

# THE COMMONWEAL

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

### THE LESSON OF THE HOUR.

THE labour revolt in the East-end, whatever the result of the dock-labourers' strike may be, will leave a lasting impression behind it, at least on the working men. The wiseacre Norwood, in his speech of Tuesday last, made the very remarkable discovery that "the strike was aimed at capital and employers generally," and seemed to think that this *discovery* was a set-off against his other shortcomings.

As a matter of fact, it is just this element of conscious or semi-conscious attack on the slave-drivers generally which distinguishes this strike from the ordinary trades-union bickerings. These latter, as individual struggles, have been usually little more than business disputes between the two parties to a contract, recognised as such by both parties to it. But this is a revolt against oppression: a protest against the brute force which keeps a huge population down in the depths of the most dire degradation, for the benefit of a knot of profit-hunters; and there is no doubt that nothing except the physical force of the executive which is, as it were, keeping the ring in this fight between the public and the shareholders, prevents the revolt from achieving far more success than the attainment of its immediate and declared aims.

In short, other strikes have been, on the surface, strikes of the business-accessories of the factory against its financial managers; this is a strike of the poor against the rich.

Let us hope that those of the respectable classes who have so loudly expressed sympathy with the strikers understand this: because if they do, it gives us a dawning hope that they will be prepared to meet us half-way when the crisis comes, when the workmen have come to understand definitely their full claim. For indeed they may be sure that this will be the only way to prevent those terrors which haunt the dreams of the the useless rich; it will be worth more to the pleasure of their lives than all the array of brute force, which they will certainly not always be able to depend upon; since, after all, that force is necessarily made up of men who are *workmen* forced by ill-luck into the ranks of the soldiery and the police.

As Burns hinted when the guards passed the meeting on Tower Hill the other day, they who are now hapless tools of the rich will presently become their hapless slaves once more, as they were before they put on their livery-coats.

Meantime, do not let us deceive ourselves as to the amount and quality of this respectable sympathy. We will not be ungenerous; we are quite sure that with many of the well-to-do the sympathy is genuine; that the horrible poverty of the East-end workers (and how many thousands outside the East end) has touched their hearts; and these people will become Socialists of some kind before the end. But I fear that they are in the minority among the respectables (or rather I know it) and that the rest have been rather *cowed* into silence, or into venting their irritation against the strike, by falling foul of Norwood and his gang; who, after all, are only following the necessary custom of the *whole gang*.

If this were not so, why do not the subscriptions to the strike fund amount to £20,000 or £30,000 instead of what they amount to now? They are workmen's pennies, somewhat eked out by contributions from a few of the better off; mostly those who can least afford it.

One word about the withdrawn manifesto of the Strike Committee. It was to have been expected that it would be attacked furiously by the capitalist press, but it was not to be expected that any calling themselves Socialists should have attacked it; and it is most lamentable that they should have done so, as they may perhaps see by the avidity with which their opinions were recorded by the capitalist press. For us surely the mere fact that it was thought possible to bring about a general strike in London remains the central point in the history of

the strike; let us hope that the aspiration toward the use of such an effective weapon against Capital may remain in the minds of the more considerate of the workers and bring forth fruit before long.

"A good man will be contented fast enough if he be fed and clothed sufficiently; but if a man be not well fed and clad, he is a base wretch to be contented." So says William Cobbett, and certainly the strikers might have one more banner with this inscription written on it. We have learned a good deal since William Cobbett's time, and some of us have become very "refined" indeed; but still on this foundation of victuals and shelter without anxiety must you build "refinement" and all.

Those who are "discontented" on the grounds given by Cobbett, know all about the meaning of that phrase so often used, "insufficiency of food and shelter"; and I am afraid it says little for the keenness of imagination at the present day, that those who have *not* suffered the insufficiency have so very little an idea of what it means. From that unimaginative content of the well-to-do comes all that covert hatred of the poor as inconvenient people, which is so common amongst us, and will one day (who can doubt it?) be so bitterly revenged.

This is the cause of the filling of the jails with manufactured criminals, a sort of criminal capital to be used for the production of more criminals; the preaching of thrift to people earning precarious starvation wages; the horrors of the workhouse, where poverty is punished for being poor; the horrors of the slum, which mocks the beauty of the earth outside the city, and the attempt to get rid of which is thrust aside as an insoluble problem; while all sorts of miracles, chemical, mechanical, and what not, are being invented for the benefit of capitalistic man, each one of them a million times more difficult than the due feeding and housing of all industrious persons.—IF we could but once have the wits to cease oppressing others for our own discomfort.

One thing is to me certain, that anyone of the well-to-do class whose imagination is sufficiently touched for him to have a vision of poverty and to gain an inkling of what it means, must either become a Socialist of some sort, or else join Mr. Justice Stephen's Religion of Inhumanity; and rather than that they had better, for their own sakes, have been knocked on the head while they were young enough to be innocent of cynicism at least. I say to all rich men, "Once feel what poverty is, and you must either be a Socialist or a cruel tyrant conscious of your tyranny." Are there such men? I should hope only a very few, and that the rest who sin against the people do so out of sheer stupidity.

The Great Strike does seem (as such things sometimes will) to have enlightened these last a little, to have touched their sluggish imaginations. If that could last, it would be something of a gain if there were no other. Yet I cannot help thinking that fear was an element of that enlightenment, at all events with many.

Meantime, surely a man of any imagination must have felt both puzzled and disgusted at the sentences on the men for intimidation. Here was the public sympathising with the efforts of the men to gain a better livelihood, and scolding at their immediate tyrants the Dock Companies; and yet through their magistrates and police-courts these very same sympathisers were punishing the strikers for doing what was necessary to carry on the strike. And this although the capitalist papers—*e.g.*, the *Daily News*—admitted that the intimidation was probably merely formal, and that the men were quite willing to accept the intimidation as an excuse for coming out. Certainly hypocrisy is a very useful—virtue—and one cannot wonder that it is so sedulously cultivated in the first commercial country, the *most practical* people, in the world.

The recovery of trade, the cessation of depression, has been crowded over considerably of late; and some persons, both foes and friends,

have seen in it the herald of the disappearance of Socialism; a most stupid assumption, and on the part of friends most cowardly, as has been pointed out in these columns a week or two back. But in any case a full recovery of trade to the period of Mr. Gladstone's "leaps and bounds" is a very unlikely event. Even now in the full flush of the "recovery" we find the cotton-trade in a disastrous condition; Blackburn, *e.g.*, which but less than a year ago, was, as I was told when there, doing as brisk a business as might be, now shutting up mills on all hands.

