

THE COMMONWEAL

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
Evidence in Black and White	J. BRUCE GLASIER 305
News from Nowhere; or, an Epoch of Rest (continued) ..	WILLIAM MORRIS 306
Sweating among the Fishermen	J. HEADLEY 307
International Notes	RTR. and WM. LENO 307
"The Labour World" 307
The Agricultural Labourer (concluded)	C. WALKDEN 308
On Temperance 308
An Anarchist Paper on the Labour Movement	NICOLL 309
Correspondence:—"Revolutionary Government" 309
The Labour Struggle	N. 310
In Southern Africa	J. BAIN 310
For the "Commonweal" 310
A Song from Quevedo's Visions	CLIO RICKMAN 311
Executive Announcements, Lecture Diary, and Notices of Meetings 311
Where to get the "Commonweal," New Publications, Advertisements, etc. 312

EVIDENCE IN BLACK AND WHITE.

THAT the workers are prodigiously fleeced by capitalists is, one would think, a fact as self-evident as any fact can be. There are, however, some people who will deny anything, if they think they can profit by the denial; and there are other people who will scarcely believe anything—no matter how palpable to their sense or judgment—until they think everybody else believes it. There is consequently no physical or moral fact but has probably upon occasion been disputed by interested knaves or disinterested fools.

We need not wonder, then, that the robbery of labour has been denied by some important and clever people, and many unimportant and stupid people: the former because they benefit, or imagine they benefit, by preventing the detection of the robbery; the latter because they have so lost the faculty of seeing or judging for themselves that they actually believe the lie, although the truth stares them in the face every moment of their lives.

It does not seem much use trying to convince people of facts by means of figures, when the everyday evidence of their own five or seven senses fails to impress them: but it is one of the vagaries of the depraved mental habits of this commercial age that if a fact or an argument can be resolved into figures of pounds, shillings, and pence, certified in "black and white," its credibility becomes established as if by a miracle. I verily believe there are some folk who would doubt death itself if it were not for the registrars' returns and the bills for funeral expenses!

It is, I suppose, our duty to try and convert such people: even if they don't prove of much account when converted. We at any rate appease our own consciences; and, what is quite as comforting, add to the moral damnation of those who persist in abiding in error. With that view I submit the following.

A prospectus appeared a few weeks ago in the chief commercial newspapers of the country announcing the conversion of the firm of Messrs. J. and P. Coats, thread-manufacturers, Paisley, and Rhode Island, U.S.A., into a limited liability company. According to the certified report of the auditors the average profits of the business during each of the last three years reached the gigantic sum of £457,719. The report also states that the total number of hands employed by the firm is 6,000. A simple calculation, therefore, shows us that the firm makes a profit of £76 per year, or 30s. per week, off every one of its workers! The sheer voracity of this fleecing will be still more apparent if we bear in mind that the majority of the workers are girls whose wages average less than twelve shillings per week. It means that the girls get less than a third of the net remunerative value of their labour. I say *remunerative value* because it must be

borne in mind that before this "divide" takes place an enormous portion of the wealth created by these girls has been thrown away in high salaries for management, rent, advertisements, and in the woeful waste entailed in everyday competitive trading,—all of which is lost to the girls, although not included in the profits of the masters.

If we could get to the bottom of the matter, and find the actual number of people whose hands and minds contribute to the production and marketing of the thread—excluding all whose service, great or small, has merely to do with safeguarding the business and its profits to the proprietors, and whose labour consequently does not contribute one iota to the value of the material—if we could get thus at the real makers of the wealth, and find on an average how much of it each produces, and compare it with what each on an average now receives from the Messrs. Coats, the revelation would be vastly more astounding.

But as it is—even making full allowance for all uncertain qualities in such statements—these facts and figures are enough to startle even the most unimaginative stickler for black and white evidence. It is not easy to see how facts and figures bearing more direct testimony of plunder could be desired by any sentient being. There is no getting out of their conclusion by assuming that the wealth produced is due chiefly to the genius, industry, and thrift of the Messrs. Coats themselves. A heap of wealth the genius, industry, and thrift of these princely personages would produce without the labour of their six thousand workers! It is probable that without the Messrs. Coats, these six thousand workers might produce as much, and most likely more, than they now produce; but it is quite impossible that without the six thousand workers the Messrs. Coats could manufacture as much thread as would serve to patch the seats of their own breeches.

If enquiry were made, it would be found that whatever genius or industry these employers display during the one or two hours per day or per week which they give to business is devoted, not to the manufacture of thread or any useful adjunct of its manufacture, but in taking devilishly good care that the profits of their workers' toil is scooped into their own pockets and not diverted into the pockets of anybody else; and it would also be found that their thrift is more manifest in scrimping the pays of the poor girls in their factories than in scrimping themselves of any luxury or pleasure.

No; the abilities and virtues of the Messrs. Coats have as little to do with the production of thread which yields them the profit of £457,719 per year, as prayers have to do with potato-growing or philanthropy with the colonisation of Central Africa. Were they, or the new directorate, to take a pleasure trip to the South Sea Islands and unfortunately get gobbled up by native epicures, the business would probably go on and the fleecings roll in as briskly as ever,—their heirs and successors would get the fleecings, that is all; and even if through mismanagement the business of the firm diminished, the business of other firms would proportionately increase, and the girls who are presently fleeced in the Coats' factories would be fleeced in those other factories, and the bosses of those other factories would get the fleecings instead of the Messrs. Coats. As it is, the Messrs. Coats are selling out, and in future the concern will be owned by a whole swarm of money-bags, who will divide amongst themselves the spoil of the workers.

L'ENVOI.

The Messrs. Coats dwell in palaces in the west of Scotland; they have horses and carriages and sumptuously appointed pleasure yachts, and they lease expensive shootings. There are ten of them—one is reputed insane—the others are mostly strong handsome fellows, who seem thoroughly contented with their lot. They contribute liberally to the church and public charities, and are highly respected.

Their work-girls dwell in single and two-apartment houses in the narrow lanes of Paisley. They never ride in carriages or sail in pleasure yachts, and are bereft of almost every means of seeking health and recreation. They are not strong; they are mostly pale, wearyful looking creatures, who do not seem happy.

The Messrs. Coats keep patent automatic time-recording machines in their factories, and the girls are fined if they are five minutes late. The girls are not allowed to read their Bibles or sing hymns during working hours; and if they are off work through sickness they don't get any pay.

J. BRUCE GLASIER.

NEWS FROM NOWHERE:

OR,

AN EPOCH OF REST.

BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

CHAP. XXIX.—AN OLD HOUSE AMONGST NEW FOLK.

As I stood there Ellen detached herself from the merry group on the little strand and came up to me. She took me by the hand, and said softly, "Take me on to the house at once; we need not wait for the others: I had rather not."

I had a mind to say that I did not know the way thither, and that the river-side dwellers should lead; but almost without my will my feet moved on along the road they knew. The raised way led us into a little field bounded by a backwater of the river on one side; on the right hand we could see a cluster of small houses and barns, new and old, and before us a grey-stone barn and a wall partly overgrown with ivy, over which a few grey gables showed. The village road ended in the shallow of the aforesaid backwater. We crossed the road, and again almost without my will my hand raised the latch of a door in the wall, and we stood presently on a stone path which led up to the old house to which fate in the shape of Dick had so strangely brought me in this new world of men. My companion gave a sigh of pleased surprise and enjoyment; nor did I wonder, for the garden between the wall and the house was redolent of the June flowers, and the roses were rolling over one another with that delicious superabundance of small well-tended gardens which at first sight takes away all thought from the beholder save that of beauty. The black-birds were singing their loudest, the doves were cooing on the roof-ridge, the rooks in the high elm-trees beyond were garrulous among the young leaves, and the swifts wheeled whining about the gables. And the house itself was a fit guardian for all the beauty of this heart of summer.

Once again Ellen echoed my thoughts as she said: "Yes, friend, this is what I came out for to see; this many-gabled old house built by the simple country-folk of the long-past times, regardless of all the turmoil that was going on in cities and courts, is lovely still amidst all the beauty which these latter days have created; and I do not wonder at our friends tending it carefully and making much of it. It seems to me as if it had waited for these happy days, and held in it the gathered crumbs of happiness of the confused and turbulent past."

