

# THE COMMONWEAL

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

## NOTES ON PASSING EVENTS.

THE dissolution is to be, then. The announcement has already cleared the air: the Hartingtonians and the Chamberlainites are no longer to be separated as favouring different lines of policy—they are a solid phalanx against Home Rule. Nobody takes the trouble to split hairs on this point. The old pretences which hung about the Chamberlainite opposition to the Bill: “Would vote for it if such and such were altered,” “as much a Home Ruler as anyone,” and so forth, have all vanished, and the Tories are chuckling, very naturally, at getting their work done by Radicals; no wonder they are pleased to find that dreadful leader who threw out the ominous hint about “ransom” now leading an auxiliary band to the defence of property, because after all that is what the whole thing means.

Mr. Chamberlain has issued his manifesto also, so that we may be in no sort of doubt on the matter. It is in the main a mere Jingo document, a little coloured by the remains of ideas on the land subject which last year made Mr. Chamberlain so terrible to many people; and also by hints at measures of local self-government, foreshadowing some scheme which certainly in itself might have something to recommend it, but which is now to be used as a bait for attracting Radicals to the Radical reaction which Mr. Chamberlain leads. In this remarkable document Irish Independence is attacked unsparingly; appeals to English prejudice against Ireland are made, though cautiously; the loyalty of the Orangemen is lauded, although they have distinctly declared that it is not Parliament but the sovereign that they owe allegiance to; and although everyone knows that it is supremacy and landlordism that they have been swaggering for. Clearly Mr. Chamberlain thinks that any stick is good enough to beat a Gladstonian dog with, and so to make all safe with his Whig and Tory allies he writes himself down Jingo—as he is.

As a favourer of Socialism no one need regret him much, as the following sentence will show: “There is a consensus of opinion that it is desirable to increase the number of owners of land in Ireland; and I believe that this object, Conservative in the best sense of the word, etc., etc.” There is no need to qualify; peasant proprietorship is Conservative in all senses of the word, as the poor Irish people are, I fear, likely to find out before they become really free.

Mr. Gladstone's manifesto is this time very simple and quite judicious. The whole tactics of the Chamberlainites have enabled him to put the matter to the public cleared of all pretence and intrigue. The real question is, “Shall the Irish have a real opportunity of managing their own affairs?” Mr. Chamberlain says “No” in his manifesto, at some length, but with no lack of distinctness. Lord Salisbury is of the same opinion, only he is partly prepared to accept the consequences, which are simply unlimited coercion. Mr. Gladstone, therefore, is right in saying that the wager of battle is between himself and Lord Salisbury. Mr. Chamberlain is only an ally of the latter: the extravagant praise which he is receiving from the Tory party should teach him that.

The Belfast riots and the slaughter which took place in them are sufficiently miserable; especially in view of the wretched tweedledur and tweedledee of Catholicism and Protestantism which was the occasion for them, whatever or whoever was at the bottom of them. But whatever caused the rioting, it was the police that caused the slaughter; if they had not appeared as the lords of law and order, the men, women and children that they shot, at the moment it may be granted in defence of their lives, would now be alive.

Also, to compare great things with small, we may well think the

crowd that received the conquered and conquering politicians at Westminster after the great division, could have kept order for themselves, at least as well as the police kept it for them. We Socialists shall lose a feather out of our cap if this goes on: we were thinking that it was Socialists who were specially doomed to be hustled by the police, but now it seems it is the whole public who are their enemies. Anyhow it is not a bad thing that “respectable” people engaged in satisfying their curiosity or loyalty in an obviously legal way should understand by experience what it is that we complain of.

The patching-up of Humpty-Dumpty is exercising the minds of the Liberals a good deal. Says the *Daily News*, à propos of the elections: “Opposition to Mr. Bright we should regard as a sort of petty treason, unless, indeed, any Liberal should be foolish enough to put himself up against Mr. Gladstone in Midlothian.” Once a leader always a leader, then, even when the led have got to be a mile in advance of the leader. What doleful nonsense the exigencies of the parliamentary party struggle does give birth to.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

## MR. AUBERON HERBERT AND INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY.

ONE of the disadvantages of being a Socialist is that your friends, loth to give you up as incorrigible, continually remind you of certain hard facts before which they expect your utopian ideas to wither like roses in the smoke of London. Such facts, for example, as that if one man does nothing all day, whilst his neighbour is industrious, the worker will be richer than the idler, and the idler anxious to borrow from the worker. Or that if one worker saves a part of his earnings and another spends all his in drink, the teetotaler will have a hoard when the drinker has nothing but his next day's labour to look to. Or that capitalists provide capital to start railways with. Or that revolutions always end in Cromwell or Napoleon. To the average middle-class man, the moral of these things is so plainly individualistic that he quite honestly feels compelled to believe that a Socialist must be either bestially insensible to the lessons of History, or ignorantly reckless of the laws of Nature. Exactly the same conclusion is arrived at by the Socialist concerning the Individualist, who seems to the Socialist to forget Nature's law that all the industry, skill, labour, valour, wit, temperance, and foresight in the world cannot make anything out of nothing; and to believe that Cromwell crushed the class which rebelled against ship-money, and that Napoleon restored the land of France to the aristocrats, instead of merely chivying the poor cats who had pulled the chestnuts out of the fire for the aspiring plutocracy. But if Socialists and Individualists are ever to get any further than a misunderstanding, they must give each other a little more credit for intelligence, and themselves a little less for infallibility in details, than is implied in their reciprocal reminders of facts that nobody forgets, and considerations that nobody overlooks. I find that when I call myself a Socialist, every Individualist present wastes time by assuming at once that I differ with him on every open question in politics, jurisprudence, art, religion, morals, and manners. And if he burns to convert me, and feels that his personal eloquence is not equal to the task, he often presents me with a bundle of tracts by Mr. Auberon Herbert. I do not resent this; for the tracts—“Anti-Force Papers,” they are called—are readable, and fit into my pocket easily (except No. 2, which is of a size suitable for papering a room, and so keeping the “Anti-Force” doctrine ever before one's eyes). Now, to nine-tenths of the tenets vehemently put forward by Mr. Auberon Herbert in these papers I am already converted. They formulate my own opinions—my Socialist opinions among others—with sufficient exactness. To many of them I have no doubt the Emperor of Russia would subscribe with unction. Yet I venture to think that neither Tsar nor Socialist are regarded as brethren in the faith by Mr. Auberon Herbert. I cannot bring myself to believe, either, that the Tsar would take me and Mr. Herbert to his bosom without first having us searched for dynamite. And I am quite certain that my only difficulty as to the attitudes of Mr. Herbert and the Tsar towards Liberty arises when I try to decide which is her more dangerous enemy. We three

have much in common; but if we were all Russians, whichever of us was Tsar would send the other two to Siberia, and then gloze the abuse of power by cribbing extensively from Anti-Force Leaflet No. 2 in our next speech from the throne, whereupon the nobles and capitalists would applaud our sentiments with swelling hearts, and the people would damn them as Sir Peter Teazle damned the sentiments of Joseph Surface. I will not call Mr. Auberon Herbert the Joseph Surface of politics, in spite of his long leaflets of sentiments, because we Socialists occasionally display considerable sentimental activity ourselves. People who live in glass houses undoubtedly derive intense satisfaction from throwing stones, and therefore seldom voluntarily forego an opportunity of doing it; but as the practice makes no converts, it is beside my present purpose, which is the conversion of Mr. Auberon Herbert.

There are about fifty sentiments (in Sir Peter's sense) in Leaflet No. 2. I shall not discuss them all: partly from want of space, partly from want of difference of opinion. Many of the beliefs which Mr. Herbert formulates as "Some of the things we want to get rid of" do not exist. Most of the hatreds which he classifies as "Some of the things we want to create" are already generally professed. The only comment suggested by the list occurred to me when I read that the first thing we should get rid of is "belief in the right of the majority to dispose of the minds, bodies, and possessions of the minority." Why any man should waste anxiety on an imaginary right like this, when an actual power of the minority to dispose of the minds, bodies, and possessions of the majority is being exercised under his eyes, is odd, and will be accounted for by many of the oppressed majority by the fact that none are so blind as those who do not wish to see. I do not account for it in that way; but I should if I were an unskilled labourer; and I take it that Mr. Auberon Herbert desires the confidence of the labourer and cares very little for mine. I ascribe his blindness to supersubtlety. Like Banquo's ghost, he rises to terrify kings; but instead of having no speculation in his eyes, he is so befogged by it that he wanders into the neighbourhood of the extreme left wing of the Socialist camp and yet believes himself a solitary Individualist prophet in the wilderness. His cry is for no more government; no more force; no more compulsory taxation; and, above all, an open market and freedom of contract, combined with "the fullest rights of private property, whether in land or in any other form." What are we to think of a gentleman whose ultimatum is the fullest maintenance of an institution together with the abolition of what has been shown (by Mr. Herbert Spencer among others) to be its inevitable and inseparable consequences? When Mr. Auberon Herbert stipulated as a preliminary "that A may voluntarily consent to lend the use of his faculties to B on such terms as may be agreed between them," he perhaps had a prophetic sense of the difficulty of making himself understood. Unless he will voluntarily consent to lend his faculties to us whilst we read his manifestoes, I fear there is little chance of our rallying round his standard. For my part, I cannot, voluntarily or otherwise, lend Mr. Auberon Herbert my faculties; but I can at least explain to him why his free and open market, with its happy crowd of catalactic atoms, can only be realized through Socialism and through the complete abolition of private property in land.