By all means no fatalistic folding of the hands for Socialists! Let us go on with our work as briskly as possible, whatever temporary discouragements we may meet with. But this we may be sure of: first, that modern capitalism is doomed to destroy itself; and secondly, that no new form of capitalism can arise from its ashes: that nothing but Socialism can arise from them.

W. M.

## ABSTINENCE.

I AM not a total abstainer, nor a vegetarian. Although I believe in Malthusianism as a theory, I scorn the life of a cold-blooded bachelor. It goes without saying that I smoke a pipe. I have no great admiration for abstentions of any kind. There are thin people whose only virtues consist of abnegation, which, when you note the superior pleasure it seems to afford them, is no great mortification of the flesh after all. Surely a man is admirable more for the good he does than for the evil he abstains from doing. I can conceive of a person so anxious to avoid evil that he would miss all opportunity of doing good—his rule of life being a mere wary evasion of danger and difficulty. Indeed, one does not need to conceive such persons; we all know them.

I have known a glass work wonders in the way of thawing frosty reserve, which, but for its kindly influence, would never have dissolved. As for a pipe, to praise its offices would carry me beyond my depth. When I see a man who fidgets as he sits, who does not know what to do with his feet and hands, who never dreams or philosophises, I judge at once that his education has been neglected—that he does not smoke. Smoking is an employment which, providing amusement, while leaving the mind clear and free, reconciles men to physical passivity, and makes patience possible. By disposing men to follow things to their roots, it develops the bump of causation; and the person who smokes can afford to think twice before he speaks.

And yet I feel that I ought to be a teetotaler. The sociability that requires drink to call it forth is not worth much; and how many men have sworn eternal friendship at the street corner after a carouse, and ever after passed one another with a dry and distant nod. If drink sometimes performs the social function of forming and cementing friendships, it has ruined more friendships than ever it formed. To say nothing of the expenditure of money, time, and health over drink, it befores the brains of those who have need of all the brains they possess to enable them to circumvent the enemy. The fellow who shouts his beery applause at whatever you say, and effusively shakes your hand at the close of a meeting, disgusts the by-standers and is a nuisance and a disgrace to every cause he favours.

There is an immense deal of truth in what the temperance people say as to the widely pervasive anti-social effects of intemperance. The large proportion of the people who live in slums are there, directly, or indirectly, through drink. There are, indeed, thousands of widows in the slums who, like Mrs. Nubbles, in "The Old Curiosity Shop," support a family by charring, sewing, and matchbox-making, and, by hard work, manage to preserve a measure of decency and self-respect. But was it hard work, or drink, that took away the husbands? Probably, a good deal of both, but especially drink, which, when it does not cut off the drinker precipitately, shortens his life by an insidious process of devitalisation. Drink helps to fill our prisons and asylums. It leads the giddy girl into harlotry. It carries distress and sorrow into millions of homes. It robs the masses of the education that might go on after the lad or lass has left school. It reconciles the miserable to their misery. I know scores of youths who look forward to their "pint" on Saturday night, and who, while that can be had, find the drudgery and abuse of the rest of the week tolerable. Your pothouse politician is no great social force.

The workers of Britain are said to spend about one hundred million pounds a year in liquor. That is not the entire national drink bill, which I have seen stated at one hundred-and-thirty-six millions; but the most enthusiastic temperance advocate will admit that the upper and middle classes contribute thirty-six millions of that amount. Well, if the masses spend one hundred million pounds in drink, I have no hesitation in saying, although I contribute my mite to this grand total, that it is one hundred millions too much; for I would not have liquor used even as a medicine. I know that doctors disagree; but intelligent people usually incline to one view or the other, whether they care to admit it or not; and I have adopted the view that alcohol, as a medicine, does more harm than good, and that any good it does could be better accomplished by other means.

Some of our comrades contend, according to the theory of the iron law of wages, that if the workers did not spend this money on drink they would not get it to spend at all. I myself have, I regret to say, blundered into this contention when, in the hurry of speaking, a better argument against the claim of teetotalism escaped my recollection. The iron law theory, as applied to total abstinence, will not bear examination. It is easy to see that if the workers did not spend their money on drink they could spend it on something else. Could not the standard

of comfort be kept as high under a system of total abstinence as it is at present? Nay; could it not be raised higher? I am aware that saving, living beneath one's income, might, if generally practised, have the effect of lowering wages. (I say might, because the so-called iron law of wages has no great rigidity about it, but can be, and is, defeated by combination and legislation). But to save money by overcoming a bad habit does not involve that we should live on less. The money spent on drink could, and, if the drinking were stopped, would be spent on useful articles, the manufacture of which would benefit the worker as producer, and the use and enjoyment of which would benefit the worker as consumer.

It is not worth much to say that the man who drinks his wages as he earns them has nothing to fall back upon in the event of a strike. He will be under strong temptation to turn rat, or scab, and he will be likely to put up with more oppression from his foreman, say, than the man who feels he can afford to be out of a job for a week, while he looks for work elsewhere. He must not suppose that prosperity makes for contentment. It is not the prosperous people, but the soakers, the people who are in debt and difficulties, who are our opponents. Political organisations and trade combinations are supported by the sober, rather than by the drinking, section of the working class. The periods of prosperity are the epochs of progress. Then the outlook takes the form of hope, and a steady hope is a better stimulus than despair.

If the hundred millions annually spent on drink were spent on clothing, food, furniture, and books, it would give employment to a million men at 30s. a week, after making full allowance for the displacement of labour caused by the abolition of the drink traffic. If the hundred millions spent on drink were spent on useful commodities, it would make up the difference between the most prosperous year and the most depressed year in trade. One hundred million pounds is about a thirteenth of the annual national income.

All this is very commonplace, and by association may seem even vulgar. But in following up new light, and in seeking to found a new gospel which will charm, as the old has failed to do, we are in danger of overlooking or underrating the value of the truth that lies in the commonplace.

Of course I do not for one moment pretend, as some temperance advocates do, that to shut the public house is to solve the social problem. I do not forget that, if the masses spend one hundred millions on drink, they are also fleeced every year of eight times as much by landlords, capitalists, and their hangers-on; that in interest alone they lose two hundred-and-fifty millions annually; that in rent 200 millions go past them. I do not barter, nor even abate, my ideal of the full-developed, well-rounded, communal life of the future for a teetotalist's mess of pottage, but I have jotted down these observations because I feel that some of us are not sound, not quite wise, on this matter.

