

THE COMMONWEAL

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TOWARDS THE TRUTH.

IN the present condition of Society what is the paramount duty of every right-minded person? Is it to ally himself with the partisans of reaction, to exhaust his intellectual faculties in the support of authority, to perplex the minds of men by a defence eloquent or otherwise, according to his powers, of the prejudices of past generations? or to fall in with the march of humanity where it now stands, and to advance with it towards the new era which Socialism has in store for us? It is well that we tread over the past as we tread over the ruins of extinct races, fallen cities, and shattered empires. We Socialists have done with consulting dumb oracles, or worshipping at desecrated shrines, and content ourselves with collecting and preserving all that may prove to be good to mankind. We now stand upon the threshold of a new era, in which mankind will divest themselves of all reverence for authority, of all worship of names, of all deference for anything but truth and just principles.

All great social catastrophes have been preceded by a questioning of the moral principles on which Society rests. The civil wars of England were ushered in by tempestuous discussions on things ethical and spiritual. First the authority of the church was disputed, then its liturgies and dogmas, then the civil institutions connected with it, viz., marriage, social subordination, and property. When the people's mind is in a state of ferment, there are sure to be many individuals arise in our midst with new theories of the salvation of the human race. The great mass of the people understand little indeed of the reasons of their own actions and opinions. Their religion and their morals, as well as their politics, are traditional; and, therefore, when a bold thinker arises to contest all their positions, divested of all reverence for their creeds and systems, the whole fabric of their belief is easily shaken.

No one has yet explored the entire domain of the possible, and therefore, when it is affirmed that Socialism is a fallacy, or that it would prove unworkable, we may safely answer our critics by saying, "They whose minds abound in the principles of truth see nothing in the teachings of Socialism which is in any way contrary to natural law." To produce a revolution it is as important to create belief in new opinions as to discredit old ones. The great point is to remove the ancient landmarks of religion and authority. Nothing is admitted to possess the character of stability. Whatever exists is regarded in many minds as merely provisional, but there are many apologists for the present system dwelling on the difficulty of reforming or overthrowing it. There are also many defenders of the system who will declaim with great force and ingenuity on the dangerous nature of Socialism, nay, even warn the community against adopting it. They will take refuge alternately in scorn and terror, and labour in the cause of authority with untiring earnestness. They will, however, labour in vain, without perhaps being conscious of it; their very mental activity is a symptom of the disease against which they combat. The approach of Socialism has disturbed their nervous sensibility, and the efforts they make to disentangle themselves from the great intellectual current in which they are plunged, are like those of

the scared swimmer who finds himself in the first absorbing eddies of the whirlpool; the water may be comparatively smooth, but he has entered on the imperceptible current which must inevitably hurry him to destruction, or to the acceptance of the truth.

All the records which preserve the forms of thought of the age are deeply imbued with irritation and discontent. A few superior minds moving along the giddy heights of speculation, foresee the necessary abandonment of the old system and the adoption of a new one; and what with them is an intelligible necessity descends like a revelation to inferior minds, and is propagated with undoubted belief. In most countries of Europe the advocates of established institutions greatly outnumber the men of the morrow, who, however, make up by superior energy and vitality for the seeming fewness of their numbers. We feel ourselves to be engaged in a sacred mission; we know that the truths we reveal will be carried by the poor to their hearths and homes, and that they will be cherished. From the beginning of the world those who addressed themselves to the poor and became their friends, are for a while persecuted by the rest of mankind. Look at the greatest names treasured up in the minds of the people to be set forth some day in the people's history—yet to be written—those names which are still pronounced with love and veneration, and hosts of others who struggled against tyranny in their day, or devoted their lives to the discovery of those truths which humanity will always cherish as its noblest inheritance. The consciousness of having done this is something to face death with.

If we ask ourselves toward what the present current of things is bearing us, I answer towards Socialism! Now if we, in reality and not in vain, would be free, we must not shrink from paying the price of liberty. Slaves of old purchased their freedom at the expense sometimes of all they possessed, and though nations may not be called upon to pay so great a price, yet we would be servilely-minded indeed if we shrank from any sacrifice that might be required of us—even to life itself—for the purpose.

The two antagonistic principles now brought into collision are the love of liberty and the love of property. At present, men seem to incline more to the love of property than to liberty. Bitter experience will at length teach them that liberty is more valuable than wealth, inasmuch as the noble sentiments of a man transcend the physical enjoyments of a beast. Liberty, moreover, includes riches, but is not included in them. Under this conviction it is reasonable to expect that the enlightened people of the world will make towards truth and liberty; this is worth all the allurements of a spurious civilisation. Man really has no superior; the superiority of man to man is an insult, a mockery, a crime, and the system which recognises it stands by that very fact condemned to the eye of reason.

During seasons of prosperity men are apt to reflect but little on their social condition. It is when calamity knocks at their doors, when the air is heavy with the storms of revolution, that they apply themselves to the investigation of the social problem. Then the studies of their youth are perhaps remembered, and History presents herself pointing with gloomy finger to the causes which everywhere bring about the ruin of empires. Then they make the discovery that their instructors were no better than empty pedants, who taught them to respect words for things, prejudices for principles, errors for truths, birth, titles, fortune, and all the wretched masquerade of corrupt society for the genuine power of humanity. But when the flood-gates of revolution are broken open, when the tempest of popular passion rages through a whole realm, when all the ancient institutions of an empire are tottering, when the whole soil of the political world is reeling as with an earthquake beneath their feet, then perhaps it is that the people will remember the teachings of the Socialists and others who have made for liberty. Then the work of a hundred years will be crowded into a day, for the people will throw themselves fearlessly into the revolutionary torrent, to be hurried to freedom or death according to the chances of the hour. It may be asked, Will they show themselves equal to the crisis? I believe they will, and in order that there may be nothing wanting to prepare and fit them for the crisis, we must not only preach the theory of Socialism but the active means to be adopted, through enthusiasm, determination, and self-sacrifice for its speedy realisation.

C. W. MOWBRAY.

THE GLORIOUS REFORMATION:

OR,

HOW THE ENGLISH PEOPLE WERE EVICTED, ROBBED,
AND MURDERED BY THE RULING CLASSES.

III.—THE FALL OF FEUDALISM.

But while peace and plenty prevailed among the workers, a terrible war was raging between two sections of the English nobility. The feudal aristocracy had fallen out as to whether the "meek usurper," Henry VI., or Richard Duke of York should fill the English throne. The Duke of York was slain at last in battle, and his young son—afterwards Edward IV.—took up his claim. This war, known as the War of the Roses, so-called from the badges of the rival parties, which were Red and White Roses—Red for Lancaster and White for York—has very little interest for us. It is only worth noting that the middle-classes of that day, the citizens of London, espoused the Yorkist cause, and at the same time the most splendid representative of the old feudal aristocracy, Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, "the greatest as well as the last of those mighty barons who formerly over-awed the Crown," was on the same side. We read that this mighty personage, known as the King-maker, for he made and overthrew them at his will, feasted 30,000 persons daily at his different castles and manor-houses in England; we hear of oxen roasted whole in his castle-halls, from which every one could cut a slice as they hung up on the spit. So great was his power that Edward IV., who owed his throne to this mighty baron, dreaded and hated him. The King longed to be a despotic monarch, and this was impossible while Warwick lived. So King and King-maker quarrelled at last, and when the Last of the Barons fell fighting in the Lancastrian cause on Barnet field his death rang the knell of feudalism.

With an aristocracy broken and impoverished by a long and terrible war,¹ for not only were many nobles slain in fair fight, driven into exile, or had their estates confiscated, but it was the custom on both sides to behead all noble prisoners taken in battle, and although Green assures us no noble family became extinct, yet there can be no doubt that the war and the death of the Earl of Warwick completely shattered what power they still possessed. Besides, there was another force coming into being which rendered their mighty castles and hosts of armed retainers useless. I have mentioned the invention of gunpowder, and gunpowder was now used in warfare. Green, in his 'Short History of the English People,' says truly enough:

"What wrecked the barons as a military power was the revolution which was taking place in the art of war. The introduction of gunpowder ruined feudalism. The mounted and heavily armed knight gave place to the meaner footman. Fortresses which had been impregnable against the attacks of the Middle Ages crumbled before the new artillery. Throughout the Middle Ages the call of the great barons would have been enough to raise a formidable revolt. Yeomen and retainers took the bow down from the chimney corner; knights buckled on their armour, and in a few days a host threatened the throne. Without artillery such a force was now helpless, and the only train of artillery in the kingdom lay at the disposal of the king."