She led me up close to the house, and laid her shapely beautiful sun-browned hand on the lichened wall, as if to embrace it, and cried out, "O me! O me! How I love the earth, and the seasons, and weather, and all things that deal with it, and all that grows out of it,—as this has done!"

I could not answer her, or say a word. Her exultation and pleasure were so keen and exquisite, and her beauty so delicate, yet so interfused with energy, expressed it so fully, that any added word would have been commonplace and futile. I dreaded lest the others should come in suddenly and break the spell she had cast about me; but we stood there a while by the corner of the big gable of the house, and no one came. I heard the merry voices some way off presently, and knew that they were going along the river to the great meadow on the other side of the house and garden.

We drew back a little, and looked up at the house: the door and the windows were open to the fragrant sun-cured air; from the upper window-sills hung festoons of flowers in honour of the festival, as if the others shared in our love for the old house.

"Come in," said Ellen. "I hope nothing will spoil it inside; but I don't think so. Come! we must go back presently to the others. They have gone on to the tents; for surely they must have tents pitched for the haymakers—the house would not hold a tithe of the folk, I am sure."

She led me on to the door, murmuring little above her breath as she did so, "The earth and the growth of it and the life of it! If I could but say or show how I love it!"

We went in, and found no soul in any room as we wandered from room to room,—from the rose-covered porch to the strange and quaint garrets amongst the great timbers of the roof, where of old time the tillers and herdsmen of the manor slept, but which a-nights seemed now, by the small size of the beds, and the litter of useless and disregarded matters—bunches of dying flowers, feathers of birds, shells of starling's eggs, caddis-worms in mugs, and the like—seemed to be inhabited for the time by children.

Everywhere there was but little furniture, and that only the most necessary, and of the simplest forms. The extravagant love of ornament which I had noted in this people elsewhere seemed here to have given place to the feeling that the house itself and its associations was the ornament of the country life amidst which it had been left stranded from old times, and that to re-ornament it would but take away its use as a piece of natural beauty.

We sat down at last in a room over the wall which Ellen had caressed, and the walls of which were still hung with old tapestry, originally of no artistic value, but which had now faded into pleasant grey tones which harmonised thoroughly well with the quiet of the place, and which would have been ill supplanted by brighter and more striking decoration.

I asked a few random questions of Ellen as we sat there, but scarcely listened to her answers, and presently became silent, and then scarce conscious of anything but that I was there in that old room, the doves

crooning from the roofs of the barn and dovecot beyond the window opposite to me.

My thought returned to me after what I think was but a minute or two, but which, as in a vivid dream, seemed as if it had lasted a long time, when I saw Ellen sitting, looking all the fuller of life and pleasure and desire from the contrast with the grey faded tapestry with its futile design, which was now only bearable because it had grown so faint and feeble.

She looked at me kindly, but as if she read me through and through. She said: "You have begun again your never-ending contrast between the past and this present. Is it not so?"

"True," said I. "I was thinking of what you, with your capacity and intelligence, joined to your love of pleasure, and your impatience of unreasonable restraint—of what you would have been in that past. And even now, when all is won and has been for a long time, my heart is sickened with thinking of all the waste of life that has gone on for so many years."

"So many centuries," she said, "so many ages!"

"True," I said; "too true," and sat silent again.

She rose up and said: "Come, I must not let you go off into a dream again so soon. If we must lose you, I want you to see all that you can see first before you go back again."

"Lose me?" I said—"go back again? What do you mean?"

She smiled somewhat sadly, and said: "Not yet; we will not talk of that yet. Only, what were you thinking of just now?"

I said falteringly: "I was saying to myself, The past, the present? Should she not have said the contrast of the present with the future: of blind despair with hope?"

"I knew it!" she said. Then she caught my hand and said excitedly, "Come, while there is yet time! Come!" And she led me out of the room; and as we were going downstairs and out of the house into the garden by a little side door which opened out of a curious lobby, she said in a calm voice, as if she wished me to forget her sudden nervousness: "Come! we ought to join the others before they come here looking for us. And let me tell you, my friend, that I can see you are too apt to fall into mere dreamy musing: no doubt because you are not yet used to our life of repose amidst of energy, of work which is pleasure and pleasure which is work."

She paused a little, and as we came out into the lovely garden again she said: "My friend, you were saying that you wondered what I should have been if I had lived in those past days of turmoil and oppression. Well, I think I have studied the history of them to know pretty well. I should have been one of the poor, for my father when he was working was a mere tiller of the soil. Well, I could not have borne that; therefore my beauty and cleverness and brightness" (she spoke with no blush or simper of false shame) "would have been sold to rich men, and my life would have been wasted indeed; for I know enough of that to know that I should have had no choice, no power of will over my life; and that I should never have bought pleasure from the rich men, or even opportunity of action, whereby I might have won some true excitement. I should have wrecked and wasted in one way or another, either by penury or by luxury. Is it not so?"

"Indeed it is," said I.

She was going to say something else, when a little gate in the fence, which led into a small elm-shaded field, was opened, and Dick came with hasty cheerfulness up the garden path, and was presently standing between us, a hand laid on the shoulder of each. He said: "Well, neighbours, I thought you two would like to see the old house quietly without a crowd in it. Isn't it a jewel of a house after its kind? Well, come along, for it is getting towards dinner-time. Perhaps you, guest, would like a swim before we sit down to what I fancy will be a pretty long feast?"

"Yes," I said, "I should like that."

"Well, goodbye for the present, neighbour Ellen," said Dick. "Here comes Clara to take care of you, as I fancy she is more at home amongst our friends here."

Clara came out of the field as he spoke; and with one look at Ellen I turned and went with Dick, doubting, if I must say the truth, whether I should see her again.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

(TO BE CONCLUDED IN OUR NEXT.)

A Tonic Sol Fa Class meets every Thursday evening at 8 o'clock at Kelmescott House, Hammersmith; comrade J. Munday conductor. All members of the League are cordially invited to attend and assist.

COSMOPOLITAN RESEARCH ASSOCIATION, Wharfedale Temperance Bar, 46 Wharfedale Road, Kings Cross.—Meets every Wednesday at 8.30 for discussion of social subjects. October 1st, Mr. Sweet, "Social Democracy v. Anarchy."

FABIAN SOCIETY.—A course of lectures on "COMMON OBJECTIONS TO SOCIALISM" will be given at Bloomsbury Hall, Hart Street, New Oxford Street, W.C., on Friday evenings at 8 o'clock.—October 3rd. II. *That Socialism is condemned by the lessons of history.* "Because Democracy has always broken down," Sidney Webb; "Because all Socialist experiments have failed," Graham Wallas.

SCOTTISH SOCIALIST FEDERATION—EDINBURGH.—Our meetings in Edinburgh and Leith on the past two Sundays have been very successful, especially in Leith, where we anticipate crowded houses during the winter. We have all but secured a nice hall in Henderson Street. On Monday, 15th, we held our first annual picnic at Rosslyn, to which place a good number of our comrades, with their wives and children, drove out by coach. Comrade McDonald and his daughter, with their violins, furnished the music for the dancing, which was largely taken advantage of by the strangers present. The singing of revolutionary songs attracted a good many natives and others towards us, and the opportunity was taken to make an appeal for Socialism, comrades Glasse and Smith addressing the gathering. Comrade J. H. Smith took a capital photo of us all in group. On Wednesday, 17th, we held a public meeting in our hall, 50, South Bridge, when we had for discussion "The Tramways Question." It was fairly successful and well reported in the newspapers. We are still adding to our numbers.

SWEATING AMONG THE FISHERMEN.