I am of opinion, moreover, that the drink question is one with which we shall have to deal, either before, or soon after, we enter on the communal life. We all believe, with Bellamy, that to-day the position of humanity is as that of "a rosebush planted in a swamp, watered with black bog-water, breathing miasmatic fogs by day, and chilled with poison dews at night," and that when it is transplanted into the conditions of a better world, and has for the first time a chance of growing in goodness and beauty, it will be so transformed that we shall forget it was once the mean and vicious thing which it appears at present. We all believe this, I repeat, but one does not require to be a pessimist to see that the very virtues which the new order will call forth may, without due safeguards, lead us into the temptation of intemperance. To lift the yoke from the shoulders of toil-burdened, care-deadened men and women, and give them leisure, and the means of enjoying it, is a process not unattended with danger. It is not difficult to conceive of circumstances in which drink may exercise a fascination over generous and impulsive men; and I trust we shall always have impulsive men. Conduct is largely, if not wholly, determined by temptation, both good and bad, and it ought to be our aim to make it, as a great phrase-master has said, easy to do right and difficult to do wrong.

JAMES LEATHAM.

Live your own life in your own day. *You are not your grandmother!*

COLLECTIONS FOR DOCKER'S STRIKE.—Hammersmith and North Kensington branches of the S.L., £1; Aberdeen branch, £2 8s.; collected by Mrs. Tochatti at Beadon Road, Hammersmith, on Monday, Aug. 26th, 16s. 3d.

Anyone who wants to see what a few workmen can do for themselves without injuring their fellows—even benefitting a good many of them—should send a stamp to the Hebden Bridge Fustian Manufacturing Society, Nutlough Works, Hebden Bridge, Yorks, for a pamphlet giving the story of the formation of the society and its subsequent history. It is a record of high resolve and strong endeavour, that we are glad to see is bearing fruit. If only the mass of the workers could see how easily masters are dispensed with, and how easy it is to combine!

SOCIALISM IN ABERDEEN.—A capital week's work has been done here. At indoor meeting on Monday, Leatham lectured to crowded audience on the question, "Why do we Punish Criminals?" *re* the Maybrick case; 5s. collected for dock labourers. The following meetings have been held at Castle Street during the week, the collections being for the strikers:—On Thursday night, speaker Duncan, collected 9s.; on Friday night, speakers, Duncan and Leatham, collected 6s.; on Saturday night, speakers, Duncan, Aiken, and Leatham, collected 19s. 4d.; large sale of literature; tall hat, which insinuated that we would "have a good booze off that," threatened by crowd with a ducking in the fountain. On Sunday afternoon, Duncan and Leatham addressed a meeting on the Inches, collecting 13s. 8d. Total for the five meetings, £2 13s. We are adding to our membership every week.—L.

**THE BOURGEOIS: ANNO 1829.**

(By HEINRICH HEINE. Translated by C. S. CALVERLEY.)

I CRAVE an ampler, worthier sphere :  
 I'd liefer bleed at every vein  
 Than stifle 'mid these hucksters here,  
 These lying slaves of paltry gain.

They eat, they drink ; they're every whit  
 As happy as their type, the mole ;  
 Large are their bounties—as the slit  
 Through which they drop the poor man's dole.

With pipe in mouth they go their way,  
 With hands in pocket ; they are blest  
 With grand digestions : only they  
 Are such hard morsels to digest !

The hard that's red with some dark deed,  
 Some giant crime, were white as wool  
 Compared with these sleek saints, whose creed  
 Is paying-all their debts in full.

Ye clouds that sail to far-off lands,  
 O waft me to what clime ye will !  
 To Lapland's snows, to Libya's sands,  
 To the world's end—but onward still !

Take me, O clouds ! They ne'er look down ;  
 But (proof of a discerning mind)  
 One moment hang o'er Hamburg town,  
 The next they leave it leagues behind.

**REVOLUTIONARY CALENDAR.**

WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 14, 1889.

8	Sun.	1812. John Martin born. 1819. First number of the <i>Cap of Liberty</i> ; lasted to Jan. 4, 1820. 1882. Arabi declared a rebel.
9	Mon.	1803. Trial of Joseph Doran at Dublin for high treason. 1830. Outbreak at Dresden. 1864. Louis Lingg born. 1883. Swiss Workmen's Congress. 1887. Mitchelstown massacre.
10	Tues.	1797. Mary Wollstonecroft Godwin died. 1801. Rev. Gilbert Wakefield died at Hackney. 1803. Trial of Thomas Donnelly, Nicholas Farrell (alias Tyrrell), Laurence Begley (alias Bayly), and Michael Kelly, at Dublin, for high treason. 1833. Trades Union Congress opened at Nottingham.
11	Wed.	1677. James Harrington died (writer of 'Oceana'). 1752. New Style Calendar introduced in Britain. 1819. Trial at Lancaster of James Watson and Laurence Moss for "a conspiracy to raise the wages of weavers at Blackburn." 1823. D. Ricardo died. 1839. Riot at Sheffield caused by cavalry attack on a Chartist meeting. 1848. Hungarian rebellion breaks out. 1867. Capture of Kelly and Deasy at Manchester. 1879. Communist rising in Colombia, South America. 1884. Trades Union Congress opened at Aberdeen.
12	Thur.	1793. Rev. Thomas Fyshe Palmer tried for "seditious practices" in publishing an address of the Friends of Liberty adopted at the Bazaar Meeting House, Dundee. 1812. Luddite riot at Leeds. 1820. Twenty-two reformers tried for high treason, York. 1860. William Walker shot. 1886. Monument to Arnaud unveiled in Paris.
13	Fri.	1806. C. J. Fox died. 1819. Henry Hunt makes a public entry into London, attended by Preston the cobbler, Waddington the billsticker, Watson, and a procession of 200,000 persons.
14	Sat.	1791. French Constitution accepted by the King. 1800. Food-riots in London. 1819. Reform riots at Paisley and Glasgow. 1839. Dissolution of Chartist National Convention. 1843. Revolutionary movement in Greece.

**LITERARY NOTES.**

THE New Co-operative Publishing Co. has just issued its first list of books for the forthcoming season. It contains several noteworthy works, amongst others a novel by Miss Amye Reade (a relative of the late Charles Reade), entitled "Ruby." This is a realistic story of circus life, and is not unlikely to create a stir. Another realistic story of to-day is "A Manchester Shirt-maker," by John Law, the author of "Captain Lobe." The list further includes a book of stirring adventure, "After Shipwreck," by J. A. Owen ; "A Book of Vagrom Men and Vagrant Thoughts," by a new writer ; "The Education of Man," by John G. Speed ; "The Laws of National Evolution," from the French of Ph. Delbert ; "Fifine," a novel by A. T. Story, and "Only Half a Hero," by the same writer. Additions to this list are promised shortly—not a bad start for so young an enterprise.

