

THE COMMONWEAL

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ONE PENNY.

PSEUDO-SOCIALISM.

It is somewhere recorded that certain monkeys are addicted to nibbling the extremities of their tails, deriving a dreadful pleasure from the uncertainty of the limit to which they can carry the operation without incurring pain or discomfort, and many there are among men and women who approach Socialism in a like shrinking, tentative fashion. This spirit was manifested very plainly at the Fabian meeting at South Place on December 18th, and found concrete expression in Mrs. Besant's paper then given upon "How to nationalise accumulated wealth," since printed in the *Practical Socialist*.

A brief while ago some courage was required upon the part of anyone who admitted a leaning towards Socialism, or even the slightest knowledge thereof, but now, everyone who feels the misery of the masses, either by sympathy or in reality, and desires to palliate or remove it, hastens to proclaim his or her "socialistic" proclivities. But the British are a "practical" folk—and hence it arises that "practicableness," "moderation," "law" and "order," are the tender portion of the popular tail towards which the dilettanti Socialists gradually nibble with an awful sense of impending danger. From Mrs. Besant's previous record, it might have been inferred that she would treat her subject in a bold, unhesitating manner; instead of this she indulged in a truistic harangue which of course delighted the "moderate and peaceable," and might have been delivered in the House of Commons with applause.

To consider and treat of this half-hearted, purblind proachment with equanimity is barely possible. The monstrous power of devoting their wealth to the exploitation and enslavement of the workers which the present system confers upon individuals, is euphemistically termed a "great blot" upon the system, and to remove the "blot," Mrs. Besant proposes; "1st. To so legislate as to endeavour to prevent further accumulation, trusting to existing agencies to slowly disperse that already accumulated. 2nd. To disperse at death that which was accumulated during life." This is moderation and diplomacy with a vengeance! Truly a sublime ideal toward which we can all work with enthusiasm! Does Mrs. Besant mean that the utmost possible attainment for the present generation or the next is a point at which it may "endeavour to prevent," since a little further on she warns those of us who believe it within the power of an awakened people to not only *endeavour* but *achieve*, that we should "put off Socialism for two hundred years" by telling them so; or was she—I ask it with bated breath—only "talking round" a no-meaning, an utter vacuity?

In her denunciation of so-called "confiscation," and her advice to "make it more difficult to leave it to those who are thereby furnished with an incentive to idleness," Mrs. Besant, in common with her class of "practical people," has either forgotten, or omitted to mention several things worthy to be borne in mind in this connexion.

The community even now crudely recognises, and puts in force, the principle of "confiscation" in regard to those things which it knows to be inimical to its welfare. Restrictions are placed upon the storage and use of explosives, the carrying of firearms, the "individual enterprise" of adulteration, etc. When the community deems the possession or use of aught by one of its members to be hurtful or even threatening to itself, it promptly resorts to "confiscation," and does not content itself with "endeavouring to prevent further accumulation." Why, therefore, shall we "injure the socialistic cause" by teaching the people to extend the application of this principle to its logical conclusion—the destruction of individual monopoly in the means of production, transport, etc.—it being admitted that the said monopoly is injurious to the common weal? It is quite within their right that some who regard such an action of the community as undue interference with personal liberty, should strenuously object thereto, but it is futile and illogical for one who admits the principle to resist its application. Perhaps, however, Mrs. Besant reasons of the "morality" of such procedure in the ratio of its "practicability"—and its "justice" in proportion to the force, moral and material, arrayed upon its side?

"There is only one *right* to possession—the right a man has to all that he can produce; any other so-called *right* in possession is simply made by the law, that is to say, by social consent. What makes property? Labour." Just so; and what we Revolutionary Socialists are striving to do, is to get this recognised by the people. When that is done, the *revolution is accomplished*, and only waits realisation.

To attempt to mislead the folk from the prompt recognition of that central truth on the plea that Expediency pays; that it is "dangerous" to appeal to Justice and to Right; that we must wait—always wait—

and take thankfully just what concessions our spineless "practical" friends judge from time to time our owners are frightened enough to give, irresistibly reminds one of the lady who ordered that her dog's tail should be cut off by degrees—it would hurt so much more if done at a blow! Let but the people be once conscious that they are robbed, understand how, and identify the robbers, they will assuredly "make a sharp distinction between income which is the result of the . . . person's own work, and income which is the result of . . . other persons' work," but hardly, I think, for the purpose of debating upon a progressive or upon a cumulative income tax, as Mrs. Besant would apparently have them do, or even of discussing the enthralling problem, "when a person is living upon money which he has done nothing to earn, may he not reasonably be expected to contribute to the state some considerable portion of his income?"

It is a very comfortable doctrine for the possessing classes, and one that will aid them in tranquilising their "consciences," now somewhat disturbed by the shadows of coming events, that they may hold on to all they have the power to retain without incurring anything more severe than the "contempt of all honest men." Some of them already have experienced this and very "practically" shown their disregard of it! They may even command the cordial approval of the pseudo-socialist by so doing; for is it not *requisite* that reform shall be "gradual," and that the "slow process of evolution" shall never be unduly hurried by a revolution—of thought even?

Mrs. Besant was incorrect—and *knew* it—when she charged Revolutionary Socialists with a thirst for blood. In speaking of the "immediate use of armed force," she consciously made a rhetorical point at the expense of truth—and she further was fully aware when she taunted us with the "fifty votes, bought and paid for with Tory gold," that the action of the candidates who secured them was not only without the support of their own section of the party, but in open hostility to the principles held by all other Socialists.

As Mrs. Besant's strong point is the "consideration of practical questions," I may suggest that if she is really on the side of "palliatives," the "endeavouring to prevent," admirable as it may seem in its philosophic calm and dignified restraint, is hardly "practical" enough to do much good—to the unemployed, for instance—and that she would be much more "useful" in supporting the Radical programme than in striving to keep back the tide of revolution with her ineffectual besom. To her and to others I would commend the caustic words of Carlyle anent some kindred spirits who manifested themselves during the French Revolution: "One thing strikes us in these poor Girondins, their fatal shortness of sight; nay, fatal poorness of character, for that is the root of it. They are as strangers to the people they would govern, to the thing they have come to work in. Formulas, Philosophic Respectabilities, what has been written in Books, and admitted by the Cultivated Classes; *this* inadequate *scheme* of nature's working is all that nature, work as she will, can reveal to these men. So they perorate and speculate, and call on the Friends of Law, when the question is not Law or No-Law, but Life or No Life. Pedants of the Revolution, if not Jesuits of it! . . . A Republic founded on what they call the Virtues, on what we call the Decencies and Respectabilities, this they will have and nothing but this. Whatsoever other Republic Nature and Reality send shall be considered as not sent, as a kind of Nightmare Vision and thing non-extant, disowned by the Laws of Nature and of Formula. Alas! dim for the best eyes is this Reality; and as for these men they will not look at it with eyes at all, but only through 'faceted spectacles' of Pedantry, wounded Vanity, which yield the most portentous fallacious spectrum. Carping and complaining for ever of Plots and Anarchy, they will do one thing; prove to demonstration that the Reality will not translate into their Formula; that they and their Formula are incompatible with the Reality; and in its dark wrath, the Reality will extinguish it and them!"

H. HALLIDAY SPARLING.

THE TWO ENTHUSIASMS.

AN ANSWER TO MR. KARL PEARSON.

In a pamphlet recently issued, Mr. Karl Pearson has undertaken to assault the fortress of Revolutionary Socialism from the academic side. We are commonly enough bombarded by the professional economist, by the theologian, by the politician, by the "sentimentalist," but the "man of culture" has hitherto confined himself to the drizzling infantry fire of casual criticism. In Mr. Pearson, however, we are bound to

recognise an opponent not to be despised, and in his pamphlet a well-planned attack. To drop metaphor, Mr. Pearson whether he intended it or not, has stated a specious case for the nice young man fresh from the university, who shudders at the "coarseness" inseparable from a really popular Socialist movement, and prefers the attitude of missionary of culture to the benighted proletarian heathen to that of his co-worker in the cause of social emancipation and in the hurrying on of that class-struggle which is its necessary condition. His argument may also to some extent be considered an elaborate justification of another individual, namely of him who really feels that he is essentially unfit for the work of agitation and that his most useful sphere is in purely intellectual labour, which may quite possibly be Mr. Pearson's own case. We may say at once that so far as we can see, the last-named individual requires no justification at all, since Socialists should be the first to recognise diversity of capacity—diversity albeit largely intensified by current conditions—and that the "nice young man" deserves none, save that like the "coarse" proletarian to whom he condescends to direct his missionary efforts, he may plead that he is but the unfortunate result of a vicious system.

With the opening paragraphs of the pamphlet in question, which deal with the distinction between natural and supernatural morality, I heartily agree. Strange to say, on page 3 Mr. Pearson argues for a kind of neo-Puritanism; he would apparently give an introspective turn to social ethics, whereby the attention would still be directed primarily to the formation of individual character rather than to the clear and broad issues of social life and progress. We may have mistaken the author's meaning, but we must confess the prospect strikes us as rather appalling if the "trivial doings" of each day, let us say for instance, taking a walk round the room, are previously to performance, to pass the scrutiny of an internal examination as to whether they or the motives prompting them, are "dictated by those general laws, which have been deduced," etc. Certain broad lines of conduct clearly hostile to the existence of social life are to be shunned, other broad lines are to be followed—what more does an ethic founded on social necessity mean than this? Surely the hair-splitting casuistry of a theological morality—based upon the notion that every action has an "absolute value," and is certain to be rigidly assayed by a heavenly pawnbroker—is out of place here. The resuscitation too, of that ancient fallacy, that the test of the value or the truth of a doctrine is to be found not in itself, but in its advocate, I must confess surprises me in a man of Mr. Pearson's ability. His remarks on this head recall to my mind the would-be crushing argument of the Christian advocate of a generation ago, that Voltaire was a "bad man," and that hence his attack on Christianity is discredited at the outset. Also, that the authors of the gospels were good men and therefore they were to be believed. Hegel, we are quite aware, was by no means a man of heroic moral calibre, but this does not prevent his reading of the riddle of Life and Knowledge being, not even excepting Spinoza's, take it all in all, the least unsatisfactory up to date. As a matter of fact, as history proves, over and over again, there is seldom an equal balance between the intellectual and moral sides of a gifted man's character, so that in general we should naturally expect a man of exceptional power in the one direction to be deficient in the other.