Imprimis, our faculties cannot produce anything by themselves, and they require to be fed with solid food. Such solid food is only procurable in these latitudes by labour-force modifying the raw material supplied gratuitously by Nature. Hence, until both labour-force and material are at a man's command, he is, only free to choose between a sudden death and a lingering one. Now, labour-force he always has whilst he lives: it is life itself. But he has no spare material in himself: he cannot eat his proper flesh, or make a bow and arrows out of his own bones and intestines. The necessary material is in the land; and he is under existing conditions driven off the fruitful part of that, and debarred from all use of it save standing room in the highways, where he may not turn a sod or lie down to rest. Such driving off and moving on (in the policeman's sense) is part of the exercise of "the fullest rights of private property in land." Therefore whoever is proprietor of the land is master of the men who depend on that land for the material without which their labour-force only consumes themselves in hunger. It does not matter whether the property was acquired by free contract with the Creator or with the inhabitants whilst there was yet land enough for every one. From the moment that the last scrap of land is made private property, free contract cannot exist between the next comers and the landholders; for the new comers, having no raw material, must sell their labour-force to the landholders or die, whilst the landholders, having both labour-force in themselves and raw material in their land, can refuse to purchase until the crack of doom, if they will. What then becomes of "the free and open market" between proprietor and proletariat? Nay, since all land is not equally fertile, what can the open market do for proprietor confronted with rival proprietor, except enable the owner of the fertile acre that yields a rich harvest to light labour, to get as much per bushel for his grain as the holder of the barren hillside plot that grudges a scanty harvest to desperate toil? Is it possible that Mr. Auberon Herbert is so ignorant of the commonplaces of political economy as not to know that the first step towards the establishment of a free market is the elimination of monopoly, and that a monopoly by a class of a prime necessity of life not created by their exertions is a most potent "instrument for making some classes more comfortable and more happy at the expense of their neighbours," which is, he tells us, one of the things we must get rid of. "What sight viler," exclaims Mr. Herbert, "than one half of the nation coercing the other half?" Surely a tenth of the nation coercing the other nine-tenths. Or, viler still, the one-hundredth part of the nation coercing the other ninety-nine hundredths. And that

is exactly what Mr. Auberon Herbert's "fullest rights of private property" must come to.

I am almost ashamed to put these rudimentary considerations to so resolute a champion of Individual Liberty. But his resoluteness in that cause will perhaps induce him to excuse an attempt to make him conscious that he is in the way to become a strangler of awakening Freedom, a foe of the industrious poor, a flatterer of the idle rich, a watchdog of unjust privilege, and the chosen architect of the new Temple-of-Liberty design for the national slave-market. That is not what he intends; but that is what he is drifting to. Like many other clever contemporaries of ours, he has been waiting for Socialism all his life; and now that it has come to him, he does not recognize it. There is plenty of time yet for him to find out his mistake. But in the meantime will he please to bear in mind that the only Individualism which is not common ground for him and for all Socialists is individual ownership of more than an equal share of that portion of our wealth which is not earned by individuals, but which is given by Nature or gained by association; and that we do not propose to bring about such equal sharing of what is not individually earned by a string of paper enactments directly commanding that it shall take place, but by the establishment of conditions in which it will arise spontaneously from that very play of the free and open market of which Mr. Auberon Herbert seems to understand everything except the foundation.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW.

## THE MEANING OF LIFE ASSURANCE.

UNDER this head I propose to give a few facts which have come to my knowledge concerning a subject which is too seldom discussed in a rational manner. It will be no advantage to denounce directors and shareholders of companies for the large dividends they enjoy, this being no exception to the ordinary capitalistic rule; but it may be well to consider the special features of this particular form of exploitation.

Life assurance is generally made known to the public through a flood of literature which unfortunately appears to have no ebb. This literature commonly takes the form of melodramatic appeals to the imagination, or of religious exhortation, and occasionally rises into poetry, as in the following picture, touching alike in sentiment and expression, of the disconsolate widow drying her tears on five-pound notes:—

"When poor pa died and went to heaven,  
What grief mamma endured;  
But, oh! her grief was soon relieved,  
For pa he was insured."

I have before me a manual for the use of agents, containing the following passages:—

"It [life assurance] blesseth the widow and the fatherless, and brings to the devoted earnest agent an ample competence continued through his old age, till he, too, passeth away."

"Remember that life assurance is in the most perfect accord with religion and the highest type of morality. . . . Its promoters are public benefactors in the truest sense."

"Your calling is one of the most necessary, the most sacred, and the most beneficent of human occupations" [i.e., the occupation of a "tout."]

One naturally asks, If this be so, how is it that the ranks of insurance agents are recruited mainly from the scum of other professions?

But let us look into the matter a little more closely. In its essence, the principle of life assurance is a Socialistic one, namely, the power of combination; it is a flat denial of individualism as commonly understood, and its extensive adoption forcibly illustrates the real tendency of our time, which is fast leaving such individualism behind. This principle is based on the uncertainty of the life of the individual in conjunction with the certainty of the life of the community; as, for example, "a man of twenty-five years of age may live to 100, or he may die within the hour; but of a large number of men at twenty-five it is quite certain that as many of them will live to old age as will die in early years." Hence the principle is a strictly scientific one: but this which might seem at first to be an advantage, is in reality far otherwise; being twisted, like all human knowledge and invention, to serve the corrupt capitalistic purpose. For the capitalist, having eaten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, manifests a decided preference for the latter; hence a paying speculation is made of the working of eternal laws and the necessities of human existence, and the shareholder can count upon his dividends with scientific certainty.

It is unfortunately only too true that if a poor man die now-a-days he must leave his family to beg or starve; but here the philanthropic speculator intervenes, and offers to guarantee the immediate payment of a certain sum at death, in return for a periodical payment during life, averaging three per cent. of such sum. Leaving out of consideration the enormous power wielded by the company over the individual when once in its grasp, it appears somewhat unjust to the unsophisticated mind that a man earning barely enough to maintain himself and his family during his life must squeeze a proportion out of his scanty earnings to rescue them from beggary after his death. Yet it is equally obvious, that under present conditions, it cannot be helped; as even Socialists who understand accurately the iron law of wages are compelled to submit to its relentless grip. The point to note, however, is that a system such as life assurance is only necessary under an artificial state of society like the present. It is a truism amongst Socialists, that if people are able to maintain themselves they should do so, and if not, whether children, aged persons, invalids, or lunatics, they should be maintained by the community. The practical application of this

simple principle would render life assurance unnecessary, and at once abolish assurance companies, a contingency as to which Mr. Bradlaugh once expressed himself in terms of horror, in which I am unable to join. The objection is hardly likely to be made that this change would benefit nobody, since those incapable of self-support would still have to be maintained; but if even the gloomiest forebodings entertained of bureaucratic kleptomania were to be realised, the substitution of communistic life assurance for capitalistic would be an immense gain. This explains the contrast between the disinterested professions and contrary practices of the advocates of life assurance above referred to. For while these "public benefactors" prate loudly of their exalted motives, they are really intent with instructive unanimity on a totally different object, namely, private gain, whether in the shape of fees, profits, or commissions. Indirect means are generally inefficient, and waste power. The directors, managers, superintendents, canvassers, and clerks of assurance companies are all busily "employed" in wasting their time, though a merciful ignorance hides from them the fearful fact; fearful indeed, even to him who knows that sooner or later the curtain will drop on this tragic farce.

If it be objected that the change I have predicted will tend to weaken the sense of individual responsibility, I reply that the sense of responsibility can only be developed in a full and complete corporate life, such as we trust will be the life of the future; a life in which the moral recklessness bred of the senseless struggle for life and wealth will totally disappear, leaving men free to merge the narrow and incomplete sense of responsibility to the private family into the higher ideal of duty towards the not less real though wider family of the whole human race.

REGINALD A. BECKETT.