Of all the white-slavery there is in Christian, commercial, and loyal England, perhaps the slavery of the demoralised, unorganised, and down-trodden fisherman is the worst. Little do the people in our inland towns and villages know the hardships, starvation, and degradation these men have to endure to procure the celebrated Yarmouth bloaters they hear so much of and get so few of, and the way they are robbed by the owners and middlemen. Well might John Ruskin say, "England has become a nation of thieves. Everybody is trying to rob everybody else, and that not bravely and strongly, but in the cowardly and loathsome ways of lying trade." When will the fishermen rise and assert their manhood like true men, and not go begging and crawling, cap in hand, to their so-called masters for a petty pittance, not sufficient to keep body and soul together, but by their united efforts, and organisation with their fellow-workers of the whole world, rise and shake off the chains of commercial slavery, and strike down monopoly and authority? Know ye not that the workers produce all wealth, yet do not get for themselves, their wives and children, the bare necessities of life; whilst the idlers—not the poor devils who hang about the quay, wearing shoddy clothes, eating adulterated food, and living, or *lingering* is perhaps nearer the mark, in filthy, insanitary slums, not fit for dogs to live in, but those rich idlers, those sweaters, "those luxurious drones who would eat your flesh and drink your blood"—live in mansions, that we the workers have built—not one single brick or nail have they made themselves—nay, they would not make them if they could, and they could not if they would? Have you never walked along a nice pleasant country road and seen some large mansion, in the midst of a splendid park, in which there is a large board announcing that "trespassers will be prosecuted" or "Beware of the dog," and has not your blood boiled within you to think that one useless creature should monopolise the glorious gifts of nature, and the labour of scores of poor workers, who perhaps have not where to lay their heads, some in prison for "stealing" a rabbit, or even a turnip, to ease their hunger for a little while, and some dying in our modern bastille the workhouse? Oh, workmen, do show a little spirit of rebellion, and try to break down the present wage-slavery. Why should we not enjoy the very best of everything nature and labour has provided for us all, but which we the workers never get? Everything is produced by labour, every nail, every rope, every sail, everything that is necessary to catch the fish, is made by some worker or other. Then why should not everything belong to labour? It should, and it will do as soon as you make up your minds to do it. "Why, then, and for what are we waiting? There are three words to speak, *We will it*, and what is the foe man but the dream-strong wakened and weak?"

But the fisherman. It will be as well to state here the conditions on which the men are engaged, as most people inland think the boats belong to the men—which they should do. After all expenses are paid, including towing, harbour dues, wharf-dues, salesman's commission, food, etc., the remainder of the money, *earned by the men*, is divided into seventeen shares, the owner taking ten, for which he has done nothing, and the crew seven shares; which seven shares are again divided into ten or ten and a half shares amongst the crew of ten men and a boy as follows:

Number of Shares.	Boat's Crew.
2 for the	Master or Skipper
1½ "	Mate
1 "	Oarsman
1 "	Whalesman
7-8ths "	Net Ropeman
7-9ths "	Net Stower
¾ each for	4 Scudders or Junkers
½ for the	Boy

As will be seen by the above, the master, who does the least work and gets the most sleep, also gets the most pay. The first four get more than the other seven. The scudders, who do the hardest and the most work, get the worst paid. The owner, the damned monopolist, the greatest curse of the present society, gets more than all the crew put together. Men, is not this eating your flesh and drinking your blood? See to this, like true men. If you are too cowardly to do it for your own sakes, think of your children at home crying for bread, their poor little faces pinched with hunger; compare them with the children of your *masters*—nay, they will not bear comparison; their little feet cold and often bare as they have to trot off to school, sometimes without a bit in their insides, whilst the children of the monopolist have the best of everything their hearts can desire, and your daughters, who ought to be at home helping their overworked mother, have to wait on them hand and foot.

If only we can get the mothers to understand Socialism, our cause is won; for instead of instilling respect for authority into their little hearts, which, when they reach manhood, takes so much to knock out of them, they would instil into their young hearts the noble principles of Socialism.

On signing to a boat, the men have to go and rig her out for sea—the boat having been laid up since the last fishing—which lasts four or five days. All the men get for this is a little bread and cheese and beer. Directly she has got all on board that is required she is towed out to sea; then the slavery begins. There is always something or other to be done, either pulling on ropes, scudding the fish, scrubbing down, etc.; the crew, with the exception of the master, very seldom get more than four or five hours sleep at a stretch, and that in a little bunk not large enough to keep a rabbit in, in fact, if any one was to keep rabbits in places like the men have to sleep in they would soon have the inspector of nuisances down on them. Can you wonder at them being degraded?

On coming into harbour with her catch, and directly she touches the quay, she is covered with a swarm of men and boys anxious to get a job, telling out or carrying the herrings ashore. The money they are paid comes out of the boat expenses instead of out of the owner's share. When all the herrings are got out the boat is washed down and got ready for sea again; all this is done by the crew. If they get her ready by 12 or 1 p.m., they very often go to sea again the same day. If not, the crew are allowed a night ashore, which happens about once in eight or ten days, but they are sent off to sea first thing in the morning. If any of the crew stop rather late the owner sets another slave on in his place, sometimes paying him as much as £1 a night during the time they are at sea, which money comes out of the man's share that stops ashore. Sometimes by an accident of this kind a man with a wife and family has to go the whole of the fishing for nothing, the owner having paid most of his money away to the man he set on in his place, the rest of his wages go for sea clothing.

The following is a bill one of the Yarmouth men had stopped out of his share:

	This is what he is paid, because he had no money to pay Cash.	This is what he could have got them for in any shop for Cash.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1 Pair Slush Boots	1 4 0	0 16 0
1 Oil Frock	0 10 6	0 7 6
1 Pair Duffel Trousers	0 10 6	0 7 6
1 Blue Guernsey	0 10 6	0 7 6
1 Gray Guernsey	0 7 6	0 5 0
2 Sea Shirts	0 7 6	0 4 0
1 Tan Jumper	0 3 6	0 1 6
1 Sou' Wester	0 2 3	0 1 0
1 Pair Sea Stockings	0 6 6	0 2 9
1 Sea Bag	0 1 6	0 1 0
1 Pair Oil Leggings	0 3 6	0 2 6
1 Pair Mitts	0 1 3	0 1 0
1 Knife	0 1 0	0 0 9
Total	4 10 0	2 18 0
Deduct	2 18 0	
Money Stolen	1 12 0	not including the other sweater's pound of flesh.

A sweating exploiter, one of the great unpaid, has a monopoly in this gigantic robbery. When will the fishermen awake to their own interests? And so the game goes on year after year, to the latter part of December, when the boats make up, which last three or four days. Then comes the grand settling of accounts, some getting £10 or £12 for twenty or more weeks of the worst of slavery, whilst others pay off their "debts" the owner taking good care that he gets his plunder. After Christmas the fishermen are forced by hunger to go begging to the Corporation to *allow* them to break stones or some other slavery for 2s. per day. Some day they will go to the sweaters and demand the wealth they have stolen from them.

J. HEADLEY.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

GERMANY.

The discussion of the proposed party programme, etc., which will be the order of the day at the Congress, is going on, and has already stirred up a great deal of bad temper. The way in which the old ones want to enforce their authority is certainly very provoking, especially as everybody knows that they are very far from being the "old ones." They have shifted and drifted about according to circumstances, that it might be said it is surprising that still such a great number follow them in their antics. Berlin seems to be the stronghold of the "kickers," and some meetings there have been far from harmonious. No doubt that the enemies of the Socialistic movement are rather pleased at this sight, but that can't be helped; it is much better that these differences are open and freely discussed than kept back; they only go in the blood of the body, forming diseases much worse than sores which can receive open treatment. Meanwhile everybody is anxiously waiting for the coming Congress, and most members wished that the wrangling should be stopped till then, though it is not at all unlikely that a split will take place.

The great lock-out in Hamburg is nearly at an end now. It can't be said that it has ended quite in favour of the workmen, though it is true the combined capitalists have been unable to smash the union (which was their desire), and must take men on without asking them to sign a paper declaring that they belong to no union; but on the other hand the unions have lost a good many members and have an enormous drain on their funds. The committee thank all friends who so liberally helped them in their struggle; and after all, if the beneficial results are not great, the workmen have learnt to stand together, and the different trades will work more and more in combined unity; if one organisation is touched it will be felt and resented by all.

