

THE COMMONWEALTH

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

A WRITTEN DEBATE

BETWEEN MR. C. BRADLAUGH, M.P., AND E. BELFORT BAX.

SUBJECT:

WILL SOCIALISM BENEFIT THE ENGLISH PEOPLE?

I.—*Affirmative*: E. BELFORT BAX.

MODERN Socialism may be defined as a new view of life (*i.e.*, of human relations) having an economic basis. Although its theory has been already many times expounded of recent years by myself and others, it may be deemed necessary on the present occasion for me to go over the ground once more. The economic goal of modern or scientific Socialism, no less than that of the Utopian Socialism of Owen, Fourier, St. Simon, etc., which preceded it, is the equal participation by all in the necessities, comforts, and enjoyments of life, and the equal duty of all to assist in the necessary work of the world. But while the Utopian Socialism believed this to be attainable by mere individual initiative and example without any special reference to the condition of the world as a whole, Modern Socialism finds the earnest of its ideal in the facts of social evolution¹—and it is on this rock of the ages, with its many-hued strata of economic-formation, that the modern Socialist builds his faith.

Society it is generally admitted in the present day, began to expand under the ægis of a limited, unconscious and crude tribal Socialism in which property was in common, and morality and religion consisted in devotion to the social unit. This in the course of progress lapsed, owing to its crudity and limitation in scope, and was gradually supplanted by Civilisation with its basis of Individualism in economics, morals, religion, etc.; the latter, in its turn, is as Socialists believe, now after many a century, in the moment of its completest realisation, destined to undergo a transformation in which its fundamental principle will be sacrificed and the old solidarity again assert itself, purged from its imperfections, and with the seal of completeness and universality upon it.

Such, in a few words, is the skeleton of the historical theory of Socialism. With what we may term the first transformation of society (from Tribal Communism to Civilisation) it would be beside the present question to deal further. I therefore, having stated the fact, pass on to consider in more detail the development of the completest form of Civilisation *viz.*, modern Capitalism, with the nature of the process by which Socialists believe its transformation into a real social order will be effected; and lastly the reasons why such social order must benefit the English people no less than every other people.

Modern capitalism and the civilisation which is its expression, is the most extreme antithesis in every respect of tribal society. All the ties which formerly bound the individual to his group, are ruptured. Modern society is based on the nominal independence of the individual as unit. Let us briefly trace the development of this independence on its economic side from the Middle Ages downward. The earliest distinctive form of medieval society, that of the feudal estate, was for the most part, an industrial whole, the links connecting it with the outer world being few, and seldom indispensable to its existence. Wellnigh everything produced on the estate came from its soil. The *villein* and his sons tilled the ground, reaped the harvest, hunted the wild animals, raised domestic stock, felled the trees, built the dwelling, etc.; his wife and daughters spun the flax and carded the wool, which they worked up into articles of clothing; brewed the mead, gathered the grapes, made the wine, etc. Division of labour and a system of exchange in a society on this plan were obviously unessential. This system, as every one knows, continued the dominant one throughout Europe for centuries. But in the course of time it gradually gave way before the growing town industrial organisation of the guilds. Each man here worked to maintain himself or his family at a *particular* handicraft, by exchanging or selling the product of his labour. In this way specialisation of labour and a more extended commerce arose. But the mediæval burgher was neither free nor a capitalist in the modern sense. Though only indirectly if at all, under the domination of a lord, he was

under the very strict *surveillance* of his guild. The guild by regulating the number of his apprentices and the quality of his material and work, took good care that he should not develop his individualistic instincts. The burgher class of the Middle Ages was nevertheless the forerunner of the modern middle-class. As the mediæval system broke up, the guilds gradually declined. A floating class of journeymen wage-labourers came into existence and flooded the towns, while the burgher class became restive at the restrictions of their own guilds, of which wealthy cliques soon obtained the entire control, while a new middle-class established itself outside the chartered cities. This development, essentially the same throughout the progressive races, is typically represented in England. The symptoms of the dissolution of the economical conditions of the Middle Ages were, the uprooting of the people from the soil and the abolition of the old feudal and communal rights, the dissolution of the monasteries and the old feudal establishments, the opening up of a world-market, the new inventions, etc. Such was the soil out of which modern Capitalism grew as expounded by Marx in the second volume of 'Das Kapital' (English translation.) Modern Capitalism, and therewith the modern "middle-class," its embodiment, dates from the Sixteenth century. Its industrial course has been marked by three phases (1) simple co-operation of a number of handicraftsmen under the lead of a wealthy burgher; (2) the manufacture or workshop system; and (3) the "great machine industry" which arose at the end of the last century and has been expanding itself in scope and intensity ever since. With this, its last phase, production for use has given way completely before that production for profit which breeds to-day the commercial rottenness we see around us. Wares of all kinds are now produced for a forced sale, by means of their cheapness—"gluts" succeed to "booms"—till trade-depression becomes permanent. The small capitalist is continually being thrown upon the labour-market by inability to hold his own in the competitive arena. Capital tends thus to become concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, while the reserve army of labour tends steadily to augment. The result is increasing riches for the few and increasing poverty for the many. The "increase of national wealth" at the present day means increase of misery for the mass of the people.

The economical change toward complete Individualism, the issue of which is the modern capitalistic system, has been accompanied by political, moral and religious changes intimately connected with it, but which, important as they are, I can only notice very briefly here. (1) The break-up of the feudal estates helped to consolidate the power of the crown. This it was which completed that economical revolution in breaking down the local centres or feudal groups with their common lands, traditions, customs and jurisdictions, isolated the individual, and laid the foundation of the modern centralised national systems of Europe. (2) The economical backbone of the landed class as a class being broken, the political power passed both by gradual process and revolutionary crisis into the hands of the new capitalist or monied classes. This was partially effected in England by the "glorious Revolution" of 1689; in France more completely by the Great Revolution of 1789. From the sixteenth century downwards political history is the history of the middle or trading-classes in their efforts to free the individual from the fetters of feudalism and monarchy to the end that on the one side there might be a body of free and landless labourers, and on the other a body of moneybags free to exploit them. To effect the end in view, political power was necessary, and though obtained in this country in principle, in 1689 or even at the Commonwealth, was not finally and fully realised till the Reform Act of 1832.

(3) Then again, the individualistic tendencies of bourgeois economics is reflected in its religion and ethics. As I have elsewhere shown, Christianity is through and through individualistic. But during the Middle Ages its individualism was subordinated to the current communal and pagan tendencies it took on from the barbarians, and the form it assumed was largely coloured by these tendencies. Hence Catholicism has been in many respects the least objectionable form of Christianity, precisely because its spirit is the least Christian. Just as every member of the local community of peasants had a right as such to the common land, etc., so every member of the universal church or community of saints had a right as such to the heavenly pastures. The Reformation, the religious side of the rise of capitalistic individualism, affirmed salvation to be a matter solely of personal concern. It tore the individual away from his spiritual moorings, just as it had torn him away from his temporal moorings and left him to shift for himself. It pretended to be a restoration of primitive Christianity, and this was true as regards spirit if not as regards doctrine. For primitive Christianity was also the ideal expression of the dissolution of communal life—in this

¹ We are so much accustomed to the idea of Evolution in the present day, that we can with difficulty understand its absence. Hence the fallacious antithesis made between Evolution and Revolution. The true antithesis to the notion of social Evolution is not that of Revolution but the idea of the possibility of isolated individuals or groups being able to change society, so to say, abstractly and of their own initiative, irrespective of the general current of human progress.

case the civic life of the classical world. Protestantism has always accentuated the doctrine of individual responsibility to the deity. Religion under Protestantism became personal and matter-of-fact, *i.e.*, eminently bourgeois.

(4) With ethics proper it has been just the same. The highest Protestant conception of goodness is, not zeal for social ends but a mauling self-introspection, having personal holiness for its end.

The results of commercial Individualism we see at the present day on all hands, and nowhere in richer luxuriance than among the "English people," unless it be in the United States, where the economic development has gone further even than in this country. Let us only look around at the material aspect of things—the universal empire of shoddy goods, jerry-buildings, foulness and squalor. As one enters London or any other large city, what is it that greets the eye? A vast agglomeration of filth in every conceivable variety of form—railway works, factories, slums—indicative of human misery that no tongue or pen could adequately describe. Had Dante lived now and wanted material for his vision of hell, he would only have needed to take the South-Eastern train on landing at Dover, and depict the place he saw as he entered the English metropolis. And for what ostensibly is human nature, and for what are the vast majority of human lives ground down to being thus *the slave of the mere process of production and distribution*? Forsooth, in order that a relatively small class may live either without labour at all or with the labour of the gambler¹—which latter the literary *flemur* glorifies under the name of the *aleatory*.