One of the most curious of the "signs of the times" is the unconscious support given to the cause of Socialism by our most inveterate opponents. The *Daily Chronicle* of June 8, in an excellent leaderette on the facts which transpired at the inquest the preceding day on the body of an over-worked letter-carrier, makes the following remarks:—

"No slave-driver would work his victims seventeen hours a-day. It would not pay him to do so. He has a vested interest in his slaves' flesh and blood, and therefore would not find it profitable to exhaust them by prolonged overwork. To Government employes under the system of "free labour" of which we boast in this country, however, it matters little whether the flesh and blood of the employes can stand abnormal exertion or not. If men break down under it there is an end to them, with no loss to the department, as there are always plenty of the unemployed ready to submit to the hardest conditions of work, provided only they can earn a pittance to keep them from starvation. The system of which we speak, however, is not one that we need feel particularly proud of."

This is but the repetition of the text from which our comrades are continually preaching. Truly we are making progress, when the ideas which we have struggled to put forward in humble leaflets and at small gatherings of the workers at street corners are beginning to appear in all the dignity of leaded type in the columns of the daily press.

The medical officer of health for Marylebone, Mr. A. W. Blyth, according to the *Daily Chronicle* of 10th June, in a report on the sanitary condition of that district, says: "Men and women either naturally feeble or actually suffering from chronic disease, unable to keep their places in the keen struggle for existence, gravitate down to the cheapest lodgings, which are naturally to be found in the least desirable courts and alleys. In this way, irrespective of sanitary state, the death-rate of such places is raised." And again: "An abnormally high death-rate may be due to the concentration into a particular place of a number of weakly and diseased lives. This human drift is constantly taking place in large cities." All this is too true, and is the strongest condemnation of the social conditions which produce and perpetuate such evils. In a decent and orderly Society there would be no need of the "keen struggle for existence," and the horrible consequences which now follow of disease, destitution, and abnormal death-rates would be rendered impossible.—B.

It is not co-operation where a few persons join for the purpose of making a profit by which only a portion of them benefit. Co-operation is where the whole of the produce is divided. What is wanted is that the whole working-class shall partake of the profits of labour. Of all the agencies which are at work to elevate those who labour with their hands, in physical condition, in social dignity, and in those moral and intellectual qualities on which so much is dependent, there is none so promising as co-operation.—*John Stuart Mill.*

LABOUR'S LAXITY.—Why is it that labour is trampled under foot by monopoly and its organs? The *Toledo News* answers in the following manner: "Labour has fattened and pampered monopoly. Labour has filled our legislatures and our congress with the agents and tools of monopoly. Labour has permitted monopoly to do its thinking and legislating, and fix its wages. Labour has permitted monopoly to seize the natural agencies by which wealth is produced, and tax labour for the use of them. Labour supports their monopoly press while monopoly boycotts the press that upholds labour. Labour stands by party, while the monopolists of all parties stand by the thief who fills their coffers and robs labour. Monopoly is thoroughly organised, while labour has been unorganised, and often disorganised, each man bidding against the other for a crumb of bread. Labour permits the products of its toil to enrich monopoly; and not one of ten wage-earners is doing anything to stop the plunder. Labour has the power to stop the encroachments of monopoly, and neglects to use it. These, together with many others, are the reasons why monopoly abuses labour and proclaims it a fool."

## THE WORKERS' SONG OF THE SPRINGTIDE.

We have heard that the spring is lovely,  
That the whole earth leaps with glee  
When the young May brings to the woodlands  
The rapture of being free;  
But we know when the springtide cometh  
Though we cannot see its grace,  
For our prisoning walls grow closer  
With the sun's glare in our face.

For us, in the spring, not the singing  
Of birds, but the whirring of wheels,  
And the shrieking of noisy engines  
Till our brain with the discord reels;  
And the stifling air of our work-cells  
Grows hotter and fiercer far:  
Oh, curse we the sultry springtide  
Where pests and hot fevers are.

We have heard of the happy forests  
Where the gurgling streamlets play,  
And the merry flowers listen  
To the song of the birds all day;  
But for us, in our homes in slumland,  
What beauty is there at all,  
Where the very skies above us  
Are black with the smoke's cursed pall?

We know there are some with leisure,  
Who roam where the world is sweet,  
But we to our factory prisons  
Are chained by the hands and feet;  
For the cry of our babes is sounding  
For ever within our ears,  
And we toil for the bread to feed them,  
With a toil that is full of fears.

We built the homes of our masters  
Where always at ease they dwell,  
And the sound of music greets them,  
'Midst the comfort they love so well;  
But we know that their ease is builded  
On the hunger and pain we bear,  
Their pleasure upon our toiling,  
Their hope upon our despair.

The song of the merry springtide  
Which is sweet to them indeed,  
These wealthy whom we are clothing,  
Whose little ones we feed;  
But to us is the sun a furnace,  
The spring but a scorching hell,  
The sky but a burning cauldron,  
And life but a prison cell.

But the time will come when the beauties  
Of earth shall be for all,  
When none on his brother's slavehood  
Shall base his freedom from thrall,  
When the spring shall bring us gladness,  
And pleasure in place of pain,  
To us who have toiled and sorrowed,  
Nor tasted our toiling's gain.

FRED HENDERSON.

## "THRIFT."

THE following I have on excellent authority; it is of some interest as illustrating the nature of Government contractors and how they get their wealth. During the Crimean war the British Government, from some mismanagement, found themselves suddenly in need of some thousands of belts, knapsacks, etc., for the troops stationed in the Crimea. They therefore applied to one of the great army contractors, who undertook to supply the same at the rate of 18s. a set, and immediately set about getting them made. Half of the required number had been procured and were just about to be handed over to the Government when the war came unexpectedly to an end. The Government, having contracted for the belts, etc., at 18s. were obliged to pay for them, though, owing to the war having ended they were absolutely useless. They therefore went to the contractor and asked him what he would take them back for. He intimated that 1s. 6d. was his price, and so he made a clear gain of 16s. 6d. on each set; half not having yet been made, the transaction as regards these was carried through on paper only, while in the case of the other half he kept them and subsequently parted with them at 10s. a set to the French Government. After this, having by this "stroke of luck", as his friends described it, "made his fortune", he retired, and now lives in luxury and ease at Croydon.

T. D. A. COCKERELL.

Revolution is a work of the unknown. Call it good or bad, as you yearn towards the future or the past.—*Victor Hugo.*



"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 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.

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

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

Subscriptions.—For Europe and United States, including postage, per year, 6s.; six months, 3s.; three months, 1s. 6d.

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.

CHUMP (South Hackney).—Thanks. Your interesting revelation of the loathsome imbecility produced in certain cases by the present system is most instructive.

EUGENE TEESDALE.—"Woman's Place To-day," 1s., and "Papa's Own Girl," 1s. 6d., published by Julius Boddoloh, 705 Broadway, New York. "Communist Manifesto of 1847," 2d., Schär and Frantz, 133 E. Third Street, New York.

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—Imperial Federation. 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—La Citoyenne. Le Devoir (Guise)—Le Forçat du Travail (Bordeaux). Germany: Neue Zeit (Stuttgart). Holland: Recht voor Allen. Hungary: Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik (Buda-pest). India: Voice of India (Bombay)—Hindu Patriot (Calcutta)—People's Friend (Madras). Italy: Il Fascio Operaio (Milan)—La Lotta (Ancona). New Zealand: Watchman. Portugal: O Campino—Voz do Operario—O Protesto Operario (Lisbon). Spain: El Angel del Hogar—Revista Social—Acracia—La Justicia Humana (Barcelona)—Bandera Social—El Socialista (Madrid)—El Socialismo (Cadiz)—La Perseverancia (Huelva). Switzerland: Sozial Demokrat (Zürich). U. S. A.: (New York): Spread the Light—Our Country—Amerikanische Arbeiterzeitung—Truthseeker. (Boston): Liberty—Woman's Journal. Denver (Col.): Labor Inquirer—Little Socialist—Chicago (Ill.): Alarm—Detroit (Mich.): Labor Leaf—Princeton (Mass.): Word—Cleveland (O.): Carpenter. Cincinnati (O.): Unionist—Stockton (Cal.) Mail—Petersburg (Ill.): Voice of Labor—New Haven (Conn.): Workmen's Advocate—St. Louis (Mo.): Altruist. Kansas (Mo.): Sun—Pittsburg (Pa.): Labor Herald—Baltimore (Md.): Labor Free Press—Valley Falls (Kan.): Lucifer Newfoundland (Pa.): La Torpille—Litchfield (Minn.): Radical—Manchester (N. H.): Weekly Budget—Evansville (Ind.): Neue Zeit Milwaukee (Wis.): Volksblatt.

ARTICLES RECEIVED.—The following will appear in due course: "A Tramp's Wallet"—"A Parallel"—"Malthusianism"—"Capitalistic Theft"—"Ruskin as a Revolutionary Preacher."

