

# THE COMMONWEAL

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**SOCIALIST LEAGUE.**

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

## POLICE, PUBLICANS, AND SINNERS.

WHY do the heathen beg pardon and the Christians rage so loudly? When, in the early days of the Socialist revival, our propagandists were arrested and our meetings broken up, what help did we receive from the red-hot Gospellers and Apostles of "pure" cold water? On the contrary, they then, as in the present case, put themselves forward as the friends of law-and-order, and took full advantage of the partiality shown them at that time by the police authorities to occupy the stations forbidden to us. It was not until a militant policy was adopted by our comrades in forestalling them at their stations, that they perceived there was a public question involved in the persecution of the Socialists. To-day they are in antagonism to the government. Judging from their antecedents one need not hesitate to aver that were the occasion one in which Socialists instead of the temperance party were interested, they would look calmly on whilst the Socialists were bludgeoned and their meetings suppressed.

"Our followers," say they, "are of the most law-abiding and order-loving section of the community!" What a pity that such and a law-'n'-order government should be at logger-heads! They might echo with Caesar, "Et tu Brute!" Nothing demonstrates more clearly the power of the bung and gin-mill interest, than the fact that the government can afford to offend a large and influential section of the people, and perhaps force a proportion of that section to make common cause with ourselves upon the question of the right of public processions.

A word in relation to the proposals of the government, which have set the whole family of Stiggenses in motion. The Tories propose to compensate their friends the publicans, who may, in view of a diminution by local action of the number of licenses, be forced to "evacuate." Of course, this simply means an increase of trade to the remaining houses, and probably also an increase of drunkenness.

Landlords and publicans are the especial care of a government composed of land thieves, and hence we have compensatory legislation on their behalf. It is superfluous to point out that the worn-out wreckage of society, the over-driven slaves, who, through old age, sickness, or supercession by machinery, are pushed down in the battle of life, are never compensated by the nation—except in those pillars of British society, the prison or the workhouse. The government will not even compensate by full wages its own over-worked employes, but set their police upon them when they attempt to organise for the redress of their grievances.

As to the publican, reader. Have you ever noticed the bland beaming rubicundity of Boniface, as he rakes in the shekels from the sweltering crowds who on Saturdays and holidays are crushed in the boxes which compose his "bar"? If you wish to see a cloud settle upon that placid face, discuss Socialism, strikes, and clubs, and he will pause as he is drawing the vile decoction he calls beer, to assure you that "They 'ort to be all put down, sir, they 'ort, sir!" He is a Conservative and stands to the government, and in this case the government stand by him.

And what about his mortal enemies, the Gospel Temperance Band, the cohorts of Sion and Little Bethel, now so deeply agitated? And the Sons of the Cross? who are now so cross. And the total abstinence force, who would vend you weak adulterated aperients to wean you from beer, and who, moreover, enliven your sojourn in this vale of tears with the startling information that "He who believeth not as they believe shall be damned!" and are ever anxious about the growth of their numerous sick and burial funds, of which, judging from their lugubrious aspect, they stand in continual need.

"We are the missionaries against strong drink, and all the evils which flow from the drink curse. From drink, and drink alone, flows poverty, crime, and attendant evils! We are the party who by legislative measures will curb and finally destroy the drink fiend!" Pshaw! This narrow proposition, put forward with leather lungs and forty-parson power, seeks to amplify the powers of the policeman, and, arming him with fresh coercive powers, obtrude him upon the people in a matter of conduct that should rest upon sentiment and liberty of action.

It is the irony of fate that such a party should now be at issue with the chief of police. The total ignoring of the root cause of intem-

perance, Poverty, and their placing it as a consequence instead of a cause, is exasperating to the Socialist and those who study the social question. It is the growth of large towns, the fierce fight for existence, which exhausts the mental and physical faculties and drives the poor to resort to artificial stimulants. Overcrowding, and breathing impure air, and adulteration, and the ogre Poverty, are responsible for drinking habits. If one wishes to search out the most flaring gin-palaces, they are found in the most fœtid slums. And so the drink statistics of England are, in short, so far as they refer to the poor, a sufficient although not complete criterion of its economic slavery.

The Socialist can find no rest for the sole of his foot upon the ground now being fought over by publican and abstainer. The publican bedecks his gin-palace, and eliminates all the comfortable features of the old inn, in order that his customers shall consume quickly and constantly. The teetotallers seek to allure you from the publican into halls, where the afore-mentioned aperients are vended with a *souppon* of Christian cant. Behind their coercive proposals for the cure of an evil of which they ignore the root-cause, there hides grim Puritanism and social tyranny. Wherever their peddling proposals have had any sort of enforced practice, they have been conspicuous failures.

Small wonder that the men of advanced thought who have adopted the temperance idea as a rule of conduct resolutely refuse to enter their narrow conventicles or be enrolled upon their membership. Let the fight for existence be replaced by fraternal co-operation; the homes and surroundings of the people will be in accord with these principles, and then the drink question, so far as excess is concerned, will be solved. To achieve this we must be in conflict with Law-'n'-order as represented by Privilege. To-day the teetotallers respect Law-'n'-order. Just now they and it have a temporary tiff. There is not the least doubt that if a conflict had occurred the truncheons of the police would have received the greatest injury. A plague upon both their houses!

The clerical element, now so actively in opposition to the publican, are ordinarily hard at work to persuade people to look above for happiness. In narrow courts and alleys, where children are born and reared amid sights and sounds which foredooms them to the workhouse, jail, and hospital—where, in short, humanity swelters—they pursue their way, giving their paltry charity, patching with presents of soup-tickets and blankets the hideous social cancer they are too cowardly to denounce the causes of. Ringing the changes upon the keyboard of their particular phase of superstition, they gather the wretched victims of Mammon within the narrow walls of mission-halls, and dose them with religious cant as a soporific for their present sufferings. In this wise they do the work of their employers, the rich, who pay them deliberately to the end that the poor may be cajoled into enduring the horrors of their surroundings by a belief in beatitude hereafter.

When, under the Empire, an English female evangelist sought to reclaim the wicked Parisians from their frivolous ways, she called upon the prefect of the district and sought the usual permit to open a mission-hall. "Certainly," said he, in giving permission. "Open your hall; such places are as good as police-stations." It argues a want of astuteness on the part of the governing classes that they should offend so valuable an adjunct to the police force as are the Gospel Brigade.

And as to governmental policy, it is clear that the thin end of the wedge, apparent when Trafalgar Square became a prohibited spot for public meetings, is being driven home, and we shall presently be treated to practical illustrations of Law-'n'-order in a wider sense than heretofore. The police—those brutal servants of the propertied classes—are becoming more arrogant every day; and the right of public meeting will follow the right of procession to the limbo of other extinguished rights; and this will happen, in the glib language of Mohro, "in the interests of the public at large." We are only at the outset of conflicts with the police; and until working-men consider that *something harder than a policeman's skull* is a necessary aid to pedestrian exercise when engaged in demonstrating, they must expect to be the victims of the unrestrained brutality of the hirelings of the classes.

As to processions, it is questionable whether in the growing heat of the social conflict it is politic for bodies of unarmed men to gather into the middle of the thoroughfares as a ready point of attack and dispersal by the bludgeoners. Our friend the enemy, in the shape of that sinister organ the *Daily Telegraph*, said recently, in relation to the Paris demonstration, that the chief difficulty of the police lay in

distinguishing Socialists from the ordinary public when mixed up with them, and that processions helped them in attack. If a change of tactics should result disastrously to the *clientèle* of Monro, whom he designates "the people at large," they will have that official and Home Secretary Matthews to thank for their troubles.

F. KITZ.

## NEWS FROM NOWHERE:

OR,

### AN EPOCH OF REST.

BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

CHAP. XVII. (continued).—HOW THE CHANGE CAME.

"THAT evening the rebel prisoners were visited in their cells by very polite and sympathetic persons, who pointed out to them what a suicidal course they were following, and how dangerous these extreme courses were for the popular cause. Says one of the prisoners: 'It was great sport comparing notes when we came out anent the attempt of the Government to "get at" us separately in prison, and how we answered the blandishments of the highly "intelligent and refined" persons set on to pump us. One laughed; another told extravagant long-bow stories to the envoy; a third held a sulky silence; a fourth dammed the polite spy and bade him hold his jaw—and that was all they got out of us.'

"So passed the second day of the great strike. It was clear to all thinking people that the third day would bring on the crisis; for the present suspense and ill-concealed terror was unendurable. The ruling classes, and the middle-class non-politicians who had been their real strength and support, were as sheep lacking a shepherd; they literally did not know what to do.