RTR.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

The son of our old friend, John Bedford Leno, in writing to his father a few days since from Helensburgh, N.S.W., says:

"The masters of this continent are beginning to quake. The miners, to which body of workers I belong, are all combined, the three districts as one. The trades here are like a bundle of sticks, the tie that binds them being formed of one common interest. We have been paying sixpence in the pound weekly for six months in order to keep the men out of a neighbouring pit. I can see that Labour is about to turn the table on Capital, or, in other words, assume the position of 'boss.'—Yours, dear father, WILLIAM LENO, Miner."

"The Labour World."

Michael Davitt's paper, although "moderate" in tone, is certainly the best written and best edited "labour paper" we have yet seen. Morrison Davidson begins a fine series of articles entitled 'The Book of Labour.' The 'Scottish Notes' and the column on 'Social Contrasts' are also excellent. Some sensational revelations about the dealings of the present Government with Figott, and also concerning the way dynamite explosions have been got up by the "law'n-order" party, are promised for next week. We are glad to see Mr. Davitt doesn't share the Republican prejudices of our old friend Reynolds, since the following appears in the pages of the *Labour World*:

"Let us hear no more trash about 'free' America as compared with down-trodden Europe. Both continents are down-trodden by the rich men who own the raw material out of which wealth is created by human labour. When the land of the United States is all absorbed by private persons, as it will be in 20 years' time, there will not be a pin to choose between America and Europe, so far as wage-workers are concerned. Wages may be higher in America, but the increased cost of living there will nearly equalise the condition of the two continents. While for swindling, lying, and merciless oppression, many American capitalists leave their European brethren far behind."

What does Reynolds think of this? Mr. Davitt and his friends know the condition of the American workers, unlike the writers in Reynolds, whose sole knowledge springs from reading the works of Mr. Andrew Carnegie.

EXCURSION TO SHIRLEY HILLS will take place on Sunday, September 28th. Brakes will start from the Office at 10 a.m.
SCOTTISH SOCIALIST FEDERATION.—Labour Hall, 50 South Bridge, Edinburgh. Business meeting Fridays at 8 p.m. Secretary, W. D. Tait, 20 Dundee Street.



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.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LEON CARLYLE.—We owe you long deferred thanks for your ably executed copy of our "Statement of Principles." It has been handsomely framed, and is a valued possession of the S.L.

G. S. (Dusseldorf).—We have not been able to get a copy of the resolution, but according to the capitalist press it certainly called for the nationalisation of land, docks, railways, mines, and all the means of production.

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday September 24.

ENGLAND Belfast Weekly Star Justice People's Press Railway Review Social Demokrat Seafaring Surrey Advertiser Worker's Friend	New York—Truthseeker Workmen's Advocate Boston—Woman's Journal Investigator Nationalist Chicago—Rights of Labour Verbote Detroit—Der Arme Teufel Milwaukee—Die Wahrheit Philadel.—Knights of Labour Paterson Labour Standard San Francisco Arbeiterzeitung S.F.—Coast Seamen's Journal	HOLLAND Hague—Recht voor Allen SWITZERLAND Arbeiterstimme Przedswit ITALY Milan—Il Fascio Operaio SPAIN Madrid—El Socialista Barcelona—El Productor Cadiz—El Socialismo
NEW SOUTH WALES Sydney—Bulletin	FRANCE Paris—La Revolte Le Parti ouvrier Charleville—L'Emancipation Lyon—L'Action Sociale Lille—Le Cri du Travailleur Nancy—Le Tire-Pied	PORTUGAL Porto—A Revolucao Social AUSTRIA Vienna—Arbeiter-Zeitung Brunn—Arbeiterstimme HUNGARY Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik SWEDEN Stockholm, Social-Demokraten Malmo—Arbetet WEST INDIES Cuba—El Productor
QUEENSLAND Brisbane—Worker	CANADA Ottawa—Progress and Liberty	
INDIA Bankipore—Behar Herald	UNITED STATES New York—Freiheit New York—Der Socialist Twentieth Century Volkzeitung Bakers' Journal	

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER.

(Concluded from p. 301.)

THE enemy of the human race in the larger village is the worker who tries to climb the backs of his comrades; the creature who carries favour with his "superiors" by telling tales of hare-catching business. He scrapes or steals a few pounds worth of goods to start a beer-shop or a pig-dealer's cart, or anything to lift him a little out of the ruck, so that the exploiters will listen to him when he gives information of "dangerous" men among the lower multitude. His path his hard and his progress slow, but his character is as bad as the conditions in which he creeps along towards a position in which he can "employ" others. This creature always becomes a tyrant, and his children as surely degenerate into "respectable" prigs.

The case of the agricultural worker who migrates is different. He most likely remains a worker among workers. I know young men who have turned shoemakers in the Northamptonshire shoe district who are still as distinctly workers as ever, and decidedly more alive to their position. The manufacturing and mining districts have a great influence upon the agricultural labourer over a narrow belt around the busier centre. But as you penetrate the more decided space and silence of the districts which produce only food, then the pace becomes slower, and the difficulty of approaching the men increases; they are more afraid of combining, or even of listening to any one who tries to inform them. They are overawed by the power that the money-bag exercises over them.

And what fearful confusion that money-bag works upon the material

of agriculture, as well as upon its slaves! It is farming "for a profit" that we see. It is a sad sight. In place of the sickle we see a huge machine that smashes all before it, sweeping ears and stumps into a littering mess, to be trampled by horses drawing the next "machine." To cut the corn down quickly before it has time to shell, that is the business—never mind if there are not enough "hands" to get it sheathed to-day or to-morrow, it can be tied up "some day" so long as it is cut. There it lays sprawling Saturday, Sunday, Monday; rain, rain, rain; all the ears of grain laying upon the warm and sodden ground. They ought all to have been gathered neatly and bound within an hour of being cut, and all the sheaves set up in tens every day. How can we expect our agricultural worker to be more than an animal, while we "basely view the ruin" that he is compelled to see made by the machines of luxury and pride? While he is compelled to see the new wheat spoiling upon the wet ground because his own children have been compelled to leave the country to make room for a labour-saving machine which cannot save that corn from destruction. Why, I say, do we wonder the worker is dull? The wonder is that he is not mad.

But these few hasty remarks are only upon the harvest. The winter work is as bad or worse destruction. What has become of the threshing floor? Where are its associations,—the pigeons picking the newly turned out straw, the pigs burrowing under it, the calves rubbing themselves clean in it? Gone, all gone, nothing now but noise, dust, and disgust. The farmer says men will not thrash with a flail now. No, they will not! they have not the chance! The man on a thrashing floor in a winter's storm was lord of creation. True he toiled ten hours; but the length of the day was no fault of the flail, it was Commercialism that made the ten hours toil!

Thrashing with "two sticks and a leathern thong" for a reasonable time at a bout is fine exercise; and what an interest it gave the worker in his tools! The ash "hand-staff" wore itself as smooth as polished marble by sliding through the hard hand as the "flail" swept the air around the man's head. The whitethorn "flail" wore itself as smooth as plate glass by continually striking the straw. The eelskin, which attached the head of the flail to the swivel of the hand-staff, was the joy of all the boys that ever had access to Ambrose, as he patiently flogged away at the golden grain. The "thrasher" made his own tools until 1850. Now, he cannot even mend the "machine" that mangles a stack of corn in a day, and what is much worse, he may not take any care of the heaps of straw and chaff which used to make the young cattle so happy. The straw may wait till it can be sold to go to London for the packing of shoddy furniture, and while so waiting it may or may not get rotten, the worker cannot interfere. As with the straw so with the chaff, and worse. At Bygrave, aforesaid, they burn it to kill the seeds of weeds that ought to have been uprooted before they choked the corn! They also burn, or expect to burn, certain rats and mice at the same time. It is no wonder that condensed milk and canned meats have to be imported to feed the people of England—

"England, bound in by the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shores beat back the envious siege
Of watry Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
With inky blots and rotten parchment bonds."

This is a true picture of the life of the agricultural labourer. It is not a pleasant nor a hopeful one; and yet, when the spirit of revolt is spreading everywhere, who can be sure that in a very little time even the agricultural serf may be roused to revolt at last. Of this I feel sure; the awakening will be terrible, and the rich will have reason to fear him when he is roused.

