

THE COMMONWEAL

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

A WRITTEN DEBATE

BETWEEN MR. BRADLAUGH, M.P., AND E. BELFORD BAX.

SUBJECT:

“Will Socialism Benefit the English People?”

I.—*Negative*: Mr. C. BRADLAUGH.

1. The question which ought to have been discussed between Mr. Bax and myself is, “Will Socialism benefit the English People?” Having carefully read the opening paper by Mr. Bax, on whom is now the duty of affirming the proposition that Socialism will benefit the English people, I am afraid that such a discussion is unlikely if conducted on the lines of that opening paper.

2. The first step should, I submit, have been to make clear precisely what it is that Mr. Bax means when he uses the word “Socialism”; and that then there should have been some attempt to show how such Socialism could be put in practice in this country; what were the beneficial results to the English people to be expected as the consequence of such Socialism in practice; and why any such benefits, if secured by the English people, were to be regarded as solely or mainly attributable to Socialism. In the first step Mr. Bax has, I think, failed, the other points he has not even touched, unless the very vague generalities I shall notice presently are considered by him sufficient.

3. Mr. Bax says that he defines “Modern Socialism” “as a new view of life (*i.e.* of human relations) having an economic basis,” and he adds, that “the economic goal of modern or scientific Socialism” “is the equal participation by all in the necessaries, comforts, and enjoyments of life, and the equal duty of all to assist in the necessary work of the world,” and he afterwards affirms that Socialism is to be realised “in the assumption by the people themselves, organised to this end, of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and in the working of them in the interest of the whole community.”

4. But it is no definition to say that Socialism is a new view of human relations upon an economic basis unless the “view” and the “basis” are both clearly explained, and this explanation has certainly not been given by Mr. Bax in the paper to which I am now replying. He does speak of the “economic goal,” but can scarcely mean that the “goal” to be arrived at is with him the equivalent for the “economic basis” from which the Socialistic system starts.

5. Then Mr. Bax says that the economic goal of the Socialism which he ought to affirm, “no less than the Utopian Socialism of Owen, Fourier, St. Simon, etc.,” is—I will omit the “etc.” as much too vague for serious discussion, and will ask Mr. Bax does the “no less” mean that the Socialism he affirms is at least that of, or at least the equivalent of, those of Robert Owen, Charles Fourier, and Claude Henri St. Simon? That is, does he mean that the Socialism which he maintains includes and accepts the whole of what he calls the Utopian Socialism of these eminent persons, and in addition affirms something else (and if yes, what?) which makes it “modern or scientific” in lieu of being “Utopian”? I must not be understood as admitting that the theories of Robert Owen, Charles Fourier, and St. Simon are identical or even workable together.

6. Mr. Bax objects that Utopian Socialists, such as Owen, Fourier, and St. Simon, believed equal participation by all “to be attainable by mere individual initiative.” This seems to me inaccurate, but as it is scarcely relevant to the issue I only note the point as perhaps enabling me to distinguish the Socialism Mr. Bax now affirms. I understand Mr. Bax, in this, to maintain that Mr. Robert Owen and his friends were Utopian because they tried to reduce Socialism to actual practice in groups, and that Modern Socialism is practical in entirely avoiding any such experiments. If I am wrong in this interpretation perhaps Mr. Bax will state precisely what it is that he means, as I fear I do not quite know what he intends by the concluding sentence of his first paragraph.

7. If Mr. Bax attaches any importance to the words, “special reference to the condition of the world as a whole,” with regard to any attempt now or in future to establish Socialism in England, I shall be glad to have this explained, the more so as I see that he declares that Socialism “is nothing if not international.” Does this last phrase mean that no plan of Socialism could succeed in England unless that plan were also adopted by other European countries, or does the condition of the world, as a whole, involve that Socialism must be accepted in Africa before it can succeed here?

8. As I see that Mr. Bax is of opinion that “the break up of the

present State nationalities of Europe would be one of the first results of Socialism,” I would ask him to state distinctly what other results, if any, of Socialism he anticipates in England as occurring prior to the expected break up of European State nationalities? I would further press him as to what he means by the break up, say, of the Swiss, Italian, French, and German nationalities? and what kind of governments, if any, he looks for, as likely to be existing, or which he may desire to exist, in each or any of these countries respectively after such break up? and whether he anticipates that such break up of State nationalities would be a slow and peaceful process? and if yes, why? or whether he regards such break up as in any case likely or desirable to be rapidly effected? and if yes, how? and whether if State nationality is to cease in England, as one of the earliest results of Socialism, he will briefly state the form of government, if any, which he hopes for in this country, and how he thinks it can exist without representing State nationality, or some federation of State nationalities.

9. If I rightly apprehend the note by Mr. Bax, he denies the possibility of any social change being effected by isolated individuals or groups. It is true he limits this denial by the words “abstractedly and of their own initiative, irrespective of the general current of human progress,” but the first word, “abstractedly,” is here meaningless, and to the last eight words it is only necessary to say that the general current of human progress has been made up of innumerable instances of isolated and individual effort ultimately co-operating and coalescing for the desired end, and thus ensuring the progress. To be told that the modern Socialist builds his faith on a “rock of ages” with “many-hued strata of economic formation” is marvellously pretty, but it has the disadvantage of not being necessarily clear in its meaning to the hearer or reader.

10. Not finding a definition of Socialism in these words of Mr. Bax, I will state my own view. I define Socialism either as affirming (1) that organised society should own all wealth, direct all labour, and compel the equal distribution of all produce, or as affirming (2) that organised society should take possession of land, capital, all means of production, distribution, and exchange, should control all labour, regulate all distribution, and conduct all exchange. That is, I understand a Socialistic State to be one in which everything would be in common as to its user, and in which all labour would be State-controlled. I therefore identify Socialism with Communism. Does Mr. Bax accept either of these definitions?

11. Mr. Bax says that there is to be “the assumption” (does this mean the taking away from the present owners? and if yes, by what means and on what conditions as regards the present owners?) of the “means of production, distribution, and exchange,” and that there is then to be “equal participation by all in the necessaries, comforts, and enjoyments of life” (this, I suppose, means that under scientific Socialism every one is to have an equal share of everything), and that the people are to be “organised to this end.” I would ask Mr. Bax to tell me whether in so using those words he means that the organised people should take into their possession as a common stock and then own all wealth and equally participate in all produce, and if not, what distinction he draws? I would also ask him whether he includes all conceivable wealth under the words “means of production, distribution, and exchange, necessaries, comforts, and enjoyments of life,” or whether he means to except any of the results of production? and if he makes any such exception, why?

12. In his third paragraph Mr. Bax promises to state “the nature of the process by which ‘the transformation of what he describes as capitalism’ into a real social order will be effected,” and further promises then to give “the reasons why such social order must benefit the English people.” I hope he will not think me rude in saying that I find no trace in his paper of any attempt to fulfil either promise.

13. There is one statement of Mr. Bax—*i.e.*, that “civilisation can be only definitely overthrown by Socialism”—which if Socialism could widely prevail would very possibly be accurate. I am unable, however, to see that the definite overthrow of civilisation either in England or everywhere is shown by Mr. Bax to be probably, or even possibly, beneficial to the English people. Mr. Bax adds that the “State world” is to become a “social world” “by a revolution generated in the fulness of its own development.” I would respectfully ask Mr. Bax to explain to me how and when he thinks this English State is to become some other kind of English society other than a State? and in what way this is to be effected “by a revolution generated in the fulness of its own development”?

14. Mr. Bax affirms that Socialism “would of course soon result in

the extinction of that private enterprise"—that is, in the extinction of some private enterprise he objects to. I venture to ask him whether Socialism, if realisable, would not certainly result in the complete extinction of all private enterprise, or what kinds of private enterprise he thinks would resist and survive? and why?

15. If I pass almost without examination, and with but very slight contradiction, Mr. Bax's inexact presentment of history, it is because I believe it absolutely irrelevant to the question Will Socialism benefit the English people? and this is the only question I intend at present to discuss.

16. When Mr. Bax says that "Christianity is through and through Individualistic," I would ask him—if it be in any degree material to the issue between us—to explain how such a proposition is reconcilable with Acts ii. 44; iv. 32?

17. I see in Mr. Bax's paper occasional, but not precise, references to other works from his own pen and to the writings of others. I would respectfully ask him to quote here any words or statistics which he may think necessary to his argument. I have hardly the time for research outside my own bookshelves, and without exact reference might not light upon the intended passage, and our readers might some of them be in similar difficulty.

18. Mr. Bax makes the following statement with great confidence, and as if one of indisputable fact:

"The small capitalist is continually being thrown upon the labour-market by inability to hold his own in the competitive arena. Capital tends thus to become concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, while the reserve army of labour tends steadily to augment. The result is increasing riches for the few and increasing poverty for the many. The 'increase of national wealth' at the present day means increase of misery for the mass of the people."

I very much doubt whether any portion of the paragraph is true as to this country, except the one that the "army of labour tends steadily to augment". This I have always maintained, and have no doubt that the evils of society resulting from tendency of population to increase until positive checks operate are of a most serious nature. I would, as to the rest of the paragraph, ask Mr. Bax to refer me to the particular trades in which, during the last twenty years in England, the small capitalist has in any large numbers been so thrown upon the labour market. Also I would ask him whether the individual possessors of capital in England are not more numerous in proportion to population than they were forty years ago, and whether there is not now less pauperism in proportion to population in England than there was forty years ago? Mr. John Morley, speaking at Cobden Club dinner, said:

"In the years 1874-5 to 1884-5 the incomes between £200 and £1,000 per year have increased by 30 per cent., though the population has only increased by 10 per cent. Incomes over £5,000 a year have decreased by 10 per cent. You come to this as a general conclusion—that the lower the income the more rapid has been the rate of increase."

