

THE COMMONWEAL

The Official Journal of the Socialist League.

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SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 1887.

WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

NOTES.

IN another column will be found an account of the great Anti-Coercion Demonstration held last Monday. However the privileged may sneer at "the howl of the holiday mob," as they call it, it means a great deal.

When the people have lost enough reverence for social fetishes to enable them to "howl" with delight at the prospect of their downfall—those fetishes are in a parlous condition, palliate it however you may!

Nor is it a cheering sign for the exploiters that the Flag of the Revolution was by no means the least popular, and that the nearer a speech came to the uncompromising revolutionary tone, the more it was applauded.

None know better than we how little actual help a great deal of cheering may sometimes mean, but it is at least certain that folk do not cheer what they regard with aversion, and the ever-increasing numbers who show by their presence and applause that revolutionary speakers voice their aspirations, show the effect our propaganda is producing.

Not less so does the enormous trouble taken by the scribes, whom the bourgeois employs to tickle his ear, to explain it all away for his satisfaction. Melancholy performances the explanations are!

As Irish landlords are robbers with a high hand, and the men who aid them are the most loathsome of parasites, it is natural that the Liberty and Property Defence League should be on their side. Landlord and lurcher are each asserting their individual liberty to do as they like at other people's expense. But our L.P.D.L. instructors suddenly forget "individual liberty" when it is the dispossessed who kick.

Let but a "crime" be committed, *i.e.*, let an Irishman resist any one of the laws that *Jus* denounces wholesale, and lo! and look ye! away goes "individual autonomy" and all the rest of it.

Jus says in last issue, "We confess that if by some miscarriage of law, half-a dozen ruffians who had earned a lighter penalty, accidentally incurred the heavier, we should have no tears to shed for them!"

It has been well nigh proved that the Holy Inquisition was run by men whose distorted souls could reconcile the hellish brutalities they practised with the brotherly love they preached. It is no harder to believe this than to credit the honesty of those who under guise of Liberty preach the rightfulness of robbery and the law of the strong hand.

I quote with strongest approval the words of Mr. Michael Davitt, who said recently: "That if the Coercion Bill should pass, every man who has helped to pass it into law, every official who is employed to carry its provisions into operation in Ireland against the lives of the Irish people, will become the avowed enemy of human liberty; and any man, woman, or child in this country (Ireland) who holds conversation or intercourse with those enemies of human liberty will become the direst and bitterest of the assassins of freedom and justice."

When a man takes to heart the Gospel of Greed, and like the old-time Individualist, Ishmael, sets his hand against all men, if haply the other men hound him forth into the desert he cannot logically complain, it is but part of his accepted risk.

If men recognised how dire was the injury inflicted upon Society by even one man who fights only "for his own hand," they would straightway brand him as Cain was branded, to be henceforth an outcast and wanderer, an example to all time.
H. H. S.

THE IRISH QUESTION: THE UNION.

YEAR by year and generation after generation we have the Irish question always to the front. It is the question of the day, it is the question of the hour. Ireland, the Poland of the West, the victim of centuries of tyranny and oppression, the sport and play and the field for plunder of royal and aristocratic land-thieves. After centuries of misrule, after years of extermination and artificial famines, destroying millions of men, women, and children, Ireland is to-day full of faith, full of hope, full of energy. Who to-day despairs of Ireland—her resurrection and her regeneration?

It is not necessary here to refer to the horrors of the past. That may be done, if necessary, further on. I propose here to deal with the question of the union of Ireland with Great Britain. All that need be here stated is that the Union was not the result of the proved incapacity of the Irish to govern themselves, but the result of the base intrigues, the bloodiest acts of rapine, of murder and treason, of the English party, aided, protected, and rewarded by the English Government. The Union was never the wish of the Irish people. When it was passed 27 counties declared against it. Petitions against were signed by 707,000 people, and the petitions for the Union by only three thousand. The Irish people, therefore, never accepted the Union, nor have the subsequent generations ever recognised it. The people of Ireland, then, owe no allegiance to the Act of Union, and no obedience to the laws of the Imperial Parliament. What treason there is, is on the part of the Parliament, not on the part of the people.

Passing over the so-called rebellion of 1798, the result of treason on the part of the English Government, and the most bloodthirsty deeds on the part of its agents, we come to the year 1799. The proposed union of Great Britain and Ireland was rejected by both the Lords and Commons of Ireland. The notorious Castlereagh introduced his Place Bill, to enable him to buy up the seats of those willing to sell; the said seats to be filled with his nominees, to carry the Union. His terms were: 1st, To every nobleman who had seats, for each seat £15,000; 2nd, Those who had purchased their seats (common both in England and Ireland at that time) to be repaid from the Irish Exchequer the full amount; 3rd, All others who might be losers by the Union to receive full compensation; and, 4th, To carry out the above, £1,500,000 to be raised by taxes from the Irish people. (Wade, p. 639.)

What are we to-day to think of such rascality? Here the people were plundered to furnish the means for their own enslavement, and to reward those for their treason who might turn traitors. Grattan, referring to the means resorted to to carry the Union, said: "The catiffs of corruption were everywhere—in the lobby, in the streets, on the steps and at the door of every Parliamentary leader—offering titles to some, offices to others, corruption to all." (Howett, p. 274.) Corruption did its work. The Union of Great Britain and Ireland was accomplished—on paper. And that is the Union of which the Tories are proud; the Union in which the Hartingtons and the Chamberlains glory. The Union to support which we have had 86 Coercion Acts, and are still going on with Coercion, as though we are blind to the facts of history—dead to the spirit of the age.

But let us look at a few of the traitors, and at their reward for their treason. Mr. J. Bingham became Lord Clanmorris, and received £45,000. Lord Loftus became Marquis of Ely, and received £45,000. Lord Shannon, £45,000; Lord Belvedere, £45,000; Sir H. Langnishe, £45,000; Lord Boyle (son of Lord Shannon), £15,000. Mr. C. H. Coote became Lord Castlecoote, with £7,500; Mr. Rich Hare became Lord Ellesmore; Sir J. C. Blackwood became Lord Dufferin; Mr. H. M. Sandford became Lord Mountsandford; Mr. H. F. Prittie took the *alias* of Lord Dunally; and so the game went on. But there is one honourable man (?) who must not be forgotten. There was a crack poet of the name of Handcock, who in 1779 wrote some songs, and sang them, against the Union. In 1800 he wrote some songs in favour of the Union—and became Lord Castlemaine. Altogether, 20 of the traitors were raised to the peerage, 10 were made bishops, and 7 made judges. £1,275,000 was thus spent in the promotion of treason.

In addition to lump sums paid many of the rascals thus steeped to the lips in treason, they received very lucrative offices. Thus the Hon. de Stratford got £7,500 and £7,500 a year as my-master of the foreign troops. Others got pensions for life, as in the case of Mr. W. Fortescue, £3,000 a year; Colonel B. Heneker, £3,500 a year. The seven who were raised to the Bench got £3,300 a year each. As samples of the compensation paid for treason, two barristers received each £5,000, eight got £3,300 each, one £1,200, fifteen £600 each, two £500 each, two £400 each, and three £300 each. This was compensation for loss of practice through all Parliamentary business being removed from Dublin to London. When the traitors were thus rewarded no wonder that treason flourished. And yet that old man now in his dotage, the Hon. John Bright, talks of the treason of the Irish to-day! In the House of Commons, June 23, referring to the Chicago Convention, he said: "The conduct of that Convention, in so far as any persons taking part in it were subjects of the Queen, shows that it was a Convention of traitors. No other accurate name can be given to men who took part in such a transaction, and who are subjects of the Queen, than that they are rebels to the English Crown." Poor Johnny Bright! The Irish leaders rebels to the English Crown! Yes, there is a treason, a treason greater than treason to the Crown, namely, treason to the rights and liberties of the people. And in relation to this latter treason, the Right Hon. John Bright has long been a traitor.

The Union having been accomplished by treason, by wholesale rapine and murder, and by wide-spread corruption with an organised terrorism, have we done justice to Ireland since that time? No. The Union was accomplished by corruption, treason, and terrorism, and it has been maintained by the same means.

At the date of the Union did we give to Ireland the same ratio of representation as England in the Imperial Parliament? No. In 1801, the population of England and Wales was 10,471,000, and the number of members 489, or 1 to 21,660 of the population. In Ireland, the population was 5,393,000, members 100, or 1 to 53,230 of the population. By the Reform Bill of 1832, with a population of 13,091,000, England and Wales had 471 members, being 1 to 27,790 of the population. In Ireland the population was 8,175,000, number of members 105, or 1 to 77,880 of the population. If we come to a later period, 1877, we find the ratio of voters to population equally unjust. In England there was 1 elector to $9\frac{2}{3}$ ths of the population, Wales 1 to $9\frac{1}{10}$ th, Scotland 1 to 11, and in Ireland 1 to $23\frac{2}{3}$ rds. But even with that limited suffrage the late Mr. Isaac Butt could always command a majority of Irish votes for his motion on Home Rule, as the following table shows:

	Irish Vote.		British Vote.
	For.	Against.	
1874—March 20	48	26	288
" — July 2	53	37	421
1876—	53	33	257
1877—April 24	54	35	262

And, of course, after the Reform Bill of 1885, Ireland returned 85 out of 103 pledged to Home Rule.