In my own eyes, statistics have no great value, experience showing that they can be made to prove any proposition in the hands of a clever manipulator. To my thinking, a day's journey through the slums of a great city proves more than tons of statistics. One fact outweighs a thousand figures. But since I am not writing altogether on my own account, but also on behalf of the Socialist League, and many persons like to see figures in an article of this kind, here are some. First you have H. M. Hyndman's figures: £1,300,000,000 annual revenue of the country, of which £300,000,000 only accrue to the working classes who produce it, the remaining 1,000,000,000 going in various proportions to the non-producing classes. I am not aware how Hyndman arrives at these figures, but I have never seen them seriously controverted, and they seem to me to express admirably the ratio one would expect to obtain, on a rough estimate, judging from the facts of modern social life. Then you have the statistics carefully compiled by G. B. Shaw in Fabian Tract No. 5. These give a similar total, but the proportions as £800,000,000 to the non-producers and £500,000,000 to the producers. In a footnote, however, to page 9 of the document in question, the amiable and witty author significantly remarks that these statistics assume regularity of employment and take no account of deductions for ground-rent, which being interpreted must mean that a sum not very much less than £200,000,000 has to be taken off the lesser and added on to the greater amount, so that after all we are brought back approximately to the Hyndman figures quoted above. But as I before said, such figures as these have no value to me except as a "cut-and-dried" statement of the fact obvious in itself without the aid of any figures at all—to wit, that society is composed of two fundamental classes, a relatively small class of monopolists that possesses the bulk of the wealth produced, and a very large class of producers that consumes only a fraction of that wealth. These classes, of course, shade off into one another, but the fact of their existence and of the antagonism of their interests still remains an indubitable truth.

It is this great curse of civilisation which Socialists would fain see abolished. Many would doubtless gladly have a wave of barbarism sweep this rottenness away as it swept away the effete classical civilisation. But the Socialist knows that this would only mean the martyrdom of nineteenth century progress, or something like it, having to be gone over again. There is no effective putting back the clock of human evolution. No, Civilisation can be only definitively overthrown by Socialism. The state-world, the *civitas*, can only become a social world, a *societas*, by a revolution generated in the fullness of its own development. The means of the present exploitation of labour, the cause of the present horrible state of things, is monopoly. Its *modus operandi* is the extraction of surplus value from the labourer by compelling him to work a whole day while receiving only so much of the results of his labour as is necessary to keep him in bare subsistence. Remove the monopoly from the hands of individuals, and you do away with the possibility of surplus value. The above revolution then consists in the assumption by the people themselves, organised to this end, of the means of production, distribution, and exchange (as explained in the Socialist manifestoes), and in the working of them in their own interest, that is, in the interest of the whole community. This would, of course, soon result in the extinction of that "private enterprise," whose exploits consist in destroying all the worth of life under pretence of enhancing it, but really in the interests of individual greed. That "stimulus of personal interest" which spreads like a cancer through artistic and literary productivity, flooding the world with cheap and nasty work, would be finally cut up by the roots. Industry would be regulated consciously with a view to the needs of Society so far as ascertainable. Wealth would be produced for *use*, and not for *profit*. With the abolition of classes, consequent on the abolition of monopoly,

national rivalries, at present mainly reduced to questions of commerce, would come to an end. The break-up of the present State-nationalities of Europe would be one of the first results of Socialism, which is nothing if not international. The sphere of politics would be gradually merged in that of industrial direction. With no independent nations there would be no national interests, as such; with no classes there would be no class interests, as such. Bourgeois civilisation at an end, there would be no longer any object in maintaining the sham of a creed to which the modern proletariat as a class has never attached itself, and in which nine-tenths of the educated middle-class have not only ceased to believe by their own confession, but for which even the sentimental attachment they may have had some decade and a half back is rapidly waning. Finally, with the consummation of individualism in Economics comes the destruction of individualism in Ethics, whether in its brutal form of (so-called) Utilitarianism or self-interest, or in its inverted and apotheosised form of introspective maudering having "personal holiness" as an end. Both must give place to an Ethic in which social and individual interest have ceased to conflict, which has as its foundation the principle that the *perfect individual is realised only in and through the perfect society*, and which hence abandons the morbid striving after individual perfection for the healthy endeavour after social happiness. Politics will thus become ethical and ethics political. Personal will be no longer divorced from public character. Social order will supervene on anarchy.

Will Socialism benefit the English people? Will fresh air benefit the suffocating man? Will food benefit the starving man? Will rest benefit the weary man? If not, perhaps Socialism will not benefit the English people. Otherwise, the question "Would Socialism benefit the English people?" would seem to partake of the ironical.

E. BELFORD BAX.

THE IRISH QUESTION.

V.—AGRARIAN OUTRAGES AND EVICTIONS.

In dealing with the question of agrarian crime, we have to bear in mind that the English connection for over seven hundred years has been one high crime against the Irish people; that the landlord system is, and from the middle of the sixteenth century has been, one great crime of rapine and murder—of legalised plunder on a national scale. For more than seven hundred years it has been a war of extermination against the Irish race. What wonder, then, that we should meet with little episodes of retaliation, or rather of self-defence. If the tyranny of a day is so odious, is it less so when practised for centuries? If the robbery of a coat or a watch deserves a severe punishment, how much greater punishment should be given to the great land-thieves who live from generation to generation on the plunder of the people. But while the great land-robbers, making the laws, are protected by the laws, the people who object to the plunder are condemned and punished as rebels.

A few weeks ago a Parliamentary Return was issued showing the number of outrages for each year from 1880 to 1886. It is not necessary to take every year; it will be enough to analyse the returns for one or two years. Take 1881. Crimes against—

	The Person.	Property.	The Peace.	Total.
Ulster ...	18	66	330	414
Leinster ...	39	105	687	833
Connaught ...	87	186	954	1235
Munster ...	153	317	1520	1957

It is true this list looks formidable enough. But they are not ordinary crimes, but are the natural outcome of the still greater crimes of the landlord system in that country. Most of these so-called crimes are only letters or notices which any police or landlord agent can write. Look at these returns again.

	Total.	Letters, etc.	All others.
Ulster ...	414	247	167
Leinster ...	833	587	246
Connaught ...	1235	710	525
Munster ...	1957	1062	895

It will be remembered that 1881 was a remarkable year, crime, as it is termed, being very heavy in the last three months, owing to the Compensation for Disturbance Bill being thrown out by the Lords. It will therefore be best to take a later year. In 1884 the outrages are given as follows:

Ulster.	Leinster.	Connaught.	Munster.	Total.
73	138	116	417	744

These are classified as—Crimes against the person, 7; against property, 201; letters, etc., 423; other petty offences, 62. These are the so-called outrages of which we hear so much, the very nature of which indicates at once the foundation of Irish society.

It is necessary now to take another class of agrarian crimes; not commonly so called, but which are of a more brutal kind than those to which we have just referred—namely, evictions. In speaking of the two classes of outrages, Gladstone (House of Commons, May 24, 1882) said: "Eviction is the exercise of a legal right which may be to the prejudice of your neighbour, which may involve the highest responsibility, nay, even deep moral guilt. There may be outrages which—all things considered, the persons and the facts—may be less guilty in the sight of God than evictions." Truer words were never spoken. Considering that the landlord system is nothing more than "legalised

¹ It is amusing and instructive, as illustrative of bourgeois humbug, to listen to middle-class paterfamilias and his holy horror of Monte Carlo and similar establishments, where gambling is at least honestly and straightforwardly carried on, while this same worthy himself thives and gambles every day in "business" or stock-exchange speculations.

felony," and that evictions are the nineteenth-century war of extermination against the Irish people, there can be no doubt that evictions are far greater crimes than the so-called agrarian outrages—more brutal, more inhuman, and more monstrous,—crimes that can never be condoned. Nor do the landlords care to act according to the law even of their own making. In 1852 Sir Chas. Wood called the attention of the House to the wholesale evictions then going on. Large districts were depopulated, and at the Quarter Sessions of Ballina alone 6400 ejectment processes were taken out. Sir R. Peel in reply said: "It would appear from the evidence of Major M'Kie, who was employed by the Poor Law Commissioners, that the forcible ejectments were illegal; that previous notice had not been given; and that ejectments were perpetrated under circumstances of great cruelty. The time chosen for the most part was night, on the eve of the new year. The people were forced out of their houses with their helpless children, and left exposed to the cold on a bleak western shore on a stormy winter's night; that some of the children were ill; that the parents implored that they might not be exposed, that their houses might be left till morning; their prayers for mercy were in vain, and some of them have since died." Who in these cases were the criminals? who the murderers? who the rebels? Will the Right Hon. John Bright tell us? But take the returns for the four years ending Dec. 31, 1852. There were evicted—

	No. of Families.	No. of Persons.
1849 ...	16,686 ...	90,440
1850 ...	19,949 ...	104,163
1851 ...	13,198 ...	68,023
1852 ...	8,591 ...	43,494

Here we find these "merciful" landlords, these plundering miscreants, in four years evicting no less than fifty-eight thousand four hundred and twenty-four families, consisting of two hundred and twelve thousand one hundred and twenty men, women, and children. And that, too, in the middle of the nineteenth century, to preserve the supremacy of law and order, those grandest of gems in our English civilisation.