Does Mr. Bax dispute these figures? I admit that with the increasing education of the past thirty years there is an increasing consciousness of suffering and augmented discontent against unfair life conditions. I have done my best to increase this consciousness and discontent in order to compel ameliorating changes. I admit that with the increase of population in great centres you have limited areas of exceedingly acute misery, disease, and crime, which are probably in excess of what was possible in small centres of population, but I deny that there is increase of misery for the mass of the people, and assert on the contrary that the condition of the masses in England has certainly improved during the past fifty years. As the burden of proof is on Mr. Bax I invite him to give me the exact figures and references on which he relies to prove the allegations I traverse. I quite admit that it is true that there are unduly large landed estates and unduly large fortunes in too few hands. The land evil may, I think, be dealt with by legislation under existing institutions. The undue accumulations of capital are a little more difficult to check, but even this may be only a question of limiting power of bequest, of imposing cumulative tax on inherited personalty beyond a certain figure, or of higher and graduated income tax in excess of a certain amount. I would also submit that the large accumulations of our richest capitalists form only a small portion of the gross national wealth. Mr. Bax quotes, on the authority of Mr. Hyndman, some figures as to which he admits that he does not know how they have been arrived at, but which he says he has never seen "seriously controverted." I do not know whether Mr. Bax means that he does not regard objection from myself as serious, but he will see that in the debate with Mr. Hyndman, p. 30, I specifically challenged these very figures, and Mr. Hyndman, though alluding to this, p. 34, never disputed the returns I relied on. I have not seen the other statistics referred to by Mr. Bax. If they are material, I should be obliged by his giving them in detail in his next paper, as the lump totals given do not enable me—even if I understand them—to do more than challenge their accuracy. I say "even if I understand them," because Mr. Bax writes that money not earned by producers—that is, the estimated increased value—should be added to the income of the non-producer—that is, that something not brought into existence should be reckoned as part of the income of someone who cannot be benefitted by this non-existent quantity. Mr. Bax may mean something by this. Will he kindly explain.

19. I exceedingly doubt whether Mr. Bax is right in saying that in England "the break-up of the feudal states helped to consolidate the power of the Crown." And if he did not mean this to apply to England, it is irrelevant to the issue we are discussing. Nor is it true that the history of this country from the sixteenth century to the present time "is the history of the middle or trading classes" in their

efforts to free the individual from the fetters of feudalism and monarchy, to the end that on the one side there might be a body of free and landless labourers, and on the other a body of moneybags free to exploit them." In any case Mr. Bax omits to show any connection between these alleged past sins of the English trading classes and the proposition he has undertaken to affirm.

20. Mr. Bax says:

"The means of the present exploitation of labour, the cause of the present horrible state of things, is monopoly. Its *modus operandi* is the extraction of surplus-value from the labourer by compelling him to work a whole day while receiving only so much of the results of his labour as is necessary to keep him in bare subsistence. Remove the monopoly from the hands of individuals, and you do away with the possibility of surplus-value."

This paragraph is an accumulation of inaccuracies. It assumes that at present some unnamed individuals have a monopoly either of all labour or of certain unspecified kinds of labour. Neither of these assumptions is true. It assumes that there is always or generally a surplus-value of considerable amount which the labourer has earned, to which he is morally entitled, but which he does not get. This is sometimes true, but seldom to the extent suggested by the form of the statement. The margin of profit over cost of production is usually very small. Then Mr. Bax says that by Socialism "do away with surplus-value," but he does not explain how manufacture will be possible if no part of the result of labour is to go for payment of the expenses of conduct of the works, outlay for raw material, cost of exchange and distribution, which must necessarily be incurred, whether any particular industrial enterprise is exploited by an individual, by a corporation, or by a community.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

THE REWARD OF LABOUR.

A DIALOGUE.

Persons: AN EARNEST ENQUIRER, an EAST-END WEAVER, a WEST-END LANDOWNER.

SCENE: Outside a philanthropical meeting on Social Science.

(Concluded from p. 165.)

E. E. (continuing to L.) But I am a stranger in London, and will you believe it, don't know what the East-end of London is like; but I have heard of so much being done for the benefit of the East-end, People's Palaces, Mosaic pictures, and the like, that I suppose by now it is quite a pleasant place; that small and squalid as your house is, you can get out of it at once into fresh air, pleasant gardens, roomy squares; and that it is well supplied with libraries, baths, and, in a word, all the benefits of civilisation—(aside) whatever that may mean.

W. Well, sir, you suppose a great deal. What's the use of building a People's Palace in Hell, or putting up a Mosaic picture on the walls of the devil's scullery. If the parsons are right about that job, and some of us do happen down there, we shall beat Old Scratch; for he will scarcely be able to make it so nasty that we shan't think we have got back again home. Excuse me, I told you that I was a bilious subject.

E. E. No excuse needed; I must get on, and indeed make an excuse to you for what I am going to say. Perhaps both I and this frock-coated, shiny-hatted gentleman here were after all wrong in thinking you intelligent; perhaps that's only a show—eh, Mr. Landowner?—to cover that dangerous discontent of the inferior part of the lower orders, which is getting to be so prevalent; and ain't you perhaps stupid, unable to seize hold of your advantages;—there, I don't want to hurt your feelings, I am only speaking of you as a type of a large body of men.

W. Never mind my feelings, I shan't get in a rage; I'm used to you now. Well, I'll answer as a type, and say I'm no stupider than other people, high as well as low; and at all events I am able to do my work—come!

E. E. (aside.) Well, the secret of the compensation to the working classes for their inferior position does rather elude my grasp, certainly; like trying to hold an eel when one hasn't sanded one's hand. Well, let's try once more, and try the moral side of things. (To W.) As I understand, we have got so far: you are a skilled workman, not stupid especially, you produce useful things, and yet you are poor; for that is the word we use, Mr. Landowner, to express a condition of life that you know nothing of, so that the word doesn't carry much meaning in it for you; nor as much as it should for you either, Mr. Weaver, because you don't know what being rich is, or what a soft and comfortable life it means, in spite of the moralists. However, I will just tell you both what being poor means, so that henceforth you, Mr. Landowner, may attach some meaning to the word, and you, Mr. Weaver, may understand partly what the word rich means. To be poor is to live in perpetual anxiety about satisfying the very simplest wants, and to have all kinds of wants besides which you have no chance of satisfying. Do you understand that, Mr. Landowner?—no, scarcely yet, I am afraid. Well, it can't be helped—he who lives will see. And now to my search for compensation again. You are, as it seems, skilful, industrious, useful—and poor. Yet, perhaps, you may be compensated even for that; for you know that according to the story, in ancient times the philosophers, whom you may look upon as a kind of reasonable parsons, were poor as well as useful, but they had their compensation in being much honoured and respected. Let us hope that it is the same with you, and that you are looked upon with a sort of

eneration because you add so much to the wealth of the community and take so little from it.

[A faint smile is observed to play on the features of the Landowner, who has been listening a little lately].

W. Yes, I thought we should get to the chaff again, or else where have you been dug up from to ask such a question? A working-man honoured and respected! Yes, when he's a working-man representative. But look here, as to the respect I'm held in, I don't want to be vague, so I ask you to take the trouble to notice the way in which a policeman (a public servant, mind you) speaks to an East-ender and a West-ender; that will enlighten you as to the respect paid to me as a philosopher; and as to those of ancient days, 'tis hard to understand; and apart from it being, as the old woman said, "a long way off and a long time ago," I can't help suspecting that some of them were dodgers. Excuse me again, I am but a weaver, and therefore ill-bred.

E. E. Well, it comes to this, then, that you're skilful, industrious, useful, poor, and despised—one of the lower class?

W. Just so—a working-man.

E. E. Why?

W. Why? Because I'm a working-man.

E. E. Well, well, can't we get any further than that with our reason?

W. No, not yet. However, here is this gentleman, an educated man, an M.P., who has of course considered this sort of thing. Begin upon him now. And since he has stood by and listened to me, perhaps he won't object to my doing the same by him.

E. E. By all means stay, and if you can set him a-going when he sticks by a word in season, I shan't grudge you. (To L.) Well, sir, now for it! And I like the prospect of questioning you. You are burly and healthy looking; your step is firm, your eye bright, your features well cut. If it were still the old slave-times of the world, and our friend the weaver and you were by the fortune of war offered to me for sale, I think I should prefer speculating in you. You would last longer, for one thing.—Now, without further preamble, tell me what is your occupation?

L. I am a landowner.

E. E. Yes, I know that. What does that mean as to the work of it? What do you do?

L. Do? Well—why—well, I manage my estates.

E. E. You manage them? And pleasant work too, since they are yours. But is your statement quite accurate? Come now, on your honour, as an English gentleman.

L. Well, you understand; my lawyer does, and my steward, and my bailiff, and—

E. E. Yes, I see. Well, what else do you besides—not managing your estates?

L. (with hesitation) Well, you heard what the weaver said, I sit in Parliament.

W. (sotto voce) O Lord! That's what he does!

E. E. Well, I needn't follow up the enquiry further on that line, as it's clear that that trade, when successful, consists not of doing anything, but preventing things from being done. Do you do anything else?

