

THE COMMONWEAL

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WEEKLY ; ONE PENNY.

EDITORIAL.

IN laying before the Socialist public the first number of our new departure, we feel that a few special words are likely to be looked for from the editors.

¶ Now, as we understand the policy of the Socialist League, it aims at education and organisation towards action when the fitting moment arrives.

When that action is set on foot it will have nothing less for its aim than the taking over by the workers of all the means of producing wealth, to be used for the benefit of the community, that is to say, for the benefit of each and all of those who compose it ; in other words, the realisation of a new society with equality of condition for its basis. Before we can attain to this it is necessary that the mass of the workers should understand this much at least, that nothing short of this will deliver them from the ills they now groan under, that anything short of this though it may change the number of their masters or their position to each other, though it may take from one group of them to give to another, will leave them under masters still, will still leave them slaves to arbitrary authority.

But it will be said to us : " Do you believe in a sudden leap into this new society, as the result of a consecutive and logical change, with no experiments, no attempt at temporary amelioration of the lives of the workers ? "

No ; we believe in no such an impossibility : a time of transition there must be, and many will accept the incompletest transition as the realisation of their hopes : experiments there will be, and many will refuse to acknowledge their failure even in the teeth of obvious facts. Attempts at bettering the condition of the workers will be made, which will result in raising one group of them at the expense of another, will create a new middle-class and a new proletariat ; but many will think the change the beginning of the millenium. All these things will and must be ; the question for us is, what share shall we take in them ?

Whatever our share in them may be, we believe that these attempts, this transitional condition, will be chiefly brought about by the middle-class, the owners of capital themselves, partly in ignorant good-will towards the proletariat (as long as they do not understand its claims), partly with the design both conscious and unconscious, of making our civilisation hold out a little longer against the incoming flood of corruption on the one hand and revolution on the other.

We believe that the advanced part of the capitalist class, especially in this country, is drifting, not without a feeling of fear and discomfort, towards State-Socialism of the crudest kind ; and a certain school of Socialists are fond of pointing out this tendency with exultation, as presaging the early triumph of the Cause of the People, and are looking forward to the time when we shall be " All Socialists " in the sense that Krapotkine uses the phrase in the chapter under that title in his " Words of a Rebel." Well, we also exult in this change of front of the middle-classes, not because we wish to become All Socialists on these terms, but because it is good that the attempts and failures should be made, the new officialism of the transition period foisted on the world by the dominant class, which has no other function but self-preservation. We rejoice to see Bourgeoisdom digging its own grave amidst the blunders and blind stumbling that Socialists might otherwise be driven into.

But though we rejoice in this and though we admit that it is good that partial changes should take place, since they cannot be final, or the condition of things they bring about be long enduring, what have

we to do with helping them on, save by steadily enunciating our principles ?

Can we pretend to push forward some measure which we know is impracticable or useless, loudly crying out on practicality meanwhile ? Can we who preach the downfall of hypocrisy make friends with the compromise which we despise ? Can we who preach freedom, fetter our souls from the outset by cowardly acquiescence with a majority which we know is wrong ? A thousand times no !

Again we are but a few, as all those who stand by principles must be until inevitable necessity forces the world to practise those principles. We are few, and have our own work to do, which no one but ourselves can do, and every atom of intelligence and energy that there is amongst us will be needed for that work ; if we use that energy and intelligence for doing work which can be done just as well by men who are encumbered with no principles, we waste it ; and we had then better confess ourselves beaten, and hand over our work to others who understand better what a party of principle means. Whatever of good may go with the stumbling, compromising kind of Socialism, let it be done at least by those who *must* do it ; do not let us do their work as well as our own. We *must* wait and they must act ; let us at least not confuse our ideas of what we are waiting for by putting a false issue before ourselves.

But there is another thing besides Bourgeois stumbling into State Socialism, which shows which way the tide is setting, and that is the instinctive revolutionary attempts which drive them into these courses. What is to be said about these ? They are leaderless often, and half blind. But are they fruitful of nothing but suffering to the workers ? We think not ; for besides the immediate gain which they force from the dominant class as above said, they are a stern education for the workers themselves. And however bitter that education may be, it surely is not so much worse than the periods of quietude they have had to endure ; the worst thing that we have to dread, though every day now it is less to be dreaded, is that the oppressed people will learn a dull contentment with their lot, and give their masters no more trouble than may come of their dying inconveniently, and being terrible objects to look at or to speak to while they live : the rudest and most unsuccessful attempts at revolution are better than that, though *that* is what is chiefly aimed at by middle-class social reformers.

With all genuine revolutionary attempts, therefore, we must sympathise, and must at the least express that sympathy, whatever risk its expression may subject us to ; and it is little indeed if we can do no more than that.

The *Commonweal*, then, will steadily continue to put forward the principles of International Revolutionary Socialism ; will deprecate all meddling with parliamentary methods of " reform." Constitutionalism means the continuance of the present system ; how can Socialists, therefore, who aim at abolishing the system, support its support ? With all revolutionary movements the *Commonweal* will sympathise as it always has done, and will not accuse the people of rashness for doing what they have been forced to do, or of blindness for making the only protest against their wrongs that they are able to make.

In few words, our function is to educate the people by criticising all attempts at so-called reforms, whose aim is not the realisation of equality of condition, but the hindering of it ; and by encouraging the union of the working classes towards Revolution and the abolition of artificial restraints on life. The true aim of the people of this epoch is to learn how to live, and to assert their right to do so in the teeth of all opposition.

WILLIAM MORRIS.
E. BELFORD BAX.

OBJECTIONS TO SOCIALISM.

(A reply to Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, M.P.)

I.

In 1884 a sixteen page pamphlet entitled "Some objections to Socialism" was published by Mr. Bradlaugh. This article and its successors will be an attempt to show cause against these objections. My reasons for selecting this pamphlet as my text are the following. In the first place it contains the usual list of questions asked and comments made at the end of every lecture on Socialism. These objections of Mr. Bradlaugh practically exhaust the list of the commonplace opponent of Socialism. If they are answered, far be it from me to say that those who urge them will be satisfied. But at least we may hope that the growing number of anxious enquirers into this subject will find some help in their work.

In the second place, the objections are put by the writer of the pamphlet in their strongest possible form. A skilled debater and a controversialist by birth and breeding, Mr. Bradlaugh naturally states the case against Socialism with more clearness and vigour than the ordinary antagonist. The greater includes the less, and if we defeat him we may hold that with him many others thinking as he thinks are also worsted.

Third, the popularity of the author of "Some objections" makes it the more necessary to deal with them. The recognised leader of working-class Atheism, the victor in a prolonged struggle for Parliamentary rights, the typical representative of that aggressive Radicalism, whose aggressiveness we are anxious to turn against the fundamental cause of our social ills—Mr. Bradlaugh is a power among the labour classes. It becomes therefore, the more imperative when we think he is in the wrong on the most vital of questions to show where and how, as it seems to us, he is in the wrong.

After these necessary preliminaries, let me now deal with the objections. For the reasons just given, it will be difficult to treat them in a wholly impersonal way, but as far as is possible they will be discussed as the utterances of a thinker who is the spokesman for many men.

And first, to make plain what I mean by the word "Socialism," Socialism declares that (1) The basis of society to-day is a commercial one—the method of production and distribution of goods; (2) The evils of our present day society are, in the main, referable to this commercial basis; (3) The only efficient remedy for these evils is a revolution in the method of producing and distributing goods.

Really the most serious (I am inclined to think the only serious) objections to Socialism ought to take the form of controverting these propositions successively. But in this pamphlet, as generally in discussions on Socialism, it is noticeable that the first and second of them are untouched by our opponents. We might fairly ask, nay, we must ask, what is the basis of our social arrangements if it is not a commercial one? Is it a matter of speculative belief, as in Christianity, *e.g.*, or is it a matter of government as by limited monarchy or the right divine of electing a House of Commons? We might equally fairly ask what is the cause of the majority of the evils, such as poverty, prostitution, crime, starvation, of to-day, if it is not the method in which our goods are produced and distributed. But to these questions, as a rule, no answer is forthcoming and certainly none is given in the pamphlet under discussion. In it, no more than in the debate with Mr. Hyndman in St. James's Hall, are the essential questions of Socialism as an explanation of the past and of the present touched upon. The vital point of the origin of surplus-value from unpaid labour is never even approached.

In fact objections to Socialism almost universally are levelled against the third of our propositions and against two parts of it. One of these is the bogey word "revolution," and the other is the phrase "efficient remedy." How impossible it is to deal in full with objections to proposition 3 unless propositions 1 and 2 have been discussed, will be readily understood; and yet that is exactly our fate. We have to discuss objections to the efficiency of a change in the method of production of our goods, without feeling certain that our antagonists know even what that method is, and without feeling certain how far they admit that to this our social evils are, for the most part referable.