A fifth of the land of England had also been confiscated during the Wars of the Roses, and had come into possession of the King, who not only was far more powerful owing to the fall of the barons and his possessions, but possessed wealth such as no King of England had known since the reign of Henry II. Edward IV., cruel, unscrupulous, and sensual, was a masterly politician; he surrounded his throne by a new aristocracy, composed of obscure men who had ennobled himself and who owed everything to him. In this policy as in other matters he was imitated by all his successors. At the same time, he added to his wealth and pleased the London citizens by becoming a trader on a large scale, winning their friendship by visiting them in their dwellings, and getting very intimate—especially with their wives. Though one of the worst men—he had not a single virtue except courage—who ever sat on the English throne, he was tremendously popular.

Edward IV., who increased his wealth by levying benevolence, *i.e.*, forced loans upon his wealthy subjects which were never paid back again. The King asked a rich man for money, and he knew better than to refuse the tyrant, so he had to stump up with a groan. Edward began the establishment of despotism, and from his reign dates the gradual disappearance of that English freedom of which Fortescue spoke so lovingly. The Tudor monarchs were to complete his work. "So vast and sweeping were the changes," says Green, "that to careless observers of a later day the constitutional monarchy of the Edwards and Henries seemed suddenly to have transformed itself under the Tudors into a despotism as complete as the despotism of the Turks." Ranke, Green, Hallam, Lingard, and all historians of the period agree that freedom prevailed in England before the rise of the Yorkist power, and that it was Edward IV. who began the establishment of despotism. But what did the middle

¹ It is worth noting that the people suffered very little at the hands of either party during this bloody and cruel war. The fact was that if their houses were plundered or burnt by either party, they threw themselves upon the other side. As Margaret of Anjou, the wife of Henry VI., found out, when she allowed her bands of Northern marauders to plunder as they pleased, the people immediately swelled the ranks of Edward of York, and Her Majesty was defeated in consequence. Philippe de Comines, the celebrated historian, bears witness to the fact that acts of plunder, or of burning and destroying peasants houses, were very rare in this war.

classes care, the King could be as despotic as he pleased so long as he encouraged them in their swindling operations and they grew rich and wealthy during his reign. After all, those "friends of the people" who would ally themselves with reaction do but copy the middle classes of this period.

We do not intend lingering over that record of lust, cruelty, and murder, *viz.*, the history of the reigns of the Yorkist Kings, Edward IV. and Richard III., but let us come at once to that typical representative of the rising middle class, the English Louis XI.—Henry VII. This gentleman continued the policy of his predecessors. In nature he was even more of a middle class king. Edward IV. and Richard III. did possess the fiery courage of the Plantagenets. They lived during a transition period, and there was something of the time in their characters. Even Edward never quite sunk the feudal baron in the petty huckster, but Henry VII. was quite a middle-class king. His courage was not remarkable, but he made up for this by craft and cunning, while like a true bourgeois his avarice was boundless. Every pretext was seized by him to break up the power of the nobility, especially by diverting the wealth from their pockets into those of the King. They were ruined by heavy fines levied upon them for keeping retainers; at the same time the old feudal dues which had not been exacted during the confusion and disturbance of the great civil wars were revived, and the nobles had to pay up all arrears; when other means of robbing them failed, "benevolences" were wrung from them. There was no chance of escape from these forced loans; if a noble lived luxuriously he was told by an ingenious minister of the King, Cardinal Morton, that his wealth was manifest; if he lived plainly, a benevolence was extorted from him on the pretext that his economy must have made him wealthy. The Court of Star Chamber, destined to become infamous in English history, was formed by His Majesty of members of his own Council. It could always be depended upon to pass sentence according to the King's desire, and it proved a splendid means of impoverishing the nobles. Robbery now was becoming legalised, and the pen of the pettyfogger was of more power than the sword of the warrior. From the reign of Henry VII. dates modern law-'n'-order. In despair the nobles revolted, they set up pretenders to the throne, but "the only train of artillery in the kingdom lay at the disposal of the King," and they were always defeated. Their estates were confiscated, or else heavy fines were wrung out of them, which all went to swell Henry's wealth; the result being that this most Christian monarch died worth two millions, which he left to his son. There is no clearer proof of the decay of the nobles than that they could be robbed with impunity by such a small-minded scoundrel as Henry VII.

D. J. NICOLL.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE 'COMMONWEAL'

DEAR SIR,—I write in sympathy and indignation. To me it seems humiliating that you should have to beg week by week for funds to carry on the 'Weal. What an opportunity for our many friends to twit us with our inconsistency to principle! I do hope you may be spared by timely help from again appealing for help, and that you may be able to continue to publish weekly. I should feel it personally as a keen loss—bad grammar—the absence of my weekly 'Weal, I look forward so anxiously each week for it. Its my weekly consolation, the only one, after the slavery is ended for the week. You, the active workers and light-spreaders, want sympathy and help, and should get it spontaneously from the many, who I am sure, like myself, feel gratified and edified by the labours of yourself and co-workers. O, the apathy of the ordinary British slave is terrible! I try very hard to make one fresh reader for the 'Weal each week, but often fail; I did make six or seven regular readers in Oldham, after many weeks and months of preaching and arguing, etc. Have found much less trouble in selling odd copies of the "Old Order and the New,"—Davidson's book. That book, later on, will make hundreds of converts to our ranks. Your past labours are now beginning to bear fruit. Keep up your courage, comrades of the 'Weal. If only one dozen earnest men appreciate your badly paid labours, it were worth continuing the fight. A poor devil of a mechanic, I keep on hoping that shortly I may be able to do something more definite than to send a few stamps; extremely annoyed that I cannot do better. How many readers of the 'Weal (who do not contribute to the Salvation Army) will guarantee 6d. a-week! "Can't afford it!"—I can't afford it; am terribly involved in debt, etc., but I'll guarantee 6d. a week while in active slavery. Why the Salvationists shame us in their contributions! If only for those beautiful word-pictures of the grand and soul-inspiring glimpses of the possible future, portrayed by W. Morris in his recent articles in 'Weal, common gratitude and decency should prompt all of us to show our appreciation of the sacrifice of time and talents given in those articles, as well also of the labours of the working staff. Wake up, comrades! and do not allow another appeal for help!—Yours, etc., T. W.

More Unemployed!

The bottle-washers, rag-sorters, and other humble folk who get their living in ways that are obscure to the great mass of the population, will either have to go packing to the workhouse when the Booth competing scheme comes into operation, or they can enter his pauper colony and be fed on pigswash and piety! "Praise the Lord!"

DUBLIN.—Dublin Socialist Union, 87 Marlboro Street. Lecture every Saturday at 8 p.m. Nov. 22, J. E. Masterson, "Politics for the Worker."

SCOTTISH SOCIALIST FEDERATION.—EDINBURGH—Labour Hall, 50 South Bridge. Business meeting, Fridays at 8 p.m. Lectures every Sunday, at 6.30 p.m.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

FRANCE.

In the *Parti Ouvrier* (which now, to the huge joy of *Le Proletaire*, appears as a weekly only and no longer as a daily) there is a good and clearly-written article on the part played by machinery in modifying Lassalle's "iron law of wages." Under the operation of that law the worker's wage fluctuated to about subsistence point, but still wage and subsistence he received. As machines multiply and grow, the very "iron law" becomes a too optimistic description of the situation. Machines take the place of men, and presently the worker becomes a non-worker, receiving neither wage nor subsistence. Then it is that the unemployed and the half-employed are told by complacent middle-class economists (like Professor Marshall) that wages are "slowly rising." If they are rising (which is very doubtful, if all factors be taken into consideration), they are rising only because one man now does the work which one hundred years ago would mayhap in some industries have taken 180 to achieve. The 180th gets a trifle more a week possibly, but what becomes of the 179?