A workingman to-day is not as well taken care of as were the slaves of the South in long time ago. As an illustration we give the following : A man in one of our shops was injured three weeks ago so as to disable him from working ; he was hauled to his home in the carriage of the boss, who has not visited him since. In the days of slavery, the boss looked after his chattel and provided for him with food ; to-day, as soon as a man is unable to work he is carted off to die.—*Labour Herald.*

THE EIGHT HOURS' QUESTION.—The following, says the *Railway Review*, is the result of the plebiscite taken among the members of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants on the Eight Hours' Question :—In favour of an eight hours' working-day, 3,344 ; not in favour, 350 ; in favour of eight hours being obtained by Act of Parliament, 2,190 ; against Act of Parliament, 1,504. Out of 13,000 voting papers issued, it will be seen that only 3,694—little over a fourth—have been returned, a number that cannot be of much service in gauging the views of the members on the question. If the figures mean anything at all it is that the bulk of the members feel no interest in the matter whatever, and declined to reply to the questions put.

**SOCIALISM IN SWEDEN.**

A FEW words about Swedish Socialist leaders will, I think, be interesting. Two of them are bourgeois—Hjalmar Branting, of *Socialdemokraten* (Stockholm), is bourgeois by birth and education ; Axel Danielsson, of *Arbetet* (Malmö), is a proletarian by birth, but bourgeois by education. Economically, it, of course, means exactly the same to be a bourgeois in Scandinavia as in England, but not quite so intellectually. When a Scandinavian bourgeois leads anything else than a pure animal and economical life—I daresay it is not very often, but still—he is much better educated, much more truly refined in his taste, and much more modern in his thought than the English one. (I say so having studied both.) Chauvinism is not the worst vice of the better sort of an educated Swede. He is rather cosmopolitan, having a smattering of knowledge of everything modern, and being well trained in German, English, French, and Russian literature and science ; and last, not least, he has a very excellent, very revolutionary, novelistic and dramatic literature of his own. Ibsen is his prophet, and he admires such in their ways revolutionary and uncompromising geniuses as Björnson, Lie, Kielland, Jacobsen, Strindberg, etc., who would be quite impossible in English literature. In this respect the evolution from Swedish (or Scandinavian) bourgeois to Socialist is the easiest possible. Hjalmar Branting is a fair, and not isolated, sample of such an evolution. He went to school with the present Swedish Crown Prince—and now he is in prison (Branting, not the Crown Prince) for publishing socialistic ideas. His paper is, on the whole, the best managed of the Swedish Socialist press. Branting is strongly Marxistic—perhaps, not to a slight extent, because the university youths of Sweden are impregnated with German science, and it therefore lies very near to a man like Branting to fall into a rather one-sided and exaggerated reliance upon German socialistic authority. Both theoretically and practically this seems to me noticeable by our Stockholm comrades. Evolution in everything—in Socialist theory and tactics before anything !

This slight reproach cannot be directed against Axel Danielsson. His strong, healthy mind is full of desire for movement onwards. He hates all authority, political and intellectual. He dislikes socialistic centralisation, and preaches autonomy. He has got his eyes open for the necessity of directing special agitation against political authority of all sorts—socialistic or bourgeois. Danielsson is a lively, charming writer, and his leaders in *Arbetet* are sometimes beautiful monuments of best modern revolutionary literature. He has been in prison one year now, and has got to stay eight long months more. Hitherto he has kept his freshness of mind most admirably. May he succeed to do so unto the end ! He is a man that Swedish Socialism cannot afford to lose. His young wife promises to be a good co-worker in the interest of the cause.

The life of Pehr Eriksson, of *Folkets Röst* (Gothenberg), is typical of the Swedish proletarian. He is a native of Dalecarlia, and was first painter, afterwards compositor, by trade. His parents were the poorest kind of Swedish land-proletarians, who worked in the forests throughout the dreadful nine months' winter of North Sweden, and for all that excess of toil could not afford always to eat unmixed bread or porridge. Starving, freezing, and overwork was the essence of his childhood. When he as a youth was sent to the metropolis to learn a trade, he still had to lead a brutally hard life. A "peasant-boy" can, in such an event, always calculate on getting a little more ill-treatment than a "town-boy"—in Sweden there is namely still the ancient hostility between town and country. Certainly, Eriksson had to taste life from its very harshest side, and he ought to bring into the movement a sound experience of the sufferings of the poorest Swedish wage-slaves, and of the injustices they have to endure from their petty tyrants. His practical knowledge of this side of Swedish life makes him able for propagandist work among that socially and intellectually low, but—in Sweden, at least—bodily and morally healthy class, which it is often difficult for the highly educated man to reach. Eriksson seems to be a man of ability and great energy,—now he is in prison for a year, which gives him a, perhaps, not wholly unwelcome rest, after a life of incessant struggle for existence.

These are three types of Swedish Socialist leaders. Among the rest, with whom I cannot occupy myself now, is August Palm—perhaps the best known of them all, as far as foreign countries are concerned. He is the best popular agitator of the party, has the greatest merits in the spreading of Socialism in the country and the small towns. He was the first Social Democrat in Sweden, and has been in prison for the cause several times already. The Stockholm group is said to be more orthodox Marxistic, and the Malmö one of a more autonomistic character. But there is no split, and no quarrel—and in so far Swedish Socialism compares favourable with the English.

STN.

TAX-DODGERS.—The migration of the tax-dodgers took place on the last day of April ; they will return on the second day of December, having spent just six months and one day in their country places, whereby they shifted the paying of a large proportion of their taxes to more economical regions. It is a very equitable arrangement, for it is only the rich man who can save money in this way, while his poorer neighbour, who has no country seat to which he can escape, must pay to the uttermost farthing. The system stimulates the impudencious to become wealthy, and helps the rich to become richer. It is, therefore, perfectly good and just.—*Marion Crawford, in "An American Politician."*