And this leads me to that general statement that may be prefixed to the discussion now to be entered upon, and indeed all discussion between Socialists and anti- or non-Socialists. It is this: that every one of the evils that the latter remind us are likely to occur under Socialism, occur with manifold more force under the individualism of our present society. Not one of the difficulties that are put before us is there that does not meet us to-day. To-day they are either not solved satisfactorily or they have been in part solved. And where such difficulties, *e.g.*, as the free expression of opinion meet us, we may fairly urge that their partial solution under the capitalistic system, gives us a sure and certain hope that under a simpler and more righteous one, they will be solved at once more rapidly and more completely. On many questions of detail I shall have occasion as I go on to show that this general principle is true; that every difficulty propounded to the Socialist recoils upon the head of the individualist, and that every question as to how he will do this, that or the other, may be in part answered by the retort: "And in what fashion are you doing it?" To all which must be added the obvious statement that whilst under the Socialistic system it is hard to conceive of difficulties with which we are not already face to face under capitalism, there are certainly under this latter a large number of difficulties peculiar to it, and that will vanish when it vanishes.

In the pamphlet to the discussion of which all the above leads, Mr. Bradlaugh opens with a reference to the "pure-hearted and well-meaning men and women" who have tried to test Socialistic theories by experiment. These "pure-hearted and well-meaning" ones are, of course, dead. Our Parliamentary reports remind us that the same observer recently made quite another characterisation and classification of Socialists in England. They were, in language that I am sure no one now regrets more than the speaker, "poets, fools or worse." This makes the classification of such well-known people calling themselves Socialists as George Bernard Shaw, Annie Besant, Stewart Headlam, none of whom is a poet, a matter of some difficulty.

However, the dead-and-gone English Socialists are "pure-hearted and well-meaning," and their experiments at carrying into practical execution Socialism failed. That "as communities none of those attempts have been permanently successful", is no objection to Socialism. For Socialism to be successful must and will be international. A little island of Socialism in the midst of a vast sea of Commercialism is certain to be swamped. An experiment on a small scale is foredoomed. This it is that gives the answer to that youthful objection usually put in the form of a question: Why does not A. or B. of you Socialists who have a certain amount of means due to the unpaid labour of others, at once cast all these away and try the simpler life? To do this would be worse than suicidal. It would be murderous. As things are to-day under the present method of production of goods, for A. or B. thus to give up all that he has would be, first to increase the quantity of capital available by less scrupulous hands than his for the exploitation of labour; second, to paralyse his own energies in attacking the very system of which he is also the victim.

Let me here quote half-a-dozen lines from the Objections. "In none of these [communities] was the sense of private property entirely lost; the numbers were relatively so small that all increase of comfort was appreciable, and in nearly all the communities there was option of the withdrawal of the individual, and with him a proportion of the property he had helped to create or increase." In this passage many things meet us. First there is the phrase "private property." So many fallacies are rife about this that encountering it here for the first time in this criticism, let us once for all remind our objectors that our fundamental objection is to private property in the means of production. It is by the omission of these last five words that so much confusion comes, so much misrepresentation wittingly or unwittingly occurs. Socialists may not be all in accord as to the precise degree of ownership involved in the phrase "my coat," when the new order of things obtains. But they are all agreed that no man will be able to say, "my machinery, my land," except in the same sense as he may to-day say "my British Museum."

Notice again the phrase as to the smallness of the numbers in the community making increase of comfort a perceptible quantity to each individual. By implication what does that say of our present system? Under it increase of comfort cannot become an appreciable quantity for each individual. That is true enough under the capitalistic system, but the reason is not the relative largeness of numbers. It is the method of distribution of our goods that leads to so partial a distribution of comfort. Given that the Socialistic community is co-extensive with mankind, increase of comfort would become an even more appreciable quantity for each individual than it was *e.g.* in the Oneida attempts.

EDWARD AVELING.

(To be continued.)

WHAT IS A NATION?

THERE are some persons who profess not to be able to understand what a free Commune means, while the meaning of the word "Nation" seems clear to them, though perhaps it is doubtful whether it is as clear as it seems. Well, the nation has been evolved from the ancient tribe, which looked upon everything outside itself as hostile; in like manner, the special function of a nation is to hold together a body of people in conscious rivalry to all other similar bodies, which rivalry, though in the main sustained for the sake of mere *commercial* war, frequently leads to military operations. When Socialism shall have destroyed all competition as well between peoples as between individuals, the result will be the establishment of free federated Communes, and then the function of the "nation" will be at an end, and the word "nation" will be a mere geographical expression, interesting chiefly to students of past history.

The above-mentioned persons also seem to have an affection for a "State," which they appear to regard as an eternal if not an immutable institution; they also appear concerned to know the precise population which the Commune is to contain; much as Mr. Bradlaugh in his discussion with Mr. Hyndman in St. James's Hall, was concerned to know the precise number and character of the bottle-washers in the world of the future. No Socialist would pretend to fix any arbitrary limit on either side to the size of the unit of social life; this must obviously be determined by immediate local or temporary conditions. But this much may be said that it will be not a merely arbitrary and senseless geographical or diplomatic expression like "Great Britain," "Italy," or "Austria," but a definite community within definite limits, fulfilling a definite function in the world-federation of such communities.

GOOD NEWS FOR THE AGED.—An employer of labour in Burnley boasts that he never gives work to any man over 34 years of age. W. S.

STATISTICAL QUACKERY.

*Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Labour Statistics.
Michigan, 1886.*

A MASS of figures and statements compiled in the interest of the exploiting and governing classes of America and designed like those of our Levis and Giffens at home, to humbug the workers into quiet submission to their fleecers. The dishonest method of comparison constantly used in such papers as the *Echo* and *Dispatch* and in the clap-trap oratory of capitalist Radicals and their hirelings, is to be found abundantly in this volume. The status of the workers is not judged in relation to the amount of wealth produced by the community and the standard of living among the well-to-do, but by comparison with the labourers of Europe; in the same way that our Brights and Bradlaughs contrast the position of the British workman of to-day with that of thirty or forty years ago. The consular reports from England, Ireland, Germany, Italy, etc., are quoted with the evident intention of impressing the workers of America with a due sense of the inestimable blessings they enjoy in living in "the glorious republic of the West." Of course it is quite plain that if an American labourer receives 17 dollars, say, whereas an Englishman or German receives respectively only 12 and 10 dollars, then the former must be a very discontented, suspicious, and ungrateful fellow if he ventures to think he is not getting the full results of his toil. There is, too, another advantage of these statistics. There is always the margin between the highest and lowest of the rates paid in the respective countries for the employers to work upon. Emigration is encouraged, and as time goes on, the condition of the American workers will be gradually assimilated to that of their brethren in Europe. Part II. relates to strikes, which, of course, are very foolish and wicked and seem to have been promoted according to the Report by a few loafers, who with "sophistical arguments of a Socialistic nature," etc., caused the workers to quit their employment against their better judgment. As might be supposed, the whole report is utterly one-sided. It is not likely that men with any spark of independence would care to lay their views before the Commissioner; and so page after page is filled with the "opinions" of sneaks, "scabs," and "rats," who all speak in terms of respect for "the boss," and denounce the wicked, lazy union men who wanted to work only ten hours per day. If my Radical fellow-workers who are being led astray after the will-o'-the-wisp of Labour Bureaus in England, would only "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" such reports as that I have now before me, I fancy the M.P.s now trying to make political capital out of their advocacy, would soon have to look up a new dodge. Of what possible benefit can it be to the workers that they should be taxed to create snug jobs for a few Howells and Broadhursts in compiling these volumes of quack statistics. What it concerns us to know is not the average rate of wages paid in this country or that, or dietary tables to show how little we can contrive to exist upon in the interest of our exploiters. The only figures worth the trouble of compiling are those that will show the workers how they are plundered and bamboozled; and hopelessly dense must be the foolishness of that man who expects a bourgeois government to do that, whether it be Tory or Radical, Monarchical or Republican.

T. BINNING.

NOTES.

In America we are on the eve of a great fight, whose end no man may tell. The cause of battle is the 8 hours' working day. If America is to fight this good fight, can England be far behind her in the strife?

Harvard University, however, has a Chair of Scientific Socialism. There is no idea at present of founding one at Oxford or Cambridge.

There are three great labour organisations in America. (1) The Federation of Trades and Labour Unions of the United States and Canada, representing 380,000 workers. This was the first organisation to try boycotting. During the past two years it has organised 237 boycotts. 114 are still in action, 99 have led to victories, 24 to defeats. On the day of the issue of this number of the *Commonweal* the Federation goes out on strike for the 8 hours' working-day.

(2) The Knights of Labour; 7,041 sections, with more than 100,000 members, says the report of their last congress at Hamilton, Ontario.