What, then, is the lesson before us? What are the historical facts with which we have to do? That the Union was accomplished by corruption, treason, rapine, and murder. That it has been maintained, and is now maintained by the same means. That the so-called Imperial Parliament never has possessed, and does not now possess, any legitimate right or authority to rule or govern the people of Ireland. That every attempt to govern a people against the will of the people, is treason, is an act of rebellion against the people. It is not a question of majorities or of minorities, but of the principle of equal liberty for every people, of right, of justice, of independence.

J. SKETCHLEY.

AN UNENVIABLE DISTINCTION.—The treasurer of the Women's Jubilee offering in Sheffield has forwarded to the central treasurer £526, 19s. 10d., that being the amount received up to the present. The subscribers number 14,933. It is stated that the Sheffield contribution is the largest sum yet forwarded from any borough in the kingdom, and the central treasurer warmly congratulates Sheffield on the result.

Why do people think Mr. John Bright's opinion on any subject under the sun worth knowing? Every now and again some one asks him what he thinks about Ireland, and he writes a letter, which is duly published, denouncing the Nationalists for their "sedition" and "disloyalty," and praising the good folk of Ulster for their "loyalty." What wretched cant all this is! Supposing a man doesn't care two straws for the British Constitution, and is "disloyal" to it accordingly, what then? Is he any the worse man for that? We have yet to learn that this precious constitution of ours is so sacred, that to meddle with it is impious; or that the maintenance of the Union between Great Britain and Ireland is part of the Divine economy.—*Christian Socialist*.

THE NORTHUMBERLAND STRIKE.—We sincerely hope that the pitmen in the Northumberland district will be successful in their present resistance to a proposed reduction of 12½ per cent upon wages, which at present—after deductions and short time—don't average over 12s. per week. We fear, however, that the system of irregular skirmishes—Yorkshire at one time, Lanarkshire at another, and now Northumberland—will only result in the defeat of the miners. A national combination, which shall include all the districts in Scotland and England, is what is wanted; and this combination might with a little patience organise a general demand which dare not be resisted, or if it was, then a general cessation of the production of coal for one week would settle the matter. The so-called Labour representatives in Parliament are a poor, mealy-mouthed lot, and the miners, especially in this and other struggles, have no reason to be grateful to the representatives they subsidise.—*Pioneer* (Glasgow).

EARLY COMMUNAL LIFE AND WHAT IT TEACHES.

It will be well, before describing the various forms of early communal life of which we know, to fix their place in the general development of property, and the area over which they have been known to exist. This will best be done by giving a general account of the development of property, and then expanding the periods which are characterised by communal life. In order that we may get as complete an idea of the ancient customs as possible, we will examine various systems of common property which may be found existing in countries that are still passing through the earlier stages of development. The great variety in the laws and customs of different nations which we see around us is only due in a slight degree to their having struck out on differing lines of development, much more largely is it due to the varying rates at which they have progressed.

This has been strikingly brought out in late years by investigations in several directions, and we are now constantly finding that special features, which we have been accustomed to consider as belonging exclusively to certain races, are in reality only peculiar to a given stage of development through which most races have to pass at one time or another. Thus, for example, Druidic stones had long been considered as peculiar to Celtic tribes, but the discovery of them in Holland, in Germany, Asia, and America, has shown that they extend to many races. In the same way it was thought until recently that village communities such as exist in Russia were exclusively characteristic of the Slavs, but more careful research has shown that similar institutions have at some time existed in Germany and ancient Italy, in Peru and China, in Mexico and India, among the Scandinavians and the Arabs. It is to the works of Emile de Laveleye on this subject that I am indebted for most of the facts given here, and I shall follow pretty closely the accounts of the various forms of communal life as given by him, drawing my own conclusions and lessons therefrom.

So long as primitive man wandered in the forest or on the prairie, and lived by hunting, fishing, and gathering wild fruits, there was very little idea of property, unless it was in the simple weapons which each one used. Tribes would fight to avenge imagined encroachments on their hunting-grounds, but they can hardly be said to have had any idea of property in the soil itself. In the pastoral age, which generally succeeded the savage and formed the next step in development towards civilisation, the idea of property in the soil is only slightly more defined, and in no case assumes the form of private or individual property. Very much the same idea of property as was understood by the pastoral tribes is expressed by two children out in the lanes gathering blackberries when one tells the other to "Get away from my bush!"

It was not till the land was temporarily put under cultivation that any definite idea of ownership grew up; and in the early part of the agricultural age, which gradually succeeded the pastoral, the arable land, the pasture, and the forest, were all farmed in common, the land remaining the undivided property of the clan. Subsequently the land was divided into parcels and distributed by lot, a mere temporary right of occupation being allowed to the individual; the soil returned to the tribe or clan, whose undivided property it still remained, for a redivision at intervals of a few years. This is the system still practised in many of the Russian village communities, and which was once the custom in Germany, as we learn from the Latin writer Tacitus.

By a new step of development the parcels remain in the hands of a patriarchal group of families living under the same roof or within the same enclosure, and working the land for the common good of the family. Such groups were customary in France and Italy in the Middle Ages, and are common in Servia at the present time. This family ownership seems to be a later development than the village community, where the land is divided, each individual worker getting his share and working to some extent on his own account, but it is not easy to find the place in the long series of developments where one passes into the other; nevertheless, the family community forms a distinct step in development, in which the family have all things in common and cultivate the common domain as one farm, all being ruled by the patriarch or head of the family. In either case the community forms the unit of the state, it is the communes which are taxed and not the individuals.

In many cases the development towards individual ownership seems to have gone on from the village community without passing through the stage of family communes. This seems to have been the case with England, as we shall see further on. In Rome, on the other hand, the family life was very marked, and the authority of the patriarch continued long after the custom of communal property had fallen into disuse.

From the stage of village or family communities to that of individual ownership is a long period marked by very gradual progress. The earlier forms of individual hereditary property were tied down by many fetters of seigniorial rights or compulsory systems of cultivation; nor is land in this country yet free from an aristocratic form of family ownership,—I mean the custom of entail; while in theory at least our law declares that no man can own absolutely any land, but can only own an estate in it.

I think we shall be better able to understand these stages in development if we examine the customs of those countries which are still passing through them. Omitting the Barbaric and Pastoral ages, in

which the ideas of property were very vague, and about which a very fairly correct idea seems to be general, we come to the stage at which village communities were formed. The best example of this stage is perhaps to be found in Russia.

Before the emancipation of the Russian serfs in the year 1861 the lords and the Crown between them claimed to own all the lands as well as the serfs, and it was customary to allow each serf the usufruct of a certain portion of land upon which to grow his subsistence. In return for this he had to work three or four days a-week on the farms of the lord. The serfs usually also had the right of pasture on common lands, and of cutting firewood in the forests. At the emancipation the lords managed to get possession of the common-lands and forests, for the use of which they now extract a rent. The measure secured to the peasants about as much land as they had had the usufruct of before, and freed them from the necessity of working for the lords, imposing some annual payment in redemption of the land. In giving the extensive meadow-pastures and the forests to the lords a great injustice was committed, for it was entirely contrary to the traditions of the Russian people, according to which they should have remained the undivided property of the communes.

Before the emancipation, the serfs did not cultivate each his own patch individually, but each village formed itself into a commune, and the land was farmed in common, the product being divided. Now, however, it is customary for the commune to allot a share of land to each, either annually or at longer periods, though there are parts in which the older custom of farming in common is still practised, mostly on lands used for growing hay, where it is evidently most easy to manage.

The Emancipation Acts did not destroy the communes, but rather strengthened them, though causing them to go through some modifications. The commune, or *mir*, as it is called, is the constitutional atom of the Russian State; it forms a civil person, and on it is levied taxation, not on the individual members.

