

# THE COMMONWEAL

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

## NOTES ON THE ELECTIONS.

THE elections have gone against the Gladstonites so far,—which, indeed, was only to be expected. Every constituency which returned a Tory at the last elections would return one with a bigger majority this time, and most of those that returned a Liberal by a narrow majority would now return a Tory,—in either case supposing there was no Irish vote to neutralise the Whig vote. Then all respectability, right down to the lowest ranks of the lower middle-class, will vote jingo: the clerks, grooms, gardeners, and general hangers-on of villadom, will of course vote on the same side. Traditional national spite and “rampant-lionism” will follow suit; and the obedient followers of big names, such as Bright and Chamberlain, will—perhaps sometimes with a sigh—put the cross against the name of the Jingo candidate. All this makes a very formidable reactionary phalanx. Against it is arrayed the personal following of Mr. Gladstone, which probably will not make so good an appearance at the polling-booths as it would in the streets; and lastly—much lastly, it is to be feared—the body of people who are convinced, either by study of the facts or instinctively, that it is neither creditable nor convenient for England to stagger along dragging a second Poland after her.

To investigate the chances of the elections in detail is rather the business of an election-agent than a human being. But, without being eager to risk a prophecy which next week may give the lie to, it does seem most probable that the new parliament will give us much the same party cohorts as the last; only of course the Whigs and Jingo Radicals will go to Westminster pledged to a kind of loose alliance with the Tory Rump, from which will result wriggings exceedingly amusing and refreshing to the cynical onlooker. Meantime a lesson will be given to the devotee of parliamentary agitation and the believer in the perfection of “representation,” if he will only use his senses and learn it. He may see, if he will, that the body of professional politicians formed by M.P.s, candidates, and wire-pullers, is far more powerful than a reasonable man would expect it to be, judging from the very low average of the talent in that body. The constituencies do certainly allow themselves to be led, or rather driven, by the group of shuffling and intriguing self-seekers whom they have elevated to rule over them, and at the best consider that when they have voted for the candidate provided for them they have fulfilled all the duties of citizenship. In short, as a rule the voters expect everything to be done for them; and what the representatives really represent is unreasoning habit formed by implicit trust in the magical powers of the word “Representation.”

It is humiliating indeed to think of the shouts of applause with which working men have greeted John Bright's last feat of digging himself up from the political grave, in which he has lain all these years, to oppose his galvanised corpse to the march of events. And yet it is more humiliating still to think that the Home Rulers would have been to-day but a powerless faction if Gladstone had not at last made up his mind to take them up.

As it is, “His Leadership” has undoubtedly pushed forward the cause of Revolution; nor can it be denied that he would never have attempted to do so unless there had been some growing instinct in its favour. Nor if he is beaten in the elections will his defeat much check the growth of that instinct. As has been said before in these columns, the Tories and Jingoers have been driven to see the impossibility of mere coercion. What are they to do, then, when they find themselves apparently masters of the situation? They *must* bring forward their Home Rule measure, which will of course be framed in such a way as to give the Irish the shadow without the substance of independence—

the “tub-to-the-whale policy” is the only one possible to them. They will hope partly to tire out the Irish party and partly to divide them into moderates and irreconcilables: in the latter attempt they may succeed beyond their expectations, and beyond what is good for the health of their own party. The Irish may, and probably will, accept the compromise offered them—accept it as a compromise, that is, without leaving off the agitation for complete independence. In a short time it will no more be a question of some Gladstone Bill, with its safeguards and constitutional provisions, but of something far more revolutionary. The Irish will be divided indeed, like the familiar demon in the old fable, cut by his unhappy employer into two unmanageable devils; and the more unmanageable will not be asking for a mere Dublin parliament, but will be claiming his right to do something with the country of Ireland itself, which will make it a fit dwelling-place for reasonable and happy people.

In short a triumph for the great Whig Rump or Moderate Party seems at hand, which will undoubtedly strengthen it very much in Parliament, and will overawe the parliamentary and constitutional opposition to its dull and eyeless tyranny; but may it not be hoped that its very success, and the woodenness with which it stands in the way of the progress which it was once supposed to further, may open the eyes of ingenuous people not wedded to mere party names? It seems to me a fair hope, and that many driven back on themselves and compelled to turn away their hopes from the parliamentary squabble, will begin to bethink them of what the true end of politics is, and that a new party will begin to form outside Parliament, a party of the People prepared to help themselves, by education first, consultation next, and at last, when the happy day comes, by action. It seems to me that the defeat of the present attempt to give Home Rule to Ireland which is founded on a genuine popular instinct, will be a blessing in the form of a curse if it helps to purge people's minds of this waiting on parliamentary providence, which is such a heavy weight on our over-patient democracy.

On the other hand, if the Gladstonites manage to snatch a victory from the hands of the Whig-Tory-Jingo coalition, they will still find that the battle is to be fought over again: compromise, hesitation, evasion, and all the many forms of lawyer-like delay which so-called statesmanship has had such long practice in, will whittle their triumph away to nothing; and those of them who have been in earnest in championing freedom and its hopes, will find out before long that the day which will make them parliamentary outcasts is only deferred and not got rid of. The Great Whig Rump will die hard, and even the first days of obvious Revolution will find it still there, still supposing itself the only real political party, still fulfilling its real function as the battle-flag, the car-borne standard of respectable legalised robbery.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

## CO-OPERATION AND COMPETITION.

THESE are the forces relied on by the Socialist and the Individualist respectively. A comparison of the advantages or otherwise of each may help us to decide rightly between these two opposing principles.

Competition, it is said, stimulates every one to do his best; it finds out those exceptionally good, and rewards them by raising them above their fellows. The more good at business makes much money, hence all seek to be good; the more skilled at work gets higher wages, and perhaps eventually gets out of the working class altogether, hence all will try to become skilled. The ideal man of a competitive society is the one who has raised himself from the ranks and has become a wealthy lord mayor. The books which such society finds its youth to read are such as ‘Men who have Made Themselves,’ or ‘From Log Cabin to White House.’ The Individualist likes to see society in the form of

a pyramid, in which the best, as he considers them, get to the top, and all are stimulated by the chance of rising to do their very best. This is, I think, a fair statement of the advantages claimed for a competitive society. Let us see how far these are realised, and with what attendant evils.

First, then, who is it that get to the top, and in what way are they the best? Evidently they are best at getting for themselves, either money, position, or honour; and it by no means follows that they do the best for society while engaged in the struggle to get themselves on. For their first aim being to make money, they will only make good articles so long as these pay them best; if they can make more money by selling shoddy clothes, the good of society will weigh very little with them. In order to be successful their best energies must be used, not to make really good and beautiful articles, but to get the better of their fellow competitors in the market—any device must be resorted to in order to undersell them. It is true that some of the devices may be a benefit, that the pressure of competition may lead to the discovery of useful labour-saving machinery; but I fear it more often leads to the discovery of adulterations and shams. The great difficulty there is of getting good, honest or beautiful articles, and the enormous quantities of shams and rubbish which are to be found everywhere at the present time, are proofs enough that competition does not tend to produce good articles, granted that it does bring plenty of them.

But even if this were less evident, there is still to my mind a more serious objection to competition as a system upon which to base society—namely, its influence on the production of something more important than commodities—men. What is likely to be the result on the character of a race of men if they are set to compete one with another, each to get the better of his neighbour? Surely they must become selfish and heartless. The most selfish will get on best, the one who thinks most of his own interest and least of the interests of others. Where would the modern business man be who, when selling out shares which he believes will go down, should stop to think of the ruin he may bring to some poor family? Again, has it not become a bye-word that a certain amount of dishonesty is necessary in all trades? To get up the pyramid of a competitive society it is before all things necessary to have no regard for the feelings of those who must be trodden on in mounting. Only a few can mount at best; the many must always be the down-trodden. And this process is graced nowadays by the title of the survival of the fittest! Christ would have said the fittest for hell!

As modern society embodies this principle of competition, so would a Socialist society embody the opposing principle of co-operation, under which men would join together to make good things because they wanted them. It being manifestly to the interest of all to have really good serviceable articles, and to the pleasure of all to have them beautiful, such only would be made. If men were co-operating to produce what they wanted they would take care not to waste their labour on bad material, for they would see that it was to no one's advantage to have more labour to do than was necessary; and the best way to economise labour is to use it only on the best materials, which last long when once made, and to make them up in such a way that they will not need much repair. Hence we see that co-operation would take away all interest in bad work or shoddy goods, and so would abolish at once all the dishonesty of trade as at present carried on. A useful emulation in the doing of good work would be enough to ensure steady progress, and the desire of leisure to follow various studies or pastimes would be enough stimulus to the invention of labour-saving appliances. Quite a different side of man's character would be drawn out by such a system; his selfish side would find little encouragement; there would be no rising on the backs of his fellows, but he would soon develop the love of common interests in place of his own; he would be proud to be received as an equal by all around, and would get to hate to be cringed to as a superior. Were he a Christ he would feel it more honour to walk arm in arm with an uneducated fisherman than to be knelt to by the wisest.

I have only touched on a few points of contrast between these two principles. I have said nothing of the killing of all happiness and mirth by the scramble which competition invariably becomes; or of the crushing out of all love for, and so of all knowledge of, what is beautiful; nor have I shown how co-operation, by taking away the spur which goads us on, would leave us at peace to enjoy things as we do them, and find us leisure for art and mirth. But enough has been said, I think, to show that we must get rid of this competitive system if we are to have any pleasure in our lives or any love left in our hearts. Socialism offers the only way of doing this. It will only be by the workers refusing longer to be the dupes of competing capitalists, and uniting to produce goods for their own use and not for others' profit, that we shall get rid of the evils of competition and gain the blessings of co-operation.