THE GOSPEL OF PLENTY.—Intelligent discontent is divine. By it everything worth having has been achieved. I wish I could kindle the flame of it in your breast. I am glad that it burns in mine. I am glad that I cannot see a palace or a hovel, a millionaire or a tramp, a pure mother or a street-walker, without being wrought into a fury by the needless contrasts presented. And I exhort you to join the church of the Holy Discontent. That is a church in which I believe. Its beatitude is this : Blessed is he who has neither too much nor too little. Its creed is this : I believe in the saving power of plenty. I believe that poverty as a social phenomenon is a crime. I believe that bad laws make bad men and a bad religion. I believe that no man should be allowed to appropriate wealth by law. I believe that each man and woman in the world should have and enjoy equal political and industrial opportunity with every other person. I believe that when vested rights are injurious to human welfare they become vested wrongs which we are not bound to respect. I believe that church and state were made for man and not man for them, and when they cease to be servants and become tyrants they must be changed or overthrown. I believe in the essential power of right and in the essential goodness of human nature, and I therefore hope for the time when there will be neither superfluity for a few nor poverty for the many, but enough for all.—*Hugh O. Pentecost.*



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

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

As all articles are signed, no special significance attaches to them because of their position in these pages. None to be taken as more than in a general manner expressing the views of the League as a body, except it be so explicitly declared by the Editors. Rejected MSS. only returned if a stamped directed envelope is forwarded with them. Subscriptions.—For Europe and United States, including postage, per year, 6s. six months, 3s.; three months, 1s. 6d.

Business communications to be addressed to Manager of the COMMONWEAL, 13 Farringdon Road, E.C. Remittances in Postal Orders or halfpenny stamps.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

T. B. (Leicester).—Report came Wednesday morning; a day too late. CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED:—Will be used: "The Power of the People," "The Vital Question Again," "What the Soil can Produce."

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Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday September 4.

ENGLAND	FRANCE
Brotherhood	Paris—Le Parti Ouvrier (daily)
Church Reformer	Le Proletariat
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Justice	HOLLAND
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Labour Tribune	BELGIUM
London—Frete Presse	Ghent—Vooruit
Railway Review	ITALY
Seafaring	Milan—Il Fascio Operaio
Unity	PORTUGAL
Worker's Friend	Lisbon—O Protesto Operario
Wakefield Free Press	GERMANY
NEW SOUTH WALES	Berlin—Volks Tribune
Hamilton—Radical	HUNGARY
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UNITED STATES	Malmo—Arbetet
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LIFE AND LABOUR IN EAST LONDON.<sup>1</sup>

"Of the making of books there is no end," was the weary cry of an old time book reviewer, which is often re-echoed over the book-making which is still going. Book-making in *excelsis* is exhibited in the particular work in hand; it tells us nothing new, but re-relates a tale told ten thousand times before, and often in better fashion, for the tremendous length and detail will almost assuredly deter any but the most determined from attempting its pages. The only people at all likely to read this book are those who have gone through at least a dozen similar works. Mill's "Poverty and the State," Sims's "How the Poor Live," Kay's "Social Condition and Education of the People," Sargent's "Economy of the Labouring Classes," the "Essays" written in competition for the Rev. John Minter Morgan prize, Mayhew's "London Labour and London Poor," are only a few which can be recalled in a minute, all telling the same tale, all giving the same momentary feeling of despair, disgust, sympathy, and—in perhaps a few cases—of remorse, and all in a very short time completely forgotten and abortive.

The one feature peculiar to Mr. Booth's work is—as of course becomes a member of the Statistical Society—the elaboration of what I suppose our editor-in-chief would call "the method of the duck's egg." Tables of figures, and columns of figures, big masses and little, turn up everywhere; and would, but for Mr. Booth's excessive optimism, have suggested a much better title than the one which was, after some trouble, finally adopted.

The "Roll Call of the Army of the Damned," or, the "Field State of the Army of the Revolution," would have, either of them, been more appropriate as exact to fact and possibilities. For the terms "Life" and "Labour," according to any ideas of Ruskinian definition, could never be applied to such a record as is given in our six hundred pages of Inferno. This may seem strong, but is none too strong as a protest against what seems an optimism which the whole book is a denial of.

How a man can give page after page of such detail as is given on say pp. 7-10, the summing-up of which is "an awful place"; how an author can prove as ours does, that any real love of home, any circle of enduring friends is impossible, because of the continual breaking up of association—not to speak of the positive physical breaking up of the "home" as represented by constantly shifting furniture; how a man can epitomize so accurately modern commerce, as where he says, "people are selling things of hardly any value to people with hardly any money"; how, after showing that there are 314,000 sinking to want, he can bring himself to say, "there is a disgrace, not a danger," is only to be explained by his fatal optimism, or a mental obliquity of vision which defies facts no matter how or by whom stated.

One would much like to have an accurate knowledge of Mr. Booth's standard or standards of happiness, for without such it is hard to balance together statements such as "their life is an unending struggle," and that they are "more or less in want but not in distress."

It may be true that where there are "only" 43,000 or 24 per cent. in poverty, against 140,000 or 76 per cent. in comfort, there may be no "danger" only disgrace, but how about the "danger" when, as in St. George's, we have the numbers so evenly balanced as 23,000 in poverty against 24,000 in comfort (p. 62), especially when we come to know what this "comfort" really is; when we learn that "St. George's appears to stagnate with a squalor peculiar to itself," that "it shares in the poor characteristics of both her neighbours, and is more entirely poverty stricken than either" (p. 65).

For the purposes of this enquiry the whole population of 909,000 is divided into eight classes:—

- (A) The lowest class of occasional labourers, loafers, and semi-criminals.
- (B) Casual earnings—"Very Poor."
- (C) Intermittent earnings—"Poor."
- (D) Small regular earnings—"Poor."
- (E) Regular standard earnings—"Above the Line of Poverty."
- (F) Higher Class Labour.
- (G) Lower Middle Class.
- (H) Upper Middle Class.

Of A, roughly 11,000, our author says, "Their life is the life of savages, with vicissitudes of extreme hardship and occasional excess . . . the ready materials for disorder when occasion serves. They render no useful service, they create no wealth; more often they destroy it. They degrade whatever they touch, and as individuals are perhaps incapable of improvement" (p. 38). "A considerable number of discharged soldiers are to be found in Classes A and B."

Seeing that by "Poor," our "author" means a regular, though bare, income of 18s. to 21s. for a family, and that B, 100,000, is classed as "Very Poor," which means "those who fall below that standard," one is a bit puzzled to know what else their lives can be than the life of savages—extreme hardship, with occasional excess.

In the opinion of the author, Class C, 74,200, is the class which, above all others, is the most proper field for systematic charitable assistance; they are, "more than any others, the victims of competition, and on them falls with particular severity the weight of recurrent depressions of trade."