One of the chief features of countries passing through the communal stage is the constitution of the State out of units which are communes, not individual men as is the case with modern countries: the individual has no relation to the State except as a member of a commune. This important distinction changes the character of all legislation. Taxes are levied on the communes, and they are left to collect the individual shares in any way they choose; the commune or *mir* collectively is responsible for them, as also for the finding of recruits for the army. It enjoys complete self-government, and has almost despotic power over individuals composing it, with the right of judging minor offences. It alone holds the land collectively, and is responsible for rent due for any land which it may need to occupy beyond its own domain. The family is the basis of the *mir*, and holds all its belongings in common—house, garden, implements, stock, and movables of all descriptions—just as the land is held in common by the families united in a commune; and as no one family thinks of claiming a share of the land as private property, so no one individual lays claim to the private ownership of a share of the common belongings of the family. Each of these families is under the rule or direction of the head, or "ancient," as he is called, who has great authority over its members. The heads of families form a communal council, presided over by a mayor, whom they elect: he is chief magistrate, and generally represents the commune. Several such communes usually unite and form a larger commune or district, which contains from 300 to 2000 inhabitants. The mayors of the smaller form a council, under another elected president, for administering district affairs. They have to regulate matters connected with the taxes, recruits for the army, the making and maintaining of roads, or any other general communal affairs.

Stepniak tells us that the mayor originally was not the ruler of the *mir*, but its trusted servant; in their own language, "the *mir's* man." But since the emancipation, the Government have made the mayors into officials more after their own heart. From the year 1868 the *mir* has been gradually passing more under the control of the local superintendent of police, who, with his subordinates, usually behaves in a very high-handed and oppressive manner towards the inhabitants.

RAYMOND UNWIN.

(To be continued.)

GETTING READY FOR 1889.—The Prince Regent of Bavaria has given orders that each of his sons is to learn a manual trade, and Prince Rupprecht, the heir to the throne, has become a turner.

The Eureka, California, *Western Watchman* says that the Indians on the Puyallup reservation, Washington territory, will organise an assembly of the Knights of Labour.

THE GHOUL OF GOLD.—"Be content, poor men, you were made to be slaves." Mr. Jay Gould was interviewed on the first of March and had this to say: "After all, after all, what does any man get in this world except something to eat and something to wear and somewhere to live. The poor man ought to be the happiest man. Wealth brings cares without compensation. A man gets rich and then he's a slave. Very mistaken ideas exist on this subject." Yes,—that is all you get, sir, except horses and yachts, and special cars and wine and pictures, music and books, and such other little things. But do you know that the men and women who MAKE all these things do not even get enough to eat? That they have nothing but rags to wear? That they have nowhere to sleep, but must always be moving on? And do you know that the reason they are thus horribly miserable is because you have THIEVED your wealth from them? This wretch that talks to us so flippantly, that affects to despise what he has wrung from our very bones and blood, this sly and scheming rascal whose hands are red with the blood of the poor that his hirelings shot down in St. Louis only a year ago, this hypocritical villain DARES to tell us how to be HAPPY.—*Labour Enquirer*.

"GOD FORGIVE THEE—I NEVER CAN!"

(ANONYMOUS. Translated by J. L. JOYNES.)

THREE shots ring out above the trench behind the frowning fortress wall;
And whose cares to look may see another rebel's carcass fall;
The monks who wait on death draw near, and bow the head, and bend the
knee,
And murmur low in earnest prayer their solemn-sentenced Litany,
"God have mercy upon him!"

"Sharp sudden death has surely shut a foul blaspheming mouth to-day,
Come ye and carry quick the corpse of this dead rebel hound away;
There where his widow weeping waits now make ye haste and carry him—
He should have hung on gallows high, and rotted slowly limb by limb,
But our Prince has had mercy."

So speaks the king's chief murderer.—The times are really not so bad,
A sword is at the scoundrel's side, the slave in uniform is clad;
All silently they take the corpse that throbb'd but now with lusty life,
And carry that dead rebel down, and give him to his widowed wife.
God have mercy upon her!

Nay, woman, wherefore dost thou mourn? nay, why so sorely, wife, dost
weep?
Two sturdy urchins at thy side, lo, here thou still hast leave to keep;
Lo, there thine aged father sits, the blood-hounds yet have left him free;
They might have stamped in ruins out thy whole rebellious house and thee,
But the Prince has had mercy.

Alas! on her dead husband's name his widow can do nought but call,
Though half-distraught with bitter woe on those two boys her eyes may fall
The father sitting at her side can only cry, "My son, my son!"
Then murmurs low, and grinds his teeth ere half the solemn words be done,
"God have mercy upon him!"

On whom should God his mercy show? He does not speak the words again,
And if of his dead son he thinks or of his Prince 'tis hardly plain.
Yet do we clench the fist in prayer, or do we gently fold the hands?
Meseemeth it, that eldest boy the old man's meaning understands.
God have mercy upon him!

A boy with curly head it is who scarce has seen his fourteenth year;
He puts his childish toys away, and stands beside his father's bier;
A child he stands beside the dead, but 'tis a Man that turns away;
He knows his grandsire's meaning well, and loud and clearly doth he say,
"God have mercy upon him!"

The quiet eve draws on, and shuts in lengthening shadow all the street;
Soft songs are heard; 'tis now the time when happy lovers love to meet;
Hark! through the softer sound of song there echoes wild a scream of pain,
And curious crowds from far and near come thronging through the streets
again—
"God have mercy upon him!"

Yes, "God have mercy!" is the cry on all men's lips; for bathed in blood
Lo, there the king's chief-murderer lies—the stroke was strong, the aim was
good!
Ye waste your words, no questions now will him that did the deed reveal;
This mouth is dumb for evermore, 'tis death's pale hands his lips that seal.
God have mercy upon him!

But there beside his father's grave beneath the gathered gloom of night,
E'en now in prayer there kneels a boy whose voice is firm, whose cheeks are
white,
"Dear father, I have ta'en revenge; sleep softly in thy quiet grave;
Three inches of my sharp steel knife clear through thy murderer's heart I
drave;
God have mercy upon him!"

"My brother soon will bigger be; the time shall not be far away,
When we will serve the Master's self as I have served his slave to-day.
Dear father, when they struck thee down, the tyrant's blood-hounds little
knew
That he, with one brave rebel slain, henceforth would have to deal with two.
God have mercy upon him!"

It is a plain fact that by hard labour no man is able to amass wealth; and it is no less a glaring fact that those who do amass wealth produce nothing at all; they simply appropriate the products of others. The question now to be solved is: How to readjust the laws of distribution so that every worker would get his due portion of the wealth he has helped to create. But does the capitalist party endeavour to honestly grapple with the difficulty? Do they inquire into it on the principles of *right and wrong*? Certainly not. Expediency is their guide. The problem they try to solve is how to blind the masses, how to pacify discontent, and how to so arrange matters that the wholesale robbery can be carried on in the future without incurring detection by those who are to be robbed.—*Our Commonwealth*.

THE SOCIALISTS AND THE POLICE.—On Sunday afternoon the Socialists assembled in great numbers in Hyde Park, near the Marble Arch. This demonstration was held in response to a handbill signed by John Williams, headed "Coercion in England," and at its close Mr. Frank Connolly suggested that the spectators should all leave by the Marble Arch, so that they might be witnesses of any unprovoked attack by the police. As soon as the crowd reached the outside, about a hundred police, who had been secreted inside the structure, rushed out and began an attack on all who came in their way. Williams was hung underneath an omnibus, and on his remonstrance was "throttled" and taken off to the police-station, surrounded by mounted constabulary, who rode upon the pavement a distance of nearly a quarter of a mile, throwing down several ladies and gentlemen who were walking by. In the meantime the police near the Marble Arch drew their truncheons and used them indiscriminately. Nine persons in all were arrested. Williams was charged and locked up, bail being refused.—*Daily Chronicle*.



"HAVE YOU NOT HEARD HOW IT HAS GONE WITH MANY A CAUSE BEFORE NOW: FIRST, FEW MEN HEED IT; NEXT, MOST MEN CONTEMN IT; LASTLY, ALL MEN ACCEPT IT—AND THE CAUSE IS WON!"

Communications invited on Social Questions. They should be written on one side of the paper, addressed to the Editors, 13 Farringdon Rd., E.C., and accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication.

All articles are signed, no special significance attaches to them because of their position in these pages. None to be taken as more than in a general manner expressing the views of the League as a body, except it be so explicitly declared by the Editors.

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

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday April 13.