### SENTIMENTAL BRUTALITY.

A FEW weeks ago a question came up in the House of Commons, which, in the stress of Party manœuvring over the Home Rule question, received but little attention from press or public. We refer to the motion of Sir Joseph Pease for the abolition of capital punishment. Now we know nothing of Sir Joseph Pease beyond the fact that he is an opponent of capital punishment, though we conjecture that he is a survivor of the humane philanthropic bourgeois of the old Quaker type. But we are not concerned here with him or his motion so much as with the arguments used for the fiftieth time against the dastardly infamy enshrined in our criminal law under the high-sounding name of capital punishment.

The gladiator was butchered to make a Roman holiday. The criminal of to-day is butchered as a holocaust to bourgeois sentiment. Such is, according to the ex-luminary of the Home Office, Sir William Harcourt, one of the main uses of capital punishment. "There are cases," he said, "like that of Lefroy, where public opinion would refuse to be satisfied with anything less than the death-penalty." Thus at last the truth comes out. The argument from social necessity has been so conclusively refuted by the instances of States like Belgium and many of the Swiss cantons, where it is abolished, or even of countries like

Germany, where the infliction is so seldom as to be tantamount to abolition, that it needs support from other quarters. The uselessness, as regards prevention of murder, of capital punishment, is demonstrated in every direction. England, with its prodigality in the exercise of the rope, shows a record of capital crime as bad as if not worse than any other country, except perhaps the equally prodigal United States of America. There is no evidence that the Swiss cantons which adopt capital punishment, have benefited by it one jot. Indeed, all evidence tends to show that severity as part of a criminal system always fails in its professed object. In the canton of Geneva, where not only is the death-penalty abolished, but imprisonment means little more than simple seclusion, with few, if any, of the wanton barbarities inflicted in England and elsewhere under the name of "prison discipline," the statistics of crime are as favourable as in any European country. So that after all it comes to what the late Home Secretary said, capital punishment has to be maintained in order to tickle bourgeois sentiment. The sentimental bourgeois' sensibilities would be wounded were the murderer to escape his hanging—in some cases at least. Rather than forego the sweet morsel of a sensational criminal's judicial murder now and then, he is quite content to allow dozens of persons, for whom even he would admit extenuating circumstances, to go to the gallows simply because they technically fall within his bloodthirsty law.

The dastardly nature of a practice by which men are deliberately and with every circumstance of calculation and hypocrisy done to death after some weeks of suspense in a prison cell—that is, of detention under circumstances which would tend to break down the strongest nerves—is unequalled by any other of the actions of men. What if it were "deterrent," as its advocates would have us believe? The argument from "deterrence," even if based on fact, would tell much further than the bourgeois would care for. If, as is contended by the advocates of "deterrence," cruelty in punishment is justified by the "deterrent" effect which these persons credit it with, then surely the rack, the wheel, and the thumbscrew are the last word of penal wisdom. If hanging and the plank-bed are "deterrent" and hence justifiable, then *à fortiori* the stake and the rack are more "deterrent" and hence more justifiable. The bourgeois is as illogical in this as in everything else. He has practically admitted that "deterrence" does not justify everything. He has tacitly conceded the principle (better the crime than repression by *certain* means). He must perforce be supposed to believe in the efficiency of oriental modes of punishment as "deterrents" if he believes in cruelty as "deterrent" at all; yet he dares not apply them. What does this reticence mean if not an admission in some form or shape of the above principle? We do but carry out the principle to its logical conclusion in saying, granted your allegation (disproved as it is by facts and figures) that the abolition of the death penalty would be followed by a certain increase of capital crime, better this increase, this infinitesimal fraction of enhanced danger of being privately murdered rather than otherwise disposed of by the resources of civilisation—crumpled-up in a railway accident, kicked to death by mounted police at a Socialist meeting, mangled at a street crossing, infected with typhoid in the improved dwellings for the working-classes or the cheap and serviceable suburban villa, slowly poisoned with adulterated goods,—better this than that Humanity should be outraged by the erection of the gallows as a permanent institution in its midst.

But have little doubt that so long as the present system lasts the bourgeois will require the periodic sop of "capital punishment" to be thrown to the wild beast within him. Criminals in high places who murder, *i.e.*, who "procure the death of another person"—like the authorities who were responsible for the tomfoolery at Liverpool during the Queen's recent visit there, when volunteers were compelled to stand for hours in the soaking rain, with the result that two have since died; the Russian bureaucracy, with its hecatombs of victims annually whitening with their bones the road to Siberia; the proprietor of unseaworthy ships, who sends them out with the certainty of their going down sooner or later; the railway company which works its pointsmen to a degree which renders effective supervision impossible, on the calculation that the score for damages for an occasional accident will be cheaper than the regular employment of an efficient staff of men,—all these escape with scarce even a word of censure. But woe betide the luckless East-ender who in a hasty moment strikes a drunken wife who is quarrelling with him a blow which indirectly causes her death. The law calls this murder, although there was no intention to kill, and although the act itself was done in the heat of passion and without any knowledge of the possible consequences. The man is hanged, with at least the complacent acquiescence of the bourgeois. And this he calls justice.

It must not be supposed that we condemn as an article of faith the taking of life under any circumstances. There are some cases—such as revolutionary crises—where, as a special measure, summary executions might be necessary. Its special loathsomeness consists in its being part of a system permanently established. What we condemn is the peculiar amalgam of the bourgeois character, which, while fattening itself on social conditions which produce criminals—capital and otherwise—derives a sentimental satisfaction from the hanging of them. This to our thinking is most offensive.

E. BELFORT BAX.

All men are equal; it is not birth, but virtue alone, that makes the difference.—*Voltaire*.

No mendicant was tolerated in Peru. When a man was reduced by poverty or misfortune (it could hardly be by fault), the arm of the law was stretched out to minister relief; not the stunted relief of private charity, nor that which is doled out drop by drop, as it were from the frozen reservoirs of "the parish," but in generous measure, bringing no humiliation to the object of it, and placing him on a level with the rest of his countrymen.—*Prescott*.

## OBJECTIONS TO SOCIALISM.

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

V.

THE changes are still rung on exchange, and all reference to production is still wholly omitted. One might think from the part of the "Objections" now under discussion, that only the distribution of goods needed changing and not the manner of their production. This strange omission, as I have said, makes the attack on Socialism partial and incomplete. The evils of to-day depend on the way in which goods are made and goods are distributed. Their remedy is in a revolution along both these lines.

Thus we find our opponent agreeing with us "that there are often too many concerned in the distribution of the necessaries of life, and that the cost to the consumer is often outrageously augmented." But we believe that we go down to the root of the matter when we say that all this middlemanism is due to the hideous system of production for profit, and not merely for consumption. Now, against this system, Mr. Bradlaugh, as far as I know, never protests, and yet that very system is the cause of the over many concerned in distribution, and of the outrageous augmentation of cost to the consumer, against which he does protest.

Again, all these evils of exchange are to be reformed gradually and in detail. Let us suppose that they are; that middlemanism is gradually and in detail reformed off the face of the earth. You then have the very thing for which Socialism contends, as far as exchange of wares is concerned. Only you have it after a longer or shorter time of the misery that it is owned exists as a consequence of the present method of distribution. In a word, the agony is to be protracted instead of ended once for all. And note, of course, that if this slow revolution of the methods of distribution were effected, if, indeed, it could be effected without revolution of the method of production also, the chief source of the social ills would still remain.

All this, and the non-understanding of our position by our antagonist, comes out very clearly in his remarks on co-operative societies. These he extols. But in the extolling of them one little phrase creeps in, that is the proverbial fly in the proverbial ointment. They have so many members, so many yearly sales, so much stock-in-trade, so much working capital, and so much annual profit. In this last phrase the cloven foot of capitalism shows.

Whence is this profit to come? Until our opponents can show us any other source of it than unpaid labour somewhere or other, we are bound to regard the co-operative societies themselves as exploiters in so far as they have profit to divide among their members. Remembering this, the words "each [society] keeping its own property," has a ring only a little less sardonic than those of the man who, having never in his life done a stroke of work, talks at large about his own property.

Extension and perfection of this organisation of co-operative distribution are without doubt desirable, if it is understood that an organisation of co-operative production must accompany it, and that the aim of the workers is not to make profit out of the unpaid labour of those not within the ranks of their organisation, but to get all the means of production and distribution into the hands of the workers. Co-operation really thoroughly carried out, made at once national and international, would, of course, be Socialism pure and simple, *i.e.*, Communism.

On this follows the customary talk about the moral effects of these on the one hand, and the immoral effects of Socialism on the other. The understanding that the effective carrying out of co-operation would be Socialism, will help the reader to discount this antithesis. "The self-reliance of the individual workers who take part in co-operative stores" will certainly not be lessened by Socialism. For this very self-reliance of which there is so much talk, is in reality an unconscious reliance on others, and a reliance on those others yielding to the reliant co-operator more or less of their unpaid labour for him to take as profit on his investment.