We have taken the so-called agrarian crimes for the years 1881-4, let us take the evictions for those two years. They were as follows:

Year.	Ulster.	Leinster.	Connaught.	Munster.	Total.
1881 ...	1,219 ...	692 ...	750 ...	784 ...	3,445
1884 ...	1,044 ...	617 ...	1,246 ...	1,279 ...	4,186

Now, where the claims of the landlords rest on no moral right, where these claims have never been recognised by the moral sentiments of the people, every one of those evictions was a crime against the individuals, a crime against the people, and a crime against humanity. The question again occurs: Who in these cases were the criminals? who the murderers? who the rebels? Will the Right Hon. John Bright tell us? Mr. Mulhall states that the total number of men, women, and children evicted during the fifty years ending 1886 was not less than three million six hundred and sixty-eight thousand. Think of that ye canting hypocrites who prate about law and order. What a glorious item to be remembered in this glorious Jubilee year! Will the white-throated black-bats of Westminster Abbey think of it? Will they lay the death-stained record at the feet of Her Most Gracious Majesty?

Let us turn again to Mulhall. During the same period there have died of famine, one million two hundred and twenty-five thousand men, women, and children. Pause and think of it. Famine in the midst of plenty, famine the result of landlord robbery, of landlord plunder. One million two hundred and twenty-five thousand landlord murders! Was there no crime, no murder here, Johnny Bright? Will the pious hypocrites of Westminster Abbey lay that record of blood before Her Most Gracious Majesty on the celebration of her Jubilee?

Mr. Mulhall also tells us that during the same fifty years four millions one hundred and eighty-six thousand have left the shores of Ireland to seek a home in distant climes. A number equal to nearly the present population of that country. No wonder that to day when the population ought to be thirteen or fourteen millions it is less than five millions. These millions and their sons and daughters form a large percentage of the population of America, where they are rich and powerful. They prosper in Canada, they flourish in our Australian Colonies. These millions are still Irish. They may be rebels to the British Crown, to British tyranny, to British oppression, but they love their country, they love those left behind, and they may yet help even more to free their mother-land from the curse and scourge of royal and aristocratic plunderers. To do it is a most sacred right, a most imperative duty. As an evidence of their devotion to their mother country, Mr. Mulhall states that during the last half century they have sent to those left behind them the enormous total of £24,500,000. And that during the single year of 1881 they sent £1,510,000. What a proof of self-sacrifice; what an evidence of devotion; what a guarantee for the future liberty and independence of old Ireland! Let Englishmen think of it, of what it means, and let them say if they are prepared to emulate such heroic devotion for their own redemption.

But there is another matter. Mr. Mulhall gives the value of the labour of the four millions and odd who have been driven from their native land by British tyranny at the enormous sum of £665,000,000. If Ireland had that wealth to day, what prosperity, what happiness, would not be the fate of her population! To insult her with charity and relief bills in face of these facts—facts that point to the domination of the English royal and aristocratic land-thieves as the one great cause of Ireland's ruin. See the natural, the inevitable result. Note the figures carefully. While it is the boast that pauperism in England

is on the decrease, in Ireland the case is just the reverse. The returns tell their own sad tale:

Year.	Indoor.	Outdoor.	Total.
1859	114,594	39,112	153,706
1871	181,032	44,478	225,510
1884	253,342	46,621	299,963
1885	329,550	120,939	450,489
1886	357,621	348,205	705,826

And during those years the population has decreased by more than two millions. Connaught, with a population of rather over 800,000, has 247,134 paupers, or about 307 to every 1000 of its population. Is British tyranny, supported by British bayonets, never to cease? Is this war of extermination never to end? It is for the workers of England, the workers of Wales and of Scotland to answer the question. It is for the workers, victims of the same tyranny, plundered by the same classes, cursed and scourged by the same system, to say whether this shame to England, to Wales, and to Scotland, and this curse to Ireland shall cease, and WHEN! J. SKETCHLEY.

NOTES.

"A CURIOUS meeting was held in Hyde Park, . . . to discuss the grievances of the police—whatever they may be" (sic!). This is how the Renegade Radical organ, the *Echo*, speaks of the policemen's protest against a fraudulent reduction of their wages.

What is the worth of a "Radical" paper which does not trouble to enquire into such affairs and which impudently proclaims its ignorance?

In the same issue of the same paper great surprise is expressed as to the "little interest shown in the Land Transfer Bill," and Welsh Home Rule is sneered at.

Apparently the *Echo* now circulates little among the workers, or it would hardly wonder at the lack of interest shown by its readers in which particular thief it is that gets the land; nor would it dare to sneer at any folk seeking to rule themselves.

Had not the *Echo* better drop its motto, "Be Just and Fear not"? The celebrated "statement of policy, Either which way at once," would suit it so much better.

Since our magistrates have shown how little the law troubles them it can be seen how gratuitously brutal was Mr. Cooke of the Marylebone police-court to the heroine of the "painful story" related there on the 9th of this month.

In a case which he might easily have dismissed, he went out of his way to fine, and heap costs upon her. And of such is English Justice!

Defending himself under a charge of perjury, a constable at Cardiff swore that lying on one another's behalf was common among the police—"they always stuck together." Any one who did not do so would "lead a dog's life."

When will the workers learn that they must "stick together," and that he who stands out deserves to "lead a dog's life"?

The *Vegetarian Messenger* makes a very foolish allusion to what it calls "a terrific onslaught against Vegetarianism" made in our columns last August. We have often pointed out that against this creed *in itself* we have no quarrel.

All that we attack is the claim made by the more ignorant vegetarians that the whole social problem can be solved by abolishing "kneophagy."

Our attitude is exactly the same toward teetotalism, anti-tobaccoism, and all the rest of them. Each one of these may be equally well true or false without affecting Socialism, but not one of them or all of them will solve the social question.

So little has Socialism to do with opposing these things that one of the brightest and best of our advocates is an adherent of all of them at once! H. H. S.

LITERARY NOTICES.

Comrade Van Doesselaer, a Dutch Socialist, has very ably translated for the Dutch paper *De Werker*, the Manifesto of the Socialist League.

El Productor, Socialist weekly journal of Barcelona, contains each week some well-written notes on passing politics, one or two interesting letters on the doings of the Socialist and Labour parties in Spain, miscellaneous notes, and in short has its columns well-filled with matter likely to interest the workers.

North and South (15 D'Olier Street, Dublin, weekly, 1d.) is a very well-got-up and apparently impartial Irish newspaper and review. A recent number contained a very good letter from our comrade M'Carthy.

May we venture to suggest to the *People's Budget* (Allahabad) that it is doing but small service to its workmen readers by the "evil speaking, lying and slandering" indulged in by its New York correspondent? A glance on any given week at the New York papers would expose this gentleman's persistent falsehood. He is apparently incapable of telling the truth upon any labour matter. Our attention was drawn to his vagaries some time ago and a detailed examination of his productions has not elicited one example of honest writing. The *N. Y. Leader* might look him up and expose him.



"HAVE YOU NOT HEARD HOW IT HAS GONE WITH MANY A CAUSE BEFORE NOW? FIRST, FEW MEN HEARD 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.

As 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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Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday May 18.

ENGLAND	Boston—Woman's Journal	BELGIUM
Justice	Denver (Col.) Labor Inquirer	Antwerp—De Werker
Jus	Hammonton (N.J.) Credit Foncier	HOLLAND
Norwich—Daylight	San Francisco (Cal.) The People	Hague—Recht voor Allen
Londoner Arbeiter-Zeitung	Chicago (Ill.)—Vorbote	ITALY
Practical Socialist	Labor Enquirer	Milan—Il Fascio Operaio
Brotherhood	Milwaukee (Wis.)—Volksblatt	SPAIN
INDIA	Seattle (W.T.) Voice of the People	Madrid—El Socialista
ankipore—Behar Herald	Fort Worth (Tex.)—South West	HUNGARY
SOUTH AUSTRALIA	Detroit (Mich.)—The Advance	Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik
Melbourne—Honest	and Labor Leaf	ROUMANIA
CANADA	New Haven (Conn.)—Work-	Jassy—Lupta
Toronto—Labor Reformer	men's Advocate	DENMARK
UNITED STATES	FRANCE	Social-Demokraten
New York—Freiheit	Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily)	SWEDEN
Truthseeker	La Revolution Cosmopolite	Stockholm—Social-Demokraten
John Swinton's Paper	Lille—Le Travailleur	
Der Sozialist		

CIGAR-MAKING IN ENGLAND.

THIS trade, owing to its peculiar nature and comparative smallness, has received but little attention from those not actually engaged in it. Its importance, however, is by no means small, as will be seen by the account, necessarily incomplete, I intend to give respecting it. As a commencement, therefore, a word as to how a cigar is made may not be out of place. Cigar-making is a very light occupation; and were it not for the long hours one has to work at it—the average being eight per day, terribly long, when the nature of the craft is understood—and bad pay, it would be an exceedingly pleasant industry.

A cigar consists of pure tobacco, sometimes of one quality, sometimes of various qualities. The *modus operandi* is as follows: A "bunch"—i.e., basis—is first produced by rolling long dry strips of leaf-tobacco (these strips vary in length) in a leaf which is suitably moistened—this is called a "bunch-wrapper"—thus producing a basis of the shape required. Then another moist leaf, generally of finer texture and colour, is employed, which is cut into long strips and used as the outside "wrapper." Considerable experience is required to produce a "bunch" of suitable shape, and a good deal of economy in cutting the wrapper. The most peculiar and certainly the most skilful process in making a cigar is forming the point.