The possible standard of life of A, B and C may roughly be judged by the fact that Class D ("Small Regular Earnings") embraces 129,000, such as carmen, where men remain at a wage of 21s., or less, for fifteen or twenty years, "being in a comfortable position at the start, but getting poorer and poorer as their family increased, and improving again as their children became able to add their quota to the family income" (p. 49), to which statement much exception can be taken, for the improvement but very rarely takes place, two main reasons preventing. First, by the time the family has grown up, the father is fifteen or twenty years older, and is of less value to his employer, and has probably been reduced; secondly, the early marriage of the expected contributor.

E is taken as a class earning, a regular wage of from 22s. to 30s., in numbers 377,000, the largest of all.

F is rated from 30s. to 50s., and numbers about 121,000.

G ("Lower Middle Class"), i.e., shopkeepers, small employers, clerks, and subordinate professional men, taken at about 34,000.

H ("Upper Middle Class") number about 45,000, and are those who generally manage to keep one servant, or, in a few cases, two, and who, in many cases, are almost as much deserving of pity as any of the first four classes.

Summing up, Mr. Booth, by grouping, has, in Classes A, B, C and D, 314,000, or 35 per cent. of population, in poverty, sinking to want, and E, F, G, and H, 577,000, or 65 per cent. in comfort, rising to affluence.

THOMAS SHORE.

(To be continued.)

<sup>1</sup> "Life and Labour in East London." Edited by CHARLES BOOTH. Demy 8vo, pp. 598; map. London: Williams and Norgate. 1889.

WEST SOUTHWARK LIBERAL AND RADICAL CLUB, Charlotte Street, S.E.—Sunday September 8th, at 8.30, George Bernard Shaw, "Radicalism and Social Democracy." 15th, W. S. De Mattos, "The New Radical Policy."

## THE DOCK LABOURERS' STRIKE.

THE following song is being sung in the East-end to the tune of "God Save Ireland." Its lack of literary finish may be easily pardoned in a spontaneous popular effusion of the kind:—

At the Docks there is a strike the Companies don't like,  
A tanner an hour a working man to pay;  
Like slaves they'd have them work far worse than any Turk,  
And make them sweat their lives out every day.

*Chorus*—Strike boys, strike for better wages,  
Stand out until they give you better pay,  
You work hard at the Docks, stick out like  
fighting cocks,  
Then the masters all to you they must give way.

Every morning there flocks for employment at the Docks  
Hard-working men who scarce can get a meal,  
With wives and children dear 'twill make you shed a tear,  
If you only knew the hardship that they feel.

There's a lot of men they seek, for about a pound a week,  
They'll take on any duffer that comes near,  
It is sweating with a will, they try your place to fill,  
But that won't wash with working-men it's clear.

If you stick up for your rights you'll put the Companies in a plight,  
For meetings and processions there has been,  
Speeches in galore, and the jolly Stevedore's,  
The Seamen and the Firemen, too, were seen.

Starvation 'tis they bids to a man with seven kids,  
When he brings home only fifteen pence a day,  
What can they get to eat? a bloater's quite a treat,  
It often takes his all his rent to pay.

Here's health to Mr. Burns, he's done us all a turn,  
Mr. Tillet, Mann, and Mr. Toomey too.  
Don't give in a bit, for you've got them in a fit,  
You've put the Dock Companies in a stew.

## THE LABOUR REVOLT.

ON Tuesday, Aug. 28th, the strike threatened to become general. Coal heavers, brass finishers, printer's labourers, rope makers, and tailors were all turning out. Revolt was contagious. On that afternoon I was passing through Commercial Road on the top of a tram, after attending the meeting at West India Docks. I saw a ring of factory girls performing a Carmagnole dance of triumph at the gates of a rope factory, occasionally bumping against the gates as if with the intention of forcing them in. Further down, they were bringing men, boys, and girls out of a biscuit factory, a good-humoured crowd standing at the door laughing and clapping the strikers in a most fraternal manner. Descending from the tram I entered a quiet street, where there was already some appearance of fermentation. Gathered around a sweater's shop was a large crowd; the shop was guarded by a strong force of police, who were evidently apprehensive of having the windows broken.

When night falls upon the disturbed scene, gangs of ragged barefooted children parade the streets, carrying some rags elevated upon a pole and accompanying their parade with the rattle of tin-pots and pans; they are playing at "strikers." Soon after the streets are lighted up for the night; the sound of a drum and fife band is heard, and a procession from one of the side streets crosses the road. It is a number of carmen, who, exhilarated by the general situation, seem inclined to be noisy. They march rather confusedly down Christian Street in the direction of Cable Street, and returning to Commercial Road march off in the direction of Mile End Waste. Here every night since the beginning of the strike huge crowds have collected, and while the glaring gas falls upon their white upturned starved faces, they are addressed by numerous orators upon that all-absorbing subject, the Strike. Sometimes the meetings wind up with a Socialist procession, and the red flag, lurid in the glare of gas and oil, is borne through the streets followed by a tremendous crowd, while a chorus of many voices thunders out the "Marseillaise" or the "Carmagnole."

It is now getting late, nearly eleven o'clock. At ordinary times these narrow streets, save for the gleam of a more or less ineffectual gas-lamp, would be plunged into a darkness in which the hideous fiend whose murderous knife has made the East-end so notorious might stalk unseen. But now that is impossible. Many doors are open, throwing streams of light upon the pavement, and excited groups are everywhere discussing the latest news,—perhaps, though, we should rather say the latest rumour, which often transcends reality. "The tram men have revolted, the cars have been left on the road out Bow and Bromley way"; "Rioting has broken out, the docks are to be fired"; "The strikers are marching to attack the railway depots and turn the carmen out"; "Deptford Meat Market is in the hands of the insurgents, who won't allow London to be fed"; "There will be wild work at the docks to-morrow, as the strikers are going down to turn out the scabs." These are the subjects of discussion in these numerous groups, while light falls from windows and doors upon their excited faces. The East-end has become like Paris in the first revolution—"a naphtha-lighted city of the dead," and the ghosts stand at doors of their tombs discussing their resurrection. So great is the excitement, that the inhabitants have no need of sleep, and seem inclined to watch out the livelong night.

Now let us deal with one of the most interesting of the unorganised strikes. This was that of the coal-heavers. These men, in the midst of the excitement in the early part of last week, suddenly left their work, and marching round the northern suburbs stopped work at all the bays. The march of these grimy sons of toil, rough, sturdy, and furious, filled the middle-classes with terror. The police were few and far between, being all drafted into the East-end, and the houses of the wealthy were completely at their mercy. On Wednesday the business reached a climax. A number of

coal-heavers had resumed work at King's Cross Station. The strikers mustered in Cambridge Street, and directly the wagons appeared they were furiously attacked. The police attempt to interfere, but the strikers jam them up against a wall and dragging the scabs off their perches, thrash them soundly before the very eyes of the police, who are helpless. Only one wagon gets away, the others are forced to put back in the yard. In Westbourne Grove some wagons of coal are upset and the coals distributed among the poor of the neighbourhood by these rebels. The effect of these vigorous measures was seen in the speedy surrender of the masters.