"One thing they found they had to do: try to get the 'rebels' to do something. So the next morning, the morning of the third day of the strike, when the members of the Committee of Public Safety appeared again before the magistrate, they found themselves treated with the greatest possible courtesy—in fact, rather as envoys and ambassadors than prisoners. In short, the magistrate had received his orders; and with no more to do than might come of a long stupid speech, which might have been written by Dickens in mockery, he discharged the prisoners, who went back to their meeting-place and at once began a due sitting.

"It was high time. For this third day the mass was fermenting indeed. There was, of course, a vast number of working people who were not organised in the least in the world; men who had been used to act as their masters drove them, or rather as the system drove, of which their masters were a part. That system was now falling to pieces, and the old pressure of the master having been taken off these poor men, it seemed likely that nothing but the mere animal necessities and passions of men would have any hold on them, and that mere general overturn would be the result. Doubtless this would have happened if it had not been that the huge mass had been leavened by Socialist opinion in the first place, and in the second by actual contact with declared Socialists, many or indeed most of whom were members of those bodies of workmen above said.

"If anything of this kind had happened some years before, when the masters of labour were still looked upon as the natural rulers of the people, and even the poorest and most ignorant men leaned upon them for support, while they submitted to their fleecing, the entire break-up of all society would have followed. But the long series of years during which the workmen had learned to despise their rulers had done away with their dependence upon them, and they were now beginning to trust (somewhat dangerously, as events proved) in the non-legal leaders whom events had thrust forward; and though most of these were now become mere figure-heads, their names and reputations were useful in this crisis as a stop-gap.

"The effect of the news, therefore, of the release of the Committee gave the Government some breathing time: for it was received with the greatest joy by the workers, and even the well-to-do saw in it a respite from the mere destruction which they had begun to dread, and the fear of which most of them attributed to the weakness of the Government. As far as the passing hour went, perhaps they were right in this."

"How do you mean?" said I. "What could the Government have done? I often used to think that they would be helpless in such a crisis."

Said old Hammond: "Of course I don't doubt that in the long run matters would have come about as they did. But if the Government could have treated their army as a real army, and used them strategically as a general would have done, looking on the people as a mere open enemy to be shot at and dispersed wherever they turned up, they would probably have gained the victory at the time."

"But would the soldiers have acted against the people in this way?" said I.

Said he: "I think from all I have heard that they would have done so if they had met bodies of men armed however badly, and however badly they had been organised. It seems also as if before the Trafalgar Square massacre they might as a whole have been depended upon to fire upon an unarmed crowd, though they were much honeycombed by Socialism. The reason for this was that they dreaded the use by apparently unarmed men of an explosive called dynamite, of which many loud boasts were made by the workers on the eve of these events;

and of course the officers of the soldiers fanned this fear to the utmost, so that the rank and file probably thought on that occasion that they were being led into a desperate battle with men who were really armed, and whose weapon was the more dreadful, because it was concealed. After that massacre, however, it was at all times doubtful if the regular soldiers would fire upon an unarmed or half-armed crowd."

Said I: "The regular soldiers? Then there were other combatants against the people?"

"Yes," said he, "we shall come to that presently."

"Certainly," I said, "you had better go on straight with your story. I see that time is wearing."

Said Hammond: "The Government lost no time in coming to terms with the Committee of Public Safety; for indeed they could think of nothing else than the danger of the moment. They sent a duly accredited envoy to treat with these men, who somehow had obtained dominion over people's minds, while the formal rulers had no hold except over their bodies. There is no need at present to go into the details of the truce (for such it was) between these high contracting parties, the Government of the empire of Great Britain and a handful of working-men (as they were called in scorn in those days), amongst whom, indeed, were some very capable and 'square-headed' persons. The upshot of it was that all the definite claims of the people had to be granted. We can now see that most of these claims were of themselves not worth either demanding or resisting; but they were looked on at that time as most important, and they were at least tokens of revolt against the miserable system of life which was then beginning to tumble to pieces. One claim, however, was of the utmost immediate importance, and this the Government tried hard to evade; but as they were not dealing with fools, they had to yield at last. This was the claim of recognition and formal status for the Committee of Public Safety, and all the associations which it fostered under its wing. This it is clear meant two things: first, amnesty for the 'rebels,' great and small, who, without a distinct act of civil war, could no longer be attacked; and next, a continuance of the organised revolution. Only one point the Government could gain, and that was a name. The dreadful revolutionary title was dropped, and the body, with its branches, acted under the respectable name of the 'Board of Conciliation and its local offices.' Carrying this name, it became the leader of the people in the civil war which soon followed."

"O," said I, somewhat startled, "so the civil war went on, in spite of all that had happened?"

"So it was," said he. "In fact, it was this very legal recognition which made the civil war possible in the ordinary sense of war; it took the struggle out of the element of mere massacres on one side, and endurance plus strikes on the other."

"And can you tell me in what kind of way the war was carried on?" said I.

"Yes," he said; "we have records and to spare of all that; and the essence of them I can give you in a few words. As I told you, the rank and file of the army was not to be trusted by the reactionists; but the officers generally were prepared for anything, for they were mostly the very stupidest men in the country. Whatever the Government might do, a great part of the upper and middle classes were determined to set on foot a counter revolution; for the Communism which now loomed ahead seemed quite unendurable to them. Bands of young men, like the marauders in the great strike of whom I told you just now, armed themselves and drilled, and began on any opportunity or pretence to skirmish with the people in the streets. The Government neither helped them nor put them down, but stood by, hoping that something might come of it. These "Friends of Order," as they were called, had some successes at first, and grew bolder; they got many of the officers of the regular army to help them, and by their means laid hold of munitions of war of all kinds. One part of their tactics consisted in their guarding and even garrisoning the big factories of the period: they held at one time, for instance, the whole of that place called Manchester which I spoke of just now. A sort of irregular war was carried on with varied success all over the country; and at last the Government, which had at first pretended to ignore the struggle, or treat it as mere rioting, definitely declared for 'the Friends of Order,' and joined to their bands whatsoever of the regular army they could get together; and made a desperate effort to overwhelm 'the rebels,' as they were now once more called, and as indeed they called themselves.

"It was too late. All ideas of peace on a basis of compromise had disappeared on either side. The end, it was seen clearly, must be either absolute slavery for all but the privileged, or a system of life founded on equality and Communism. The sloth, the hopelessness, and if I may say so, the cowardice of the last century, had given place to the eager, restless heroism of a declared revolutionary period. I will not say that the people of that time foresaw the life we are leading now, but there was a general instinct amongst them towards the essential part of that life, and many men saw clearly beyond the desperate struggle of the day into the peace which it was to bring about. The men of that day who were on the side of freedom were not unhappy, I think, though they were harassed by hopes and fears, and sometimes torn by doubts, and the conflict of duties hard to reconcile."

"But how did the people, the revolutionists, carry on the war? What were the elements of success on their side?"

I put this question, because I wanted to bring the old man back to the definite history, and take him out of the musing mood so natural to an old man.

He answered: "Well, they did not lack organisers; for the very

conflict itself, in days when, as I told you, men of any strength of mind cast away all consideration for the ordinary business of life, developed the necessary talent amongst them. Indeed, from all I have read and heard, I much doubt whether, without this seemingly dreadful civil war, the due talent for administration would have been developed amongst the working men. Anyhow, it was there, and they had leaders far more than equal to the best men amongst the reactionaries. For the rest, they had no difficulty about the material of their army: for that revolutionary instinct so acted on the ordinary soldier in the ranks that the greater part, certainly the best part, of the soldiers joined the side of the people. But the main element of their success was this, that wherever the working people were not coerced, they worked, not for the reactionists, but for 'the rebels.' The reactionists could get no work done for them outside the districts where they were all-powerful; and even in those districts they were harassed by continual risings; and in all cases and everywhere got nothing done without obstruction and black looks and sulkiness; so that not only were their armies quite worn out with the difficulties which they had to meet, but the non-combatants who were on their side were so worried and beset with hatred and a thousand little troubles and annoyances that life became almost unendurable to them on those terms. Not a few of them actually died of the worry; many committed suicide. Of course, a vast number of them joined actively in the cause of reaction, and found some solace to their misery in the eagerness of conflict. Lastly, many thousands gave way and submitted to the rebels; and as the numbers of these latter increased, it at last became clear to all men that the cause which was once hopeless was now triumphant, and that the hopeless cause was that of slavery and privilege.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

TO BE CONTINUED.]

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## HOW TO WIN LANCASHIRE.