So also when we read that "the organisation of all industry under State control must paralyse industrial energy and neutralise individual effort," we feel that the misconception of the moral is as great as the misconception of the economic position. Of course, the State control that Mr. Bradlaugh dreads is not to us the control by such a State as is now, and ever more shall not be. That primal misconception is the cause of much error. Our antagonists think that we are State Socialists, and are actually anxious to have things taken in hand by the powers that be at the present time. Nothing could be more erroneous than this idea. Even if a rare act for good is done by the State now, its good effect is marred by the fact that it has been taken in hand by the State of to-day. The hands are much too dirty.

And even under the terrible Frankenstein monster that we call the State to-day, when a feeble attempt in the direction of co-operation rather than that of pure Socialism is made, the paralysis of industrial energy, the neutralisation of individual effort are certainly not noticeable. The fact is that our opponents confuse the energy and effort of individuals with their energy and effort to get profit. The energies and efforts of ninety-nine hundredths of men at the present time are solely devoted to the getting more and more of the results of unpaid labour into their own possession. The paralysis of that kind of industrial energy, and the neutralisation of this kind of individual efforts are consummations most devoutly to be wished.

The next phase in the argument is the well-known device of setting against Socialism that large numbered class of people just on the

border-line between the exploited and the exploiters. Any one that has ever addressed audiences chiefly made up of this class knows the eagerness with which they respond to any appeal to their selfishness. So demoralised have they become by the frightful society in which they live and by its frightful methods, so narrow is their conception not only of duty but of mere matters of fact, that they take quite seriously the statement that Socialists desire "to take the private economies of millions of industrious wage-earners in this kingdom for the benefit of those who have neither been thrifty nor industrious." It is difficult to conceive a statement more misleading than this. In the first place we do not desire to take the private economies of wage-labourers. We desire to prevent any one's private economies from being used to exploit the labour of another. Nor is anything to be done for the profit of those who "have been neither thrifty nor industrious," except in so far as any revolution in the method of production and distribution will better the condition of all men, and so make the number of the non-industrious less. And there is here a complete omission of two facts that even the outraged would-be small capitalist might grasp. First, that it is just exactly the non-industrious people who are now the best off. The richest are the idlest. Second, from the purely selfish point of view the would-be small capitalist may be reminded that he himself would assuredly be better off under the system we propose than he ever could be under the present.

EDWARD AVELING.

(To be continued.)

## AN ANOMALY.

"BEHOLD us here, so many thousands, millions, and increasing at the rate of fifty every hour. We are right willing and able to work; and on the planet Earth is plenty of work and wages for a million times as many. We ask, if you mean to lead us towards work—to try to lead us, by ways new, never yet heard of till this new unheard-of time! Or, if you declare that you cannot lead us? And expect that we are to remain quietly unled, and in a composed manner perish of starvation? What is it you expect of us? What is it you mean to do with us? This question, I say, has been put in the hearing of all Britain; and will be again put, and ever again, till some answer be given it." These are Thomas Carlyle's words. This question was put "in the hearing of all Britain" in his earlier days, and here it is again to-day. How are we going to answer it? Answer it we must, whether it be with shot and shell—which God forbid, and which is really no answer at all, but a confession of imbecility—or by a diviner method, by a due examination of the disorder, by a manful facing of it, and by an honest effort to do what is righteous. Let us pray that our rulers may be tempted to follow this latter course.

It is, however, not the general problem that is fronting every civilised community that we mean to speak of, but only a corner of it—a corner alive just now with lessons so easy that "he that runs may read." Trade depression is in everybody's thoughts, and everybody is therefore gloomy. A foreboding of ill surrounds every earnest heart; pernicious doctrines are in the air—doctrines that have already been tried and found wanting. The fact is, the cause of trade depression has not yet been clearly grasped by the popular mind; consequently there is the additional pain that always accompanies suffering when the agent is unknown. A real and true explanation, therefore, of trade depression is one of the greatest boons that could be conferred on humanity just now; for besides the apprehensive fears that fill the mind of those far enough removed from want, we have throughout the world honest men, their wives and children, perishing.

Considering the outward signs of trade depression, we find an abundance not only of the necessaries but also of the luxuries of life. Our power to produce, moreover—our machinery, our workmen—are all as effective in bad times as in times that are called good. We find that our warehouses, our markets, are crammed with commodities; our docks are full of idle ships; even our granaries are, according to the figures returned at the end of last year, fuller than they ever were before. To quote again from Carlyle, we may well say, "we have more riches than any nation ever had before; we have less good of them than any nation ever had before. Our successful industry is hitherto unsuccessful; a strange success, if we stop here! In the midst of plethoric plenty, the people perish; with gold walls, and full barns, no man feels himself safe or satisfied. Workers, master-workers, un-workers, stand fixed and cannot further . . . Have we actually got enchanted, then; and accused by some god?"

It looks very much like as though we had; for why do people starve? Is there anything scarce? We have seen not. Yes, one thing is scarce, and that is work, employment; and the reason that work is scarce is simply because everything else is abundant. If anything else were scarce, then work would not be scarce, for man would be required to make that thing until its scarcity were made up. Work, then, is scarce because we have plenty of everything that is made by work—plenty of everything that human beings can use or play with. All that is wanted is a market, consumers. For these many generations we have been striving after new and improved and more rapid methods of production and transit, striving to make it necessary for man to labour less and less; and now that we have attained our end, now that we have made work scarce and Nature productive, we think this a justification for starving.

Is not this an anomalous position for a community of grown-up people to get into? We are in a worse position than this, however,

as we shall see by and by. Meanwhile we would call attention to the words that Sismondi applied to decaying Rome, with the remark that they seem to be equally applicable to England: "Increasing opulence continued to meet the eye, but man became more miserable; the rural population, formerly active, robust, and energetic, were succeeded by a foreign race; while the inhabitants of towns sank in vice and idleness, and perished in the midst of riches they themselves had created."

It is generally accepted that our social disorders are due to over-population, and the only remedy that economic philosophers have hitherto been able to offer is that a limit should be set to the number of children in each family, especially amongst the working-classes. Emigration is another remedy suggested by the over-population theory.

The arguments of the Malthusian—we say the Malthusian, not Malthus, for a reason to be given presently—are these: This country is over-populated. Why? Because there are more people in it wanting work than can get work. Many are consequently compelled to idleness; these not having any other method of procuring the necessaries of life except by labour, are consequently either thrown upon the generosity of their friends or become recipients of public relief, paupers, or criminals. In this simple way does the Malthusian explain all our social calamities; and, as the only remedy, he suggests, as already mentioned, that people must be more prudent, must regulate the number of children they bring into the world—in a word, the population of a country must correspond to the number of situations in that country. Such is the position of the Malthusian; it is not the same as the position of Malthus himself, as we shall now show.

What Malthus contended for was that population was limited by the means of subsistence—a contention that no one can deny, for it is impossible for more people than a certain number to live upon a certain quantity of food. Human suffering, poverty, and such like, arose, according to Malthus himself, from the strong tendency of population to press upon this limit, there being an ever-diminishing quantity of the necessaries and comforts of life for each individual as population came nearer and nearer to this limit.

The reader will now see the difference between the position of Malthus and the position of the Malthusian. The former set up subsistence as the limit to population, the latter sets up employment or work to be done—the more work there is to be done, the more room is there for an increased population. This is a mighty difference.

Let us now follow the Malthusian position to its logical issue. Why do we call one method of production or transit an improvement upon another? Simply because it involves less labour, simply because it abridges labour, and that is the reason that we adopt the improved method. Now with every abridgment in the labour of making and transferring things there becomes relatively less and less labour to do, and consequently the ideal population of the Malthusian becomes less and less. In this way the most ingenious race would be the first to disappear from the face of the earth, the fittest to survive would be the most stupid, the unkindest countries would be the most densely populated; in a word, Nature and man would be at daggers drawn. We do not say that such is not the case to-day—in fact, *it is the case*. Proof of this is found in recent legislative action in America and Australia. Chinese labour was forbidden the markets of these countries because the Chinaman can underbid the Anglo-Saxon; he is also more docile, and therefore commends himself more to those in authority than the dauntless Briton; hence the reason of a recent letter to the *Times*, pointing out the fact that our navy was being over-run with Chinamen. One word more as to the attitude of America and Australia to John Chinaman. Laws are made to protect the weak against the strong; in this case the strong man is the submissive, resigned Chinaman; the weak, the fearless, brave, if rebellious, in favour of the right, Anglo-Saxon, who requires special protection. The fittest will always survive—that is a law that we cannot alter. What we can alter, however, and what we must alter if we wish to retain all that is commonly considered good in human nature, and if we wish to make any further progress at all, are the conditions that make the Chinaman and those that approach him in character the superior.