L. Well, I suppose you won't call shooting doing anything?

E. E. Well, it doesn't do much service to others—not even the partridges.

L. Or horse-racing? At anyrate that's as useful as stock-jobbing.

E. E. I am happy to be able to agree with you.

W. And stock-jobbing isn't so bad as sweating.

E. E. Hilloa, my friend! That subject would lead us further, before we have done with it: let me stick to the honourable member's usefulness.

W. Like the breeches to the legless man!

E. E. (To L.) Well, all this—shooting, horse-racing, yachting, and the like—we had better not trouble ourselves as to its details; it can all be called by one generic name, can't it?

L. Yes; you mean amusement, I suppose.

E. E. You have said it. So that your work consists in your amusing yourself?

L. Yes (sadly)—or boring myself.

E. E. What are you paid for it?

L. Eh, what's that?—paid for it?

E. E. Yes, paid for it: you can't feed and clothe yourself on the game you shoot; it wouldn't pay powder and shot, I doubt. Shall I put it in another way? Who keeps you?

L. Keeps me? I keep myself, of course. My father used to keep me; he couldn't get a decent Government place for me.

E. E. Well, never mind your family history: we can guess at it. I must put my question another way, since you will be so obtuse. What do you get?

L. Oh, you mean my income? Well, my rent-roll is ten thousand a-year; but it doesn't come to much after all outgoings. First there's—

E. E. Excuse me; never mind those details, I am not a tax-gatherer. What's your income, all deductions made?

L. (blurring it out). Six thousand a-year—there!

E. E. Well, and what do you think the reward for doing nothing ought to be?

W. (eagerly). Nothing.

E. E. Yes, but I didn't ask you. What do you say; Mr. Landowner?

L. Nothing.

E. E. Well, well, this is sad. You get £6000 a-year for doing nothing, for which our friend here thinks you ought to have nothing,

and you have nothing to say to it. Your position is a strange one. Where does your £6000 a-year come from?

L. From my property, of course.

E. E. Where does that come from?

L. Come, come! you want to know too much. Suffice it, the property is mine, and that I came by it legally.

E. E. Well, I might press you on that point; but as I know that you are your father's son, as the saying goes, I had rather ask the questions I might ask you, as to where the property comes from, of a self-made man—that is, a man who has made money; which means he has "collected" it. But now, suppose me to be a man from another world, and answer me this: You live softly and comfortably, you can have everything you want, even to the point of the satisfaction of your desires boring you, and you do nothing useful.

L. (interrupting). Does any one?

E. E. What, not the men who supply you with food? Well, perhaps they don't, if that's all they do.

L. Well, you know what I mean.

E. E. No, I'm damned if I do—unless 'tis "nothing" once again. But you interrupted me with your meaningless pessimism. I say you do nothing, and for that you have and spend the livelihood of a hundred silk-weavers. You take a great deal out of the stock of wealth of the world, and put nothing into it. As an inhabitant of another world, allow me to ask, don't people look down upon you, jeer at you for this?

L. Certainly not; I am much respected, looked up to—liked even.

E. E. Why?

L. Well, I'm a good-natured sort of fellow.

E. E. You should be that at least, considering your easy life. But I wonder are you very clever? Perhaps a poet;—no, of course not: you would have let me know that long ago—but are you very clever?

L. Certainly not a poet, not even an inarticulate one; and not specially clever, I admit. But look here, if I were, I shouldn't be respected any more: I am respected because of my property, my position.

E. E. Well, I haven't much else to ask you; but tell me this: If you were employing two workmen, and one did his day's work well and straightforwardly and ate workman's victuals, and the other you had to feed on venison and champagne, and his day's work came to nothing, would you respect the second workman more than the first—as his employer, you know?

L. Of course not; but you see I'm not in the same position as the second workman. You see, my dear sir, the complexity of civilised society—in short, your question is quite wide of the mark.

W. Oh, oh!

E. E. I must put the case otherwise, then. Here is a man (pointing to Weaver) who works hard and usefully and is paid for it with £60 a-year and contempt; and here is another (pointing to L.) who does nothing at all and is paid for it with £6000 a-year and respect. As an earnest enquirer, I ask if you can tell me why?

L. These inequalities are necessary for the maintenance of society.

E. E. But it seems to me that it is an injustice, a gross one. Don't you really think so too? Come, try to throw away caste prejudices, and answer me like a man.

L. Well, perhaps it is—in the abstract.

E. E. Then injustice is necessary to the maintenance of society—why?

L. Because there must be rich and poor or there would be no society.

E. E. That is saying the same thing in other words. Again I ask, why?

L. I know it always will be so, that's all.

W. Then it's a bad look-out—that's all.

[While they have been talking, a small crowd has gathered about them, under the impression that an open-air meeting is going on. Enter to them a policeman, under the same impression, who pushes through the ring, and, seeing the Weaver, catches hold of him and gives him a rough shake, and says, "Come, you get out of this." Exit Weaver, hurriedly, glad to get off so lightly. Then policeman turns round to Landowner, who is very nicely dressed, touches his helmet, and says, "Shall I get you a cab, sir?" Landowner nods and moves off to meet the cab, and the small crowd disperses. Earnest Enquirer walks off slowly, soliloquising.]

E. E. I must try to find out why; for as the weaver said, 'tis a bad look-out. Society should mean something else than organised injustice; and somewhere there ought to be the germs of a society of which no one need ask the question, "Why does it exist?"

WILLIAM MORRIS.

"DRIVEN TO MADNESS BY THE CRUELITIES OF CASTLE GOVERNMENT."—The N. Y. Herald of May 7 contains an account of the "arrival of thirteen late members of the Royal Irish Constabulary" who "resigned for conscience sake," from which it appears that one of them, Patrick M'Donough, "a fine-looking young fellow of thirty-six," had become insane. Shortly after embarking, he commenced raving about the horrible scenes he had witnessed, and imploring some imaginary persons to forgive him for doing his duty.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN PARIS.—The result of the recent municipal elections in Paris has been on the whole satisfactory, for the Socialist Labour Party have returned eleven representatives, while in the last municipal council they were but four, hence a gain of seven seats. L'Intransigeant gives a full list of the results of the ballot, from which we abstract for the interest of our readers the following details: The new Council consists of 56 "Autonomists," of which 45 are Socialist Radicals (so to call them!) and 11 Revolutionary Socialists; 13 "Opportunists" (as against 27 in the last Council) and 11 "Reactionaries."



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

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

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

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

O'B. (Cork).—"The Fenian Song" was published, with music, by H. M. Higgins, 117, Randolph Street, Chicago, in 1864. Whether it can still be procured we do not know. We have never seen it for sale in this country. "The Rallying Song" ("Shouting the Battle-cry of Freedom") is included in Boosey's 'Musical Cabinet,' No. 88, 1s.; "Garryowen" is in No. C93 of Boosey's 'Universal Music.'

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday May 25.

ENGLAND	Seattle (W T) Voice of the People	SWITZERLAND
Norwich—Daylight	Albina (Oreg.)—Weekly Courier	Zurich—Sozial Demokrat
Londoner Arbeiter-Zeitung	Cincinnati (O.) Unionist	Geneva—Bulletin Continental
Brotherhood	FRANCE	SPAIN
Die Autonomie	Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily)	Madrid—El Socialista
INDIA	Le Socialiste	Cadix—El Socialismo
Bankipore—Behar Herald	Le Revolte	PORTUGAL
Allahabad—People's Budget	L'Insuage	Lisbon—O Protesto Operario
UNITED STATES	Lille—Le Travailleur	Voz do Operario
New York—Freiheit	Guis.—e Devoir	HUNGARY
Truhsecker	BELGIUM	Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik
Der Sozialist	Brussels—L'Avant-Garde	ROUMANIA
Leader	Liege—L'Avenir	Jassy—Lupta
Boston—Woman's Journal	Antwerp—De Werker	DENMARK
Denver (Col.) Labor Inquirer	HOLLAND	Social-Demokraten
Chicago (Ill.)—Vorbote	Hague—Recht voor Allen	SWEDEN
Labor Enquirer	ITALY	Stockholm—Social-Demokraten
Milwaukee (Wis.)—Volksblatt	Milan—Il Fascio Operario	NORWAY
Fort Worth (Tex.)—South West	Naples—Humanitas	Kristiania—Social-Democraten
New Haven (Conn.)—Workmen's Advocate	AUSTRIA	GREECE
	Vienna—Gleichheit	Athens—Ardin

NOTES ON NEWS.

The Coercion Bill is being slowly dragged through committee, and attacks are being made on its details with more or less success, so that there are not wanting genuine anti-coercionists who are beginning to feel elated at the prospect of the bill coming out of the mill something quite different from what was intended. I would remind these persons that it will in any case still be a coercion bill for Ireland; that is to say a bill for the manufacture of special crimes in that country, which do not exist in England, Scotland or Wales, and that the Tory Government and their Liberal allies will be quite satisfied with it in that form: a few words more or less, what do they matter?

In fact this struggle over the bill in committee illustrates very well the impotency of minorities in Parliament, even when they are important, respectable, and numerous, and the futility of attempting to use that body as a means of safeguarding the people from oppression. The bill becomes law after all this sifting out of parts of it that are any ways siftable; nor, as the division on Sir W. Harcourt's amendment shows, can the Opposition get rid of any of its principle; nevertheless anti-coercionists, and those as aforesaid, not of the mildest, are already beginning to look with a kind of complacency on the altered bill, are considering it to a certain extent as the work of their own hands, as indeed it is or will be; the effect of their guardianship of the liberties of the people will be visible in it, and will take the edge off the resistance of moderate opponents of the measure, or timid people, who will say, we have done all we can do in the matter—through our representatives in Parliament—and it isn't so bad after all: now let us go eat our dinners and forget the Irish question.