DEAR COMRADES,—If Lancashire is to take its proper place in the ranks of Socialism, we must be up and doing, and to do our work properly we must have a system, or else our efforts will be very materially depreciated, and the Cause will suffer. It has been dinned into our ears many times during elections, and especially by the party which has secured a majority of the seats, that "what Lancashire says to-day England will say to-morrow." If this be an axiom, then we must work to get Socialism in the ascendancy; and with an educated working class we ought and can do it. In this county we have at least nineteen towns with populations numbering over 20,000 without a single recognised place of meeting, either indoors or outside. These towns are: Oldham, 152,511; Preston, 93,707; Bury, 49,746; Burnley, 69,110; Wigan, 48,916; Warrington, 45,275; Ashton, 43,389; Accrington, 31,435; Bacup, 25,033; Hyde, 28,629; Heywood, 23,050; Lancaster, 20,724; Chorley, 22,792; Widnes, 24,919; Tottington, 20,324; Worsley, 23,787; Barrow in Furness, 47,276; Staleybridge and Duckinfield, 56,614; Todmorden and Nelson, 34,242; Leigh and Redford, 21,733; Gorton 33,096; St. Helens, 57,234; Southport, 32,191; and another score of towns just on the borders of these big towns, with populations from 8,000 to 20,000. They are all big enough to establish branches and provide speakers of their own. These are Atherton, Blackpool, Clitheroe, Colne, Crumpall, Droyloden, Earlstown Junction, Eccles, Failsforth, Haslingden, Hindley, Newton-le-Willows, Padiham, Frestwich, Radcliffe, Rawtenstall, Sowerbybridge, Stretford, Westhoughton, and Whitefield.

Let every branch in Lancashire see to it. Let them determine which place is the easiest to attack, and make the attack at once. Let the branch send two or more members for some time. Let the meetings be held once a week, be punctual, and ask for enquirers to be seen after meeting. Don't make meetings too long; you may educate, but it is just as desirable to organise. Get a corresponding secretary; and you may rely upon it that a branch will be formed and you will not require to send more than one speaker afterwards. You should always take *Commonweal* and leaflets and pamphlets. Let us work hard, pull well together, and victory will be ours.—Yours fraternally,  
E. H. P.

P. S.—A collection should be made at all meetings for the local propaganda fund to pay travelling expenses for speakers. We want the best talent procurable. All Socialists are enthusiastic enough, but not always rich enough to travel further than they can walk.—E. H. P.

## A SOCIAL MEETING

WILL BE HELD

AT THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB,

40 BERNER STREET, E.,

On Tuesday, June 24th, at 8.30 p.m.

All Revolutionary Socialists are invited. The position of the *Commonweal*, and the best means of advancing the Revolutionary Propaganda will be discussed. To be followed by a Concert. Admission free. Further particulars next week.

SHEFFIELD SOCIALISTS.—We have a very encouraging report to make of the work accomplished here during the past week. To us in Sheffield the "Rev." is getting sensibly nearer. Had our usual meetings at Monolith, Westbar, and Rotherham. We are also holding open-air meetings on week nights as follows: Monday at Handsworth Woodhouse, a mining village about five miles out; Wednesday night in the Wicker; and Thursday, Bramall Lane. We sold last week 270 *Commonweal*, and a quantity of pamphlets and *Freedom*; we expect to equal it this week. The attendance at all our meetings has greatly increased, and the interest is getting almost intense. The members are one and all working with a will, and in the heartiest comradeship. Our comrade Andrew Hall, of Chesterfield, visits us on Sunday next, and we are expecting record audiences.

## A VISION OF HELL;

OR, A PEEP INTO THE REALMS BELOW.

HEAVENS! what a list!—what shoals on shoals  
Of sinners sentenced, on hell's rolls,  
To scorpion-whips and brimstone-coals!  
Tremble, ye lords of funds and acres!  
Now is the time to save your souls,  
Ye money-grubbing Jews and Quakers,  
Bow your stiff wills unto your Maker's,  
Ere death calls in your undertakers!

Foremost in sinful guilt and pride  
Scowled land-usurpers, money-changers—  
'Twixt these the world is crucified;  
Authors of all its woes and dangers,  
To which men otherwise were strangers.

What streams flow from this fountain-head!  
What myriads tangled in their toils!  
What countless hosts these monsters lead!  
Who share their crimes, to share their spoils,  
Filling the earth with woes and broils!

Loan-mongers, landlords, millionaires,  
Contractors, usurers, speculators,  
Stockjobbers, brokers, bulls, and bears,  
Blacklegs, monopolists, regraters,  
Dealers in spiritual wares;  
And House of Commons' sham debaters,  
Yea, the whole tribe of legislators,  
Who cater for these depredators,  
Most of them rotten fornicators,  
All of them licensed spoliators,  
Trampers on right, and people-haters,  
Rogues every man, and all first-raters;  
With swarms of hunters after place—  
A hungry, servile, graceless race!

Discounters, notaries, lawyers, proctors,  
The scum of gluttonous corporations,  
Of bubble-company concoctors,  
Fit tools for rank abominations,  
Attorneys gorg'd by litigations;  
Managers drown'd in peculations,  
Pauls, Redpaths, Robsons, of all stations,  
Steep'd to their chins in malversations,  
The produce of their incubations,  
And scandal of corrupted nations.

Land-factors, merchants, bankers, brewers,  
Proprietors of "hells" and stewards,  
Forestallers, turf-men, hired reviewers,  
And fabricators of false news,  
With smooth-fac'd Quakers, "saints," and Jews,

Such as pious thieves would choose  
For missions to back slums and mews,  
To coddle thieves, on their acquittals,  
With sermons, tracts, and broken victuals,  
Which they would gladly leave for skittles,  
Or "swag" to earn their fresh committals,  
Conscious their blots would bear the light,  
Compared with their's who'd washed them white.

Legions there were of cotton lords,  
And manufacturers, whom free trade  
Make candidates for hell's rewards,  
Through blood-stain'd fortunes wrung, not made,  
From famished serfs in graves soon laid.

No devils were half so hypocritical  
As these close-fisted, grinding skin-a-flints,  
Most brazen-faced, yet parasitical,  
With falsehood traced in all their lineaments;  
Bullies to serfs, to tyrants, sycophants,  
And primed with purse-proud, upstart insolence,  
Which swell'd them out to huge dimensions,  
Based only on their own pretensions.

Though "Liberals" styled, none e'er can love them,  
So opposite their actions show them;  
Take all they can from those above them,  
And nothing give to those below them.  
Behold the shibboleth to know them!  
For never yet was Liberal known  
To let the poor have even their own.

By J. BRONTERRE O'BRIEN.

An infamous sentence has been passed upon Moses Harman, the editor of *Lucifer*. He is a very plain-spoken sexual reformer, and did not shrink from printing an unusually strong letter from one of his correspondents. For this offence he has actually been sentenced to five years' imprisonment and a fine of three hundred dollars, which he is never likely to pay. Such a sentence makes one gape with wonder. Would any judge who was not a wretched bigot pass it, or would it be tolerated by any people not eaten out with hypocrisy? The wife-beaters and woman-outragers are at large, and this well-meaning, if mistaken, man is treated as a criminal of the deepest dye. Even if society—God bless its sweet, pure soul!—felt obliged to discontinue such a publication as *Lucifer*, one would think that a week's imprisonment would suffice, at least to begin with. But five years! It takes one's breath away. Yet this happens in America, where they are holding meetings to protest against the Czar's treatment of political prisoners. "Frailty, thy name is woman," says Hamlet. That's a mistake. But this is true—Hypocrisy, thy name is Christian civilisation.—*Fresthinker*



OFFICES: 24 GREAT QUEEN STREET, LONDON, W.C.

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

The COMMONWEAL is the official organ of the Socialist League; but, unless definitely so announced by the Editors, no article is to be taken as expressing in more than a general way the views of the League as a body. In accordance with the Manifesto and Statement of Principles of the League, the COMMONWEAL is an exponent of International Revolutionary Socialism. On minor differences of opinion the widest freedom of discussion is maintained. As all articles are signed, no special significance attaches to their position in the paper.

Articles and letters dealing with any phase of the social problem are invited and will meet with earnest consideration. They must be written on one side of the paper only, and accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication. MSS. can only be returned if a stamped directed envelope accompanies them.

Advertisements can only be inserted if unobjectionable in all particulars. Scale of charges and special quotations may be obtained from the Manager.