C. WALKDEN.

[Now comrade Walkden's interesting article is concluded, we shall be very glad to have facts concerning the labourer in other agricultural districts. We want information concerning the wages paid, the length of the working-day, the condition of labourer's cottages, overcrowding if any, the extent to which labour has been displaced by machinery, and all cases of oppression and sweating. Comrades need not have great literary talents to do this; send us the facts and we will put them into shape. Sometimes, too, a plain tale simply told touches the hearts of the people more than all the learned rhetoric in the world.—Eds.]

ON TEMPERANCE.

Sir,—I would be a Socialist *bona fide*. I have been one at heart for many years, but have as yet only a slight acquaintance with the generally accepted principles of the League, and, furthermore, have only quite recently come across a copy of the 'Weal' containing the "Notes on News" (enclosed), to which I trust I am in order in asking your kind attention. Said "Notes" comment in somewhat adverse terms, to my mind, upon the subject of Temperance, the adoption of which as a firm basis I always understood (and practice myself) as being one of the first principles of reform, and advocated by Socialists and all other friends (of whatever denomination) of the masses, who are the chief sufferers from the effects of Intemperance. You will not deny that, sir. It may be that I am too young a Socialist and reader of the *Commonweal*.—Yours sincerely,
SERO.

[The objections we have to temperance folk is when they step out of their way to coerce others, and also when they assert that their principles are the sole panacea for evils flowing from our social system.—Eds.]

LABOUR LITERATURE.—A large meeting was held last Saturday afternoon at the Sewing Machine Makers' Hall, Antigua Street, Nelson Street, Glasgow City, for the purpose of considering the establishment of a depot for labour literature. The proposal was well received, and a committee was appointed to carry out the necessary arrangements and report to a future meeting. The above step has been rendered necessary, as the newsagents refuse to give labour literature any publicity whatever.

AN ANARCHIST PAPER ON THE LABOUR MOVEMENT.

OUR Anarchist friend who writes the leading article in *La Revolté* appears to be very indignant with the Revolutionary Socialists of England because they have not played a prominent part in the great Dock Strike of last year and in the labour revolt which followed. We should like to point out to this writer, whose knowledge of English affairs is evidently on a par with that of most writers in the French press, that he might have spared his lofty indignation if he had known the elements which made up this tremendous labour revolt. It is not altogether true that the dockers themselves were prejudiced against Socialism, although they were downtrodden, as our friend seems to think. Thanks to the propaganda done among them by a few poor Socialist workmen, years before the leaders of New Unionism had blest the Socialist movement with their presence, they were rather friendly than otherwise. This anyone who spoke at the numerous outdoor meetings held by the Revolutionary Socialists during the Dock Strike can testify; but on the other hand the aristocratic trade unionists like the stevedores and the lightermen would certainly have withdrawn from the strike altogether if any Revolutionary Socialist had taken an active part in the movement, and this would probably have led to the failure of the strike.

We will endeavour to explain to our French friends why these aristocratic gentlemen objected to Socialism. The lightermen and watermen, whose trade union is an old city guild which dates from the Middle Ages, were bitter Conservatives and Jingoos to a man. Their ideas with regard to politics are those of a "bold British tar" of the reign of George III.; they believe most devotedly in their queen and country, and hate "French principles" like poison. Among the stevedores there is a large section of Irish Catholics, on whom a red flag would have the same effect as a red rag upon a bull. The remainder of them, with very few exceptions, were ordinary "British trade unionists" of the most hopeless type. By personal experience, we certainly say that you might as well talk to a brick wall as preach Revolutionary Socialism to such people. Our Anarchist friend would probably know what would happen if he attempted to convert an assembly of Breton peasants—those people who were so active in exterminating the "enemies of the Church" in Paris in 1871. We should admire our friend for his courage, but we do not think any practical good would come from his exertions, unless his speedy martyrdom could be considered in that light. Therefore we think we are justified in saying that it would have been hopeless for a Revolutionary Socialist to have attempted to lead a motley host of this description—unless, of course, he was prepared to abjure his Revolutionary Socialism, and talk as much like an orthodox trade-unionist as possible.

Perhaps our French friends will now understand why it was necessary to exclude the red flag from the dockers' procession; why, also, when in response to a cry for help from the leaders of the strike the Socialist League sent two speakers, these men were carefully kept off the platform by the "leaders"; why also Mr. Champion, to still further oblige his Conservative and Catholic friends, consented to alter the sub-title of his paper, which stated that it was the "organ of practical Socialism," into something much more "moderate." We admit that the alteration was needed, for we never could make out what that paper was called the "organ of practical Socialism," unless its "practical" Socialism consisted in advocating an Eight Hour Bill and a heavy duty on all foreign imports, together with rabid professions of jingoism and savage abuse of every Socialist who, unlike Mr. Champion, was too honest to sell himself as a base and venal tool to the Tory party. It was therefore not the Social Democracy of most of the leaders of the Dock Strike, that recommended them to the stevedores and lightermen, whatever it may have done with the dockers. Burns was popular with the Irish section of stevedores because he was fresh from assisting at a Home Rule victory at Kennington; while on the other hand the lightermen thought there could be nothing "revolutionary or Socialistic" about the business, for Mr. Champion, the friend of Maltman Barry the trusted agent of the Tory party, was the *real* leader of the movement. So the New Unionism at its start conciliated both the Conservative and the Home Rule working-man.

The secret history of the New Unionism, like the secret history of the unemployed movement of 1887, has yet to be written. But behind both hovered a Mephistophelean figure, whose gifts, like those of the demon in the old legend, always brought curses with them, and the name of this modern edition of Satan is—Maltman Barry. It is the old story of many a popular movement in France, including the Boulangist movement. The reactionists have played what they thought was a deep game; they have stirred up a popular movement with a cry, which they thought would drown a popular cry of their political adversaries, and they have *done it*. The movement has grown too strong for their friends, and now the raging whirlpool of their own creation threatens to engulf not only Liberals but Tories also. To daring young Tory Democrats it seemed an excellent plan to drown the siren song of Home Rule with a popular shout of Eight Hours. So they set the heather a-fire, and to their dismay the blaze not only threatens the mansion of the capitalist but their own ancestral halls. If we were the writers on *La Revolté*, we should give thanks not to the leaders of the New Unionism but to Mr. Maltman Barry and his Tory Democratic employers, "who have done more to awaken the

most downtrodden of the masses, who are the most prejudiced against Socialism, than all the Socialists put together."

When the work of these gentlemen is completed, and London is in the throes of a popular revolution, then the Revolutionary Socialists will take a hand in the game, and not even the leaders of the New Trade Unions shall say them nay. Till then we shall continue our work of quietly impregnating the masses with revolutionary ideas by open-air meetings and the distribution of revolutionary literature, and although such work may not make a great noise or provide us with much popular applause, yet perhaps, the people who come after us and enjoy the fruits of our work, may not forget the obscure propagandists who worked on in silence amid difficulty and discouragement, and the hatred and persecution of the enemies of the people, their only aim being to free the poor and downtrodden, and seeking neither honour, glory, nor gold for themselves. It was such men as these, after all, and not Mirabeau or even Danton who made the French Revolution. Mirabeau and Danton merely took advantage of the work of other men to raise themselves into greatness and prominence.

Verily they have had their reward! A brief period of prosperity and then—death; one dying in his bed worn out by his own vices, the other perishing on the scaffold as a traitor to the Cause of the people. And down to the present historians are still squabbling over the point as to whether they were heroes or scoundrels. We, at least, do not want their "fame." "Better be a poor fisherman than a ruler of men," and we rather fancy the leaders of the New Trade Unionism are by this time rather inclined to be of Danton's opinion. Meanwhile, we should advise our critic in *La Revolté*, before he writes about the work of the Revolutionary Socialists in England again, to read the reports in the *Commonweal* of the work we have done during the past year, and then perhaps he will come to the conclusion that after all we have done something "to awaken the downtrodden masses who are the most prejudiced against Socialism!" Further, we hope a writer in an Anarchist paper will not tell us to abandon our "principles" in order to gain a little temporary popularity and applause. N.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT."