ENGLAND		LIEGE—L'AVENIR	
Justice	Freiheit	Antwerp—De Werker	
Jus	John Swinton's Paper		HOLLAND
Norwich—Daylight	Der Sozialist	Hague—Recht voor Allen	
Londoner Arbeiter-Zeitung	Truthseeker		SWITZERLAND
Cotton Factory Times	The Question	Zurich—Sozial Demokrat	
Glasgow—Pioneer	Boston—Woman's Journal		ITALY
Church Reformer	Denver (Col.) Labor Inquirer	Milan—Il Fascio Operaio	
Christian Socialist	New Haven (Conn.)—Workmen's Advocate	Turin—Il Muratore	
Our Corner	Chicago (Ill.)—Knights of Labor		SPAIN
	Vorboite	El Productor	
	Albina (Oreg.)—Weekly Courier		AUSTRIA
Bankipore—Behar Herald	Detroit (Mich.)—The Advance	Vienna—Gleichheit	
Bombay Gazette	and Labor Leaf		HUNGARY
Allahabad—People's Budget	Cincinnati (O.) Unionist	Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik	
Calcutta Statesman	Fort Worth (Tex.)—South West		ROUMANIA
	FRANCE	Jassy—Lupta	
	Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily)		DENMARK
	L'Insureur	Social-Demokraten	
	BELGIUM		
	Le Combat		

GODWIN'S 'POLITICAL JUSTICE.'

AMONG those political philosophers of the eighteenth century whose speculations heralded the growth of Socialism, none, perhaps, was more remarkable than William Godwin, the husband of the famous Mary Wollstonecraft and the father-in-law of Shelley. His great work on 'Political Justice' was published in 1793 and created a marked sensation, "carrying," as De Quincy describes it, "one single shock into the bosom of English society, fearful but momentary." The whole book is still well worth reading; but the part which is of most interest at the present time is that which deals with the question of property, treated from a distinctly Communistic point of view, though the remedies suggested by Godwin are not such as commend themselves altogether to modern Socialists.

Premising that the distribution of comfort should be as far as possible equal, and that every man has a right to the means of improvement and pleasure, provided always that he respects the equal right of his neighbour, Godwin points out in clear and powerful language the terrible evils that result from the present system of social inequality. "However great and extensive," he says, "are the evils that are produced by monarchies and courts, by the imposture of priests, and the iniquity of criminal laws, all these are imbecile and impotent compared with the evils that arise out of the established administration of property." Foremost among the disastrous effects to which Godwin refers are the "servile and truckling spirit" which is brought home to every house in the nation by the contrast between wealth and poverty; the wide-spread demoralisation caused by the perpetual spectacle of injustice, and the pernicious love of money-making thus engendered in men's hearts; the immense amount of vice produced "by one man's possessing in abundance that of which another man is destitute"; the encouragement given by large accumulations of property to the warlike ambition of aggressive governments; and, above all, the loss of those intellectual enjoyments which might be shared by all mankind, but are now monopolised by the few. "Accumulated property treads the powers of thought in the dust, extinguishes the sparks of genius, and reduces the great mass of mankind to be immersed in sordid cares, beside depriving the rich of the most salubrious and effective motives to activity." Elsewhere in his 'Enquirer,' written a few years later than 'Political Justice,' Godwin insists strongly on the fact that the rich are in reality the pensioners and dependants of the poor. "It is a gross and ridiculous error," he says, "to suppose that the rich pay for anything. There is no wealth in the world except this—the labour of man.

What is misnamed wealth is merely a power, vested in certain individuals by the institutions of society, to compel others to labour for their benefit." Knowing this, Godwin could not fail to see the hypocrisy of that blatant system of "charity" which is one of the most unhealthy features of our modern pseudo-philanthropy; and he speaks with bitter irony of this "accommodating doctrine," which enables the rich "to make a show of generosity with what is not truly their own." This system he describes as one of clemency and charity, but not of justice. "It fills the rich with unreasonable pride by the spurious denominations with which it decorates their acts, and the poor with servility by leading them to regard the slender comforts they obtain, not as their incontrovertible due, but at the good pleasure and grace of their opulent neighbours."

In the course of his remarks on property Godwin anticipated some of the common and fallacious objections so often made to the possibility of a Socialistic State. He points out the folly of our "sinking into idleness" when the stimulus of gain is withdrawn, whereas, even now, the love of distinction is seen to be so powerful a motive, and would become still more so in a reformed society. He laughs at Malthus's warnings about the danger of excessive population, since "three-fourths of the habitable globe are now uncultivated," and the difficulty of a population-limit would not arise for many centuries to come. He is at one with modern Socialists not only in his impeachment of the cruelty and folly of the commercial and competitive system, but also in his desire to substitute a new and purer state. When, however, he proceeds to indicate the methods by which he would secure the desired reform, it will be found that his doctrines are no longer in accordance with the Socialist policy, but are rather precursory of the opinions held by Comte and the Positivist school.

In the first place, the system advocated by Godwin is essentially a *voluntary* one. He believes that there is but one mode of improving society, which consists in "rendering the eession by him that has to him that wants, an unrestrained and voluntary action." He is a thoroughgoing Individualist in his dislike of all government and all action of society in its corporate capacity, except for the suppression of bodily force. He believes that the rich can be induced to be unselfish by what he calls "illumination of the understanding and love of distinction," and to these two instruments he would accordingly entrust the whole process of regeneration. So great is his dread of all popular violence and the massacres which, as he says, are "the too possible attendant upon revolution," that he strongly deprecates the use of any kind of force, or of any agitation that could possibly lead to the adoption of forcible measures by the people. He seems entirely to have overlooked the consideration that there are more methods than one in which "force" can be applied, and that the wealthy classes, who have the policeman, the soldier, the gaoler and the hangman, at their beck and call, are in reality in their exploitation of the working-classes under cover of a legal form, employing the very force, ay, and the very massacre, which he considered, rightly or wrongly, to be the worst of all possible calamities.

But though Godwin thus failed to grasp the full significance of the problem with which Socialism has set itself to deal, all Socialists must honour him for his noble enthusiasm in the cause of humanity, and his unanswerable exposure of the folly and wickedness of the capitalist system. In the very choice of the word *justice* as the title of his philosophical treatise, he instinctively struck a true note, and showed that he had correctly divined that this principle of just dealing between the State and the individual, and between man and man, was destined to become the crucial question of nineteenth century politics.

H. S. SALT.

SOCIALIST DEMONSTRATIONS.

THE fortieth anniversary of the great Chartist demonstration was signalled on Monday in London by the biggest meeting in Hyde Park ever held there, and in many parts of the country in a similar manner. All the meetings were held in support of kindred principles to those which animated the Chartists, and at each of them the Socialist League was prominently present.

HYDE PARK.

The Hyde Park meeting was called together to protest against the Coercion Bill (the 87th of its kind in 86 years!) now introduced by the Government. We have said that it was the largest ever held there, but this conveys no clear idea of its gigantic size; the reports of the bourgeois press of course vary and contradict one another in their usual stupid fashion, but even from them it is clear that over 150,000, probably near 200,000, persons were present in support of the meeting; while the lookers-on, all of whom seemed in sympathy, were quite beyond all hope of computation. All this in spite of its being Bank Holiday. In fact, the day was a distinct advantage, inasmuch as the rowdy and snob elements were conspicuous by their absence. There was absolutely no horseplay or levity of any kind; every one apparently felt the greatness of the occasion, and, if one may judge from scattered remarks, was deeply impressed by the vastness and earnestness of the assemblage. From one side of the park to the other there stretched a line of people, hundreds deep, intently listening to what was said, marking with frequent deep-toned cheers their approval of it all. One of the morning papers admits that of the seventeen platforms, that of the League was much the most numerous attended, while the Socialists who spoke at several other platforms proved by their recep-

tion that they were, at the very least, as much in sympathy with the audiences as the most favourite politician who spoke. Many members of the different Radical clubs wore the red conspicuously; while one, the North Camberwell, sent a strong Socialist Section with a distinct banner. Along the route of the procession the Socialist League banner was hailed with cheers, and in the park, as the late comers marched past, it was again and again saluted with hearty cheering. During the return, also, it was greeted as an evident favourite with the workers, one Irish band breaking off the tune it was playing, and starting the "Marseillaise" as it came by.

The proceedings at the Socialist League platform were opened by H. A. Barker, who said that of all the bodies represented there the Socialists had been the very first to uphold the cause of Ireland. Again and again they had met there and elsewhere to protest against the legalised wrong and robbery carried on in the name of the English people. Now the whole body of the people was waking up, and the Socialists came there to continue the agitation and assist with all their might in the work they had taken in hand. H. H. Sparling followed. He said the real thing that animated the resistance to Home Rule was that the parasite class felt their hold upon the people was being loosened, and they were making the last desperate stand in defence of monopoly. It had been said by one of the landlord crew that their "rights" were worth fighting for. If the "right" to be a thief was worth fighting for, was it not still more worth fighting and working for the people's freedom? W. C. Wade showed the falsity of the bourgeois parrot-cry of "law and order," and urged that no true order could be looked for till the law was wholly expressive of the people's will. S. Mainwaring spoke of the plain duty incumbent upon all working men to unite for their own freedom, irrespective of nationality or creed, and paying no attention to the ordinary political parties, who were all tarred with the same brush. Bernard Shaw said that if England had the right to rule the Irish against their will, any foreign nation had the same right to rule the English. D. J. Nicoll spoke of the lies told by the bourgeois press about both Irish and Socialists. The people were finding out these lies, and such meetings as this were the result. Eleanor Aveling, as the only woman speaker on this occasion, spoke of the grand work done for Ireland by its women. At home they helped to support the rent agitation, to resist the forces sent against them, and stand side by side with their men in all phases of the struggle. Abroad they worked unceasingly for Ireland, and from them came great part of the money that enabled the war against oppression to be so well carried on. There were thousands of women present in the park, and although they were not so loudly heard as the men, they were just as much in earnest. Edward Aveling said the battle was not merely between the landlord and tenant in Ireland, it was between the exploiter and his victim the world over. As international knowledge spread, national barriers were disappearing, and the workers were becoming solid and united in their effort to destroy monopoly. T. E. Wardle alluded to the close alliance between the Irish and English democracies, and the effect it must inevitably produce.