SUBSCRIPTIONS, including postage:—For British Islands, Europe, United States, and Canada, a year, 6s.; six months, 3s.; three months, 1s. 6d. For Australia, New Zealand, Cape of Good Hope, Natal, Transvaal, and the Argentine Republic, a year, 8s.; six months, 4s.; three months, 2s. For India, Ceylon, China, Hong Kong, and the Straits Settlements, a year, 10s.; six months, 5s.; three months, 2s. 6d.

Subscribers who receive a RED WRAPPER are thereby reminded that their subscriptions have expired and must be renewed immediately if they wish to continue to receive COMMONWEAL.

SPECIAL RECRUIT SUBSCRIPTIONS.—To aid in spreading our principles, the following largely reduced terms are offered to those who obtain new subscribers: Two new yearly subscriptions for British Islands, etc., 10s. 6d.; for Australia, etc., 15s.; for India, etc., 19s. Five new subscriptions: For British Islands, etc., 25s.; for Australia, etc., 37s. 6d.; for India, etc., 47s. 6d. Specimen copies will be sent on receipt of postage.

Remittances from abroad must be made by International Money Order.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. M., De C. (Hampton, Va.)—Letter and book received.  
 J. M. B. (Beith).—Notice of strike arrived too late for insertion.  
 To CONTRIBUTORS—Workmen could help us greatly by sending in accounts of capitalist tyranny and sweating in London and the provinces. We want the names of the sweaters. Those who write must send us their name and address, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith. We shall not fear to publish the truth.

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NOTICE.

Letters should be addressed as under—  
 Editorial matter for 'insertion in 'Commonweal,' address "The Editors."  
 Business letters address "Commonweal' Manager."  
 Letters containing Reports should be marked "Report" on the envelope, and if intended for next issue should reach the Office not later than Tuesday morning.

DOWN A COAL PIT.

(Concluded from p. 173.)

THE stall man is responsible for the safety of his bank; he has to see that the requisite props and sprags are fixed, and that nothing is left in a dangerous condition. His wages are even more difficult to fix with exactitude, depending as they do on so many varying circumstances. The tonnage price will mostly lie between 1s. 8d. and 2s. 2d., subject to the 35 per cent. rise, though both more and less may be met with. Of course 1s. 8d. in one stall may be much better than 2s. 2d. in another, so much depends on the nature of the coal, the thickness of the seam, and the character of the roof. But for a full week's work most of the stall-men will now make from 30s. to 40s., and some men as much as 50s. or 60s., and for an odd week in exceptional cases possibly even a higher figure might be touched. But, on the other hand, it is quite possible for men to work a whole week for nothing! If they come across a fault in the coal, or if the roof falls in and buries the stall, it may take them all their time to earn enough to pay the day-men. It is seldom that a stall will be worked for many weeks together without getting a poor one in for some reason or other. I have before me two pay tickets taken from the same stall for succeeding weeks; in both cases there were two stall men and one filler, and in both weeks there were only five days worked:

FIRST WEEK.		£	s.	d.
33 Tons 18 Cwt. at 2s. 4d. ....	...	3	19	1
Advance 25 per cent. ....	...	0	19	9
Total .. .. .	...	4	18	10
Sick and Accident Clubs, stopped ..	...	0	1	10
		4	17	0
SECOND WEEK.		£	s.	d.
24 Tons 7 Cwt. at 2s. 4d. ....	...	2	16	10
4 Yards "Ripping" at 1s. 9d. ....	...	0	7	0
Advance 25 per cent. ....	...	0	15	11
Total .. .. .	...	3	19	9
Clubs, etc. ....	...	0	1	10
		3	17	11

It will be noticed that in this case 10 per cent. of the rise had been added to the price, making it 2s. 4d.; but as successive rises were gained they were calculated on the old basis. Out of the money paid to these stall men as above, they had to pay their filler for five days at 4s. 11d, viz., £1 4s. 7d., leaving them in the first week £1 16s. 2½d. each for themselves, and in the second £1 6s. 6d. A deduction of 6d. a-week each would have to be made for powder, and wear and tear of tools, probably rather more than that would be needed. Pits are considered to be working well when they make five days a week regularly. Most of the house and gas coal-pits will not work that during the summer, though some of the hard coal ones may make six days most weeks. Only clean lump coal must be loaded by the men in the pit; for slack they will get only 9d. or 1s. per ton. The ton consists of 21 cwt. for all kinds of coal. There are fixed rates for various extras which occur, such as "ripping," or "heading," but a great deal is expected to be included in the tonnage rates, and when faults and slips occur the men have to trust very largely to the generosity of the employer for any extra payment. The pit we are examining is one of the more generously managed in many ways; a good deal of work is done by day-men employed by the owners to clear and secure the travelling roads, etc., and nowhere have we noticed the ponies rubbing against the roof, which in some pits may be frequently seen, though, of course, contrary to the provisions of the Act.

We were fortunate enough to see the whole process of coal-getting in the different stalls as we went through, but it will be more easily explained in the order in which it is done. In the first district we pass through the hard rock comes immediately over the coal, so here they "hole" the coal underneath and wedge it down. The "holing" consists in cutting a sort of groove about one foot high and four or five deep all along the face of the stall; this the miner does with his pick, lying on his side; as he goes along he will put short sprags at intervals to keep the coal from breaking down, until the whole length is holed. He then draws two or three of the little sprags and drives the end of a long steel bar between the rock roof and the coal, and so wedges down a huge block weighing often many tons. This his filler will break up and load into tubs, each tub being marked with chalk, or having a small leather ticket attached bearing the number of the stall. This will go on until all the bank is wedged down; then a fresh row of props must be fixed to keep the roof safe, and afterwards the back row will be withdrawn and the roof left to drop in at its leisure. This it does, now and then, with greater energy than is required, burying the whole stall up to the face; and as we pass from bank to bank we have to crawl through more than one small ugly-looking hole that has been cleared through such a slip to allow the air to pass. Sometimes if the coal is lively it takes little or no wedging down, but splits off without any assistance. Nothing makes one realise so vividly the immense pressure to which the coal has been subjected by the weight of the superincumbent ground—in this case 400 yards thick—as to hear it hissing and crackling when first laid bare! The men like the coal to be lively as it takes so much less

winning, though of course there is a little more danger of getting caught by unexpected falls. Where there is a layer of soft clod above the coal, between it and the rock, the holing is done in this, and then shot holes are drilled near the bottom and it is broken up by blasting. The shots are fired with flameless powder by one of the deputies, they only being allowed to fire them, in dangerous pits, after making an examination to see that there is no gas about. Should the charge fail to go off the stall would be shut up until it is considered by one of the officials that all risk of its explosion will have passed.

It will be easily imagined that, even where the utmost precautions are taken, accidents cannot be entirely prevented; and there is no doubt that the present system often leads to unnecessary risks being run. For instance, the eagerness of the men to get as many tons of coal as possible—and so as large a wage—makes them run into danger in order to save time; they neglect to put enough props in, or draw too many out at once, so letting the coal down too suddenly, and in many ways they run extra risk in order to increase their earnings. On the other hand, risks are run to save expense to the owner. There is a standard of safety which varies, and which is undoubtedly influenced by the wealth of the pit and the disposition of the manager or owner. The men are held responsible for the loss of props which the officials consider it safe to recover; sometimes it turns out that they could not safely be got out, and a man is injured in the attempt. Mistakes of judgment there must always be in these things, but there is no doubt that the standard of safety is kept down a good deal by the basis of profit upon which the whole system is worked.

We pass on through many stalls, getting considerably hot and dusty, until at length we turn out once more into the travelling road. Here we find quite a cool breeze, and one is glad to button up. We at once realise the work that is being done by the fan which we saw at the surface. The air is so guided by doors, brattis cloths, etc., that it is always circulating through every part of the roads or workings, which are many miles in extent. We are now trudging along up some old roads, which were made twenty or thirty years ago, towards the shaft of another pit which is working a seam below ours. For hundreds of yards this old road is arched in with brick, and altogether gives one the impression that progress during the last score of years has not in every case brought improvement! Evidently a more generous use of brickwork was common in those times. Presently we come to an old furnace, once used for ventilation, but long since superseded by a fan. Furnaces are still used in some of the more old-fashioned pits. A huge fire used to be kept burning in these furnaces, and a large volume of heated air discharged into a shaft, which, acting like a very tall chimney, caused a great draught, sufficient in fact to draw the fresh air down the other shaft and through the workings. We now pass through double doors, and find ourselves in a small cavity half way up the shaft. We watch for a while the two cages spinning past us, one up and one down; then we ring five to the banksman, which tells him that there are men waiting at this seam. Again the cages fly past us, and then ding, ding, goes our bell; we know that next time one of them will call for us. A few seconds and here it comes slowly down, stopping exactly at the right level; again our bell rings one, and we get into the cage—carefully, for there is another hundred yards below us, and plenty of chance to slip down, as this is not a regular landing-stage. When we are all on, the last reaches and gives a final signal to the engine-man, and up we go. This is pleasanter than going down, one's feet seem to feel the cage well under them, except just for a few seconds when the engine first steadies, then a feeling creeps over one that the cage has begun to go down again, and one has just time to wonder, with a slight pang of horror, whether the rope has given way when the first glimpse of daylight casts a reassuring ray on the side of the shaft! Slowly we emerge into the full dazzling light, and as we glance at our lamps we wonder how we can possibly have got accustomed to walk by such slender illumination.