When made, the cigars are sorted according to colour, and then "bundled" or "boxed," then dried in a room fitted up with gas-stove, racks, etc. They are then ready for the market.

The price paid for labour in this trade is determined, both by the unions and trade generally, by three factors—namely, weight, shape, and quality of material. Cigars have to be made by weight, so many to the pound—which, by the way, is a fruitful source of dispute between the employers and the men, and a frequent cause of difficulty for the unions. The most difficult-shaped cigar is that which is known by the brand "Flor de Fuma," which now commands the highest price. The different kinds of tobacco now used in the manufacture of cigars in this country, are known by the following names, which also indicate their quality: Esmeralda, German, Giron, Japan, Java, Seed, Manilla, Sumatra, Mexican, Cuba, Yara, and Havana. There are other kinds of tobacco used besides those mentioned, but they are the principal.

Fifty years ago cigar-makers were considered highly skilled mechanics, and were paid accordingly; the rate of wages at that time was much higher than it is to-day. A cigar-maker often obtained from £2 to £3 per week; in fact, £2 seemed rather the average than a particularly high wage. The average wage to-day is difficult to arrive at; but from all I am able to learn, it would appear that £1 per week probably covers the average among union men. There is one very worthy feature in connection with the men in this trade, which I think deserves to be recorded: that as early as 1835 they were organised in unions.

In this trade as in every other the meanest shifts have been adopted by the employers in order to coerce the men; while on the other hand deeds of great merit have been performed by some of the workers. The

lightness of the cigar industry has ever been a source of danger to the position of the men, and is especially the case to-day. Women and children, in consequence, have been attracted to it, and, thanks to the employers, who have not been slow to take every advantage of the position, the trade is fast slipping from our grasp. The firm of Copes, in Liverpool, were among the first to introduce female and child labour on a large scale, and still employ them in large numbers. As an illustration of the greed and cupidity of the employers, I think it right to mention here what took place in 1857. The employers proposed an immense reduction in the prices of work all round the trade, which was at once refused, and the men struck. The employers sent immediately to Holland for cigar-makers to take the place of the men here. The Hollanders responded, and large numbers of men were landed here at the docks daily. Our men were not to be done in that fashion; so they met the newcomers and in very many cases prevailed on them to leave the country, we bearing the expense of their return. A number of them, however, would not leave, and worked under the reduction, some of whom are now employers themselves. I feel confident that a similar dodge on the part of the masters would not succeed in the slightest degree to-day. We have made various grants to the cigar-makers of Holland since then, and there is every reason to believe that there is a much greater feeling of solidarity between us now than existed some years ago.

Machinery has made no great headway in cigar-making. True, there has been a mould introduced, which has pretty well succeeded; this mould is used to form the "bunch" and give it the shape by pressure, thus rendering it much easier for women and young persons to learn the trade. Of course, it will be at once seen that by this contrivance, although persons might learn to make a cigar with less labour, they would not possess the skill one would have under the old hand-style. There has also been a machine introduced which takes up the work where the mould leaves off, and finishes the cigar. One of these machines was exhibited in the Colonial Exhibition last year, by the firm of Wright's. There are two reasons for the comparative non-introduction of machinery in this branch of the tobacco trade—first, the very element which is the cause of success with machinery in other trades, is the cause of failure in ours.

Uniformity of action, uniformity of pressure, is the secret of success with machinery in other trades; while in the manufacture of cigars the very reverse—variation of action, variation of pressure—is required. The leaf to be rolled, even in itself, is of variable tenacity, and therefore requires to be manipulated with great delicacy, the pressure varying with the unevenness of texture; failing to obtain such conditions the leaf is broken and thus spoilt. Machinery in other trades lessen the cost of production, hence, its efficiency; while in the manufacture of cigars there is a tendency to increase the cost of production, a sufficiently strong reason, under the present system of competition, to prevent any very serious introduction of machinery in an industry of this character. It was found that the machine, which was the new and approved patent, was only of use when the leaf to be used was selected, and, in fact, was highly suitable to it in every respect; while most of the leaf could not be worked by it at all.

The speed of the machine also was by no means satisfactory; sixty cigars an hour being, I understand, the limit of its powers, a speed very often reached by the human hand. The second reason for the failure of machinery in the cigar industry is, that the capitalist soon discovered that he could obtain human machines as cheap, or cheaper, than iron ones. With the mould at his disposal, and women and children to boot, he could engage nimble human fingers, with all the requisite variations of pressure, a quality which, up to the present time, has been found wanting in the iron machine.

The workmen are paid by the hundred. The prices range from 1s. per 100, to 4s. union prices. There are some very fine work sometimes made at from 4s. 6d. to 6s. It will be seen at once that machinery is not needed when it is understood that the employers pay women and children about one-third or less what they would have to pay union men. There have been several attempts to organise the females into unions, but without success.

This trade affords the close observer a full view of the horrors of capitalism. The man who sits enjoying his cigar, scarcely ever knows under what conditions the "fragrant weed" has been produced.

In many factories the silent system reigns supreme. A man is in danger of losing his employment for uttering a word. The factories themselves are mute but eloquent appeals to the factory inspector, but that functionary is rendered proof against their mute eloquence by his eternal absence. The workers make the cigars, but they are scarcely ever allowed to smoke them. There are a few firms who treat their employes once every general holiday to a "smoke," but even then they only give what are of no earthly use to themselves. These cigars are the "off-colours" as they are called.

There are very few cigar-makers who can be called moderately healthy, as the unnecessarily long hours they have to sit in the factory causes them to contract all sorts of diseases. So well known is this morbid tendency amongst cigar-makers, that many benefit society doctors will not accept them as members. A cigar-maker may nearly always be known by his saffron complexion.

H. DAVIS.

(To be concluded).

At the commencement of the capitalistic era of production, workman was pitted against workman, now sex is pitted against sex, and, later on, age against age. Men must make way to women, and women to children. This is the "moral order" of industry.—August Bebel.

THE REWARD OF LABOUR.

A DIALOGUE.

Persons: AN EARNEST ENQUIRER, AN EAST-END WEAVER, A WEST-END LANDOWNER.

Scene: Outside a philanthropical meeting on Social Science.

Earnest Enquirer. Excuse me, gentle—h'm, gentlemen! neither of you seem quite comfortable after the noble sentiments showing the harmony that should exist between the rich and the poor, and the inculcation of altruism, and self-sacrifice on both sides, which we have heard in there. You, sir (*to the Weaver*), whom I take to be a soldier in the noble army of industry, seem discontented; a little sour—sulky even, if I may say so. And you, sir (*to the Landowner*), you also (again a million apologies!) seem sulky: although, probably because of the restraint which the refinement of hereditary culture and habits of command makes easy to you, I can't think why.

Landowner (somewhat languidly). Not at all. I assure you I was much interested. The subject is a very interesting one; I heard much which I did not know before. (*Lapses into thinking of something else.*)

E. E. Were you puzzled?

L. No, I quite agreed with it all.

E. E. All? was it all like that?

Weaver (with a grin). Pretty much.

E. E. Eh! what's that? Would you answer me a question or two, my friend?

W. Well, yes, so long as it's not chaff and you really want information. You began as if you were going to chaff me openly, and him slyly. Now, you know, you said I was sulky, and perhaps I am; anyhow I know I am irritable because of my liver (you'd know why if you was me); and being irritable, I can't stand chaff. So if you do chaff me, since I'm not big enough to hit you, I shall be off.

E. E. Well, thank you. I really didn't mean to chaff you; one must begin somehow, you know. (*To L.*) And you, sir, will you answer me a question or two?

L. Well—yes; though I have a suspicion of what you are driving at. Begin with this good man; I am curious to hear what he has to say; he looks thoughtful and intelligent. (*Aside.*) Might get something out of him; looks like an ultra-Radical—perhaps a Socialist; and we're all expected to be so damned original in the House now.

E. E. (To W.) You heard that gentleman who moved the vote of thanks just now, and who spoke so—well, so elegantly on the compensation which the working classes have for their apparently inferior position; and how necessary it was for the progress of civilisation that there should be this division of labour and life; and what a noble position it was for the workers to hold; and how the slight sacrifices they had to make they ought to make cheerfully and almost as a matter of religion, that new religion of Humanity, considering their position as the foundation of all the culture, thought, light and leading which is the glory of Humanity. What did you think of all that?

W. What's the use of asking me such questions as that? I shall go away at once if you haven't got something more than that to say to me.

L. (to W.) My dear sir, if you would but pay a little more attention to such speeches as that which this gentleman is speaking of, it would be a very good thing for you.

W. Think so? Do you know what he meant by it?

L. Yes, I think I do.

W. (to E. E.) Do you know what he meant by it?

E. E. No, I think I don't.

W. Well, I think I do. Besides, it ain't quite new to me, you see. But that's neither here nor there; don't waste your time by asking me what I think of a vote-of-thanks speech, but ask me something about my work and my earnings, and the sort of way I live in.