(3) The Socialist party in America, into which in spirit, if not in name all others may one day be absorbed. Three daily papers and one weekly, *Der Sozialist*, are in evidence as to its growing power.

Henry Richmond, 52 years of age, had been in one situation exactly one-half his life. Then he made some mistake in his work, of pianoforte making, and was dismissed. Verdict on the dead Henry Richmond: "Suicide whilst of unsound mind." Verdict on the capitalistic system that makes such things possible: "Murder whilst of unsound soul."

There is talk of indicting the leaders in the Tramway strike in New York for conspiracy. There is no foundation for the rumour that the directors are to be treated in the same way for getting so many hours per day of unpaid labour out of every one of their men, under false pretences.

Tramways are quite internationally on the move just now. The North and South Paris Tramway Companies are to be bought out for some 14,000,000 francs. These will, of course, be paid out of the lives of the working-classes. But for the yearly tribute the companies had to pay per

mile to the General Omnibus Company of Paris, it would have paid splendid dividends. So that now its shareholders will receive 14,000,000 francs for doing nothing from the municipality, instead of getting them on the same terms out of their drivers and conductors.

Professor Huxley has joined the noble army of reactionaries. With grief be it said that as a rule our scientists, if they do ever meddle with politics, are the worst of foes to the proletariat. Tyndall and Huxley in England, Vogt and Haeckel in Germany, are sad cases in point. Living comfortably, very comfortably, in their studies and dining-rooms, the cry for Home Rule or for labour emancipation never reaches their ears, or, at least, never wakes an understanding echo in their hearts.

Let us honourably except one, not the least among them, Alfred Russell Wallace. I cannot think of any other that has written or spoken for economic or political freedom, without which intellectual liberty is like capital, only for the good of the few.

HARD TIMES.—At Protheroe and Morris's Rooms, Cheapside, on Monday, April 19th, the following prices for orchids were realised:—*Odontoglossum Alexandrae*, with four flowers, 160 guineas; *Cypripedium Morganianum*, 65 guineas; *Vanda Sanderiana*, 40 guineas; *Cypripedium Fairreanum*, 30 guineas, etc.; the sale realising about £1,250.—*Daily News*, April 21st.

Some amusement, of a rather sorrowful kind, may be derived from the fight for the Shop Hours Bill. Its leading advocate is Sir John Lubbock, one of the most unfair and virulent of the opponents to any measure of justice to Ireland. One of its most vigorous antagonists is Mr. Maple, of Tottenham Court Road. By the way, the upholstering exploiter should send the clerk that writes his newspaper letters for him back to the counting house, and get another with more command of his own language, if not of Mr. Maple's.

These Maples, Shoolbreds, Whiteleys, are an awful product of our demoralised age and immoral society. And when they take to having letters written for them in decayed English, on behalf of the small retail traders and against the shop assistants, one feels that while they are mindful of the last rung of the ladder up which they have climbed to opulence, they have forgotten the one at which they started. Stop having letters written for you, Mr. Maple, and go in for Parliament again. You are fit for that.

Ed. A.

TRADES UNION ITEMS.

The London Trades Council is waking up. It has recently issued a circular, addressed "to the workpeople of every industry," against systematic overtime. The circular which is distinctly progressive in character, points out that the advantage to individuals in working overtime is illusory, and results in injury to the whole body of workers, "by making them still more the slaves of capitalists. Every extra hour they work after production equals the requirements of the community, promotes the growth of an idle class, and helps to keep surplus-labour at the command of the employers," etc. The inevitable result of increased competition, still further intensified by the employment of child labour, is also commented upon, and the workers are exhorted "to aim at apportioning the work necessary for the sustenance of the community equally between those desirous of living by honourable labour, as the preliminary to a higher state of humanity."

The committee of the London Society of Compositors have also issued a circular dealing with the same question. The enormous amount paid in unemployed relief is commented on in the spirit of articles which have appeared in the *Commonweal*. It is pointed out that the large sums of money paid out of the earnings of the members of trades unions, keep down the rates in the interests of portions of the community who are hostile to the interests of labour. The committee assert "most emphatically that no trade union was ever established for the purpose of supporting a proportion of its members in enforced idleness." They declare that the action and principle of trades unionists should be to divide the necessary labour of the community so that all should earn their own living, instead of one portion working hard and being taxed to support another portion in idleness.

Talking of unions, an interesting item of news comes from New York to the effect that a Newsboys' Union has been started there. It has a membership of one hundred. They will not sell rat newspapers or those which are boycotted. The American workers do not, like us, support the papers which insult and oppose them.

There is, for instance, that disgustingly brutal vulgar periodical misnamed *Fun*, with its foul slang and execrable drawing, whose very existence is proof of a low and degraded state of society. The other day this champion of so-called "free labour," sought to make "ratting" respectable by depicting Mr. Gladstone in the guise of an Irish "knobstick," with some doggerel setting forth the virtues of the model working man who refuses "to join trades unions and go on strike." The boss rat and his humbler congeners should be left to support their own organ. It is difficult to understand how any workman with any sense of self-respect can contribute even a penny to the support of such a paper.

Why do not the London Trades' Council follow the excellent example of the unionists of New Haven (Conn.), and issue an official organ like the bright, vigorous "Workmen's Advocate," and thereby bring into closer relationship the organised workmen of the metropolis, and by providing healthy food for thought and reflection on their industrial, social and political condition, do something to counteract the evil influence of such papers as the *Weekly Dispatch* and other capitalist sheets, so heedlessly supported by the very people whose real interests they are established to oppose?

T. B.

HOW THRIFT AIDS CAPITALISM.—Recently a naval pensioner asked a Preston capitalist for work. "What is your pension?" asked the capitalist. "Twelve shillings a week," said the worker. "Well, if you will take eight shillings a week, you may go on. You will then have a shilling more than Brown gets." The naval pensioner accepted. The reward of his thrift—pension in his case meaning accumulation of savings from under-payment—being one shilling to himself and eleven to the capitalist. W. S.



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

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

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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

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

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

RECEIVED—England: Anarchist—Worker's Friend—Daylight (Norwich)—Christian Socialist—Church Reformer—National Review—Republican—Journal of Vigilance Association—Justice—To-Day—Freethinker—Practical Socialist—Leicester Co-operative Record. Belgium: La Guerre Social (Brussels). Canada: L'Union Ouvrière (Montreal). France: Paris: Cri du Peuple (daily)—La Revue Socialiste—Le Révolté—Le Socialiste—La Tribune des Peuples—Revue du Mouvement Social. Le Devoir (Guise)—Le Forçat du Travail (Bordeaux). Germany: Neue Zeit (Stuttgart). Holland: Recht voor Allen. Hungary: Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik (Budapest). India: Voice of India (Bombay)—Hindu Patriot (Calcutta)—People's Friend (Madras). Italy: La Question Sociale (Turin)—Il Fascio Operaio (Milan). Morocco: Almoghreb Al-aksa (Tangiers). New Zealand: Watchman. Portugal: O Campino—Voz do Operario—O Protesto Operario (Lisbon). Spain: El Angel del Hogar—Revista Social—Acracia (Barcelona)—Bandera Social (Madrid)—El Socialista (Madrid)—El Socialismo (Cadiz). Switzerland: Sozial Demokrat (Zürich). U. S. A.: (New York): Volkszeitung—Der Sozialist—Freiheit—Progress—John Swinton's Paper—Spread the Light—Our Country—Amerikanische Arbeiter-zeitung. (Boston): Liberty—Woman's Journal—Index. Denver (Col.) Labor Inquirer—Little Socialist—Chicago (Ill.) Alarm—Detroit (Mich.) Labor Leaf—Princeton (Mass.) Word—Cleveland (O.): Carpenter—Chronicle. Cincinnati (O.) Unionist—San Francisco (Cal.) Chronicle—Stockton (Cal.) Mail—Petersburg (Ill.) Voice of Labor—New Haven (Conn.) Workmen's Advocate—St. Louis (Mo.): Die Parole—Altruist. Kansas (Mo.) Sun—Pittsburg (Pa.) Labor Herald—Paterson (N. J.) Labor Standard—Baltimore (Md.) Labor Free Press—Valley Falls (Kan.) Lucifer—Atlanta (Ga.) New Working World—Newfoundland (Pa.) La Torpille—Litchfield (Minn.) Radical—Manchester (N. H.) Weekly Budget—Portland (Oregon) Alarm.

INDEPENDENT IRELAND.