Turning to the main theme of the pamphlet under consideration, we find the baneful influence of the individualistic and absolute ethics which the outset of the paper led us to hope Mr. Pearson had outgrown, again at work. To the Revolutionary Socialist Mr. Pearson says, "Abandon agitation, go and create a new morality." Now from the point of view of a Scientific Socialism, he might as well tell the engineer, "Abandon your borings and your blastings, say to yonder mountain, depart thou hence and be thou cast into the sea—for until the ground is level you will never make your highway." Mr. Pearson is evidently still more than half a Christian, leastways in his ethics. He thinks that all social change must proceed from the individual—that all reform must come from within, in accordance with Christian doctrine, but in striking defiance of the teaching of history and what I may term a *concrete* view of the nature of things. Morality is with Mr. Pearson an abstract entity to be brought to perfection by a culture of the individual breathed out, in some mysterious manner from the study, and operating by a magic charm of its own on squalid masses huddled in reeking courts, on the outcast in the recesses of London Bridge, on the factory slave or the shop-assistant without leisure and resources, on the out-of-work labourer with starvation at his door, no less than on the struggling shopkeeper whose being's end and aim is to hold out against the big capitalist competitor, and last of all on the giant capitalist himself—on the Vanderbilt or the Jay Gould. It is to operate, in short, irrespective of such insignificant obstacles as economic conditions and social surroundings. The factory-slave and the Vanderbilt are alike to feel the renovating influence touch their hearts, to hear the voice of "Culture" and live—a pleasant dream forsooth. Unfortunately, according to Mr. Pearson's own estimate it may take some hundreds of years, and "while the grass grows—" The proverb is something musty." Mr. Pearson in his study may be content to wait, but will social evolution wait?

"Human society cannot be changed in a year," says our critic. True, answers the Socialist, but its economic conditions can be radically modified in a very few years, through the concentration of the means of production and distribution in the hands of a Socialist administration. Thus although one generation may not indeed suffice to complete the transformation of Civilisation into Socialism, yet even one generation may dig the foundation of the fabric, nay, the time being ripe, may even rough-hew its more prominent outlines. We readily admit that the old leaven of civilisation must require many a long decade before it is

eliminated, but the generation which for the first time turned the helm of progress in the one direction by which its goal can be reached, would be worthy of none the less honour because it was not itself destined to see the promised land in its fulness. Thenceforward we shall be consciously steering for the goal which hitherto we have been at best only unconsciously and vaguely drifting towards; the whole political and administrative system, once the great crisis of the revolution is passed, instead of, as now, having for its sole aim the perpetuation of itself and of the class-antagonisms it represents, will have for its end the abolition of civilisation, that is of a class-society, and therewith its own abolition, since with the transformation of Civilisation into Socialism it will be a superfluous and meaningless survival.

In the pamphlet before us we have once more the hackneyed argument that the French Revolution left no enduring creation behind it, that it was abortive in short. Has Mr. Pearson ever read Arthur Young? Has he forgotten the state of France before and after the Revolution? Nay, not of France only but of entire western Europe? What was there of human creation in the French Revolution? asks Mr. Pearson. There was the creation, at all events, of the supremacy of the commercial middle-class (though that there is not much that is "human" in that I readily admit). The French Revolution meant the final realisation of Bourgeoisdom,—this was its central idea and purpose,—notwithstanding that it contained episodes which pointed to something beyond this. Into Mr. Pearson's special preserve of the Reformation I will not enter particularly, except to say that as I read history, the same remark holds good there also.

The "enthusiasm of the study" is by no means a new thing. It is as old at least as Periclean Greece. In the "garden," the "grove," and the "porch," we have the enthusiasts of the study; and in the later grammarians, enthusiasts who despised the market-place possibly even more than Mr. Pearson himself. Yet cannot we date the decline of ancient culture precisely from the moment when it became the exclusive appanage of the study? This high-toned ancient enthusiasm of the study, did it make a good end? Or did it not rather ignominiously "peter out" in the persons of the seven melancholy and neglected sages or pedants, who wandered in dry places seeking rest and finding none till the worthy Chosroes obtained them a respite for the term of their natural lives wherein to reflect on the vanity of that empyrean "enthusiasm of the study" which had become so rarified that no mortal besides themselves could breathe its atmosphere? Need I remind Mr. Pearson of other enthusiasms of the study? Setting aside the German humanists whose work, Mr. Pearson would say, was rendered abortive by the wicked men of the market-place, let us turn to the Italian renaissance, the court of the Medicis. Here the "enthusiasm of the study" was disturbed by no red-herring of the market-place. Yet what did it effect for mankind at large? What of the French salon-culture of the eighteenth century? For even Mr. Pearson, we suppose, will hardly contend that had it not been for the market-place Revolution which ensued, the "philosophers" and *littérateurs* of the study would have regenerated mankind by the influence of their conversation on the wits, *bons vivants*, and fascinating women of 18th century France. "Sweetness and light," again—the refined, æsthetic, middle-class culture of to-day—what has this gospel of "sweet reasonableness" done, what does it bid fair to do? Brought together interesting young men from the universities to study the habits of the East-end "poor," perhaps; provided a temporary stimulus in the direction of soup-kitchens and "literary institutes." Is Mr. Karl Pearson content with this?

But the root-fallacy of Mr. Pearson's pamphlet lies to our thinking deeper than this. It lies, namely, in his attempt to accentuate the distinction which civilisation has in great part created between the "study" and "the market-place," the man of learning and the man of labour, and to treat it as permanent. To the Socialist this is merely one of the abstractions created by a society based on classes, and therefore is essentially false and unreal, and as such destined to pass away with the other abstractions—*e.g.*, ruler and ruled, master and servant, capital and labour, rich and poor, religious and secular, etc.—which find their expression in modern civilisation. The enthusiasm of the market-place and the enthusiasm of the study are not properly two things but one. They form part of one whole. The enthusiasm of the market-place is the direct expression of the particular phase at which evolution has arrived, the enthusiasm of the study is its indirect expression. The present enthusiasm of the study with the large place modern science plays in it, differs from the old humanist enthusiasm of the 15th century, as that differed from the enthusiasm of the mediæval schoolmen, and so on, and we may add it differs from the enthusiasm of the future, when mathematics shall have been relegated to their due place in the economy of human culture. But the enthusiasm of the study *per se* is no substantial body; though fair in semblance, it is after all but a bloodless wraith. As little can you require the "enthusiasm of the study" to supplant the "enthusiasm of the market-place" in human society, as St. Thomas could have expected his decapitated head to urge St. Thomas on irrespective of the trunk to which it belonged. That the first condition of the healthy animal is a good digestion is a trite observation. The first condition of a healthy society, as certainly, is that it should have something to digest—something besides Pearsonic morality, wholesome as that may be in its proper place. In other words, the intellectual and moral revolution of society rests primarily upon the conditions in which its wealth is produced and distributed. When this is done in the interest of all, and when all take an equal share in it, then that embodied abstraction the "man of the study" will disappear along with that other embodied abstraction "the man of the market-

place." In a society in which culture is for all and work is for all, the antagonism of the workman and the scholar will be resolved in the concrete reality of the complete human being. Meanwhile so long as the antagonism exists, it is the market-place that must create the revolution, since the enthusiasm of the market-place, unreasoning, emotive though it be, is clearly the motive-power of society.

E. BELFORT BAX.

The Claims of the Commons v. The Rights of the People.

Now that we have a new House of Commons with a few labour representatives, and, as many of our Socialist friends are disposed to take part in Parliamentary action, it may be well to consider the nature of representative government, and its relation to the rights of the people.

The grand revolutionary ideal of the age is the Direct Sovereignty of the People. This excludes the very idea of government by representation. These principles are thoroughly antagonistic to each other. The one is the negation of the other. The two can never co-exist. Either the one or the other. The two together are impossible. Nor can the one ever be grafted on the other; the traditions of Parliament and the claims of the Commons to-day would prevent even the attempt by any one as a revolutionary Socialist. It is quite true there are men to-day, as there have been in the past, quite willing to attempt the impossible, but for any one or any body of men to try to reconcile the claims of the Commons with the sovereignty of the people would be the last degree of folly.

It may be asked, what are those claims of the Commons to which we refer and which are so antagonistic to the sovereignty of the people? This may be answered in one word—its claim to supremacy. It claims to represent the people and in the name of the people to speak and act with supreme authority. It claims the right to make what laws it pleases without consulting the wishes of the people, and to impose what taxes it thinks proper without any regard to the people's ability to pay them. The only right left to the people is the right to petition, to humbly pray their so-called representatives—the *servants* of the people as they are ironically termed—not to do this or to be gracious enough to do that. But the Commons claim even more than this—they claim the right to coerce the people should they become discontented, and to use against them the bludgeon and the bayonet. And the people are powerless.

We are told, it is true, that the powers of the Commons are limited by the Constitution, but what is the Constitution? Where is it? Has anyone seen it? Can anyone produce it? Can anyone say what it is, or where or when and by what authority it originated? The only possible answer to these interrogatories is a negative one. England has no Constitution. It is true, as we are sometimes told, she has her twenty-five thousand Acts of Parliament in addition to the Common Law, and that these are all that is meant by the so-called Constitution. But if the glorious constitution of England is a myth, the claims of the Commons are realities. And what are these claims? We are told by Sir Edward Coke and by Blackstone that the "power and jurisdiction of the House of Commons is so transcendent and absolute that it cannot be confined for persons or causes within any limits. It hath sovereign authority in the making, confirming, enlarging, restraining, abrogating, repealing, revising, and the expounding of laws, concerning matters of all denominations, ecclesiastical or temporal, civil, military, maritime, or criminal, this being the place where that absolute despotic power, which in governments must reside somewhere, is entrusted by the constitution of the kingdom. All mischiefs, grievances, operations and remedies that transcend the ordinary courts of law are within the reach of this extraordinary tribunal." Here, then, we find the Commons a kind of Hydra-headed usurpation, supreme, absolute, and despotic; supreme above the people, absolute in its decisions, and despotic in its powers. And these powers have been claimed by the Commons since the revolution of 1688, and have been exercised on numberless occasions. The House of Commons, like the crown, is above the law. It forms an irresponsible body over which the people have no control after the ballot-boxes are closed. Such is government by representation.

It may be asked, How came the Commons to be possessed of such unlimited powers? The answer is very simple. For centuries the Crown claimed the right to determine who should be returned to sit in Parliament. Hallam tells us that Richard II. sent for some of his sheriffs and ordered them to let no knight or burgess be returned without the approbation of the king and his council. The Parliament of 1397 was chosen by intimidation and court influence. We also read that Henry IV. (1410) ordered the sheriffs to have no regard to the number of voices at elections, but to return such as were subservient to the Court. The good Queen Bess and her council (1559) sent a list of the candidates who were to be returned, and they were returned. Now after the revolution of 1688 the Commons claimed the powers hitherto exercised by the Crown, and they claim them to-day.

