

# THE COMMONWEAL

The Official Journal of the Socialist League.

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

## NOTES ON PASSING EVENTS.

MR. JOHN BRIGHT fairly tires out one's attempts to understand how a once vigorous and combative man can fall so far behind the times he lives in, and his friends ought to put pen, ink, and paper out of his way. It is absurd enough that he should use Milton as a stalking-horse for his attack on the classic poets, since Milton had not the least sympathy for anything that was not classical; but except as showing Mr. Bright's inaccessibility to facts, and the narrow and conventional turn of his mind, that is of no great importance, since it is only a question of a slight alteration in the education dealt out to the middle-classes at modern Oxford; and whatever alteration is made in that education, it can for the present be nothing more than a cramming of middle-class persons to fit them for their competition for places in the hanger-on group of the well-to-do; a commercial education in the full sense of the word.

But his letter on depressed trade and high wages! Trades' unionism and Protection are still the enemies to him; and a fall in wages is the hope which he holds out to the British workman as a remedy for depression of trade! Nor does he seem to have considered how far the fall of wages is to go, nor how much the "concessions" of the Nottingham workmen may influence the livelihood of their brethren elsewhere; he can see nothing but a group of manufacturers competing against the world and "employing" labour as long as it is convenient for them to do so, and no remedy for the workmen, but always making it convenient for the manufacturers, at the cost of any amount of suffering to themselves—the Quaker's peace!

Mr. Bright is not likely to read these lines, nor would he heed them if he did; but for the benefit of any one of our readers who may have some lingering confidence, not in Mr. Bright, but in the middle-class democracy of which he was once a demi-god, one may say this, that when the British trades' unions understand the necessity of trades' unionism being international, they will find some better remedy for depression of trade than that the wealth-producers should quietly starve for the benefit of non-producers.

W. M. //

Lady John Manners has been discoursing on the benefits derivable from hard work. Well, Socialists are in agreement with her ladyship, if she accept the proviso that the work be for the worker's own benefit and not for the profit of an exploiter. It is worth consideration, in passing, that members of the class which owns and controls all things, when preaching the gospel of toil to a proletarian audience, forget that it is they themselves as a class that keep a large number of their hearers from carrying out their precepts.

To "give employment" is a function supposed to be fulfilled by capitalists and "upper" folk generally. Should it not be counted to them rather that they give *un*-employment? For, were all hands set to fill all mouths and cover all backs, and having done this to rest and amuse themselves, where would room be for lack of labour or of leisure, and where would the modern bogie, over-production, come in?

What hinders the doing it but class-control of all the material resources of the community, and the compulsion of the workers to labour for an employer and cease when he is satisfied?

The loads of rubbish that are being thrown upon the market just now by enterprising providers of Christmas cards, and books, and gifts, and so on, are apt illustrations of the waste of labour, want of taste, and contentedness with machine-work of the worst kind, that are induced by commercialism.

At the same time the reckless disregard of effective demand, the unscrupulous competition in price and size and "novelty," never in real merit, and the ever increasing exploitation of the labour employed, are equally as marked as the artistic degradation; and naturally so, for they cause it.

Now that the Government, in prosecuting Mr. Dillon, proclaiming meetings, etc., has proven how definitely it sides with the landlords in the Irish rent-war, it is well to note the successive stages through which the affair has recently passed, and how in this as in all revolutionary movements the fears and prejudices of the possessing class fight on the side of the advance.

When Mr. Gladstone's bill for buying out the landlords was before the nation, a most hideous outcry was raised by all the crowd of exploiters and their parasites. Nothing was too bad to be said of the man who unconsciously worked as the landlords' friend and sought to provide "a bridge of silver for a flying enemy." The landlords would not be "robbed" by having their power to plunder exchanged for a set sum of hard cash.

Again came forth a friend to aid them, did they but know it, in the person of Mr. Parnell, who did at least attempt to give them a fixed rent, to be settled by appeal to regularly constituted "legal authority." Once more did the insensate crew refuse a compromise favourable indeed compared to any they would now be accorded.

Terror-stricken before the looming form of the Social Revolution, the Reaction can but think of renewed and extended oppression, and will not awake to its error till it is too late for retreat. Thus does even the Reaction itself help toward narrowing and accentuating the issue, and helping to defeat well-meant but futile efforts at compromise, force on the folk to simple unflinching expropriation.

The Nationalists are going the right way to work with the law-and-order ruffians. Instead of treating the police seriously, they seek in all ways to make them ridiculous. At the Sligo meetings the speakers and people played at hide-and-seek with the authorities, appearing and disappearing, and making the constabulary chase them vainly over hill and dale. The "proclaimed" meeting reappeared as several, at which jury-packing was vehemently denounced, despite the Government. A strong blow has been struck in this way. As *United Ireland* says: "A government may survive being defied; a government that is both defied and derided is done for."

H. HALLIDAY SPARLING.

## SOCIALISM IN BRADFORD.

SOCIALISM is progressing very slowly here. How is this? Are the people not intelligent enough? One would not think so, since they have a free library with branches in each district, though I learned that the books most desired are novels, and a bookseller the other day told me in confidence that publications of any depth of thought do not take, but there was a good sale of 'Something to Read,' and similar trash. A bad sign this. But, after all, it would be rather unfair to judge the intelligence of a whole working population by the tests of a comparatively few. And it is not the hard-working man or woman that hunts our libraries for lying novels and sea-adventure stories. This idle "recreation of the mind" is left to more or less idle people or half-grown lads and lasses of the so-called middle-class. When a man has toiled thirteen hours at "night-turn" without even half-an-hour's rest for a meal, he has little desire for reading, not to speak of studying; his worn-out body demands rest, and his "recreation" consists in a pint of beer and a pipe of tobacco. The married woman that goes to the mill, and has to leave her little one with an old neighbour who nurses it for a few pence, will find plenty of work at home after her day's toil, but she will find no time for books of any description.

The indifference towards anything outside their daily toil is greatest here amongst this class of workers; if they have any opinion at all upon matters political and social it is derived from the local press, which manufactures and sells "public opinion" to anybody who cares for it. Those people are not within our reach yet. To preach and spread our principles we must go to those that already show a keener interest in public matters, however narrow their views upon social questions, however near-sighted their actions may be. Here we find our opponents, here our sympathisers, but at present more of the former than of the latter, which has its cause in mere technical matters.

Our success would be far greater were it not for the scarcity of means at our disposal to push our propaganda amongst the more intelligent portion of the workers here. There is a lack of speakers, men that are not only able enough but also sufficiently independent to appear in public on our behalf. The fear of loss of employment keeps many an intelligent fellow from joining our ranks or advocating our principles publicly. With selling your labour-power you sell silently in most cases your opinion, *i.e.*, the unbarred right of expressing your independent opinions, on social questions especially. Where your em-

ployer would not offer any objections to your being a teetotaler, vegetarian, chapel-goer, belonging to the Salvation Army, or wearing a tiny blue ribbon in your button-hole, he would most likely strongly object to employ a "dynamiter" in his shop.

In speaking of the spread of Socialism we can, of course, only judge by the increase of our numbers, which is, I am sorry to state, not very rapid. Still we are not disheartened at this, as we feel sure that the principles we try our best to spread, take up roots amongst the workers, and must continue to do so in spite of opposition, and whether our actual members increase rapidly or not. Perseverance should be the great watchword, the device of our comrades, without it there is no success, without it no victory.

In speaking of our propaganda during the winter months, it is my duty to report, as the first effort of this season, the lecture which was delivered by Mrs. Annie Besant on behalf of our Branch. This lady had kindly consented to lecture for the Branch on the occasion of her present visit to Bradford, where she lectured on Sunday, Nov. 21st, under the auspices of the Bradford Branch of the Secular Society. We had made arrangements for the lecture to be delivered on Saturday evening, Nov. 20th, at the Co-operative Hall, Shipley. Mrs. Besant had chosen for a subject: "Why Workers should be Socialists." There were about 250 persons present. Our comrade Gaskell occupied the chair. Mrs. Besant delivered her lecture with that clearness of expression which could not fail to bring home to the most simple-minded listener the truth, fullness, and justness of the Socialist's principles. I need not go into details over the lecture, as I have already occupied too much space of the *Commonweal*; besides, I believe the lecturer's ideas to be well known among our readers, and, therefore, do not require repetition here. The discussion which followed was lively, and the prompt answers were well taken up. I think we have gained ground in this particular district, bearing in mind the peculiar nature of its Radical population.