That is of course just what all Governments reckon on in such cases; they don't expect to carry a measure condemned by the democracy by the mere force of the accidental majority of that odd jumble of a body, the voters of the United Kingdom; they have always the fraud of Parliamentary representation to help that force, and can depend on the juggle of "determined opposition in committee" to do all they want for them and enable them to pose as persons who are carrying out the will of the people and are trying, so far as is possible, even to satisfy the perhaps not unreasonable prejudices of the minority.

How different a figure the bill would have cut if instead of going night after night to fight the air in committee, the real opponents of coercion had said after the second reading: Well, the force of the majority is yours and the bill is carried; we have opposed it as well as we could, and henceforth will have nothing to do with it, there is none of our handiwork in it; the whole measure is yours, face the public with it in your hands as the only persons responsible for it. If they had said that and then gone home till the business was over, would not anti-coercion have been by now in a better position than it is? Possibly in that case the Government might have put forward the bill in all its hideous nakedness and so have courted open revolt, thereby shocking the moderates into serious opposition: more probably they would have felt extremely nervous under their ill-omened freedom from opposition, and would not have ventured as far as they are venturing now under opposition; but in that case the public would have understood clearly enough that their forbearance was caused by cowardice, whereas they now suppose that they have yielded to reason as expressed by the Opposition. In either case the Coercion Bill would have been much more obvious for what it is, an impudent attack on the most elementary liberties of the country. The Parliamentary sham-fight of compromise and expediency has once more served the purpose it is sustained for, that is keeping the people down; and that in spite of the thoroughly organised and sincere opposition of the Irish members, who have done everything that they could have done—as a Parliamentary party. For the kind of abstention I have alluded to could not be done by a Parliamentary party.

Something has already been said in the *Commonweal* about the case of the pit-brow women; but owing to Mr. Burt's amendment to the Mines Regulation Bill the matter is again before the public, and is now put before them with sentimental and even theatrical embellishments which tend to obscure the real question at issue, which is briefly this: Are these women to be used for doing work which is unfit for women for the purpose of reducing the wages of working people? The capitalists very naturally answer "Yes," the working men as naturally answer "No." The public, confused as it well may be by the fact, amongst others, that the women engaged in this beastly work (also quite naturally under the present muddled slavery of labour) do not wish to lose their employment, doesn't know what to say. It may therefore be explained to them once more that the women would not be employed unless at lower wages than men would have to be paid, and that this is the case whenever women are employed on work which they are not especially fitted for. Whatever boon, therefore, may be conferred on the women by allowing them to work amidst filth for a small wage, it will be no boon to the working people in general.

A word may here be said to the "women's rights" group. They are far too apt to put women forward as competitors with men, and thereby injure the cause of the emancipation of women which every Socialist is bound to further. They are therefore blind to the fact that the capitalist employment of women for the general cheapening of labour is founded on that very dependence of women which they (and we) want to get rid of. Under reasonable conditions of society every woman will be free to earn her own livelihood as every man will be, but for that very reason there will be no competition between the sexes; and women will neither get nor seek employment in work which man can do better than they can. Capitalism forces them to accept such work now—at starvation wages; just as it forces males to accept work which is not fit for human beings. As long as men are slaves, women can be no better. Let the women's rights societies adopt that last sentence as a motto—and act on it.

The East-end people may be congratulated on the new "palace" they are getting, though the word is an unsavoury one in the mouth of the people. But what a number of East-enders there will be whose poverty will prevent them from using it! People too ragged, dirty, ignorant—in a word, too degraded to use it. And even those of the workers who can use it, can they do so with due pleasure and content? Surely not, when they contrast its magnificence with their own narrow, inconvenient, sordid dwellings and their wretched surroundings. Until their private houses are roomy, comfortable, and pleasant, they cannot really enjoy splendid public buildings; they have got to go back again to their narrow, shabby lodgings, and beastly workshops—and live there. Surely when true society takes the place of false, we shall raise beautiful and magnificent halls with their surroundings for the use of all. But the contrast will not then be between splendour and sordidness, but between splendour and special beauty and the due simplicity of the dwelling of a private person which is quite consistent with beauty and convenience.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

SHORT DRAMA IN TWO SCENES.—First scene: Millionaire seated in an easy chair; by him stands a Poor Man in a supplicating attitude.

Millionaire: "Ahem! Very sorry, my young friend, that I can do nothing for you. But I can give you a word of good advice—economise!"

Poor Man: "But when a man has nothing to—"
Millionaire: "Nonsense! Under such circumstances a man must know how to save."

Second scene: The Millionaire is drowning in a pond; the Poor Man calmly regarding him from the shore.

Poor Man: "Sorry, my friend, that I can do nothing for you, but I can give you a word of good advice—swim!"

Millionaire (choking): "Bub-bub-but wh-when a man can't swim!"
Poor Man: "Nonsense! Under these circumstances a man must know how to swim."—*Newcastle Chronicle*.

THE MORROW OF THE REVOLUTION.

WE Socialists are often asked the question, what would you do if you found yourselves with power in your hands to-morrow? This question is not an unreasonable one, and I think it is one that Socialists should discuss before the day finds them unprepared. In Paris sixteen years ago the problem had to be faced in a practical manner, but the leaders of Paris were then unhappily in utter confusion as to its solution. It is true they performed the ordinary executive functions of an administration admirably; and it is sufficient to point to their example to confute those who affect to laugh at the notion of men unacquainted with official red-tape being put in responsible positions. But when it came to the question of any new departure to be made the council-room of the Commune was the battle-ground of rival propositions. Now it seems to me that it is not unprofitable for Socialists to enter upon the discussion of such points as these at once, and as far as may be to "thrash them out," before rather than after they are called upon to act.

The usual reply to the question referred to in opening is that we intend to nationalise or communise the means of production and distribution. This is undoubtedly strictly and literally correct, but from the questioner's point of view it may possibly be regarded as what a celebrated character of Dickens' would have called an "evasive answer." If further elucidation is required we proceed to explain that we mean to take over the big industries, railways, factories, banks—all, in short, that are sufficiently concentrated to admit of being worked by the State—and to proceed by the erection of communal or municipal workshops and stores on a large scale to undermine by competition the individualist-capitalist production and distribution. So far so good. But all this takes time to work itself out; "While the grass grows," says Hamlet, etc. An objection may be raised, therefore, that in a period of revolution it would be necessary to take certain immediate steps of an *ad interim* character to satisfy legitimate popular demands and to forestall the *panem et circenses* schemes of reactionary demagogues—Tory and Liberal "democrats," to wit. In other words, it may be insisted that the purely economic action of the organised Socialist administrative must be supplemented by legislative and judicial action for the former to have the chance of taking effect. That this is the case I am myself convinced. What action, then, would be the right one to be taken in addition to the orthodox economic readjustment above referred to, and which would of course be the mainspring of fundamental social reconstruction? In this instance, as in many others, I find the traditional three courses present themselves; with this difference, that here, as I take it, not one only, but all would have to be followed, since they are all more or less interconnected. To be brief, the first is the reduction of the working day to eight hours or less; the second, the all-important correlative of this action (without which I fear the limitation of hours would be merely illusory)—*viz.*, the enactment of a law of *maximum* and *minimum*; and the third the abrogation of "civil" law, especially that largest department of it which is concerned with the enforcement of contract and the recovery of debt. As to the first of these provisions, it is unnecessary to say much, the reduction of the working day having become a plank in the working-class platform throughout the world. But the second and third may need a word of explanation. By a law of *maximum* and *minimum*, then, we mean the fixation of a maximum or compulsory price for all the necessary articles of everyday consumption—ordinary food, clothing, firing, etc.—and a minimum or lowest wage for the day's work in every industry, or at least in all the more important industries. This it seems is a necessary concomitant of a reduction of the working day, otherwise the price of necessities must tend to rise in proportion to the increased cost of production, or wages to fall, or perhaps both. Of the abolition of civil law I have elsewhere spoken, showing this law to be indeed the logical result of an individualist society and the indispensable corollary of such a society, but to have no reason of being in one based on collective possession of the means of production and distribution. The grounds of this are obvious. In an individualist society, where every man is fighting for his own hand in the *mêlée* of competition, he requires as the first condition that the laws of the war should be observed—that is, that plunder and murder should follow the prescribed rules, since if they are departed from his position as a combatant is prejudiced. In fact, without the enforcement of such rules the fight itself would be impossible, so that they are vital even to the very existence of competition or the commercial system.

On the other hand, under a Collectivist *régime* they are neither necessary for the system nor for the individual. The latter has his livelihood already assured by the constitution of society in return for his share of its needful work, and is no longer under the necessity of struggling as an individual with his fellows for his share of the produce of labour. Hence, he is not dependent for his subsistence upon any contract or agreement he may choose to make with other individuals. Any such agreement must therefore become a purely subsidiary and private matter, with which he has no right to expect Society to concern itself. Socialism implying that contract has ceased to be the cornerstone of economic conditions and social relations, it would be but natural that a revolutionary government should proclaim that fact in abolishing its legal sanctions. But there are additional reasons, and those of expediency, why this should be an immediate measure: (1) The abolition of enforcement of contract (including recovery of debt) would instantly put a stop to an enormous mass of swindling now carried on under the eyes of the law; (2) would effectually preclude the possibility of even temporary competition with the government or

municipal industries; and (3) would as effectually prevent any evasion of the law of *maximum* and *minimum*.¹ In fact, the abolition of the courts taking cognisance of contract (including the recovery of debt) would of itself so dislocate the whole commercial system, as to render its resuscitation during any period of temporary reaction well-nigh impossible.