We come back now to the anomaly that we have already pointed out. That anomaly, the reader will remember, is the fact that the more abundant all kinds of commodities are, the less demand is there for labour, and consequently more people are thrown out of employment, and starve. In other words, the more bountiful Nature is, and the more ingenious we are in saving labour, the more do we suffer. All this is susceptible of an easy explanation; it is, however, entirely an economic problem, and it has been customary to sneer at economic science. Be this as it may, here is our explanation.

Suppose that the Malthusian doctrines were practically adopted and most rigidly carried out. Suppose that to-day our population was so regulated that there was not an idle man in the kingdom, not a pauper, not even a criminal. Every one is fed, and clad, and legitimately employed. There remains, however, in this happy state of things just one thing that we have got to-day, and that is our present economic system. Let us now step forward a year, say. In that time, improved methods of production and transit have been introduced. Linen can be manufactured with half the labour, goods can be conveyed to their destinations with less labour—in a word, in nearly every department of human effort improvements have been introduced within the year. They are called improvements because they lessen labour. What then would be the economic effect of a year's progress upon the ideal state of affairs that we have just been imagining? The first effect would be that to make the same quantity of manufactures less workmen would be required; masters would consequently have to discharge some of their men. Now, what becomes of these men? Well, they do not

want to be discharged, so they offer their services at a lower wage, competition amongst the workmen for such employment as there is to be had becomes keener, wages consequently become lower—for masters are obliged to follow the market rate of wages. No matter, however, whether wages be high or low, the masters cannot employ as many men as they did before the introduction of the supposed improvements. What, then, becomes of the surplus? Why, enforced idleness, and with it loss of independence; then as we go on improving we recruit the ranks of the enforced idlers—they are enforced idlers at first—and out of them springs the necessity for those vigorous institutions, police-courts, prisons, and workhouses.

One word more in connexion with improvements. We have seen their effect to be the lessening the number of those employed and the lowering of wages. Now here comes the economic effect *par excellence*. Fewer men in employment and at reduced wages means a diminution in the power of the community to consume. Improved methods of production, etc., are ever increasing our power over Nature, our power to produce; they are at the same time, by rendering competition amongst labourers keener and keener, diminishing our power to consume. This is going on all over the world, is operating upon nearly every class in every civilised community, is the noose in which we are strangling ourselves. Can any one wonder that the markets of the world are glutted? The supply-pipes are ever widening, the waste-pipes ever contracting; of course there is a running over, of course, as Carlyle says, "Our wealth is an enchanted wealth." R.

## SOCIETY AND THE REVOLUTION.

"WHAT shall we do with the Revolutionists?" is the cry of Society, filled with astonishment and terror as it hears the sounds that prelude the great eruption. "What shall we do with the creatures who will not be quiet, and will not let us rest amid the goods we have gathered, and in the mansions erected by the labour of our slaves, the people? We are comfortable and contented, we have all that makes life easy, plenty to eat and drink, plenty of luxuries! Why should these people be dissatisfied? What right have they to make all this disturbance? Is it not most unpleasant to open the paper at breakfast and have your appetite upset by London riots, insurrection in Belgium, and desperate fighting at Chicago, and then to be assured, in a kindly leader by the editor of our favourite journal, that this is nothing to what is coming, that the world, our world, the Society created by us is full of combustibles, which need but a spark to explode them, and then where are we going to?"

This is but a poor picture of what many are thinking in Society to-day. These judicious capitalists who can read the signs of the times, must feel very uncomfortable under the present most lamentable circumstances. They know that the favourite threat of their class, of the revolution frightening all the capital out of the country, is vain and foolish. For who supposes that the factories, the railways, the mines, and the land, will take wings and fly even at the word of the marvellous magicians who own all these because they say they have created them? What an age of wonders this is when there are men who by merely sitting at home, with their hands in their trousers' pocket and their minds perfectly vacant, can make the earth bring forth its increase, both vegetable and mineral, can throw long lines of rail across the country, and rear the lofty factories wherein their slaves are graciously allowed to toil! But can you not see that these claims are absurd, that it is not the loafing middle-class who created this wealth, but the toilers, from whom these gentlemen have extracted their riches, by seizing on that which has been made by the labour of the people? And these troublers of the world, these revolutionists, are calling upon the workers to take that which they have made, so the middle-classes are troubled greatly; the black cloud of misery and fear for the morrow, that fills the dens into which the people are driven is ascending into the palaces of the rich.

They know they are drifting into a new world, where they fear they may be treated to the same mercy they have shown to the poor and oppressed. The judicious capitalist is conscious that his beloved system is going to pieces; the night is far spent, and a new and awful dawn is breaking upon the world. The morning light will show him to the people as a monster, a trickster, a thief; there he will stand in his rags of smug hypocrisy and mock benevolence at the mercy of those whom he has made it his business to rob. He may well shudder as he thinks of it! Then he asks himself this question: "Cannot this revolution be stayed at least for my time?" But how to stave it off? How can he silence those tongues that are continually calling upon the people to rise and take their own? What can he do with the revolutionists? Shoot them down? That may stop their crying for a time. But musket shot will not silence discontent when the discontented are so many. Has he not tried it again and again, and with what result? Quiet for a time, but when the cry is raised again it is deeper and stronger than ever. The voices of the musket and cannon carry the new gospel from shore to shore, till the whole world is ringing with shouts for freedom and vengeance. Shall he make concessions, and give to the workers part of that which is due to them? That has also been tried and has failed. These morsels do but whet the hunger of the starving; they clamour for more, and will not be satisfied with anything but the whole of the wealth that is due to them. And, after all, the judicious capitalist is a rare animal; most men of his class are obstinate and pig-headed, they will hear of nothing but "blood and iron." They will discuss "practical Socialism with fixed

bayonets," and with marvellous results. There is but one way of dealing with revolt that springs from the misery of men: give them what they ask. The wealth they will have, or else the question will be not what Society will do with the revolutionists, but what the revolutionists will do with Society—a question soon to be answered.

D. J. NICOLL.

### FREE SPEECH.

Our last, lingering bit of faith in the superiority of "American institutions" has been, I fear, for ever shattered. Real freedom of speech does not exist, under the stars and stripes any more than it does under the shadows of imperial thrones in Europe. Here, as elsewhere, when free speech aims at nothing in particular, people are allowed to glory in their freedom to their hearts' content. But once let any one mention a word against the existing order of things, the established government, whatever it may be, and here, as elsewhere, and as it has been in all ages, the cry of "treason" goes up, and the mighty arm of the law deftly chokes off your speech.

Our forefathers endeavoured to preserve the right to complain, to petition, to state grievances, and even to change governments, to the American people forever, but the old-world superstitious sacredness attached to established institutions, and carefully fostered by the classes in power, has been too much for even the brave "Declaration of Independence" to contend against. "Speak so long as you do not tell what is hurting you; write so long as you do not warn the people what to expect and how to prepare for it. Express yourself freely, but do not dare criticise the powers above you, that keep you in your miserable conditions." This is the true tenor of American freedom of speech to-day. I have been behind the iron bars, kept from communication with my dearest friends, debarred even from procuring decent food unless I paid three prices for it, for what? I have written my honest thoughts, given to the world the best ideas I could in a simple way, and did what seemed to me the best in my power for human freedom. I have never seen or handled dynamite, never possessed arms, and never have been able to kill anything bigger than a mosquito in my life. Yet I am liable to re-arrest any day.

But my short confinement is nothing to what others as honest and innocent are suffering. Every day men and women are thrown into prison, torn suddenly away from home and family and work, for something they have said or are suspected of having said. The more prominent men arrested are treated, not like men awaiting trial for what they may be innocent of, but like dogs without rights and unworthy of consideration. The capitalistic press have not had such a howl for vengeance and blood, such a hideous outcry of abusive, malignant talk since the days when those other freedom-lovers, the abolitionists, called forth their ire. I am as certain as I live that our speakers knew nothing of what was to occur on the evening of May 4. We were attending a meeting of the American group in the *Alarm* office. Both Parsons and Fielden were present, and expressed themselves as disinclined to attend the haymarket meeting; they had not been personally notified or invited to speak and did not know who had called the meeting. Later they were sent for, because a large and interested crowd had gathered and more speakers were needed. Ever ready to respond to such a call they went, some of the rest of us following and remaining at the outer edge of the crowd. The meeting was very quiet and orderly, and the speeches were of the same nature as had been given hundreds of times without calling forth the power of the law. The meeting was about to be dismissed, when suddenly, without warning, without even a hint that the meeting was objectionable or unlawful, 200 armed police marched up and peremptorily ordered this peaceable crowd of American citizens assembled according to acknowledged rights, to disperse.

The brutality of Chicago police is notorious. The deaths of many working-men, some innocent women, the crippling for life of children and peaceable men, lie at their doors. No one knows how the battle began; perhaps some single desperate individual, goaded to frenzy by the memory of his wrongs and those of his fellows, believed the time had come for him to act. No one will ever know the exact truth, perhaps, but it is certain that had the police remained away the meeting would have dispersed quietly and peaceably.