I note that *Le Proletaire*, unlike a certain virtuous Social Democratic sheet on this side of the Channel, has at least sufficient common-sense and frankness not to pretend indignation at Parnell's very natural attraction to Mrs. O'Shea. The leading lights of the S.D.F., who are so fond of the Paris Possibilists, should take a lesson from them in this matter. A self-styled "Revolutionary Socialist" playing Podsnap is not a pretty spectacle.

From all parts of the Ardennes district news of strikes continue to come in. Workers in a great variety of industries are out. The Federation of Ardennes Socialist Workers has taken up the striker's cause, and have issued an appeal on their behalf.

Paul Lafargue has begun contributing to the *Cri du Travailleur* (Toiler's Cry), of Lille, what promises to be a good series of articles on the "Evolution of Property."

The French post-office has never been very trustworthy where the correspondence of revolutionists was concerned, and it appears from *L'Action Sociale* that the police at Lyons have been at their old tricks again. Our Anarchist comrades in that city have had many of their letters opened. We all know, of course, the tragic result of the seizure by the Paris police of our Nihilist comrades' letters, upon the occasion of their arrest last summer. In consequence of the infamous treachery by which this correspondence was communicated to the Russian Government, some of our Russian friends are now lying under sentence of death in the fortress of Peter and Paul, and may, for aught I know, by the time this appears in print, have been slaughtered. Meanwhile, the Paris police (who really seem to have become a branch of the "Third Section") have taken advantage of the execution of the infamous Sevillierstoff to place a number of Nihilists under lock and key, amongst others the excellent Mendelsohn, who happens, by the way, to be a "Marxist," and opposed to the "propaganda by deed" of our Anarchist friends.

PORTUGAL.

The Oporto Anarchists held a meeting in memory of our martyrs on the 16th of November, and founded a new group, the "11th of November," which group will shortly publish a manifesto to the Portuguese workers, urging them to hasten their organisation for the struggle of the next First of May. As *A Revolucao Social* rightly says, "This is assuredly the best way to pay homage to the martyrs of the Revolutionary Ideal who were sacrificed in the 'model' republic in 1887."

SPAIN.

The Madrid *Anarquista* publishes an interesting biography of our recently deceased comrade, Juan Serrano y Oteiza, a Revolutionist and Anarchist of long standing, who founded *La Revista Social*, a periodical which had greater success than any worker's paper in Spain, circulating 24,000 copies. It was subjected to the most unrelenting persecution by the Canovas Government, and any one found reading it was cast into prison.

The *Anarquista* is improving much, and is publishing some capital cartoons, some of which might be usefully reproduced here with modifications.

So many commemorations of Chicago have been held in all parts of Spain, that it is impossible to speak of them in detail. I make an exception, however, for Barcelona, whose noble-minded people are ever to the front in whatever may speed the Revolution. As I have already noted, all the worker's societies of the city and neighbourhood were invited to take part in the solemnity, and they nearly all at least sent delegates. The spacious Barcelona Circus was crammed with a thoroughly sympathetic audience. The *Productor* gives a very full report of the speeches. Possibly the present writer may hereafter reproduce some passages from them in these columns.

El Socialista is publishing Engels' "Utopian Socialism and Scientific Socialism."

CUBA.

We have been cut off from Cuban news for some time, owing to the suppression of the Havannah *Productor*. When the last intelligence came to hand, the island, or at least Havannah, was in the throes of something like a General Strike. Bad news now comes by way of Barcelona. There seems a fear of something like a repetition of the Chicago murders. Many of our comrades have been put in prison, and they are apparently to be accused of imaginary and capital crimes. I reserve my account of these infamous transactions until fuller news arrives.

UNITED STATES.

The Knights of Labour have been holding their General Assembly (14th Annual Session) at Denver, Colorado. There was, of course, a characteristic report from "General Master Workman" Powderly, who is as Pecksniffian as ever. The Order, it seems, asserts the "eternal and undeniable rights of man to everything that his Creator drew from the depths of the earth." (Pecksniff Powderly, of course, knows all about that same Creator). "The Order has been called Conservative, but it is only so in its methods, for it stands a Radical among Radicals. Radical but not rash." Powderly is naturally very anxious to clear himself from responsibility for the New York Central failure, and really does not make out a bad case. He commits himself, however, to the following extraordinary advice to railway men: "Permit the interests of the company to receive the same consideration as those of the employe (!). Remember that we are asking the employers to show the same consideration to our interests that they do to their own, and in order to be consistent we must practise what we preach." This is verily

Pecksniff sublimated. Truly a wage-slave should "consider the interests of his employer,"—he should consider how he can best injure and destroy them; that is the only consideration they merit from him. We read in the official journal of the Knights that "although ardently active in the secular work of the General Assembly, General Master Workman Powderly found time to deliver a lecture on Sunday night at the Tabor Opera House, under the auspices of the Mercy Home and for the benefit of that excellent institution."

This pestilent Powderly (whom our comrade Charles has so repeatedly exposed in these columns) is as wearying with his "All-Wise Being" as ever was Robespierre with his particular Mumbo Jumbo. Socialists, however, could readily forgive the G.M.W. this little idiosyncrasy (shall we call it?), if only he were "straight." But I fear me that, like certain other religious-minded Generals nearer home, he is about as straight as Bret Harte's "Heathen Chinese." R. W. B.

SOCIALISM IN THE PROVINCES.

LEEDS AND BRIGHOUSE.

On Sunday, November 23rd, heavy rain all day prevented us holding any open-air meetings, but comrade Cores lectured twice for the Brighouse Radical Association; in the afternoon on "The Coming Change in Society," and in the evening on "The Fraud of Politics." Although it was the first time that a speaker belonging to the Revolutionary School of Socialism had addressed them, many of the members expressed their strong agreement with his views. We have arranged to send them a small supply of literature periodically. Although C. Bradlaugh and Auberon Herbert have championed "Individualism" (?) to the Brighouse friends, they have rather prepared the ground than otherwise for our propaganda. On Sunday, November 30th, we held two short meetings at the Market Gates, in the morning and evening, Allworthy, Cores, and another comrade speaking. In the afternoon we attended at the Grand Assembly Rooms, where Dr. F. R. Lees lectured on "The Relations of Temperance and Socialism," showing a great ignorance of the latter although a deal of sympathy with it. The lecture was brought about by the debate in one of the local papers, which is still going on, and the speaker referred to it in his speech. No opposition was allowed, the meeting being a "sacred" one. However, we sold a number of *Commonweals* outside, which rather riled some of our temperance friends. We make a point of attending any lectures having any relation to the questions of Land, Labour, or Capital that are held. It will interest our comrades to hear that at a recent lecture in the Co-operative Hall, a certain well-known apostate, an ex-revolutionist, supported the proposal of beggar colonies on the Dutch plan as a remedy for the unemployed problem. According to this honourable gentleman, they, the "practical people," are doing all the necessary reforming work (what are they doing?) while the Revolutionary Socialists are "vapouring" about theories. This gentleman no longer "vapours," but goes in for things that are "practical," i.e., that pay. On Monday, December 1st, we visited Booth's meeting at the Town Hall, and sold a fair number of *Commonweals*. We would like to remind our friends in Leeds that they may find a welcome in our club in Victoria Road any evening, and if they will give their aid we shall be able to carry on a more powerful propaganda in Leeds, and Yorkshire generally, than ever before. G. C.

YARMOUTH.