E. E. Well, well, I was going to, but allow me a little explanation, I want to find out something about that compensation which our altruistic friend in there did apparently think was due to you for your apparently inferior position; which, indeed, so far as I can see, is abundantly apparent to me. Your clothes are old, worn, and when they were new they were bad; you're not very clean, you don't speak like an educated man (though I perceive in you some of the intelligence which this educated man here spoke about so patronisingly) and worst of all you don't look properly grown or healthy; you are stunted, sallow, and ugly—there, don't bounce out at me! I cannot fail to see that some compensation is due to you, if all this, as I suppose, is the result of your being the foundation of the progress of civilisation, and a bearer of the palm branch of martyrdom for the behoof of the religion of Humanity. No, no, don't go! That vote-of-thanks speech will stick in my memory, as meaningless words often will, when they are spoken according to art. What I want to get at is how you get that compensation above spoken of. So here goes for my definite questions. What is your occupation?

W. I am a silk weaver.

E. E. Is that difficult? Does it take skill to do?

W. Well, you wouldn't ask that if you had seen a weaver at work, taking care that his pattern doesn't work out longer or shorter than it should; mending half-a-dozen of the fine silk threads of the warp, for instance.

E. E. As difficult as a barrister's work, for instance?

W. I'm sure I don't know—it's not so easy as lying, at any rate. But don't get off the subject.

E. E. Is it a useful occupation?

W. It seems so. People will have silk; and why not since they can? It is pretty stuff and clean, and wears well. Didn't you notice that lady at the back of the platform, the young and pretty one, who went to sleep during the lecture, and how nice she looked in her new silk gown. Well, I wove her gown.

E. E. Well, your work is useful and requires skill; let's see on what terms you carry it on. How many hours a day do you work?

W. As many as I can. That's none too many as things go I assure you!

E. E. You mean to say that you are sometimes out of work.

W. Sometimes!!

E. E. And you take all the work you can get? You're not one of those lazy ones of which I have heard a good deal?

W. Now I want to keep my temper, and I really think you don't believe that 'good deal' you have heard.

E. E. Well, no I don't. But tell me, would you work eight hours a day if you could?

W. Eight hours! I shouldn't get a job if I didn't put it through as quick as I could; ten at the very least.

E. E. Well, now as to payment. Suppose you worked ten hours a day all the year round except Sundays, how much would you earn?

W. From 35s. to 40s. a-week.

E. E. Say £90 a-year?

W. No, I won't say £90. Haven't I just told you that I've got to sit and look at my loom many and many a-day? I should think it a good year's work in which I got nine months full employment. I'll say £60 if you like—and don't I wish I may get it, year in and year out!

E. E. Have you got a family?

W. Wife and five children.

E. E. Do they make anything?

W. My wife gets a job now and then weaving plain silk or winding, and one of the lads is a half-timer in a shoe-shop; it don't come to much altogether; £75 a year, since we must put it in the grand style, will cover it all.

E. E. H'm, well (*aside*: Poor devil!) Rent's cheap, I suppose in the East-end, since you are all working-men there?

W. (in sudden wrath) No, it's not, I pay £26 a-year for my house; how much do you pay for yours?

E. E. Well, never mind.

W. Yes, I know; and then the whole of my house together isn't as big as your drawing-room.

E. E. Well what sort of a house is your house?

W. Good enough for me, I suppose; it's a weaver's house.

L. (with sudden interest) Dear me, I should like to see it; it must be quite curious.

W. Should you? Well I shouldn't like you to see it; it isn't fit for a gentleman.

E. E. (to L.) Excuse me, sir, let me have our friend to myself; think about the sort of questions I am likely to be asking you presently. (*To W.*) Well, certainly I haven't come to the compensation which we all think you have a right to claim as a representative of that noble army of labour which we all praise so highly—especially at election time.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

(To be concluded.)

AGRARIAN COMMUNITIES IN ITALY.

In Italy, as in all other countries, one finds everywhere below the surface, so to speak, of the existing social organisation based on individual property and exploitation of labour, the community of the peasants, which is the natural form of the economy of equality. On traversing the south, one comes upon vast private lands, formerly possessed by the barons, and now by their descendants or by wealthy bourgeois, who are also members of Parliament, senators, or mayors—in short, the masters and factotums of the lands; and side by side with these immense stretches of country belonging either to the Government (such as Sila) or to the municipalities, by whom they are leased out to speculators, often to the councillors of the commune itself by the intermediary of their confederates and men of straw. . . . These last lands belong by right to the people, and properly to the poorest peasants, to whom the Acts of 1806, 1807, abolishing feudality, reserved them in compensation for the lost rights of cutting wood, pasturage, etc. . . . But while these rights were lost directly the Acts were passed, the parcelling out of the land to-day in spite of the 80 years that have passed, is still to do, and the poor peasants are obliged, whilst waiting, to work their own lands as common labourers for the profit of my lords the speculators and municipal councillors.

This situation being insupportable, there have occurred in the southern provinces of Italy these frequent revolts of peasants against the municipality and against the large usurping proprietors, which are at once the outcome of the past and forerunners of the future. While this agrarian community forms the historical substratum of the existing proprietary constitution in Italy, there are here and there places where it still exists in the light of day. In the province of Ancona alone, according to an official document (*Atti della Giunta per l'Inchiesta Agraria*, Vol. XI., tome ii., 384), this number reaches 351 spread over 37 communes. The character of these communities or *universities* or *consortia* is identical with that of all agrarian communities. The land is divided into three parts: Wood, pasturage, and arable. . . . In some communities, as that in the Vestignano territory, they even sow the grain in common and divide the produce.—*Le Revolte*.

DEATHS FROM STARVATION IN THE METROPOLIS.—A return issued shows that the number of deaths from starvation or accelerated by privation during 1886 in the metropolitan area was 40. In the eastern division of Middlesex there were 16 deaths; in the central division, 15; and in the western division, 1. In the city and liberty of Westminster, the Greenwich division of Kent, and the city and borough of Southwark, 2 each; in the Newington division of Surrey and the liberty of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1 each.

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.

A meeting of female telegraphists has been held for the purpose of consulting as to how they may improve their position and get their grievances remedied. They want more pay, fewer hours of work, and longer holidays.

The Annual Report of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of the United Kingdom has just been issued, from which it appears that some railway companies have effected reductions of wages during the year, while others have exacted more labour without additional payment.

The Darlston nut and bolt makers have been successful in five prosecutions for violations of the Truck Act. One shopkeeper, who supplied groceries on an employer's order, used also to lend the men money at twopence per shilling per week, or 866 per cent. per annum.

Two thousand members of the body of amalgamated engineers, steam-engine makers, and metal planers are on strike at Bolton for an advance of 2s. per week. The dispute, which has assumed various phases, has extended over a year. A general lock-out appears probable, and 10,000 hands would be thereby affected. The masters are determined to resist the demands.

At a representative meeting of chainmakers at Cradley Heath it was stated that nearly all the leading employers had conceded an advance, but there were still about 2000 operatives out on strike owing to small employers refusing to concede the advance. It was reported that upwards of £100 had been expended in providing relief for starving families, and it was announced nearly £50 had been received from newspaper proprietors at Liverpool. It was resolved to continue the strike.

The whole of the miners employed at the New British Iron Company's Wynnstay Collieries, Ruabon, the most extensive mines in North Wales, struck work on Friday 13th, in consequence of a dispute with the manager. About 500 of the men marched up in a body to the residence of the general manager, and surrounded the house. Police were sent for, a riot being feared. The grievance having been settled, the men returned to work.

At a meeting of all classes of railway servants held at Bathgate last week, Mr. Henry Tait, general sec., referred to the advantages that had been and were to be derived from organisation among railway employes. He advocated a universality of hours of labour, and held that if there were half of the population going idle for want of work while the other half were working nine hours per day, no man should work more than his share, and this would give work for all.

RATTENING IN THE CHAIN TRADE.—During Sunday night the chain factories of Mr. Allen Beasley and Mr. Neale of Cradley were broken into, and 14 pairs of bellows were destroyed. A large number of workmen have been thrown out of employment in consequence. It is alleged that the workmen employed at these factories have been working under the required list of prices. The leaders of chainmakers' associations have publicly condemned the outrages.

AVERAGE DURATION OF LIFE OF THE WORKERS.—Dry grinders of forks, 29 years; razor-grinders, 31; edge-tool grinders, 32; spring-knife and file grinders, 35; saw and sickle-grinders, 38; workers in copper, lithographers, moulders, engravers, watch-makers, 48; "Every grindstone-maker is cut down with consumption at or soon after the age of 24—hardly one escapes"; flint-cutters, glass-polishers, under 30; stone-masons, 36; weavers (hackling, carding, sorting, and dressing), 44; workers in lead (lead-miners, painters, plumbers, compositors, type-founders), 48; carpenters, joiners, cabinet-makers, 49; flour-millers, 47; bread-bakers, 47. Consumption is in all cases the chief cause of death, brought about by irritating dust-particles (which is also, with exhaustion, responsible for intemperance). The following are some percentages of deaths from consumption: Needle-makers, 70 per cent.; file-makers, 62; steel-grinders generally, over 40; lithographers, 48; flint-cutters, glass-polishers, 80; flax-mill workers of Belfast, 60; cigar-makers and tobacco-workers, 36; brush-makers, 49; artificial-flower makers, 36. This is a vastly important subject, with far-reaching consequences, and receives but little attention. Those desiring to pursue it further, and in more detail, should consult "Germs, Dust, and Disease," by Andrew Smart, M.D., F.R.C.P.E., who tells us—as, indeed, we know well—that this great evil is capable, by proper arrangements, of being prevented.—W. B.