MR. GLADSTONE'S measure has at last seen light, and it must at least be said of it that under the circumstances it has been accepted joyfully by the people whom it was chiefly meant to serve: the Irish at least are pleased. This is an improvement on the character of most measures of reform, which usually rather err in defect than in excess of that ancient vice and modern virtue, cowardice; and which consequently discourage friends while they fail in conciliating enemies. To find the irreducible minimum has been Mr. Gladstone's aim, and according to the verdict of both friends and foes he has succeeded. A simple-minded man might have expected the Radicals, at any rate, to be pleased at this, but he will by this time be disillusioned. Some of them do indeed eat the leek thus presented to them by the Celtic champion with a tolerably good grace, but a great many insist on being thrashed before eating, which grace before meat they are, I think, not likely to lack.

The fact is these worthies were quite prepared to give Ireland Home Rule so long as Humbug accompanied it, so long as the grant of it did not enable the Irish to manage their own affairs; and they seem to have hoped (not perhaps without some reason) that Mr. Gladstone would contrive this trap for their benefit. It would indeed have been a triumph for modern bourgeois legislation to have been able to say, "We have done what you wanted, we offer you Home Rule, and now you won't take it." And that would have been quite in its manner too. But they have been disappointed and are forced to face a measure which the Irish believe will make them practically independent, and whether the bill passes or not, there is no doubt that they will not now

accept anything less than it. This is grievous enough for our Federation-of-the-Empire friends, but if they are Radicals to boot, what are they to do? Mr. Chamberlain sees that he cannot, as yet, join the Tory-Whig coalition, and consequently, in spite of the almost unanimous agreement of the London Liberal press, including the once anti-Jingo *Echo*, which now sees the error of its ways, he will probably have to content himself with looking on at a Gladstone triumph and a Whig protest, without sharing in either. The bill will pass the Commons either now or after a coalition muddle, or else the Irish will in some way or other rebel.

Under these circumstances it is not worth while to look into the details of Mr. Gladstone's bill, even if such matters could concern Socialists at all. It means the Independence of Ireland and not the sham Federation which the greater part of the Liberal Party intended it to mean. This is clearly shown by the fact that while Radicals cry out on injustice to the Irish in excluding them from the Westminster Parliament, these themselves will by no means accept the honour if they can help it, as they perceive it to tend towards Federation. One remedy at least they might have, of the kind known to the unthirsty horse when brought to water; they need not drink of the stream of honour and consideration flowing from Westminster; in other words they may stay at home and mind their own business, which they will sorely need to do. For the rest, the bill is a specimen of the usual Constitution-building, and is full of safeguards against dangers which, when they come near will send the said safeguards flying into space. We need not heed all that; the Irish people accept it, the Whigs reject it: that is enough.

But what is this new parliament to us Revolutionary Socialists who see no panacea in parliaments of any kind? Well, first the Irish (as I have some reason to know) will not listen to anything except the hope of independence as long as they are governed by England; no, not even to the most elementary propositions about the land, which concern them most and nearest—they can see nothing else than an Ireland freed from that government. They are, as it were, demoralised by a long war, and will likely enough confirm the prophecies of their enemies by floundering wofully amidst their difficulties, when they have their own affairs to manage. But it is only by finding out what a parliament is like that they can know what a worthless instrument it is towards helping the community to a decent life; and they will have to meet those difficulties themselves and be responsible for their manner of dealing with them, instead of letting their responsibilities lapse into the willing hands of England. They will then surely begin to find out that English rule was so disastrous to them, not because of the difference of race between the governors and the governed, but because a crude form of arbitrary authority was practised on the "inferior race"; because England represented landlord and capitalist oppression, which, to say the truth, would not have lacked a representative even if she had not been paramount in Ireland.

Home Rule for Ireland is not of itself necessarily a revolutionary measure, but it will clear the ground for sowing the seed of Revolution; and that all the more as the problem in Ireland is simpler than elsewhere, owing to its being chiefly an agricultural country. The patience and good humour of the people may help its new rulers to stave off the great change which shall make Ireland free by freeing all its inhabitants; and their terrible apprenticeship in misery may help in restraining them from claiming that decent and happy life which it will be easier for them to get for the claiming than it is to most peoples; but the claim will certainly be made, and can only be crushed by a bourgeois England triumphant over its enemy—THE PEOPLE.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

AN EXPLANATION.

The change of the *Commonweal* from a monthly to a weekly prevents my retaining the responsible position of one of its editors, as the necessary demands of a weekly on an editor's time can only be met by those in relatively more fortunate positions. The amount of time and work given by me to the paper in its new form will be not less than have been given heretofore.

EDWARD AVELING.

THE Government were badly beaten in the Socialist trial, and in fact it is difficult to understand why they persisted in it after their breakdown in Bow Street. Some attempt there was in the bourgeois press to make as little as possible of the defeat, but most people with memories will connect it with the police defeat of Dod Street last summer. The result shows that the general public are not prepared as yet to attack mere opinion, however dangerous it may seem, and should encourage all Socialists to speak plainly to the people; though it must be admitted that those who are fairly enlisted in the cause do not want much encouragement on that side. On the other hand, if our bourgeois have not the heart to resist such very plain attacks it shows how bad their conscience must be.

W. M.

MRS. GRUNDY'S MISHAP.*(See Cartoon.)*

AN old lady, in fear of a terrible foe,
Ran away from her shadow a short time ago—
Eighth day—second month—and the week-day was Monday;
And the old woman's surname was said to be Grundy.

What caused the unlucky old lady to quake?
And why should her shadow have set her a-shake?
She was doing her best to look sober and solemn,
As she passed by the base of Trafalgar Square column.

That she had some large parcels to carry is true;
And a good many people with nothing to do
Were waiting about on the chance of a job,
When poor Mrs. Grundy got mixed in the mob.

Now what were the parcels she had in her hand?
The load that looked largest was labelled the Land,
And the labourers living there once had been driven
Elsewhere to find houses—in hell or in heaven.

Another good-sized one was simply her purse,
Which no wonder she clung to, for better, for worse;
But the fact that 'twas heavy with other folks' gold
Made it slightly unsuitable for her to hold.

She had fastened the folds of the gown that she wore
With her bonds and her bank-notes behind and before;
But the cloak that she trusted for hiding her gown
She found to her horror was fast falling down.

Now in bonds and in bank-notes for clothes to be clad
Might have well made her nervous, except that she had,
To defend her from danger of drops or of dust,
A grand old umbrella whereon she could trust.

A grand old umbrella, two-handled and stout—
This handle was active when that was worn out—
And each was adorned with the head of a scamp;
She called the umbrella her Government gamp.

But just at this juncture, to add to her fears,
An unemployed urchin's voice struck on her ears,
And not stopping to listen to what he might say,
She hoisted her gamp up to hunt him away.

That she thus should be troubled she thought it was hard,
Having bought her a Bobby of tape and of card,
Whose duty it was in the name of the law
To protect the possessions she clutched in her claw.

So she hoisted her gamp up, when what did she see?—
What a terrible curse a bad conscience must be!—
She saw very plainly, terrific and tall,
A brutal black bogey 'twixt her and the wall.

That bogey's black arm was uplifted to smite;
And gruesome was good Mrs. Grundy's affright;
For enormous and weighty and knotted and black
Was the bludgeon whose blow took its aim at her back.

She tottered and trembled—for terror turned pale—
But such sad situations 'tis proper to veil—
Yet before she got home she abused like a Turk
That unemployed urchin who asked her for work.

J. L. JOYNES.

INSURRECTION IN BELGIUM.

I.

THE events which have taken place in Belgium since the 18th of March, the anniversary of the Paris Commune, and which still continue, although under slightly altered conditions, certainly deserve that we should endeavour to understand and to explain them, in a manner somewhat different from that which has been done by the papers of the bourgeoisie, the very organs of financial, commercial and industrial feudality.

Belgium is certainly the most extraordinary country in the world; everywhere, in other lands, its liberty, its greatness, its riches are boasted of; all the citizens are equal in the eyes of the law, and all offices alike open to them; liberty of conscience is absolute, and no one can be hindered in any manner whatsoever, from freely expressing his opinion upon all subjects, whether philosophical, political, or economical; its constitution, the palladium of all its liberties, is inviolable and has never been violated; all those privileges which were formerly attached

to birth or wealth, have been abolished; in a word, Belgium, that happiest corner of the earth, envied by the gods, has for more than fifty years existed in joy, comfort and liberty, under the protecting ægis of a king who, having nothing to do at home, devotes his leisure to carrying the benefits and blessings of Belgian civilisation to the unfortunate negro savages of the region of central Africa.

We do not know whether after the events which have so suddenly broken out in this earthly paradise, the buffoons who make it their mission to form public opinion in other countries, will still think and write in their journals that little Belgium is the model of a constitutional country; but we believe that for our part we shall find but little difficulty in proving that in Belgium liberty is a bitter irony, that its greatness only resembles a soap-bubble which a mere breath is sufficient to burst; and that its riches are entirely absorbed by an oligarchy composed of an exceedingly small number of people, who, to the great detriment of the large mass of the nation, are living by theft, fraud, rapine and exaction. There is no country in the world where equality between the citizens exists less than in Belgium; where privileges are more scandalously accumulated in the hands of the few; where the social problem presents itself more formidably and where, unless all the symptoms are deceptive, revolution will break out sooner than anywhere else.