In 1704 a burgess of Aylesbury brought an action against the Returning Officer for not allowing him to record his vote at the election. The burgess (Ashley by name) obtained the verdict. The Queen's Bench reversed the decision, but the House of Lords confirmed the original verdict. In the meantime five other burgesses had commenced actions on the same ground against the same Returning Officer. On the House of Lords confirming the original verdict, the Commons issued the following declaration: "The determination of members to serve in Parliament is the proper business of the House of Commons which they will always be very jealous of, and this jurisdiction of this House is uncon-

tested; that it exercises a great power in that matter, for it obliges the Returning Officer to alter his return according to its judgment, and it cannot judge of an election without determining the right of the electors; and if electors are at liberty to prosecute actions touching their right of giving votes, in other courts, this would make one fusion, and be dishonourable to the House of Commons, and therefore such an action is a breach of privilege." The House also passed the following resolution: "That whoever shall presume to commence an action, and all attorneys, solicitors, counsellors and sergeants at law, soliciting, prosecuting, or pleading in any case, are guilty of a high breach of privilege of this House." On this resolution the six burgesses of Aylesbury and their solicitors were sent to prison, and were only released by the queen proroguing Parliament. The House of Lords issued a declaration in which it defended the rights of the electors. Look at the action of the Commons in the case of John Wilks; and to-day in the case of Charles Bradlaugh. We see its despotic powers, too, in the numerous coercion acts passed at various times. Then, again, each Minister of the Crown can by warrant order the private correspondence of all suspected of being hostile to the Government to be seized as it passes through the post. Is not this despotism?

Can any revolutionary Socialist recognise these claims of the Commons—these claims to be sovereign and supreme? If he believes in the principle of the sovereignty of the people, can he accept the claim to supremacy of the so-called people's representatives. And if he does not accept such principle, on what ground does he rest his claim to be a revolutionary Socialist? If he accepts the declaration that there is no authority higher than the people, then he must reject the claims of the Commons as being based on usurpation and as altogether incompatible with the principle of the sovereignty of the people.

It may be asked, Ought then a revolutionary Socialist to take no part whatever in any Parliamentary action? Ought he to abstain from taking part in any Parliamentary proceedings? The answer is a very simple one. If he take any such part he recognises the claims of the Commons to be supreme, the claim to sovereignty of those who are foolishly supposed to be the servants of the people. It may be asked, Cannot a Socialist vote for a candidate for the House of Commons? Above all things a Socialist should be self-possessed. He should retain his freedom as a citizen, his dignity as a man. But in voting for a candidate for Parliament, the ballot-box is the tomb of his freedom; he there surrenders his dignity and ignores the revolutionary, the glorious principle of the sovereignty of the people. He virtually accepts the claims of the Commons—its claims to sovereignty, to supremacy—and thus recognises the legitimacy of its despotic authority.

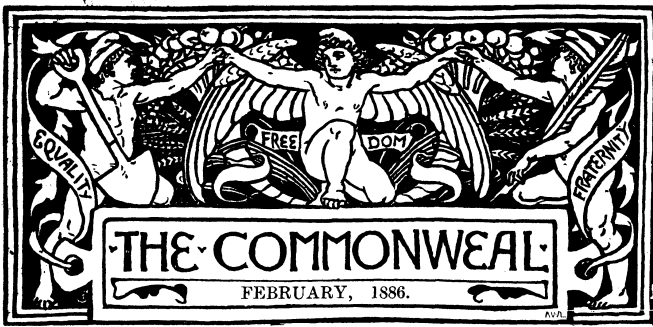
But it is argued that not only may a revolutionary Socialist vote for a candidate for Parliament; he may himself become a candidate for the House of Commons. Let us examine the question a little further. The claims of the Commons rest on usurpation. Its claim to supremacy rests on usurpation, and the exercise of despotic authority is an act of war against the people. To become a candidate is to accept the principle of usurpation, and to become a member is to join in the exercise of despotic power. The members of the House are jointly and severally an assembly whose claims are based on usurpation. Can any one become a member and take part in the proceedings of such assembly without himself becoming a usurper? Again, before he can take his seat as a member he must take the oath of allegiance, and thus recognise the supremacy of the principle of hereditary privilege over the principle of the sovereignty of the people. Would not taking the oath of allegiance be an act of treason on the part of a revolutionary Socialist, treason against the principle of the sovereignty of the people, and treason against the principle of eternal justice?

We are told to look at the position of Parnell to-day, *master* of the situation. But Parnell is a man of expediency, not of principle. Above all he is not a revolutionary Socialist, nor is the Nationalist movement socialist either in principle or in tendency. But a revolutionary Socialist is a man of principle, devoted to principle and incapable of compromise or expediency. To the revolutionary Socialist government by representation is impossible. Will cannot be represented. Rights can neither be abdicated, alienated nor transferred. The revolutionary Socialist takes his stand on the moral law of our being and not on the decrees of tyrants or the acts of usurping assemblies. He will echo the words of the late Thomas Carlyle when he said, speaking of mere Statute laws and the claims of the Commons, "I tell you and them it is a miserable blunder this self-styled law of theirs, and I for one will study either to have no concern with it, or else by all judicious methods to disobey said blundering, impious, pretended law." Nor did Carlyle stand alone.

Take the following from Lysander Spooner on "Natural Law," sec. 3, p. 12, "If there be in nature such a principle as justice, nothing can be added to, or taken from, its supreme authority by all the legislation of which the entire human race is capable. And all the attempts of the human race, or any portion of it, to add to, or take from, the supreme authority of justice, in any case whatever, are of no more obligation upon any single human being than the idle wind." The true Socialist accepts the moral law, and he accepts no other. He takes his stand on principle and never recognises privilege. He will be consistent, and will never take the oath of allegiance. He will never take part in any proceedings of a despotic character; and will never be a member of any assembly whose claims rest on usurpation.

Let us take our stand on principle alone, never on expediency. Let us accept with all its consequences the principle of the sovereignty of the people, based on the sovereignty of the individual, and let us clasp hands and work with each and all of every clime whose aim is the social revolution, the social and economical reconstruction of society, and the brotherhood of the human race.

J. SKETCHLEY.



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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.

IRISH SOCIALIST.—Thanks for suggestion. A leaflet dealing with the Irish question has been prepared, and will shortly be ready for distribution.

JESSIE CRAIGEN.—We are not in a position at present to do as you ask. See notice of pamphlet in another column.

BEKANNTMACHUNG!—Genosse Theodor hält jeden Donnerstag abend einen Coursus für Elementar Unterricht in der englischen Sprache, woran alle Genossen welche derselben noch nicht mächtig sind, theil zunehmen eingeladen werden. Näheres beim Secretär, 13 Farringdon Road, E. C.

RECEIVED—England: Anarchist—Worker's Friend—Daylight (Norwich)—Christian Socialist—Church Reformer—National Review—Republican—Journal of Vigilance Association—Justice—To-Day—Der Rebell—Freethinker—Practical Socialist—Leicester Co-operative Record. Belgium: Ni Dieu ni Maitre—L'Insurgé. France: Cri du Peuple (daily)—La Revue Socialiste—La Bataille—Le Révolté—La Question Sociale (Paris)—Le Socialiste (Paris). Greece: Harden (Athens). Germany: Neue Zeit (Stuttgart). Holland: Recht voor Allen. Hungary: Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik (Budapest). Italy: La Question Sociale (Turin)—Il Paria (Ancona)—Il Fascio Operaio (Milan). Morocco: Almoghreb Al-aksa (Tangiers). New Zealand: Watchman. Portugal: O Campino—Voz do Operario—O Protesto Operario (Lisbon). Roumania: Drepturile Omului (daily, Bucharest). Serbia: Tchas (Belgrade). Spain: El Angel del Hogar—Revista Social (Barcelona)—Bandera Social (Madrid). Switzerland: Sozial Demokrat (Zürich)—Morgenröthe (Bern). U. S. A.: (New York): Volkszeitung—Der Sozialist—Freiheit—Progress—John Swinton's Paper—Spread the Light—Our Country. (Boston): Liberty—Woman's Journal—Index. Denver (Col.) Labor Inquirer—Chicago (Ill.) Alarm—Detroit (Mich.) Labor Leaf—Muskegon (Mich.) Social Drift—Princeton (Mass.) Word—Cleveland (O.): Carpenter—Chronicle. Cincinnati (O.) Unionist—San Francisco (Cal.) Chronicle—Stockton (Cal.) Mail—Petersburg (Ill.) Voice of Labor—New Haven (Conn.) Workmen's Advocate—St. Louis (Mo.): Die Parole—Altruist. Kansas (Mo.) Sun—Pittsburg (Pa.) Labor Herald—Paterson (N. J.) Labor Standard—Baltimore (Md.) Labor Free Press—Valley Falls (Kan.) Lucifer—Atlanta (Ga.) Working World—Newfoundland (Pa.) La Torpille.

SINCE last acknowledgment books for the library have been received from Sparling, Lawie, Frearson, Grönlund, Morris, Lazarus.

NOTES.

SINCE our last issue politics have practically come to a dead stand before the Irish question. On that point there has been some talk and boundless speculation, but nothing else, till quite lately a man with eyes in his head could at last begin to see whether it was all tending. Mr. Gladstone has apparently let a Home-Rule scheme be put forward in his name, which was officially repudiated after it had played its part of drawing out various opinion, some of it, the reactionary part, emphatic enough. Lord Salisbury's scheme of ignoring the Irish question by means of a Local Government Bill for both the islands, including Scotland and Wales, has also been given in hints obviously official. Mr. Labouchere has propounded a definite Home Rule constitution, very pretty—on paper; Fitzjames Stephens has dealt with the subject in his usual coldly truculent manner; and at last comes the scheme from "Economist" in the *Statist*—a very pretty scheme indeed—for the Irish landowner; for it arranges to buy his land out and out and to give him a bonus in reward for his past oppression on the one hand, and on the other burdens the taxpayers both English and Irish in the long run, for the sake of sustaining rent and eviction in Ireland. If this scheme could be well and thoroughly carried out, speculation in eviction would become a special and lucrative profession—if the game could only last.