However, here we are, come out a mile and a-half from where we went in, and we are not at all sorry to be able to walk upright again, free from any misgivings about the roof coming down or the sides closing in on us!

It remains for us to follow the coal from the pit bank to the wagon, and see it screened and sorted. As the cage comes up two empty tubs are pushed in on one side sending out the two full ones on the other. These are run off to a weighing machine beside a little cabin, in which a clerk and check-weighman are rapidly booking the weight—of the latter of these we shall have more to say presently. From the machine the tubs are run to a tippler, which turns them over, discharging the coal on to a sloping screen, down which it slips. The small, falling through the bars, glides down a shoot on to a travelling belt underground, which conveys it away to be further sifted into nuts and slack, the latter going forward through a washer and crusher finally lands in the coke ovens, and is there converted into coke by being burned to a red heat and then slacked with water. The larger coal slips over the screen bars on to a wide belt, which slowly creeps along carrying the coal with it. On each side of the belt lads are stationed to pick out any lumps of dirt or bad coal; being stimulated by a bonus on the quantity of dirt they pick out, there is not much escapes them. At the end of the belt the coal slides down another screen into the wagons, which will carry it up to London to cook many people's dinners or warm their toes.

As we walk away from the pit towards the station, we ask our conductor about the checkweighman. It seems that he is a most important person, and holds a position almost unique. He is appointed by the men in the first instance to check the weights of the coal which they send out, to see that the weighing machines are true and that the

correct weight is booked. His position is established by Act of Parliament, which authorises the majority of men who are paid by weight to elect him, and compels all so paid to contribute their share towards his remuneration, which share is stopped from their wages. But his actual sphere is much larger. Being a servant of the men, independent of the employers, he has got to be a sort of general secretary to them. He presides at their meetings, is spokesman for them in disputes, makes collections at the pit-top for strikes or other purposes, posts up any general union notices, and in fact does all the work for doing which an ordinary man would be in danger of being discharged. It will be easily seen what an immense advantage it is to the miners to have such a man, appointed by them, independent of the employers, but still holding an acknowledged official position on the pit bank. His legalisation is in fact one of the most distinct benefits conferred on the men by the Mines Regulation Acts.

Perhaps a coal pit illustrates better than anything else the advantages and disadvantages of Government regulation—grandmotherly legislation, as some like to call it. There can be little doubt that, while the relations of employers and employed remain as they are, Government regulation is the most direct and effectual means of carrying out any measure for the benefit of the men. The present standard of safety in pits, low as it still is, would not have been reached had not the law come to the aid of the men's combinations. But on the other hand, one is made to feel that the law is a poor and clumsy way of enforcing regulations which should be adopted voluntarily and carried out loyally, without the need of enforcing. And why are they not so adopted? Simply because the pits are worked for profit, and because the interests of the men and masters are all across. It is the masters' interest to bring to bank as large a quantity of coal as possible with the smallest expenditure on labour and safety precautions. It is the men's interest to get as large a payment as possible in wages for every ton they send up, and to get as much as possible out of the employers in the shape of safety precautions. At the same time, the tonnage price being fixed, they are tempted to get all the coal they can and to spend as little time as they dare in making their stalls safe. While this system of working continues, there will always be discontent, distrust, and friction of all sorts between men and their employers, between the employers and the inspectors, and even between the men and the inspectors sometimes.

Only when the pits come to be worked by free men, not goaded on by a scanty tonnage price, but secure of their fair share of life's comforts, and at liberty to make what provision for their safety they may think fit,—only then will it be possible for the miner's life to be a decent one, and for rational organisation to take the place of arbitrary regulation, with its endless friction and discontent.

R. U.

### SCENES IN THE PARK.

A TEMPERANCE demonstration does not, as a rule, fill me with great enthusiasm, but there were some sights in the Park on Saturday which made my heart beat a little quicker than usual. You have read in the papers about the size of the demonstration, and the way it was broken up into minute fractions by police. That I shall not trouble you with. My purpose is to relate as briefly as possible the attitude of the people towards the idle scoundrels who live upon their labour, and who have the insolence to ride them down like dogs whenever they enter the Park to vent their complaints in a more or less futile demonstration. I am glad to say these gentry got a warm reception on Saturday. They were hooted all along the line, and in fact had to run the gauntlet amid a storm of jeers and chaff. "Sweaters" was the popular name for them; and the general sentiment was well expressed by one workman, who, addressing a particularly fat and over-fed capitalist, said, "All right old man. Wait till another five years is over; we'll have you out of that blooming carriage." Not only this, but despite the efforts of the police, carriages were repeatedly stopped by a furious crowd, so as to allow the procession to pass; and a coachman who endeavoured to drive over the people was sternly warned to be careful, or the carriage would be overturned. We all know how a "gallant" baronet and an M.P. had to ride for his life, amid a volley of sticks and stones, for insulting the workmen. All these are signs that should tell us that our propaganda is taking effect, and that the people will not stand the insolent tyranny of aristocrat and plutocrat much longer. Nor will they be bludgeoned into a meek and quiet submission by an irresponsible police despot like James Monro with his horde of murderous police bullies. These gentlemen and their chief had better let processions alone for the future, or it may be the worse for them.

N.

A WORD TO THE PRACTICAL MAN.—It is not a lucky word, this same *impossible*: no good comes of it. Who is he that says, there is a lion in the path? Sluggard, thou must slay the lion then; the way has to be travelled. In Art, in Practice, innumerable critics will henceforth demonstrate that most things are impossible; that we have got once for all into the region of perennial commonplace, and must contentedly continue there. Let such critics demonstrate; it is the nature of them; what harm is there in it? Poetry once well demonstrated to be impossible, arises the Burns, arises the Goethe. Unheroic commonplace being now clearly all we have to look for, comes the Napoleon, comes the conquest of the world. It was proved by fluxionary calculus that steamships could never get across from the farthest point of Ireland to the nearest of Newfoundland: impelling force, resisting force, maximum here minimum there; by law of nature, and geometric demonstration:—what could be done? The Great Western could weigh anchor from Bristol Port; that could be done. The Great Western, bounding safe through the gullets of the Hudson, threw her cable out on the capstan of New York, and left our still moist paper demonstration to dry itself at leisure. "Impossible!" cried Mirabeau to his secretary; "*Ne me dites jamais ce bête de mot!*" Never name to me that blockhead of a word.—*Carlyle: 'Chartism.'*

## THE LABOUR STRUGGLE.

### Shipton Triumphant.

So Shipton has gained the secretaryship of the London Trades Council and beaten the new trade unions after all. The wily old fox is not to be caught napping. Mr. Shipton is a man whom every trade-unionist you meet admits ought to have been kicked out long ago, yet he contrives, though attacked by young and vigorous men, to defeat them by sheer force of cunning, and his knowledge of all the tricks which are the capital of an old hand at electioneering. The first dodge was to prevent the most popular candidate, Mr. Farnell, from standing for election by procuring a "mysterious vote" from his society, withdrawing him as a delegate from the Trades Council. Then with a bogus majority of people who represent small and reactionary trade unions, Shipton gained the victory, by 61 to 46, against Hammil of the Engineers, a comparatively young and untried man. The new trade unions, who joined the Council to turn him out, will now have the pleasure of paying Shipton's salary for some considerable time. Would it not be a wiser plan for these bodies to boycott that effete and rotten institution, the London Trades Council, and form a federation of their own? A rival organisation set up beside the Trades Council would certainly attract all that was young and healthy in trade-unionism, and Mr. Shipton's bogus societies would then be left to stew in their own juice along with their respectable secretary. We fear it will take the new trade unions some time to beat Shipton on his own ground.

