clock, when J. L. Mahon will speak on "Socialism and the Northumberland Miners."

Leeds.—Sunday: Hunslet Moor, 11; Vicar's Croft, 7.

Leicester.—Sunday: Humberston Gate, 11 a.m.

Norwich.—Sunday: Market Place at 3; Agricultural Hall Plain at 7.

DUBLIN.—Irish Labour League, 2 Bachelors Walk, every Thursday at 8 p.m. Discussion on all subjects connected with the Labour Question. All interested are requested to attend.

Notice to Readers of the 'Commonweal'

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