The shouts of delight with which this notable suggestion has been received by the capitalist press, point to the real intentions of our legislators, in which they will be backed by the whole of the Bourgeoisie, little and big. They mean to yield, as far as they are forced, in the direction of giving "such a measure of Home Rule" as will muzzle the Parnellite party in Parliament by its appearance of liberality to the Radicals; while at the same time they will so cumber the gift as to safeguard the sacred rights of rack-rent and eviction. If they can do this they do not care much about names: County-boards or Irish Parliament, either will do so long as the landlords are the masters of the situation. It is not to be supposed that Irishmen will be amused into inaction by this disgusting farce; but English advanced Radicals may be; and that is the reason why I call attention to it, and beg leave to point out to them that if they share in the plot they will be giving themselves up a prey to the Whigs. They have some ideas, vague enough as yet, that something should be done with the land in Great Britain beyond "freeing" it for the direct advantage of the capitalist: let them be sure that the Irish peasant is fighting their battle as well as his own (I am thinking of

the working-men Radicals of course) and that they will bitterly repent it if they let themselves be nose-led by their *Representatives*, who are so eager for the honour of the eighth commandment in its Bourgeois development, as given us by A. H. Clough:

"Thou shalt not steal: an empty feat
When it's so lucrative to cheat!"

About this Irish business Mr. Chamberlain has pretty much effaced himself, which I must say seems to me both cowardly and impolitic; but he has given us a long speech at the meeting of the Allotments and Small Holdings Association, of which there is little to be said except that he does not seem to be moving from his old plan of following up vigorous denunciations of the land-owners with the proposal of absurdly insignificant "practical" suggestions. The logical outcome of his oratorical attack on the Duke of Richmond's 300,000 acres, if it was sincere, would certainly be that the Duke should no longer "own" them. Mr. Chamberlain's proposal is that he *might* be compelled to sell a few of them to the state at a fair market price. This is a small mouse to creep forth from the birth throes of the mountain.

As to the Allotments business, I think it is time that this swindle should be exposed; the accompanying quotation from the *Standard's* leader on Mr. Chamberlain's speech will help us to see what it means; it is good to learn from the enemy:

"We yield to no one in our appreciation of the good effects of the allotment system. It gives the labourer a new interest in life, and an additional motive for sobriety, frugality, and industry. It helps him to keep his pig and to pay his rent, without interfering in the slightest degree with the work which earns his weekly wage."

So much for the enemy; now for a friend, our staunch old comrade, E. T. Craig:

"If an agricultural labourer hold, say two acres of land at £2 per acre, he will have to seek employment at the hands of a farmer, and till his small allotment at his leisure. This would doom the man to an endless, increasing life of toil. Real leisure for social enjoyment he would never possess. These small individual allotments are most sordid agencies for the development of selfishness, ignorance, egoism, and superstition."

You see the two agree; only the veteran co-operator knows only too well what "sobriety, frugality (!) and industry" mean, in a condition of abject poverty, unenlightened by the manly hope inspired by communal good fellowship.

On the surface, then, this allotment swindle means the keeping down of wages by means of over-work; but it does not concern the field-labourer only, but the whole labour-class. It is a part of the regular plan of holding down discontent which specially characterises this second half of the nineteenth century; and which, but for the sickness of the commercial system in general, would be more dangerous than all the bayonets of absolutist monarchs. Briefly it means the plan of raising the condition of a part of the working class at the expense of the whole class; it would create an aristocracy of labour in whom, as our comrade puts it, "selfishness, ignorance, egoism and superstition" would be indeed developed. Those on the one hand, and on the other would be the real proletariat, the lower class indeed, doomed to life-long torment and degradation in the workshop, the street, the workhouse and the prison; these and their discontent it would be the function of the aristocracy of labour to keep down.

Words are but weak to express one's horror at this scheme for the last and worst, because most hopeless, oppression of the people; but I can at least call on the better-off of the workers to think what they will sink to if they lend themselves to it; what base flunkies of the upper classes they will become. And the only way to escape from complicity in this plot is to remember that the wretched fringe of labour the tramp, the prostitute and the thief, are what they are because of the conditions under which they have been born and bred; modern society would have them so, and will keep them so (not in the least knowing what to do with them save, if it can, to forget their existence) until you decent working men understand that they also are part of the Brotherhood of Labour and *must* be raised out of their misery as that rises. Not at the expense of these miserablemen, but at the expense of the system of slavery of which they are now the foundation must come the bettering of the condition of the working classes.

There is no great need to swell the chorus against Mr. Lusk since it has been taken up so strongly by the press in general; but we may remind the public in general that even when he is extinguished (and he will survive the present attack) the law which he administers will exist. The same may be said of Mr. Hadden: it is not that special fool who is the important thing; nay scarcely even the workhouse system itself, but the society which is forced to support such monstrosities.

The people of Bedfordshire are very naturally and properly crying out for help against Lord Brownlow who is setting about robbing them of some of the open ground on the beautiful chalk headlands of the Chiltern Hills regardless all the while of any obliteration of the historical records which may hinder his "doing what he likes with his own." The outcry against all this clearly comes mostly from cultivated people; they will of course be quite helpless against "the rights of property," and their defeat might teach them, if they could only learn, that there will be some gain even to well-to-do persons in a change in society which would prevent a man destroying other people's pleasure in beauty and history for his own gain of L. S. D.; a change which would only admit the right to possession when the owner could personally use the wealth possessed. Lord Brownlow has as much right to walk about the downs as anybody else—not a bit more. When the good people of south Bedfordshire have learned this lesson thoroughly they will be able to enjoy their chalk hills freely. Meantime, if they think the law will help them—why then who can help them?

There has been a great deal of talk about intimidation at the late elections. Our comrades will not be surprised to hear that Socialists have had their share in this; for instance, a comrade at Oldham, a good workman and an earnest Socialist, has been dismissed from his employment on account of his principles, and is now out of work. His case is a hard one as he and his wife and children are in great distress.

W. M.

Note.—"The Pilgrims of Hope," by Wm. Morris, and Edward Aveling's *Lessons in Socialism* are held over through press of matter. See Notices on last page.

A LETTER FROM THE PACIFIC COAST.

WE have received an interesting letter from San Francisco relative to the labour question and especially to the conference lately held there, in which the main subject of discussion was the Chinese labour question. Our correspondent's letter is as follows:

"1035 Post Street, S. F., California, Dec. 9, '85.

"DEAR COMRADES,—We last night adjourned from the 'Trades and Labour Organisations Convention' which had, with an interval of two days, been sitting since last Monday week. A full report is in course of preparation, of which you will undoubtedly receive a copy, but this is not yet ready, and I am anxious that you should receive at least an outline of the proceedings in time for your January issue. I am sending you copies of the *Daily Report* which, though a capitalistic paper, has given the gist of the speeches with commendable fairness. A study of such copies will give you a general idea of the work and temper of the convention, but it may be useful to English readers if I add the following as explanatory notes.

"In the first place we consider that we have gained a most decisive victory over the politicians, who have hitherto been the curse of the labour movement in this city. They, having obtained control of the District Assembly of the Knights of Labour, appointed themselves an Executive Board, and summoned the convention. They originally intended to run it as a political convention, and for that purpose threw out the credentials of the Socialist organisations. The convention by an overwhelming vote defeated them in this, and, if you will note that the names I have underlined are those of the Socialists, you will see what a significant part we played.

"The line we have taken throughout is briefly this. We have leaned greatly on the Declaration of Independence, which declares this to be a government of and for the people, and that all are entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I may, perhaps, say here that I feel now convinced that this is invariably safe ground to take with an American audience. We accordingly declared that, the will of the people on this coast having most unequivocally declared for the expulsion of the Chinese, the people were bound to be true to themselves, and to enforce compliance with their demand. Everyone, however, of our speakers declared (and we had the ear of the audience throughout) that the Chinaman was our brother-slave; that we had no quarrel with him, and that not one drop of his blood must be shed; that the crime lay with the property owners, the employers who make profit out of the Chinese, and the officials who refused to execute the demands of the people. These we recommended as personally responsible. We adopted the same line of personal responsibility of officials to the people in our handling of the Convict Labour and Hard Times questions, in which last, of course, we got in plenty of work, every speaker being distinctly Socialist, and an audience of some 1500 having the whole question laid before them in the clearest and most thorough manner.

"Having had for six nights an audience of 1500 to 2000 people, we have, I believe, conclusively shown that we Socialists are the power in the labour movement on this coast, and we have for the first time got the Trades Unions, who are now in course of federation, in sympathy with us. This I consider an incalculable gain.

"I may add that a careful study of the proceedings, and of the audience—which was throughout a most orderly and intelligent one—has convinced me that the people are far more advanced than I for one had imagined. The feeling against the wealthy and the police is, I am also certain, intensely strong. It has, however, modified my judgment on the Chinese question; for I have honestly held the belief that there would be this winter at least an attempt to drive the Chinese out of this city by force, and have further considered it a sacred duty incumbent on us to make at least an attempt to direct the storm against those who deserve that it should fall upon them. I now incline to the opinion that there are large masses who recognise that the cause of hard times lies far deeper than the Chinaman, and that they will wait till they can settle this question upon broader and sounder principles. If we have accomplished this we have, as I am sure all English comrades will admit, done good work."

This on the whole is satisfactory and reassuring, especially considering the sinister rumour of a plot for the massacre of the Chinese which was published in the English press some weeks ago, and which now appears from information since received from America to have been one of the breed of plots instigated by the police for the benefit of the capitalists. Our correspondent being present at the Convention would have a much more accurate impression of its tendency than any newspaper report could give, as he would understand the significance of what was said there in comparison with the utterances of former times.

Nevertheless, if anything can be said on this side of the Atlantic which might strengthen the hands of the American Socialists in pointing out to the workers their real enemy, it ought to be said; so as an International Revolutionary Socialist, I venture to make a few remarks, premising for the information of our English friends that a law has been passed restricting the importation of Chinese labour (apparently made that it might not be carried out) and that this law is systematically disregarded by the capitalist officials, so that our American friends are only exercising their ordinary rights as citizens in calling on the government to see that the law is carried out. It must also be remembered that whereas the European immigrants, Irish, German, or Scandinavian, speedily mingle with the general population, and so do not affect the standard of livelihood permanently by the lower standard which they bring over with them, the Chinese do no such thing, but remain Chinese in America, a community within a community.

Now I must say that it would be difficult to exaggerate the crime of the capitalists in their importation of Chinese labour; and done as it was for profit, quite regardless of the welfare of either Chinese or American workmen. I fear, indeed, that some of the individuals of that order (of capitalists) who were engaged in the transaction, would give an ugly grin at the weakness of anybody supposing that they could think of anyone's welfare except their own and their families'. But the preamble of the resolution passed at the Convention pointed out very truly that the expulsion of the Chinese would by no means solve the labour question in America, and if our comrades there can only drive that home hard enough, so that American workmen can really understand it even amidst the sufferings caused by the immediate and special attack on their standard of livelihood, then the labour question in America will have entered into a new phase.