As criticism is invited on this article, I wish to make a few observations with reference to the same. In the first place, as to the elected "government," Kropotkin states "to confide to it the work that we all, every one of us, ought to do in our own initiative" would be a blunder.

Kropotkin then contents himself and his Anarchist followers with the remark that "the practical solution will be found, will become clear, when the change has already commenced"; as though each of the workers would thoroughly educate himself at the last moment, and know exactly what to do in his own initiative and the most suitable way of doing it. Past experience of revolutions teaches us that the way of carrying on the Revolution so as to make it a success can only be arrived at by careful study and discussion through the *Commonweal* and at Socialist meetings for months beforehand.

An elected "government" would of course be unsafe, as the people would naturally elect the persons who "talked" the most at the time.

As to the "dictatorship," Kropotkin states, "We know that a Socialist Revolution cannot be directed by the intelligence of a single man or a single organisation," thus leading us to believe that the intelligence of one hundred human machines (alas! that the term should be used) must be greater than that of a William Morris. Kropotkin paints the dictatorship as black as he possibly can, and his description of the French Revolution seems to be his principal argument in favour of Anarchism, and he appears to think that all future leadership will be as bad and as muddled. It is certain that he could not trust a non-elected temporary administration, consisting of long-standing workers in the cause, which must necessarily arise when the time comes.—Yours fraternally,
J. SMYTHE.

In relation to this very important question comrade Nicoll asks "What will the Anarchists do?" and seems to fear they will become corrupt, which they may. But when, as he says, "a popular revolution declares for Anarchy," one must assume the people declare *against* the very evil Anarchists are as a body a living protest—government; or, if you will, mere authority, say of the most "palatable" form, the humble chairman (presumably a most harmless creature, but still a type of authority). And also assume the Revolution has just come off, and in this city of five millions provisions run short—"who is to *direct* the men, for instance, who must be sent into the country, and into other countries also, to get supplies?" A natural question, and undoubtedly there would be much confusion resulting from the social disturbance, and *present* supplies would, however near or distant (if not actually in consumption) would be at the least retarded in transit. But if the popular revolution declares for Anarchy, if I have any faith in my fellow creatures, those who can go will not wait to be sent, they *will* go, they will do and not wait till some one orders them to do: being no longer at arm's length, with all the absurd, degrading, and artificial social barriers of this unnatural society, but free to use head and hand in the highest and best manner to mutually serve each other. The distribution of necessities would follow in the natural course of things, though perhaps the people would possibly congregate where they were easiest of access for a time. Generally men retain the position most suitable or pleasing to them, and I can't help saying that immediately after the Revolution those who even are part of a "means of transit," say, will quietly and rapidly fall into their places, seeing the necessity of it, and as there will be plenty of help there will not be so much "utter confusion and irretrievable disorder" as even some of our friends suppose. I trust my fellow creatures that when they rid themselves of their chains, however long their tuition of submissive helplessness may have been, their submission will take a new turn, and just as they have been willing slaves to be exploited, they will set to work to use and enjoy all the good things of life, but *not* at the dictation of others.—Yours fraternally,
HENRY HOPKINS.

THE LABOUR STRUGGLE.

"Free Labour."

We hear a lot about free labour nowadays from employers of the Norwood and Livesey type, and it is just well for workmen to consider what kind of freedom the dock-labourer used to possess in the good old days which Mr. Norwood so eloquently regrets. Here is Mr. Tillet's description of a reporter the other day:

"I know what our critics, and the employers, and those who rant about free labour, want to see down at the docks. They are anxious for the return of times such as I have seen at the London Docks in the past. There is a place at the London Docks called the cage—a sort of pen fenced off by iron railings. I have seen 300 half-starved dockers crowded round this cage, when perhaps a ganger would appear wanting three hands, and the awful struggle of those 300 famished wretches, fighting for that opportunity to get perhaps two or three hours' work, has left an impression upon me that can never be effaced. Why, I have actually seen them clambering over each other's backs to reach the coveted ticket. I once saw a man's ear torn off in the struggle, and I have frequently seen men emerge, bleeding and breathless, with their clothes pretty well torn off their backs. I think if some of the critics who talk so glibly about free labour had seen the sights I have, they would not complain so much of our new departure."

We must remember that the shipowners of this "free country" have formed a federation with a capital of £100,000,000 for the benevolent purpose of reducing the dock and other labourers into their old misery, by which they would be forced into a mad struggle for such a miserable existence as starvation wages would give them. Now, the poorer English workers have been fighting for nearly two years to improve their position by peaceful combination, and now a robber gang is threatening to do their best to hurl them back into slavery and starvation. These scoundrels are not alone content with the power of their combination, they talk openly and boast of crushing the new union by shooting the unionists "down like dogs." Troops alone are not enough for this purpose—these capitalists are beginning to feel *doubtful* about the troops now—so they must have their gangs of hired assassins, their Pinkertons, to murder the rebels against their law and authority. Well, let them begin the shooting. Within a minute after the first shot has been fired the carcasses of deceased Pinkertons in the neighbourhood of the docks would be as common as dead flies in November; and even some members of the "Shipping Federation" might find out that the lamp-post would form as good a gallows for the robbers and assassins of the capitalist classes, as ever it did for their progenitors, the Foulons and Berthiers of old feudal France.

Gladstone and Scamped Work.

Old Gladstone the other day took to lecturing the working-man. This has become quite an amiable weakness on his part recently, and he usually succeeds in demonstrating how completely ignorant he is of all questions relating to labour. In course of his remarks he accused workmen of scamping their work out of sheer idleness and carelessness. Mr. Davis, the secretary of the Brass-workers, has given the Grand Old Sham a rap over the knuckles, and has proved conclusively that it is the employers' love of cheap and shoddy goods, which correspond in many particulars to most middle-class politicians, and not the desire of the workman to scamp his work, which causes so many trashy articles to be thrown on the market nowadays. Here is Mr. Davis's statement. He begins by quoting Gladstone's, which runs as follows:

"It was bad altogether, and they were speaking of the working man. In this case it was bad, first because it was a fraud on his employer, and secondly because it was a fraud on himself. In the long run the interest of the working man was to do his work in the best manner; not to do it so that it would pass possibly a cursory and hasty inspection, but so that it should be done as well as the nature of the case permitted."

"The case thus stated gives colour to the fallacy that the individual mechanic is responsible for scamped work. Now from an extensive, intimate, and practical knowledge of the inner workings of our manufacturing system, and from general representations made to me from a variety of sources, I do not hesitate to say that the opposite can be demonstrated by a statement of facts. It will be well to give one or two illustrations of our desire to maintain England's commercial supremacy by producing an honest article. In 1882 Mr. Birtwistle and myself were appointed to represent the Trade Union Parliamentary Committee at the Co-operative Congress held at Oxford on behalf of the Lancashire operatives. The deputation called attention to the over-sizing of cotton goods by industrial co-operative concerns as well as by private traders. The system was denounced as a fraud on the public, and by the application of certain chemical ingredients in the process of manufacture a danger to the health and longevity of the workers. More recently still, when acting as one of her majesty's inspectors of factories at Sheffield, I had the opportunity of witnessing the working men of that town putting forth an almost unanimous effort to bring about the enactment of the present Merchandise Marks Act. The opposition to the proposed legislation came from the manufacturers and the Cutlers' Company and Chamber of Commerce, doing all they could to frustrate the intentions of the trade unionists. The object of the Act is, as you well know, to prevent commercial fraud by protecting the genuine article from the eyeable counterfeit."

"Only the other month some of the hatters of London struck against being compelled to put best silk on common shapes, the result being a discontinuance of the deception."

"The Trade Union Congress has year after year carried unanimously resolutions against fraud in manufacture in various industries, and Congress after Congress recommends Parliament to allow none but competent certificated engineers to be permitted to take charge of engines and boilers. The opposition to this latter proposal, it need hardly be said, emanates from the capitalists."