RAYMOND UNWIN.

## THE SEQUEL OF THE SCOTCH LETTER.

ON Sunday 27th June I lectured on the "Political Outlook" at the Waterloo Rooms, Glasgow, the same place where my Thursday's lecture was given; this was under the auspices of the Branch, and our comrade Muirhead took the chair. There was a larger attendance than on the Thursday; howbeit several got up and went out almost as soon as I began: it seems there was some mistake as to my subject, as there was a religious meeting elsewhere on the premises, and some of the proper audience thereof had wandered into our hall. Moreover I sus-

pect that some found themselves "caught" by my title, and expected the lecture to refer to the present election instead of the wider subject which it dealt with. The audience was over 600, I should think, and was attentive and sympathetic. Instead of the cut-and-dried, meaningless vote of thanks, our comrades arranged to try the effect of a resolution, which was thus worded: "That all political action which does not aim at placing the entire means of production in the hands of the community, to be used by it for the equal benefit of all, is totally inadequate to raise the present labouring classes to the level which they have a right to claim as human beings." Comrade Glasier put this resolution in a very able speech, and it was seconded by Mr. Cunningham; and to my surprise no one proposed an amendment, or spoke against it: some half-dozen hands were held up against it; the rest, for. We afterwards appealed to the audience to make their resolution good by joining the League, and got some names at any rate. Mr. Bennet, once editor of the *Radical*, who said he had come in late by misadventure, made a sympathetic speech at the end of the meeting. The literature sold well.

The last lecture was on Monday 28th, at Bridgeton, the east end of Glasgow, and to speak plainly a most woeful abode of man, crying out from each miserable court and squalid, crowded house for the abolition of the tyranny of exploitation. But here we did not score a success. There were election meetings going on all about us; and I fear that our audience was just *not* that which we wanted—to wit, the poor folk of the district, who, if they only knew it, do so sorely need showing what it is that has doomed them to their special form of hell-upon-earth—one of the worst forms in existence, I should think. The audience was about 200, in a large hall, but entirely on our side. The monotony of acquiescence was only broken by an eager religionist, who turned his question-time into a kind of sermon addressed to us, which the audience listened to rather impatiently. A clergyman who elicited from me the answer that service as well as actual production of commodities conferred the title of good citizenship upon a man, seemed satisfied that this admission safe-guarded his craft in future society; but as he did not openly champion that position, it was not discussed. Comrades Glasier and Greer moved and seconded a resolution, the wording of which has escaped my memory, but which was rather more complete in its Socialism than the one of Sunday, and no hand was held up against it. Several names were taken for the Branch before we left the hall.

This was the end of my work; but I should mention that I had a long conference with the Branch on the Sunday, and must say that though circumstances prevent their propaganda from being showy, it is sound, and especially that there seems every chance of their developing the sale of *Commonweal*. I must add that the Branch of the Social Democratic Federation is on very friendly terms with them, and that they co-operated heartily in trying to make our meetings a success; and the members that I came across were very cordial to me.

Altogether the condition of opinion in the Scotch towns that I have visited is encouraging. It must be remembered that it was a bad time of the year for the kind of work I had in hand; to which must be added the much more important stumbling-block of the most exciting election-time of our days; and yet the halls were mostly well filled, and the audiences more than attentive—almost enthusiastic—and as above said, two of them passed Socialist resolutions. In short, not to make too much of outward tokens, one could not help feeling that the ideas of Socialism are taking hold, and that people are beginning to feel the hollowness of that kind of politics in which all reforms pass by those who need them most. Nor will the attachment to puritanic religion, which has been held up as such a bug-bear to us, be a very serious barrier to Socialism; the one or two appeals to it which were made in my hearing were received decidedly coldly. The Scotch, it seems, no longer care to mix religion with their politics, whatever influence genuine feeling, or habit, or respectability may have on them in the matter. I was told that when Henry George appealed to their old puritanic feeling on the occasion of his last visit, it fell very flat indeed; and I was not surprised to hear it, after my own small experience herein. Here, then, is good hope of harvest, and once again the labourers are few. Let us hope that will mend before long, and that Scotland will not be the last in the Revolution. WILLIAM MORRIS.

## A Word in Time saves Nine.

THOSE who think the eight-hour movement, if generally adopted, would benefit the working-classes, will do well to consult some of the American papers, which are engaged at the present moment in a fierce controversy as to the probable results of its adoption. It has been pointed out *ad nauseam*, by revolutionary Socialists—who, the events of every-day life prove, are the only persons able or willing to grapple with the labour question—that these so-called reforms are but myths in themselves, and are, after all, entirely useless in attaining that object for which they are supposed to exist.

A bourgeois weekly print, the *Brooklyn Morning Journal*, Brooklyn, N.Y., in a recent issue, commented rather strongly on this question, and placed the whole matter in a nut-shell, as will be seen by the following:

"Even if ten hours' pay is demanded and granted, working-men will receive no more than they are now receiving as a day's wages, says the Omaha Bee. But there is still another point to be taken into consideration. Shorter hours and the same pay for working-men mean an increased cost of production and consequently a decrease in the purchasing power of the dollar. On a basis of two hours less work for the same pay, manufacturers will have to

add a heavy per cent to the price of goods to secure the same profit as before the reduction of hours. The result of this must be an increase in the case of every article into which labour enters. Working-men with the same wages as before the reduction in the hours of labour will have to be content with considerably less of the comforts and necessities of life which they now enjoy. There would be a proportionate decrease in the purchasing power of the dollar under the increased cost of production. That is what Mr. Powderly means when he says that while eight hours for a day's work is desirable in some respects it is of doubtful expediency at present. On the other hand, there are strong arguments used in favour of the reduced hours of labour. It is claimed by its advocates that reduced hours would mean employment for the unemployed, and that the march of invention, new machinery, and devices for decreasing the cost of production would sooner or later produce results equal to those now produced on a ten hours' basis. But it will take time to bring about these results. That eight hours will shortly be the ordinary day's work there is little question. Working-men should be prepared to accept the consequences."

Few words of mine are required to interpret the meaning of the above extract. We are continually engaged in pointing out that the capitalist will, wherever possible, recoup himself for any encroachments on profits that these reforms may threaten to bring about. Whatever palliations in the lot of the worker reforms generally achieve (and where they exist at all they are ever scanty and meagre), will soon be neutralised by the cupidity of the capitalist classes. Our delightful competitive system affords equally delightful opportunities to the capitalist to fleece the consumers in an ever increasing proportion to the amount which these reforms pretend to give to the producer.

Revolution, not reform merely, is the thing that is wanted in order to permanently raise the condition of the community from that rut of spoliation and degradation into which it has fallen. The "iron law of wages" can never be seriously interfered with while this system lasts; while production for profit is the basis of our Society the "iron law" reigns supreme; when, on the other hand, production is carried on for use minus profit, its terrible effects will be no longer felt; and then, for the first time will happiness be secured and life worth living.

H. DAVIS.

### LEADERS.

How can a labour agitator or reformer be properly accused of "arousing discontent" or inciting to riot? If wrongs did not exist and if people were not suffering from injustice, the agitators, no matter how eloquent, could gain no hearers, and could wield no influence whatever. The speaker who creates enthusiastic interest in a throng of listeners is simply portraying truths in vivid pictures; depicting facts already known, in clear, strong language; defining, fastening, holding up to view, the real conditions which every hearer feels vaguely, sullenly, ignorantly perhaps—but still, feels. A prosperous community containing no poverty-stricken members, could not possibly be "incited to riot." The authorities knew, that while this country was new, and profit systems had not yet crowded its citizens to the wall, it was entirely safe to allow perfect free speech; with no immediate occasion for "discontent," agitators might talk and disturb nobody. Now, when in this country as well as every other, there is an army of men without a chance to work, and a larger army of people who work like slaves and live like paupers while millionaires grow richer and more tyrannical, it is not safe to allow reformers to state their grievances and wrongs. All the people feel; for them to know would be to act, and the power of the bourgeoisie would vanish.

Our most prominent speakers and writers are called "leaders," "inciters," "breeders of discontent," etc. This is a mistake which even many labourers perhaps make. They only say what thousands of us believe to be true, because they are more fitted to say it than the rest of us. They give to the world what we want to see given to the world, and what so many of their hearers feel in their heart to be true. They speak and write what is necessary to the movement should be expressed, because they are able to do so and feel it a duty. They are not urging on a reluctant following to hazardous and foolish positions—they are simply obeying the call of an idea—an idea which is permeating the whole working world to-day. Then neither undue praise nor undeserved persecution should rest upon their heads. If the authorities want to try anybody for the radical ideas that have been expressed in the past few years, they should try the whole body of advanced, free thinking men and women—in fact, the whole grand movement for human freedom all over the world. The men on trial to-day have only put in words the feelings and principles inspiring millions of people; they have not created principles or aroused feelings which did not already exist.

Free thought—free speech itself is on trial. If in the United States, a precedent is established for the limitation of speech, from this time forward, whenever any powerful party has an interest in gagging someone else, his ideas will be classed among the prohibited ones, and he can be effectually silenced. It, then, behoves every lover of freedom in this country to assist in the defence of the Socialists in Chicago. We want no such precedent established. We want it to be impossible for quiet, peaceable gatherings to be broken up lawfully. The people of the west especially, noted for loving freedom, should be willing to sacrifice something and help the defence both financially and sympathetically. Friends, assist the defence!