In conclusion, let me mention Mrs. Besant's Sunday evening lecture in Bradford on "Radicals and Socialists," which was both an attempt at pointing out the Socialist tendency of Radical legislation and an appeal to earnest Radicals to work hand in hand with Socialists. The very numerous audience showed much appreciation and a good understanding of what the lecturer said. It is to be hoped that both her lectures, at Shipley and Bradford, will have stimulated at least some of our intelligent workers to think and study for themselves in the direction pointed out to them. However much we may differ in minor points, as to tactics or organisation of the future free Society, one point is important above all—the *Education of the Masses*. True liberty, true equality, and true justice will never be firmly established by an ignorant and superstitious people; but, free from those curses of mankind, the workers will be able to lay the foundation of a better and a happier life for themselves and future generations. Let us try, therefore, to double our efforts to spread the light amongst the miserable and down-trodden fellow-slaves of to-day. We may not see immediate success, but success there will and must be nevertheless. We have a mighty help-mate, *Necessity*, which will force at last people to accept what otherwise they would refuse.

C. HENZE.

## A DREAM OF JOHN BALL.

(Continued from p. 283.)

Our men had got into their places leisurely and coolly enough, and with no lack of jesting and laughter. As we went along the hedge by the road, the leaders tore off leafy twigs from the low oak bushes therein, and set them for a rallying sign in their hats and head-pieces, and two or three of them had horns.

Will Green, when he got into his place, which was some fifty yards from where Jack Straw and the billmen were in the corner of the two hedges, looked to right and left of him a moment, then turned to the man on the left and said:

"Look you, mate, when you hear our horns blow ask no more questions, but shoot straight and strong at whatso cometh towards us, till ye hear more tidings from Jack Straw or from me. Pass that word onward."

Then he looked at me, and said:

"Now lad from Essex, thou hadst best sit down out of the way at once: forsooth I wot not why I brought thee hither. Wilt thou not back to the cross, for thou art little of a fighting-man?"

"Nay," said I, "I would see the play. What shall come of it?"

"Little," said he; "we shall slay a horse or twain maybe. I will tell thee, since thou hast not seen a fight belike, as I have seen some, that these men-at-arms cannot run fast either to the play or from it, if they be a-foot; and if they come on a horseback, what shall hinder me to put a shaft into the poor beast? But down with thee on the daisies; for some shot there will be first."

As he spoke he was pulling off his belts and other gear, and his coat, which done, he laid his quiver on the ground, girt him again, and hung his axe and buckler to his girdle, and hung up his other attire on the nearest tree behind us. Then he opened his quiver and took out of it some dozen of arrows, which he stuck in the ground beside him ready to his hand. Most of the bowmen within sight were doing the like.

As I glanced toward the houses I saw three or four bright figures moving through the orchards, and presently saw that they were women, all clad more or less like the girl in the Rose, except that two of them wore white coifs on their heads. Their errand there was clear, for each carried a bundle of arrows under her arm.

One of them came straight up to Will Green, and I could see at once that she was his daughter. She was tall and strongly made, with black hair like her father, somewhat comely though no great beauty; but as they met her eyes smiled even more than her mouth, and made her face look very sweet and kind, and the smile was answered back in a way so quaintly alike by her father's face, that I too smiled for goodwill and pleasure.

"Well, well, lass," said he, "dost thou think that here is Crecy field toward; that ye bring all this artillery? Turn back, my girl, and set the pot on the fire; for that shall we need when we come home, I and this ballad-maker here."

"Nay," she said, nodding kindly at me, "if this is to be no Crecy, then may I stop to see, as well as the ballad-maker, since he hath neither sword nor staff."

"Sweetling," he said, "get thou home in haste. This play is but little, yet mightst thou be hurt in it; and trust me the time may come, sweetheart, when even thou and such as thou shall hold a sword or a staff. Ere the moon throws a shadow we shall be back."

She turned away lingering, not without tears on her face, laid the sheaf of arrows at the foot of the tree, and hastened off through the orchard. I was going to say something, when Will Green held up his hand as who would bid us hearken. The noise of the horse hoofs, after growing nearer and nearer, had ceased suddenly, and a confused murmur of voices had taken the place of it.

"Get thee behind me, and take cover, old lad," said Will Green, "the dance will soon begin, and ye shall hear the music presently."

Sure enough as I turned from the hedge close to which I had been standing, I heard the harsh twang of the bowstrings, one, two, three, almost together, from the road, and even the whew of the shafts, though that was drowned in a moment by a confused but loud and threatening shout from the other side, and again the bowstrings twanged, and this time a far-off clash of arms followed, and therewithal that cry of a strong man that comes without his will, and is so different from his wonted voice, that one has a guess thereby of the change that death is. Then for a while was almost silence; nor did our horns blow up, though some half-dozen of the bill-men had leapt into the road when the bows first shot. But presently came a great blare of trumpets and horns from the other side, and therewith as it were a river of steel and bright coats poured into the field before us, and still their horns blew as they spread out toward the left of our line; the cattle in the pasture field, heretofore feeding quietly, seemed frightened silly by the sudden noise, and ran about tail in air and lowing loudly; the old bull with his head a little lowered, and his stubborn legs planted firmly, growling threateningly; while the geese about the brook waddled away gobbling and squeaking, all which seemed so strange to us along with the threat of sudden death that rang out from the bright array over against us, that we laughed outright, the most of us, and Will Green put down his head in mockery of the bull and grunted like him, whereat we laughed yet more. He turned round to me as he nocked his arrow, and said:

"I would they were just fifty paces nigher, and they move not. Ho! Jack Straw, shall we shoot?"

For the latter-named was nigh us now; he shook his head and said nothing as he stood looking at the enemy's line.

"Fear not but they are the right folk, Jack," quoth Will Green.

"Yea, yea," said he, "but abide awhile; they could make nought of the highway, and two of their sergeants had a message from the grey goose feather. Abide, for they have not crossed the road to our right hand, and belike have not seen our fellows on the other side, who are now for a bushment to them."

I looked hard at the man. He was a tall, wiry, and broad shouldered fellow, clad in a handsome armour of bright steel that certainly had not been made for a yeoman, but over it he had a common linen smock-frock or gabardine, like our field workmen wear now or used to wear, and in his helmet he carried instead of a feather a wisp of wheat straw. He bore a heavy axe in his hand besides the sword he was girt with, and round his neck hung a great horn for blowing. I should say that I knew that there were at least three "Jack Straws" among the fellowship of the discontented, one of whom was over in Essex.

As we waited there, every bowman with his shaft nocked on the string, there was a movement in the line opposite, and presently came from it a little knot of three men, the middle one on horseback, the other two armed with long-handled glaives; all three well muffled up in armour. As they came nearer I could see that the horseman had a tabard over his armour, gaily embroidered with a green tree on a gold ground, and in his hand a trumpet.

"They are come to summon us. Wilt thou that he speak, Jack?" said Will Green.

"Nay," said the other; "yet shall he have warning first. Shoot when my horn blows!"

And therewith he came up to the hedge, climbed over slowly because of his armour, and stood some dozen yards out in the field. The man on horseback put his trumpet to his mouth and blew a long blast, and then took a scroll into his hand and made as if he were going to read; but Jack Straw lifted up his voice and cried out:

"Do it not, or thou art but dead! We will have no accursed lawyers and their sheep-skins here! Go back to those that sent thee——"

But the man broke in in a loud harsh voice:

"Ho! YE PEOPLE! what will ye gathering in arms?"