The following special resolution was passed at the League meeting, as also was that officially recognised and put forth by the promoters of the demonstration:

"That this meeting expresses its deep abhorrence of the coercive measures levelled against the Irish people, and is of opinion that, the Land Question being at the root of the Irish troubles, no political change can have permanent value unless accompanied by, or be in the direction of, the abolition of Landlordism in Ireland; and is further of opinion that the Irish people should be left free to settle with the landlords without any restriction whatever from the English Parliament."

It may be noted that over 1000 *Commonweal* were sold during the meeting, and many thousands of leaflets distributed there and on the route.

At the Social-Democratic Federation platform, where Michael Davitt, amongst others, spoke, a special resolution was also carried.

THE SOCIALISTS AND THE MINERS.—THE GREAT DEMONSTRATION IN NORTHUMBERLAND.

A MASS meeting of the Northumberland miners and other workmen was held on Easter Monday, at Horton, near Cramlington, for the purpose of forwarding the cause of Socialism.

The men attending the meeting were, for convenience sake, separated into two divisions. The first contingent assembled at Blyth, and included the men from the surrounding neighbourhood. They were addressed in the market place by Wm. Morris and J. L. Mahon, after which a move was made towards Horton. The second division congregated at Dudley Colliery, and was made up principally of miners from Burradon, Seaton Burn, and Dinnington. J. Fielding delivered a brief address, and the men then marched to Horton. Each division, during its progress, was increased by the addition of a number of miners from the villages through which it passed.

The demonstration was held in a spacious field in the parish of Horton, easy of access to people living in the large group of colliery villages that lie around. The place is within comfortable walking distance of Cramlington, Blyth, Bebside, Bedlington, Newsham, New Delaval, Dudley, Burradon, Seaton Burn, Dinnington, and numerous other localities. The commencement of the meeting was fixed for two o'clock, but long before that hour crowds of people began to find their way, singly and in groups, from all directions; and, before the arrival of the processions from Dudley and Blyth, the field was occupied by a considerable crowd of people. The division from Dudley and Annitsford, with its banner and band, was the first to arrive; and, twenty minutes later, the Blyth contingent, which also was preceded by a

banner and band, came into the field. It had originally been intended that speeches should be delivered from two platforms, but the promoters decided to mass the people into one great meeting, over which J. Fielding presided. A rolley was provided, and when A. K. Donald, J. Fielding, H. M. Hyndman, J. L. Mahon, and William Morris took up their positions upon it, they were loudly cheered. When the proceedings began, there could not have been fewer than nine or ten thousand people standing and sitting around the extemporised platform. These included several women, who appeared to take no less interest in the proceedings than their husbands and brothers.

The Chairman, who was received with cheers, said he was glad to see such a gathering of sturdy North-Country men. It was quite evident that the workers in this part of the country thought that their only hope of getting the full reward of their labour was to combine so as to show the capitalists they had got the power, and would no longer be ground down as they had been in the past.

J. L. Mahon moved:—

"That we call the attention of the workers throughout the country to the infamous attempt of the capitalists to reduce the starvation wages we have been receiving for the past few years, and we demand the practical help of all workers in our present struggle."

He said people were not aware of the position and the fight in which the miners had been engaged. From the lying concoctions, compiled by Government statisticians, people were led to believe that the mining population were very well off indeed, and that there was no reason for discontent on their part. He complained of the indifference of the labour representatives in Parliament. They were all here when they had a picnic, but they were all away when they were wanted to do anything useful. (A Voice: "That's true," and cheers.) The great obstacles that stood in the way of the progress of the working-men were—first, the apathy, and very often downright duplicity, of those who pretended to be the leaders of labour; and, secondly, the want of education in the great economical questions. The Socialists are trying to make England a place where every man could get a living who worked for it, and where no man should be allowed to loaf about without doing any work at all. (Cheers.)

Comrade W. Morris seconded the resolution in a stirring speech, which roused the utmost enthusiasm. The resolution was carried unanimously, with three cheers for the strike.

H. M. Hyndman proposed the following resolution:

"That, seeing the hopelessness of getting the just reward of labour under the present system of competition, monopoly, and wage-slavery, we pledge ourselves to organise for a free labour system, in which the land, capital, and all industrial resources shall be owned by the community, and used in co-operation for the good of all."

This was seconded by A. K. Donald, and carried with one dissident.

A resolution condemning the Coercion Bill was moved by J. L. Mahon and seconded by H. M. Hyndman, and carried unanimously. Another resolution was passed protesting against the clauses in the new Mines Regulation Bill with regard to the employment of women and girls above ground.

The meeting concluded with cheers for the Social Revolution.

A meeting was held in the evening at Ryton Willows, J. L. Mahon presiding, when addresses on Socialism were given by W. Morris and A. K. Donald. A resolution was unanimously passed condemning the Coercion Bill.

WILLIAM MORRIS AT GLASGOW, HAMILTON, PAISLEY, AND COATBRIDGE.

ON Wednesday evening, April 6th, on his return from lecturing at Edinburgh and Dundee, William Morris met the members of the Glasgow Branch and a few friends at tea. Over fifty persons were present. After tea Morris read the speech of John Ball, after which the evening was spent in songs, recitations, and speeches. A short report was given by the secretary, and Morris made a brief speech.

On Thursday, Morris lectured at Hamilton, under the auspices of the Hamilton Branch, on "Socialism and the Labour Struggle," McMunn in the chair. The meeting was not so large as was expected, owing probably to the miners being so much dispirited with the result of their recent strike. Those present, however, were entirely sympathetic, and a resolution in favour of Socialism, moved and seconded by the Secretary and President of the Hamilton miners, was carried unanimously.

On Friday, Morris lectured on "Socialism, the Way and the Means," at Paisley, Provost Cochrane in the chair. There were about 300 present. The Provost introduced Morris in a very sympathetic speech. After the lecture a resolution in favour of Socialism was carried unanimously. Names were then given in with the view of forming a Branch of the League at Paisley. At an after meeting, which was of a very hearty description, arrangements were made for this purpose.

On Saturday afternoon, Morris, in company with several members of the Glasgow Branch, held an open-air meeting at the Cross, Coatbridge. Morris, Glasier, and Downie spoke to a crowd of about 200 persons. Some objections were offered in a very fair spirit by one of the audience, to which Morris replied.

On Sunday, Morris spoke to an audience of 1000 to 1200 on Glasgow Green, making a marked impression on the crowd. Glasier, Rae, Curran, and Stewart (S.D.F.) also spoke. A resolution in favour of Socialism was carried with only three dissentients, while one against coercion was carried unanimously. The meeting closed with three hearty cheers for the Social Revolution. Socialism is getting a strong hold in Scotland, and the local men are confident of the future harvest for their present work.

THE LABOUR STRUGGLE.

This department is under the direction of the Strike Committee. Labour News and Contributions to the Fund should be sent to T. BINNING, at the Offices.

BRITAIN.

THE ASHTON WEAVERS.—The majority of the Ashton-under-Lyne weavers, who have been on strike for eighteen weeks, have returned to work upon terms which give a slight advance in wages.

THE STRIKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND MINERS.—The coalowners of Northumberland having declined to accept the proposals for arbitration, the executive committee representing the men on Monday resolved to issue new ballot-papers, enabling the men to decide whether the committee be empowered to make the best terms for a settlement of the dispute, or whether the strike shall be continued.

STRIKE OF SCARBOROUGH FISHERMEN.—On smacks where donkey-engines are employed to raise the trawl beam and net, the men have been paying 5 per cent. on original cost of engine, the master finding oil, etc. The men are now required to pay 6½ and to provide oil. On Saturday last they refused to go to sea on these terms.