LIZZIE M. SWANK, in *Labor Enquirer*.

**SHEFFIELD SOCIALISTS.**—On Monday, June 28, J. Sketchley, of Birmingham, gave us a lecture on "Socialism." He pointed out how impossible it is that the present state of society should continue, showed by figures the frightful disparity between the receipts of the wealthy few and the wages of the working masses, and advocated the principle of collective Socialism as a means by which Society would ultimately return to the ideal Communism. There was a good and intelligent audience, and the lecturer was received with enthusiasm. On the Wednesday following an open-air meeting was held at Rotherham. There were 300 to 400 present, and Home Rule was advocated from a Socialistic point of view by J. Sketchley, T. Garbutt, and E. Carpenter. Four quires of *Commonweal* and four quires of *Justice* were sold during the week.—E. C.

The power of education is almost boundless; there is not one natural inclination which it is not strong enough to coerce, and, if needful, destroy by disuse.—*Mill*.

## THE WHISPERING WIND.

(By FERDINAND FREILIGRATH. Translated by J. L. JOYNES.)

THERE'S not a child along the Rhine as far as Switzerland but knows  
The murmur of the whispering wind that up the stream for ever blows;  
With cooling breath o'er pleasant fields from early dawn till angry noon,  
To dwellers in the sultry streets he brings the blessing of his boon.

Yes, ever only up the stream through all the vale from hill to hill,  
Goes hurrying on the bustling breeze with whisper soft or whistle shrill;  
Upon the bosom of the flood he scorns to rest or downward ride,  
But hastens up from wave to wave against the river's tossing tide.

Far down the valley's fruitful fields he sets him forth at first to roam,  
Past many a hut and many a mill and many a humble cottage home;  
And thence to high-built palace halls where lords and mighty princes dwell,  
To din into their deafened ears the tale of wrong that he must tell.

He roars and rattles round their doors without a thought of shame or fear,  
The only unlash'd honest voice those palace precincts e'er may hear;  
And blows till all the sky be bright, till all the mist be backward rolled,  
The curtained mist whose vapours dim their high-embattled walls enfold.

Yes, bright above him grows the sky, and mist and vapours flee away;  
So let him whistle round the walls, and blow the loudest blast he may;  
Till yet another breeze shall rise and usher in a brighter morn—  
The songsters of the wood awake, a whisper on the wind is borne.

The whisper of that other wind is borne where'er its breezes blow,  
But always upward to the heights it comes from lands that lie below;  
From lowland still to beight and hill mounts up a murmur and a cry,  
And thatch and hut and cottage home still pass it on to palace high.

The palace walls are veiled in cloud, and shrouded round with mists of wrong,  
But patience yet a little while! the wind will clear them off ere long!  
How thick soe'er the vapours hang, how close soe'er the clouds be furled,  
No more may they have leave to stay to blot and blight a waking world.

All thanks to thee, thou whispering wind, and may thy murmurs ne'er be dumb,  
Till wrong be rolled like mist away—O would the happy time were come!

For not a child by banks of Rhine right on to Switzerland but knows  
The voices of thy whispering breeze that upward, upward always blows.

## THE VOICE OF FREEDOM.

LOUD across the world it ringeth, we have heard it in our sleep—  
We have heard and we have wakened, though our slumbering was deep.  
Many a man whose heart nigh failed him in the long and weary night,  
Now with soul aglow is watching for the dawning of the light.  
And the voice o'er all the nations has gone forth upon the wind,  
Bearing hope to those despairing, sight to those who wandered blind.  
"Wake, oh men!" the loud voice crieth, "wake, if ye be men indeed;  
Will ye sleep and slumber ever, bound to serve a tyrant's greed?  
Surely all too long, oh toilers, have ye been the slaves of gold;  
Are ye men, or have ye quite forgotten of your sires of old?  
Hope not Freedom from the masters who reap pleasure from your pain;  
All the freedom they would give you is but lengthening of the chain.  
When they see ye pale and restless, they may lengthen it a whit,  
Soothing ye the while to slumber, that ye be content with it.  
Shake it from you altogether: come, clap hands, the night is late,  
And the golden dawn is flushing round about the eastern gate."  
And we rise, our chains upon us, at the voice that thrills us through.  
Lo, the piteous sight that greets us: we are but a weakened few,  
And around us lie our comrades, knowing not the bonds they wear,  
Seeing not the light we gaze at, feeling not the hope we bear.  
Loudly, loudly let us call them. See them rising one by one,  
Till our little band grows stronger underneath the rising sun.  
Free we must be. In our souls the seraph voice of Liberty  
Thrills till every chord is trembling as a harpstring's melody.  
See, the clouds begin to scatter; brighter, brighter grows the day;  
Happy we to see the morning hold the long, long night at bay!  
We, the toilers, shall no longer be the passive driven slaves;  
We have seen a nobler future. What though pierced with many graves  
Be the way that leads to freedom? Shall we shun the glorious day  
Though our very names should perish in the eagerness of fray?  
Lo, our hearts are set upon it, and our feet are on the road:  
Burn the bridge, and let us forward,—on to Liberty's abode!

FRED. HENDERSON.

If the doctrine of monopoly is true, the most industrious have the most money. The toilers are now about ready to start for the summer resorts, and the non-producing idle monopolists will have to stay at home and sweat.—*Industrial News*.

**GREED.**—Will greed ever relax its grip from the throat of industry at the instance of justice enforced by reason? Let us see. The demand of greed, like that of the highwayman, is that of something for nothing. Will the highwayman cease his demand when his victim pleads the injustice of the demand? Not at all. Its injustice is admitted by the highwayman. He says it is not a question of justice, but one of force. Suddenly his victim whips out a revolving navy, gets the drop on the highwayman. The highwayman then delivers a discourse on the terrible crime of murder, meantime gives up his demand for his victims money. What follows? A truce of course with this understanding, the highwayman may retreat without being killed, providing he makes no motion to draw his arms. Don't you see it takes force instead of reason to stop a highwayman. So it will require force to stop the spoliation of greed from industry. Reason's field is to point out to industry where, when and how it is robbed by the ingenuity of greed. But we doubt if anything will ever stop the robbery but force directed against the robbers, who act as agents of the system greed represents.—*Chicago Express*.



"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 are invited from all concerned with social questions. They should be written on one side of the paper only and should be addressed to the Editors of the COMMONWEAL, 13 Farringdon Road, E.C. They must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication.

As all articles are signed, no special significance should be attached to them because of the position they may occupy in these pages. None, therefore, are 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.

QUESTIONS bearing upon the principles propounded and the objects had in view by the *Commonweal*, will be welcomed by the Editors.

CORRESPONDENTS wanted in Dundee, Rotherham, and Workington.

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RECEIVED—England: Anarchist—Worker's Friend—Daylight (Norwich)—Christian Socialist—Church Reformer—National Review—Republican—Journal of Vigilance Association—Justice—To-Day—Freethinker—Practical Socialist—Leicester Co-operative Record—Imperial Federation—Our Corner—The Socialist. Belgium: Le Chante-Clair (Bruxelles). Canada: L'Union Ouvrière (Montreal). France: Paris: Cri du Peuple (daily)—La Revue Socialiste—Le Révolté—Le Socialiste—La Tribune des Peuples—Revue du Mouvement Social—La Citoyenne. Le Devoir (Guise)—Le Forçat du Travail (Bordeaux). Germany: Neue Zeit (Stuttgart). Holland: Recht voor Allen. Hungary: Arbeiter Wochen-Chronik (Buda-Pest). India: People's Friend (Madras). Italy: Il Fascio Operaio (Milan). New Zealand: Watchman. Portugal: O Campino—Voz do Operario—O Protesto Operario (Lisbon). Spain: El Angel del Hogar—Revista Social—Acacia—La Justicia Humana (Barcelona)—Bandera Social—El Socialista (Madrid)—El Socialismo (Cadiz)—La Perseverancia (Huelva). Switzerland: Sozial Demokrat (Zürich). U. S. A.: (New York): Volkszeitung—Der Sozialist—Freiheit—Progress—John Swinton's Paper—Spread the Light—Our Country—Amerikanische Arbeiterzeitung—Truthseeker. (Boston): Liberty—Woman's Journal. Denver (Col.) Labor Inquirer—Little Socialist—Chicago (Ill.) Alarm—Detroit (Mich.) Labor Leaf—Princeton (Mass.) Word—Cleveland (O.): Carpenter. Cincinnati (O.) Unionist—San Francisco (Cal.) Truth—Stockton (Cal.) Mail—Petersburg (Ill.) Voice of Labor—New Haven (Conn.) Workmen's Advocate—St. Louis (Mo.): Altruist. Kansas (Mo.) Sun—Pittsburg (Pa.) Labor Herald—Baltimore (Md.) Labor Free Press—Valley Falls (Kan.) Lucifer—Newfoundland (Pa.) La Torpille—Litchfield (Minn.) Radical—Evansville (Ind.) Neue Zeit Milwaukee (Wis.) Volksblatt—Portland (Oregon) Alarm—Salem (Oregon) Advance—Thought—Paterson (N. J.) Labor Standard.

ARTICLES RECEIVED.—Will appear: "Malthusianism"—"The Dead to the Living"—"A People's Palace"—"Isms and Schisms."