Then cried Jack Straw:

"Sir Fool, hold your peace till ye have heard me, or else we shoot at once. Go back to those that sent thee, and tell them that we free

men of Kent are on the way to London to speak with King Richard, and to tell him that which he wots not; to wit, that there is a certain sort of fools and traitors to the realm who would put collars on our necks and make beasts of us, and that it is his right and his devoir to do as he swore when he was crowned and anointed at Westminster on the Stone of Doom, and gainsay these thieves and traitors; and if he be too weak then shall we help him; and if he will not be king then shall we have one who shall be, and that is the King's Son of Heaven. Now, therefore, if any withstand us on our lawful errand as we go to speak with our own king and lord, let him look to it. Bear back this word to them that sent thee. But for thee, hearken thou bastard of an inky sheepskin, get thee gone and tarry not; three times shall I lift up my hand, and the third time look to thyself, for then shalt thou hear the loose of our bow-strings, and after that nought else till thou hearest the devil bidding thee welcome to hell!"

Our fellows shouted, but the summoner began again, yet in a quavering voice:

"HO! YE PEOPLE! What will ye gathering in arms? Wot ye not that ye are doing or shall do great harm, loss and hurt to the king's lieges—"

He stopped; Jack Straw's hand was lowered for the second time. He looked to his men right and left, and then turned rein and turned tail, and scuttled back to the main body at his swiftest. Huge laughter rattled out all along our line as Jack Straw climbed back into our orchard grinning also.

Then we noted more movement in the enemy's line. They were spreading the archers and arbalesters to our left, and the men-at-arms and others also spread somewhat under the three penons of which Long Gregory had told us, and which were plain enough to us in the clear evening. Presently the moving line faced us, and the archers set off at a smart pace toward us, the men-at-arms holding back a little behind them. I knew now that they had been within bow-shot all along, but our men were loth to shoot before their first shots would tell, like those half-dozen in the road when, as they told me afterwards, a plump of their men-at-arms had made a show of falling on.

But now as soon as those men began to move on us directly in face, Jack Straw put his horn to his lips and blew a loud rough blast that was echoed by five or six others along the orchard hedge. Every man had his shaft nocked on the string; I watched them, and Will Green specially; he and his bow and its string seemed all of a piece, so easily by seeming did he draw the nock of the arrow to his ear. A moment, as he took his aim, and then—O then I understand the meaning of the awe with which the ancient poet speaks of loose of the god Apollo's bow, for terrible indeed was the mingled sound of the twanging bow-string and the whirring shaft so close to me. I was now on my knees right in front of Will and saw all clearly; the arbalesters (for no long-bow men were over against our stead) had all of them bright head-pieces, and stout body-armour of boiled leather with metal studs, and as they came towards us, I could see over their shoulders great wooden shields hanging at their backs. Further to our left their long-bow-men had shot almost as soon as ours, and I heard or seemed to hear the rush of the arrows through the apple-boughs and a man's cry therewith; but with us the long-bow had been before the cross-bow; one of the arbalesters fell outright, his great shield clattering down on him, and moved no more; while three others were hit and were crawling to the rear. The rest had shouldered their bows and were aiming, but I thought unsteadily; and before the triggers were drawn again Will Green had nocked and loosed, and not a few others of our folk; then came the wooden hail of the bolts rattling through the boughs, but all overhead and no one hit.

The next time Will Green nocked his arrow he drew with a great shout, which all our fellows took up; for the arbalesters instead of turning about in their places covered by their great shields and winding up their crossbows for a second shot, as is the custom of such soldiers, ran huddling together toward their men-at-arms, our arrows driving thump-thump into their shields as they ran: I saw four lying on the field dead or sore wounded.

But our archers shouted again, and kept on each plucking the arrows from the ground, and nocking and loosing swiftly but deliberately at the line before them; indeed now was the time for these terrible bow-men, for as Will Green told me afterwards they always reckoned to kill through cloth or leather at five hundred yards, and they had let the cross-bow-men come nearly within three hundred, and these were now all mingled and muddled up with the men-at-arms at scant five hundred yards distance; and belike, too, the latter were not treating them too well, but seemed to be belabouring them with their spear staves in their anger at the poorness of the play; so that as Will Green said it was like shooting at hay-ricks.

All this you must understand lasted but a few minutes, and when our men had been shooting quite coolly, like good workmen at peaceful work, for a few minutes more, the enemy's line seemed to clear somewhat; the penon with the three red kine showed in front and three men armed from head to foot in bright steel except for their short coats bright with heraldry, were with it. One of them (and he bore the three kine on his coat) turned round and gave some word of command, and an angry shout went up from them, and they came on steadily towards us, the man with the red kine on his coat leading them, a great naked sword in his hand: you must note that they were all on foot; but as they drew nearer I saw their horses led by grooms and pages coming on slowly behind them.

Sooth said Will Green that the men-at-arms run not fast either to or fro the fray; they came on no faster than a hasty walk, their arms clashing about them and the twang of the bows and whistle of the

arrows never failing all the while, but going on like the push of the westerly gale, and from time to time the men-at-arms shouted, "Ha! ha! out! out! Kentish thieves!"

But when they began to fall on, Jack Straw shouted out, "Bills to the field! bills to the field!"

Then all our bill-men ran up and leapt over the hedge into the meadow and stood stoutly along the ditch under our bows, Jack Straw in the forefront handling his great axe. Then he cast it into his left hand, caught up his horn and winded it loudly; the men-at-arms drew near steadily, some fell under the arrow-storm, but not a many; for though the target was big it was hard, since not even the cloth-yard shaft could pierce well-wrought armour of plate, and there was much armour among them. Withal the arbalesters were shooting again, but high and at a venture, so they did us no hurt.

But as these soldiers made wise by the French war were now drawing near, and our bowmen were casting down their bows and drawing their short swords, or handling their axes, as did Will Green, muttering, "Now must Hob Wright's gear end this play"—while this was a-doing, lo, on a sudden a flight of arrows from our right on the flank of the sergeants' array, which stayed them somewhat; not because it slew many men, but because they began to bethink them that their foes were many and all around them; then the road-hedge on the right seemed alive with armed men, for whatever could hold sword or staff amongst us was there; every bowman also leapt our orchard hedge sword or axe in hand, and with a great shout, billmen, archers, and all, ran in on them; half-armed, yea, and half-naked some of them; strong and stout and lithe and light withal, the wrath of battle and the hope of better times lifting up their hearts till nothing could withstand them. So was all mingled together, and for a minute or two was a confused clamour over which rose a clatter like the rivetting of iron plates, or the noise of the street of the coppersmiths at Florence; then the throng burst open and the steel-clad sergeants and squires and knights ran huddling and shuffling towards their horses; but some cast down their weapons and threw up their hands and cried for peace and ransom; and some stood and fought desperately and slew some till they were hammered down by many strokes, and of these were the bailiffs and tipstaves and the lawyers and their men, who could not run and hoped for no mercy.

I looked as on a picture and wondered and my mind was at strain to remember something forgotten, which yet had left its mark on it. I heard the noise of the horse hoofs of the fleeing men-at-arms (the archers and arbalesters had scattered before the last minutes of the play), I heard the confused sound of laughter and rejoicing down in the meadow, and close by me the evening wind lifting the lighter twigs of the trees, and far away the many noises of the quiet country, till light and sound both began to fade from me and I saw and heard nothing.

I leapt up to my feet presently and there was Will Green before me as I had first seen him in the street with coat and hood and the gear at his girdle and his unstrung bow in his hand; his face smiling and kind again, but maybe a thought sad.

"Well" quoth I, "What is the tale for the ballad maker?"

"As Jack Straw said it would be," said he, "the end of the day and the end of the fray;" and he pointed to the brave show of the sky over the sunken sun; "the knights fled and the sheriff dead: two of the lawyer kind slain afield, and one hanged, and cruel was he to make them cruel: and three bailiffs knocked on the head—stout men, and so witless, that none found their brains in their skulls; and five arbalesters and one archer slain, and a score and a half of others, mostly men come back from the French wars, men of the Companions there, knowing no other craft than fighting for gold; and this is the end they are paid for. Well, brother, saving the lawyers who belike had no souls, but only parchment deeds and libels of the same, God rest their souls!"

He fell a-musing; but I said, "And of our fellowship were any slain?"

"Two good men of the township," he said, "Hob Horner and Antony Webber, were slain outright, Hob with a shaft and Antony in the hand-play, and John Pargetter hurt very sore on the shoulder with a glaive; and five more men of the fellowship slain in the hand-play, and some few hurt, but not sorely. And as to those slain if God give their souls rest it is well; for little rest they had on the earth belike; but for me I desire rest no more."