### Mr. Burt and the German Emperor.

Mr. Burt's firm belief in the good intentions of the German Emperor ought to be considerably shaken by this time. Here is a copy of the proclamation issued by an official of that most benevolent and best of princes just before the International Miners' Conference:

"In virtue of section 16 of the Socialist law passed in October 1878, we prohibit herewith the collection of subscriptions having for its object to send delegates to the forthcoming International Miners' Congress at Jolimont, in Belgium. And in particular we warn you herewith not to supply any means whatever to enable any delegate to attend this said congress. Any public announcement asking for funds for this purpose is likewise prohibited. Any person acting contrary to this notice will be prosecuted, and is liable to a penalty not exceeding £20, or three months' imprisonment. Any monies so collected will be confiscated and handed over to the poor-box of the district. This notice will take effect from the day of its publication.

"DR. BALTZ, Sub-Prefect.

"Gelsenkirchen, 30 April, 1890."

This proclamation is quoted from an article on the Congress by Mr. Abrahams (Mabon) in a South Wales paper. Mabon, besides commenting on this edict, gives some other facts which show what a sham is William's "earnest desire to improve the condition of the wealth-producers." Mabon says:

"This most extraordinary notice was posted in all mining districts, and also published in the newspapers. Is not this tyrannical edict in striking contrast to the solicitude recently expressed by the Emperor William on behalf of the labouring classes? . . . In point of fact, however, proclamations notwithstanding, no country was more ably represented than Germany, one of the representatives being one of the men that recently appeared before the Emperor. These men reported that one of their comrades, who, at a public meeting recently, dared to denounce a large colliery director who had artfully and wrongfully broken a pledge given by him to them on strike in order to induce them to return to work, had been sent to gaol for twelve months. When asked why they did not take part in the question of a general strike if the eight hours day was not conceded, they said, 'that they dare not,' for if they did, they would, upon their return to their own country, be prosecuted, and placed in prison. But they knew their countrymen and their sufferings so well, that when the time agreed upon arrived they would rise to a man and 'strike the blow.'

We wonder what the miners think of that old humbug Burt after this. It is quite evident that a reactionary Government knew what it was about when it sent him as a delegate to the Berlin Conference. But surely it will be impossible for any body of workmen to have any confidence in him in future. Has "Tory money" got anything to do with Mr. Burt's sudden zeal in the cause of reaction? Or is it the weakness and childish imbecility of advancing age? Let us charitably conclude that it is the latter. In that case the Miners' National Union had better pension him off: "Superfluous lags the veteran on the stage."

### Livesey Hooted.

Livesey had quite an ovation at the Victoria Hall on Friday night. This gentleman, who drenched his blacklegs with beer and brandy during the recent strike, had the impudence to appear on the platform as chairman of a meeting to protest against "compensation to publicans." The audience were so delighted, that if they could have got hold of Livesey they would have probably "compensated" him. What Livesey's great exemplar, Mr. Pecksniff, would have called "forcible and hilarious suggestions" for Livesey's removal were made by a numerous and savage audience. "Chuck him out," "Break his neck," "Throw him off the platform," were among the yells which assailed him. So furious was the hooting, that Livesey, after vainly endeavouring to speak, had to "gracefully" retire, like Sir Charles Warren at the Oxford Music Hall. We believe Mr. Livesey professes to be "a sincere and earnest Christian" as well as a "temperance advocate," and we want to give him an opportunity of proving his Christian beneficence. If anyone will send us his private address, we will be happy to publish it for the information of some hundreds of starving gas-stokers, who are anxious to call upon him to show their "gratitude and respect" for his late "kindness" towards them, and also to "solicit a voluntary contribution" for the support of their wives and families.

### International Labour League and Federation.

This organisation held a very successful meeting at the East Finsbury Radical Club on Saturday, June 7th. Thirty-five organisations were represented by sixty delegates from all parts of London. An attempt was made by the State Socialists to get the federation formed upon a "legal and constitutional basis." But most of the delegates were not authorised to pledge their organisations to this programme, and the question is held over till the 13th of July, when another conference will be held. We hope that the workers will steer clear of legality, and decide as the miners and other Socialist workmen on the Continent have done, not to wait for Governments or Parliaments to give them the eight hours day, but to obtain it for themselves by a general strike of workmen in every trade. N.

## INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

### GERMANY.

The German Socialist Publishing Company have issued the second volume of a most interesting work, entitled *Nach Zehn Jahren* (After Ten Years), being the history of the working of the muzzle-laws in Germany for the last decade. We say an interesting work, and regret not being able to add an impartial one, but we have no room here to deal at any length with the contents of the book. We want only to say that 15,000 copies of the first volume, and already 12,000 copies of the second volume have found their way in Germany alone, and after such a widespread circulation the Berlin police have thought it necessary now to prohibit the entry on German territory of this Socialist publication.

A German Socialist, comrade Janisverski, who was the opponent of Professor Virchow at the recent election for the Reichstag, has been ordered to leave Berlin.

The police have arrested at Wiesenbach, in Saxe-Weimar, comrade Steuzleit, who recently returned to that town from America. A domiciliary visit to his house resulted in the discovery of various appliances for making explosive shells.

It is expected that comrade Bebel will become the chief editor of the daily *Berliner Volksblatt*, the principal Socialist organ now issued in Germany, after the 30th of September next, when the muzzle-laws will cease to be in force. It is also stated that comrade Auer, who for the present is expelled from Berlin, will be the sub-editor of the paper.

The government of Saxony have asked that the Bundesrath may prolong the state of siege which is proclaimed over Leipzig, that would otherwise cease to exist under normal circumstances after the 28th of this month. The authorities in Saxony have always been the most ardent adversaries of the Socialists; the Draconian laws of 1878 have nowhere been applied more vigorously than in Saxony. The papers of that part of Germany are especially reactionary; they issue just now scores of articles of a most alarming nature, describing under the most sombre light the situation which will be created by the abrogation of the muzzle-laws. Another paper issued at Hamburg goes still further, and says "The government are placed in an awkward position; they cannot aggravate the general penal legislation without restraining at the same time the political freedom of all other parties; on the other hand, if they abrogate simply and purely the anti-Socialist law an insurrection becomes inevitable, and when the guns will have interfered God knows what may then happen! It is possible that a good strong bleeding following the revolt may have a salutary influence on the social organisation, but on one condition only: that this bleeding be implacable and merciless; otherwise there will be no end of troubles and revolts, and Socialism, like a cankerous disease, will permeate society at large."

There are still a considerable number of partial strikes going on all over Germany. At Altenburg, the sculptors, carpenters, and turners have won their cause. The sculptors of Erfenschlag, near Chemnitz, have also obtained an increase of 25 per cent. The cabinet makers at Gorlitz are still out of work, as well as the millers of Leipzig and neighbourhood. The cigar-makers at Brunswick have succeeded, after a strike which lasted for several months and cost over 50,000 marks, in getting rid of a tyrannical foreman. The strikers at Fleusburg have now resumed work after having won their demands. The carpenters of Leipzig and at Hamburg are still out of work, and intend to stick to their guns as long as they possibly can. Numerous other strikes, which cannot all be recorded here, are in progress, and make at the present time the German soil rather hot for the capitalist class of that country. Everywhere, in fact, all over the world, we seem to approach the beginning of the end!

### RUSSIA.

The paper of the "Society of Friends of Russian Freedom" has now appeared, and we can only say that this venture is well worth of meeting with the sympathies of all true-hearted men and women. In "A Free Platform for Russian Reformers," Dr. R. Spence Watson, speaking of the Russophile movement in England, says: "The actual task which we contemplate is the wide dissemination from time to time of accurate information upon the political position of Russia in domestic affairs, the condition of the people, the treatment of political exiles, and all the action of authorities in suppressing all aspirations for freedom. From time to time news appears in the French or English papers casting a lurid light upon the darkness which surrounds Russian life, but that light and the interest it awakens speedily die away. We wish to prevent this, and to preserve the interest by ensuring that authentic information shall be regularly forthcoming. In spite of many difficulties, such information will be provided; and although in the nature of things the source from whence it is obtained cannot be disclosed, every pains will be taken to assure that everything we publish shall be so guaranteed as to stand the test of the severest investigation." *Free Russia*, having so stated the nature of its publication, enters at once into Russian affairs. Madame Tzebrikova's Letter to the Tzar is reprinted, and we fully agree with the commentator when he says that her letter is a most important and perhaps historical event in the record of Russian liberation. The Siberian atrocities are dealt with in an exhaustive manner, and it is clearly shown that the life of the whole mass of people exiled and imprisoned in Siberia has been made unendurable by the new rules and recent events.