This is not the only unorganised strike that has been successful. The middle-classes are in a pitiable funk. Those who desire to test the question have only to read the columns of our daily press, whose articles eloquently express the perturbation of the superior person. Numerous cases are known where the mere threat of a strike has been sufficient to procure an advance of two or three shillings a-week in wages. The fountains of the great deep are breaking up, and the hearts of the rich are failing them for fear. Sweated workmen should universally take advantage of the terror of the rich to improve their condition.

In the middle of the week the strike flagged to a certain degree, the accessions to the ranks of the strikers not being so numerous as in the early part. This was mainly owing to the issue of a manifesto protesting against unorganised men joining the ranks of the strikers; but with the issue of the general strike manifesto on Friday public interest greatly revived.

On Saturday subscriptions poured in to a tremendous extent, £2,000 being received by the Strike Committee; and with the renewal of public interest the funk of the middle classes increased. That old Motner Gamp of journalism, the *Standard*, was very indignant, though it was evident to most of its readers that the indignation was mingled with fear. It shrieked aloud for the suppression of the strike and the arrest of the leaders. How you are to prevent men from leaving their work does not appear, unless you station soldiers with bayonets at every factory door; and as to the arrest of the leaders, it must be evident to most people that such a proceeding in the present state of public excitement would be more likely to extend the strike than act as a deterrent. The only way of protest against this act of illegal absolutism would be for every man to leave his work, and so the last state of the strike would be worse than the first. No, gentlemen of the middle classes, the time for suppressing strikes has gone by! *Standard* leader-writers should have lived in the good old times of George III.

The *Standard* finds an able backer-up in its strictures in *Justice*, which appears nearly as alarmed for the safety of the capital and the solidarity of our commercial system as the leader-writer of the *Standard*. Rather a funny position for "we Social-Democrats" to occupy! "We Social-Democrats, the only Socialist party in England," used to be always talking about a general strike, but now some impertinent person has a notion of putting our ideas into practice, we do not appear to like it. It is strange how moderate some revolutionists get in a time in which revolution seems not unlikely!

Well, despite the grave censures of that portion of the press in which old women delight, there is no doubt that public interest was greatly quickened by the famous manifesto. The procession into the City was larger and more enthusiastic than I have known it for some days. The narrow streets of the City looked bare and desolate before the host of marching men which swept through them. The "Marseillaise" rang out with what seemed redoubled force along the resounding streets. On comes the great procession, proudly, firmly, and defiantly. The windows of every business office is crowded with the middle classes, who gaze with parted lips and staring eyes upon the daring men below. As the procession advances, the hearts of the processionists swell within them as they listen to the glorious song of revolution that proclaims that the glorious day of victory and vengeance is at hand.

You all know how the directors refused the demands of the men, which was followed by a great demonstration in Hyde Park, and the withdrawal of the general strike manifesto, to be held back as the last desperate weapon to bring the middle classes to their knees. So now let me give a slight sketch of a scene on Tower Hill at one of the morning meetings. It is Monday morning; the sky is gloomy and overcast, but an immense crowd has gathered upon the hill. From that raised terrace in front of an old warehouse a man is speaking. We all know that figure—short, thick, strong and muscular, clad in blue, a straw hat on his head and a leather bag slung at his side. Yes, it is John Burns, the central figure—what one might almost call the soul of the strike. To the startled eyes of the few middle-class people who gaze upon the scene, there must be a terrible meaning about that black-bearded swarthy figure, that has risen like some gnome from the depths, and now towers aloft, a potent of coming storm and revolution.

You gaze through a screen of leafy trees upon the old grey Tower behind sleeping peacefully after a stirring life of centuries. There they stand face to face, the man and the prison fortress. The Tower one of the last relics of a worn-out feudalism; the man the impersonation of the coming storm, that will sweep capitalism and feudalism away. Here in this pleasant spot—for Tower Hill is one of the few places which are cheerful in the East-end of London, with its old houses, its gardens, the green trees, the huge fortress, and the river, which now sparkles in the sun, beyond—it is easy to fall into a pleasant dream; and even these wretched toilers must feel what little happiness their starved lives afford, while their hearts yearn for a life that shall be bright as the sun, fresh as the green leaves, free from care and joylessness.

But let us change the scene. Within a quarter of an hour's walk from Tower Hill there is a street where the League has held meetings for months past. By the side of a gloomy railway arch there is a coffee tavern, and an immense crowd of starving men has collected round to get their relief tickets. The place is besieged by them, and the doors threaten to give way. The terrified proprietor, fearing that they will yield and that this will be the signal for the sack of his shop, harangues them frantically from the window, and is met with shouts and groans. The police, however, arrive in strong force, and forming the men into a column three deep, they keep them in this position, and they gradually enter the shop. A little further on a mad crowd surrounds a strong man who has some relief tickets which are literally torn from his grasp. Little children with hardly rage enough to cover their nakedness run up to you to beg "a penny to get something to eat, they are so hungry."

We are now in a street inhabited by dockers—narrow, close, and unwholesome. The very houses look desolate, despairing, and hungry. Haggard women, with dishevelled hair and ragged dresses, talk excitedly together; and if you listened to their conversation you would probably hear the name of Norwood and the directors linked with the bitterest curses. But in spite of the hunger and the wretchedness, one sentiment prevails—the most enthusiastic belief in their leaders, and the certainty of ultimate

victory. The misery of the present they are willing to suffer, if they can win by it a happier future for themselves and their children.

The battle is growing in bitterness. All processions have been stopped, and the docks are now invested by a vast silent army of pickets, through which it is almost impossible for a scab to pass. Meanwhile, funds are pouring in, and £3,000 was received by the Strike Committee on Tuesday. The epidemic of strikes spreads. At Liverpool the dock labourers are out, at Rochester the coal-whippers, and in the West and South-West of London the engineer's labourers have revolted. John Williams is at their head. The strike among the Jewish tailors and cabinet makers spreads in the East End, and before long they will be joined by the bootmakers. This will paralyse most of the sweating industries of the East End. Our own comrades have not been idle. Kitz, Mowbray, Cores, Nicoll, Brookes, and Parker have addressed large meetings, and tons of literature and leaflets have been distributed. More work could be done, but funds are lacking. Will our members and friends do their best to enable us to spread the light?