I looked at him and our eyes met with no little love; and I wondered to see how wrath and grief within him were contending with the kindness of the man, and how clear the tokens of it were in his face.

"Come now, old lad," said he, "for I deem that John Ball and Jack Straw have a word to say to us at the cross yet, since these men broke off his telling; there shall we know what we are to take in hand to-morrow. And afterwards thou shalt eat and drink in my house this once if never again."

So we went through the orchard closes again; and others were about and anigh us, all turned toward the cross, as we went over the dewy grass whereon the moon was just beginning to throw shadows.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

(To be continued.)

At the School Board election at Nottingham on Nov. 29, John Peacock, the Socialist candidate, polled 22,659 votes—more than double the number given to the lowest on the list of those elected, and nearly 8000 more than the next highest on the list. The conservative clericals were at the bottom of the poll.



"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. can only be 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 as they may appear.

G. J. Pollard.—Thanks for your note. Can you give us the address of the secretary of the society?

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday December 8.

ENGLAND		ITALY	
Justice	New Haven (Conn.)—Workmen's Advocate	Milan—Il Fascio Operaio	
Norwich—Daylight	Paterson (N. J.)—Labor Standard		SPAIN
Club and Institute Journal	Springfield (Ill.)—Voice of Labor	Madrid—El Socialista	
Londoner Arbeiter-Zeitung	Chicago (Ill.)—Vorbote	Cadiz—El Socialismo	
Die Autonomie	Knights of Labor	Barcelona—Acracia	
Freshinker	Portland (Oreg.)—Avant-Courier	La Justicia Humana	
Hull Express	Milwaukee (Wis.)—Volksblatt		PORTUGAL
Personal Rights Journal	Detroit (Mich.)—Labor Leaf	Lisbon—O Protesto Operario	
Radical	Corning (Iowa)—Revue Icarienne	Vos do Operario	
		Villafranca de Xira—O Campino	
INDIA		AUSTRIA	
Madras—People's Friend		Brunn—Volksfreund	
	FRANCE	Arbeiterstimme	
	Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily)		HUNGARY
CANADA			Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik
Toronto—Labor Reformer	Le Socialiste		
Montreal—L'Union Ouvriere	Le Revolte		ROMANIA
	Journal du Peuple		Bucharest—Fruncel Roman
UNITED STATES			Jassy—Lupta
New York—Volkszeitung	Guise—Le Devoir		
Freiheit	Lille—Le Travailleur		DENMARK
Truthseeker			Social-Demokraten
Der Sozialist	HOLLAND		
John Swinton's Paper	Hague—Recht voor Allen		SWEDEN
Boston—Woman's Journal	Brussels—Le Chante-Clair		Stockholm—Social-Demokraten
Denver (Col.) Labor Inquirer	En Avant		
Cincinnati (O.) Unionist	Liege—L'Avenir		NORWAY
Toledo (O.)—Industrial News	Antwerp—De Werker		Kristiania—Social-Democraten
Cleveland (O.)—Carpenter	SWITZERLAND		
St Louis (Mo.) Light in the West	Zurich—Social Demokrat		
	Geneva—Bulletin Continental		

## EVOLUTION VERSUS REVOLUTION.

It may appear strange that in the year 1886 we should discuss the above question. It is not a new one. The same question, though in other words, was raised during the Radical agitation which preceded the first Reform Bill. During the Chartist movement it was again raised, and with most pernicious results. As the agitation advanced and the movement spread, the cry was raised of Moral *v.* Physical Force. Both sections declared they were in favour of the Charter and nothing but the Charter. But one section, representing mainly the small trading classes, were in favour of none but moral means. This naturally led the outside world to infer that the other section, representing almost exclusively the working classes, were in favour of a violent revolution. Both sections were forced into a false position; united action became impossible; and the foolish and absurd cry of moral *v.* physical force helped to ruin the movement. It was a source of discord and acted as a dissolvent.

But there were other cries raised, equally destructive of united action, such as "legal and constitutional," a cry as absurd as it is possible to conceive. If we had a constitution to which every one could refer, and if that constitution were based upon the rights and liberties of the whole people, then one might logically declare in favour of constitutional action. The same with regard to legality. But such is not the case. England has no constitution. There is no public recognition of the rights and liberties of the people; the legal of to-day becomes the illegal of the morrow; while the Government can, by a mere stroke of the pen, suspend the exercise of all those rights and liberties of which Englishmen boast so loudly. All such cries, by whomsoever raised, are an evidence of weakness and are a danger to the movement. The party becomes divided into hostile groups who quarrel with each other, and thus become far more dangerous to themselves than to the common enemy.

The cry of "evolution, not revolution" raised to-day is an unfortunate cry. It can serve no good purpose. As well might we think of drawing a line between thought and action. Yet to attempt to do

so would not only be illogical, but an act of extreme folly. To create new ideas, to raise new hopes, new aspirations, to be realised only with the consent of the tyrant, is not an act of wisdom. Where there is consistency, thought and action are one. It is impossible to separate them. It is equally impossible to separate evolution and revolution. To raise the cry of evolution, not revolution, is as absurd as was the cry of moral *v.* physical force raised within the ranks of the Chartist party.

Throughout the civilised world ever rampant tyranny rules supreme. The crowned usurper, encircled with a wall of fire and steel, bids the toiling millions obey. Mercenary legions are everywhere ready to obey the call of the tyrant oppressor. In the name of law and order the people are plundered of the fruits of their labour. In the name of society men and women are doomed to starve in the midst of plenty. To protest against oppression is to be guilty of sedition. To resist the will of the blood-stained tyrant is to be guilty of rebellion. Yet usurpation is the greatest of all crimes. Every act of tyranny is an act of war against the people. Usurpation is rebellion against the rights of the people, against the principle of eternal justice. Shall we strike down the highwayman who rifles one's pockets, and hold sacred the usurper who holds in bondage millions of human beings, and in whose ears ring as music the despairing cries of his expiring victims?

On what depends to-day the supremacy of usurpation? On the organisation and application of brute-force. By what means are the people everywhere held in bondage? By brute-force. By what means do the landed aristocracy take from the people some £180,000,000 a-year? By brute-force. By what means do the State clergy take millions annually in the shape of tithes? By brute-force. In a word, by what means are the people—the wealth-producing classes—plundered of at least seventy-five per cent. of the wealth they produce? By brute-force everywhere organised and everywhere present. The very supremacy of the non-producing classes throughout the civilised world depends on the supremacy of brute-force. All the industrious, all the economical conditions of society by which the plunder of the people is reduced to a system, all depend on brute-force.

Whenever a government endeavours by arbitrary measures to reduce the people to slavery, the government puts itself into a state of war against the people, into a state of rebellion against the rights of humanity, by which the people are freed from any further obedience or obligation, and are in duty bound to resume those natural rights which are their only refuge against tyranny and oppression, and which neither the decrees of tyrants nor the votes of majorities can ever either alter, diminish or destroy. The right of the people to put an end to tyranny and oppression by whatever means circumstances may render necessary, is a right that depends on neither time nor clime.

What is evolution, and what is revolution? Can they be separated? Does not one logically follow the other? As well try to separate thought and action. If I embrace the principle of equal justice for every human being, because that principle is opposed to existing institutions, and those institutions are upheld by brute-force, am I for ever to be content with the mere profession of that principle? am I for ever to remain a slave? am I never to strike a blow for freedom, for liberty? It is the duty of every one to embrace whatever is true, to approve and support whatever is pure, to realise as far as possible whatever is just. It is the duty of every one to combat whatever is evil, to seek to destroy whatever is tyrannical in government or oppressive in society. The means depend on circumstances, but the most speedy may be the most moral, the most legitimate. The true man is revolutionary from principle. He recognises no usurpation. He bends his will before no tyranny. He tamely submits to no oppression. With him profession and practice, thought and action, are one. He seeks no compromise; he accepts no mere modification of tyranny. Embracing a principle, that principle to him is a religion. He will labour for its realisation. He will devote to it more than the Christian's one day in seven. He will give to it his best hours, his best days, his best years—his thought, his energy, his love, and if need be, his life. As a Socialist, he will be revolutionary from principle. The realisation of the principle of equal liberty, of equal opportunities for every human being; the principle of eternal right, of eternal justice, will be the one grand aim of his life. To him the phrase "Evolution, not revolution" will be a contradiction in terms. To him the phrase "Morally possible" will be a moral absurdity.