GLASGOW.—STRIKE OF POWER-LOOM WEAVERS.—A meeting of the weavers in the employment of Mr. John M'Pherson, power-loom cloth manufacturer, West Street, Calton, who are now on strike, took place on Monday forenoon in M'Keehnie Street Hall for the purpose of considering what action should be taken in the present dispute. The weavers, 150 in number, are on strike in consequence of the employer having increased the length of pieces of cloth without giving a corresponding increase of wages. The employes are now asked to weave 66 yards of cloth for the same amount of money as they were hitherto paid for pieces of 56 yards. "This," added one speaker, "was a fly way of reducing wages." It was stated that a deputation had waited on Mr. M'Pherson, but no agreement was made.

THE MINES REGULATION BILL.—A great demonstration of the miners of Nottinghamshire was held on Friday afternoon, 8th inst., on Bulwell Forest, on the outskirts of Nottingham. Alderman Cropper presided, and amongst the speakers were Mr. Broadhurst, M.P., and Mr. Flynn, M.P. More than 6000 persons were present. Mr. Broadhurst, speaking to a resolution urging all miners in the county to join the Nottingham Miners' Association, said they had had time to look into the Mines Regulation Bill of the Government, and to find many defects in it. The check-weighmen's clause would have to be absolutely altered before it would be satisfactory to the miners of the United Kingdom. The Bill would still leave in the hands of the manager of the mine the power to discharge the check-weighman for anything which he might be pleased to call bad conduct. The position of miners' families was not much altered by the Bill. Indeed, he was not sure whether it had not rather been weakened than strengthened. It was a crime against unborn children that women should be allowed to work at the heavy employment of collieries. They must also insist on an amendment raising the age of boys working in mines from ten to twelve. There were many other points in the Bill which would require the attention of miners' representatives.

"THE FOX AND THE GEESE."—We have stated before that the convictions of employers for breaches of the Factories Acts have now become so common that we have ceased to take special notice of them. They are not, however, half so common as they ought to be, and last week we had another example of the reason why. A firm of manufacturers in business near Oswaldtwistle were summoned by Mr. Hamilton in twelve cases for working overtime on March 23. According to the inspector, the engine was not stopped until six minutes after the time for stopping for breakfast. The magistrates fined the firm £1 each in three cases, and costs in the rest. That means that in nine cases no conviction ensued further than what carried costs. We should like to know how many more cases could have been obtained at this firm and at this particular breakfast time. The inspector had only taken the names of twelve, so that we may reasonably assume he could have obtained more. In the face of this, nine out of twelve cases are practically dismissed. We don't particularly blame either the inspector or the firm. We can even to some extent excuse the magistrates, as some of them may be the next "on turn." What we blame most is the system which allows magistrates such a wide discretion. The penalties ought not only to be heavier, but ought to be inflicted in every case. A dozen cases brought forward out of perhaps a possible hundred or more, and then three fines out of a dozen is a travesty of justice which would not be tolerated for a moment if workmen were the defendants. The system will last just as long working people allow themselves to attach more importance to other people's business than their own. —*Cotton Factory Times.*

"INDIVIDUALISTS."—Of all the disagreeable things connected with industrial strikes, that of having to contend with those who are ever ready to sell themselves for a temporary gain, and act the part of what is best described and understood among workmen as knobsticks, is the most distasteful to trades' union committees and officers of any they have to cope with. There are a numerous class of persons who are always on the look-out for securing subsistence without having to work for it, and as numbers of such persons are to be found in every town and country village, they are sure to put in an appearance when a labour dispute arises, and unless liberally dealt with in the shape of pecuniary grants, or put on strike pay along with the strikers, they are sure to cause trouble and assist the capitalist to defeat the cause of labour. The trades' unions are compelled to spend thousands of pounds annually in giving support to persons who never contributed a penny to their funds, and never will do, and this money has to be spent to buy over dishonest men, and stop them from injuring the cause for which true and good workmen have occasionally to strike. We know of several individual strikes now pending, and those connected with them are having to pay these persons to keep away from the place of the strike, and if no strike existed they would be far away from the locality, and that without any subsidising whatever, as such characters don't really want work, but only the money which they can make by threatening to go to work if it be denied them. Employers who are willing to put up with incompetent workmen during times of labour disputes, are only too ready to avail themselves of the services of unprincipled tramps to assist them in defeating their workmen. Hence it is that these men have to be arranged with, or the chances of the real strikers are greatly endangered. As the means to obtain employment become more restricted, and this is yearly taking place in most trades, the evil to which we allude will increase in intensity, and it will be most difficult to conduct an individual strike to a successful issue unless there be complete organisation in the branch of trade affected by the dispute. —*Cotton Factory Times.*

NEW SOUTH WALES.

SYDNEY, March 5.—THE SYDNEY UNEMPLOYED.—THREAT OF RIOT.—Claims for relief made upon the Government by the unemployed are increasing. To-day 235 tickets, from two to four meals each, were issued to married men, and 1,355 to single men. A representative of the unemployed waited upon the Immigration Officer to-day, and stated that he was deputed by 2,000 men out of work to say that they must have bread or work, and would not accept less than 6s. for a day's labour. If their requirements were not met the representative added that the Government must take the consequences. The Premier on being advised of the covert threat gave directions to the police to hold themselves in readiness to deal promptly with any act of riot on the part of the unemployed.

FRANCE.

MEHUN-SUR-YEVRE.—The strike of the porcelain-makers here still continues and subscription-lists are opened for the benefit of the families of those on strike.

At the Conseil des Prud'hommes last week, an employé in the service of a wine-merchant sued his master for damages on account of his being lamed in the hand in his service. He was of course made to pay. Too cheaply do the workers hold their bodies at; this young man was content to estimate the life-long damage to his hand at about £2, the fee of the doctor who attended him!

ITALY.

A correspondent of the *Fascio Operaio*, writing from Diano Marina, between which town and Mentone the late earthquake was principally disastrous, declares that the distributions of the Relief Committee were disgracefully partial, and in short here as elsewhere "the system of favouritism triumphed;" and while great numbers of the poor rendered utterly destitute received nothing, landowners and householders were favoured with money and goods, and had the face to accept these unfair gifts rightfully due to others whose state clamoured for help. The Relief Fund, was in fact, very badly managed, for Ventimiglia, which suffered but little, if at all, received abundant assistance. In one commune three-fourths destroyed by the shocks rice was sent in sufficient quantity to serve for one distribution; out of this the mayor and several others of "comfortable estate" did not blush to take their share! At Diano Marina the wood and materials sent for the erection of some sort of shelter for the houseless was voted for the use of the church instead, a grim piece of mockery of the consolations and comfort of religion!

SPAIN.

VALENCIA.—The strike of printers at Valencia still continues. They are receiving aid in money from the various labour-associations in the districts where the Labour Party or the Socialist Party hold their ground.

PORTUGAL.

PORTO.—An important strike is announced here among the workers at the tobacco factories. The "hands" number about three thousand. Numerous arrests have been made by the authorities, and it is said the progress of Socialism is somewhat marked in the town.

SOUTH PLACE DEBATES.

"E pur si mouvo"—or in other words, "We still gee"—would have been a fair comment by any one who attended the four debates just concluded. It is not every Sunday afternoon that the capacity of South Place Institute is taxed as it was in March. The ball was opened, as all balls should be, by one of each sex; Annie Besant and Corrie Grant debating on the proposition, "That the existence of classes who live upon unearned incomes is detrimental to the welfare of the community, and ought to be put an end to by legislation." Each debate was cut up into four speeches—twenty minutes to each speaker, and then ten minutes ditto.

Mrs. Besant opening, filled her twenty minutes in her usual logical-cum-emotional manner, cutting out the work for Corrie Grant in a style which noticeably knocked his logic completely out of his head. From his previous record as a somewhat go-ahead Radical, the leader of the last forlorn-hope attack on Woodstock, I had quite a high expectation of what he would be able to do; but the way he brought to mind the old chop-logic story about the horse-chestnut and the chestnut horse upset me. Mrs. Besant strongly insisted on the axiom that all wealth was the product of labour; Grant was bold enough to hazard an attempt to prove the reverse way of using the words was also correct. He was a poor exhibition while making the attempt, but when Mrs. Besant took his logic in hand it was a caution to snakes. Another droll exhibition was the Individualist trying to show what would be the result of any attempt upon the right to hoard up £10,000 in gold for the purpose of drawing upon later in life. "Would a man be committing a crime if he attempted to burgle some of the £10,000 in gold and would the saver-up be committing a crime if he killed the burglar who attempted to burgle what the saver-up had committed a crime in saving?" This may seem a somewhat involved sentence, especially as I purposely do not point it in any way, but it is not one which more involved or muddled than the matter put before the audience as serious argument. This was immediately shown, by a few figures given by Mrs. Besant as to the total amount of what is called money existing, and by her asking whether it was seriously suggested that the wealth-owners proposed to store their railways and canals, etc., etc., in their back parlours so as to preserve their wealth to themselves; and if that were done, how much wealth would it really be?