For this crime is being committed everywhere and always in civilisa-

tion by Capital; nor can it help committing the crime as long as it exists. Neither preaching nor terrorism will make it refrain from this: it is not an accident, but an essential condition of its life to drive down wages to the lowest point possible. Foiled in one direction it will try it in another, and will in the long run always succeed as long as it has life in it.

The Chinese workmen are only doing what every workman is forced to do more or less, that is to compete with his fellows for subsistence. It is true that the Chinese are forced by capital into being more obviously the enemies of their fellow-workmen than is usually the case, but that is only a surface difference; it is more dramatic, that is all. Every working-man is forced into the same false position of contest with every other working-man until he becomes a Socialist, and is conscious of his being naturally the friend of every workman throughout the world, and until he does his best to realise the consequences that should flow from this friendship.

The Chinese workmen are no more guilty of the suffering which their competition causes than are the women and girls who in London are starving the male adult tailors; are being used to starve them one should say—used against their own husbands, brothers and sweethearts.

It would be miserable indeed in this Chinese matter if, as too often happens, the instruments should receive the suffering due to those who have used them; who indeed in their turn are but the instruments of the long centuries of oppression which we may surely hope are now drawing to a close. If the American workmen can see this, and abstain, as we may well hope they will, from playing into the hands of their real enemies by attacking their fellow wage-slaves the Chinese, they will deserve well of the Brotherhood of labour, and will show that they understand the motto: WAGE-WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES UNITE!

WILLIAM MORRIS.

THE LIBERTY AND PROPERTY DEFENCE LEAGUE.

REPORT FOR 1885.

JUDGING from the report of the doings of the band of landlords, lawyers, publicans, pawnbrokers and lesser banditti, who comprise the bulk of the aforesaid society, it seems to me a more appropriate title would be The Liberty and Plunder Protection League. One of the objects of this precious association is to resist over-legislation, and a list of about 40 Bills is given which the L. P. D. L. helped either to reject or mutilate during the past year. Amongst these were Bills relating to the London Livery Companies; Housing of the Working Classes; Labourers (Ireland); Suspension of Evictions (Scotland); Land Tenure (Scot.); Access to Mountains (Scot.); Factory Acts (Extension to Shops); Employers Liability Amendment; Criminal Law Amendment; and a number dealing with the drink traffic, railways, water companies, etc. By a curious coincidence it would seem that over-legislation commences precisely at the point where Government ceases to be merely a machine for the plunder and oppression of the many for the benefit of the few, and begins to touch, even in the most gingerly fashion, the sacred privileges of property. These hypocrites prate of liberty, and yet use the forces of the state which we workers pay for, to evict our Irish and Scottish brethren and to awe our fellow wage-slaves into submission to their taskmasters. A significant item in the report refers to a banquet given by the Pawnbrokers' Defence Association to the members of the League's Parliamentary Committee "as a mark of appreciation of the assistance rendered by the League in the successful opposition to the Pawnbroker's Bill and the Stolen Goods Bill in the preceding session." Truly a notable illustration of the old saying, "Birds of a feather etc.," this feast of the kites and the crows! But what of the poor wretches fleeced by the landlords and their allies—the "poor man's bankers," as the report euphemistically terms those traders in human misery, the pawnbrokers!

A lengthy paragraph is devoted to the action of the League in relation to the International Club affair. This is the only matter in which the League was concerned in which self-interest was not manifestly the sole ruling motive. The assistance of the League was doubtless asked more in irony than anything else. The astute individuals who run the concern, however, took up the case as a means of getting a little cheap popularity by posing as champions of liberty; and so the chairman of the committee wrote a letter to the papers appealing for subscriptions, a little political humbugging took place, and the upshot was, in the words of the report, that "the members of the club were ultimately compelled from lack of means to forego the prosecution, which on public and private grounds it was most desirable should have been pressed home." Yet be it noted that three of these Defenders of Liberty, whose names appear on the report as members of the Parliamentary Committee—viz., Earls Fortescue, Pembroke (Ireland's richest landlord), and Wemyss, possess respectively rentals of £28,674, £50,233, and £57,567; whilst the aggregate rental of half-a-dozen of the rank and file, reaches the enormous sum of £450,334. Amongst the titled founders of the League is also to be found the name of Lord Leconfield who owns 110,725 acres of land, with a rental of £88,482. He is a non-resident landlord of County Clare, and a portion of his enormous income is thus derived from the robbery of probably the most poverty-stricken peasantry on the face of the earth. In addition to the black mail levied in the form of rent, these objectors to over-legislation and their families, have plundered the public treasury of several millions in the form of pensions, etc., during the last 30 years. Money can generally be got for debauching pot-house politicians with cheap whisky and tobacco, and for the hire of "braves" to support the cause of the exploiters; but where the interests of the "common people" only were concerned, even such a "noble" society as the L. P. D. L., brimming over with love of liberty and the working man, was unable to find the means for their defence.

It appears grimly grotesque to read, notwithstanding, that 274 lectures were given at workmen's clubs by the League agents. Bill Sykes on "The Benefits of Burglary," or Charley Bates proffering "A Plea for Pocket-picking," seems to me a far less ridiculous notion than that of a body of working men gravely listening to a lecture on "Progress or Plunder" and the dangers of Socialism, from the point of view of the audacious monopolists who constitute the Liberty and Property Defence League. It is to be hoped that the report will be read and pondered in every workman's Club, in order that the wiles of these wolves may be understood, who hunt in packs themselves and preach individualism to the sheep in order that they may more easily devour them.

T. B.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MOROCCO.

Mr. Allen, Secretary of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, writes us :

"The visit of Mr. Crawford and myself to Morocco was in no way connected with the revised Treaty with that country, upon which some of the European powers are now engaged. We knew nothing of the Treaty until after our arrival in the country, the visit being purely one of inquiry to supplement one made by me nearly two years ago.

"As Morocco is a barbarous country, without a single road or wheeled carriage or a mile of telegraph wire, it is not very surprising that Mr. Bax is not better informed than his article shows him to be. The condition of the country is a disgrace to civilisation, as there is no law but that of might, and no man's person or property is safe from the grasp of the oppressor.

"I do not know what your readers understand by the term 'professional philanthropists.' My own idea would be that it implies payment for services. Of course it is needless to state that the large body of influential gentlemen who form the committee of the Anti-Slavery Society, never receive one penny for their time, and the whole expense incurred by the Society for office rent and expenses, and the publication of its monthly journal, scarcely exceeds £1000 per annum, so that it could scarcely be called a paying profession."

[By "professional philanthropist" we did not necessarily mean that money was received for services, but that "philanthropy" in the sense of "promoting civilisation," with all which that implies, is the purpose of the public life of the individual in question. Mr. Allen finds Morocco "a disgrace to civilisation." We think we could name some countries nearer home, enjoying all the blessings of civilisation, which are nevertheless a disgrace, if not to civilisation, at all events, to humanity.—Ebs.]

"SOCIALISM AND REMUNERATION."

The remarks of T.M. under the above heading, in last month's *Commonweal*, considerably surprised me, coming as they did from one who I believe to be an earnest and active co-worker. I can only suppose that in a temporary fit of depression he allowed the short-sighted selfish doctrines of the Individualists, backed up by the local Whig paper, to overcome his better judgment. The proposition he puts forward, however, advocating "piecework" as against time, is so distinctly reactionary and so utterly incompatible with the Socialistic ideal, that I ask permission to reply.

T.M. says: "Taking men as we find them, the generality would object to bear one another's burdens. To tell the average man that it is his duty to do more work than his fellows for the same remuneration, is not the way to attract him towards Socialism or impress him favourably respecting your sanity." Is not this the most extraordinary perversion? Why the generality of men are to-day bearing the burden—doing the work of others—and not only doing more work for the "same," but enormously less, remuneration; and it is this very state of things that we denounce. He goes on: "The plague of it is because he does not believe himself to be merely an 'average' man," etc. The plague of it, I contend emphatically, is entirely the other way. It is not the conceit of the few, but the abject, grovelling, flunkeyish spirit of the many that is the difficulty. Is it not horrible, for instance, that the men who win the coal, should labour ten long years in "the unwholesome mine" at the daily risk of life and limb, for a sum equal to the monthly pay of a mischievous, muddle-headed statesman, thievish lawyer, or a lazy, canting bishop? Yet the "generality" of men who suffer the present frightful inequality of work and pay will, T.M. thinks, be deterred from accepting Socialism for fear they might be liable to do a stroke more work than their fellows!

The next reason is fear of loafers finding their way into the brotherhood. Now the term loafer is very vague. In the same way that, in our present beautiful Society, the big rogues pass sentence on the little ones, and the fashionable sinners are shocked at the peccadilloes of the unfashionable, so also, I find, that the loafers *par excellence*—the aristocratic club-loungers of the West-end—are much concerned about the shortcomings of their prototypes in the East-end; and in the intervals of billiards, racing, gambling and still more objectionable pursuits, some of them contrive to raise a little "smoke" money by scribbling libellous articles on the workers for the society magazines; while an inferior grade of snobs who hang on to the skirts of the aristocracy, write letters on emigration, etc., for the bourgeois press, insolently lecturing working-men as to their work and conduct, they themselves probably having never done an honest day's work in their lives.

It is evident, however, that these are not the people of whom T.M. was thinking, because his standard of quality and quantity is to be fixed according to the respective callings of the citizens. But before commenting further, let me quote from the concluding sentences of T.M.'s letter: "I believe that the idle and the selfishly-disposed would soon die off in a Socialist atmosphere . . . given society on a Socialist basis and a generation's trial, the salutary influences of fraternal communal principles, as opposed to the brute competition obtaining, would so effectually regenerate men, that," etc. Yes, exactly so, T.M.; but if you had fully considered the meaning of these words and had had faith in your principles, you would never have advocated the yoking of the Individualistic Ox with the Pegasus of Socialism. It is of the very essence of our doctrine that the "loafer" is only one of the many terrible products of the present system of society, and we claim for Socialism that, by destroying the system, we shall necessarily destroy the monsters—Poverty, Prostitution, Crime, Overwork, Idleness, Debauchery, etc.—which it engenders.