Corruption is the greatest fomentor of revolution; and it may safely be said that in Belgium the governing, aristocratic and middle-classes are all absolutely corrupted. Power, politics, the magistracy, the political press, both great and small, finance, commerce, industry, literature and science—everything is bought and sold, everything is bartered.

Power is for the highest bidder; this régime of political intrigue and constitutional corruption has so deteriorated the character and the heart, that moral and social decomposition exists there without remedy, and will finish by carrying away everything.

The invasion of political functions by financiers of all sorts, has produced there such confusion that one no longer knows whether he has to do with honest but stupid legislators, or with vulgar stock-jobbers. For more than half a century the Belgian bourgeoisie have plunged themselves up to the neck in the mire of finance, in gambling on the exchange; and there is scarcely a minister, a representative or political man whose name has not been stained by some doubtful association, whose fame has not suffered from his being mixed up in some equivocal transaction. The aristocracy of birth, having shaken off its old prejudices, joins hands with the aristocracy of fortune, and both by mixing politics with finance, government with business, have contrived to cover the country with an inextricable net-work of companies, joint-stock, insurance, banking, agricultural and industrial; with coal and iron and stone, and even mud and dirt companies of all kinds, all set on foot by a "Company of General Improvements," which sustains the political power and is sustained by it. Intrigue, stock-jobbing, trading, speculation, are organised from the top to the bottom of the governmental ladder; the Exchange is the antechamber of the Ministry, and the Ministry is the vestibule of the Bank! Thanks to this system, ambitious people destitute of energy or talent, cynical flatterers and shameless courtiers, divide between themselves places, offices, and "honours," and emulate each other in devouring all who are not traffickers like themselves. The magistracy, the press, literature and science, are at the service of these people and complaisantly cajole their improper combinations. No dignity, no shame, nothing but the immoderate love of money. Science is on the same level as civic intelligence; it only exists in order to invent new ways and means of making business. Literature is a sink where all the vices, whether coarse or attractive, are by turns exhibited for the amusement of that gangrened society which is no longer capable of taking strong, healthy and substantial nourishment. The Belgian bourgeoisie is simply a mob, without ideas and without a conscience; it inspires the heart with disgust, not even with indignation.

A society which has arrived at such a degree of moral and social corruption, cannot exist long, and therefore, also, nothing can prevail against the new society which is organising itself slowly but surely. From time to time, one of these formidable revolts, like the one which has just raged in Belgium, comes to interrupt the tranquillity of the bourgeoisie; these signs are the harbingers of the social tempest, the "Mene, Tekel, Upharsin" of modern times, and will break out again here and there, with more or less force, until one day, the cup of iniquity being full, the destruction will be complete and final.

VICTOR DAVE.

(To be continued.)

One of the saddest things in the terrible struggle for life at the present day is the eagerness with which any "employment" however miserable, is clutched at; so that when the Bourgeois conscience awakes to the fact that some occupation or other is so disgracefully carried on that something must be done to amend it, the victims of the abuse themselves are often among the first to cry out against the interference. The case of the pit-brow women is an example of this: they are prepared to fight tooth and nail in defence of their wretched work, and are being helped in their battle by philanthropists and fine ladies whose imaginations are not strong enough to master the picture of their daughters or themselves working day in day out on such terms. When will the workers at least come to understand the meaning of employing women and children to do work which men can do better, which is simply the reduction of the wages paid to the adult male at the expense of the over-work and degradation of the weaker members of the household; a price not too high to pay for cheap labour, thinks the capitalist, since I don't pay it.

W. M.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"MODERN MONEY-LENDING"

Bombay, Feb. 24, 1886.

Enclosed is a cutting from a Bombay newspaper of this week, showing how the money-lenders thrive on their trade in India. The man lends ostensibly at 2 per cent per month, but as he secures his interest in advance, he really lends only Rs. 1,710 to be repaid Rs. 3,000 in equal monthly instalments in 20 months. If the Rs. 3,000 were to be paid at the end of the term, the interest would amount to 42 per cent. per annum, but as it is to be repaid in equal instalments of principal and interest, the interest is really doubled, amounting to 84 per cent. per annum. Notice that he will only lend upon "good security," i.e., some one in good position is expected to back the bill. I judge from internal evidence that the person concerned is either a government official or a military officer.

D. GOSTLING.

"A correspondent has sent us the following characteristic letter which he has received from a money-lender in a neighbouring town in reply to an inquiry as to the terms on which he would lend a sum of Rs. 3,000. For pure unadulterated villainy," the correspondent remarks, "the letter will be in the first rank."

"With reference to your letter of 29th January, 1886, we beg to inform you that we shall be very glad to advance you money on the following terms which we hope, will approve you. Bond for (Rs. 3,000) to be repaid by monthly instalments at (Rs. 150) for 20 months. Interest at 2 per cent. per mensem, to be paid in advance (Rs. 1,200) leaves (Rs. 1,800). Deduct commission (Rs. 90) at 3 per cent. on (Rs. 3,000). Net amount (Rs. 1,710). Good security must kindly be given. We shall be highly obliged if you will give us 20 cheques, so as to enable us to draw the 20 instalments through your agent in Bombay, and not to trouble you for the same. If you approve the above terms, we shall send you the rough copy of the bond to be written; and, on receiving the bond, we shall send the money by postal order. Hoping you will complete the transaction."

"INTERNATIONALISM"

In claiming so emphatically to be nothing if not "international," I beg to raise the question whether English Socialists have arrived at a "scientific" conception of the term. In other words, have we distinctly realised whether "internationalism" utterly excludes "nationalism," or is founded upon and derived from pure nationalism? I am prepared to maintain the latter alternative; and I do so in strict compliance with the elementary conception of social evolution. The coherency or "solidarity" implied in internationalism must advance *pari passu* with, and must depend upon the differentiation or "heterogeneity" involved in national characteristics. This seems clear upon theoretical grounds, and it opens up the way to that respect and sympathy for national types which I believe nobody can entirely ignore, and which I imagine should be cherished upon considerations of art as well as morals.

Humanity without the picturesque traits of national character would become an unbeautiful monotony, and at the same time, by losing the mutually attractive influences of difference, would lack the connective principle of solidarity itself. Sameness is not solidarity. Race-hatred is accursed of course; away with it! But let us not destroy or despise the local colour and the charm of nationalism.

Rather let the nations say to each other frankly, "Be distinctly Dutch, or English or Scotch or Irish, but all the more be brothers." My purpose is attained if I have made clear the plea for nationalism, which arises from the necessity of discovering and respecting "the principle of good in things evil." I think the plea is good in reason and am sure it is wise in policy.

R. THOMSON.

CONCERNING THE "COMMONWEAL."

A comrade writes to us, on the naming of the *Commonweal* the "official" organ of the League, a letter which he himself summarises thus:

"1. While agreeing with most that appears in the *Commonweal*, I (and I doubt not many others) absolutely decline to be held responsible or to be expected to agree with all that appears in that paper.

"2. The public invariably hold the whole League responsible for all that appears in their official organ.

"3. It is impossible for any man to be responsible for the utterances of another, unless he has previously fully instructed him, which is clearly impossible in the present case.

"4. Therefore, the title should be changed somewhat in this fashion: 'The *Commonweal*, an exponent of Socialism and organ of the Socialist League.'

The propositions 1, 2, 3, would, I think, meet with general assent from the members of the League. I beg to remind our correspondent that all articles are signed, and therefore those that write them are the only persons fully responsible for the opinions in them, but the editors are responsible for their appearance in the paper. The *Commonweal* is called the "official" organ of the League, because the Editors are responsible to it for the whole conduct of the paper, are appointed by the League, who have the power of making them amend or repudiate in the name of the League anything that seems to militate against our principles. Undoubtedly the Editors would not insert any matter with the opinions of which they did not agree in the main, without making some sign of their disagreement. I must add that it seems to me that the difference between "the organ of the League" and "official organ," is one of words only.

W. M.

Society is barbarous until every industrious man can get his living without dishonest customs.—Ralph W. Emerson.

Many politicians are in the habit of laying it down as a self-evident proposition, that no people ought to be free till they are fit to use their freedom. The maxim is worthy of the fool in the old story, who resolved not to go into the water till he had learned to swim.—T. B. Macaulay.

THE PEOPLE'S PRESS.

(Under this heading will be found a collection of pithy paragraphs collated from various journals published in the interest of the workers. Comrades and friends are invited to forward cuttings from English and translations from foreign labour journals.)

The truest test of civilisation is not the census, nor the size of the cities, nor the crops—no, but the kind of men the country turns out.—*Hastings* (Mich.) *Journal*.