Mrs. Besant handled her subject in her mingled fashion of hard logical argument and intense sympathy with the suffering she so emotionally painted once or twice, but she seemed sadly fatigued, or I am satisfied she would have handled her antagonist in the much severer fashion which he laid himself open to. I was completely disappointed in Grant, for I had somehow formed a very much higher

opinion of his power than he exhibited. I should not feel very well satisfied with my counsel if in a tight case no better defence could be made for me by him than was made *re* Individualism.

The second of the series was between G. Bernard Shaw and Rev. F. W. Ford, on the proposition, "That the welfare of the community necessitates the transfer of the land and existing capital of the country from private owners to the State."

Not so exactly punctual as on the previous Sunday did the proceedings begin; but Shaw wasted no time when started in stating his case, which he did neatly and lucidly.

Mr. Ford, a small dark man, wearing glasses, rather long hair, a voice and mannerism of exaggerated distinctness, which recalls Allanson Picton, did not suggest a very go-ahead sort of debate, but if not the most capable debater he was certainly the most energetic and voluble. I am inclined to the opinion that as a debater he was much the strongest, he certainly shirked awkward places the least of any of his fellows; if he did not solve serious doubts he made a fairly bold attempt to grapple with some of them, which is very much more than any of the others did.

At the start he wasted some time in the usual complimentary gush as to Mr. Shaw and his friends "having only the interests of the workers at heart," etc., and so forth. This sort of talk may be all very well in the pulpit, but when a tolerably plain proposition, covering a wide amount of debatable matter, has to be dealt with by two speakers in sixty minutes, I make bold to suggest that the too often insincere gush which is poured out had better be taken as said, and that the points at issue had much better be attacked right away. I do not for one moment suggest that sentiment and emotion is to be banished with political economy to Saturn, but I am sure it is often introduced to lead off the scent and cover retreat.

Mr. Ford led off by asserting that the whole of Mr. Shaw's argument was based on a fallacy. *Cela va sans dire*, according to Individualists when replying to Socialists.

He scored one rather neat point when he argued that the skilled labourer is a capitalist as compared with the unskilled. The argument continued by his next point was rather pretty, but showed just a trifle of its initial weakness. He endeavoured to show an exact parallel between this capital "skill" or "education" with "capital" as generally understood. ("Hereditity" is a capital which it is quite outside the power of any individual to vary to any great extent.) "That greater skill of course fairly demanded greater remuneration, and that this is one of the great factors of present inequality."

It struck me that we were going to have a rather elevated train of argument now. There were one or two fairly strong points made, and I "put forth the tender leaves of hope," but "ma goodness," almost the next breath he came out with that awful bosh of piling up all the wealth in one heap, and then going equal shares. "He fell like Lucifer never to rise again."

Naturally he raised a storm when he said that £93 per annum was the average wage of the workers. He was in worse form still when he tried to paint the terrible chance of everybody having plenty of food, but none of the present spirit of emulation.

He argued that "Liberty" (O thou strangely invoked non-entity!) is an absolute necessity, without which all worth of life would die out, and then in a perfect whirl of words painted the terror of a gigantic State machine which would allow no liberty of action in any one detail, food, dress, marriage, everything by rule, even "commerce will rapidly decline." Fancy that, ye starvelings, who are doing so well by commerce.

G. B. Shaw began his reply by some well-deserved strictures on the noisy section who often break a chain of reasoning to pieces by rowdy interruptions of approval or disapproval as the case may be. As to Mr. Ford's argument *re* skill, exceptional skill, or no skill at all, it was not a matter of pressing moment to find out the exact rate of wages to be paid for each, but he might be allowed to ask whether a Duke has 5,000 times the ability of any labourer; he has 5,000 times the pay, but he was sceptical as to any man having 5,000 times the skill of any other man. He said according to Mr. Ford we are on the horns of a dilemma, and "Smash" was a positive dead certainty.

Mr. Ford, in the concluding speech, dealt with land tenure, and suggested the suppositious case of his great-great-grandfather having taken by *strictly legal* means land, from the g. g. f. of G. B. Shaw, "what should be done with the present owners?" When "Chuck 'em out" from one of the irrepressibles suggested the more than possible solution, and brought down the curtain.

THOMAS SHORE, jun.

(To be concluded).

TO THE TAIL-LESS.—The name of the enterprising capitalist who "employs" apes to break and prepare his hemp for market is Mr. Parkes. He has a farm at Kingston, Kentucky. He has seven of them at present; they were sent to him by his brother in South Africa, and he has already ordered ten more. He says they do the work more rapidly and better than negroes, and at one fiftieth the cost. He cages them at night and feeds them on raw turnips, carrots, and potatoes. It only took him four months to train them. They don't need houses, books, pictures, baby-clothes, nor school-books for their children. It costs about 3 cents a day for their subsistence and when they die, planted in the furrows, they serve as excellent fertilizers. Skinned and tanned their hides make splendid leather, and its use will not be followed by any outcry of horror like that that saluted the utilisation of the Tewksbury pauper. Mr. Monkey also has no vote. Isn't it time for the long-eared, tail-less toilers to WAKE UP?—*Labor Enquirer*.

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

OFFICES: 13 FARRINGTON ROAD, E.C.

NOTICE.—All business matters relating to the Socialist League to be directed to the Secretary, H. A. Barker, 13 Farringdon Road, London, E.C.

Annual Conference.—The Third Annual Conference of the Socialist League will be held at 13 Farringdon Road on Whitsunday, May 29th. Branches are particularly requested to attend to the following arrangements, if they wish to be represented at the Conference: (1) To at once send a return of their membership to the General Secretary. The representation will be based on this return. (2) Branches cannot be represented unless all monthly subscriptions are paid up to March 31 by May 1st. (3) Notices of motion, amendment to Rules, etc., must be sent in six weeks before the Conference—*i.e.*, not later than April 18th. (4) Agenda Paper will be forwarded on May 2nd to Branches complying with these arrangements.

Lessons in French.—Comrade Victor Dave is now giving lessons in French at the offices of the League on Tuesday evenings, at 8 o'clock. The lessons are free to members, and those desirous of profiting by them should send their names at once to the secretary of the League.

FRENCH CLASS will resume on Tuesday April 26.

Library.—The Library is open to members of the Socialist League and affiliated bodies. LIBRARY CATALOGUE, containing the Rules, 2d. LENA WARDLE and W. BLUNDELL are the Librarians.

Bound Volumes of 'COMMONWEAL' for 1886 can now be had. Price 6s. 6d.

General Meeting of London members adjourned to Monday April 18, at 8.

Reports for 'Commonweal.'—Branch Secretaries are requested to make their reports as brief as possible, dealing with points of general interest as to the progress of the propaganda, rather than attempting to give the substance of the lectures, for which there is not space, even if it were otherwise desirable. Notices should be confined to purely business announcements and written separately. Reports and Notices should be addressed to the "Printer," and cannot be guaranteed insertion unless they reach the office by 2 p.m. on Tuesday.

BRANCH SUBSCRIPTIONS PAID.

Birmingham, Hackney, Hull, Leeds, North London, to August 31. Manchester, Merton, Norwich, to October 31. Bradford, to November 30. Croydon, Hammersmith, Leicester, South London, to Dec. 31, 1886. Lancaster, to January 31. Bloomsbury, Walsall, to February 28. Clerkenwell, Hoxton (Labour Emancipation League), Oxford, to March 31, 1887.

THE NORWICH PRISONERS' AID FUND.

C. W. Mowbray and Fred Henderson, of the Socialist League, were sentenced at the Norwich Assizes on Jan. 20 to nine and four months' imprisonment respectively. The costs of the trial amounted to £60, and Mowbray's wife and five children must be provided for during his imprisonment, so that at least £100 will be required. The treasurer of this fund therefore appeals to every one to give all the assistance he can.

Arthur, 6d. Leeds Branch, 2s. Collected by Mrs. Dyer, 3s. For Mrs. Mowbray—A few Fabians, per Annie Besant (weekly), 10s.—J. LANE, Treasurer.

BRANCH REPORTS.