#### NOTES.

The Liberty and Property Defence League, *i.e.*, the League that defends the liberty of robbery and the property of the privileged in other people's labour, have been having a field-day; they have seen the necessity of doing something towards internationalism, since it is clear that their principles cannot be bounded by narrow geographical-political limits. So M. Léon Say has been holding forth to them; and a very proper person he is to do so, considering that he is one of the directors of the Decazeville miners, in whose liberty and property he is so seriously interested. He admitted and lamented the spread of Socialism from France to England, and spoke of it as taking two forms, centralising and municipal Socialism, which he spoke of as already affecting the liberty to live at other people's expense. But if M. Léon Say lives, he will see what real Socialism means, something very different from the first nibblings at crude State Socialism that he has got into his head as being the enemy. He expressed a sort of after-dinner hope of crushing out Socialism in France, which aspiration of a true defender of Liberty no doubt he will do his best to realise. Just so sailors, who find there is an irretrievable leak in their boat,

try to keep out the limitless ocean with whatever of rags or oakum happens to lie handy; not because they really hope to succeed, but because they must needs satisfy their consciences by hoping against hope.

Bad news from Burmah—or good, if you be not a confirmed Jingo. The Dacoits are giving trouble indeed, and are as eager for other people's goods as the veriest Englishman would have them to be; this is always on the assumption that they are Dacoits, *i.e.*, robbers; as, of course, all people are who resist the progress of our commercial body-guard. And yet, if the history could be written by the vanquished, their resistance would seem uncommonly like that defence of hearth and home that has been so besung amongst us, though we have had so little to do with the practice of it, except as affording occasion for it. Indeed, as regards our dealings with barbarous foreigners, we English are like the poor in the capitalist morality, whose function it is to afford occasion to the virtues of charity and benevolence. If the Burmese, therefore, are troubled to account for such unaccountable evils as English invaders, they had better conclude that they were made to give them an occasion for practising hopeless courage first, and fortitude under injury secondly. They are hardly like to find a better solution of the problem.

By the way, the Indian mutiny is an old story now; but it is worth while to quote a line or two from the very frank author of "Life on Board the Alabama" in the *Century* magazine, who says in passing as a matter not worth much attention, "I must say that the 'pandies' were not a whit more brutal and savage than the English civilians and soldiers." He saw Gordon afterwards in China, and found him "a very common-place gentleman," with a great talent for swearing. General Ward, the ex-Yankee clipper-mate," he admired far more as "bold, bloody, and resolute." The poor devils of Taipings probably found out the meaning of those words, which give one a kind of shudder, as of Captain Teach or Blackbeard come back again. Truly our soldiers of fortune are a fine present for us to give to the "outer barbarians."

W. M.

#### SOME INSTRUCTIVE FACTS.

A FEW facts are worth a great many suppositions. The following brief history of a firm has been put together as an illustration of the working of the present competitive system. The writers have satisfied themselves of the accuracy of the statements, and are quite prepared to prove them if challenged. This is in no way meant as an attack upon the persons at the head of the firm, nor is it the record of an exceptionally infamous instance of capitalist tyranny and greed. Plenty of similar cases could be found, and no doubt many a great deal worse. It is just a type of the system, and without the least exaggeration in the telling.

Some weeks ago a note appeared in this journal on the state of trade in Leeds. A firm in the flax industry was mentioned which would shortly close its works, remove its machinery to America, and leave some fifteen hundred employes without the chance of earning even the scanty living now afforded them by the mills. The firm referred to is Marshall & Co. It was founded some seventy or eighty years ago by the father of the present partners. Business was started in a humble way, but carried on with more than ordinary shrewdness, and perhaps less than ordinary regard for the people who laboured hard and long to build up the great mass of wealth now owned by the masters. The business grew steadily and quickly into fame and importance: the workers made the riches quickly, and Marshall & Co. took care of them. In time one of the hugest flax-mills in the world was built, splendid machinery made, and at the period of their greatest prosperity about 3000 hands were employed. To-day the head of the firm is reputed a millionaire, while the younger members have trifling fortunes of a few hundred thousand pounds each. These mills became, of course, one of the staple industries of Yorkshire, and many hundred families depended on the employment furnished by them. Of late years, however, the great change which has come over England's commerce began to affect this branch of trade, and with characteristic acuteness the firm was at once on the lookout for a means of holding on to its profits. It was soon apparent that trade was not merely dull or declining, but that it was departing from the country altogether. The capitalists soon resolved to follow their profits, and preparations were made, and are now nearly finished, to leave the country. Their capital (machinery and all) will be transported to America, where the industry can be carried on more profitably. This case of capital being driven out of the country is not caused by terror at the spread of incendiary doctrines, but is simply the result of the capitalist looking out for himself, as he always will, and going to whatever country and exploiting whatever people will yield him the biggest return.

But although the capital is going, the workers will be left behind. Labour is as willing, plentiful, cheap, and, on the whole, as docile, in America as here. So the cost of transit will be saved, and the workers, including several hundred young girls, will be left to look out

for themselves,—or rather, left without a chance of looking out for themselves, for there is not the least likelihood of one-third of these discarded hands finding employment. Trade is bad enough in Leeds, but worse in nearly every other part of the country. These hands are now left, outcasts in their own land, to intensify the distress and swell the army of unemployed.

Some of these employés have worked all their lives, and are now unable to begin work afresh at a new task. The provision made for those who have grown grey in the service of the firm is instructive as an example of capitalist generosity. One man who has toiled for them for fifty years is to be pensioned off with 2s. 6d. per week. He would have got this much at least from the parish, but being now a "pensioner," is disqualified for receiving poor-law relief. Yet he is one of a fortunate few; for some old people who had been with the firm for from thirty to forty years were told on applying for similar favours that they must wait until some of the older pensioners have dropped off. The total sum paid in pensions is twenty-nine shillings per week.

The conditions under which most of the hands work are of the "hell-hole" kind usual in most large factories. About seventy men are employed as "hecklers." The atmosphere of their workroom is permeated with a fine dust, which comes from the flax and settles on their lungs. The men are all short-lived: an old man is exceedingly rare. This kind of work is just what forces men to drink. Sobriety becomes an impossible virtue (if it be a virtue at all). Many of the girls work under conditions little better—and of course with the usual results.

The wages of these employés are regulated by the usual method of competition. Of late they have been steadily decreasing. Ten years ago the weaving girls could earn from twelve to fifteen shillings per week—an enormous income for a young factory lass in the best of times. But declining trade and intensified competition overtook the struggling capitalists, and in order to keep a grip on their profits the girls' wages were gradually reduced, until now the average will be from 3s. 6d. to 5s. 6d. weekly. This is but an illustration of what is going on in other departments.

There is another mill at Shrewsbury owned by the same firm, which at one time employed two thousand hands. All that has been said of the Leeds mill is equally true of the Shrewsbury one.

It would be useless to speculate on what will become of the people thus deprived of their living. We can, however, feel sure that their future will be hard enough and that Society, which has so heavily sinned against them, will hear more of them some day. It is a curious proof of the brutality of the commercial system, and shows off the "free workman" of modern times in a strange light. A few thousand people turned adrift in the richest country in the world: many of them into the most abject misery.

In conclusion, a few words to you, Mr. Stephen Marshall. Pray don't think the above is a personal attack upon you, or even upon the distinguished firm of which you are the head. This case was selected merely as a type of others, to illustrate the system. You are, no doubt, as good as most of your class, and perhaps better than a great many. If you did not get your fortune by work—the only honest way of getting anything—neither did your fellow capitalists. Indeed, if you are any way inclined to moralise, you will probably console yourself with the reflection that if you hadn't appropriated the wealth made by these poor old men and unfortunate girls somebody else would. After all, the blame is not entirely to be laid at your door, or even at that of your class. If the workers were more alive to their own interests, the cunning and dishonesty of the capitalist would avail nothing. No doubt you will find a multitude of excuses to calm your conscience. Besides, it must be mentioned in your favour that if you have left your employés in poverty, you have also left them a church, erected at the expense and by the generosity of your firm. Therein they may find at least spiritual comfort, and learn to despise earthly treasures—which they might as well do, seeing that the little you have left them is hardly worth respecting. But you are not merely a gross money-grabber, absorbed in the pursuit of pelf. You are an ardent patriot and upholder of your country's greatness. When the integrity of the empire was threatened, you, like a true Whig-imperialist, rushed to its support. You are a member of the Loyal and Patriotic party, and no doubt you will subscribe more to its funds than you will give to relieve the workers, without whom your funds would have been as small as men of average ability usually possess. It is not very loyal and patriotic of you to scurry out of the country with your capital because profits are higher elsewhere. Surely a disinterested patriot would prefer a small profit in his own country to a larger one in a foreign land. But let that pass; it is only what the most patriotic of your fellow loyalists would do in similar circumstances. It is no use raking up these things now when you are leaving us. Get yourself off to America, and your capital with you. None of us will lament the loss of you,—though we would have liked to nationalise the machinery. However, the Socialists in America will see to that soon enough. Farewell, and may the Revolution overtake you before you have squeezed another million out of the people of America!

Leeds.

J. L. M. and T. M.

How many men are there who have lived as idle parasites, and who, if they had been compelled to work in order to gain their bread, would have made good and industrious citizens.—*L'etourneau*.