These three provisions, I take it, ought to be the immediate issue of the attainment of power by a Socialist government. For the rest it might be further asked by one desirous for light, what attitude would a Socialist administration adopt towards the existing criminal law? To this also, so far as I am personally concerned, I am prepared with an answer. The customary laws of Anglo-Saxon tribal society, which form the basis of the so-called common law of England, as they became inappropriate to the new conditions, have been gradually superseded by legislation or by statutes, and these form the main body of our modern criminal law. Westminster has dictated statutes which have taken the place of the local "common law." This is necessarily the case as primitive society merges into civilisation. Civilised law, which is based on the independence of the individual and on the personal possession and control of property, is necessarily opposed to "customary law," which presupposes the dependence of the individual on a group and the collective ownership of property by that group. The latter (*viz.*, customary law) will stretch and may be modified, it is true (as evidenced by the English "common law"), up to a certain point in accordance with the changed conditions; but beyond this it has to be supplemented, and is finally superseded by legislative enactments or statutes. Now, as Socialists, we believe that civilisation is destined to pass into a new and higher communism, just as tribal communism has passed into civilisation, and that therewith the whole of modern legislation will become obsolete. But, meanwhile, and until the economic change has worked itself out in ethical change, it is clear that a criminal law must exist. The only question is whether its basis shall be a mass of anomalous statutes and precedents or a logical system. In the one case the sweeping changes which it would be necessary for a Socialist government to make, would be complicated and hampered in a thousand ways. In the other they could be effected with ease. Now the most perfectly logical and connected system of jurisprudence is admitted by all students of law to be the Roman or civil law, and in modern times the system founded upon it was prevalent over a part of the Continent, and known as the "Code Napoleon."

My answer then to those who would know the proper course for a revolutionary government to take in the matter of jurisprudence, is that in my view such a government should, in countries where the "Code Napoleon" does not obtain, immediately suspend the existing criminal law and replace it by this code, at the same time appointing a committee of urgency to expurgate and amend it in accordance with the new Socialist morality. Such expurgation, it is possible, might leave little of the original in the end, but that original would have acted as a working basis and so served its purpose. The crucial distinction, it must never be forgotten in all these matters, between the old Society and the new, is that the one is based on the absolute sacredness of personal property, the other recognises the welfare of the community alone as the one absolutely sacred claim, all other claims having validity only in so far as they are derived from this one.

E. BELFORD BAX.

NORTHUMBRIAN NOTES.

IN Northumberland we have had a visit from the harmless old gentleman who commands the British army. He was opening a big show which is making a stir here just now. It was very funny and very degrading to see how thousands of people flocked after and cheered this person. The shopkeepers, however, in the most disloyal manner, tell one that they are in favour of the Jubilee fuss if it brings them more trade, and against it if not. Their straightforwardness is refreshing, even if their motives are not of the highest.

Socialism in the North of England is now on a secure footing. The gratifying outcome of our agitation is the establishment of the North of England Socialist Federation—a solid labour organisation, chiefly miners, at present consisting of twelve branches and over 1200 enrolled members. Rules are being drafted by a committee, and everything is going on in the most satisfactory manner.

The strike is now practically settled. By a large majority the men have decided to give the Wage Committee power to settle on the best terms they can obtain. This means little short of surrender. But the men have no disgrace attaching to their defeat. For seventeen weeks they have stood out, living on a few pence a-day, maintaining a quiet and peaceful demeanour, but with a dogged determination that nothing could overcome. That they have suffered keenly no one who has seen them and known them can doubt. Their battle was rendered doubly hard by the bitter knowledge that their leaders, who ought to have cheered them on and fought for them, hung back, gloomily predicting defeat before they had made an effort for victory.

The men feel and say that they could have won this fight had their leaders fought with them; but from the first, defeat seemed certain, since the leaders not only predicted it, but did nothing, where they could have done much, to avert it. The strike has taught many lessons, but most of all the lesson that *unity* is essential to the miners cause and the cause of all the workers.

The men have fought splendidly. There is nothing in the annals of the last quarter of a century of the labour-struggle to surpass it. Perhaps the sturdy chainmakers of Cradley Heath should be excepted. But here the whole county have fought magnificently against their foes and against their generals too. By standing out they have shown the true grit they are made of. They have also given the masters a lesson that they had never expected but fully deserved.

J. L. MAHON.

¹ The reason of the inefficacy of the mediæval laws against usury, which has been the subject of so many homilies on the part of orthodox economists, was simply owing to the fact that concurrently with the anti-usury laws, there existed laws for the recovery of debts.

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 members of the Hackney Radical Club have organised a subscription in aid of the pitmen who are on strike in Northumberland.

At Darlaston there is a partial strike of the nut and bolt trade, owing to the attempt of one of the firms to enforce a reduction of wages and the alleged resort in other cases to violation of the Truck Act.

Several delegates of the Knights of Labour have recently arrived in England from the United States, and are now engaged in constituting assemblies of that order. They are said to be meeting with some success, and already several have been formed in the North of England.

The strike in the coal trade at Hebburn is now at an end. The men at the "C" pit came out in December last. The dispute was eventually referred to arbitration, and a settlement was arrived at in Durham on the 18th. The miners recommenced work on Monday. Between 600 and 700 men have been "out" for five months.

Intimation has been given by the Gourcock Ropework Co. (N. B.) to the whole of their workpeople of a reduction in wages of from 7 to 15 per cent. This reduction comes into effect at once, and extends to both male and female workers. As the works have been running only four days per week for some time, the reduction will be severely felt.

As a consequence of Mr. Goschen's budget arrangements as to the duty on tobacco, a large number of men, it is reported, have been discharged for three weeks from the firm of Messrs. Levy Brothers, tobaccoists, Shoreditch. Many operatives have already been discharged from other firms, and the new arrangement is likely to cause the closing of at least two large factories in the East-end.

The chainmakers have the satisfaction of being able to report several firms conceding the advance. At these firms work has commenced. At a recent meeting, Mr. Homer, the chairman, said they intended to boycott those men who had been at work during the time they had been on strike. They were determined not to resume work till they had attained their object. It was unanimously resolved to continue the strike. This is the 42nd week. A. K. Donald is now in the district as a delegate from the Strike Committee of the Socialist League. His report will probably be given in this column next week.

STRIKE OF BOYS.—On the 16th, the boys to the number of 32, who perform the duties of "putters-up" and "takers-in" at the new gas tank house of Londonderry Bottleworks, Seaham Harbour, belonging to Messrs. Candlish and Sons, struck work, and men have had to be engaged in their places, so that the men employed in gathering, blowing, and finishing will not be stopped. The refusal of the boys to go in is said to be owing to the adoption of a new code of working rules by the firm, by which the former allege their wages are considerably reduced.

The Northumberland miners have now reached the last stage of orthodox strikes. At the meeting last Saturday the result of the vote on the terms of surrender was decided, and the Wages Committee are empowered to make the best terms. The M.P. and other "trimmers" of the miners' organisation, have gained a decided victory, and have assisted the masters to a great extent in bringing about a conclusion to the strike. This will probably be the last strike bossed by the "old gang" who, on the slightest pretext play into the capitalists' hands and leave the men to fight both enemies and quondam friends. It is to be hoped the next turn-out will be a Socialist movement. The terms of the settlement are reductions of 12½ and 6½ respectively on different classes of coal.

THE STRIKE IN THE BELFAST SHIPBUILDING TRADE.—The employers are acting in the most high-handed manner. A deputation of the Queen's Island workers waited on the heads of the firm and were told if the men were not willing to go back to work under the old conditions the employers were prepared to "let the grass grow on the yard." Messrs. Harland and Wolff have decided to close their yard for at least a month, and have discharged the apprentices and clerks. Notwithstanding that subscriptions are coming in very slowly, and that the men are beginning to feel pinched, they are still determined to hold out. At a recent mass meeting, on a show of hands being called for, not a dissentient was to be seen in the entire assembly.

BOLTON.—The strike in the iron trade seemed likely to come to an end. The Mayor intervened—taking the tide in the affairs of the disputants which was thought might lead to a settlement. The ironworkers however rejected an offer by the masters, who suggested that the men should continue at work for three months, withdraw their objections to overtime, and then consent to the refereeship of the Mayor in the matter of wages. A counter-proposal was made to the masters, which was not divulged.—The spinners engaged at the Vernon mills, have struck against a reduction of wages.—It is satisfactory to see that Herbert Fletcher, owner and manager of the Lady Shore Colliery, was fined £20 and costs for refusing to comply with the award of an umpire to stop working the mine with naked lights. The award was backed by 300 men who were employed by the defendant.

BELGIUM.

GREAT STRIKE IN THE MINING CENTRES.—"La Grève noire" has been spreading through the mining districts in Belgium with telegraphic rapidity. In the Centre work has been completely stopped at the forges at La Hestre, Haine-Saint-Pierre, Baume, the workshops and smelting factories at La Croÿère, etc. Military assistance has been called into requisition, and in several places the military have come into contact with the enraged strikers at the mouth of the pits. At La Croÿère, the gendarmes charged the strikers very indiscriminately and killed and wounded several among their number. In the Charleroi coal basin the spread of the strike has been less rapid, though at Gilly, where as at Châtelet it is principally accentuated, the collieries and several of the workshops are guarded by a squadron of lancers which arrived from Tournai. The strikers in the Centre number over 3000. In the Borinage the number of those on strike has been 6000, but has since considerably diminished. Several arrests have been made, among them being Loor and Coureur, editors of the *Combat*.