Before going into the water, however, T.M. thinks we ought to learn to swim. He proposes that we should show our fraternity by each looking upon his neighbour as likely to shirk his duty unless kept up to the mark by a labour-test; and we are to promote equality by the establishment of two labour-castes—time-workers and piece-workers. The diversity of capacity and industry is the stock argument of the cunning sophists who write in the interests of the infamous capitalist régime. I will endeavour, therefore, to show that this pretended difficulty is so small as to be unworthy of consideration, much less to require the machinery which T.M. suggests. I will take my own craft as a compositor to serve as a general illustration. As a result of 25 years' observation in various parts of England and Scotland and amongst large numbers of fellow-workmen, I have found the variations in working capacity in the vast majority to be inconsiderable. There are, however, about five per cent. who are recognised as "whips," that is, they probably exceed the average by from one-fifth to one-tenth. I worked several years beside one of these "swifts," and discovered, what I have no doubt is a pretty general rule, that the "speed" was gained at the expense of "staying power." Thus at 45 the "whip" begins to fag, if he does not break down entirely, whilst the average man who has taken life a little more easily, and deemed comfort and health of more importance than working himself to death for the sake of an extra shilling or two in his weekly wage—still keeps up a steady pace. These "superior workmen" are frequently members of building societies, and being terribly anxious to keep up their payments and make provision for their families, are forced still further to intensify the existing competition by over-exerting their powers, to the detriment both of themselves and their fellow-men.

In a rational state of society the difference in working capacity would constantly tend to diminish. Since by moderate exertion by all, not only the necessities but the comforts of life could be produced abundantly for all, no one could possibly be "burdened," whilst the spirit of emulation to which T.M. refers, would have scope for healthy exercise, freed from the debasing greed for gain with which it is now too often allied. As to the fear of idlers, I do not believe that the proportion of those who can be honestly termed lazy, exceeds two per cent. I am amazed not at the number of loafers, but at the excessive industry of the masses who are content to toil laboriously such long hours for such scant pay. Terribly pathetic, too, is the interest the poor slaves take in their masters' affairs. As a matter of fact, men are often compelled to loiter over their work for fear of "working themselves out of a job." I have had to do it myself and found it ten times more disagreeable than hard work. But even for the lazy ones (not to insist that laziness is really a disease) a word is to be said. They are dimly conscious of being exploited and, after all, they are only following their masters' example, "getting as much as they can for as little as they can." Even under the debasing influence of the commercial system, the proportion of "black sheep" is small, and surely the breed will become less and less as the salutary principles of Socialism more and more prevail.

So far, I have dealt with T.M.'s suggestion mainly from a theoretical point of view; but a very slight examination will show the proposal to be utterly unworkable. I will not dwell upon the minor difficulties of fixing a fair standard, arising from the variations in the materials used, of age, of health, etc., which would undoubtedly lead to a deal of friction and unpleasantness, but proceed to point out the great obstacle, which constitutes, in fact, the scientific basis of Socialism, *i.e.*, that by the organisation and subdivision of labour, aided by machinery and natural forces, the amount of wealth produced collectively is enormously in excess of what could be produced by individual effort, and that practically it is impossible to determine the exact *quota* which each worker has contributed to the product; or it may even be urged that there is really no difference in the value of the labour given by each worker, since the amount of work that can be measured by the "piece" is so small, and individual skill such an unimportant factor in socialised production. Apart, altogether, then from any ethical, sentimental, or Christian ideas as to the duty of the strong to help the weak, etc., enlightened selfishness must lead the workers to see that "share and share alike" will pay them better in the long run than trusting to their individual powers of brain and muscle in a general scramble.

The whole tendency of the age is totally at variance with T.M.'s ideas as to the "average man." Indeed it is only a truism to say that society is based upon averages. Not only is the price of the great bulk of commodities determined by averaging, but a large percentage of all the transactions of everyday life are regulated by the method of capitulation. Why even those great apostles of Individualism—Mr. Herbert Spencer, the Hon. Auberon Herbert, and Mr. C. Bradlaugh, M.P.—doubtless appreciate the value of averages at a *table d'hôte*, say, or in the case of life insurance and the interest on their bank accounts; and would scarcely advocate individual bargains in the case of cab and railway fares, etc. In conclusion, the leading trades' unions of England have long since declared against "piece" work, and the American labour organisations are doing likewise. In the London Society of Compositors time-work is fast becoming the rule, with the most beneficial results. In place of the bickerings, jealousy, spite, and paltry pride fostered by the "piece" system, a more brotherly spirit prevails; and to me the fraternity engendered by this equality on a small scale, gives happy augury of the blessings that will follow when the workers having shaken off their chains, adopt as the foundation of the New Society the Socialist principle, "One for all: all for one."

T. BINNING.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

NINE THOUSAND men are thrown out of work on the Tyne and Wear. The shipbuilders demand a reduction of 12½ per cent. on piece wage, 10 on time-wage. The men have struck. They contend that the contracts now in the hands of the building firms were obtained on the basis of the present rate of wages, not on that of a 10—12½ per cent. reduction. Nor can reduction of wages increase the demand for new ships.

In all the large ports are many steamers manned by a single watchman. Suppose an improvement in the sea-carrying trade. These idle vessels will be employed or ever a new one need be built.

Last spring when the war-scare was on, the Admiralty commissioned a number of war-vessels of private firms, with the avowed intention of finding work for unemployed artisans. It is conceivable that even an Admiralty would be guided as to the price paid for these vessels by the then rate of wages. A reduction in these last means, therefore, that the masters will, as of old, pocket the difference at the expense of the men.

In March 1884, in August 1884, in January 1885, the shipbuilding artisans had their wages reduced. Aggregate of reductions 15 to 22½ per cent.

"Snow means starvation" to hundreds and thousands. Imagine a system under which a simple natural event, such as a snowstorm, is death to many! There is no need of imagination. It is the system under which we live—and die.

The unemployed of Birmingham are becoming busy again—not with work, but agitation. They are to form a labour army and conquer injustice. "No longer shall innocent children starve," says their handbill, "and strong men lie idle." And yet the smug, demure folk think there is no likelihood of a change in the basis of society.

Everywhere reduction of wages. The Manchester Iron Trade Association have given notice of a 7½ per cent. reduction, and this is but the beginning of a general movement throughout the English iron trade. Twelve weeks ago the cotton operatives of Oldham and its vicinity had a 5 per cent. reduction and now another 5 per cent. fall is announced.

The use of the military against the Llandulas quarrymen shows us, once again, how uneven is the contest between labour and capital, and how readily the latter uses brute force to satisfy its brute hunger.

The scene at the Tipperary guardians' meeting when the labourers bearded the guardians in their den was very disgraceful to every one but the labourers. Their cries are those of all their class. Their audience ought to be all society. "We are driven to half madness from hunger and you have done nothing for us."

It is hardly necessary to say that all Socialists are Irish Nationalists at heart. But it is worth our while to keep in mind that with the solution of the question of Irish independence a great nation will be set free to consider a yet greater matter—the freedom of labour.

E. A.

RECORD OF THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT.

POLAND.—Some few weeks ago a Reuter's telegram announced, much in the same way as they announce that Her gracious Majesty has gone for a drive, that the "Warsaw trial of Socialists" had taken place, that six of the accused had been condemned to death, eighteen to sixteen, two to ten, and one to eight years' hard labour in the mines and life-long banishment to Siberia (as if any one had been known to outlive such long years in the Siberian mines!) and two to life-long exile to Siberia. And that was all! Of the trial, of the men condemned, I have seen no word in a single English paper. After all, a few Polish Socialists done to death by Russian "judges"—what does it matter?

To begin with, it must be borne in mind that for months, even years, these unhappy men and others retained as "witnesses," have been kept in prison. "I can take no oath," said one of these "witnesses." "You have kept me three years in prison, you have tried to force me to make false statements, and when I asked what had become of my wife and my children you gave me no answer—I can give no evidence." Three years in prison before even the farce of a trial! And what prisons they were, let these few facts prove. Two women, Poll and Rusiecka went mad; another woman, Breslauer, hanged herself; of one prisoner a report says: "His pale, death-like appearance made a painful impression. Only the fiery eyes showed there was still life in this skeleton." And yet after all these years of torture all the prisoners behaved with a calm courage that would have been admirable under any circumstance, and is thrice admirable under such circumstances as these. One and all defended their cause, which is ours; not one failed. Not the least interesting or remarkable fact in connexion with this trial is that men of every class were represented at it. Thus, of the six men condemned to death, Bardowzyki is a justice of the peace, Lury a military engineer, Ossowski, Pietruszyki, and Szmans, working-men, and Kunicki a student. Among the others also are officers, artists, working-men, teachers, and students. At the "trial" no friends of the prisoners were allowed to be present, and the public was rigidly excluded. A correspondent of a German paper writes: "The accused, who were brought in by threes and fours, and again led out so, received their sentences with perfect calm. These sentences have caused the utmost consternation among the people of Warsaw." Not one of the prisoners was acquitted, and those who know anything of Russian prison tortures, are aware that of all these men only the six who are to be hanged have been mercifully dealt with. The venal English press that so lately shrieked with horror at King Theebaw's atrocities, has uttered no word of horror at this atrocity. But let us Socialists at least remember these Polish martyrs, let us bear their names in our very heart of heart, let us learn to have something of their courage and devotion.

FRANCE.—That humbug and *faux bonhomme*, M. Jules Grévy, has been "exercising" as a daily paper put it, "his prerogative of mercy," and Louise Michel, P. Krapotkine, and some eight or nine political prisoners have been—*pardoned*. There is an impression that these people have been *amnestied*. Nothing of the kind. An amnesty would have had to include the victims of the infamous police plot at Monceaux-les-mines, and would have opened the prison doors of some thirty or forty persons still under lock and key as felons. For the French Republicans have learnt a lesson from England, and have taken to condemning political prisoners, like England did the Fenians, as ordinary criminals. They can thus, as the virtuous Mr. Gladstone did when the amnesty to the Irish was first proposed, indignantly repel the insinuation that there are any political prisoners. As to Louise, Krapotkine, and their comrades, their names happen to be known all over Europe, and to keep them longer in jail was a scandal that had to be ended. Their release was absolutely unavoidable, and so they have been—*pardoned*! That they resent this pardon, an insult to them and an injustice to the other prisoners, is natural. And we, while we rejoice that they are free to go on with their work, while we heartily welcome them, we too cannot but share the feeling of Louise when she says "to let us out thus is not only an insult but a shameful trick by which they hope to make the world forget our fellow-prisoners." That this was the pious intention of the French government there is no doubt. But the trick will fail. Rochefort is immediately to bring forward a General Amnesty Bill. This, Clemenceau and his followers must support, and there is a great probability that it will be voted. But should it not be, then a general agitation on the subject will be begun. Anyhow, the "convicts" will not, as M. Grévy imagined, be forgotten in the pleasure of welcoming those already "pardoned."