No man could be rich, no man could be poor, in Peru; but all might enjoy, and did enjoy, a competence. Ambition, avarice, the love of change, the morbid spirit of discontent, those passions which most agitate the minds of men, found no place in the bosom of the Peruvian.—*Prescott's "Conquest of Peru."*

## REVIEW.

MODERN SOCIALISM. By Annie Besant.

Mrs. BESANT has written a useful pamphlet under this name, all the more useful as with her name on the title-page it will reach some groups of advanced political thinkers who would otherwise have been frightened off the subject. It is clearly and pleasantly written, with as little technicality as may be, and in the main steers clear of subjects that are in controversy among Socialists. The arrangement is good. After a brief notice of the utopian Socialism of Robert Owen and the communities which resulted from it, it takes up the question of production for profit, with the consequent antagonism of classes; then deals with competition, and points out its evils and the remedies for it; then points out what capital is, and deals with the objections to a society producing without profit. The opening sentence of the chapter on Land which follows, is somewhat sanguine: "It is hardly necessary to argue at this time of day that land—i.e., natural agents—ought not to be the private property of individuals"; but that there is a public to whom such words can be addressed is true, and is a hopeful truth indeed. The concluding chapters deal with Education, Justice, and Amusement, and the Conclusion takes up some of the more ordinary objections which anti-Socialists make who have pretence to economical knowledge.

Perhaps the American communities are dwelt on rather disproportionately to the length of the pamphlet. Although these communities were experiments in association, from one point of view they were anti-Socialistic, as they withdrew themselves from general society—from political society—and let it take care of itself. They were rather modern and more extended forms of monasticism, and were distinctly exclusive,—hence their failure. To me, in common with other Communists I should suppose, Mrs. Besant's definition of Socialism and Communism seems incorrect: "Socialism merely implies that the raw material of the soil and the means of production," says Mrs. Besant, "shall not be the private property of individuals, but shall be under the control of the community." But I ask is not the part of wealth which can be called "the means of production" that part which individuals do not use for satisfying their personal needs? And that part which they are so using no Communist would meddle with. What each takes from the common store for his personal needs he will use as he pleases, so long as he does not turn it into an instrument of compulsion for the exploitation of others. The Socialism which Mrs. Besant and others sometimes distinguish from Communism, is only an initial and imperfect form of it. The abolition of private property in "the raw material of the soil and the means of production" must lead to Communism, as the present monopolists will instinctively perceive, and they will in consequence resist the initial stage by any and every means in their power.

In a future edition Mrs. Besant might put back the commencement of the Industrial Period to a date before the Great Machine Industry. Adam Smith belongs to the Division of Labour Period, what Marx calls the "Periode Manufacturière," during which the workman was himself the part of a machine, the *group*, which was the unit of industrial production. This system was at work early in the seventeenth century, and under it exploitation of labour went on merrily, though of course the old individualist system of production survived partly amidst it, just as the division-of-labour system still survives amidst our machine-industry. A sentence or two on this point need not interfere with the clearness of Mrs. Besant's exposition of profit-mongering.

I may add that Mrs. Besant has had a testimonial to the usefulness of her pamphlet in the eagerness, or indeed the brutality, with which it has been attacked by some of the members of the party with which she has hitherto been identified.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

## OBJECTIONS TO SOCIALISM.

(A Reply to Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, M.P.)

VI.

(Continued from p. 93.)

AFTER the very serious mis-statement that Socialism aims at taking "the private economies of millions of industrious wage-earners for the benefit of those who may have neither been thrifty nor industrious"—a misstatement the more serious in that the present system, of which our objector is champion, does precisely this very wrong—we have the time-honoured deprecation of "physical force." This deprecation always seems to me so queerly out of place in the mouths of those who defend our modern methods. For these, initiated by physical force, are based on physical force and entirely maintained by physical force.

When as an objection to Socialism it is urged that one final and supreme use of physical force may have to be and there an end of it for ever, we note, first, that it ill becomes the advocates of capitalistic production to complain of their own weapon being turned against their own throat. We note next, as has been noted before in this series of papers, that not to keep constantly before men's eyes the certainty of such an actual struggle is to preach peace when there is no peace. We note third (and for the repetition of this for the thousandth time the constant repetitions of our antagonists are to blame) that the revolution could and would be a perfectly peaceful one, were it not for the resistance to their perfectly righteous dispossession that will be forthcoming at the hands of the privileged classes, when the process of disorganisation sets in.

Mr. Bradlaugh reads Shelley. Let him turn to the "Masque of

Anarchy," and there he will see how the acute poet-mind foresaw what would happen. When the vast assembly of the free is gathered together, and in measured words declares itself emancipate, the tyrants will pour around their troops of armed emblazonry. We may be sure that, the time coming when the workers declare their intention of taking all the means of production into the hands that have made them, there will follow a bitter period—may it be as brief as bitter!—of fierce resistance to this just decree. But that this is inevitable is no reason whatever for those who recognise more clearly than even their opponents how inevitable this is, to uphold the present iniquitous system—a system that entails more human suffering of the dumb sort in a week than would follow from a year of revolution.

The argument that the inevitable revolution is "in the highest degree difficult, if not impossible," because "property holders are the enormous majority" is, from our point of view, not water-tight on the general grounds just given. But in itself it is worthless, as we think. First of all, on the mere question of fact. It is doubtful whether with the most liberal estimate of what a property holder is—nay, even with the most radical estimate—the mere number of units supports Mr. Bradlaugh's strange contention. Even acting up to the farce of regarding every possessor of a dozen stamps in a post-office savings-bank as a property holder, it is open to question whether, setting against these all the toilers who have not reached even this extravagance of wealth, and all the paupers—the reserve army of labour—the mere numbers of the latter do not exceed those of the former. But it is not only a question of quantity of property-holders. It is one of the quality of their holdings. It is of no use to support a system that graciously admits of a few thousand depositors in penny savings-banks, if the same system makes possible a Rothschild or a Duke of Westminster. Even if property-holders were in an enormous majority, the enormous majority of property is in a very few hands. Even in the interest of the enormous majority of property holders, and appealing to the lowest of their motives, any change in the method of production of goods would be for them a change for the better.

After this comes the discovery of another contradiction that is not a contradiction. J. L. Joynes has written that the immediate aim of Socialism is "not the abolition of private property, but its establishment . . . on the only sound basis." Mr. Hyndman, in the abortive debate, spoke of "collective ownership of land, capital, machinery and credit." And these two statements are gibbeted as contradictory. This they in no sense are. Both these gentlemen have in their mind that which we have such difficulty in driving into the minds of our antagonists—the necessity of ending, once for all, private property in the means of production. This need not in any way conflict with the private possession of "my watch, my coat," and the like, as to which the individualists are so clamorous. How vaguely our opponents think on this point is shown by the concluding sentence of this same paragraph, in which we find the writer saying, "to me it seems impossible that if *everything* be owned collectively, anything can be owned individually, separately and privately." The blunder here is, of course, in the word I have italicised, though an odd error in sentiment rather than in thought seems to me running through it. For my own part, I feel quite as private and individual a sense of ownership in things I hold in common with others, as I do in those that are more exclusively mine in the individualist sense. For example, my feeling of ownership in regard to the British Museum is every whit as strong as in regard to my boots, even when the latter have been paid for.

It is really no wonder that our essayist says quite pathetically that he is afraid "Mr. Joynes has in his mind some other unexplained meaning for the words 'capital' and 'property.'" Mr. Joynes has only the meaning for capital that we are always explaining, and never getting understood—"for ever telling, yet untold." Capital is due to unpaid labour. It would be interesting to have from our antagonists their definition of capital, their explanation of how it is possible for a non-worker to become worth thousands of pounds. Even an attempt at explanation from them would have the charm of novelty.

Then Mr. Bradlaugh turns to statistics, and furnishes us with another weapon against himself. He reminds us that there are of professional men 647,075 in England and Wales; commercial men, 980,128; farmers, 249,907; unoccupied males over twenty (not including recognised paupers), 182,282. Let us add all these together. They come to 2,059,392 out of a population of 25,974,439. Not  $\frac{1}{12}$ th of the whole. Is it not strange that any one quoting these numbers fails to see the enormous injustice of a system that lets some two millions only out of a population of twenty-six millions batten on the unpaid labour of the other twenty-four.

(To be continued).

ED. AVELING.

The New York *Tribune* is anxious to have somebody write a statistical history of strikes, in order to show the strikers that they did not have as large an income while they were out as they would have had if they had worked steadily all the time. The *Tribune* is evidently under the impression that the strikers went into the strike as a speculative enterprise, and even now believe that they made money by the operation.—*Voice of Labor*.

"The labour troubles did not extend to the rural sections, where good farm hands continue to work eight hours in the forenoon and eight hours in the afternoon at an average compensation of 25 dols. a month.—*Chicago Tribune*." A man enjoying a safe income of 75,000 dols. a-year will naturally take a complacent view of the situation when he sees millions of producers toiling contentedly for a bare subsistence in order to support his affluence. But how would it strike the *Tribune* man if he were compelled to "work eight hours in the forenoon, and eight hours in the afternoon, at an average compensation of 25 dols. a month," with small prospect of ever being able to do any better?—*Voice of Labor*.

## INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST AND LABOUR NOTES.

### AMERICA.

BOSTON, June 8.—At Stoneham this morning half the members of a militia company refused to obey an order of their captain which conflicted with an order issued by the Knights of Labour. It was an aggravated case of insubordination, which will doubtless end in the arrest and court martial of more than half of Company H, Sixth regiment. The company was ordered to start for the state muster ground at South Framingham. The captain had arranged to have his company transported from the town to the railroad station, two miles distant, on the only line of horse cars which the town boasts. During the recent labour troubles the Knights of Labour placed a boycott on the railroad company and established an independent line of coaches. When the company reached the cars this morning more than half the members refused to take their seats. The captain was thunderstruck at this disobedience of his command, and again ordered them to board the cars. The men stubbornly remained standing in the line. They explained that they belonged to the Knights of Labour, and they could not enter the cars unless the boycott placed on the company by the executive committee was removed.

ST. LOUIS, June 14.—To-day warrants were issued for the arrest of forty-seven Knights of Labour, the most prominent being Chief Advocate M'Murray and Secretary Nolan of Assembly No. 3650, for conspiracy to destroy railroad tracks, turntables, switches, etc. The Missouri Pacific Railway company expresses its determination to press these cases to the end.

SAN FRANCISCO, June 15.—There was a general strike to-day of cooks and waiters in most of the large restaurants in this city. Many of the restaurants were compelled to close, while others ran short-handed. The cause of the strike was the posting of rules for the control of the cooks and waiters, which the strikers consider unjust.

The cooks and waiters' strike ended to-night by the restaurant owners agreeing to modify the objectionable rules to meet the views of the strikers, and making eleven hours a day's work, instead of thirteen, as heretofore.

The labour organisations of San Francisco and other Californian towns will celebrate the Fourth of July, after the true style of 1776. The I.W.A. will take an active part.

NEW YORK, June 20.—The big shoe factory of Brennan and White has been killed by the boycott. The firm employing 150 "hands" last April drove out their women-workers for joining a union, and began to run amuck against all unionism. The women were backed by the whole body of their fellow-workers, who struck; ever since the firm have been compelled to resort to make-shifts for securing slaves. The unionists exhausted every resource in trying to get fair terms of settlement from the firm; but Brennan and White were obstinate as Pharaoh. At last the boycott was reluctantly brought into play by the victims as an agent of defence. The firm have for fifteen months waged their anti-Union war, while, during all that time the unions have unceasingly striven to cut off the enemy's supplies. Their market was as wide as the country, but it was no wider than the network of unions and assemblies in which they found themselves entangled and which they could not evade. Their saying that they would "bury organised labor" has been followed by their own fall into the grave which they had dug.

The annual picnic of the Socialist Labour Party took place in the Lion Park, last Monday. Over 2000 men, women, and children were present.

### FRANCE.

The disturbances at Lyons owing to the introduction of workers from the north of France, still continue; the latter are fraternising with the strikers right pleasantly. A rather amusing incident occurred between the two parties: the strikers stationed before the workshops were considering what means they should use to communicate with the strangers within, so as to appeal to their feelings of solidarity, when they saw appearing over a wall one of these workers waving a paper in his hand. Being encouraged to descend and explain his mission, he presented his document, in which rang loudly the tone of fear, begging for mercy from the ferocious strikers and explaining they did not relish being kept as in prison in the workshops. The delegate was sent back with a reassuring letter, bidding them be of good heart, as no harm was intended them. Whilst the workers were at dinner, two of the strikers climbed the wall and opened the doors to their companions, who entered and fraternised with those within, the two parties finally marching out in high spirits arm in arm, singing the "Marseillaise" under the nose of the astonished master. In the evening, at a big meeting held at the Boule-d'Or, the workmen brought the day before from Belgium and the north of France passed a resolution protesting against the machinations and deceptions of the masters, and declaring that they were resolved not to work against the interest of their colleagues of Lyons.

At a silking-weaving factory at Amplepris, employing about 1000 workers, the master has gradually and gradually been reducing the wages, till about a fortnight ago 300 of the employés struck. The number of strikers has now reached 650, and they are determined not to go in until a reasonable tariff has been offered them. The wages are now reduced to from 1s. to 1s. 3d. a day of twelve hours.

### THE STRIKE AT DECAZEVILLE.

Basly and Co. may cry "Victory" over the termination of the Decazeville strike as they will; nevertheless they well know it is no victory, but a defeat. The proletarian has once more given way before his exploiters. After 108 days of suffering and privation, the miners have gone back to work, submitting to the conditions imposed by the Company—conditions constituting a *compromise*, far more in favour of the Company than themselves, *capitulation* before the conqueror, who will now pick and choose among the workers, and dismiss all those who had shown the most spirit during the strike. Thus the most energetic will leave the district, with hearts embittered, and will seek work elsewhere in France, in some part where the "Internationale Noire" of the capitalists has not yet preceded them with the denunciation, "têtes dangereuses" (dangerous men).—*Le Révolté*.

It is to Rodes that our rulers went to find juries to convict those whom they wished to send to the galleys. They took from among the lot several men and women who were in the street at the time of the execution of Watrin—being evidently those whom the Company had pointed out as "têtes dangereuses"; and on these eight men and two women they placed the responsibility of an execution done by all—by the people, whose patience was worn-out at last.—*Le Révolté*.

The trial was of course a farce—an opera-bouffe (with an excellent show

of military force to give an air of reality to the *mise-en-scène*, in which the praises of the Company and of Watrin were sung touchingly enough by solo and chorus. According to the procureur Baradat, Watrin was the workers' sole benefactor, the Company their guardian angel. Of the accused, three were sentenced to seven, six, and five years' imprisonment, and one (Bedel) to eight years', with hard labour.

Le *Socialiste* has had several articles lately rejoicing over the termination of the strike, going so far as to entitle one "Victoire!" I confess I do not see much to rejoice over in the easily-to-be-foreseen end of the affair,—rather, much to make those watching the courageous struggle profoundly melancholy, seeing with the proverbially clearer sight of onlookers that this is not the "forerunner of the Revolution," as I have seen it called, but an isolated attempt, and that it was to end—as will all such attempts until organisation instead of chaos reigns supreme among the workers—in a compromise.

Le *Révolté* thus speaks of the state of the Liège miners who have lately been out on strike for a short while: "It is almost impossible to realise the normal condition of misery in which this population of 30,000 exists. After successive reductions, the wage is so lowered that a bourgeois journal now before us, speaking of another intended reduction, says, 'It would be difficult to reduce wages further, no matter for what grade of workers, for they have already reached the extreme limit.' The most skilful workers make about 1s. 3d. in a day of twelve hours; but the crisis here is so serious that the companies are giving five days', and sometimes only four days', work. 'It is not to be denied that the men are discouraged,' continues the same paper; 'they go to work listlessly and without hope.'" M. M.

### A LETTER FROM INDIA.

BOMBAY, June 6th, '86.—To tell you frankly the only way I see to help the Cause is by circulating the *Commonweal* and such pamphlets as you may send, and if you choose to print my name in the weekly paper, people all over India will gradually get to know that there is at least one Socialist here. In private life I make no secret that I am a Socialist, but I have no time nor stomach for public lecturing. I know not a single Socialist here. The very name is unknown. The people are steeped in the depths of ignorance. Labour is so cheap that much of the work done by horses and carts in England is done by women here. All railway embankments and cuttings are carried in baskets on men and women's heads, principally the latter. They seem happy in their work. They are laughing and chatting all day as they carry their loads, and in my experience they are certainly well-fed, their vegetarian food of millet flour cakes and chili condiments, washed down with water, agrees with their constitutions. Their work hours, judging by the English standard, are not over hard, 9 to 6, with one hour interval at noon, i.e., 8 hours per day. But it is also the custom to make them come from 6 to 6, with two hours' interval, equal to 10 hours work, technically called a day and a quarter. They are happy because they are all in the same boat, and because there is no misery from cold. Clothes are worn only for decency not comfort's sake. The coolie man during work throws off all his clothes save the waist-cloth, which is with some castes precisely the same as English bathing-drawers. I believe it is the very article. But the women always work decently and modestly dressed, and the men are very careful of the honour of their women. They are absolutely without education, can neither read nor write, which is not saying much considering that England was in the same condition 100 years ago. Lord Ripon, during his viceroyalty, passed an ordinance for primary vernacular schools all over the country, the first step in the right direction. All superior education is obtained at the Government public schools and colleges, and the only way to spread your propaganda will be through the students, who form the teaching class. You will now see that Indian circumstances are very different from what you are accustomed to in London. We have a small highly-educated class in the chief towns, who can hold their own anywhere with Englishmen; some even can write passable English poetry, in correct idiom and with good feeling. I send you the first page of a pamphlet written by a Calcutta Indian, urging his countrymen towards national life. The tendency of the English commercial government is to break up the communal life of the country villages, so as to make the villagers utterly poor and turn the money-lenders into landholders. No longer ago than fifty years, the land revenue of a village was paid by the community as a whole (the *commune*), consisting of shopkeepers, tradesmen, tenant farmers, messengers or postmen, and labourers; each one of whom had his recognised share of the village produce, and each one of whom did the village work in exchange for that produce. Money was in those happy days unknown; barter was a sufficient medium of exchange. Before English rule came, even the rent was paid by a recognised share of the produce. The English changed all this, gave the whip hand to the money-lender by decreeing that revenue should be paid in money, and in order to render this possible they made the land a negotiable security by passing a law to vest it in the individuals of the village communities. Hence, far-seeing men see only black ruin for those who live upon the land, but the merchants, the lawyers, and the professions of the towns are flourishing by means of that commerce developed through the English Government, which is at this very time, from its undue lowering of the cost of English produce, bringing ruin upon all connected with the land in England. So that the English connection with India, the main river of English capitalism, which feeds privileged classes among the manufacturers, bankers, and merchants, keeps up the Jingo spirit in the army and navy, is the cause of all our big and little wars, bids fair to have far-reaching effects throughout English life and in the English future, unless you and others turn your minds to understand and grapple with the novel problem. Hyndman has gone a good way towards proving that the English connection with India is the ruin of India; you have yet to see that it may possibly be also the ruin of England. Certain I am that India and Ireland are suffering from exactly the same disease, the Castle government, and the agitation in both countries is proceeding upon the same lines, viz., to upset the Castle and introduce Home Rule, excepting that in India, barring the Mutiny, there is no violence to life and property. I cannot believe it is conducive to the prosperity of England that the cultivation of corn should be given up, and hundreds of thousands of acres of arable land changed to pasturage, simply because landlords and tenants cannot make a profit out of wheat, and that you should be dependent upon all the world for the necessaries of life. Yet you cannot shut out Indian wheat as the French have done, because the privileged classes of England and the Government combined draw from India 20 millions sterling yearly, of which 12 millions come from India direct and 8 millions through the Chinese opium tribute. So that you see it is a large question, having far-reaching effects, because the Indian tribute is paid in wheat and raw produce.