Is money more sacred than human life? If not, when one is drafted to defend the nation, why should not the other be drafted also, in just and equitable quotas?—*Chicago Express*.

The cranks of the present are the men who have an idea, a thought involving a principle in science, in political economy, or in government, which is not comprehended by those who sneer at them. It is better to be called a crank than a blockhead.—*Carpenter* (Cleveland, O.)

The policy of the government seems to be to take care of the Indians because they make trouble. It will be a cold day for any government when the out-work white population comprehend this policy, and they will not be slow to act upon it.—*Labor Leaf*.

"In the castle of Labour dwells Riches." True, but why does not Labour dwell in his own castle? Because at the gate of the castle Riches has placed two giants, Custom and Ignorance. These keep Labour out of his rights. While Riches dwells in Labour's castle, Labour must needs find shelter in Poverty's hovel.—*Labor Leaf*.

There is far too much, even in our own ranks, of the worship of so-called "eminent" and leading men. We think it a great thing when one of this class lets fall a few words seemingly favourable to our cause, forgetful that in the vast majority of cases these lights of politics and society and culture have only gained their positions by trucking and toadying to wealth, and not daring to call their souls their own.—*Palladium of Labor*.

Intense feeling, not correct theory merely, is needed to-day. The ever-growing poverty of the many and its terrible results spring from a social disease. Its most dangerous quality is the power to render its victims blind, indifferent, and helpless. To rouse them to their need is the first work. This done there will be no trouble to find the remedy. It is the lethargy of the masses, benumbed by some fatal spell, that makes the situation menacing.—*Our Country*.

Capital like fire and water is a very good servant but a most cruel master. Capital is the creature of labour and so long as it holds a subordinate position to its creator—so long as capital remains the obedient servant of labour—all will be well. But when this natural order is reversed—when capital becomes the master and labour the servant, as we now find them—then look out for trouble.—*Daily Citizen* (Topeka, Kansas).

Vanderbilt is dead, but the corporations through which he made his money still live. And these corporations will go on legally robbing the wealth-producers, just the same as if Vanderbilt was living. And here is the lesson working-men should learn: Our fight is not against men, but against systems. The axe must be laid at the root of this upas tree, this monarchical system of industry. The power to legally rob must be abolished: peaceably, if we can; forcibly, if we must.—*Labor Leaf*.

The special honour of modern Socialism lies in this, that it has fairly destroyed the economic dogma of Liberalism that free competition is the soul of modern society, and that all is well if the strong, acting within the law of the land, drive the weak to the wall. It is Socialism which has taught the world that trade and commerce, society and political economy must rest on a foundation of sound morals, and that without such a basis modern society would end in a tragic conflagration.—*Boston Beacon*.

Many capitalistic newspapers advise the Knights of Labour—for the sake of their good name—to do away with the nasty practice of boycotting obnoxious employers. That would certainly suit them; but the Knights are not such fools as to cast aside the best weapon within their reach, while the struggle against oppressive employers is becoming more intense. The good name capitalists would allow them to carry, would be a luxurious and expensive article.—*Cincinnati Unionist*.

During the late rise in the Missouri river a man was standing watching the driftwood float past, when he called to several coloured brethren standing by, and said he would give them half of all they fished out. The proposition was too good to be rejected, and the sable spectators went to work with a will. They rescued a lot of the driftwood and divided it, the result of their labour being a good thing for all concerned—particularly good for the man who made the generous offer. The occurrence will seem exceedingly funny to most people, but there is a great deal of work done on what is practically the same plan. The men who stand on the bank and make big-hearted propositions are called financiers, and so they are.—*Leavenworth Journal*.

This reminds us of the story of the white loafer and the negro idling on a wood pile at Nantucket. Says white loafer to negro: "Sam, go get a shovel and basket, go down to the shore and dig a bushel of clams and I'll give you half." And the negro did it. This seems very funny—that anybody should be so foolish; but if you will stop and think you will see that the classes which live by usury, speculation and their wits, giving no equivalent in production for what they enjoy, whether they actually say to the workers of the country, "Make your goods and bring them here and we'll give you half," or not, so manipulate matters as to get their half, all the same.—*Our Country*.

A coat does good service to a growing boy, yet when the lad outgrows the coat, it is cast off for a newer and better-fitting garment. In like manner our coat—the competitive system—has done us good service, but we are getting too big for it; it pinches us in every part, and as the time goes by and we find ourselves still growing, we feel increasing pain and misery from the inconvenience of wearing this old garment. We must therefore cast it off; this is necessary to our comfort, our safety and happiness; nay, to our very lives. Rest assured that if we do not quietly cast off this old garment—and that very soon—it will burst into pieces with a shock that will shake the earth to its very centre. Relief we must have; we cannot much longer stand the strain. The new garment—co-operation—is ready and waiting for us, and it behoves us to give heed to the demands of nature, and the whole human race.—*Labor Enquirer*.

Mr. Chamberlain was much exercised at the anti-democratic nature of the Home Rule Bill at Birmingham the other evening. Nor are we Socialists at all concerned to defend its details, as is said elsewhere in this paper; but when he said that it was ridiculous to suppose that the Irish people would accept it, it is really strange that he was not met by a shout of laughter even in the halls of the Caucus, and the fact seems to show that the Birmingham Radicals are deficient in a sense of humour, and Mr. Chamberlain has the same right to be displeased with them as the teller of a Joe Miller has when one of his audience requests a reasonable explanation of the joke. Mr. Chamberlain knows perfectly well that the Irish people have accepted the Bill, because they understand that whatever shortcomings or follies there may be in it, it is intended to give them the management of their own affairs. Mr. Chamberlain's constituents ought to know, and do know unless they are fools; that this is the very reason why Mr. Chamberlain opposes it. W. M.

RECORD OF THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT.

GERMANY.

The Anti-Socialist Law has been renewed for another two years. That this would be the case was a foregone conclusion, but as the Socialists took care to remark more than once, law or no law the movement will, nay must go on. That it had been practically ineffectual in the past was, indeed, admitted on all sides.

The debate, which lasted over three sittings of the Reichstag, and was as exciting and full of "incident" as an "Irish night" in the House of Commons, has been a tremendous success and triumph, not for the Socialists of Germany alone, but for us all. "The doctrine" has never been more admirably, more boldly preached, more thoroughly and with less high falutin'. The Anti-Socialist Law prohibits Socialist meetings; Herr Puttkammer (Minister of the Interior) declared that so great had been the effect of Bebel's speech at a Berlin meeting which he had not prohibited by way of experiment, that for the future, "so long as he had the honour to watch over the execution of this law, Bebel, *except from this tribune*, would not again be allowed to speak in public in Berlin." But "this tribune" is there, and not all Bismarck's Puttkammers can prevent thousands from reading the reports of this debate, and consequently of some of the best speeches ever made, even by Bebel and Liebknecht.

Of course the Commune and the "murder of the hostages" were trotted out. Equally, of course, reference was made to Nihilism, Belgian riots, London riots, etc. Bismarck became quite pathetic about the horrors of a "Communist state of society." In his opinion "life," under these Communist conditions, "will be valueless, and I shall be grateful if you will take mine," he said, "before it comes about. . . . Existence will be wretched. . . . before you attain your ideal, shoot me, with all well-thinking men." But even if he wished it very much I don't think we could oblige him in this way. He is too valuable a coadjutor. Then he went on to speak of the bold bad Socialists and their aims. They—these wicked Socialists—have "no higher aims, no nobler strivings; they have no hope in another life, but look upon enjoyment in this as their sole object, and they therefore promise their followers a life of enjoyment; they want to get as much enjoyment out of life as possible, and they want to make that enjoyment as common to all as possible. Socialists want equality of enjoyment, and because our present Society does not give this equality they want another Society, in order to bring about this equality of enjoyment." Bismarck must really have been exceptionally drunk or exceptionally sober when he put the question so well.

The old "Communist Manifesto" was largely quoted, especially to prove that Socialists want to "abolish marriage" and "have women in common." Liebknecht thereupon read a passage from the manifesto on bourgeois marriage and bourgeois morality, which I hope the virtuous and moral gentlemen enjoyed.

That good, gentle Christian, perjurer and Jew-baiter, Chaplain Stöcker, was also much to the fore, and helped to enliven the debate considerably. The Socialists reminded him more than once that having been proved to have committed perjury he was not the man to show himself among decent-minded people at all. They also told him he was a "liar," that to be compared to him was "an insult," that he was "one of the most contemptible of creatures," and other pretty things, more accurate than polite. But for my own part I feel grateful to the gentle pastor. As usual, he could not speak without dragging in the Jews, and he bore such testimony to the good work they are doing for Socialism, to the "extraordinary percentage of them" among the Nihilists, that, I repeat, I am personally very grateful to him.