CHARLEROI, May 22.—Numerous meetings have been held here to-day, at which a general strike was decided upon for to-morrow. The Burgomaster has asked for a battery of artillery to be sent here this evening. The District Court is sitting uninterruptedly, and great anxiety prevails.

CIGAR-MAKING IN ENGLAND.

(Concluded from p. 164.)

THIS trade is the only one, the raw material of which is heavily taxed by an excise duty. It is owing to this fact that in the early spring of the year the trade becomes "slack," and men are thrown out of employment. The employers are ever expectant of an alteration of duty, and await anxiously the introduction of the Budget in the House of Commons. In 1878, Sir S. Northcote, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, raised the duty on leaf tobacco from 3s. 2d. to 3s. 6d., an increase of 4d. on the pound. The employers at once commenced an agitation, in which they succeeded, to obtain an increased duty on foreign and Continental cigars, "to equalise the tariff and protect the home market." In the meantime, the employers took good care to well stock their warehouses with tobacco before the new and increased duty came into operation, thus gaining 4d. on every pound of leaf cleared. Not content with this, they also in many cases forced a reduction in the prices they were paying to their operatives, contending that the consumer would not pay the enhanced price for tobacco and cigars, and that they would be at an enormous loss to continue manufacturing at the old prices. We were obliged to give way.

The duties remained as above until the 21st of April, 1887, when Mr. Goschen, Chancellor of the Exchequer, introduced the Budget, and to the surprise of every one proposed to take off the 4d. Sir S. Northcote put on, this to come into operation on the 21st of May. As soon as this became known, the employers began to discharge their "hands" until that time. The unions at once decided to send deputations to the employers with a view of arresting the wholesale discharge of the men, and at the same time to seek the co-operation of the employers in requesting the Chancellor to either give a rebate of 4d. on all tobaccos cleared out of bond until the 21st of May, or bring the new tariff into operation as early as possible. They assured our deputation that they could rely on their support in what we were doing, and even promised to keep the men at work on short time rather than discharge them, a promise they forgot to keep in a large number of cases. Many of the employers offered a reduction as a condition to keep the men at work, and in the case of a very "respectable" firm in Long Acre, they offered a reduction of 6d. per hundred to the cigar-makers and 20 per cent. to weekly servants, which was persisted in until the news of the rebate granted by the Chancellor reached the firm.

I am glad to say that both in London and the country the female section of the trade have greatly aided us in resisting all offers of reduction in this crisis.

We have been repeatedly told that the interests of the employers and the men are identical, and yet, while the unions were endeavouring to bring the new tariff into operation as soon as possible (to the employer's benefit in the long run), the Masters' Association were in solemn conclave, and resolved "to strongly recommend the Chancellor to adhere to May 21st for the reduction of the tobacco duty in order that the manufacturers might have time to clear their stocks!" So much for identity of interests!

The Chancellor also proposes to make it illegal to sell tobacco containing more than 35 per cent. of water. The extent to which adulteration has been carried with smoking tobaccos since 1878, has attracted the attention of the novice as well as the expert. As much as 65 to 70 per cent. of adulteration has been discovered in the commoner kinds of tobacco, thus increasing the already enormous profits of the manufacturers.

It is not generally known that every large spinner of tobacco has his chemical laboratory, in which "scientific" experiments are carried on and applied to this industry—an example of stimulus to invention which Socialists hear so much about to-day. The employers, therefore, are quite angry with Goschen for tampering with it, and are loudly protesting against the interference with their genius.

In the *Tobacco Trade Review* for this month (the employers' journal) there are several letters of protest against the proposed alteration. The following is an extract from a letter by some one who signs himself "W. D.": "My impression is that the boon offered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the reduction of the tobacco duties is more than neutralised by the restriction of the amount of added moisture permitted. Doubtless the working man will get more tobacco for his 3d. and perhaps of better quality. The retail shopkeeper also will do better, because his roll and common shag will not shrink on his hands, but there will be much inconvenience caused by the extinction of the wholesale dealers, for whose profits and expenses no margin will be left." He concludes by asking: "Would it not be better to leave the question of added moisture to the operation of the natural law of trade competition?" (The italics are mine.)

The above is a good sample of the "cheek" of those "gentlemen" who fill the *Review* with "trade requests" and nostrums of doubtful utility. Another correspondent (a retailer) writes to ask a very "ticklish question," eminently useful as indicating the general efficiency of prohibitory enactments: "Sir, can you or any of your readers give me any idea how the authorities are going to carry out the clauses restricting the sale of tobacco containing over 35 per cent. of moisture? A roll of thick twist as a whole may be within the limit, but the outer laps will be very much so, and the inner core probably just as much over-weighted with increase. Will the Excise take the average of the roll, or the outer laps, or the inner ones, for the purpose of testing? And what are the penalties imposed for infractions?"

These letters are sufficiently suggestive to any one to show that there

are always opportunities afforded manufacturers to adulterate their goods in spite of the Government regulations.

Before closing this review, a word as to the unions in existence among cigar-makers in England is necessary. There are two societies, the Cigar-makers' Mutual Association (to which I belong) and the Provident Society. The latter have about 250 members, and I believe their financial position is fair. A few facts and figures pertaining to the former association may be interesting and instructive. The figures I am about to give will illustrate the ravages made by the recent depression in trade on our financial position. The general fund on April 25th, 1885, was £1283, 4s. 5d. Up to Jan. 23, 1886, we paid to men out of work £1508, 4s.: there were 1003 members on the roll at that time. We were now, however, to experience a still heavier strain on our funds. In the following quarter, from Jan. 23, 1886, to April 24, we paid to men out of work £571, 2s., and £156, 2s. 6d. to men on the sick list, which ultimately brought our general fund to the small figure of £733, 1s. 3d., or a loss on the quarter of £390, 16s. 4d. In the next three months we paid to men out of work £414, 1s. 6d., and another £110, 8s. 6d. to men on the sick list, losing on the quarter, one way and another, £74, 16s. 10d., our funds standing at £658, 4s. 5d. We therefore paid in out-of-work benefit alone during the period from April 25, 1885, to Jan. 21, 1887, £2625, 9s., while our membership has decreased to 917; the funds standing at £913, 14s., a loss of over £370 in just on two years, showing we are rapidly losing ground as trades' unionists.¹

Socialism has made but little progress among cigar-makers up to the present time, but there is every indication that the men are every day becoming more willing to listen to anything pertaining to their position as workmen. They are for the most part a fairly intelligent body of men, many of whom have displayed in the past a self-sacrificing spirit for the general good; and I have no fear that, as time rolls on, and the great social change for which Socialists strive looms up in the distance, those engaged in the cigar industry will not be found wanting.

H. DAVIS.

SOCIALISM IN NORWICH—HENDERSON'S RELEASE.

ON Sunday morning Morley gave a short address near Ber Street Fountain. In the afternoon a very large meeting assembled, notwithstanding the rain had been falling incessantly. Henderson was greeted with a hearty welcome, it being the first meeting since his release. He spoke for some time. The following resolution was carried unanimously: "That this meeting of Norwich workers considers that the imprisonment which Charles Wilfred Mowbray is now suffering is an unjust one, and calls for his speedy release." After the meeting, cheers were given for Henderson. Collected for defence, 7s. In the evening Henderson and Slaughter spoke on Agricultural Hall Plain. At the Gordon Hall, which was crowded, many being unable to get in, comrade Slaughter in the chair, Henderson lectured on "Civilisation of Prison Life," giving some experience of his recent imprisonment. He spoke of the many martyrs who had suffered for their opinions and still continued carrying on their mission, amidst frequent bursts of applause from the audience. Morley and another comrade also spoke. A good meeting was held at Wymondham, addressed by comrades Morley, Reux, and Stone. Literature has had a good sale; all *Commonweal* sold out. A. S.

The following additional particulars of the release of our comrade Henderson, taken from a report in a local paper, will no doubt be of interest to our readers.