D. GOSTLING.

### AFFAIRS IN KANSAS.

The following interesting letter has just been received from a comrade whose name is already known to readers of the *Commonweal*—

"Office of the *Daily Citizen*, Topeka (Kan.), U.S.A.  
Our organisation (I.W.P.A.) here, can scarcely be called an organisation. We are working in the Knights of Labour, and really control every action of that society, which has over 1500 members in this city. We hold regular open-air meetings in the city park every Sunday afternoon. The platform is perfectly free to any one who has anything to say. The speakers as a general rule are very Radical, and almost without exception preach the speedy dawn of the Social Revolution. Resolutions were recently passed expressing sympathy with the Chicago "brethren." The attendance is very large, the crowd generally reaching two or three thousand persons.

"Times are very dull here. The "Santa Fe" R. R., whose shops are located here, and in which are employed over 2000 men, have recently made a reduction in their force. This causes a very material depression in the business of the community. A new railroad which has been grading, has stopped work indefinitely. This leaves some 200 men out of employment. Surely the old saying, "Go West, young man," is losing its significance, and becoming only a matter of fiction.

"We have organised a society for the protection of the poor against the rich, to see that the laws of the land are impartially administered; to see that legislative bodies perform their functions aright; to prevent corruption in everything. This organisation will make a fight against the police and police-courts, which are the great oppressors of the poor, and the only courts in which a man is denied the constitutional right of a jury. We will fight the vagrancy law, and attempt to have it stricken from the statute books."

"Hoping our friends in London are enjoying the same degree of prosperity that we are experiencing, I remain, fraternally yours,

"HARRY A. BLAKESLEY."

### LITERARY NOTICES.

*What's to be Done?* By N. G. Tchernychevsky. Benj. R. Tucker, publisher, Box 3366, Boston, Mass. Paper, 75 cents.; cloth, 1 dol.—This novel and its author have a remarkable history. The work was written in 1863 in a St. Petersburg dungeon, where the author was confined for twenty-two months prior to being sent into exile in Siberia. The author was not only one of the foremost literary men of Russia, but one of the earliest and most influential of the Nihilists, and, though still in exile, he is looked upon by the Nihilists even yet with a peculiar veneration. His influence upon the youth of Russia was of the most extraordinary and wide-spread character, and was chiefly exercised through this romance, *What's to be Done?* The book was suppressed by the Czar, but not before it had had a large circulation. The Russian work is now rare, but it is read secretly in Russia still, where copies have been sold for a thousand roubles each. Though it has been translated into nearly every European language, Mr. Tucker's admirable translation is the first in English. The phenomenal movement by which the youth of the upper classes in Russia, and especially the young girls, have enrolled themselves in such large numbers in the Nihilist ranks, received its greatest impetus from the publication of this book, the principal characters in it becoming types on which these young people formed themselves. So important was the work done by this book that the Italian author, Arnaudo, in his history of *Nihilism and the Nihilists*, devotes an entire chapter of over seventy pages to its analysis. He says of it: "*What's to be Done?* was welcomed by the Russian youth with extraordinary enthusiasm, and was always considered by the Nihilists themselves as the best and most faithful picture of Nihilism." Alexis Tveritinof, who translated the work into French, writes: "Never did a novel bear such fruit, and in so short a time, as this one. To it and to it alone is due the type that we now see developing more and more—I mean the Russian female student. In 1873 there were 108 of them in the University at Zurich; but after the famous ukase which pronounced them all libertines and nullified the diplomas of that university, they started for the other universities of Europe instead of returning to Russia and abandoning the study of the sciences. The ukase launched by Tchernychevsky from the depths of his prison was, it seems, more potent than that of the chief of police, Schouvalof, and the Minister of the Interior, Timaschef. . . . *What's to be Done?* has completely transformed the family relations of the young generation; and persons may be found whose minds are not sufficiently elevated to understand all the ideas contained in this novel, but who nevertheless arrange their lives upon it as a model, as if regarding it as an ideal of moral force to be attained." In view of these facts, this book might not improperly be called the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of the Russian Nihilists, and should be read by all who can procure it.

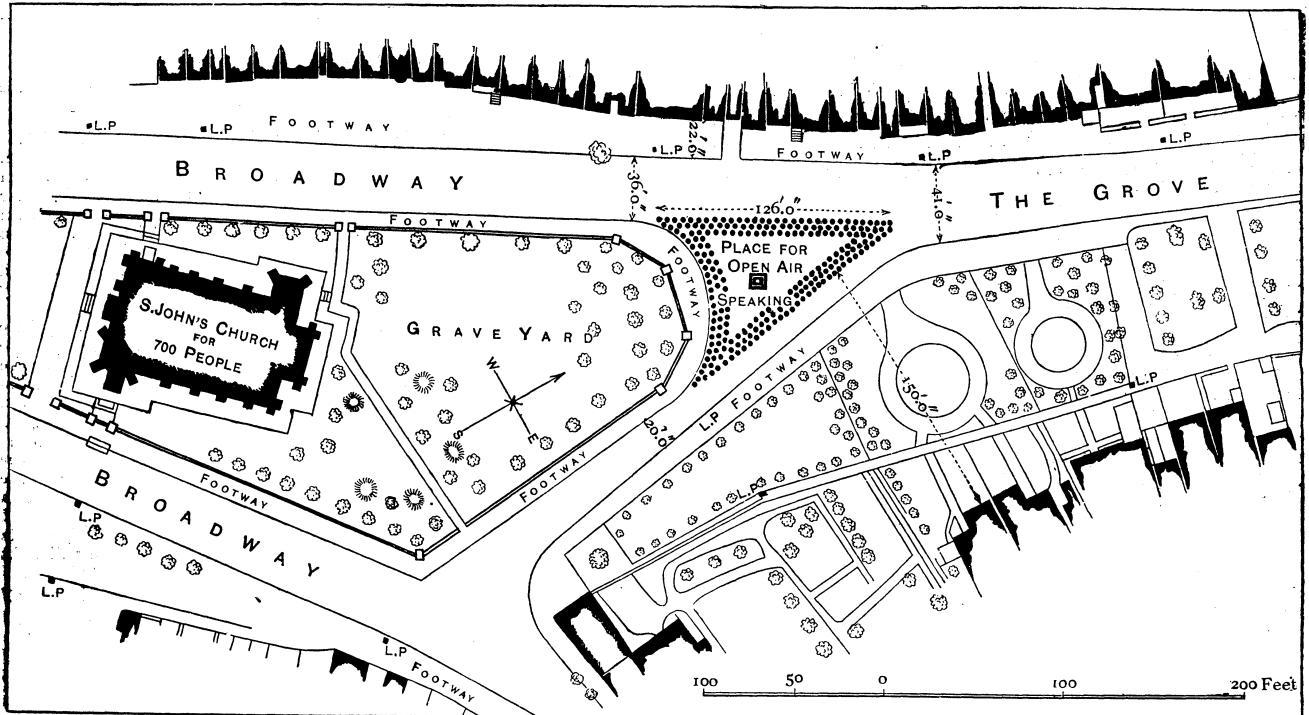
### POLICE INTERFERENCE IN MARYLEBONE.

For the past two years addresses have been delivered by Socialists at the corner of Bell Street, Edgware Road, without interference from the police or complaints from the inhabitants. But the police seem to think that we have become too popular, so, as a means of stopping our popularity, they have determined to add to it by arresting our speakers. On Sunday morning the police came prepared to make an arrest, and brought with them several plain-clothes men, evidently for the purpose of causing an obstruction, as they persisted in standing in the middle of the footway. Having thus succeeded in their purpose the inspector proceeded to stop the meeting, and I was at once arrested. In the evening comrade John Williams was arrested at the same spot.

On Monday morning we both appeared before the magistrate at Marylebone Police Court. The police-witnesses in cross-examination, admitted that we had been successful in our endeavours to keep the people off the footway, and that they had never interfered with any obstruction caused by the religious bodies in the district; that our doctrine was the most obnoxious, and that they intended to suppress our meetings. Of course, the magistrate decided as usual, and fined us 1s. each, after having given us a little fatherly advice. As the people in the district are entirely in sympathy with us, and against any interference by the police, it is not possible to prophecy what will be the end of this latest attempt at the suppression of free speech.