"SAVING" LABOUR.—By the prospectus of the "Universal Simplex Type-writer, Limited," we learn that "enormous fortunes have frequently been made out of small inventions. There is, in fact, a fortune to be acquired in the simplest article of utility which meets a universal demand," and evidently the company is on the right track. "For," says the prospectus, "it is estimated that 150,000 'Simplex' Type-writers will be sold in the first twelve months, but even this will show a nett profit sufficient to pay a dividend of 50 per cent. on the capital issued, after paying working expenses." The price of the Simplex is to be 10s. 6d. We are also told that "this wonderful invention will effect as complete a revolution in writing as that effected by the sewing machine in taking the place of hand-work with the needle." Tell it not in Gath! Whose benefit has the sewing-machine been? Not the sempstress; not the workers. There is now, spite of sewing machine, as much slavery as when the "Song of the Shirt" was written, in their lives. And type writers will do as little for copyist and clerk. All the advantage will be appropriated by these people of the "per cent." Per cent. is their god, and in their scheming worship they have not a thought for those whom their "labour-saving" machines have sent to the wall.—P. C. W.

AMERICA.

The Pennsylvania miners have withdrawn their demand for an advance in their wages and have asked for arbitration.

Strikes and lock-outs in the building trade are reported from Chicago. Six thousand men are out of work and still further suspensions of work are expected. There is some talk of trouble as the men are getting desperate.

The stove-moulders of Troy, N.Y., have refused to work on the "scab" patterns of Bridges and Beach, St. Louis, and a shut-down at the stove-foundries is the consequence.

The organised carpenters of Chicago have achieved a great victory. Eight hours and 35 cents per hour are positively established, and all union men are employed.

PITTSBURGH, May 4.—A general strike was begun in the Connellsville coke region to-day, and upward of 1200 ovens have shut down, and 13,000 men are

idle. By the refusal of the strikers to draw the ovens at Connellsville a loss of between 50,000 and 75,000 dollars was suffered by the capitalists.

BELGIUM.

BRUSSELS, May 13.—The *Peuple* to-day announces that a strike has commenced among the miners of the Basin du Centre. Great excitement prevails throughout the affected district and a rapid spread of the movement is apprehended. The journal adds that the voting by the Chamber of the tax on the importation of meat has greatly excited the people.

CHATELET, May 16.—The strike is spreading here, and is assuming alarming symptoms. Troops have left Charleroi for the place. The whole of the Civic Guard in the neighbourhood of Charleroi is on foot.

TILLEUR, May 16.—At a meeting, attended by a large number of workmen, held here to-day, a general strike in the Liège Coal Basin was decided upon for Thursday next.

FRANCE.

MIRAMONT (Hte. Garonne).—The knitters of Miramont are on strike to the number of 310, declaring they cannot accept the last reduction of wages—*i.e.*, down to one franc a-day for the men, and 50 centimes for the women.

RONCHAMP.—The syndicate of miners of Ronchamp have addressed to the mining company a vote demanding fortnightly payment of wages. To which the company has "replied by silence." And yet the claims of the syndicate are most moderate and carefully weighed and considered. "Does the company mean to push the workers to a strike? Does it mean to provoke manifestations which the syndicate will be the first to regret?" say the miners, giving in the *Cri* a sort of ultimatum to the company of Ronchamp.

ANGERS.—The beauties of the system of prison-industry as at present carried out are brought out day by day in some fashion or another. At Angers, for instance, where there is a gaol, in the basket-work industry there is a struggle going on between the "free" labour (so to call it) and the prison work. A certain contractor for the prison work, in spite of the many efforts made by the syndicate of the trade, has succeeded in throwing upon the market goods whose price is lower than that of the free-labour industry by 60 or 70 per cent., thus causing an inevitable standstill in the corporation. After months of warfare, this enterprising contractor revenged himself on the sturdy syndicate that had the folly to resist so long, by assembling the masters of the workshops in the town to talk over their own interests, and to come to the conclusion that their men were too well paid and in danger of getting fat: which conclusion being come to—hey, presto! down go the tariffs.

SAINT-QUENTIN.—At a little village near Saint-Quentin there exist looms for the manufacture of "imitation antique tapestries." About ten years ago the workman could earn 7 and 9 francs a-day at a hand-loom in his own house, whereas now at the same work, with much more toil, because the models are more difficult and the "points" more numerous, working 15 or 16 hours a-day, he earns 90 centimes! This almost incredible change in hand-work is due of course to the enemy, Mechanism, the hand-workers meanwhile dying of hunger. We must add that we think a mechanical loom plenty good enough for the perpetration of imitation-tapestry, the more so as the worthy Parisian bourgeois who buys cannot for the most part detect any difference between the machine-made and the hand-made atrocity, and certainly cannot detect the atrocity itself from the real old work—and if he did! would delight far more in the misplaced skill and ingenuity of the imitation.

AGRICULTURAL NOTES.

Enclosed I send a copy of one of the many hideous advertisement circulars which confront one everywhere. It refers to the latest engine of destruction for that down-trodden being, the agricultural labourer. The self-binding reaper is doing a part, with Enclosure Acts, and landlords, in depopulating rural England. One might be inclined to suppose that persons interested would say as little as possible about it. R. Hornsby and Sons, however, deem it expedient, apparently, to add insult to injury in the exquisitely ugly and highly coloured lithograph headed the "Old Style and New Style." The master-man is represented under "Old Style" as sitting on a fence, with umbrella and cigar, watching thirty labourers getting his harvest. In "New Style" a Hornsby binder and two horses, with master-man as driver, does the work, while the thirty men sit on the fence—without either cigars or umbrellas. How very nice!

But our farmer master-men are having a rough time of it, spite of Hornsby binders that were to "save" labour, and a lot besides. At a meeting of Cambridgeshire farmers on April 23, met to consider the present depression one is reported to have said that 90 per cent. of farmers are unable to pay twenty shillings in the pound. The meeting was almost unanimous in supporting "fair" trade speakers; and protection against the "foreigner" was the main cry. Another speaker said he should propose a poll-tax on foreigners arriving in England, as he felt "sure half the socialistic rubbish which was talked came over with 'foreigners.'" Poor man!

Not a word was spoken about the fleecings industry undergoes in the forms of rent, taxes, tithes, etc. The halo of the law rests about them, and the law is more sacred than religion with English farmers.

The majority of our farmers are most incompetent, and are themselves to blame (speaking from the bourgeois point of view) for a great deal of the fix they're now in. Many of their own labourers know far more of cultural direction and detail.

Probably no industry exists in which the instruments of production are so entirely in the workers' hands, and none could be more easily worked for the community's benefit. The men have many shrewd heads among them, and when they are more united will make their power felt. The great lacking is the want of solidarity, which must exist to a greater extent, though, in such a scattered life, than in our large towns.

Nothing has helped to make the labourer feel his dependency on the "master" so much as the enclosures that have been carried on within the last fifty years; and some of the older men remember with a shake of the head how it was all managed by landlord and money-bag for their own benefit. A history of enclosures has yet to be written, and a dismal record it will be.

Royston, Cambs.

P. C. WALKDEN.

Government in this country is not a union of the people to protect themselves, but an aristocratic contrivance to make the poor men keep the rich; to compel industry to maintain idleness; to make rich men richer, and poor men poorer.—'Black Book' of the Chartist.

THE COMING OF DEMOCRACY.

[Astronomers say that the "Star of Bethlehem" will be visible this year.—*Vide Press.*]

SPAKE the wise men of the nations, keeping watch at midnight stations,
"Lo! the hour is now at hand when, rising in the heavens afar,
Should the messenger be sighted, in a robe of glory lighted,
Bringing tidings of New Birth and shining out a beacon star.

"O! the days have travelled slowly and the nights were dark unholy,
But the Christ to men was promised, yea, his coming is foretold,
All too long the poor ill-fated in their weariness have waited,
And the hour is now upon us written by the seers of old.

"With the day-star onward guiding, we must seek his place of hiding,
Where the blasts of winter enter, whistling through the shaky door;
In abodes of want and sorrow we shall find him on the morrow,
And the star shall shed its halo o'er the hovels of the poor.

"His abiding place a stable! Ere his little limbs are able,
We shall find him in the mines and workshops labouring hard and long;
Cares and spurns and burdens bearing, in the woes of others sharing,
Ever battling for the weak against the haughty and the strong.

"Spite of sneers and high disdain we shall find him growing, gaining
Strength and wisdom, knowledge; gathering, garnering Truth's beloved
store;
Ripening unto godlike kindness, kindling eyes gone out in blindness,
Breathing words of love to those that knew but bitter thoughts before.