Another good feature of *Free Russia* is the "Bibliography of the Russian Question," and we hope it may be made as complete as possible, for the benefit of those who want to become more acquainted with the history and details of the Russian question.

The paper may be had from the publisher (Reeves, Fleet Street) at 1d. a copy. Every subscriber to the fund of the Society from 1s. and upwards will receive all its publications that shall be forthcoming, free of charge till further notice.

All of us—revolutionary Socialists, Anarchists, Social Democrats—who are engaged in the battle of freedom against tyranny and oppression, must feel deeply interested in the fate of these heroic Russian men and women who, by hundreds and thousands, are willing to give up their lives as the vanguard of the army of social justice and human liberty.

### DENMARK.

We have already spoken last week about the stonemasons and bricklayers strike of Copenhagen. We are now requested to reproduce the appeal launched by our Danish friends. It runs as follows: "Comrades, the bricklayers of Copenhagen, at this moment, are struggling to bring about a nine-hours working day and a payment of 50 ore (6½d.) an hour. The strike broke out on the 12th of May, after we had negotiated for about two years with the masters about this matter. But they have always opposed our

claim, although want of employment increased year after year in such a manner that about 500 have been obliged to leave Copenhagen and a great number of others have been forced to seek work abroad. Under these circumstances, we had no other resource than to ask for a reduction of hours, and the masters persistently refusing to yield to this, about 1,200 bricklayers have struck work, whereby 800 unskilled workmen and a number of carpenters have also got out of work. The masters' corporation is engaged in struggling against us; they have associated with the building-speculators, the carriers and constructors, to prevent those of the masters who would be willing to accede to our demands to go on working. Thus we are at war against our whole capitalist class, and the battle will be a hard one. As the question of reduced hours is for us of great importance, we are ready to hold out until we have won our cause. Therefore, comrades and brethren, we do beg you instantly not to come to Copenhagen before the strike has ended, and we also entreat to send us your support. Remember that, owing to the strike, about 2,500 families are without bread. We also request you to let us know whether work is abundant enough with you to allow some of our striking comrades to get employment in England." Signed H. Rasmussen, chairman of the Bricklayers' Union of Denmark. Treasurer: P. C. Olsen, 22, Romersgade str., Copenhagen, K. Denmark. V. D.

## THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

OFFICES: 24, GREAT QUEEN ST., LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, W.C.

The Offices of the Socialist League will be open for the sale of *Commonweal* and all other Socialist publications from 8.30 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day except Sunday. The Secretary will be in attendance from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

**Executive.**—We wish to draw the attention of Branches to the decision of the Conference *re* Branch Reports, viz., "That monthly records of the work done, condition of the workers, etc., be, where practicable, substituted for the short weekly reports."

**Propaganda Committee.**—The Propaganda Committee meets on Tuesday, June 17, at 8.30 p.m. Special meeting; important business; all members of the League interested in the propaganda invited to attend.

**Branch Subscriptions Paid.**—1890:—Leicester and North Kensington, to end of April. Glasgow, Oxford, Hammersmith, North London, East London, 'Commonweal' Branch, Manchester, and Norwich, to end of May. Streatham, to end of December.

(Branch Secretaries will please send with remittances for Capitations the number of their membership.)

### NEW PREMISES FUND.

Collected at Council meeting, June 9th, 3s. 6d.

### "COMMONWEAL" GUARANTEE FUND.

The following further sums have been received towards this fund:—East London Branch, 3s.; B. W., 1s.; H. K., 1s.; 'Commonweal' Branch, 16s. 4d.; Deakin (Walsall), 10s.; A. H. (Norwich), 5s.; D. Nicoll (2 weeks), 1s.; P. Webb, 1s.; Hammersmith Branch, 2s.; Mrs. Edwards, 1s.; C. Saunders, 2s.; and Glasgow Branch, 5s.

## REPORTS.

**EAST LONDON.**—We are trying hard to push Revolutionary Socialism among the workers in the East-end, and are very hopeful. We intend in future to make it a feature at our meetings to have female comrades open with revolutionary songs; Mrs. Morgan has been very active in this respect for weeks past. We held four meetings last week, viz., at Hoxton Church on Friday night, at Union Street on Sunday morning, and Victoria Park and Hoxton Church in the afternoon; literature sold well. At Union Street we have had the pleasure of hearing two comrades, Wright and Marsh, make a start as speakers, and we hope in future to spur on other comrades to take an active part in spreading our ideas. At Stratford Church, Mrs. Lahr and Cores tried to hold a meeting, but were driven away by the police. The following speakers have addressed meetings during the week—Blundell, Parker, Cores, Hicks, Davis, Brookes, Mowbray, Mrs. Lahr, Wright, and Marsh.

**NORTH LONDON.**—After the demonstration on Saturday, we endeavoured to enlighten the teetotallers as to the errors of their ways, which started a brisk discussion; one said that among the many advantages of total abstinence it enabled him to live on a pound a week and bring up a wife and family of ten respectably; our speakers were Cantwell, Moore, and Parker. In Regent's Park, Cantwell and Nicoll spoke to an attentive audience; collected 1s. 8d., and 6s. worth of literature sold.—T. C.

**ABERDEEN.**—Open-air work was resumed here in Castle Street on the evening of Saturday the 7th.—the first meeting (which had been announced by handbills) taking the form of a demonstration to protest against the freedom of the city being presented to Stanley, who pays us a visit in about a fortnight. Before the singing commenced we were surrounded by some hundreds of people, who had gathered there to hear us. Comrades Duncan, W. Cooper, and Leatham were listened to with close attention—a number of damaging extracts, read from Stanley's own books and letters, creating a marked impression. When a hope was expressed at the close that those who had learned what manner of man Mr. Stanley was, and what kind of work he had been doing, would show their disapproval when the celebrations came on, the large crowd responded with unanimous applause. At the indoor meeting on the night following, at which there was a large attendance of non-members, Nicoll's article on "Stanley's Exploits" was read and discussed.—L.

**GLASGOW.**—On Sunday we held two very successful meetings; one on Jail Square, which was addressed by Joe Burgoyne; and one at Paisley Road Toll, which was addressed by Glasier. At the latter meeting Morris's idea of how the Revolution may be achieved, as given in "News from Nowhere" in last week's *Weal*, much impressed the audience; all our *Weals* were sold out.

**DUBLIN.**—At the Dublin Branch of the Theosophical Society, on Wednesday, June 4th, Mr. E. A. Neale read a paper on "Socialism and Theosophy," in which he accepted the doctrines of Socialism. The opposition was of the usual trifling, reward of industry, etc., kind; Fitzpatrick, King, Hamilton, Mr. F. J. Allen, and others took part in a highly interesting discussion.

**EDINBURGH—SCOTTISH SOCIALIST FEDERATION.**—We held a very good meeting on the Meadows on Sunday, and although it rained somewhat heavily, the good speeches of Mackenzie, Hamilton, Smith, Bell, and Davidson kept the crowd together till a late hour. Some statements about the Trades Council roused the ire of Purdie, the bookbinders' representative, and other unionists, and a sharp exchange of questions and answers was the only result, but perhaps the last has not been heard on the subject. Our new hall is opened, and is ready to be let for trades and other meetings. No one need fail to find us, as our name may be read at a considerable distance—large white letters on a vermilion ground.—T.

**EDINBURGH—SCOTTISH SOCIALIST FEDERATION.**—Labour Hall, 50 South Bridge. Business meeting every Friday at 8 o'clock. Communications, etc., to be addressed there. Meeting on Meadows, Sunday at 4 p.m.

## LECTURE DIARY.

LONDON.

**Battersea.**—All communications to E. Buteux, 45, Inwith Street, Battersea Park Road.

**Commonweal Branch.**—24 Great Queen Street, Holborn, W.C. Tuesdays, Singing Practice. Thursdays, Business meeting. Saturdays, Social Gathering. On Sunday June 15, at 8 p.m., a Free Concert.

**East London.**—All branch communications to be addressed to H. M'Kenzie, 12 Basing Place, Kingsland Road.

**Hammersmith.**—Kelmescott House, Upper Mall, W. Sunday June 15, at 8 p.m., a Lecture. French Class conducted by Mdlle. Desroches on Friday evenings at 7.30.

**Mitcham.**—"Lord Napier," Fair Green. Meets every Sunday at 12.30, to enroll members, etc.

**North Kensington.**—Clarendon Coffee Palace, Clarendon Road. Meets every Wednesday at 8 p.m. The branch Band meets every Friday at 8 p.m. for practice. Comrades wishing to join to give in their names to the instructor at the above address.

**North London.**—6 Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road. Meets every Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock.