It is terrible that such things must occur, in the evolution of the human race, yet it seems convulsions and revolutions do come about, and will until humanity reaches that higher plane where reason alone shall have sway. I shudder to think of bloodshed; but I shudder over the deaths of fellow-workers in Milwaukee, at McCormick's, at Lemont, St. Louis, and elsewhere, as well as over the deaths of a few police. A human being is no more sacred to me because he wears the insignia of the law, than a poor, homeless, hungry labourer. A bullet speeding from a legal revolver is no less "fiendish" to me than a bullet from some desperate, unorganised, hungry working-man's gun.

My one hope is that the sensible, humane portion of the people will not take their cue from the howl of the capitalistic press. Only wait to pass judgment till more of the truth can be known. Be not like hounds in full cry at the bid of a savage hunter, but reasonable, thinking, justice-loving human beings, and reserve sentence for another day.

LIZZIE M. SWANK, in *Labor Enquirer*.

### LITERARY NOTICES.

"The Robbers of the Nineteenth Century," by Judson Grenell, is a small pamphlet published by the *Labor Leaf* of Detroit. It is an incisive exposure of rent, profit, and interest, and should be widely circulated by our American friends.

The Kansas City *Sun* devotes its current number to "Corporations," striking forcible blows at the "organised crime" of our present society. S.

When social conditions tend to brutalise men, we must expect men to become brutes; when industrial conditions tend to degrade them and make them dependent, we must not expect to find them moral, religious, intelligent, or manly; and we cannot make them so while the conditions continue. The industrial question is not one of charity or generosity; it is one of justice. The social question is not one of obedience by the individual to conventional law, but of obedience by society to natural law, which is also divine law. There are no great natural inequalities to be adjusted, but there are great artificial inequalities to be minimised.—*Louis T. Post*.

### THE KING OF BAVARIA.

EVEN a Socialist can hardly contemplate the career and fate of the poor mad monarch who has just destroyed himself, without a feeling of pity. Ludwig II. was the last of a type, the only surviving monument of the feudal monarch, and hence thoroughly out of sympathy with the shoddy commercial potentates around him. That his original eccentricities (as they appeared to his contemporaries) were complicated and exaggerated by inherited tendency to insanity, we do not deny. But a responsible head of a State who openly despised the Court society of his time, carefully kept himself to himself and the few artists and musicians with whom he associated, occasionally indulging in poetical midnight flights through his native mountains and forests in imitation of the Erl King, could not but be considered as an eligible subject for deposition and a lunatic asylum by the modern Court circles of Europe, even if he had not developed a taste for ordering members of his cabinet out to instant execution.

But that the simple Bavarian peasantry had a perfectly genuine and unfeigned affection for this strange, old-world, generous, and foolish being, who hated railways and all modern "improvements," and was such an utterly unfit person to be a monarch in a commercial age, there is every reason to believe. Him they could understand, and in a sense sympathise with; and hence the domination of such a one was always tolerable, as compared with the philanthropic capitalist who opens up and "improves" their country-side, or the joint-stock company whose last word is "Freedom of contract." E. B. BAX.

### THE PEOPLE'S PRESS.

These are stirring times. These who do not stir with the times will be overwhelmed by the oncoming tide of revolution.—*Labor Leaf*.

Twice as many honest men may be murdered in a coal mine as have been killed in Chicago, and there isn't any noise at all about it. The American press is a wonderfully lop-sided affair.—*Labor Enquirer*.

Strange that workmen have not only to combine to earn living wages, but to strike to get them after they have been earned. Yet capital is supposed to employ labour.—*Labor Leaf*.

Fools wonder that we should have poets in our ranks and that we should appreciate their works. But why should we not appreciate true poems?—we who would make human life a song instead of, as now, a curse or a shriek!—*Labor Enquirer*.

Instead of condemning and forbidding them, as the Jewish lawgiver condemned and forbade, the laws on which our social system are based not only recognise but sanction and approve of usury and land monopoly. These are the causes of the disease from which our modern civilisation is suffering, and which, if not cured, will destroy it.—*Worcester Times*.

If through bloody war the miseries of the people can be removed in six months, then it is stupid folly to suffer for generations for the mere privilege of removing the misery by education. People who see wickedness in war, but none in starvation and oppression, are simply blockheads. But if by the slow process of education alone, the people as a whole, will suffer no more than through war, in accomplishing the same end, then education is better than war; but not otherwise.—*Labor Enquirer*.

It might be well if the papers and people who are howling about the "foreign element" would remember how this country became "infested" with the "scum of Europe." They were imported by the capitalists to be used in crowding down the wages of native working-men. Organised labour in this country has been protesting unceasingly for ten years against the wholesale importation of foreign workmen, but congress and the general public have scoffed the protests down; now let them take the consequences. They shall reap as they have sown. It is another singular thing that this "foreign element" argument is not applied to the Chinese question.—*Labor Enquirer*.

The problem of the day is not how to furnish more work for the workers, or at least should not be. The problem should be how to lessen the hours of toil for those who labour and divide them out among those who do not, and then permit the labourer to have what he produces. Upon every hand we see granaries and storehouses filled to overflowing with productions of labour until people in their stupidity cry out that there is an over-production. Yet producers are compelled to toil 12 or 16 hours each day to get enough of these articles to sustain life. Better means of distribution, distributing the hours of labour and the products thereof among the people is what is needed, not more labour for them to perform.—*Carthage (Mo.) Press*.

Now they are using dynamite, these discontented working-men. For they are working-men, whether they are foreigners or not. We do not say they are in the right, but are they wholly to blame? Is there not some reason for these outbreaks? To cure an evil it is necessary to eradicate the cause. The killing of a few rioters here or there does little or nothing toward stopping the spread of Anarchistic ideas. The proper way would seem to be to lay aside all prejudice and inquire into the cause of this growth of Anarchism. There must be a reason for it. It is not right to condemn ideas without first inquiring into the causes which produce them. If reason teaches any considerable body of men that they have been wronged, there certainly must be some ground for the conclusion.—*Topeka Citizen*.

"Once upon a time a man found a rude boy in his apple-tree, and he bade him come down. The boy refused, whereupon the farmer threw clods at the boy, who merely laughed at the efforts of the agriculturist. The farmer then threw stones at the urchin, who was glad to descend and 'arbitrate' the differences between them. Capital and Labour are now in that position. The precocious Monopolist is stealing all the fruit grown by his ancient relative, Labour. The only method by which he can be made to arbitrate is to feel the necessity for arbitration."—*Craftsman*. That's a pretty good comparison, brother; but when you catch a thief in your own house and corner him, we should think you'd make him disgorge first, and then, if you were bent on "arbitration," you might compel him to "agree" to that in a police court. As for us, we don't seem to "enthus" much for arbitration between Capital and Labour: the trouble is, that you can't find disinterested arbitrators.—*Workmen's Advocate*.

## FREE SPEECH AT STRATFORD.

Last Saturday, comrades Mowbray and Lane went down to Stratford to follow up the success of Morris, Aveling, and Messrs. Ellis and Rose on the previous Saturday, but not being like them either middle-class men or Radicals, the police immediately interfered, with the result that before Mowbray had spoken ten minutes he was being taken to the station with all the traditional brutality of the police. It may be as well to state that the crowd was no larger than on the previous Saturday, and that there was neither obstruction nor disturbance. The detective force engaged themselves in arresting the speaker's chair.

Comrade Mowbray was brought up before Mr. Phillips, on Monday, charged with wilful obstruction. After some useless fencing from both sides, together with much contradictory evidence from the police, Inspector Rooks was placed in the witness-box, and being asked: "Is it not a recognised meeting-place?" "Why did you not arrest Morris, Aveling, Ellis, and Rose on the Saturday previous?" "Can you give us a list of men who may speak at Stratford?" "Can you give a list of men who may not speak at Stratford?" looked blank and sulky. The trick had now become so transparent that the magistrate saw it, and found occasion to point out that it looked as if Mowbray was up for his opinions and not for obstruction. Nevertheless, he fined Mowbray £1. The police, headed by Inspector Scott, thought this the right time to come in and say that no meetings had been held since eleven of our comrades had been prosecuted. This also was such a transparent lie, that again Mr. Phillips had to interfere and point out that he himself had seen meetings since, both by Socialists and others. The police on this as on previous occasions were remarkable for their contradictory evidence. *E.g.*, K R 37 could not or would not distinguish the difference between standing in a chair and standing on a chair as he probably meant; likewise K R 37 and K R 69 could not agree whether Mowbray spoke three or fifteen minutes, but happily Inspector Scott came to the rescue, and explained that K R 69 was not on duty at the time, so his statement should be discounted. Among the distinguished people in court, Mr. Jennings, the pseudo-schoolmaster, sat and listened attentively, evidently in the hope of learning how to conduct his next case with success, or perhaps to become better acquainted with our looks, as indeed it turned out afterwards. For as we passed through the waiting-room Mr. Jennings, addressing me by name, requested a few words, and with conscious guilt stamped on every feature, began to complain of the humiliating way certain Socialists had looked at him last Saturday, and even in court. Also of the unfairness of Aveling's report. While making his excuses and giving explanations, I could not help thinking how much better he would have looked in blue with silver buttons. For then only would he have shown in his true light, in spite of his last remark that there was no one so unwilling as himself to give evidence for the police.