To-day society is divided into two great classes—the producers of wealth and the non-producing consumers of wealth. The gulf that divides those classes is wide and deep, and grows wider and deeper as the years roll on. That gulf can never be bridged over by any political tinkering or social quackery. Just as the barons of old were revolutionary in relation to the crown, and just as the trading and commercial classes are revolutionary in relation to the aristocracy, so are the working classes revolutionary in relation to all the other classes of society. Between the producers and the non-producers there is war. Between the plunderers and the plundered there can never be peace. The workers are, and of necessity must be, revolutionary in relation to all that live on taxes, rents, or profits. The Socialist from principle, the worker from interest, must be revolutionary against those who merely consume the wealth produced by the labour of others. But just as the easy-chair politicians preached to the unfranchised workers that half a loaf was better than none (as if they could divide a principle), we are told to-day that revolutionary Socialism is wrong; that it is wild and extravagant; that it is too continental, so contrary to English traditions. In the seventeenth century our forefathers sent to the grave a headless tyrant. Were they justified in so doing? Was the deed moral? Were the means legitimate? Behold in all the

States of Europe usurpation in the ascendent, tyranny everywhere rampant. Shall we sing "Te Deum" in honour of triumphant wrong? We see in all the European States and through all the ramifications of society, the most cruel oppression, the most brutal disregard of the wants and requirements of the wealth-producing classes. Shall we bow the head and bend the knee in honour of every exalted rascality? No; let our cry be, Down with tyranny, whatever the creed, whatever the clime! Down with oppression, whatever the name, whatever the form! Let the good men and true who are Socialist from principle, who will act from conviction, thoroughly devoted, grasp hands with each and all who are prepared for the combat. In the name of liberty, of the principle of eternal justice and the brotherhood of the human race, let us proclaim a holy war against whatever is evil, whatever is tyrannical or oppressive.

"Is it peace or war?  
Not peace with thieves or murderers;  
Not peace with usurpers, with tyrants.  
Not abnegation of duty.  
Not death; but life, however stormful.  
War, war against usurpation, whatever it may call itself;  
War even to the death, rather than compromise with any incarnation of wrong."

J. SKETCHLEY.

## IMPRESSIONS "ON THE ROAD."

### I.

To be "On the Road"! So they call their mode of travelling; and it is no fault of mine if to some the phrase be misleading and my "Impressions" disappointing. And since disappointment there must be, I will let you have it at the outset: I do not tread old country roads, either ancient or mediæval, but glide along on roads more recent and more fashionable, on roads embraced, like our lives, by bands of steel—on railroads.

How smooth and swift, how shaky and how dangerous withal! When you walk along the sunny hillside you may sit down at your liking and wipe from your brow the pearls that have come forth through your honest endeavour "to get on"; when you are driven in a coach and find the strides of your horses too fast for your safety, you may command or beseech the driver to take it easy—for the horses' sake; but when once you have handed your money and yourself to the keeping of the company that owns the "rolling stock"; when once you are boxed, herring-like, in the compartment of a modern fast train; when the door has been banged and the whistle been sounded,—what is your position? How about your "free will," your "self-reliance," and your "independence"? A man's life, thus tied to the fates of an express, is not worth five minutes' purchase. And if you are of opinion that your own life is worth more—that is to say, that you ought to be spared, or your relations compensated for your loss—why, then, grudge not to pay the insurance ticket offered you by the same company, which, by implication, guarantees your safety!

But stop! (I am not speaking to the train, but to the reader.) I seem to be wrong here. If your life in an express train be not worth five minutes' purchase, how is it that through the payment of one bashful penny you may ensure the receipt by your surviving relatives of the magnificent sum of £100 in case your earthly coil be shaken off you in the course of your journey? This wonderful trick is no confidence-trick at all, but the very reverse of it, since you lodge your penny with the receiver out of actual distrust in the *bonâ fides* of railway-company foresight and skill of management. It is a trick seemingly more wonderful even than that performed by the "Indian Tea Supp-lic Direct Company," who engage to make you a present of a set of genuine silver-plated spoons, if you condescend to buy and swallow five pounds of their tea at a price which is only one-third part of its actual cost; of tea which is, in fact, quite "substantial" and "syrupy" from sheer weight of its "intrinsic value"! The life-insurance trick is more wonderful because it seems more natural and less deceptive. Indeed, I should hesitate to call it a trick at all were it not for the blending of two principles so utterly opposed to one another as human solidarity and inhuman exploitation, were it not one of the many cases in which a Socialist principle is applied and made the most of by self-seeking commercialism for individual gain.

In a rational—that is, Socialistic—community of human beings, where every capable one performs his due, a few unfit or failing ones may yet enjoy and be exempt from loss. Similarly, when capable members should happen to suffer through unavoidable natural causes, they may fall back upon the solidarity of all and from it gain relief.

There is no sentimental generosity in this idea. To-day's receiver of aid out of the common funds of strength may be a part-security for his neighbour's loss to-morrow, and the part-security of last night may be felled to the ground to-day and claim his share of help from those who are still standing. This principle of Socialism is but the recognition of the truth that in his battle with the wild forces of nature man must be infinitely more successful as part of a social organism than as an isolated being.

Commercialism has pressed most of the modern sciences into its service, and among them is the calculation of probabilities. Having found out, by the aid of statistics, that out of about every million of persons who travel by rail per annum, one is forcibly torn from his earthly pilgrimage and sent straight to heaven (this refers to England only; on the Continent they are sent somewhere else, and deservedly

so), some enterprising spirits concluded that if they could make each of the million travellers pay them one penny they might engage to pay to the one who quits this world thus unexpectedly the sum of one hundred pounds (24,000 pence) and yet not be losers in the transaction. Indeed, if every railway traveller, apprehensive of his safety, gave them the benefits of his doubts in the shape of a penny, there could scarcely be a better paying (and at the same time more respectable) concern than such an insurance company. But it is needless to say most of the railway passengers do not habitually think at all, and few only seriously consider the possibility of getting killed in transmission. Of those few, again, some are ready to run the risk for a penny, and would run it for a farthing. The rest pay the insurance fee, and hasten to secure in the travelling-box the corner most comfortable to be squashed in.

Now it is clear that if only the fortieth part of the said million (that is, 2½ per cent.) pay their penny of distrust, the company still get back what they lay out for the one victim, and hence in a Socialist community, where profit would be out of the question, we should only have to pay the fortieth part of a penny each to secure an equal benefit for the relations of those who fell on the railroad. Of course, this is assuming rather many things which shall not be *then*. There will be no money (hurrah!) to part with and none to look for; there will be less hurry on the railroad, and hence more safety and more pleasure; and finally there will be no need for us to provide for surviving relatives, as they would be cared for much better by the community. Apart from affectionate ties rent asunder by sudden death, the loss of a useful member will then simply be looked at economically as the loss of so much working power, and will have to be provided for in the general calculation of expenditure of labour-force for the common needs—

"Tickets, please!" says a servant of the company, and calls me back to the shabby reality of my present circumstances.

ANDREAS SCHEU.

## LITERARY NOTICES.

"The Lateral Expansion of England," by W. Green (Dean and Son, Fleet Street, 6d.), is a very thoughtful and earnest study from a moderately advanced standpoint of the problems befronting the British Empire. It is well worthy perusal by Socialists, as it shows how a quite honest non-Socialist faces such questions.

"England Arise!" (Modern Press, 1d.) is a "Socialist marching song" the words and music of which are by Edward Carpenter. It is printed in handy form, and should be useful.

"Social Salvation" (Progressive Publishing Co., 1d.) is a "lay sermon" delivered by Col. R. G. Ingersoll. In his usual brilliantly trenchant style, the lecturer passes the present system in review; but, as might be expected when he confesses that he is not a Socialist, there is no solution given of the problems set forth.