It is to be hoped that the speeches of Bebel (he spoke three or four times) and of Liebknecht and Vollmar will be published in pamphlet form. Bismarck declared the Socialists had no programme, but these very speeches set forth that programme very clearly. I regret that I cannot here give them. The whole drift of them was to point out that this social revolutionary movement is not one that is "made" by any few men, but is a historical development and necessity; that this revolution must come, and that it means the expropriation of the present exploiters of labour, of the bourgeois class, itself the outcome of revolutions; that all this tinkering called "social reform" is of no avail, because if it were genuine it would mean really the same as the dreaded "revolution." Bebel concluded a speech with these words: "Whatever you may do, we have this conviction, our party will grow, it will develop, and we shall force the State and Society to do justice to our demands, till at last in one way or the other a Socialist State of Society is realised." Liebknecht concluded his speech thus: "We are reproached with wanting to make a revolution. But revolutions are not made. . . . We are in the very midst of revolution. Look back for the last twenty years . . . everywhere revolution, upheavals, constant changes. And if you see what has happened in the past, I beg you also to look forward. . . . Of course I can see into the future as little as yourselves, but this I know, *what exists to-day will not exist then*. . . . Every one must be responsible for his own acts. I will only cry this to you. To your pity we do not appeal, the result (on the voting of the law) is indifferent to us, we shall conquer anyhow. Do your worst, it will be for our best! And the more insensate your rage, the more rapidly will it draw towards an end with you; the pitcher goes often to the well, but is broken at last!"

Among other things Bismarck took occasion to state that he "did not know whether Marx had bred murderers, but this he had heard, that the man, of whose shots he still bore the scars, was a pupil of Marx!" To this statement my sister Laura Lafargue and I have sent a short reply to Herr Bismarck, in which we point out that the fright our dead father inspired in him was quite unnecessary; that he never saw poor young Ferdinand Blind after he was 12 or 13 years old; that all the objects Blind could have had in courageously braving death by firing at Herr Bismarck were of complete indifference to our father; that like his master and model Louis Bonaparte, Bismarck was to Marx only a comic personage, useful perhaps as involuntary accomplice of the proletarian revolution; finally that the ridiculous idea that a man like Marx could have spent his time "breeding assassins" only proves how right Marx was to see in Bismarck nothing but a Prussian clothopper, who despite his cunning is utterly incapable of understanding no matter what great historical movement. E. M. A.

ITALY.

Last week seven Anarchists were condemned by the tribunal of Massa Carrara to several terms of imprisonment, under the imputation of criminal

association, a formula invented by the Government to reach all those Anarchists, who, although they have not rendered themselves liable for any special offences, are active enough in their propaganda to give umbrage to the authorities.

At Pavia, several thousands of peasants went on strike, asking no more than 1fr. 40c. per day; but the Government, *more solito*, interfered, arrested seventeen leaders (who were treacherously invited to go and explain their reasons to the Municipality, and were retained under arrest), and put by force an end to the strike—at any rate, a temporary end.

At Mantua, during the Easter holidays, a Socialistic Congress will be held. S. M.

LITERARY NOTICES.

The Anarchist, as announced in No. 14, will represent Communist-Anarchism for the future, Comrade Seymour acknowledging in manly fashion the untenability of his former individual viewpoint.

My Royal Father, a Story for Women. 3 Vols. (White and Co., Southampton Street).—An evidently intimate acquaintance with South African life, which enables him to look upon "civilisation" from an outside viewpoint, combined with keen insight, render Mr. J. S. Little's novel most interesting as a social study. The artificially false relations between the sexes, the conventional trammels that surround our most ordinary actions, the foul corruption and sycophantic hypocrisy that pass current for morality, are trenchantly laid bare, with some striking revelations of the real depth and sublimity of life. Apart from a slight prolixity, and tendency to labored diction, the work is well written and will repay perusal.

A Brief Sketch of the First French Revolution, 1789-1794 (W. H. Allen and Co.) is one of those mournful productions which bespeak either malevolent ignorance or shameless venality on the part of their compilers. It is intended, according to a naive admission in the preamble, "for the benefit of those who have not leisure or inclination to read in full the history of that dreadful time." All the rulers are "good" and "noble," the rebels "human monsters," "infuriated demagogues." Yet the author speaks of the "real solid grievances of the honestly industrial poor" without a word that would tend to show the slightest desire to redress the said grievances save in the "ruffians" and "cut-throats," who throughout are denounced as having no aim beyond "indulging to the full their love of destruction." But it is when the moral is to be pointed and a lesson deduced for the workers of to-day that this inflated fustian becomes most pronounced. The questions are gravely asked "Will the utter ruin of those whose numerous desires now furnish you with employment benefit you?" "Abolish the rich, with their tastes and luxuries, and who will buy anything but the plainest of food and clothing?" and the workers are expected to see that the abolition of the parasite class that now prey upon their labour would injure them! The workers are further told, "You think that when money and land are taken from their owners and divided equally, you and your fellows will be placed above the need of employment. Do not believe it." A convenient forgetfulness is here shown of the fact that it is not an indefinite "sharing-up" that is contended for, but the control by the community of the means for production and distribution of wealth, so that to each may be secured the full fruits of his labour.

We have also received *Leasehold Aggrandisement and Freehold Disfranchisement* (Liberty and Property Defence League).—*As Dodas Reaes*, by J. Carrilho Vieira (De la Rosa, Lisbon).—*Manifesto of Christian Socialist Society* (Reeves, Fleet Street).—*Indicators v. Book-keeping* (Bale and Sons, Oxford Street).

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

Notice to Members.

General Meeting.—On Monday May 24, at 8.30 p.m. Council meets at 7.30.

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

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

Annual Conference.—Whitsunday, June 13. Attention of Branches is especially called to Rule V. (pages 3 and 4 Constitution and Rules).

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

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

Notice to Lecturers and Branch Secretaries.

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

REPORTS.

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

Comrades Lane and Morris were appointed by the Council on March 29, to represent the League upon an International Committee to consider the Belgian troubles. A manifesto in French and Dutch was issued by the committee and a Concert has been arranged, advertisement of which will be found on eighth page.

A new Branch has been formed at Hackney, where there is every prospect of success.

The Bradford, Leeds, and Dublin Branches have been visited during the month by Comrade Morris, an article by whom, recounting his experiences, will appear in next issue.

Norwich has held an "Easter Campaign" with the assistance of Comrades Kitz and Mowbray, which has been attended with most gratifying results. Our comrades started work on Friday morning, and right through to Monday night, held two meetings daily. The Sunday afternoon meeting in the market-place was attended by over 1,000 persons. The interest shown by both men and women on all hands has been very encouraging, and will repay our Norwich friends for the great efforts they have made.

Other Branches would find it beneficial to arrange for speakers to visit them at holiday times when excursion trains offer such facilities for travel.

It is suggested to all Branches that they form committees for the purpose of looking up members who fall in arrears or fail to attend.

Secretaries of Branches are asked to note day for sending in weekly report, so that it may be inserted in current number.

A leaflet (No. 9) has been issued entitled, "Shall Ireland be Free?" of which over 5,000 have already been distributed in different parts of the country.

The Concert which was to have taken place on Saturday 24th April, is postponed to Saturday May 5.

One of our comrades of the Mile-end Branch, J. Slodden, has been out of employment for three months, having been discharged because of his article upon "East End Workers" in the July number of the Commonwealth. A benefit has been got up for him, tickets for which may be obtained at this office or from the Mile-end Branch.

FRENCH AND BELGIAN MINERS.

A Concert in aid of the Fund for the relief of the French and Belgian miners in distress, will be given at South Place Chapel on Saturday May 1, at 8 p.m. Front seats, 6s. Side rows, 2s. 6d. Admission, 1s. Tickets may be obtained at the Office of the League.

"THE COMMONWEAL."

This number constitutes the first of the weekly series, and with it is given a cartoon. In future the Commonwealth will be ready every Thursday afternoon at 3 o'clock. A special effort should now be made by every one to extend the circulation of the paper. Terms of subscription are favourable and should result in a large increase in the number of subscribers. At the same time, our friends would materially assist us by sending labour and trade notes from their different localities.

LECTURE DIARY.

HALL OF THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE 13 FARRINGTON ROAD, E.C.

Sunday Evening Lectures, 7.30.

May 2. R. Banner, "The Fraud of Politics." 9. J. Lane, "Will Land Nationalisation alone benefit the Workers?"

Wednesday Evening Lectures, 8.30.

May 5. W. Chambers, "The Socialist League Manifesto." 12. W. Morris, "Art and Labour."

BRANCH MEETING ROOMS.

LONDON.