REVOLUTIONARY Socialism is making headway in Yarmouth. The *Commonweal* is looked for with great interest by comrades and friends. We are still able to sell our usual quantity, although the weather has been too wet for open-air propaganda during the last three weeks. We find that the revolutionary tone of the paper makes it popular. A series of addresses and papers have been arranged for by several comrades, at which collections will be made for *Commonweal*. Comrade John Oldman and his wife (from Manchester) have been with us for several weeks, doing splendid propaganda for the advancement of Revolutionary Socialism, and our local comrades have been considerably enlightened in revolutionary ideas. We are certain the day is not far distant when the Social Revolution will be an accomplished fact, for even in Tory-ridden Yarmouth we can count our friends by hundreds. On Sunday, November 16th, in the morning on Priory Plain, a short meeting was held from 11 to 11.30, addressed by Oldman, when we adjourned to the Radical Hall to hear the Secretary, D. T. King, read a paper on "Co-operation, Trade Unionism, and Strikes." Discussion was afterwards continued by Ceiley, Oldman, and the secretary of the United Radical Club, Kay Street, London, all speaking in favour of Revolutionary Socialism, believing the subjects to be false remedies for poverty. G. Lee (Radical Club) moved the adjournment of further discussion until the following Sunday. In the afternoon on the Fish Wharf, a large meeting was held, addressed by Oldman; Headley opened by reading "Statement of Principles" from the *Commonweal*, and closed with "Jones's Boy." In the evening good muster in club room, and discussion on "Physical Force." On November 23rd in the morning, at the Radical Hall, good attendance of comrades to hear the adjourned discussion, opened by G. Lee, who supported the paper. Kitchen (S.L.) (London) with a well-delivered address against, completely knocked the wind out of the Radical sails. On the motion of Oldman (S.L.), further discussion was adjourned for a week. In the afternoon we assembled in the club-room. Again in the evening; good attendance of comrades to hear a discussion on "Anarchy," opened by Oldman, who gave a very good explanation, followed by Kitchen and five of our local comrades; we had no chairman, yet perfect harmony prevailed throughout the whole evening. November 30th, at the Radical Hall in the morning (Headley in the chair) a good attendance of Radicals and Socialists; Oldman resumed the discussion at some length, followed by Gibson (Radical Club), and several local comrades. Our Radical friends got rather excited, and refused to allow any further adjournment. Most of them left the hall long before the discussion was finished, so we kept the meeting going until 1.30. In the club-room, afternoon and evening, Oldman lectured on "Law 'n' Order"; no discussion, all present agreeing with the lecturer's able remarks; seven members have joined since last report; 160 *Commonweals* sold, several *Freedoms*, and fair collections, "and the Cause goes marching on." J. HEADLEY.

ABERDEEN.—A good meeting was held on Sunday afternoon, November 23rd, at the Quay Side; the speakers were comrades Glasier (Glasgow), Leatham, and Duncan. In the evening the hall was well filled to hear Glasier's lecture on "Socialism, its Progress and Prospects." On Thursday, comrade Rennie spoke on Castle Street; and on Saturday, Duncan and Leatham addressed a good meeting at the same place in spite of the bitter coldness of the night. On Sunday afternoon, November 30th, another good meeting was held at the Quay Side, the speakers being Rennie and Leatham. At the indoor meeting in the evening, comrade Rennie lectured on "The Unemployed." We are making arrangements for our annual social meeting and dance.

LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST SOCIETY.—Vegetarian Restaurant, Eberle Street, Dale Street.—Meets every Tuesday at 8 p.m.



TEMPORARY OFFICES: 7, LAMB'S CONDUIT 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.

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Remittances from abroad must be made by International Money Order.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CORRESPONDENTS who order literature should prepay postage, or state if they wish their parcels to be sent per rail or carrier, "carriage forward."

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.—EDS.

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday December 10.

ENGLAND Belfast Weekly Star Die Autonomie Justice Labour Tribune People's Press Railway Review Seafaring Worker's Friend Free Russia La Tribune Libre Manchester Examiner	New York—Freiheit Boston—Woman's Journal Boston—Liberty Investigator Chicago—Rights of Labour Vorbote Detroit—Der Arme Teufel Kaweah (Cal) Commonwealth Philadelph.—Knights of Labour Paterson Labour Standard S.F.—Coast Seamen's Journal San Francisco Arbeiterzeitung St. Louis (Mo.)—Die Parole	SWITZERLAND Arbeiterstimme Bulletin Continental
NEW SOUTH WALES Sydney—Bulletin Sydney—Truth Adelaide—Quiz	FRANCE Paris—Bourse du Travail Le Parti Ouvrier Le Proletaire Charleville—L'Emancipation Lille—Le Cri du Travailleur Rouen—Le Salariat Lyon—L'Action Sociale	ITALY Palermo—Avanti
VICTORIA Melbourne—Bull-Ant	GERMANY Berlin—Volks Tribune Halberstadt, Sonntags-Zeitung	SPAIN Madrid—El Socialista Madrid—La Anarquista
QUEENSLAND Brisbane—Boomerang	AUSTRIA Vienna—Arbeiter-Zeitung Brunn—Arbeiterstimme	PORTUGAL Porto—A Revolucao Social
UNITED STATES New York—Truthseeker Volkszeitung Voina Listy Freie Arbeiter Stimme Voice The World	HUNGARY Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik	GERMANY Berlin—Volks Tribune Halberstadt, Sonntags-Zeitung
	DENMARK Copenhagen—Arbejderen	GERMANY Berlin—Volks Tribune Halberstadt, Sonntags-Zeitung
	SWEDEN Malmo—Arbetet	GERMANY Berlin—Volks Tribune Halberstadt, Sonntags-Zeitung
	ARGENTINE REPUBLIC Buenos Ayres—Vorwarts El Perseguido	
	HOLLAND Hague—Recht voor Allen	
	BELGIUM Antwerp—De Werker Ghent—Vooruit	

THE "COMMONWEAL."

Whilst thanking the many friends and comrades who have volunteered their sympathy and help during the present crisis, we wish to assure all that no efforts will be spared to resume the Weekly Issue at the earliest opportunity. We by no means despair of being able to do so if our comrades will but rally round at this juncture. We regret as much as our comrades do the disappointment and inconvenience which even the temporary suspension of a Weekly Issue entails. We also ask the indulgence of Subscribers and Correspondents for any delays that occur in forwarding answers, as the task of obtaining New Premises and Removal from present address is a heavy one. We are confident that if all do their share of work in helping, that we shall take up a stronger and more durable position in the future than we have held in the past. We want our Readers to send us Copy and Coin for the January Number.

—EDITORS.

PARNELL AND THE PHARISEES.

THE last few weeks have been fruitful in horrors and crises,—the African Horrors, the commercial crisis, the Hampstead murders, the Parnell and Connemara divorce cases, have come with a rush almost together, and all point to one conclusion, "There is something rotten in the state of Denmark." The murderous cannibalism of pious and gentlemanly explorers; the greed and avarice of speculators; the folly of laws which bind those together, who have no feeling but indifference, which soon ripens into detestation for each other; all these things teach us that our social system is diseased beyond redemption, and that death is the only remedy for the ills that its flesh is heir to.

Still more a sign of the times is the contemptible spectacle presented during the past few weeks by the Liberals and the majority of the Parnellite party. There is no need to refer at any length to the miserable time-serving and cowardice of the old humbug who poses as a representative of morality and virtue, when all the time he is only afraid of losing votes at the next General Election? Does any one think that if Mr. Parnell had been stained with every crime in the calendar, and yet had not incurred the wrath of outraged Christian respectability—which winks at deeds that are ten times worse—that Mr. Gladstone would have then assumed his attitude of holy horror? If so, why does he bow down before men compared with whom Mr. Parnell is an angel of light?

What changes in a little time! Not more than a year ago Mr. Parnell was acclaimed to the skies by the very Liberals who now cannot find words hard enough to throw at him. A few weeks ago, after the divorce case, the mongrel curs who are now yelping at his heels lavished upon him every epithet of lying flattery, "calling upon him not to retire" from the leadership of the Irish party. And now! Is not the spectacle of the last few days enough to disgust every honest man with politics and politicians! We should think so. The reed that bends, or the weathercock that turns to every wind, is the high ideal which these gentlemen strive so anxiously to reach. Their only belief and faith is the Creed of the Jumping Cat.