H. G. ARNOLD.

**SOCIALIST LEAGUE LITERATURE.**—Prices to the Trade and for Distribution, of all 1d. publications (including the *Commonweal*) 8d. per dozen; 1s. 4d. per quire; 5s. per 100 (not including cost of carriage).—H. H. SPARLING, Manager of *Commonweal*, 13 Farringdon Road, London, E.C.



Plan showing open space at Stratford where speakers of the Socialist League were arrested for alleged obstruction.

**THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.**

OFFICES: 13 FARRINGTON ROAD, E.C.

**Notices to Members.**

A General Meeting of London Members will be held on Monday July 26, at 9.

**Branch Subscriptions Paid.**

Hammersmith, Leeds, Norwich, Dublin, to April 30. Bloomsbury, Bradford, Croydon, Hackney, Merton, to May 31. Clerkenwell, Hoxton (Labour Emancipation League), Mile-End, Manchester, North London, Oxford, to June 30. Marylebone to Sept. 30.—P. W.

**The "Commonweal"**

On Saturday last a Board Brigade went out, with a couple of women-comrades, to sell the paper. The sale was nearly three quires. Next Saturday the experiment will be repeated. Start will be made at 11.30. Volunteers are wanted.

**REPORTS.**

(Reports and Notices should be addressed to the printer, and to insure insertion in the current issue must reach the office not later than 10 a.m. on Tuesday.)

**Executive.**

At their regular weekly meeting on Monday last, the Council resolved that a General Meeting of London members be held on the last Monday in each month, such meeting to commence after the business of the Council is completed; but if the business be not transacted by 9 p.m., that the Council do then adjourn. T. Binning, J. Lane, and W. Morris, were appointed a committee to arrange the order of procedure at General Meetings and report next Monday.

**Branch Reports.**

**CLERKENWELL.**—On Wednesday, June 30, H. Barker lectured on "Socialism" to a fair audience; lively discussion and reply; sale of paper good; propaganda fund, 1s. 8d.—On Sunday, July 4, John Clay, who was down to lecture on "The Land Question," found such a poor audience, owing to the very warm weather, that the Branch members present decided not to hold an indoor meeting, but to go to Clerkenwell Green, a large open piece of ground, well known for public meetings of all sorts. The decision proved correct; a large and successful meeting lasting nearly three hours was held, and addressed by H. H. Spurling and W. Chambers. The audience was sympathetic, and frequently applauded the speaker's sentiments. Good sale of *Commonweal*, and 2s. collected at the end of meeting for the Defence Fund.—W. B.

**MARYLEBONE.**—On Saturday evening we held our usual meeting in the Harrow Road; it was interrupted towards the close by a stupid person, who had come accompanied by about a dozen boys for the purpose of upsetting the meeting, but all passed off very well.—On Sunday morning we had a large meeting at the corner of Bell Street, and comrade Arnold was arrested at the close of the meeting.—We had a large audience in Hyde Park in the afternoon, which was addressed by comrades Arnold, Burcham, and Chambers.—H. G. A., sec.

**MERTON.**—Last Sunday, comrades Lane and Kitz addressed a somewhat limited audience in the open-air, and the sale of *Commonweals* was not quite so good as usual. As an offset we have made several new members, and increased the list of regular subscribers to the *Commonweal* in this district.—F. Kitz.

**MILE-END.**—On Tuesday, June 29th, owing to the warm weather, our usual indoor meeting was not held, but we decided to call a meeting on Mile End Waste. H. Spurling, in the place of W. Morris, addressed the meeting, which was a large and enthusiastic one. Some very illogical opposition was offered by a "Christian Evidence Society" man, with whom, however, the meeting was entirely out of sympathy.—On Saturday evening, we held a meeting on the Waste (our first attempt on a Saturday), which was very successful. Mowbray, at some length, explained the aims of Socialists and the position of the workers to-day, which, he said, was a false one and could not last; Graham also addressed the meeting. An appeal was made for subscriptions to the Free Speech (Stratford) Fund, which resulted in 6d. being collected; good sale of *Commonweals*.—A good meeting was also held at Stamford Hill, on Sunday, under the auspices of the Mile End Branch.—H. DAVIS.

**LEEDS.**—Two meetings were held last Sunday, one in the morning at Hunslet Moor and the other at Vicar's Croft, as announced. Both meetings were successfully carried through, and about two quires of the *Commonweal* were sold.—T. M.

**MANCHESTER.**—The meeting at Grey Mare corner on Sunday morning, though small was hopeful; papers sold well, and four new members were made. We regained our station at the Viaduct in the evening, and had a good meeting; some warm discussion took place.—R. U., sec.

**LECTURE DIARY.**

**London Branches.**

**Bloomsbury.**—Arlington Hall, Rathbone Place, Oxford Street, W. Friday, July 9, at 8.30 p.m., H. H. Spurling, "Killing no Murder." 16. G. B. Shaw, "Socialism and Malthusianism." 23. Annie Besant, "Why the Workers should be Socialists." 30. Mrs. Wilson.

**Clerkenwell.**—Hall of the Socialist League, 13 Farringdon Road, E.C. Sunday July 11, 7.30 p.m. W. Blundell, "Diseases, Mental and Physical." Wednesday 14 (8.30). H. H. Spurling, "Organisation."

**Hackney.**—Kenton Coffee House, Kenton Road, Well Street, every Tuesday at 9, for the enrolment of members and other business.

**Hammersmith.**—Kelmescott House, 26 Upper Mall, W. Sundays, at 8 p.m. July 11. Andreas Scheu, "Socialism and the Theory of Evolution."

**Hoxton (L. E. L.).**—Exchange Coffee House, Pitfield Street, opposite Hoxton Church, N. Sundays, at 7.45 p.m. July 11. W. Morris, "Education." 18, H. H. Spurling, "Unrest and Unreason."

**Merton.**—11 Merton Terrace, High Street. Sundays and Wednesdays at 8 p.m. **Mile-end.**—I. W. M. Educational Club, 40 Berner Street, Commercial Road. Tuesdays at 8 p.m. July 13. W. Chambers, "Our Political Parties."

**Country Branches.**

**Birmingham.**—Bell Street Coffee House. Every Monday evening, at 7.30. **Bradford.**—Scott's Temperance Hotel, East Parade, Leeds Road. Meets every Wednesday at 8 p.m.

**Glasgow.**—Lecture and discussion in new rooms of the Branch, 84 John Street every Sunday at 7 p.m. Reading-room of the Branch open every day from 10 a.m. till 10 p.m. sympathisers invited.

**Edinburgh (Scottish Section).**—4 Park Street. Meets every Friday at 8.30 p.m. **Leeds.**—No meeting-room at present. Out-door stations notified below.

**Leicester.**—Radical Club, Vine Street. Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.

**Manchester.**—County Forum. Thursdays, at 8 p.m.

**Norwich.**—Gordon Café. Every Monday at 8 p.m.

**Oldham.**—Mrs. Wrigley's Coffee Tavern, 9, Old Market Place. Wednesdays, 7.30.

**Oxford.**—Temperance Hall, 27 Pembroke Street. Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.

**Open-air Propaganda for the Week.**

LONDON.				
Date.	Station.	Time.	Speaker.	Branch.
Sat. 10.	Euston Road—Ossulton St. ...	7 ...		N. London.
	Harrow Road—opposite the "Prince of Wales"	7 ...	W. Chambers	Marylebone.
	Hyde Park (Marble Arch).....	7 ...	H. H. Spurling	Hammersmith.
	Mile-end Waste .....	7 ...	C. W. Mowbray	Mile-end.
S. 11.	Regent's Park .....	7 ...	D. Nicoll	N. London.
	Croydon .....	11 ...	W. Chambers	Croydon.
	Edgware Road—Bell Street.....	11.30...	Mainwaring	Marylebone.
	Hackney—Well Street .....	11.30...	H. Barker	Hackney.
	Hammersmith—Beadon Road.....	11.30...	The Branch	Hammersmith.
	Hoxton Ch.—Pitfield Street.....	11.30...	H. H. Spurling	Hoxton.
	Mile-end Waste .....	11.30...	Lane and Mowbray	Mile-end.
	Regent's Park .....	11.30...		N. London.
	St. Pancras Arches.....	11.30...	T. E. Wardle	Bloomsbury.
	Hyde Park (near Marble Arch)...	3.30...		Marylebone.
	Victoria Park .....	3.30...	T. E. Wardle	Hackney.
Clerkenwell Green .....	7 ...	Spurling & Blundell	Clerkenwell.	
Croydon .....	7 ...	W. Chambers	Croydon.	
Merton—High Street.....	7 ...	H. Charles	Merton.	
Tu. 13.—Soho—Broad Street .....	8 ...	T. E. Wardle	Bloomsbury.	
Th. 15.—Euston Road—Ossulton St. ...	7.30...	T. E. Wardle	N. London.	
	Hoxton Ch.—Pitfield Street...	8 ...	C. W. Mowbray	Hoxton.
	Mile-end Waste .....	8.30...	H. Graham	Mile-end.

**PROVINCES.**

**Hulme.**—The Viaduct, Chester Road. Sundays, at 7.30 p.m.

**Leeds.**—Hunslet Moor, 11 a.m.; Vicar's Croft, 7 p.m.

**Manchester.**—Grey Mare Corner, Ashton Old Road. Sundays, 11 a.m.

**Oldham.**—Curzon Ground. Sundays, afternoon and evening.