It has been known for some days past by Norwich Socialists that Fred Henderson would be released from the Castle yesterday morning at about seven o'clock. Arrangements were therefore made to give him a hearty welcome on his return to public life, and at that hour a goodly number of people had assembled in the vicinity of the Castle gates, amongst whom were comrades Crotch, Sutton, etc. But the object of their search had left the place of his temporary retirement an hour previously, having, we are told, been pressed to leave the prison even as early as five o'clock. However, Henderson was not far off, for presently putting in an appearance he was cordially greeted by his old friends, and a procession was formed for the Market Place, where a short meeting was held. The hero of the "demonstration" was cheered and received with manifestations of welcome. He thanked them for their kindness in thus meeting him, and said he hoped to be able to re-commence his work on behalf of Socialism in the city. An adjournment was then made by a select few to the Gordon Café, Duke Street, where a substantial breakfast was eaten, served by comrade Slaughter. In the evening there was a welcome home tea and social gathering at the Gordon Hall, the rendezvous of the local branch of the Socialist League. The tea was supplied by comrade Slaughter, and 150 persons sat down. After tea a social entertainment of a miscellaneous character was held, under the chairmanship of comrade Sutton, who was supported by comrades Slaughter, Crotch, and Henderson, the guest of the evening. The hall, which was densely crowded, was tastefully decorated with red baize, Socialist mottoes, cartoons, and portraits, among which were those of Henderson, Mowbray, Morris, Kropotkin, and others. Letters and telegrams were received during the evening from Annie Besant, giving "cordial congratulations and good wishes;" from Mahon, who is with the Northumberland miners, "with hearty greetings," and stating that they had in Newcastle just started a Socialist Federation there with 1200 members; from the Clerkenwell Branch, with "hearty greetings;" from the Social-Democratic Federation, giving "hearty congratulations;" etc. The programme consisted of songs, selections by a brass band under the direction of Crotch, recitations, readings, and short speeches. Comrade Slaughter gave in felicitous terms the toast of "The Prisoners for the Cause throughout the World," and it was responded to by Fred Henderson in an eloquent speech, in which he declared his intention of never faltering in his agitation. He regarded the Cause as the only thing worth living for. His remarks were listened to with deep attention, and applauded frequently. Comrade Crotch, on behalf of the local branch, presented Fred Henderson with Byron's Works, two volumes, and "Tales of Revolution and Patriotism," by the daughter of Joseph Cowen of Newcastle. In response to the toast of "The Visitors," Mr. E. Burgess, Rev. Charles Roper, B.A., and Mr. J. F. Thorn delivered short addresses. The assembly broke up at a late hour.

Powderly and the Labour Party.—A series of resolutions passed by the Portland (Oregon) Eureka Assembly K. of L. are in type, but unavoidably held over by press of matter.

¹ We pay 9s. per week to men out of work, for thirteen weeks, and 6s. per week for the next thirteen. The same to men on sick-list.

FOR THE CONFERENCE.

Whitsunday, 1887.

THOUGH Pentecost but faintly now recall
The rushing mighty wind and tongues of flame
Wherewith the universal spirit came
Upon the faithful at the festival,
When all the startled strangers in the hall
Heard them in divers tongues one truth proclaim,
And in the concord of a common aim
They gave their goods each for the good of all;

Yet if like them we seek the highest good
In earnest union, and cast out to-day
The evil spirit of mistrust and strife,
Our tidings shall be told and understood
Through all the nations, and our hands shall lay
The new foundation of the house of life.

REGINALD A. BECKETT.

Anti-Coercion Demonstration in Victoria Park, on Saturday May 21st, 1887.

No. 10 was the platform occupied by the Socialist League, and although neither Liberal, Radical, nor pseudo-Socialist spoke therefrom, a large and enthusiastic audience assembled around it, despite the unpropitious nature of the weather, which on this occasion was enough to make the stoutest heart quail. The proceedings were opened by

H. A. BARKER, who stated that they were there that day to make their voice heard on behalf of freedom and against coercion, not because the coercion on this occasion emanated from the Tories. From whatever source it came—Liberal or Tory—they denounced it, and not in mere party fashion, but because they hated coercion and loved liberty. The history of both political parties showed that neither had scrupled to use this hateful weapon when the interests of the monopolists were threatened.

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

"That this meeting expresses its deep abhorrence of the Coercive Measures levelled against the Irish nation, and is of opinion that, the Land Question being at the root of the Irish troubles, no political change can have permanent value unless accompanied by, or be in the direction of the abolition of Landlordism in Ireland; and is further of opinion that the Irish nation should be left free to settle with the landlords without any restriction whatever from the English Parliament."

In moving it he declared that this question of coercion concerned the people of England, Scotland, and Wales equally as much as it did those of Ireland. That unholy trinity, Salisbury, Hartington, and Chamberlain were doing all in their power to maintain entire what were called "the indefeasible rights of property." He warned his hearers not to allow themselves to be hounded by this trinity, who, after all, were not concerned so much about Home Rule for Ireland as they were about the domination of the privileged class, a class which depended for its existence upon the robbery of the worker. They had all learnt that commandment which said, "Thou shalt not steal," let them learn another, viz., "Thou shalt not be stolen from."

G. BERNARD SHAW seconded, and in doing so asked his hearers to drop all pretence of special sympathy with the Irish people, the English people were as bad off and as hardly used as were the Irish. In most cases in Ireland the tenant was not evicted unless he owed at least six months' rent; such was not the case here, where folk were turned out without owing anything like that amount of rent. The fact was our hardships were just as great as those of the Irish, we were oppressed just the same, and the only difference between them and ourselves was that they protested, warred against their oppressors, while we bore in silence the very same oppression.

W. C. WADE, in supporting the resolution, declared that when the abolition of slavery was proposed all privilege stood up against it, and to-day as then privilege was up in defence of its rights, rights which could only be enforced at the expense and misery of the workers. To-day they were wage-slaves, formerly they were chattel-slaves, and until they freed themselves economically they must remain so.

The resolution was then put and carried unanimously.

H. DAVIS then moved:

"That this meeting firmly believes that the English, Scotch, Irish, and Welsh people are enslaved by the present capitalist system, which by means of the monopoly of the means of production robs every working-man of the results of his labour, and determines to do whatever is necessary to do away with the slavery of labour."

J. LANE seconded, and remarked that if they were to be free they must free themselves. The present capitalist system must result in bringing about a social revolution, and it was coming whether they wanted it or not, and it behoved them to so act that when the crisis came it would find them prepared and able to take possession of the land and the means of production, and to use them in the interest of the whole community.

S. MAINWARING, in supporting the resolution, descanted upon the hardships of the worker, and spoke with much animation. On some of his remarks being called in question by a man in the crowd, he concluded by enforcing upon his hearers the necessity for combination, without which the cause of the workers was hopeless.

The resolution was carried by a large majority, which, considering its nature and the mixed character of the meeting is most encouraging.

This concluded the meeting so far as the League was concerned; and wet and steaming the occupants of Platform 10 drove from the park, leaving behind it knots of people discussing what they had just heard of Socialism and seen of its advocates.

H. A. BARKER.

THE STRIKE IN THE BOLTON IRON TRADE.—IMPORTATION OF FOREIGN WORKMEN.—In connection with the strike in the Bolton iron trade, Messrs. Wood, a local firm of engineers, have imported a number of foreign workmen, whom they wished to provide with sleeping accommodation on the premises. The strike hands on Tuesday night intercepted a quantity of bedding and assailed the upholders with stones and other missiles. Great excitement prevailed.



OFFICES: FARRINGTON ROAD E.C.

Annual Conference.—Morning, 10 to 1. Afternoon, 2 to 5. Evening, till business is concluded.

French Class.—Discontinued during the summer months.

BRANCH SUBSCRIPTIONS PAID.

Birmingham, to August 31. Manchester, to October 31. Leicester, South London, to December 31, 1885. Bradford, Croydon, Edinburgh, Hackney, Hammersmith, Hoxton (Labour Emancipation League), Hull, Ipswich, Lancaster, Leeds, Marylebone, Merton, Norwich, Shields, Walsall, to March 31. Bloomsbury, Clerkenwell, Glasgow, North London, Oxford, to April 30, 1887.

STRIKE COMMITTEE.

P. W., ls. T. BINNING, Treasurer.

"COMMONWEAL" PRINTING FUND.

T. B. (weekly), 6d. W. B. (weekly), 6d.
P. W., Treasurer, May 24.

THE NORWICH PRISONERS' AID FUND.

Memo., per Christian Socialist, 3s. Dutch Section, International Club, Tottenham Street, 7s. Webb, 1s. For Mrs. Mowbray—A few Fabians, per Annie Besant (weekly), 10s.—Total, £1 1s. J. LANE, Treasurer.

HENDERSON HELP FUND.

H. Wood, 2s. R. S. P., 2s. H. Wall, 6d. A. Pearce, 6d.

Northumberland Miners—

Collected in Regent's Park, Sunday, May 22, per Cantwell, 7s.

BRANCH REPORTS.

BLOOMSBURY.—A large meeting assembled on Thursday to hear comrade Aveling lecture on "Radicalism and Socialism." The lecture was listened to with much interest. A few questions were asked, and in the discussion which followed George Bernard Shaw and others took part.—U.

CLERKENWELL.—On Wednesday, May 18, T. Dalziel addressed a fair audience on "Proto-Socialism." On Sunday, May 22, T. E. Wardle lectured on "The Jubilee Coercion Bill."—W. B. and T. E. W.

HACKNEY.—H. Graham addressed a good meeting at the Broadway, London Fields, on Wednesday last. On Sunday morning, Vanderhout addressed a large and attentive audience at the Salmon and Ball.

HOXTON.—On Sunday evening, H. H. Sparling gave a very instructive and interesting lecture on "Subsistence Wages," which was well appreciated by the audience.

MERTON.—We held a good open-air meeting on Mitcham Fair Green. Sale of *Commonweal* fair. Kitz and Eden were the speakers.—F. K. U

NORTH LONDON AND MARYLEBONE.—On Sunday morning, at Regent's Park, a very good meeting was addressed by Cantwell, Brookes, and Nicoll. Somebody rather roused the ire of the audience by claiming that stock-jobbing was a proper means of livelihood; 7s. collected for Miners' Strike Fund. At Hyde Park in the afternoon, Brookes, Mainwaring, and Davis addressed a rather variable audience, but a good crowd gathered to hear comrade Morris. One individual ventured to suggest that Morris was a paid agitator. Fair sale of literature. Members please note branch meeting, place, and time.—H. B.