And let the workmen of England remember that the "descendants of the Puritans," who have dictated to the servile English and Irish Gladstonians the course they shall pursue, are their enemies to-day. What chance have workmen of getting anything from a House of Commons packed with the nominees of these pious persons, whose lofty Christianity and high morality—which has lately been so terribly shocked—has never yet prevented them from receiving with open arms a Samuel Morley, whose huge fortune has been accumulated by the prostitution of sweated work-girls. These moral, virtuous, and Christian Nonconformists are notorious as the hardest drivers of bargainers, and the most merciless of sweaters. These holy men of Manchester, who sent out "moral pocket-handkerchiefs" to African negroes, made of a fabric dyed with the sweat, blood, and tears of child-slaves who toiled in their factories. These upright citizens, who would lick the boots of a libertine prince if he deigned to take notice of them, but cry shame upon a man who has but loved not wisely but too well. Morality! Respectability! Christianity! Out upon the canting hounds; let them set their own house in order first, these "descendants" of the Pharisees, these pious sweaters who sit under Stiggins and Chadband every Sunday, and thank God they are not as other men are, or even as this publican.

An amusing political situation—the Irish Gladstonians sacking their leader at the dictation of Gladstone, who is dictated to in his turn by Stiggins, Chadband, and their supporters. But we think the gentlemen who have sacked their leader at the dictation of the "unrivaled coercionist" of the Irish race, will not find their act so popular among the people of Ireland as it has been with the English Pharisees. One thing we may feel sure of, that the Irish revolutionary party will spring into renewed life, and with Parnell at its head may yet prove too powerful for the political hacks and wire-pullers who have sold him. It is quite true that Mr. Parnell is never likely to become a Revolutionary Socialist, but we cannot help admiring him for the plucky fight he has made against those canting humbugs, the pious English middle-classes.

Again, we repeat that the betrayal of the Irish Chief, and Mr. Gladstone's equivocations and political dodgery, should teach us all how hopeless it is to expect honesty from politicians, or anything but tricks and treachery. But from the ruin of political parties, from the crises and scandals, we Revolutionary Socialists should gain new hope. Society is rotten morally, financially, and politically, and it will need but a few brave men to bring the shaking edifice to the ground. Let us determine that whenever an opportunity presents itself, we will make relentless war upon the humbugs, hucksters, and hypocrites whose voices are so loud to-day.

D. J. NICOLL.

Pigswash and Piety.

One result of General Booth's scheme is said to be a large increase of vermin in his refuges. Another will be a rise in the price of pork, for whilst the pigswash contractors, who deal with the hotels and the large mercantile houses for offal, are threatened with ruin by the proposal to use this refuse as human food. Piggy will have to be fed on a more expensive diet,—“Hallelujah!”

NOTES.

BRITISH virtue and respectability are having just now an immense boom. Mrs. Grundy is largely in evidence. The Parnell-O'Shea case gave occasion to all the political dodgers, wire-pullers, and party hacks to asseverate with their hands upon the vacant region—where should be their hearts? That their morals are shocked, their consciences (*sic*) are outraged, nothing less than the complete abdication by Parnell of his political position will assuage the wounded feelings of these humbugs who hide their party purposes behind sham morality.

Parnell, like Dilke, has committed the unpardonable offence of gratifying his appetites within the ranks of his own class. Had he seduced a workman's daughter, or sought the pleasures of St. John's Wood or Cleveland Street, possibly the editors and scribes who now attack him would suffer the same fate as Parkes did in the Cleveland Street affair.

The next case that has afforded Mrs. Grundy an opportunity to vent her virtuous indignation, is the trial of Mrs. Pearcey for the Kentish Town murders. Both the judge and the prosecuting counsel laid great stress upon the fact that F. Hogg—for whom Mrs. Pearcey betrayed such ardent affection—was a commonplace fellow. They hurled at his devoted head all the withering epithets those legal word-weavers are capable of. What right had a workman, and a commonplace fellow to boot, to dally with two women at once? He ought to be taught that such luxuries are reserved for our masters and pastors, including, of course, lawyers and judges.

Betting and brothels are institutions for well-to-do people, and when poor people venture to indulge in such things they must be sternly shown that they are treading upon the prerogatives of the rich, and made to keep their places. Viewed in this light it is easy to understand the deference paid by Bench and Bar to the Jeffries and Somersets when their *laches* bring them within the law.

We are told that the gallery, and even the bench, was packed with a crowd of well-dressed "Ladies" who came to view and gloat upon the agony of the prisoner in the dock. These bedizened harridans of the fashionable world, living upon labour not their own, must needs enliven the inane lives they lead by making the scenes of a courtroom contribute to their hideous pleasures.

"The so-called 'weaker sex' (writes an indignant correspondent of a contemporary) besieged the court with shameless persistency. No sense of decency restrained them, no amount of personal discomfort kept them outside the doors of the grim forum. Wives came with their husbands, brothers brought the female members of their families, mothers sat side by side with their young daughters. Hour after hour did these ghoulish women, armed with opera-glasses, sherry-flasks, and sandwich boxes, hang with eager curiosity upon every movement and look of their miserable sister, whose fate was so firmly fixed from the very outset. To the end they stayed; for the solemn closing scene had special attractions for them. These women were not the wives and daughters of labourers and costermongers, but ladies of gentle birth and no inconsiderable position. They hailed from the West-end, not from Whitechapel—from Bayswater, not from the 'Borough.'"

General Booth is reaping in the shekels from the Land and Labour thieves, who look upon him as a New Saviour of Society (their Society). He is the scavenger who will, if allowed, clear away the filth out of sight, at least, of those whose robbery of the means of life causes the misery of the mass. Society does not like the sight of its own wreckage and filth. It does not wish it to come between the wind and its nobility, or to disturb the day-dreams of the parasites who are helping Booth's scheme forward.

Booth, pious man, comes forward, and says he, "Just give me a million and the thing is done. I will hide your ugly poor away in pauper colonies, no longer to affront your eyes and noses with their unsightly presence, and between steamed crusts and prayers it will be a marvel of cheapness!"

We read in an evening paper that Vitreo, the Human Ostrich, is given to eating with relish broken glass bottles, coal, coke, oyster shells, rags, old boots, etc. Having done the land of Barnum he is going to visit the land of Booth! Now, General, secure him at once to give lessons on Dietetic Reform to the extravagant people who may clamour for Steamed Crusts and Salvation!

Immediately subsequent to the death of Lord Byron there grew up a school of persons who, devoid of his other attainments, strove to imitate his manners and dress. They wore Byronesque collars, and a languishing air of inextinguishable sorrow. They refused to allow the barber's shears to come into contact with their long and tangled locks. They disappeared, and the only mementoes of their existence are a few deep collars and cuffs still hanging about in third-rate wardrobe shops.

We of the Socialist Party have been troubled with a similar set. During the drawing-room and æsthetic stage of the Socialist move-

ment we were afflicted with the presence of hungry ink-slingers, who had evinced the same disinclination to receive the attentions of the barber. They allowed their locks to flow and also their speech; they talked of blood, nothing but blood; they clutched the red flag with a wild and feverish clutch; they wore a red fez in public to emphasise their devotion to the "Cause"; and they discovered that Art was rooted in Socialism. Now all is changed. They pergrinate with cut hair between Chancery Lane and Fleet Street; they pawn in anonymous paragraphs the dirty linen of their souls in order that they may dine, and dine to live, though no man besides themselves sees the necessity. Some have found pelf and spouses; what they will leave behind it is difficult to say. Perhaps the fez is still in existence, and may yet be shown in company with a famous straw-yard hat as a relic of the past.