ELEANOR MARX-AVELING.

PROPOSED ALLIANCE OF SOCIALIST ORGANISATIONS IN AMERICA.

WE have received the following resolutions from the Central Committee, Pacific Coast International Workingmen's Association, and we hope that the admirable proposal it makes will be carried into effect:

"Whereas the economic condition of the masses of the working people generally, and recent events looking toward a settlement of the labour-troubles by violent means particularly, are portentous of a social upheaval in the nearest future; and

"Whereas during such an upheaval it is the duty of the reformers to be at the helm and carry it into proper channels toward a successful issue; and

"Whereas it is imperatively necessary, for such a purpose, to concentrate all our forces against the common foe; and

"Whereas there is really no sound reason why a concentration of all reform forces should not be effected, inasmuch as the aims of all genuine reform-organisations are identical, namely, the liberation of the people from the bondage of economic slavery and the substitution of economic independence; and

"Whereas, furthermore, all genuine reform-organisations—even the Socialistic Labour-Party according to the declarations made by its last congress—agree that the realisation of these aims can only come through Revolution; therefore be it

"Resolved by this body, the Central Committee of the Pacific Coast Division of the 'International Workingmen's Association,' that we earnestly and sincerely advocate an amalgamation of all existing genuine reform organisations;

"Resolved that we urge to be held as speedily as possible a congress of all these organisations, especially of the Socialistic Labour-Party and the black (anarchistic) and the red (social-revolutionary) Internationals; and

"Resolved, that at such a congress an agreement upon a common platform and a common system of agitation, organisation, and Action should be arrived at; and

"Resolved finally that copies of these resolutions be forwarded for publication to all labour journals."

LITERARY NOTICES.

In several little articles in the *Working Man's Almanack* (Turin) bearing on the social condition of the workers, the writers have grasped with enthusiasm the sentimental side of Socialism, but its ethical and economical aspects are evidently *terra incognita*.

A second edition of Frederic Engel's "Herr Eugen Dühring's Anwälzung der Wissenschaft" is out. Dealing ostensibly with the "System" of Herr Dühring, it actually treats in general the large questions of Philosophy, Political Economy, and Socialism. The whole work, and notably the third section of it, ought to be consulted and studied by all who want to know the history and the theory of the new philosophy called Socialism. Volksbuchhandlung, Zürich, 3s.

In an address delivered at Ravenna lately, published as a supplement to *Il Fascio Operaio* (Milan), Andrea Costa took a general survey of the growth of Socialism in Italy since the Union, and then proceeded to explain the position of the Socialist party. Costa builds his hopes high on parliamentary reform, although in another part of his discourse he calls the law a dead letter, and quotes the Gospel on the futility of putting new wine in old bottles.

Miss Jessie Craigen has reprinted as a pamphlet entitled "The Irish Police and Home Rule," part of a larger work published some years ago. It is a trenchant indictment of the Irish police-system as established and kept up by the English Government, and is based wholly upon what the authoress herself saw and heard. At this special juncture it should be widely read. It may be procured from the authoress at 31 Nutcroft Road, Naylor Road, Peckham, at 1d.

"English and French morality from a Frenchman's point of view." By Yves Guyot. Modern Press, 14 Paternoster Row. A pamphlet called forth by the events of recent days. Apart from its polemics, it contains much valuable information respecting prostitution in France, a subject on which the author is probably the first authority of the day. M. Guyot, we should imagine, from many passages might one of those days be a Socialist. The parallelism between Lombard Street at midday and the Haymarket at midnight, on p. 55, is excellent.

THE PEOPLE'S PRESS.

(Under this heading will be found a collection of pithy paragraphs collated from various journals published in the interest of the workers. Comrades and friends are invited to forward cuttings from English and translations from foreign labour journals.)

"Were you never in a court of justice before?" "No, never, but I've often enough been up before the magistrates!"—*San Antonio Item*.

Work for all may be had by reducing the hours. Pay for all may be had by all going to work.—*Labor Leaf*.

A hungry man has a bad conscience. If he had as much courage and energy to go with it as a well-fed man he would make things crackle.—*Chicago (Ill.) Alarm*.

That every mother shall have a roof over her head, where she can rear her children amid virtuous and refining influences, is of more importance to the country than all the wealth of the world.—*Our Country*.

The people should be warned that there is a persistent and sleepless influence all the time at work, to secure upon the bench judges who have not the staunch integrity and inflexible independence that should characterize the judiciary.—*New York Times*.

Majority! Don't wait for a majority! They come only when some great deed is done whose brilliancy lights up the dark skies of despair. Then the weak, the timid, the doubtful, the indifferent, will rally and move towards the light, roused by the magnetism of intrepid action. All great revolutions are accomplished by the few who, rising in the hot wrath nursed for many years, seize some hoary oppression by the throat and bid it in God's name depart! This is the history of all the great deliverances of man from his oppressors!—*Our Country*.

PATRIOTISM.—Patriotism is the clap-net and stock-in-trade of that social devil-fish—the politician. Deprive him of it, and, like Othello, his conception's gone. It is the "I am better than thou" sentiment, the meanest and most debasing trait in human cunning and hypocrisy. Patriotism is nurtured by knaves, and believed in only by fools. By it nations are held in antagonism and war, where there should be harmony and peace. It is patriotism that prevents the world from being the country of every man and all mankind his fellow-countrymen.—*The Alarm*.

GAMBLING.—The pertinent question, so far as this vice is concerned, is the one of criminality. One man has it in a mild form, and buys a tenth of a ticket in a lottery every month. This costs him a dozen dollars a year, and may or may not be criminal. . . . It would appear to an impartial observer that the crime comes in the intent to defraud. Thus, where there is a game put up with a deliberate intention to swindle, there is fraud, hence crime. The person who gambles to enrich himself at the expense of another's poverty, commits a crime. There is more that is wicked and bad in a corner gotten up by speculators in breadstuffs, than in all the pools, lotteries, church fairs, and raffles in the world.—*The Republic*.

TRADES' UNIONS cannot confine their actions to merely exclusive trade matters any more if they want to be abreast of the times. Unjust social conditions are crowding them away from their old stumping grounds, and the methods that were effective fifty years ago are useless now. The mere regulating of trade matters is too small game for large bodies of presumably intelligent men to waste so much ammunition on. Of course, these little matters need attention, but we must not make the adjustment of these the paramount object of our great organisations. Why should not these unions grapple with the question of the right of every honest, industrious person to live? This necessarily would lead them to demand access to the means of earning a living,—the raw materials of nature, and the tools of production and exchange. The products of labour must be the wages of the labourer, and any association whose actions and hopes are not in this direction cannot consistently claim to be a labour organisation.—J. A. LABADIE in *Labor Leaf*.

I affirm it as my conviction that class laws placing capital above labour are more dangerous to the Republic at this hour than chattel slavery in the days of its haughtiest supremacy.—*Abraham Lincoln*.

The civilised labourer who bakes a loaf that he may eat a slice of bread, who builds a palace that he may sleep in a stable, who weaves rich fabrics that he may dress in rags, who produces everything that he may dispense with everything,—is not free. His employer, not becoming his associate in the exchange of salaries or services which takes place between them, is his enemy.—*Froudon*.

It is not to die, or even to die of hunger, that makes a man wretched." All men must die—the last exit of us all is in a fire-chariot of pain. But it is to live miserably, we know not why; to work sore, and yet gain nothing; to be heart-worn, weary, yet isolated, unrelated, girt in with a cold universal *laissez-faire*. It is to die slowly all our life long, imprisoned in a deaf, dead, in "white injustice, as in the accursed iron belly of a Phalaris Bull.—*Carlyle*.

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

Notice to Members.

Choir.—The choir meetings are suspended for the present.

General Meeting.—On Monday 21st Feb. at 8.30 p.m. Council meets at 7.30.

Library.—The librarians, May Morris and W. Chambers, attend on Mondays and Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m. Members who have books from the library in their possession are requested to return them at once, as the librarians wish to collect all books for the purpose of re-cataloguing.

Reading Room.—Open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. All papers received by the Secretary are sorted and filed and are at the disposal of members.

Standing Committees.—Meet on Wednesdays at 7.30 p.m.

MONTHLY REPORT.

At their ordinary weekly meeting held on Monday Jan. 18, the Executive Council passed the following resolution unanimously: "That this meeting of the Council of the Socialist League, while welcoming the released Socialists, records its energetic protest against the cowardly action of Jules Grévy, the President of the French Republic, in burking the question of the amnesty of political prisoners in France, by 'pardoning' a few of the more prominent among them."

In response to an invitation from the I.W.M. Club, Whitfield Street, delegates were appointed to assist in arranging for the reception of the Socialists lately released in Paris, should they visit England, and also for the holding of a meeting to protest against the conduct of the French Government in still confining the men of Lyons, Monceaux les Mines, etc., in defiance of justice and humanity.

The Council also resolved to invite all the Socialist bodies in London to send delegates to a preliminary meeting to form a committee to arrange for the holding an anniversary celebration of the Commune of Paris on or about March 18.

Although the reaction consequent upon the frenzy of the party conflict has hardly yet been recovered from by the people, there has been a marked improvement in the attendance at our lectures during this month, and from all quarters come tidings that augur well for our work when the season once more allows us to "go forth into the highways and byways." Everywhere the Branches have done a good month's work with lectures, outdoor meetings and discussions, but there is very little that specially calls for mention.

Comrades Sketchley and Copeland, with others, have succeeded in founding a very promising branch in Birmingham, in spite of the oft-repeated boast that the men of the midland metropolises were too hard-boiled politically to give ear to our gospel. Steady, enthusiastic work has its due reward, and our Birmingham comrades are to be congratulated on the success that has crowned their efforts.

At Liverpool some friends have formed a "Worker's Brotherhood," which has been carrying on a good series of lectures, with the help of our Manchester comrades, and is making some progress.