"But he comes no more a dreamer! He shall smite the foul blasphemer;
Scribe and high-priest who have mocked him and have bartered him for
gold.

Yea, he comes his house to straighten, warring with the wiles of satan,
And the hell-wolves long since loosened on the shepherd's slumbering fold.

"Even now the star appeareth, lo! the hour of triumph nearth,
Christ-Democracy ariseth, big the world is with New Birth;
Blessed now ye poor ill-fated! who have waited—wept and waited—
For the dawn of happier days is breaking o'er your nights of death."

T. MAGUIRE.

SOCIALISM IN SCOTLAND.

ON Thursday, May 5, the Scottish Miners' Federation inaugurated a movement for restricting the working-time to eight hours per day and five days per week. Meetings were organised all over the mining districts, and the men instructed to come out on the 5th and make that the first holiday. Unfortunately, the Fifeshire miners hung back. They made a deal of delay and bother about giving in their notices, and finally put off for a fortnight. They have since then resolved to stand aside from the movement. More than half the collieries refused to come out when it was known how Fife had acted. The meetings were held, however, and great numbers of miners came together. I spoke at the Kirkintilloch demonstration in support of a resolution for the abolition of royalties, but was of course careful to point out the uselessness of striking at any special evils. The men seemed well inclined towards Socialism. The Rev. John Glasse spoke at Dalkeith, and was splendidly received by the miners. A bad impression was made, however, at the beginning of this meeting by a crankish imitator, in a feeble way, of Thoreau. This person gave a hour's dreary recital of some commonplace incidents in his career, while he carefully avoided anything which might be construed into a reference to the object of the meeting, and also inflicted some villainous original poetry on his hearers. However, Mr. Glasse happily did away with the bad impression made by the aforementioned gentleman. On the same night Glasier and I went to Glasgow and got an exceedingly good meeting in the open-air. The miners, however, are greatly depressed by their late defeat, and seem quite spiritless.

Next day several open-air meetings and a good indoor one were held at Paisley, where preparations for carrying on a regular propaganda and forming a branch of the League were carried out.

On Saturday, the Edinburgh members prepared a meeting at Loanhead in Midlothian. I tried hard to make a speech, but the surroundings would have discouraged the most adroit orator. Within two yards on my right was the Salvation Army, consisting of a dozen queer females of forbidding aspect and terrible vocal powers; a friendly bystander firmly interjected his shrill "hear, hear," at the wrong points; half-a-dozen policemen executed some mysterious manoeuvres in the rear of the crowd; and to add to all this a band of Scotch bag-pipers relentlessly chimed in. Now I am not afraid of ordinary interruptions. I despise a thunderstorm, and have even prevailed against the Salvation Army big drum; but the Highland bag-pipes with their mingled drone and screech and chirrup are enough to discourage a fog-horn. Presently the man in charge of the police came up officially and spake thus: "Now then, you must not block up the road with your Socialistic ideas!" This speech was well meant, but the crowd grinned and after some good-natured chaff the officer withdrew with considerable loss of dignity. In spite of these drawbacks the crowd was interested in Socialism, and a fairly large amount of literature was sold.

On Sunday at Glasgow Green, I gave an account of the miner's strike in Northumberland, and the same night I spoke to a very large audience in the meadows at Edinburgh. On Monday and Tuesday meetings were held at Dalkeith, and arrangements made for starting a branch and carrying on a regular series of meetings with the help of the Edinburgh branch. On all sides the Socialist movement in Scotland is progressing wonderfully well. The Edinburgh and Glasgow branches are very active, and becoming quite a power in their own districts. A good deal of work is done outside these two towns; this will be very much enlarged, and several new branches will soon be in good working order.

J. L. MAHON.

Peace, well-being, and order for all are the real aims of Socialism. To obtain these the one thing necessary is the combination of the workers; they, who create all wealth, must learn to understand that Socialism means the change from fighting each with each for life like beasts, to working together for life like men. They must get to know each other, and agree together that this change *must* be made, and then it *will* be made.

SOCIALISM IN NORWICH—RELEASE OF OUR COMRADE HENDERSON.

ON Sunday morning a meeting was held at Trowse, addressed by comrades Crotch and Morley; in the afternoon a large meeting was held in the market-place, chair taken by comrade Darley; comrade Crotch spoke at some length; 4s. 8d. collected for the defence. In the evening Parker gave an address on the Northumberland miners' strike, giving a full explanation of the present desperate struggle of these poor fellows, and urging for help. Comrades Slaughter and Crotch also spoke. On Monday morning comrade Fred Henderson was released, after four months' imprisonment. He was released an hour before the usual time; a few comrades were waiting. Henderson waited till the usual time of releasing prisoners, when a large crowd assembled, cheering lustily for Henderson and the Cause. The crowd then followed him from the prison gates to the market-place; there he spoke a few words, telling the people that he was not reclaimed, but intended carrying on the work with more vigour than he had ever done before. He then proceeded to the Gordon Café, and had breakfast with a few friends. In the evening a large "Welcome" Tea was held in the Gordon Hall, the demand for tickets being far greater than could be supplied. After tea, a public social meeting was held, a band being in attendance; songs and recitations were given by comrades and friends. Fuller report next week. Fred Henderson will address Welcome meetings here on Sunday. A. S.

The North of England Socialist Federation

is steadily increasing in membership. It is not expected that much can be done until after the strike is over. Meantime, however, a committee of miners is engaged in drawing up rules and formulating plans for carrying on the propaganda and extending the organisation. There are now twelve branches with over twelve hundred members, and this strength will be easily increased by one-half when the pits open again. Comrade Donald has now returned from his visit to Northumberland after addressing upwards of thirty meetings in three weeks. Mahon is back from Scotland and is at work again in Northumberland carrying on the propaganda.

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

OFFICES: 13 FARRINGTON ROAD, E.C.

Annual Conference.—The Third Annual Conference of the Socialist League will be held at 13 Farringdon Road on Whitsunday, May 29th. A cold luncheon and a tea will be provided for delegates and others (luncheon, 1s.; tea, 6d.). All who intend to take advantage of the arrangement are requested to send in their names to the Catering Committee at 13 Farringdon Road.

Branch Secretaries and the Agenda.—The Agenda forwarded to Branches must be returned without delay to the General Secretary.

Commonweal Selling Brigade.—Volunteers wanted for Saturday May 21, to attend Anti-Coercion Demonstration in Victoria Park. Secretary will be glad to receive the names of those willing to undertake this work.

Co-operative Store.—The Committee attend at the offices at 8.30 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. See advertisement on last page.

Lessons in French.—On Tuesday evening at 8 o'clock. The lessons are free to members.

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.

BRANCH SUBSCRIPTIONS PAID.

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

THE NORWICH PRISONERS' AID FUND.

F. Sturt, 5s. Arthur, 6d. Webb, 1s. For Mrs. Mowbray—A few Fabians, per Annie Besant (weekly), 10s.—Total, 16s. 6d. J. LANE, Treasurer.

STRIKE COMMITTEE.

P. W., 1s. T. BINNING, Treasurer.

"COMMONWEAL" PRINTING FUND.

T. B. (weekly), 6d. W. B. (weekly), 6d. PH. W., Treasurer, May 17.

Northumberland Miners—

Collected in Regent's Park, Sunday May 15, per Cantwell, 17s. Four Shop-mates (per T. Binning), 2s.

The sum of £3, 17s. 0½d. has been paid to the miners' strike fund by J. L. Mahon. The sum was collected during his lecturing tour in Scotland. The items are as follows: Edinburgh—May 2nd, East Meadows, 11s. 6½d., 3rd, Tron Hall, 2s. 8d.; 4th, Leith Links, 12s.; 1st and 5th, Hamilton, 4s. 2d.; 8th, Glasgow Green, 6s. 8d.; 9th, R. M., Edin., £2.

BRANCH REPORTS.

BLOOMSBURY.—A business meeting was held on Thursday, May 12, and arrangements were made for comrade Aveling's lecture on the 19th.—U.

CLERKENWELL.—On Wednesday, May 11, Stewart Headlam addressed a good audience on "The Sins that Cause Poverty." On Sunday, May 15, G. Bernard Shaw lectured to large and attentive audience on "The Rent of Ability." Lively discussion followed. It was unanimously carried that "hearty greetings" be sent to Henderson on his release from prison.—W. B. and T. E. W.

HACKNEY.—H. A. Barker delivered an instructive and interesting lecture on "Socialism the Necessary Outcome of the Present System;" good discussion.

HOXTON.—Very successful outdoor meetings morning and evening. Some opposition from a teetotaler, which was answered to the satisfaction of those standing round. In the evening, W. H. Campbell delivered a splendid lecture on "Justice before Charity," which was well received by the audience.—E. P.

NORTH LONDON AND MARYLEBONE.—On Sunday morning, at Regents' Park, a good meeting was addressed by Sparling on "Thieves, Large and Small." The audience showed their sympathy by donating 17s. for the Miners' Strike Fund. At Hyde Park in the afternoon, a large audience was addressed by Brookes and Davis. A number of questions were asked, evincing the interest of the hearers. These being disposed of, Nicoll followed and closed a successful meeting. Very good sale of literature. Members will be notified of next branch meeting in next issue.—H. B.