And so it is that our somehow friends are the authors of the vile communications against the Revolutionary Party, that are paid for at so much a line by the capitalistic press. The envenomed pens of these renegades are actively at work to injure the *Commonweal* during the present crisis. Paragraphs have appeared in several daily and weekly papers to the effect that the *Commonweal* is dead. The *Daily Chronicle*, with which Morrison Davidson is connected, stated this falsehood in a conspicuous paragraph. A reply was sent to the *Daily Chronicle*, but appeared in a mutilated form in an obscure part of the paper two days after the original statement. We have reason to know that the paragraphs all emanated from one source, viz., a *Star* scribbler, instigated thereto by the afore-mentioned renegades. Mr. Morrison Davidson, of the *Daily Chronicle*, is a member of the Central Democratic Club, Chancery Lane, where most of these delightful ink-slingers foregather. F. K.

Our good middle-class friends of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Weekly Dispatch* have kindly announced the death of the 'Weal, and the approaching final dissolution of the Socialist League. No doubt it would be a matter of congratulation to many "able editors" and enterprising "journalists" if the only really revolutionary journal published in English in London were to disappear, and the Socialist League to follow it; but I fancy we may assure these excellent folk that neither event is in the least likely to occur. Rather, we may hope that recent happenings will establish us firmly on a broader basis, and make us more thorough-going and "dangerous" Revolutionists than ever. As for the disappointed wire-pullers and rejected "leaders" who vent their impotent venom by sending these too gross and palpable lies to the capitalist press, we can surely afford to treat them with merited contempt.

As I write, there is renewed trouble brewing at the Docks. Certain of the shipowners of London have broken through all custom by requiring "their" sailors and firemen to sign articles on board ship and not at the regular shipping-offices provided by the Board of Trade. This is done with the double object of terrorising unionists and protecting blacklegs. The United Labour Council of the Port of London and the Sailors' and Firemen's Union have not been slow to take up this challenge, and the Shipping Federation has issued an appeal for blacklegs. By the time these lines appear in print the matter may be settled. On the other hand, it may be the beginning of a prolonged struggle.

The point specially worth noting, in the meantime, is that the officials and leaders of the Docker's Union are beginning to show themselves in what one fears may be their true colours. The autocratic Tom Mann and the other bureaucrats refuse to allow their union to come to the help of the sailors and firemen, because, forsooth, such important personages as themselves were not consulted beforehand. Like the late lamented General Trochu, it seems that these superior persons have a "plan" which they will not allow more impetuous—not to say more energetic—warriors to interfere with. Like Trochu, too, they maintain a position of masterly inactivity while the enemy closes round them more and more securely.

It is not wonderful, under the circumstances, that the dockers should begin to be a little tired of their union, and that an increasing proportion should fall off in their contributions. The natural result of the tame way in which rats have been allowed to take the place of loyal unionists, is that only five per cent. of the entire number of the latter are employed four days a week, while fifty per cent. are only working two days a week, and a great proportion of the remainder are out of work altogether. These figures are furnished by Mann himself, who, after setting them before a docker's meeting, had the audacity in the same breath to blame some of the branches for their "apathy." Naturally enough, there was "considerable interruption," and the speaker had some difficulty in obtaining a further hearing. One man gave expression to a wide-spread complaint by telling Mann that they could "only hear him at public meetings—nowhere else."

One of Mann's expressions was that "if there were no hope in trades' unionism, where was hope to be found?" Well, Mann ought to know. Surely not in "docker's tanners" or so-called "co-operative" schemes, but in the General Strike for Freedom of determined men, who have resolved never to work for wages again, but to bring about, once for all, the Social Revolution, and to destroy mastership (aye, and "leadership," too) for ever. That General Strike, however, will

never be helped forward by well-paid union officials, whose interest it is to keep the class-war, as it were, on the smoulder, instead of fanning it into a blaze which shall fire the Old World, and destroy it as were destroyed the fabled "Cities of the Plain."

The actor, Wilson Barrett, has opened his "New Olympic" (at what are facetiously called "popular prices") with a piece which seems to be an audacious libel on strikers and unionists. If workers here had only the spirit of our Paris comrades, for example, they would take care to attend and manifest their disapproval in such fashion as to show the enterprising lessee that his ignoble playing to the stalls is not to the taste of the gallery at any rate. Louise Michel and our French Anarchist friends the other day took advantage of a piece called "The Strike" to make propaganda. R. W. B.

IN EAST KENT.

At this time of the year, in rural places as well as in the towns, Socialism finds a good propagator in the cold weather. The greater its severity the greater is the force with which King Winter drives home his message to the mind and the stomach of the rustic.

Now that he has all but bared the branches of their leaves, and wind-swept the face of the country to a more or less naked condition, he invites the husbandman to rest awhile in the shelter and warmth of his dwelling until spring-time comes round again, and to peacefully enjoy in the meanwhile the fruits of his past season's labours.

As certain little animals during the warmer months gather together a store of food for their winter keep, so the agricultural worker, by his labour and his labour alone, raises and brings together his store of corn, fruit, live stock, and agricultural produce generally. But there the simile ends, for nobody thinks of disputing the aforesaid animals claim to what is their harvest. As for that of the agricultural worker, well,—we all know who takes possession of that.

Until very lately the popular rustic faith was this—that the good employer was a man whom God, in the goodness of his heart, had prospered in order to "find" work for those of his fellow-creatures who had not been thus blessed, and that if it were not for the likes of him men would soon starve for want of employment, and things would quickly come to a general standstill. In fact, he was the goose which laid the golden eggs. Though he does not yet see clearly what is the matter with him, our rural labourer realises in a vague sort of way that things are not as they ought to be. Certainly his ideas on this point are in a very nebulous state at present, but, in spite of the red herrings of politics and religion which his squire and parson take care to have drawn freely under his nose, he is evidently finding out that it is on himself alone that he must depend for real help, and that his employer does not give him work out of love for him.

It is only after his day's work is done that he has any inclination or any opportunity to think and talk of such matters, and this is the proper time to catch him. To do this one must go to the village inn, where, over the evening pipe, work and wages now form the principal topics, and are always taken up and discussed with more or less warmth. As the interest in these subjects increases the discontented man is revealed, and the gospel of truth and progress is drunk in with as much avidity as the Kentish ale—it is only at such moments as these that one has any opportunity of reading aright the mind of the rustic labourer, for at other times it is to all appearances quite a blank.

Now, for my part, I have not the least belief in the grinning bacon-fed yokel in smock and billy-cock. If he does exist he is not to be found in these parts, at any rate. If you want the real article behold him on the other side of this thorn hedge here. What with wind and weather he is tanned, hair, clothes and all, into very nearly the same colour as the brown furrows which he is turning. The brightest feature about him are his brick-red cheeks, making a good bit of colour in the winter landscape, more so when he follows his team westward; then, if there be a fairly clear horizon, the afternoon sun quite glorifies the poor chap. Look at him closer still, and you will find out what a shrivelled piece of humanity he would be without his clothes, moulded and stiffened to his limbs as they are by perhaps half-a-dozen year's accumulation of clay and sweat. You would also discover what a hollow mockery is the popular idea about the wholesomeness of the ploughman's existence with its fresh air and outdoor exercise, for here you have the result of too much of these good things.

But it must not be forgotten that other matters have contributed to the deterioration of our friend's physique. For instance, we must take into account his three centuries of ancestors living in a state of bondage, from which they had not the ghost of a chance of escaping; and again, we must not forget that he has an insufficiency of food and rest. Town dwellers may be surprised at being told that the agricultural labourer does not get enough to eat, but let them judge for themselves. Herewith is given a fair statement of wages obtained by the average farm-worker in East Kent, and in this particular it must be borne in mind he is much better off than his brethren in other parts of England, notably in the Eastern Counties:

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Taking one season with another, he earns on an average throughout the year about	13s.	6d.				
per week, or per year				35	2	0
His wife and children together may earn at the year's hay-making, harvest, and hop-picking				6	0	0
Total years earnings of the family				41	2	0
From this we must deduct the following—						
52 week's rent of cottage at 2s. 6d. per week	6	10	0			
Cost and repair of tools	2	0	0			
And at least four weeks of the man's time lost through bad weather and other causes	2	14	0			
				11	4	0
Total per year				29	18	0

This gives about 1s. 7½d. per day for providing food, clothing, fuel, and other necessities to existence for six people. And yet this is the class selected by the political and religious hacks as special subjects on which to graft their humbugging gospel of thrift, contentment, and teetotalism!