"I will now deal with how the shape, finish, and workmanship is taken away from hand labour by those who are ever lowering labour's dignity by debasing industry and marring and destroying the country's reputation for fair trading. . . . Well, sir, the way the standard of quality is pulled down is by manufacturers or their agents going to the workman and saying, 'I can have a large order for these (producing a pattern) if you can reduce the price.' The artisan remonstrates. Then he is informed that the article is not required to be highly finished. The mechanic pleads that he has not been used to make bad work, and that he would prefer that all his work should be of good quality, but in vain. He is told that he must work to the wishes of the firm, or make room for those who will. Some of the smaller merchants, and I fear also some of the larger ones, are factors in bringing down hand labour to a low level. They not infrequently obtain large orders from samples supplied by reputable houses, and, wishing to obtain the greatest profit, take them to what are known as the 'slaughterhouses,' and accept the lowest tender. This is done to the injury of the firm who made the pattern, and who paid for the brains of the skilled designer and artisan to produce it, and depreciates the reputation of the district in which such goods are made."

"Mechanics all over Great Britain and Ireland know to their cost that bad workmanship means low wages, and low wages bad trade."

The Grand Old Sham returns a very lame reply; and it is to be hoped that in future he will not give vent to any more "good advice" to workmen without first ascertaining whether his advice is needed. N.

IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

On Saturday night, August 23rd, news reached Cape Town that the "Pioneer Column" of the Chartered Company's force had been attacked by the Matabeles and slaughtered almost to a man—two natives were all that the rumour stated had escaped. The news caused a deal of excitement and distress, for many residents in Cape Town and district had friends with the column. The rumour, however, has since been officially contradicted, but there is not the slightest doubt but that the Matabeles are massing themselves at different points to resist the advance of the filibusters. It is a fact that, as I mentioned some time ago, the younger regiments of Matabeles are determined to resist any attempt of the Chartered Company to rob them of their birthright. Lobengula—the king—finds that the young warriors are dead against him for granting concessions to the Rhodes syndicate, and he, Lobengula, will be compelled to take the field against the Chartered Company, whether it is his wish or no. White European natives have yet something to learn from their coloured brothers in other lands. Many of the company's force have taken "French leave" already, and patrol parties are out in search of deserters. The company's police are keeping a matter of 150 miles or so from the "kraals" (or huts) of the Matabele regiments, lest a too sudden and near approach should end in their complete annihilation. The *Daily Independent* (Kimberly paper) states that the Chartered Company has already expended nearly a round million in the creation and equipment of their troops. And when one remembers that the "pioneer column" is provided with such civilising agencies as Gatling guns, electric search light for night attacks, and betwixt four and five hundred professional cut-throats all armed to the teeth, one begins to understand what wonderfully cute liars the Hon. Cecil and Messrs. Fife and Co. are. Were the "pioneer column" only composed of shareholders and directors, and other such like fry, then the cutting up of such a lot of vermin would be no great loss to the world at large.

Truly, the workers in the neighbouring colony of Natal have much to be thankful for. First they were taxed for the importation of Indian coolies for the use of sugar-planters and other capitalists. Then their wages are kept down indirectly by the presence of cheap labour and a low standard of living. Then, as if that were not enough to be thankful for, they are given by a considerate and careful Immigration Board an epidemic of cholera into the bargain. On the arrival at Durban (Natal) of the S.S. "Congella" eight deaths were reported from fish-poisoning, and a number of coolies were in hospital. Since then the following official proclamation has been published: "Under and by virtue of the provisions of the 11th section of the Public Health Act, 1883, his Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, hereby notifies that the port of Durban in the colony of Natal is infected with cholera."

A "Labour League" (which I take to be a fraud) has been formed in Durban, mainly for the purpose of bringing forward candidates in favour of "responsible government," and amongst others have nominated Sir John Robinson, Mr. Escombe, and a Mr. Greenacre.

Another thing which shows the stuff which this party is made of was a petition made by this body that a large number of coolies, Arabs, and natives be struck off the roll of voters. This the magistrate has done, but the natives were not to be squashed so easily. They appealed against the magistrate's ruling, and the Chief Justice upset the magistrate's decision and ordered them to be again placed on the voters' roll—a very questionable benefit.

As regards the "debris-washers," of whom I spoke in my last letter, the whole affair has turned out a farce all through. In short, it was a "put-up job" from the first. Those who have received licences from the De Beers Company are all fairly well off, not one really poverty-stricken case amongst the whole batch of so-called respectable and deserving licence-holders. And yet there are hundreds in Kimberly out of work at the present moment.

The Chamber of Mines (or masters, it comes to the same thing) announces that competent miners are required. I trust no one in England or elsewhere will be gulled by this announcement. There are plenty of miners in the country: why doesn't this Chamber try and be honest and plainly say that they want to reduce wages all round?

The same body has issued a circular to mine-managers, asking particulars as to native labour and prices paid, and calling for suggestions about effecting a reduction. Native labour on the gold-fields costs about £54,000 per year, and the Chamber of Mines, or masters, think that it could be easily reduced one-half. I wonder if the same body ever thinks of effecting a reduction of dividends, or of directors' salaries. Jos. BAIN.

For the 'Commonweal.'

A Course of Special Lectures and Concert and Ball for the above purpose (under the management of the 'Commonweal' Branch of S.L.) will be given at the Club Autonomie, 6, Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road, W., as under:

Monday, October 6th, at 8.30 p.m.—G. BERNARD SHAW (Fabian Society), on "Ferdinand Lassalle." 'Commonweal' Choir will sing. Admission free.

Monday, October 13th, at 8.30 p.m.—D. J. NICOLL (S.L.), on "The Glorious Reformation; or, How the English People were Evicted, Robbed, and Murdered by the Ruling Classes." 'Commonweal' Choir. Admission free.

Monday, October 20th, at 8 p.m.—WILLIAM MORRIS (S.L.), on "Art for the People." This Lecture will be delivered at the Athenæum Hall, 73, Tottenham Court Road, W. Admission by Ticket, Sixpence. For full particulars, see large bills. Tickets can be had from Wm. Blundell, 'Commonweal' Branch Secretary, or F. Kitz, S.L. Secretary, 24, Great Queen St., Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.; and of all Branch Secretaries.

Monday, November 3rd.—A Concert and Ball. Full particulars of this will be duly announced in 'Weal.'

Any further information will be gladly supplied by 'Commonweal' Branch Secretary, 24, Great Queen Street, W.C. Received for expenses—J. L., 1s.

A TRUTH OF BOTANY AS WELL AS OF SOCIALISM.—Neither conquering nations, nor earthquakes, nor fires, nor tempests, nor rain, nor all put together, have destroyed so many works of man as have the roots of plants, which have all begun their work as slender fibres.

A SONG FROM QUEVEDO'S VISIONS.

(Written by Clio Rickman in 1784, and sung at the Anacreontic Societies of that day; and in America, where fifty thousand copies were circulated. See the Pope's Curse, or Bell, Book, and Candle; the Creed of St. Athanasius, and many other "sacred" denunciations.)

Air—"Liberty Hall."

WHEN Quevedo peep'd into the regions below,
He met with a Devil, a sort of a beau;
Who, scraping his hoof with a courtier-like grace,
Made offers of service to show him the place.

"Sir Devil, your servant," the stranger replied,
"Your offer's most kind, since the place is so wide;"
So, bowing politely, they set off together,
Like a couple of beaus in the park in fine weather.

Wide around the drear regions of Tartarus flamed,
Where Quevedo on all sides saw millions of damned,
Each profession pent up in a separate cell,
Which divided, like pews, the interior of hell.

Damned lawyers, damned courtiers, damned cowards, damned
braves,
Damned counterfeit patriots, damned time-serving slaves,
Damned bishops, damned cardinals, damned priests, and
what not,
With red-letter saints, now in hell were red-hot.

Damned generals, who ravage mankind for ambition,
Damned prophets, who cheat the world into submission,
With founders of sects, sat a-warming their noses;
There were Peter, Mahomet, Paul, Aaron, and Moses.

Having viewed all these curious and terrible things,
"Be so good," says the stranger, "to show me your kings;
For fain would I know if these high-titled brothers
Are damned to a hell any hotter than others."