"The Children of Gibeon" (3 vols., Chatto and Windus) is one of those books by Mr. Walter Besant the interest and *raison d'être* of which are in the strong contrasts made in men and manners by the class-divisions of our alleged "system of society." It is of course, being written to sell, carefully balanced upon the ragged edge, so as not to unduly shock the sensitive souls of the "better classes" by a plunge into the fell abyss of truth; but the truth is so terrible that it forces recognition now and then. We wonder how many philanthropic fine ladies will take to heart the rebuke administered by a girl-worker: "The truth is that we don't want fine ladies here. We're work-girls and we've got to earn our living, and we aint ashamed of it. We don't want to be looked at like as if we were elephants in a circus. Let 'em go and look at somebody else. We aint a show. Lotty aint a clown; I aint a jumping-horse; Liz aint a salamander. . . . Sooner they go the better!" Will all or any of such books as this one do anything to rouse the bourgeois, read as they are to while away the dull intervals between the excitements so liberally furnished in "high life" by turf trickery and matrimonial complications? Charles Kingsley, Mrs. Lynn Linton, Eugene Sue, Victor Hugo, and many others have sought with passionate fervour to so speak out the truth of the proletariat's position, without effect upon the bourgeois: and where these have failed few others can look to succeed. It is to the people we must appeal; it is the proletariat that must be educated and roused; and this cannot be done by any one who stoops to perversion from prejudice, or to prettiness from complacency.

The Leicester Branch of the Socialist League have published a penny pamphlet with a selection of well-arranged extracts from Ruskin's 'Unto This Last.' It has been compiled by T. Barclay, and has an Introduction by J. Holmes. This is a good step towards putting Ruskin's magnificent writings within reach of workmen. Other Branches of the League might order some to sell them at their meetings. They will be supplied by the Branch Secretary.

The employés on the District Railway works at Brompton are to be placed on short time at Christmas.

Owing to depression in the iron trade, the Wingerwork Iron Company in Chesterfield have decided to blow out all their furnaces for the present.

LIVERPOOL.—The Secretary of the Workers' Brotherhood is agitating for reforming the Poor Law by turning the useless toil of able-bodied paupers into useful work on co-operative estates. In this he is favoured by the local Ruskin Society, and also by Professor John Ruskin himself, who writes, "I am with you in all you say, and wish, and mean to try for." Address, the Rev. Herbert Mills, 6 Kenlyn Road, Stanley Park.

It is now four months since the workers of Vierzon first went out on strike. We ask ourselves how these men with all their resolution intend to get through the winter months that are setting in, and whether the strike so courageously held out will not fail at last through the intolerable hardships gone through, and still longer to be gone through, by these numerous families? The French Socialist papers would do well to find out details of how the Société Française progress, and what inconveniences they are suffering in consequence of the obstinacy of the strikers. The one cry from the friends of these last of course is "Money!" and yet again "Money!"

## THE LABOUR STRUGGLE.

### Strike Committee of the Socialist League.

A large number of communications have been received from trade organisations and individuals, promising financial and other assistance to the Committee and also agreeing to subscribe to and push the *Commonweal*. District secretaries are being appointed throughout the country. A resolution was passed at last meeting of the Committee, warning workers of Great Britain and Ireland against being led away by the enormous noise made by the Cunard Steam Ship Co. and sundry other companies in reference to foreign mails, as it matters little to the workers whether they are fleeced by foreign or home capitalists. The General Secretary of the

#### INTERNATIONAL UNION OF GLASS-BOTTLE MAKERS

informs us that in connection with the strike in Lancashire one of the employers is now on the Continent endeavouring to secure "hands." Our foreign secretaries have taken means to warn foreign workmen against accepting engagements.

H. A. BARKER, Gen. Sec.

#### INTERNATIONAL TAILORS' SOCIETY—LONDON GROUT.

A Special General Meeting to discuss finance and future policy of this Society will be held on Tuesday first, Dec. 14, at 8.30 p.m., in the Club, 49 Tottenham Street, W. Admission on showing card of membership only.—J. MACDONALD, English and American Sec.

#### THE SOUTH WALES TIN-PLATE TRADE.

The outlook in the tin-plate trade of South Wales is exceedingly black—Abercarn having been closed for a month; notices of a reduction of ten per cent. in wages in Pontyemeisti, Abertillery, Blaenan, and Nantyglo. The notices at Margam and Mansell have expired since Saturday last. A meeting of delegates from the several districts took place on the evening of the same day, at which the following resolutions were adopted: 1. That in the opinion of the workmen engaged at the mills and the tinhouse at Mansell and Margam works, it would be injurious to both employers and employed in the trade were they to accept the ten per cent. reduction which is now proposed to them. 2. Each body of men at each works in the district pledge themselves to raise subscriptions towards maintaining the Margam and Mansell men in an honourable manner during the struggle, and that an appeal be sent to the various works for a liberal support for this purpose.

#### THE FLUNKY DEPUTATION.

The City Society of Painters and Decorators have passed the following resolution: "That in the opinion of this society the deputation that waited on royalty at Sandringham, comprising certain members of the London Trades' Council, was unrepresentative, mean, and contemptible, and entirely opposed to the doctrines held forth by many of them in past years on public platforms." Resolutions expressing disgust at the conduct of the deputation have also been passed by the Metropolitan Radical Federation, the Hackney Radical Federation, the Fawcett Liberal, the John Bright, and three Hammersmith clubs. We hear, also, that other trades are taking action in regard to the matter, and some of the flunkey deputation are likely to have an unpleasant quarter of an hour in explaining their conduct to their respective societies. It is gratifying to see the workers resent the audacious attempt of a clique of self-seeking toadies to pose as their representatives. Those who aspire to be the leaders of the democracy in the stirring times before us will need to be made of sterner stuff.

#### "BRITISH WORK AND WAGES LEAGUE."

A circular has been issued by the "British Seaman's Protection Society," announcing the formation of a "British Work and Wages League." It starts with a superficial explanation of the cause of distress among the workers, and continues with a mean-spirited Jingo-tainted tirade against foreign workmen. There is a distinctly bogus ring about its appeal, and the usual bosh about "constitutional" means. Who are these people? Kelly and Co.? Potter and Co.? Liberty and Property Defence League? Or are they a sub-committee of the London Trades' Council, subsidised in the interest of capitalists, as they were in the case of the Sugar Bounties meetings at the Memorial Hall? In the latter case the various trades paid the delegates attendance fees, and the interested sugar people (Quinton, Hogg, and Co.) found the intrinsic saccharine for the hire of hall, and by some process, not necessarily reasoning, induced in the wire-pullers of the L. T. C. an extraordinary amount of interest as to sugar. Perhaps some reader will find out and forward something more about this queer "working-class" society.

#### WOMEN AND THE FACTORY ACTS.

The Factory Acts, the passing of which was so bitterly opposed by Mr. John Bright, are sometimes enforced; but the difficulty of obtaining convictions is very great owing to the starvation wages given to women and girls. The legal hours, if alone worked, would barely pay rent; consequently, where women and girls cannot take work home to do, they generally assist the masters to break the law. What is the use of a law which settles the working hours, and not the wages? "The firm of Messrs. Selman and Hill, manufacturers of japanned goods, Wolverhampton, were fined over £10 and costs at the police-court, on December 3, for contravention of the Factory Acts by employing women and girls at illegal hours." It would be interesting to know the wages of these women and girls if they only worked the "legal hours." The employment of female labour is a point of vital interest to the whole working community. Under the pretence of "freedom" and "philanthropy," girls and women are engaged to compete against their brothers and fathers, without any regard to fitness or decency so long as the capitalists can screw a little extra profit out of the transaction. The strike that is now on at the Bostock Mills, near Bolton, is of special interest, from the fact that the quarrel is not so much as to wages and hours, but to protect girls and women from following an occupation which tends to demoralise and degrade them. The men do not ask for the discharge of the females, but only that the system shall be allowed to die out by engaging men to fill up vacancies as they occur. It is to be hoped that the operatives will be well supported in their struggle.

ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE, Dec. 3.—A strike of weavers, which is expected to affect at least 5000 operatives, commenced here to-day. The grievance is that the Ashton-under-Lyne employers are paying less than the North Lancashire manufacturers for their class of fancy work. The struggle has been anticipated for several years. Some time ago they were forced to submit to a new and reduced list of prices, and since then they have been

waiting for a favourable opportunity to obtain their old scale of pay. All the strength of the Amalgamated Association of Weavers, which has 135,000 members, is pledged to support the operatives, and there is reason to believe that the struggle will be a very long and bitter one.

At Stockport the cotton doublers are agitating for an increase of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per hour, a concession which the masters do not seem inclined to grant. In several mills nightwork is largely adopted, and extra prices are paid for this, but the men contend that the work should be done within the working hours, and the wages should be equalised. The matter is still in dispute.

NORTHAMPTON.—This town is still deep in the labour difficulty. Last week the Board of Guardians announced that they would open the labour yard, payment to commence at 6d. a-day for single men, with increases up to 2s., according to the number in family, for married men. The men decided to strike rather than accept such terms. The Watch Committee considered the subject, and the chief constable has received instructions to deal with the men collecting subscriptions for the unemployed as he would with ordinary vagrants.

JARROW.—A thousand men employed by the Tyne Coal Company, Hebburn Colliery, Jarrow, have received a fortnight's notice on account of the colliery not paying. The company have been searching for a new seam, but failed to find it; hence the notice.

The signalmen employed by the Midland Railway Company are making some headway in their agitation against the contemplated changes in the classes of signalmen, which will affect the wages adversely. We learn that at Birmingham a signalman passed 174 trains in 12 hours, or over 14 trains per hour. Each train averaged 25 figures to be entered in 21 columns, and a column for remarks, making a total of 4350 figures in 12 hours. There were 1485 beats of the electric bell, 3132 beats of the needle, and 800 movements of the lever. It is claimed that when the exactitude of the work is considered it is not difficult to see that the hours of the signalmen are fully employed, and any movement should take the direction of shorter hours and an increase, not a reduction, in their pay. Meetings of the men have also been held at Shipley and Leicester.

The chainmakers strike still goes on, and the men are bearing up hopefully in their struggle. The strike has now lasted over sixteen weeks, and more than 2500 hands are affected.

#### NEW SOUTH WALES.

The following has just been received in a letter dated October 12 from a clerk at the gas-works, Sydney: "Trade is very bad here; I don't think it has been so bad for twenty or thirty years. Hundreds of men are out of work, and we have to turn scores away from the office every week. Our new gas-works are being put up and we are employing about fifty men. We are expecting a revival of trade, but it will take a long time first. Unless intending emigrants have a nice sum of money to come with, I would advise them to wait till things are better."

#### AMERICA.

New York gas-fitters have struck to support the demands of the plumbers.

There are said to be 32,000 cigarmakers in the International Union since it absorbed the Progressive.

RICHMOND.—Some fun is contemplated ere long in this city from the fact that the contract for granite for our new City Hall has been awarded to a quarry upon which a general boycott has been placed by the K. of L.

PHILADELPHIA.—There is a possibility of trouble between the Philadelphia carpet manufacturers and their employers. The men have asked for an increase, which was not only refused, but met with a thirty days notice of intention to reduce the existing wages.

CHICAGO.—The outcome of the great packing-house strike in Chicago is a combination among the bosses to refuse to employ any man who belongs to a labour organisation. They can make the attempt, at least, while they can use the militia of the State to further their decision. What a howl would go up if the men undertook to use the militia to drive out all but union men from the packing-houses, and make the people pay the expenses!

PATERSON, N. J.—The strike of the moulders at Paterson, N. J., will probably last all winter, as there are no signs of an understanding being reached. The moulders demand a uniform rate of wages at 2 dol. 50 c. per day, but the employers refuse to accede, claiming that some men are worth more than others. An effort will be made to arrange the rate at 2 dol. 50 c., but if this were proposed as a uniform rate the bosses would still insist on paying some men less.

The *Workmen's Advocate*, the official journal of the organised workmen of New Haven and vicinity represented in the Trades' Council of New Haven (Conn.), has now been adopted as the official journal of the Socialistic Labour Party of North America. In notifying the "promotion" our comrades say: "We trust that our many readers will accompany us on the progressive course which our new functions indicate, and by their active appreciation of our efforts sustain us in the struggle against the most insidious foes of humanity—landlordism and wage-slavery." We heartily wish success to the *Workmen's Advocate* and the cause it represents, and congratulate the workers of New Haven in having such a brisk bright journal to fight the battle of Labour.

#### BELGIUM.

AMERCEUR.—The Directors of the coal mines of Amerceur and Bois-del-Ville are at bay, and trying to entice workers of the Borinage and the Centre to replace those on strike. The strikers maintain their attitude of cool and energetic resistance.

JUMET and GOHYSSART.—The miners of these places have been struggling against their "owners" for nearly a month. They are hopeful as to the issue of the struggle. It is a new Decazeville which is in preparation in Belgium, therefore it concerns all workers to come forward in this struggle against capital, for it is the fight of one and all.

GHEENT.—At Ghent, the authorities have been on the alert all the week owing to some disturbance à propos of a strike declared among the weavers. The police appeared upon the scene and succeeded in irritating the manifestants, and the Burgermaster called out the civic guard to parade the streets and instil fear into the heart of man.

AMSTERDAM.—Our comrade Van der Hout recently addressed a large meeting on "The Labour Movement in England." Great enthusiasm was aroused by a description of the advances made by the English workers, and the formation of the Strike Committee of the Socialist League was heartily commended.

T. BRINKING.

## REVOLUTIONARY RUMBLINGS. AMERICA.

News comes from America that the exploiters are preparing to maintain their ascendancy by strengthening the militia. New posts are being established in various large labour centres; the latest improved repeating magazine gun is to replace the regulation army rifle. Target practice and street evolutions are to be encouraged, and it is stated that one of the gun manufacturers has received orders during the past few months for gatling guns from over twenty of the larger cities.

The very fact that more than a column of telegrams in regard to the action of the Socialists in London on November 9, were printed in an obscure evening paper at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, indicates the intense interest the capitalists of the world have in the action of all Socialists.

The American workmen are following the example of their fellow workmen in Germany. In Milwaukee they have elected to the legislature one of their number who was arrested and imprisoned as a "bloodthirsty Anarchist" last May.

The late elections have proven that Socialism, as a scarecrow, is worn out and even Anarchy is losing its ragged edges which only a short while since were wont to cut such horrible gashes in the feelings of timid people. Capital will have to raise some other scare-crow cry.—*Labour Enquirer*.

### BELGIUM.

CENTRE.—A year ago, says the *Avenir*, there only existed in the Centre, one Labour Society, the "Solidarity," composed of 200 members, being an old section of the International. They had a Conference a year ago, and constituted a Labour League, and since then the propaganda has been steadily and rapidly growing. The *Federation du Centre* constituted last May, included 12 affiliated societies; it now numbers 61, many others being in course of formation. In spite of all persecutions of the police and the masters, the labour movement is thus making great progress in the Centre. At all our meetings, which are public, gendarmes in plain clothes and policemen are always present, attempting to intimidate the workmen, but without success.

The people demanded amnesty for the two thousand victims of bourgeois justice, to which the king has replied by a categorical refusal, and, as though to further trifle with his subjects, the "Co-bourgeois" has granted pardon to those among the condemned whose sentence has already been fulfilled by their imprisonment while awaiting trial. As to Schmidt and Falleur, these unfortunate victims, for whom more than 50,000 citizens have signed petitions, the "Saxe-Cobourgeois" holds them, and does not intend to let them go, and does not grant them one day's grace out of the 20 years' hard labour which they have to undergo. We quote from a bourgeois journal: "We are assured that the Minister has granted 400 free pardons, the most part for very minor condemnations mostly covered by their preliminary detention; there are also about 200 slight penalties. Finally, the minister has refused to grant one day's grace to about 70, among whom are Schmidt and Falleur."—*En Avant*.

M. Beernaert, replying beforehand in the Senate to M. Crocq's motion of amnesty, which was not even discussed there, declared that the Government rejects the amnesty, and that "those which have not been pardoned till the present time—among them Schmidt and Falleur—will obtain nothing, not even an abatement of penalty."