**Streatham.**—Address secretary, R. Smith, 1 Natal Road, Streatham.

**Whitechapel and St. Georges-in-the-East.**—Branch meetings at International Club, 40 Berner Street, Commercial Road. J. Turner, organising secretary.

### PROVINCES.

**Aberdeen.**—Organiser, J. Leatham, 7 Jamaica Street. Branch meets in Hall, 9 Harriet Street, on Sunday evenings at 6.30. Singing practice, etc., in Odd-fellows' Small Hall, Crooked Lane, Mondays at 8 p.m.

**Glasgow.**—Members are invited to meet on Thursday and Sunday evenings, at 8 o'clock, in the Secretary's house, 250 Crown Street, S.S. All communications to be sent to that address.

**Halifax.**—Socialists meet every Sunday at 6.30 p.m. at Helliwell's Temperance Hotel, Northgate.

**Leeds.**—Clarendon Buildings, Victoria Road, School Close. Open every evening. Business meeting Saturdays at 8 p.m.

**Leicester.**—Exchange Buildings, Rutland Street. Branch meets on Monday, Thursday, and Saturday at 8 p.m.

**Manchester.**—Socialist League Club, 60 Grovesnor Street, All Saints. Open every evening. Branch weekly meeting on Tuesdays at 8.

**Norwich.**—Members meet at 23 Rose Yard, St. Augustines, Tuesday at 8.30.

**Oxford.**—Temperance Hall, 25½ Pembroke Street. First Friday in every month, at 8.30 p.m.

**Sheffield.**—Socialist Club, 63 Blonk Street. French Class, Tuesday at 8.30. Discussion Class, Wednesday at 8.30. Open-air meetings are held as follows:—Sunday: Monolith, at 11.30; College Yard, Rotherham, at 3; Westbar Pump, at 8. Monday: The Cross, at 7; Handsworth Woodhouse, at 7. Wednesday: Corner of Nursery Street, at 7.30. Thursday: Corner of Bramall Lane and Hereford Street, at 7.30.

**Walsall.**—Socialist Club, 18 Goodall Street, Walsall. Meetings every night.

**Yarmouth.**—Socialist League Club, 56 Row, Market Place. Open every evening. Business Meeting Tuesdays at 8 p.m. Elocution Class Friday at 8.30 p.m. Discussion Class Sunday 3 p.m.

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

SATURDAY 14.

7 ..... Hyde Park ..... Nicoll and Cantwell  
7 ..... Stratford—back of Church ..... Cores and Mrs. Lahr

SUNDAY 15.

11 ..... Commercial Road—Union Street ..... Leggett and Mrs. Lahr  
11 ..... Latimer Road Station ..... North Kensington Branch  
11.30 ..... Hammersmith Bridge ..... Hammersmith Branch  
11.30 ..... Hoxton Church ..... Davis, Marsh, and Brookes  
11.30 ..... Kilburn—"Old Plough," Kilburn Lane ..... Mainwaring and Coulon  
11.30 ..... Mitcham—Fair Green ..... The Branch  
11.30 ..... New Cut—Short Street ..... Casey and Wright  
11.30 ..... Regent's Park ..... Mrs. Shack and Nicoll  
3.30 ..... Hyde Park—Marble Arch ..... Mrs. Lahr and Miss Lupton  
3.30 ..... Streatham Common ..... Smith and Wright  
3.30 ..... Victoria Park ..... Davis  
7 ..... Hammersmith Bridge ..... Hammersmith Branch  
7 ..... Wormwood Scrubs ..... North Kensington Branch  
7.30 ..... Mitcham Fair Green ..... The Branch  
8 ..... Waltham Green—back of Church ..... Hammersmith Branch

WEDNESDAY 18.

8 ..... New Cut—Short Street ..... Miss Lupton, Casey, and Mrs. Lahr

FRIDAY 20.

8.15 ..... Hoxton Church ..... Kitz and Davis.

### PROVINCES.

**Glasgow.**—Sunday: Jail Square at 2 o'clock; Paisley Road at 5 o'clock.

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

**Leicester.**—Sunday: Russell Square at 11 a.m.; Humberstone Gate, at 8 p.m.

**Liverpool.**—Landing Stage, Sundays at 11.30 a.m. and 3 p.m.

**Manchester.**—Saturday: Middleton market ground, at 7 p.m. Sunday: Phillips' Park Gates, at 11; Stevenson Square, at 3. Monday: Market Street, Blackley, at 8.

**Norwich.**—Sunday: Market Place at 3 and 7.30.

**Yarmouth.**—Sunday: Priory Plain, at 11; Bradwell, 11.30; Colman's Granary Quay, at 7.

Commonweal agent in Lambeth—  
Newsagent, 80 Princes-road, Lambeth

**CLUB AUTONOMIE,** 6 Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.—Sunday June 15, at 8.30, Lothrop Withington, "Through the Smoke."

**NEW MANHOOD SUFFRAGE LEAGUE,** "Three Doves," Berwick St., Soho, W.—Sunday June 15, at 8.30 p.m., George R. Cox, "Other Lips and Other Hearts" or Fifty Years After."

**MANCHESTER.**—A Demonstration, to protest against the freedom of the city being conferred on H. M. Stanley, will be held on Sunday June 15, in Stevenson Square. Frank Kitz (London) will be the principal speaker.

**SOUTH LONDON.**—All Revolutionary Socialists in South London willing to form a Branch of the S. L. are requested to send their names to W. Wright, 18 Ward Street, Lambeth, or turn up at the open-air meetings at Short Street, New Cut, on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings.

**FABIAN SOCIETY.**—A course of seven lectures on SOCIALISM IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE will be given in the French Chamber, St. James's Restaurant, W. (entrance from Piccadilly), on Friday evenings, at 8 o'clock. June 20 (fifth lecture), William Boulting, "Edward Carpenter and Earl Pearson."

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The above Leaflets, at prices given, can be had from the *Commonweal* manager in any quantities by Branches, members, or sympathisers, for distribution, 24, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London.

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**STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES.**

THE Socialist League advocates International Revolutionary Socialism. That is to say the destruction of the present class society, which consists of one class who live by owning property and therefore need not work, and of another that has no property and therefore must work in order that they may live to keep the idlers by their labour. Revolutionary Socialism insists that this system of society, which is the modern form of slavery, should be changed to a system of Society which would give every man an opportunity of doing useful work, and not allow any man to live without so doing, which work could not be useful unless it were done for the whole body of workers instead of for the do-nothing individuals. The result of this would be that livelihood would not be precarious nor labour burdensome. Labour would be employed in co-operation, and the struggle of man with man for bare subsistence would be supplanted by harmonious combination for the production of common wealth and the exchange of mutual services without the waste of labour or material.

Every man's needs would be satisfied from this common stock, but no man would be allowed to own anything which he could not use, and which consequently he must abuse by employing it as an instrument for forcing others to labour for him unpaid. Thus the land, the capital, machinery, and means of transit would cease to be private property, since they can only be used by the combination of labour to produce wealth.

Thus men would be free because they would no longer be dependent on idle property-owners for subsistence; thus they would be brothers, for the cause of strife, the struggle for subsistence at other people's expense, would have come to an end. Thus they would be equal, for if all men were doing useful work no man's labour could be dispensed with. Thus the motto of Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality, which is but an empty boast in a society that upholds the monopoly of the means of production, would at last be realised.

This Revolutionary Socialism must be International. The change which would put an end to the struggle between man and man, would destroy it also between nation and nation. One harmonious system of federation throughout the whole of civilisation would take the place of the old destructive rivalries. There would be no great centres breeding race hatred and commercial jealousy, but people would manage their own affairs in communities not too large to prevent all citizens from taking a part in the administration necessary for the conduct of life, so that party politics would come to an end.

Thus, while we abide by the old motto

Liberty, Fraternity, Equality,

we say that the existence of private property destroys Equality, and therefore under it there can be neither Liberty nor Fraternity.

We add to the first motto then this other one—

**FROM EACH ACCORDING TO HIS CAPACITY, TO EACH ACCORDING TO HIS NEEDS.**

When this is realised there will be a genuine Society; until it is realised, Society is nothing but a band of robbers. We must add that this change can only be brought about by combination amongst the workers themselves, and must embrace the whole of Society. The new life cannot be given to the workers by a class higher than they, but must be taken by them by means of the abolition of classes and the reorganisation of Society.

COUNCIL OF THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

Printed in the Socialist League Printery, and published in the name and on behalf of the Socialist League, by PAUL KIRK at 24 Great Queen St., Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W.C.