CLERKENWELL.—On Wednesday, April 6, Eleanor Marx-Aveling lectured on "Socialism in Europe and America." Good discussion followed. On Sunday morning, April 10, a very successful anti-Coercion meeting was held on Clerkenwell Green, being well-attended by local citizens. The Merton Branch and Clerkenwell Branch of the Socialist League amalgamated with the Clerkenwell Branch of the Social Democratic Federation, speeches being delivered by members of these sections. The following resolution was put and carried unanimously: "That this meeting expresses its deep abhorrence of the Coercive Measures levelled against the Irish nation, and is of opinion that, the Land Question being at the root of the Irish troubles, no political change can have permanent value unless accompanied by, or be in the direction of, the abolition of Landlordism in Ireland; and is further of opinion that the Irish nation should be left free to settle with the landlords without any restriction whatever from the English Parliament." Much enthusiasm prevailed, and the meeting closed with three hearty cheers for the Social Revolution. In the evening, at Farringdon Hall, L. Gronlund addressed good audience on "The Familistere of Guise," describing it as mere philanthropy. Literature has sold well.—W. B. and T. E. W.

HOXTON.—W. C. Wade lectured on "Radicalism from a Socialist Standpoint," taking as the base of his objections to Radicalism, that Radicalism is founded on expediency while Socialism is founded on principle. The discussion after the lecture was enlivened by the remarks of an employé of the Liberty and Property Defence League, a Mr. Lyons, who at the close of the discussion challenged us to debate the aims and objects of the L.P.D.L. The challenge was accepted, and notice of the same sent to the secretary of the L.P.D.L.—E. P.

EDINBURGH.—On Tuesday, April 5, Wm. Morris lectured in Free Tron Hall on "Monopoly." Spirited discussion at close, and Socialistic resolution carried. Good sale of literature.—G.

NORWICH.—Large and enthusiastic meetings were held on Sunday and Monday in various parts of the city, addressed by Joseph Lane and others of the Socialist League, in favour of Socialism and against Coercion.

BIRMINGHAM.—At a meeting in the Birmingham Forward Liberal Club last week, the debate on "Is Socialism sound?" which had been debated for four nights, the question was decided in the affirmative. Speakers belonging to the Club, the Fabian Society, the S. D. F., and the Socialist League, took part in the debate, which aroused great interest.

DUBLIN.—Our Dublin comrades are doing right good work, which is having effect. Discussions and meetings are being attended, and occasional lectures given. The leaflet issued by the Irish section is being widely circulated throughout Ireland, and is attracting attention to Socialism. The Labour League lately formed here has also been bestirring itself.

NOTTINGHAM.—On Sunday, April 3, a Conference of members of the Socialist Union, the International, and the Social Democratic Federation, was held to consider the desirability of combining the different bodies in one independent local organisation. I. Hamer was in the chair, and J. Winterton, J. Peacock, P. H. Knight, T. Proctor, H. Cooper (S.U.), and W. Winterton (S.D.F.) spoke in favour of the proposal. It was finally moved by J. Wane, seconded by J. Peacock, "That this meeting form itself into the Nottingham and District Socialist Brotherhood, and use all their united efforts to advance its propaganda, and make the local movement a success. The Brotherhood to be unconnected with any outside society." J. Winterton was unanimously elected secretary *pro tem*. The meetings are held at the Liberty Café, Alfred Street, Central. In the evening a meeting was held in the great Market Place, at which about 2,000 persons were present, and a resolution condemning the Tory Coercion Act for Ireland was unanimously carried. The propaganda among the miners of the Mansfield division was commenced on Thursday night by J. Peacock and T. Proctor; the literature given to them was gladly received, and the speeches made by the two Socialists were loudly cheered.

LECTURE DIARY.

London Branches.

- Bloomsbury.**—Communist Club, 49 Tottenham Street. A Business Meeting of great importance will be held on Thursday 21st, at 8.30. All members must attend at the Communist Club, 49 Tottenham Street. On Friday April 22, at 8.30, G. Bernard Shaw will lecture.
- Clerkenwell.**—Hall of the Socialist League, 13 Farringdon Road, E.C. Sunday April 17, at 7.15 p.m. F. Verinder, "The Queen's Jubilee and the People's Jubilee."—Committee Meeting every Friday at 8 p.m. sharp, at Parker Road.
- Croydon.**—Royal County House, West Croydon Station Yard. Sunday April 17, at 7.15 p.m. F. Verinder, "The Queen's Jubilee and the People's Jubilee."—Committee Meeting every Friday at 8 p.m. sharp, at Parker Road.
- Hackney.**—23 Audrey Street, Goldsmith Row. Club Room open every evening from 8 till 11. Business Meeting every Tuesday at 8.30. On Sunday Apr. 17, at 8 p.m. A Lecture.
- Hammersmith.**—Kelmescott House, Upper Mall, W. Sunday April 17, at 8 p.m., William Morris, "True and False Society."
- Hoxton (L.E.L.).**—Club Room, 2 Crondall Street, New North Road. Sunday April 17, at 8 p.m. Eleanor Marx-Aveling will lecture. A CONCERT and Social Evening, will be held on Saturday April 23, at 8 p.m.—admission free. Committee meeting on Friday April 29, at 8.30 p.m.
- Merton.**—11 Merton Terrace, High Street. Club Room open every evening. Committee every Thursday. Discussions held every Sunday morning at 11.
- Mitcham.**—Corner of Merton Lane and Fountain Place. Club Room open every evening from 7.30 till 11.

Country Branches.

- Bingley.**—Coffee Tavern. Every Monday at 7.30 p.m.
- Birmingham.**—Carr's Lane Coffee House. Every Monday evening, at 8.
- Bradford.**—Morris's Dining Rooms, 114 City Road. Wednesdays, at 8.
- Edinburgh (Scottish Section).**—4 Park Street. Meets every Thursday at 8 p.m. Reading Room and Library open every Wednesday evening, 8 till 10.
- Glasgow.**—Reading-room of the Branch, 84 John St., open from 10 a.m. till 10 p.m. daily. On Sunday, open-air meetings at the Green at 1 and 5 o'clock. Lecture and discussion in Rooms, 84 John Street, at 7 p.m.
- Hamilton.**—Branch meets every Thursday at 7.30 in Paton's Hall, Chapel Street.
- Hull.**—11 Princess Street, Sykes Street. Lectures on Sunday at 7 p.m. Thursday at 8 p.m., Political Economy Class.
- Lancaster.**—Addresses every Sunday morning on the Quay Jetty.
- Leicester.**—Spiritualist Hall, Silver Street.
- Manchester.**—145 Grey Mare Lane, Bradford, Manchester. Club and Reading Room open every evening 6 to 10 p.m. Lecture and discussion every Wednesday at 8 p.m.
- Newcastle.**—Meets every Sunday night at the Temperance Hall, Gallowgate, at 7 p.m.
- Norwich.**—Gordon Hall, 5 Duke Street. Free Lectures every Sunday and Monday at 8 p.m. Reading-room open every evening. See open-air meetings below.
- Oxford.**—Temperance Hall, 25½ Pembroke Street. Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.
- Seaton Delaval (Northumberland).**—Meeting-place will be announced next week.

Open-air Propaganda—Sunday 17.

- 11.30...Hackney—"Salmon and Ball" Hobbs & Allman
11.30...Hammersmith—Beardon Rd.The Branch
11.30...Hoxton Church, Pitfield St. ...Pope & Wade
11.30...Garrett—Plough InnThe Branch
11.30...Regent's ParkCantwell & Nicoll
11.30...St. Pancras ArchesWardle & Dalziel
11.30...Walham GreenThe Branch
3.30...Hyde Park.....Mainwaring & Wardle

TUESDAY.

- 8...Euston Rd.—Ossulton Street...Cantwell & Donald

WEDNESDAY.

- 8.30...Broadway, London Fields ...H. Graham

PROVINCES.—SUNDAY.

- Norwich.**—St. Mary's Plain, at 11; Market Place, 3;
Agricultural Hall Plain, 7.
Leeds.—Hunslet Moor, 11 a.m.; Vicar's Croft, 7 p.m.
Leicester.—Humberston Gate, 11 a.m.

Dublin.

A MONSTER MEETING in advocacy of the RIGHTS OF LABOUR will be held on Sunday April 17, at Harold's Cross Green, at 4 p.m. Several well-known Socialists will speak.

DUBLIN.—Irish Labour League, 2 Bachelors Walk, every Thursday at 8 p.m. Discussion on all subjects connected with the Labour Question. All interested are requested to attend.

SOCIALIST LEAGUE LITERATURE.

- The Manifesto of the Socialist League.** Annotated by E. Belfort Bax and William Morris. An exposition of the principles on which the League is founded. . . . 1d.
- For Whom Shall We Vote?** Addressed to the Working-men and Electors of Great Britain. Spp. cr. 8vo. For distribution, 2s. per 100. . . . ½d.
- The Commune of Paris.** By E. Belfort Bax, Victor Dave, and William Morris. . . . 2d.
- Organised Labour: The Duty of the Trades' Unions in Relation to Socialism.** By Thomas Binning (London Society of Compositors). . . . 1d.
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