- Bloomsbury—Business meeting at central office every Wednesday at 7.30.
Croydon.—County Hotel, near West Croydon Station. Sundays at 8 p.m.
Business meeting at Parker Road every Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock.
Hoxton (L. E. L.).—Exchange Coffee House, Pitfield Street, opposite Hoxton Church, N. Sunday evenings at 7.45.
May 2. W. Chambers, "Ireland." 9. C. Wade, "Faith, Hope and Charity."
Hammersmith.—Kelmiscott House, 26 Upper Mall, W. Sundays at 8 p.m.
Hackney.—Kenton Coffee House, Kenton Road, Hackney.
Merton.—11 Merton Terrace, High Street. Sundays and Wednesdays at 8 p.m.
Mile-end.—I. W. M. Educational Club, 40 Berner Street, Commercial Road. Tuesdays at 8 p.m. May 4. J. Quintin, "The Over-population Chitnera," a challenge to Malthusians.
North London.—Communications to R. A. Beckett, St. Mildred's House, Poultry, E.C.
South London.—Business meetings at 103 Bird-in-bush Road, on Sundays at 7.30.

PROVINCIAL.

- Birmingham.—Bell Street Coffee House. Every Monday evening, at 7.30. All are invited.
Bradford.—Laycock's Temperance Hotel, Kirkgate. Meetings every Tuesday at 8 p.m. Sympathisers invited.
Dublin.—30 Great Brunswick Street. Every Tuesday at 7.45 p.m.
Edinburgh (Scottish Section).—4 Park Street. Meets every Friday at 8.30 p.m.
Glasgow.—Neilson's Hotel, Ingram Street, every Saturday at 7 p.m. Lectures and discussions. All are invited.
Leeds.—54, Myrtle Street. Meets every Tuesday at 8 p.m.
Leicester.—Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate. Every Sunday at 3 o'clock.
Manchester.—County Forum. Fridays, at 8 p.m.
Norwich.—Gordon Cafe. Every Monday at 8 p.m.
Royton.—"Greyhound Inn." Every Sunday evening at 7.30.
Oldham.—Mrs. Wrigley's Coffee Tavern, 9, Old Market Place. Meets every Wednesday at 7.30 p.m. The Secretary will be happy to give lectures on Socialism to any of the Liberal and Radical Clubs in the town and neighbourhood; address 57 Landsdowne Road, Chadderton, Oldham. Comrade Tod, 73 Book Street, off Ashton Road, will be glad to see or hear from bona fide inquirers.
Oxford.—"The Temperance," Pembroke Street, St. Aldates. Every Monday at 8.30 p.m.

OPEN AIR PROPAGANDA.

(For the week ending Saturday May 5th.)

LONDON.

Table with columns: Date, Station, Time, Speaker, Branch. Includes entries for Canning Town, Edgware Road, Hammersmith, Hoxton, Mile-end, Regent's Park, St. Pancras, Hyde Park, Victoria Park, Euston Road, Soho, Kingsland Road, Hoxton, Mile-end, Hackney Rd.

PROVINCES.

- Hulme.—The Viaduct, Chester Road. Sundays, 7 p.m.
Leeds.—Vicar's Croft, Sunday morning. Woodhouse and Hunslet Moors in the afternoon.
Manchester.—Grey Mare Corner, Ashton Old Road. Sundays, 11 a.m.
Oldham.—Curzon Ground. Sundays, afternoon and evening.

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

MEETINGS OF OTHER SOCIETIES.

Bristol.—SOCIALIST UNION (Bristol Section).—Every Thursday night at 8, at St. Philip's Coffee Tavern, 58 West Street. On Thursday April 1, C. Fitzgerald, of London, gave us a lecture, subject, "The Bread and Butter Question; or Why Should the Workers Starve." There was a good audience, and the frequent applause which was given testified to the great feeling of sympathy with all the speaker said. On April 8, H. Rogers lectured on "Rent and Interest the two Vampires of Modern Society." He showed that under these two names the life-blood of the workers is being sucked from them by men who are worse than useless to the community. A good discussion followed, in which a young student from Oxford took part, of course defending the orthodox political economy. At an adjourned discussion on April 15th, our Oxford friend came to open the discussion, and did a bit of special pleading for the existing system. He relied on the over-population theory, but it proved only a broken reed when our comrades Rogers and Sharland replied to him.—R. WEARE, hon. sec.

Liverpool.—THE WORKERS' BROTHERHOOD.—Wood Street Assembly Room. May 20, 8 p.m., Councillor Threlfall, President of last Trades Union Congress, on "Eight Hours." Open-air.—Old Haymarket, Sundays, 3.30.—R. F. E. WILLIS, hon. sec.

Sheffield Socialists.—An excellent lecture was delivered by John Sketchley of Birmingham before a good audience at Sheffield on Tuesday March 30; subject, "Why the Workers are in Poverty." The lecturer showed the futility of the current explanations—"over-population," "drink," etc.—pointed out the enormous increase of wealth during the last forty years, and proved convincingly by statistics that if this wealth were only justly distributed, the financial condition of the workers would be three or four times as good as it is now. He also brought further figures showing what a frightful burden the landlord and capitalist classes constitute on the industry of the country, and explained very clearly the value and uses of a paper currency. Mrs. Besant delivered a lecture at Attercliffe on Sunday evening, April 11, entitled, "Why I am a Socialist," which was enthusiastically received, and resulted in the formation of an Attercliffe Branch of the Sheffield Socialists.—E. C.

WHERE TO GET THE "COMMONWEAL."

LONDON.

- Old Ford Road—Roberts, 4; Caudle, 139.
Globe Road—Poole, 24; Caudle, 241; Brown, 253.
Mile End Road—174. Haines, 212; W. Cole, 84.
New St., wholesale agent; Hendry, 6 Jubilee Street.
Commercial Road—C. A. Schweitzer, 43; Viney, 115; Busby Brothers, 184; Long, 234; Briggs, 244.
Whitechapel Road—Kerby, 118; Eades, 219; J. Brown, 18 Bakers Row.
Hackney Road—Miller, 15; Wood, 103; Smith, 182; C. Ell, 443; Hammond, Goldsmith Row; Auckland, 4 Bishops Road; Vale, 4 Bonner Road.
Mare St., Hackney—J. Yates, 4 West Street.
Bishopsgate—E. T. Fendril, 26 Brushfield St.
Fleet Street—Freetbought Publishing Co., 63; Reeves, 185; Cattell & Co., Bouverie St.
Strand—Pitt, 23 Newcaste St.
Farringdon St.—Progressive Publishing Co., 28 Stonecutter St.
Comrade Wm. Blundell, 14, Camden Passage, Islington, N. Agent for Socialist League publications.

PROVINCES.

- BIRMINGHAM—J. Sketchley, 345 Cheapside.
BRADFORD—G. Miller, 3 Crab St. Hall Lane.
BRISTOL—Morris, Narrow Wine St.
DUBLIN—J. J. Lalor, North Earl St.
EDINBURGH—B. Given, 20 Bristo St.; Robinson, Greenside St.
GALASHIELS—The News Stall, Princess St.
GLASGOW—R. Ferguson, Ingram St. W. Porteous & Co., Royal Exchange Pl.; Mrs. Thomson, St. Enoch Sq.; Walter Scott & Co., 4 Bridge St.; J. Tollins, 5 Main St.; Bridgton; W. Stewart, 94 Canning St., Calton; W. Winning, 270 Crown St.
HAWICK—J. Finlay, High St.; J. C. Goodfellow, High St.
HULL—H. Witty, Suffolk Row, Winculmlee.

ABROAD.

- NEW YORK... Julius Bordollo, Labor News Agency, 1267 Broadway.
PARIS... Courchinoux Fils, 19 Rue Bullant.
HOTTINGEN ZURICH... Volksbuchhandlung.

The Manifesto of the Socialist League. Annotated by E. Belfort Bax and W. Morris. An exposition of the principles on which the League is founded. 16pp. crown 8vo. 1d.

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Art and Socialism. By William Morris. Bijou edition, 3d.

Chants for Socialists. By William Morris. 16 pp. crown 8vo., 1d.

The Socialist Platform.—1. Trades' Unions. By E. Belfort Bax, 1d. 2. Useful Work v. Useless Toil. By William Morris, 1d. 3. The Factory Hell. By Edward Aveling and Eleanor Marx Aveling, 1d. 4. A Short History of the Commune of Paris. By Wm. Morris, E. Belfort Bax, and Victor Dave, 2d.

Socialist Leaflets.—1. Why be Transported? 2. "Down with the Socialists!" 3. To the Radicals. 4. The Cause of Prostitution. 5. The Workers' Claims and "Public Opinion." 6. Tram-Car Slavery. 7. Home Rule and Humbug. 8. The Unemployed and Rioting. 9. Shall Ireland be Free? Copies will be sent to any one on receipt of stamp for postage; supplied for distribution at 2s. per 1000.

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