The farm labourer's day usually begins at six o'clock in summer, and seven o'clock in winter, and when he has horses to attend to he is obliged to be out and about at least an hour earlier. The day's work may be taken at about 13 hours in summer and 11 hours in winter. The horse works about 7½ hours a day. Shorter hours of labour you see for the animal than for the weaker creature—why? Because if the animal were overworked, or underfed, or badly housed, he might die, and this would mean parting with a quantity of money before he could be re-placed. As for the men that is quite a different matter; we know that sooner or later they fall victims to one or more of the causes mentioned, but this does not matter to our Christian farmers and landlords,—there are plenty more waiting to fill up the dead men's places.

The present outlook for the agricultural labourer is anything but bright, and is likely to be more hopeless as time goes on; mainly, because more and more of the land is being withdrawn from cultivation every year. For instance, in this county alone there are this year 1,962 acres less under cultivation than there were in 1889, and an average falling off in the yield of 4.13 cwt. per acre. In 1889, the estimated average yield per acre was 9.35 cwt., whereas this year the average yield is only 5.22 cwt.

In the face of this and the consequent influx of agricultural labourers into the towns, some of the trade unionists are making active preparations for a rural campaign to be opened by the Docker's Union in the spring; and again, as far as this district is concerned, the workers in the neighbouring riverside cement factories, who are, to a man almost, members of the Dock, Wharf, Riverside, and General Labourer's Union, are profiting by the opportunities which their daily business intercourse affords them of pointing out to their disorganised brethren the advantages which they themselves have already gained by their own federation. JONATHAN BINES.

THE CAUSES OF ILL-HEALTH AMONG THE WORKERS.

WHAT are the causes of ill-health among working-men and women in the present day? We hear much about the hated tenement house, badly heated and ventilated, where whole families are huddled into one or two small rooms; some directly under the rafters, others in the cellar where the light of day never penetrates. This is an awful state, but it is not all. Men and womed women work all day in poorly-lighted factories, some reeking with the fumes of deadly chemicals. In the morning they arise early, with insufficient sleep and rest; hurry about to get breakfast, a portion of the year before daylight, in order to get to the mill or factory in time; hurry home to dinner, which they bolt for want of sufficient time; eat in haste a late supper when tired, and then to bed. This, in addition to their work, often in cramped positions and unhealthy surroundings, is their daily life. Is it any wonder that they are unhealthy? And yet the instructors of hygiene in our public schools are instructing the youth under their charge that health is one of the freest of Nature's gifts, and not to be purchased with riches. Compare the life and health of the nabob with that of the working-man, and see if it is a free gift or is to be purchased with money. What is the toil of the rich man who daily inspects a few condensed statements of his assistants, and signs his name thereto to that of his servants? His meals can be ready for him at seasonable hours, and garnished with the best of sauces—conversation. He has the means of purchasing both palatable and nutritious food, which many times his employes have not. He has sufficient and suitable clothing. He has a dwelling built with thought in regard to convenience, pleasure, beauty, and sanitary conditions. He has time for rest and healthy recreation. Compare the men at threescore and ten, and, if the rich man has obeyed the laws of temperance and health, note the difference. One is broken down and despondent, and the other, who has riches, is the picture of happy old age.

Many instructors of hygiene seem to insist that everything necessary to insure health is plenty of pure air, yet this is contradicted by the fact that the health of farm labourers does not hold out so well as that of their brethren who work in mills, where pure air is not always to be had. The exposure and fatigue of farm work counteracts any effect that plenty of pure air could give. To secure health, suitable clothing, suitable hours, and suitable shelter are necessary in addition to pure air, and this the want of money many times forbids.

When the hand of disease and mental depression is laid heavily upon the working people, it simply brings more vividly before them their poverty, and they feel that they can neither rest nor procure the necessary medical assistance. When the physician is called he does what he can; but this class of patients has aggravated and complicated forms of disease, springing from many roots, that only persistent nursing, rest, and change of life can cure, all of which seem impossible to secure. This does not end with the life of the person, but is bequeathed to innocent babes. Children are born into the world tired, and possessed by inheritance of a nervousness and irritability caused by our system of competition, where all honour and gain is to the foremost, while, to use the common expression, "the devil take the hindmost."

What is the grand panacea for all this disease? Nothing but a complete change of our mode of life; and what plan is more complete, more just, and more humane than the internationalisation of all industry and the abolition of monopoly? CHARLES E. WATERMAN.

What Peasant Proprietary Means.

The peasant proprietary system of France has done practically nothing for the mere labourer, except to degrade him into the veriest drudge, or make him a miserable rack-rented tenant-at-will to some peasant landowner, who has gradually got hold of several farms, and so is becoming in turn a small landlord. It is thus by no means certain that the prosperity of the peasant proprietors means the prosperity of the labourer. The talk of general prosperity is very edifying no doubt, but, if one class of the community secures to itself complete control of the land, and of sites for labourers' cottages, and the unearned increment under the proposed settlement, it is not easy to see how the labourer and artisan classes will be in any way better off. If one had to go to a peasant owner for half an acre of land and a cottage, he might find him even less generous than the old class of landlords, bad as they are. In all peasant proprietary countries, the mere labourers have to pay two or three values for any favour of this sort from one of these close-fisted peasant landlords. The general prosperity of shareholders in railway companies does not mean shorter hours or higher wages for their employes. Neither does that of farmers necessarily involve the prosperity of the labourers; but it does mean the severance of the labourers from any interest in the soil.—Belfast 'Weekly Star.'

DO YOU AGREE?

Do you agree with us that the social awakening of the workers is a desirable end? Do you agree with us that we are working in the right way to achieve that end?

You do not? Then oppose us and prove us wrong on every platform and in every paper to which you can gain access!

You do agree? Then work with us and for us; help us to extend our circle of influence; let no day pass in which you have not interested some one in our propaganda!

There is no middle course for an honest man!

AN EXCEPTIONAL LANDLORD AND CAPITALIST.

THE following extract from a letter written by the Hon. Theophilus West, is worthy of note. It appeared in the *Nationalist News*:—"I will tell you at the commencement that I am a capitalist. I do this in no vulgar spirit of ostentation, but merely as a fact, and an explanation. I am the largest owner of land in this parish, and I inherited this from forefathers in a line for two hundred years. I own some land and houses in Bath also, and on the same title. But I am an earnest Socialist, despite, I believe, that capitalists will benefit much as individuals, by the abolition of private ownership in capital. Citizenship in a socialistic community will more than compensate the loss of property in capital. The feeling of brotherhood with all one's kind will be more than equivalent for the loss of that gratified ostentation and arrogance which property and position confers, by exacting homage from those who are less fortunate. By 'brotherhood' I mean a real equality, not a sophisticated one, based on a corporeal similarity. I mean an equality of cultivation and culture. I mean an extinction of what is now called the lower class,—not a destruction of the higher. I was a declared Socialist before 'Looking Backward' appeared, and I have been an unconscious Socialist all my life, even when, in my ignorance, I actively opposed Socialism from a misconception of what it was.—Yours in brotherhood (as I hope),
THEOPHILUS WEST."

"Labour Saving" Machines.

As a man in a quicksand sinks the deeper because of his every struggle, so labour in struggling by the invention of machines to escape its taskmaster but sinks itself deeper and more hopelessly into the quicksand of the competition that is destroying it. So it will ever be until the workers learn that they must own the machines, and, by substituting co-operation for competition, become their own employers. Now the man of work is the slave of the man of money, but when labour learns the lesson that those only are free who are their own employers, the reign of injustice will come to an end and the men of work will be themselves the men of money. Then, "If any will not work, neither shall he eat."—*Belfast Weekly Star*.

Seamen's Meeting in Barry.