GLASGOW.—On Sunday afternoon, Glasier addressed a large meeting of the Legislative Independence Branch of the National League. In the evening, a most successful open-air meeting was held on George's Square, several hundred of the better-to-do class being present, who listened to comrade Glasier's exposition of Socialism with much attention. *Commonweal* sold well. A meeting of members was afterwards held in our rooms.

HAMILTON.—At a meeting of the Hamilton Branch of the Socialist League, held in Paton's Hall, Chapel Street, a very interesting paper was read by Michael Kelly, one of our local members, on "The Land Question."—J. M.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—J. H. Stevens made a short address on Sunday night at the Cattle Market, and sold a large number of the *Commonweal*. Thomas Mann and Laidler, and other members of the S.D.F. delivered speeches. Mann got a good hearing, and was very well received by the audience. Meetings have been held by the S.D.F. at Byker and Gateshead as well, and in spite of the inclement weather there were good attendances.—J. L. M.

PAISLEY.—Comrades Curran and Glasier, of Glasgow, addressed two open-air meetings, one at the County Square and one at the Causewayside, on Friday evening.

SHIELDS (NORTH AND SOUTH).—A debate was held on the Bury Side on Sunday morning last at 10.30, between W. Wallace (Socialist) and Mr. Leslie Stephens (nondescript, but supposed to be Individualist). The discussion was animated, the crowd very large,

and on the show of hands the chairman declared a majority had voted for the Socialist. In the evening at 6.30, Mahon addressed a meeting in the Market Place at South Shields, Wood taking the chair. At 8 Mahon spoke again on the other side of the water, and a meeting of the branch was held at 9 in the Gladstone Hall. J. H. Stevens was unanimously elected delegate of the branch to the Conference. A further meeting was arranged for the following Thursday to complete arrangements for carrying on the propaganda, and for discussing the advisability of joining or co-operating with the North of England Socialist Federation.—J. H., sec.

WALSALL.—Comrade A. K. Donald arrived here on Friday night, and on Saturday afternoon visited Wednesbury and Darlaston, accompanied by H. Sanders and Deakin. Owing to the wretched weather we were unable to get up a meeting at Wednesbury, but had a fair gathering at Darlaston, which Donald and Sanders addressed. At night, Donald and Sanders spoke to a good number of people on the Bridge, Walsall, but owing to a heavy storm coming on were prevented from taking up our usual position in the Market-place. On Sunday morning, the Roman Catholic Church was attended to hear a sermon upon "Socialism" by the Rev. Dr. McCarten, on which comrade Donald will report. In the afternoon we journeyed to Willenhall and held a fair meeting, Donald, Sanders, and Deakin speaking, and returned to Walsall at night, where Sanders opened a meeting and was followed by Donald, who was listened to by an audience of several hundreds, who appeared greatly interested. At the close a number of questions were put to Donald and satisfactorily disposed of. A good quantity of literature has been sold, and the cause considerably helped forward here by Donald's visit. To-day (Monday) he goes to Cradley Heath to investigate the condition of the white slaves of the chain-making trade.—J. T. D.

BRISTOL.—After successful winter work in our meeting-room, 43, Old Market Street, we began our open-air work on Tuesday last. We had some thousands of leaflets distributed, and the result was a good meeting both in numbers and attention. The portions of the addresses most strongly condemning the present competitive system were loudly applauded, and the Socialist remedies for existing evils were warmly approved. There is no doubt that Socialism is making good progress in Bristol.—R. W.

DUBLIN.—At the Custom House Steps, Beresford Place, a meeting was held on Sunday, May 22nd, by the Labour League. Despite the inclemency of the weather more than 800 persons were present. Excellent speeches on the various phases of the Labour Question, all of a strong Socialistic character, were delivered by Hall, Brown, Cantwell, and Keegan, the last-named arguing forcibly against political agitation, and showing the necessity for international combination amongst the workers. The meeting was guarded by more than 20 policemen and 3 inspectors, each of whom was presented with a copy of the Socialist leaflet, "Ireland a Nation."

SOCIALIST UNION (NOTTINGHAM SECTION).—Peacock and Proctor lectured to an attentive audience on Sunday morning in Sninton Market; collection for propaganda, 3s. 0d. In the evening, Peacock lectured to a good audience in the Great Market Place on "Religion and Socialism." Wane and Proctor spoke on the events of the week, collection 4s. 3d. Good sale of literature and *Commonweal* sold out. A meeting in our club-room was held afterwards, and more names enrolled. Our club-room is being decorated and fitted up, and will be opened by a social evening and tea on June 1st.—T. P.

North of England Socialist Federation.

Rapid progress is being made with the organisation. There are now nineteen branches, and during the week Mahon will open several others in Durham. The committee for drafting principles and rules met on Saturday at Blyth, and agreed to a proposal which will be submitted to the branches. A further Conference of delegates from all the branches will be held on Saturday, June 12, in Blyth at 3 p.m.

LECTURE DIARY.

LONDON.

Bloomsbury.—Communist Club, 49 Tottenham Street. On Thursday May 26th a Social Evening will be held. Coffee will be provided, and the members are requested to come and bring any friends. Those who have power to entertain their fellow comrades are requested to place it at the disposal of the Branch.

Clerkenwell.—Hall of the Socialist League, 13 Farringdon Road, E.C. Sunday May 29, no lecture. Wednesday June 1, at 8.30. Wm. Morris, "True and False Society." Business Meeting on Sunday week, June 5, at 7.15 p.m.

Croydon.—Royal County House, West Croydon Station Yard.

Hackney.—23 Audrey Street, Goldsmith Row. Club Room open every evening from 8 till 11.30. Members are urgently requested to attend next Tuesday at 8.30 p.m. Monthly Business Meeting; election of officers, etc.

Hammersmith.—Kelmescott House, Upper Mall, W. **Hoxton (L. E. L.).**—2 Crondall Street, New North Rd. Club Room open on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday evenings from 8 till 11. Singing Class every Wednesday at 8.30. Members Meeting on Friday

June 3, at 8.30 p.m.; important business. Sunday June 5, at 8 p.m. J. R. Macdonald (F. S.), "The Signs of the Times."

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.—Members' Meeting at 32 Camden Road, June 5, at 8 p.m.

PROVINCES.

Birgley.—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.

Dublin.—Irish Labour League, 2 Bachelors Walk, every Thursday at 8 p.m. Discussion on all subjects connected with the Labour Question. A Mass Meeting will be held at the Custom House Steps, Beresford Place, on Sunday May 29, at 4 p.m., under the auspices of the Labour League. Well-known Socialists will speak.

Dalkeith (Edinburgh).—Wednesday 1st June, at 8 p.m. lecture on "Christian Socialism" in Scientific Hall.

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 8.30. (See "Open-air" below.)

Glasgow.—Reading-room of the Branch, 84 John St., open from 10 a.m. till 10 p.m. daily. Or Sunday evening at 7, in our Rooms, a discussion on "Our attitude towards Trades' Unions." See "Open-air."

Notice.—We have rented our present Rooms at 84 John Street for another year. As it is intended to make them much more attractive than hitherto, members are earnestly requested to contribute in money, books, newspapers, and useful articles, according to their ability.

Hamilton.—Paton's Hall, Chapel St. Every Thursday at 7.30.

Hull.—Address all communications to E. Teesdale, 20 Shakspeare Street.

Leeds.—Sunday: Hanslet Moor, 11; Vicar's Croft, 7. **Leicester.**—Addresses every Sunday morning on the Quay Jetty.

Leicester.—Office of Hosiery Union, Horsefair Street. Fridays at 8 p.m.

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.

Normich.—Gordon Hall, 5 Duke Street. Free Lectures every Sunday and Monday at 8 p.m. Reading-rooms open every evening.

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

Paisley.—On Friday at 7.30, open-air meeting at the Causewayside.

Shields (North and South).—Meetings every Sunday, Quay-side and Market Place. Branch meetings on Thursday nights at the "General Gordon," Bath Street, Maxwell Street, South Shields. Secretary, J. Hearne, 32 Clive Street, No. Shields. A Public Debate is being arranged between Mr. Leslie Johnson and J. L. Mahon.

North Shields.—Irish National League. On Sunday June 5th, at 3 p.m., Gladstone Hall, J. L. Mahon will lecture on "The Irish Question."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

LONDON.—Sunday 29.

11.30...Hammersmith—Beadon Rd. The Branch
11.30...Hoxton Church, Pitfield St. The Branch
11.30...Mitcham Fair Green The Branch
11.30...Regent's Park Nicoll
11.30...St. Pancras Arches Bartlett
11.30...Walham Green The Branch

Wednesday.

7.30...Broadway, London Fields Graham

Thursday.

8 ...Hoxton, Pitfield Street Wade & Rapp

PROVINCES.

Edinburgh.—Sunday: Queen's Park, afternoon at 3.

Loanhead (Edinburgh).—Saturday, at 7 o'clock.

Glasgow.—Sunday: Jail's Square at 1 p.m.; George's Square, at 6 o'clock.

Paisley.—Friday: Causewayside, at 7.30.

A Free Concert and Ball will be held at the Hackney Branch on Saturday 28th, at 8.30.

Hawick.—Persons in Hawick desirous of forming a Branch are requested to address the Secretary of the Socialist League, 4 Park Street, Edinburgh.

GRAND CONCERT AND DRAMATICAL ENTERTAINMENT will take place at the International Working-men's Educational Club, 40 Berner Street, Commercial Rd., E., on Friday May 27, the proceeds to be devoted to the Norwich Prisoners Fund. Commence at 8 o'clock. Admission by Programme, 6d.

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