THOMAS E. WARDLE.

## THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

OFFICES: 13 FARRINGTON ROAD, E.C.

## Notices to Members.

*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.

## Notices to Lecturers and Branch Secretaries.

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

## Second Annual Conference.

On Sunday last the Annual Conference of the League met at 13 Farringdon Road, when 18 Branches were represented. Reports on the past year's work were submitted and approved. The Rules were discussed and amended. A full report of the proceedings will be issued to all Branches shortly, and a descriptive article will be given in next number. The number of the Council was altered to 15, and the following elected to serve for the ensuing year: Edward Aveling, H. A. Barker, E. Belfort Bax, Reginald A. Beckett, Thomas J. Binning, H. Charles, A. K. Donald, W. Knight, Joseph Lane, May Morris, William Morris, Lena Wardle, T. E. Wardle, Philip Webb, C. W. Mowbray. William Morris and E. B. Bax were appointed Editor and Sub-Editor of the *Commonweal*.

## Excursion.

On Monday an excursion was carried out in accordance with arrangements previously announced. 196 members and friends, including the provincial visitors, went to Box Hill and Dorking, spending a most enjoyable day, despite some heavy showers which fell during the afternoon. No mishap of any kind occurred to mar the pleasure of those assembled; and the wish was unanimously expressed that it were possible to have such an experience more often.

## Branch Subscriptions Paid.

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

## The "Commonweal."

"Socialism from the Root Up," by Bax and Morris, will be continued in the number for July 3, which will also contain the conclusion of "The Pilgrims of Hope." Next week will be printed the first instalment of the paper read by W. Morris at the Fabian Conference, entitled, "Whigs, Democrats and Socialists."

Branches are reminded of the absolute necessity of their paying for the paper week by week.

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

Boards for the use of newsgagents can be supplied to Branches at 1s. each.

## Branch Reports.

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

**BLOOMSBURY.**—Edward Aveling lectured on Friday 11 to an audience of about 150. Sale of literature and collection good.—T. W.

**CLERKENWELL.**—On Wednesday, June 9, W. Chambers gave a very interesting lecture on "Clerks," pointing out how clerks were thoroughly bourgeois in sentiment, although much-abused wage-slaves in reality; a good discussion followed; one quire of *Commonweal* sold.—No lecture on Sunday evening, June 13, the Conference being held in the hall on that date.—W. B., sec.

**MARYLEBONE.**—We had a large and attentive audience in the Harrow Road on Saturday evening, and at the close of the meeting we took seven names for the purpose of forming a Branch of the League in the district.—On Sunday

morning there was a large audience at Bell Street. Over seven quires of the *Commonweal* have been sold by the Branch this week.—H. G. A., Sec.

**LEICESTER.**—A Debate on Socialism took place at the Secular Hall on Sunday 13th inst. between our comrade Barclay and Mr Wallace Nelson of Sheffield. In opening the debate Barclay said that Socialists proposed to abolish private property in land and the means of production and distribution, by this means giving leisure, comfort, and plenty to all. There would be no idlers existing on the labour of others, and poverty would be unknown, for those who would not work would cease to exist. It was slavery to be forced to toil for another's enjoyment. Under Socialism there would be no power of enslaving others in any one's hands. Mr Nelson made the stereotyped attack, saying incidentally that Socialism would result in a government of ignorant and stupid majorities, and be most tyrannical. He believed in co-operation, which aimed at doing some very good work by some very good ways; but Socialism sought to do some very bad work by some very bad ways. He was very ably answered by Barclay, much to the satisfaction of a large audience. The debate lasted two hours and a half. The hall was full, although it was holiday time, and great interest was manifested throughout.—R.

**DARWEN.**—On Sunday, Mr. Skethley, of Birmingham, delivered three lectures in the Co-operative Hall, which were of a most interesting nature. The evening lecture, "Capital and Labour, Profit and Wages," elicited an animated discussion, and the meeting expressed its satisfaction at the able and honest fashion in which the lecturer had replied to the questions and criticism.—J. W.

## LECTURE DIARY.

## London Branches.

**Bloomsbury.**—Arlington Hall, Rathbone Place, Oxford Street, W. Friday, June 18, at 8.30 p.m., Thomas E. Wardle, "The Fallacies of Society." Edward Aveling in the Chair. Music before and after. Business meeting at 7.30, election of officers for ensuing year.

**Clerkenwell.**—Hall of the Socialist League, 13 Farringdon Road, E.C. Sunday June 20, at 7.30 p.m. George Bernard Shaw, "Socialism and Malthusianism." Wednesday 23 (8.30). Fred. Verinder, "The Land and the Drink Question." Saturday 26 (8 p.m.). Smoking Concert. Sunday 27 (7.30). H. H. Sparling, "What is a Religion?" Wednesday 30 (8.30). A. K. Donald, "The Prophecy of Socialism." Music occasionally.

**Croydon.**—Royal County House, West Croydon Station Yard. Sunday June 20. R. Banner, "The Fraud of Politics." Business meeting at Parker Road every Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock.

**Hackney.**—Kenton Coffee House, Kenton Road, Well Street, every Monday at 8, for the enrolment of members and other business.

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

**Hoxton (L. E. L.).**—Exchange Coffee House, Pitfield Street, opposite Hoxton Church, N. Sundays, at 7.45 p.m. June 20, H. Davis. "Are we Over-Populated?"

**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. June 22. Mrs Wilson. "The Future of Radicalism."

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

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

## Country Branches.

**Birmingham.**—Bell Street Coffee House. Every Monday evening, at 7.30.

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

**Glasgow.**—Lecture and discussion in new rooms of the Branch, 84 John Street, every Sunday at 7 p.m. Reading-room open every day from 10 a.m. till 10 p.m. Donations of books for library will be gladly received.—J. B. G.

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

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

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

**Manchester.**—County Forum. Thursdays, at 8 p.m.

**Norwich.**—Gordon Café. Every Monday at 8 p.m.

**Oldham.**—Mrs. Wrigley's Coffee Tavern, 9, Old Market Place. Wednesdays, 7.30.

**Oxford.**—Temperance Hall, 27 Pembroke Street. Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.

## Open-air Propaganda for the Week.

Date.	Station.	Time.	Speaker.	Branch.
Sat. 19.	Harrow Road—opposite the "Prince of Wales"	7		Marylebone.
	Stratford—at end of Church	7		Central.
S. 20.	Canning Town (Beckton Rd.)	11.30		Central.
	Edgware Road—Bell Street	11.30		Marylebone.
	Hackney—Well Street	11.30		Hackney.
	Hammersmith—Beadon Road	11.30		Hammersmith.
	Hoxton Ch.—Pitfield Street	11.30		Hoxton.
	Mile-end Waste	11.30		Mile-end.
	Regent's Park	11.30		N. London.
	Soho—Broad Street	11.30	T. E. Wardle	Bloomsbury.
	St. Pancras Arches	11.30		N. London.
	Hyde Park (near Marble Arch)	3.30		Marylebone.
	Victoria Park	3.30	T. E. Wardle	Hackney.
	Merton—High Street	7		Merton.
Tu. 22.	Euston Road—Ossulton St.	7.30	T. E. Wardle	N. London.
Th. 24.	Hoxton Ch.—Pitfield Street	8		Hoxton.
	Mile-end Waste	8		Mile-end.

## PROVINCES.

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

**Leeds.**—June 13. Hunslet Moor, 11 a.m.; Vicar's Croft, 7 p.m.

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

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

## MEETINGS OF OTHER SOCIETIES.

**CHAMBERLAIN CLUB,** 21 Choumert Road, Peckham. Sunday June 27, at 8 p.m., A. Scheu, "The Essence of Freedom and of Servitude."

**NOTTING HILL DEBATING SOCIETY,** "Monarch Tavern," Manchester Street (near Latimer Road Station)—Sunday June 20, at 7.30. F. Kitz, "Criminal Classes, High and Low." 27. Charles Murray (S.P.E.L.), "Why have Revolutions failed to Emancipate the Working Classes?"

**PROGRESSIVE DEBATING SOCIETY,** "Bee Hive," Warner Street, New Kent Rd. Sunday June 20, at 8 p.m., C. W. Mowbray, "Woman: Her Position under Socialism and To-day."