In a public meeting held last Monday, near Liège, Michel Thonar openly declared that he considered that the African Negro was better off than the workers of his own country, and that the planters took more thought for their slaves than our capitalists of their employés. "Why?" he asks. "Because these niggers are the goods, the capital of their masters, and, therefore, cared for according to their value; constituting the elements of wealth, they are preserved out of self-interest; while in our countries wealth consists of money, capital, and machines." In civilised, humane, and Christian countries wealth consists of machines truly, but of two sorts, the "man-machine" and the "monster-machine." The latter works, feeds, and suspends its labour for a certain number of hours; the former works, feeds, and suspends its labour for a certain number of hours—for to call by the name of "rest" a mere blank suspension of toil, which is often the most that workers attain to, is the veriest mockery of men and abuse of language. The sole difference, economically, between the two is that the man-machine is, on the whole, much less carefully tended than the monster he is in charge of, or whose labour, by the ingenuity of latter-day development, he supplants and imitates, for the reason that he is so very, very cheap to buy, and so easily replaced when worn out.

### FRANCE.

Like all other laws for the protection of labour, that which regulates matters between master and apprentice is a dead letter for the most part. I quote one or two passages: "The master must conduct himself towards the apprentice as a good father," etc. That, of course, is out of date, a last straggling record of the nature of apprenticeship in mediæval time. "The master shall never employ his apprentice in work which is unhealthy or beyond his strength. No night-work shall be imposed on any under the age of 16. On no account shall they be kept at work on Sundays or fête-days either generally recognised or legal. . . . A certificate must be given to the apprentice on leaving," etc. How long is this mockery and farce of legality in all labour exploitation to be kept up? One prefers the frank brutality of the rough-grained "master of men," who declares aloud he means to make his toilers work "or know the reason why."

The Minister of Marine, in the course of the year 1887, will have to dismiss more than 40,000 workmen temporarily employed in the arsenals for the work of the extraordinary armaments for Madagascar and China. It is a necessity caused by the Budget, it seems. What will these unfortunates do now?—*Cri du Peuple*.

On Sunday last a meeting, so called private, got up by MM. Tolain and Gragnon at the Tivoli Vauxhall, was broken up and ended in a general scene of confusion, owing to those "Anarchists" of the *Cri du Peuple* objecting to some irregular proceeding on the part of the organisers, who, on demand of the meeting, refused to constitute the "bureau" which is usual at such semi-public meetings. In the meeting of about a thousand there were only some 50 Socialists. The result of the disturbance was the suspiciously prompt and sudden appearance of the police and arrestation of eight Socialists. Tolain is a renegade of the party, a workman, an old member of the International, etc., and much execrated by Socialists.

### AUSTRIA.

VIENNA.—Against the Bill for creating Labour Chambers brought in, as we have already reported, by the Liberal party the Social Democrats have taken up a strong position. Without one dissident, they consider the Bill futile and insufficient, a token of vain straining after lost popularity and an open effort to maintain the infamous "representation of interest" on which our hypocritical swindlers have based the construction of the House of Deputies. They claim a true and sincere social reform, instead of the pretentious quackery which forms at once the newest sport and business of our ruling classes.

According to the report of the delegate Dumba, "civilisation" makes great progress in the occupied provinces Bosnia and Herzegovina. We do not in the least envy the poor inhabitants of that country the blessings of the "culture" pressed upon them. Imported goods, produced in Austria on a great scale in the way before described, and therefore dirt-cheap, ruin the small home industry. The handicraftsman, unable to compete, is being expropriated, and becomes a proletarian. Owing to the revolts of 1878 and 1882, many families have been driven from the soil, and the process of the pauperisation of the great mass, slowly indeed, but incessantly progresses. Only the great capitalist is yet needed to make the country totally happy. This will soon be done. The low standard of life of the people will entice bourgeois greedy for profits; manufactures and factories will be established, in case of necessity even with the help of the State. Thrice fortunate folk, you will then be "civilised"!

It was in January 1885 that, owing to the coercion-bill then brought in, many trades' unions dissolved voluntarily, to avoid compulsory dissolution. The unions of bookbinders, casemakers, and kindred industries in Vienna did so. Dreadful conditions consequently spread in this industry, threatening to change it into one in which the work is done at home, with true starvation wages. It was necessary to found a new trade union. Therefore the statutes which had been the basis of the nine years' activity of the old dissolved union was submitted to the magistrates. In the meantime no new law had been issued, but notwithstanding that, the old statutes had become unlawful. Firstly it was forbidden to insure the members against disease and age, and to support their widows and orphans, because these are the tasks of insurance societies, founded for gain, and not falling under the law of 13th November 1867; further was forbidden the establishment of tariffs for wages, the watching over the relations between boss and worker, the procuring of employment, because these are reserved to the guilds re-established by the law of 15th March 1883; also was forbidden the help of unemployed, because strikers are also unemployed, and the aid for strikers has no legal effect. There was therefore nothing left for the activity of a trade-union and the foundation did not take place.

The issue of 24th inst. of our organ the *Volksfreund* published a respectful report, written in the mildest language. This article was confiscated by the public prosecutor. The editors omitted the said report and published a second issue with an article on Henriks Ibsen, which was also confiscated. Our brethren in Germany suffer from Bismarkian coercion-laws; but, as hard as these laws may be, under them they have more political rights than we without exceptional ministerial ordinances. No miracle, therefore, that anarchism flourishes, especially in our country, and that now a great part of Austrian comrades are against every legal agitation. Everywhere the bourgeoisie endeavours to hold up its power; but nowhere it employs means so base, so brutal, so infamous as against the Austrian worker. F. S.

## THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

OFFICES: 13 FARRINGTON ROAD, E.C.

*General Meeting.*—The next General Meeting of London Members will be held on Tuesday January 4, 1887, when the following will be the order of business: Reports of provincial and London Branches; Report of Strike Committee; Report of Ways and Means Committee; Statement of weekly *Commonweal* to date; Motions of which notice has been given.

*Library.*—The printed catalogues are now ready and can be obtained from the Librarians at 2d. each.

### Branch Subscriptions Paid.

Mile-end, to June 30. Birmingham, Bradford, Clerkenwell, Hackney, Hull, Leeds, North London, to August 31. Croydon, Dublin, Marylebone, to Sept. 30. Manchester, Merton, Norwich, to October 31. Bloomsbury, Hammersmith, Hoxton (Labour Emancipation League), Oxford, to Dec. 31.

### The Free Speech Fight.

The case of comrade Mahon has been adjourned again to Dec. 22, when sentence will be passed or the accused sent for trial at the Sessions. There is still a deficit in the fund for defence in these cases, and subscriptions should not be allowed to fall off until there is at least a small balance in hand.

### An Appeal for the Children.

Considering the success of our Children's Christmas Party last year, it has been decided to hold a similar one on December 27, for which end we appeal to our friends who cannot attend personally to give us some help in money for this Reunion of children, which we are confident by experience will be a pleasant one. Subscriptions payable to Mrs. Wardle, 9 Charlotte Street, Bedford Square; May Morris, Kelmscott House, Upper Mall, Hammersmith.

### Executive.

Upon the report of the Reunion Committee, it was resolved to abandon the idea of a reunion of the whole League, as the country branches were from various causes not in a position to attend. It was decided to give a Christmas treat to the children instead, to be followed by a Social Meeting of members and friends. The General Meeting of London Members has been fixed for the first Tuesday in each month in future.

### STRIKE COMMITTEE.

H. C., 1s.; T., 1s.; V. D., 1s.; S. M., 6d.; R. F. E. Willis, 3s. 6d.; Norwich Branch (per Mowbray), 1s. 3d. T. BINNING, Treasurer.

### FREE SPEECH DEFENCE FUND.

*Daily Chronicle* Chapel (Mainwaring Concert), 2s. Deficit, £2, 8s. 6d.

PH. W., Treasurer, Dec. 7.

### "COMMONWEAL" PRINTING FUND.

W. M. (donation), £1; Bloomsbury Branch (weekly) 5s.; T. B. (weekly), 6d. Mainwaring (sale of *Commonweal*), 4d.—£1, 5s. 10d.

PH. W., Treasurer, Dec. 7.