And I asked how they thought a man could be expected to keep a wife and family on the wages they were getting. The reply I got was, "We have nothing to do with the men's wives and families. What do sailors want with getting married?" The men received £3 10s. a month, were taken on at Cardiff and paid off at Newcastle, and then they were put to the expense of about £2 to get back to their homes. How could a man be expected to keep a wife and home together? Yet those shipowners, who used to preach the doctrine of supply and demand to the men, and that they had no responsibility as far as the seamen's wives and families were concerned—they used to give a £200 note towards building a Sailors' Mission Room, in order to convert and purify the souls of you men, and at the same time these very men were advocating a system which meant a doctrine of prostitution, and denying to you the right to take unto yourselves a wife and a home. That doctrine was preached in order that they might pile up their dirty ill-gotten gains. I appealed to those men sympathetically, but it had no impression on their minds or their souls, for they only worshipped one god and that god was the god of gold—the dearest god that ever the shipowners had.—*Seafaring*.

"COMMONWEAL" GUARANTEE FUND.

All monies sent to this fund will be duly acknowledged in the Next Issue.

To Help the Paper.—There are several ways in which you can help to spread the *Weal*. Ask your newsagent to try and sell it. Get those who don't care to buy it month by month to subscribe direct. Arrange for the posting of contents bills anywhere you can. Any number of other plans will suggest themselves if you think about it.

Postal Propaganda.—Some who would like to do propaganda but dare not openly, or who cannot spare the time to do it personally, can find many ways in which it can be done quietly. Not the least useful among possible plans would be to order and pay for a number of copies to be sent to persons in whose hands they might do good. We will send six copies to six different addresses for 7d. Write the names and addresses legibly.

FABIAN SOCIETY.—A course of lectures on "COMMON OBJECTIONS TO SOCIALISM" will be given at Bloomsbury Hall, Hart Street, New Oxford Street, W.C. Friday, December 5, at 8 o'clock.—VI. "The Coming Slavery." "That Socialism involves Bureaucracy and Jobbery," G. Bernard Shaw; "That Government can be dispensed with," H. W. Just. Dec. 19th. VII. *That Socialism, though desirable, cannot be brought about.* "Because it would involve national dishonesty," W. S. de Mattos; "Because all except the destitute and reckless would be injured by the process," Frederic Hudson; "Because the revolution would involve violence and bloodshed," Edward R. Pease.

LECTURE DIARY.

LONDON.

Hammersmith Socialist Society.—Kelmescott House, Upper Mall, W. Lecture every Sunday at 8. French Class conducted by Mdlle. Desroches on Friday evenings at 7.30.

North Kensington.—Clarendon Coffee Palace, Clarendon Road. Meets every Wednesday at 8 p.m. Band practice every Tuesday at 8, in the hall at the back of the "Britannia" public-house, Latimer Road—more fifiers wanted.

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

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, Victoria Road. Open every evening. Business meeting Saturdays at 8.—International Educational Club, near St. James's Hall, York Street. Open every evening. Lectures every Saturday at 4. All kinds of Socialist literature for sale at both clubs.

Leicester.—Room No. 7, Co-operative Hall, High Street. Branch meeting on Thursday at 8 p.m. Lecture in the Spiritualist Hall, Silver Street, every Sunday at 6.30. Nov. 30, J. C. Chambers, "Should Socialists Vote?" Dec. 7, G. Stanley, "Why are the many Poor?" 14th, Clara Warner, "Government." 21st, J. Billson (Fabian Society), "Socialism, and how to get it." 28th, Social Evening.

Manchester.—Socialist League Club, 60 Grovesnor Street, All Saints. Open every evening. Branch weekly meeting on Tuesdays at 8. On Sunday, Nov. 30, at 8, lecture by W. Bailie, "The Place of Modern Athens in Industrial Evolution." On Friday, Dec. 5, a discussion will take place at 8 o'clock, opened by W. Bailie—subject, "Difficulties of Communism."

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.

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. Eloquence Class, Friday at 8.30.

All persons who sympathise with the views of the Socialist League are earnestly invited to communicate with the above addresses, and if possible to help us in preparing for the birth of a true society, based on equality, brotherhood, and freedom for all.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

(Weather permitting.)

SUNDAY.

11	.....	Commercial Road—Union Street	.....	The Branch
11	.....	Latimer Road Station	.....	North Kensington Branch
11.30	.....	Hammersmith Bridge	.....	Hammersmith Branch
11.30	.....	Hoxton Church	.....	The Branch
11.30	.....	Regent's Park	.....	Nicoll
3.30	.....	Hyde Park—Marble Arch	.....	Mainwaring and Nicoll
3.30	.....	Victoria Park	.....	Commonweal Branch
3.30	.....	Streatham Common	.....	The Branch
7	.....	Hammersmith Bridge	.....	Hammersmith Branch
7	.....	Wormwood Scrubs	.....	North Kensington Branch
8	.....	Kings Cross—Liverpool Street	.....	The Branch
8	Walham Green—back of Church	Hammersmith Branch

FRIDAY.

8.15	Hoxton Church	The Branch
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PROVINCES.

Aberdeen.—Saturday: Castle Street, at 7.30 p.m.

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

Leeds.—Sunday: Market Gates, Kirkgate, at 11.30 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Leicester.—Saturday: Old Cross, Belgrave Gate, at 8 p.m. Sunday: Russell Square, at 10.45 a.m.

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.

Sheffield.—Sunday: Monolith, Fargate, at 11.30; West Bar, at 11.30; Newhall Road, Attercliffe, at 11.30; Grimsthorpe, at 11.30; Rotherham, at 3 Woodhouse, at 3; West Bar, at 8; Attercliffe Road, at 8.

Yarmouth.—Sunday: Priory Plain, at 11; Fish Wharf, at 3; Hall Quay, at 7.

YARMOUTH.—The following addresses and papers will be given in the Socialist League Club, 56 Row, Market Place, Yarmouth, for the benefit of *Commonweal*, by local comrades; mornings at 11, evenings at 7:—Dec. 7th, Saunders, "The Relation of Secularism to Socialism."—Dec. 14th, R. E. Dell (Fabian), morning in Radical Hall, subject, "Socialism and Individualism;" evening, "Socialism and Trade Unionism."—Dec. 21st, J. Headley, "Why Working-men and Women should be Socialists."—Dec. 25th, J. Headley, "Was Christ a Socialist?"—Dec. 26th.—In the morning we shall visit Bradley, Burgh, Belton, and district with Socialist literature and *Commonweal*, and in the afternoon a strong force of Yarmouth Socialists will attack Caistor, Martham, Ormesby, and district; in the evening, "Revolutionary Concert in Club-room."—Dec. 29th, Evening Concert.—Jan. 4th, Brightwell, "Force, Fraud, and Fear."—Jan. 11th, Barnes, "Why I am a Socialist."

SOCIALIST LEAGUE PUBLICATIONS.

Leaflets.

All pamphlets not published by the Socialist League will in future be charged to Branches and Allied Societies at the following rates:—1d. each, 1s. 6d. per quire of 26; 2d. each, 3s. ditto.

The following are now on hand—Price per thousand :
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 Songs for the Workers (2 leaflets)—each 2 0

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 The Great Strike: the Irrepressible Conflict between Capital and Labour ... 0 4
 What is Freedom? When am I Free? ... 0 4
 The Railway Kings and an American Empire ... 0 2

MISCELLANEOUS.

The Triumph of Labour. Memorial Cartoon of the Great Dock Strike, Sept. 1889. With cardboard roll, 6d.; artist's edition, ditto ... 1 0
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WHERE TO GET THE 'COMMONWEAL.'

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 Watson, 76 Hoxton-street
 Knox, 5 Mayes-terrace, Wood Green
 Vale, Stamford Hill

N.W.

Clark, 63 Malden-road
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 Wilson, 24 Highgate-road
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 Hayne, newsagent, Harrow-on-the-Hill

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W.C.

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 Harrison, 306 Grays Inn-road, Kings Cross
 Truelove, 256 High Holborn

And at all Branch Meeting-Places and Outdoor-Stations of the Socialist League.

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 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 FRANK KITZ, Temporary Postal Address, 7, Lamb's Conduit Street, London W.C.