"The hottest of holes," says the fiend, "they are crammed in,
And a still ten-times worse they deserve to be damned in:
Take a peep through the key-hole, their kingships you'll see;
For, by Satan! their stink's too offensive for me."

Quevedo peeped in, and through sulphur and smoke
Espied certain monarchs, and instantly spoke—
"Sir Demon, I think, with submission to you,
Though the world is so ancient, their numbers are few."

"But few!" quoth the demon; "why surely you rave;
Speak out, man, and tell me how many you'd have?
Without bate, or exception of climate or nation,
Here are all that have reigned ever since the creation."

Just on quitting these regions of sulphur and smoke,
To the demon, so civil, Quevedo thus spoke
(For now they had reached of hell's boundary the door)—
"Among all these damned I see none of the poor."

"The poor," quoth the Devil; "you mean those on earth,
Who are slaves to their kind of rank, riches, and birth;
We have none such in hell"—grinning full in his face—
"For 'tis wealth and possessions that damn all your race!"

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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.

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

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

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Glasgow Branch	0	5	0	B. W.	0	0	6
S. Stephen	0	1	0				
East Kent Hop-pickers	0	1	6	Total	0	11	6

REPORTS.

SOUTH SIDE BRANCH.—Three meetings were held on behalf of above Branch, on Sunday, Sept. 21st, at Thornton Heath, Brighton Road, and Crown Hill, Croydon; speakers were Leggatt, Buckenridge, Parker, Smith, and Miss Lupton. Good audiences, and 2s. 8d. collected and song-books sold. Much sympathy was expressed with Socialist views generally, and as to the police action in regard to Miss Lupton; speakers cordially invited to come again. At Crown Hill (in centre of Croydon slums) the police attempted to interfere, and stated loudly that they were not going to allow a meeting to be held; on comrade Leggatt asking "Why?" they stated in lordly fashion "They were not going to argue with such as him!" and yet, after this bombastic display, the meeting proceeded quite unhindered, speakers receiving quite an enthusiastic reception from the crowd.—E. LUPTON, Sec. *pro tem.*

ABERDEEN.—Socialism seems to be on the boom here. On Sunday, Sept. 14th, the hall was again well filled, when an article on "Russian Nihilism" was read and discussed. On Thursday night, the usual open-air meeting was addressed by comrades Duncan and Leatham, and comrade Watt of the Hammersmith Branch, who along with Mrs. Watt was visiting here. On Saturday night, W. Cooper, Aiken, and Leatham spoke to a large audience. Long after our meetings are over, groups are to be seen eagerly discussing the points that have been raised.—C.

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. Sunday, September 28, at 8.30 p.m., a Lecture.
East London.—H. McKenzie, 10 Victoria Dwellings, Clerkenwell Road, E.C.
Hammersmith.—Kelmescott House, Upper Mall, W. Lecture every Sunday at 8. French Class conducted by Mlle. Desroches on Friday evenings at 7.30.
North Kensington.—Clarendon Coffee Palace, Clarendon Road. Meets every Wednesday at 7 p.m. Band practice every Friday at 8 p.m. On Sunday, Sept. 28, at 8.30, lecture by R. E. Dell (Fabian), "The Strange Case of the Socialist-Radical."
North London.—6 Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road. Meets every Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock.
South London.—St. George's Coffee Tavern, 106 Westminster Bridge Road.
South Side Branch.—E. Lupton, secretary *pro tem.* (Open-air Station—Thornton Heath, Sunday.)
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 Odd-fellows' Small Hall, Crooked Lane, on Sunday evenings at 6.30. Singing practice, etc., 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.
Hull.—Club Liberty, 1 Beets Court, Blanket Row.
Leeds.—Socialist League Club, 1 Clarendon Buildings and Front Row. Open every evening. Business meeting Saturdays at 8.—International Educational Club, Templar Street. Open every evening. Discussion class every Friday at 8; lectures every Saturday at 4. All kinds of Socialist literature on tables and for sale.
Leicester.—Exchange Buildings, Rutland Street. Branch meeting on Thursday at 8 p.m.
Manchester.—Socialist League Club, 60 Grovesnor Street, All Saints. Open every evening. Branch weekly meeting on Tuesdays at 8.
Nottingham.—Socialist Club, Woodland Place, Upper Parliament Street. Club contribution, 1d. per week; Dancing every Wednesday, 8 till 10.30—fee 3d.
Norwich.—Members' meeting held every 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, Fargate, at 11.30; Newhall Road, Attercliffe, at 11.30; Pump, Westbar, at 8; Heeley, Maresbrook Park, at 7.30; Monolith, Fargate, at 6.30; Rotherham, College Yard, at 3.15. Wednesday: Nursery Street, Wicker, at 8. Thursday: Bramall Lane, at 8; Eekington, at 6.30. Friday: Duke Street, Park, at 8. Saturday: Woodhouse, at 7.
Walsall.—Socialist Club, 18 Goodall Street, Walsall. Meetings every night.
Yarmouth.—Socialist League Club, 56 Row, Market Place. Open every evening. Business Meeting, Tuesday at 8. Singing Practice, Wednesday at 8.30. Discussion Class, Thursday at 8.30. Elocution Class, Friday at 8.30.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

SATURDAY 27.

- 8 Bermondsey Square.....Kitz and Mowbray
- 8 Euston Road—Ossulston StreetNicoll
- 8 Mile-end WasteLeggatt and Greenwood

SUNDAY 28.

- 11 Commercial Road—Union StreetMrs. Lahr
- 11 Latimer Road StationNorth Kensington Branch
- 11.30 Hammersmith BridgeHammersmith Branch
- 11.30 Hoxton ChurchBlundell and Burnie
- 11.30 New Cut—Short StreetSouth Side Branch
- 11.30 Regent's ParkNicoll
- 3.30 Hyde Park—Marble ArchMainwaring
- 3.30 Victoria ParkMrs. Lahr
- 3.30 Streatham CommonThe Branch
- 6 Streatham—FountainThe Branch
- 7 Hammersmith BridgeHammersmith Branch
- 7 Wormwood ScrubsNorth Kensington Branch
- 8 Kings Cross—Liverpool Street.....Nicoll
- 8 Mile-end WasteMrs. Lahr
- 8 Walham Green—back of ChurchHammersmith Branch

MONDAY 29.

- 7.30 Westminster Bridge Road—Pearman StreetThe Branch

THURSDAY 2.

- 7.30 New Cut—Short StreetMrs. Lahr and Kitz

FRIDAY 3.

- 8.15 Hoxton ChurchLeggatt and Kitz

PROVINCES.

Aberdeen.—Saturday: Castle Street, at 7.30 p.m.
Glasgow.—Sunday: Jail Square at 2 o'clock; Paisley Road at 5 o'clock. Friday: Bridgeton Cross, at 8.15.
Leeds.—Saturday: Woodhouse Moor, at 7.30 p.m. Sunday: Hunslet Moor, at 11 a.m.; Vicar's Croft, at 7 p.m.
Leicester.—Sunday: Russell Square, at 10.45 a.m.; Market Place, at 6.15 p.m.; Humberstone Gate, at 8 p.m. Monday: Belgrave, at 8. Tuesday: Sanvey Gate, at 8. Wednesday: Braunstone Gate, at 8. Friday: Infirmary Square, at 8. Saturday: "Cross," Belgrave Gate, at 8.—Sunday, Sept. 28, Frank Kitz, of London.
Liverpool.—Landing Stage, Sundays at 11.30 a.m. and 3 p.m.
Manchester.—Saturday: Middleton market ground, at 7 p.m. Sunday: Philips Park Gates, at 11; Stevenson Square, at 3. Monday: Market Street, Blackley, at 8.
Nottingham.—Sunday: Sneinton Market, at 11 a.m.; Great Market, at 7 p.m.
Norwich.—Saturday: Haymarket, at 8. Sunday: Market Place at 11, 3, and 7.30.
Yarmouth.—Saturday: Church Plain Trees, at 8 p.m. Sunday: Priory Plain, at 11; Bradwell, at 11.30; London Boat Landing Stage, at 3; Colman's Granary Quay, at 7. Monday: Belton, at 8 p.m.

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