In Dublin our comrades have been, and are, subjected to those delicate attentions in which the English auxiliary garrison known as "police," is so very proficient, and which are so serviceable always in advertising our propaganda and arousing revolutionary feeling. The branch engaged the Oddfellows' Hall for a quarter to hold weekly meetings, but omitted to obtain a written agreement. After two or three very successful meetings had been held there, the Oddfellows' Hall board of management inserted an advertisement in the *Freeman's Journal* on Wednesday 13 Jan., stating that they would not allow the meeting advertised for next day, on the ground that it was a public meeting and they never allowed such, although it is well known that public meetings are continually being held there. Another advertisement answered on behalf of the branch that only members and the press would be admitted. Then came out the truth that Socialism was what was objected to, and that "at any risk" a Socialist meeting would be prevented. When the members turned up for their meeting they found a formidable array of police going through the force of "guarding the building" to the intense delight of a large and appreciative audience! Our comrades gathered the crowd and went off and secured a room over a tavern, where a most successful meeting was held. The police, however, again exerted themselves with the landlord, and the branch was once more "evicted." It has now located itself in Carpenter's Hall, Aungier Street, but there is little doubt that it will be ultimately driven out there also. The time is coming, however, for open-air work, when the branch will have a full opportunity for utilising the leaflet just published on the Irish question.

The attention of provincial branches is specially called to the following resolution, passed at the monthly general meeting of London members on Dec. 28: "That branches be urged to organise four special public meetings during the year to be addressed by lecturers sent from the League."

H. H. S.

"THE COMMONWEAL."

The title-page, index, and covers for binding the volume of the *Commonweal* for 1885, can be obtained of the manager, 13 Farringdon Road, for 2s.

THE GUARANTEE FUND.

We now have in hand about £80 in cash and definite promises, and appeal to all interested in the matter to help to make up the necessary sum before the end of this month. We take the opportunity of urging branches and members to do their utmost to circulate the paper, since its success must to a great degree depend upon their efforts. Probably the most effective method of support is for branches to guarantee to take a definite number of copies at wholesale price. Two or three branches have already done this; we commend their example to the others, and hope they will consider the matter and report to the manager at an early date.

E. BELFORT BAX. WILLIAM MORRIS.
H. H. SPARLING. CARL THEODOR.

LECTURE DIARY: February, 1886.

FARRINGTON HALL (Offices of the League), 13 Farringdon Road, E.C.

Lectures.—Every Wednesday at 8.30 p.m. Admission free; discussion invited.
Jan. 27. G. B. Shaw, "Laissez Faire." Feb. 3. E. Belfort Bax, "Universal History from a Socialist point of view." 10. Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "A Socialistic Experiment. The Poor Laws—a Folly and a Failure." 17. H. H. Sparling, "The Münster Commune." 24. Mrs. Charlotte M. Wilson, "Anarchism."
Concert.—On Saturday Feb. 27, at 8 o'clock, under the management of Comrade Theodor. All are welcome. Admission free.

BRANCH MEETING ROOMS.

LONDON.

Bloomsbury.—The "Eagle and Child" Coffee House, 45 Old Compton Street, Soho. Every Thursday at 8.30 p.m. Feb. 4. Eleanor Marx Aveling, a lecture. 11. Discussion on above lecture, opened by W. A. Chambers. 18. C. Faulkner, "Arithmetic." 25. Discussion on above lecture, opened by T. E. Wardle.

Hoxton (L. E. L.).—Exchange Coffee House, Pitfield Street, opposite Hoxton Church, N. The room is open every Sunday morning at 11.15, evening at

7.45. Evening arrangements: Feb. 7. Concert. 14. H. Sparling, "Pseudo-Socialism." 21. C. W. Mowbray, "Development of Revolutionary Ideas." 28. G. B. Shaw, a lecture. In the mornings there are readings, discussions, songs, etc. All are welcome.

Hammersmith.—Kelmescott House, 26 Upper Mall, W. Sundays at 8 p.m. Feb. 7. J. Stuart Glennie, "The Crofters." 14. F. Kitz, a lecture. 21. F. Verinder, "Work, Wages and Rent." 28. Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, "The Land and Social Morality."

Marylebone.—"Walmer Castle" Coffee Tavern, 136 Seymour Place, Marylebone Road, W. Sunday evenings at 8 o'clock. Feb. 7. H. H. Sparling, "The Meaning of the Revolution." 14. A. K. Donald, "Some Objections to Socialism." 21. W. A. Chambers, "Duty and Right." 28. Laurence Grünlund, "German and French Socialism."

Merton.—11 Merton Terrace, High Street. Every Sunday, 8 p.m. Feb. 7. A lecture. 14. A lecture. 21. R. A. Beckett, "Happiness." 28. H. Charles, "Society v. State."

Mile-end.—I. W. M. Educational Club, 40 Berner Street, Commercial Road. Tuesdays at 8 p.m. Feb. 2. William Morris, "Political Outlook." 9. H. Davis, "Malthusianism and Socialism." 16. C. W. Mowbray, "Lords and Commons v. The People." 23. H. Charles, "The German Labour Movement."

North London.—Camden Hall, King Street, Camden Town, N. Wednesdays at 8.30 p.m.

South London.—Peckham and Dulwich Radical Club, 144 Rye Lane, Peckham. Every Tuesday at 8 p.m. Feb. 2. H. Charles, "Socialism and Anarchism." 9. D. Nicoll, "Charms of Civilisation." 16. R. A. Beckett, "Equality." 23. H. H. Sparling, "The Münster Commune." Business meetings at 103 Bird-in-bush Road, on Sunday evenings at 7.30.

PROVINCIAL.

Birmingham.—Bell Street Coffee House. Every Monday evening, at 7.30. All are invited.

Bradford.—Laycock's Temperance Hotel, Kirkgate. Meetings every Tuesday at 8 p.m. Sympathisers invited. Feb. 2. J. L. Mahon, "The aims of Socialists." 9. T. Maguire, "The Labourer and the Capitalist." 16. J. Mitchell, "Usury: What does it mean?" 23. (M.S. lent by W. Morris) "Misery and the way out."

Dublin.—The Carpenter's Hall, 75 Aungier Street. Thursdays at 8 o'clock sharp. Edinburgh (Scottish Section).—4 Park Street. Meets every Friday at 8.30 p.m. Special business meeting, Wednesday 17th Feb. at 8.30 p.m. Lecture in Oddfellows' Hall on Thursday 18th Feb. at 7.30 p.m., by Edward Carpenter. Subject: "Exploitation of Labour," with illustrations from railway and other industries.

Leeds.—54, Myrtle Street. Meets every Wednesday.

Leicester.—Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate.

Manchester.—City Café, Swan Street. Meets each Tuesday at 8 p.m. Feb. 2. Ball, "How the Democracy are plundered." 9. Snowdon, "Female labour." 16. Addison, "Men who have made Socialism." 23. Prince, "A plea for Land Nationalisation." At the County Forum, Market Street, on Jan. 30, at 7.30 p.m., Edward Carpenter will lecture on "Exploitation of Labour."

Rayton.—"Greyhound Inn." Every Sunday evening at 7.30.

Oldham.—Mrs. Wrigley's Coffee Tavern, 9, Old Market Place. Meets every Wednesday at 7.30 p.m. The Secretary will be happy to give lectures on Socialism to any of the Liberal and Radical Clubs in the town and neighbourhood; address 57 Landsdowne Road, Chadderton, Oldham. Comrade Tod, 73 Book Street, off Ashton Road, will be glad to see or hear from *bona fide* inquirers.

Oxford.—"Elm Tree Tavern," Cowley Road. Every Monday at 8.30 p.m.

OPEN AIR PROPAGANDA.

Hyde Park.—Sundays, 3.30 p.m., near Marble Arch.

Midland Arches, St. Pancras Road.—Sundays, 11.30 a.m.

Mile-end Waste.—Sundays, 11.30 a.m.

Hulme.—The Viaduct, Chester Road. Sundays, 7 p.m.

Leeds.—Vicar's Croft. Sundays, afternoon.

Manchester.—New Cross, Oldham Road. Sundays, 2.30 p.m.

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

MEETINGS OF OTHER SOCIETIES.

HAMMERSMITH LIBERAL CLUB.—Wednesday 10th Feb. at 8 p.m., William Morris, "The Political Outlook."

PATRIOTIC CLUB.—Sunday 14th Feb. W. Morris, "Socialism."

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CLUB, Goldsmith Row, Hackney Road.—Lectures on Sundays at 7.45 p.m.

LIVERPOOL.—"THE WORKERS' BROTHERHOOD."—Sunday evening Socialist lectures. Fred Willis, 49 Wood Street, Hanover Street, asks help.

WHERE TO GET THE "COMMONWEAL."

LONDON.

Old Ford Road—Roberts, 4; Caudle, 139.
Globe Road—Poole, 24; Caudle, 244; Brown, 252.
Mile End Road—174. Haines, 212; W. Cole, 84
New St., Bedford St., wholesale agent;
Hendry, 6 Jubilee Street.
Commercial Road—C. A. Schweitzer, 46; Viney, 115; Busby Brothers, 184; Long, 234;
Brizes, 244.
Whitechapel Road—Kerby, 118; Eades, 219;
J. Brown, 18 Bakers Row.
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Marc St., Hackney—J. Yates, 4 West Street.
Bishopsgate—E. T. Pendrill, 26 Brushfield St.
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Strand—Pitt, 30 Newcastle St.
Farringdon St.—Progressive Publishing Co., 28 Stoaecutter St.
Comrade Wm. Blundell, 14, Camden Passage, Islington, N. Agent for Socialist League publications.

PROVINCES.

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BRADFORD—G. Mihly, 3 Crab St. Hall Lane.
BRISTOL—Mortish, Narrow Wine St.
DUBLIN—J. J. Labor, North Earl St.
EDINBURGH—B. Given, 20 Bristo St.; Robinson, Greenside St.
GALASHIELS—The News Stall, Princess St.
GLASGOW—J. Adams, 91, Houston St.
HAWICK—J. Finlay, High St.; J. C. Goodfellow, High St.
HULL—H. Witty, Suffolk Row, Wincolmoie.
HAVERHILL (Suffolk)—Chevins & Son, High St.
LEEDS—T. Maguire, 54 Myrtle Street.
LIVERPOOL.—Landing Stage;
Stocker, 27 Vauxhall Road; Tibbs, 11 St. James Place; F. Bacon, Prescott St.
MANCHESTER—W. Addison (Wholesale) 22 Carnarvon St., Dickens St., Queen's Road.
NORTHAMPTON—W. Brain, 16 Little Cross St.
OLDEAM—J. Salway, 64 Falcon St. off Ashton Road.
OXFORD—English, 38 St. Ebbe's St.; Miss Foy 5 The Plain, St. Clement's.

Special attention is called to the literature of the Socialist League, including a series of leaflets. No. 7, "Home Rule and Humbug," is now ready. Copies may be had on application to the secretary. Supplied for distribution at 2s. per 1000

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