EDINBURGH.—On Sunday afternoon, in Queen's Park, Smith, Tuke, and Gilray spoke to a good audience, who seemed by their attention to be much interested. No opposition was offered. Good sale of literature.—J. G.

GLASGOW.—On Sunday, at two o'clock, Glasier addressed a good meeting at the Green. At five o'clock, Curran and Glasier spoke to a large audience on George's Square. In the evening in our rooms, Arch. McLaren gave an address on "How to Work for the Revolution." McLaren pointed out the numerous methods of propaganda which we can adopt without compromising our principles, and which will lead us directly and speedily to Socialism, and deprecated "parliamentary action" as being likely to obscure our aims and fritter away our efforts. Macfarlane led off on the parliamentary side, and contended strongly in favour of using parliamentary and every other means that would enlist the sympathy of the people on our side. Quite an animated discussion followed. Fisher, McLaren, Gilbert, and Glasier supported McLaren's view, and Warrington and Shaw Maxwell speaking in support of the views of Macfarlane.

HAMILTON.—On Thursday, Arch. McLaren and Bruce Glasier, of Glasgow, addressed a meeting in Paton's Hall.

PAISLEY.—Comrades Curran and Glasier, of Glasgow, addressed a large and very attentive meeting on the Causeyside. Several additional games were given in as members of the new branch.

SHIELDS (NORTH AND SOUTH).—This branch held three meetings last Sunday, Donald, Mahon, Hearne, and Stevens being the speakers. In the morning a large gathering at the Quay Side listened to animated speeches from the above. Considerable opposition was given by some local Liberals, but was fully answered by Mahon and Donald. One Radical was anxious to know what the Socialists would do if a Liberal or Tory candidate were before the constituency, to which Mahon replied that the workers should go to the ballot box and write on the papers, "Damn 'em both." In the afternoon, a meeting was held on the sands at South Shields, where Donald delivered a trenchant speech to a large crowd. At 6.30, a tremendous audience assembled in the Market Place at South Shields. This branch has been holding large meetings for the last six weeks, and is now considerably enlarged in membership.—J. H.

WALSALL.—On Saturday evening we held a meeting in the Market Place, addressed by H. Sanders, and a good impression was made upon the audience. Fair sale of literature.—J. T. D.

SOCIALIST UNION (NOTTINGHAM SECTION).—We have secured a neatly furnished room for our club over Bailey's tobacco shop, near the Mechanic's Hall, Milton Street, one of the best streets in the town, and shall now be able to collect our members together, increase our numbers, and do some sound work. On Sunday morning, Peacock and Proctor lectured in Sention Market to a good audience; collection for local propaganda, 3s. 2d. In the evening we had a splendid and enthusiastic mass meeting. The Temperance Crusade Band, which had volunteered its services, played a selection after a few remarks from comrade Knight, who took the chair. Comrade Peacock then delivered a spirited address on the "Labor Struggle," chiefly referring to the struggle of the miners in Northumberland, and pointing out to the audience that the only way to finally solve the struggle will be to make the mines, railways, etc., the property of the people. A collection was then made on behalf of the Northumberland miners on strike while the band played another selection. Wane and Proctor also spoke. The collection amounted to 17s. Several names were taken to join our movement. *Commonweal* have all been sold out, and we have now doubled our order.—T. P.

LECTURE DIARY.
LONDON.

- Bloomsbury.**—Communist Club, 49 Tottenham Street. On Thursday May 19, at 8.30. Dr. E. Aveling, "Radicalism and Socialism."
- Clerkenwell.**—Hall of the Socialist League, 13 Farringdon Road, E.C. Sunday May 22, at 8.30 p.m. T. E. Wardle, "Jubilee Coercion Bill." Wednesday 25, at 8.30. Wm. Morris, "True and False Society." No lecture on Sunday May 29, the Conference being held on that date.
- Croydon.**—Royal County House, West Croydon Station Yard. Sunday May 22, at 7.15 p.m. A Lecture.
- Hackney.**—23 Audrey Street, Goldsmith Row. Club Room open every evening from 8 till 11.30. Business Meeting every Tuesday at 8.30. Sunday May 22, at 8 p.m. S. Mainwaring, "Liberty."
- Hammersmith.**—Kelmescott House, Upper Mall, W. Sunday May 22, at 8 p.m. Fred. Verinder, "The Queen's Jubilee and the People's Jubilee."

Hoxton (L. E. L.).—2 Crondall Street, New North Rd. Club Room open on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday evenings from 8 till 11. Singing Class every Wednesday at 8.30. Committee Meeting on Friday May 20, at 8.30 p.m.: important business. Sunday 22, at 8 p.m. H. H. Sparling will lecture on "Subsistence Wages." Literary Class, Friday 27, at 9—Joyne's Catechism.

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.

North London.—Communications to H. Bartlett, sec., 13 Farringdon Road, E.C.

PROVINCES.

- 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.
- Dublin.**—Irish Labour League, 2 Bachelors Walk, every Thursday at 8 p.m. Discussion on all subjects connected with the Labour Question. Saturday May 21, at 4 p.m., at Custom House Steps, Beresford Place, a Mass Meeting will be held, under the auspices of the Labour League. Two Socialist speakers will address the meeting.

Edinburgh (Scottish Section).—4 Park Street. Meets every Thursday at 7.30 p.m. to transact business. Class for the study of 'Das Capital' at 8.30.

Glasgow.—Reading-room of the Branch, 84 John St., open from 10 a.m. till 10 p.m. daily. On Sunday evening at 7, in our Rooms, a discussion will take place on "Local and municipal action as a means of propaganda." Arch. M'Kechnie will introduce the subject. Tuesday, at 8, Business Meeting to discuss new scheme of organising work of the Branch. Wednesday, at 8, Choir Practice. See Open-air.

Hamilton.—Paton's Hall, Chapel Street. On Thursday at 8 o'clock the Branch will hold an open-air meeting at Burnbank.

Hull.—Address all communications to E. Teesdale, 20 Shakers Street.

Leeds.—Sunday: Hunslet Moor, 11; Vicar's Croft, 7.

Lancaster.—Addresses every Sunday morning on the Quay Jetty.

Leicester.—Office of Hosiery Union, Horsefair Street. Fridays at 8 p.m.

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.

Norwich.—Gordon Hall, 5 Duke Street. Free Lectures every Sunday and Monday at 8 p.m. Reading-room open every evening. Open-air meetings see below.

Oxford.—Temperance Hall, 25½ Pembroke Street. Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.

Paisley.—On Friday at 7.30, open-air meeting at the Causewayside.

Shields (North and South).—Meeting on Sunday mornings at 10.30, Quay-side. Communications to be sent to the Secretary, J. Hearne, 32 Clive Street, No. Shields. Sunday: Debate between Wallace (Socialist League) and Mr. Leslie Johnson.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

LONDON—Sunday 22.

- 11.30. Hackney—Salmon and BallThe Branch
 - 11.30. Hammersmith—Beadon Rd.The Branch
 - 11.30. Hoxton Church, Pitfield St.Wade & Pope
 - 11.30. Garrett—Plough InnKitz
 - 11.30. Mitcham Fair GreenDalchow
 - 11.30. Regent's ParkBrookes & Wardle
 - 11.30. St. Pancras ArchesBartlett & Dalziel
 - 11.30. Waltham GreenThe Branch
 - 3 ...Hyde ParkDavis, Mainwaring, Nicoll
 - 7 ...Clerkenwell GreenWardle & Blundell
- Wednesday.*
- 7.30...Broadway, London FieldsPaylor
- Thursday.*
- 8 ...Hoxton, Pitfield StreetThe Branch

PROVINCES.

- Edinburgh.**—Sunday: Queen's Park, afternoon at 3.
- Glasgow.**—Sunday: The Green, at 1 o'clock; George's Square, at 5 o'clock.
- Hamilton.**—Thursday: at Burnbank, at 8.
- Norwich.**—Sunday: Ber Street Fountain at 10.45; Market Place at 3; Agricultural Hall Plain at 7. Eaton, at 11.
- Paisley.**—Friday: Causewayside, at 7.30.

A Free Concert and Ball will be held at the Hackney Branch on Saturday 28th, at 8.30.

ANTI-COERCION DEMONSTRATION, VICTORIA PARK.—The Socialist League contingent will leave Clerkenwell Green on Saturday afternoon at 3 o'clock with London Patriotic Club.

NOTICE.—The Holborn Division of Finsbury intend celebrating the Queen's birthday, May 24, by a mass meeting on Mount Pleasant, at 7.30 p.m., to protest against the Jubilee Coercion Bill. The meeting will be addressed from two platforms. The Rev. Stewart

Headlam and Mr. Walter Blott are the chairmen. All lovers of liberty are invited to attend.—T. E. W.

CENTRAL FINSBURY REFORM ASSOCIATION. "Three Kings." Clerkenwell Close.—Sunday May 22, at 8.30. Wm. Blundell, "Landlordism from a Socialist Standpoint."

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13 FARRINGTON ROAD, E.C.

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