N.

### Strike of Tailors.

A general strike of tailors was declared among the sweaters' victims of East London on Monday, September 2nd, 1889, when some 5,000 men and women turned out against the long hours of labour. Comrades Lewis Lyons, Mowbray, Turner, Wess, and others have assisted in bringing the Jews up to the scratch of unionism. Several employers of labour have already given their sanction to a reduction of the hours of labour. At present they work 16 to 18 hours per day; the strike is for a uniform day of 10½ hours. The men and women on strike show great enthusiasm in the matter, and the speeches bordering on Socialism are certainly the best received. The following is their manifesto:

#### TO TAILORS AND TAILORESSES!

##### GREAT STRIKE OF LONDON TAILORS AND SWEATER'S VICTIMS.

Fellow Workers,—You are all aware that a Commission of Lords have been appointed to enquire into the evils of the sweating system in the tailoring trade. The revelations made before the Commission by witnesses engaged in the tailoring trade, are a disgrace to a civilised country. The sweater's victims had hoped that this Commission would have come to some satisfactory conclusion as to an alteration in the condition of the sweated tailors. Finding they have just put off their deliberation until next Session, we have decided to take immediate action.

It is too long for us to wait until next Session, because the hardships inflicted upon us by the sweater are unbearable. We have, therefore, decided to join in the general demand for increased comfort and shorter hours of labour. Our hours at present being on an average from 14 to 18 per day, in unhealthy and dirty dens, we demand:

1. That the hours be reduced to 12, with an interval of one hour for dinner and half-hour for tea.
2. All meals to be had off the premises.
3. Government contractors to pay wages at trade union rates.
4. Government contractors and sweaters not to give work home at night after working hours.

We now appeal for the support of all tailors to join us and thus enable us to successfully enforce our demands, which are reasonable. Tailors and tailoresses support in joining this General Strike.

We appeal to all tailors, machinists, pressers, basters, etc., to meet, *en masse*, on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday mornings, at 10 o'clock (outside the Baths), Goulston Street, Whitechapel, E.

Piece workers finish up, week workers give notice at once. All work to cease on Saturday afternoon, when the strike will be declared.

(Signed) Strike Committee [here follow names].

Tailors' Strike Committee Room, W. WESS, Secretary.  
"White Hart," Greenfield St., Commercial Rd., E., Aug. 27, 1889.

M.

### The Printers' Labourers Strike.

A most remarkable movement among a class of workmen resembling in many respects the dock labourers, has during the past week been growing in a most encouraging manner. Like the dock labourers,—hopeless, disorganised, ignorant, and contemptible has been the verdict generally passed upon them by those who have had to do with them. Their case is even worse than that of the "dockers," as their pay is nearly as low and they toil in thoroughly unhealthy workshops. Let anyone who doubts this visit the places where they have to work, and look into the filthy cellars; the foul air coming out is enough to make one vomit, and the men themselves say that the employers hardly ever venture into the "machine-room"—perhaps not once in a twelvemonth.

Contrary to general belief, the "machine boy" is not by any means, generally speaking, a juvenile. On the contrary, two-thirds of these "boys" are from twenty to forty years of age, and the long spells of hard work, sometimes extending to fifty continuous hours, would be too much for a boy, in years, to do. Neither is it true, despite the title of "printers' labourers" being applied to them, that their work belongs to the "unskilled" order, for it requires very considerable practice and experience for one to become a "pointer" or "stroker-in." Both alertness of eye and precision of hand is needed in the work, especially as some machines run at the speed of 2,000 revolutions per hour, each revolution taking a sheet of paper and printing it, the work of the stroker-in or pointer being to "feed" the machine. The wages paid for this work is on the average only 12s. a-week, although varying from 9s. to 16s. a-week in different cases; and men, in order to keep their families in bare bread, have to work all night very often to add a couple of shillings to their miserable wages at the end of the week. They rejoice at the opportunity of being able to work "a week (of 59 hours) and two nights" to make up their wages to 16s., 17s., or 19s. per week! Could chattel-slavery be worse? But the burden has become too heavy to bear, and like the proverbial worm they have begun to "turn" on those who crush them.

A general strike is the first symptom of revolt among these despised and disorganised slaves. They begin to see clearly the position of the worker, and compare the profits of the employers with the scanty wages which they themselves receive. During the week isolated strikes took place, succeeded and failed, and finally ended in the employees of many firm's turning out on Monday morning last for a united demand for the not very exorbitant sum of 20s. a week of 54 hours, and 6d. an hour over-time.

Meetings have been held daily, at which not only Socialists such as comrades Cores, Power, Nielson, Nicoll, Annie Besant, etc., have spoken, but the men themselves have found out how to put their case most effectively before the public although never having addressed public audiences before.

Speaking thoroughly from the socialistic labour standpoint, they tell of their low wages and the employers' large profits, and of the foul holes in which they work. Their exhibition of lamed limbs, and hands with but one or two fingers remaining, or of shopmates lamed and beggared for life, too poor and weak even to obtain legal compensation, and turned off with a few shillings by the employers whose wealth is the result of the toil of these poor wretches.

They have formed the nucleus of a trade combination, who issued a manifesto on August 30th, which is printed below. They have good chances of success in their present demands, and it must also end in many cases in these unhappy wage-slaves resolving to get rid entirely of those men who take the profits, and who leave them, the workmen, toil, poverty, disease, and death.

#### TO PRINTERS' LABOURERS AND OTHER WORKERS IN THE PRINTING TRADE.

We, the Printers' Labourers, are on strike for a wage of 20s. per week and 6d. per hour overtime. We appeal to the Machine Minders and other workers to aid us in obtaining our just demands.

Our present wages vary from 12s. to 14s. per week, and many among us have wives and families to sustain. We work on an average fifty-four hours a week, and seventy-five hours to earn £1.

How, and under what conditions do we work? In heated cellars where gas-light replaces daylight; amidst perpetual din; breathing a stifling, filthy atmosphere. We have to keep eye and hand ever on the alert to keep stroke with the machines we tend.

Our kind, respectable Christian employers would not put their pet cats and dogs in the styes where they condemn us to pass our best working years. Above are the demands for the toil which destroys our health.

We appeal to all fellow labourers to join us. Do not listen to the specious talk of interested foremen and employers who "promise to favourably consider your demands." They want time to work off urgent orders. If you on strike are selfish enough to go in because a few employers grant concessions, you help to ruin the cause. Will you purchase your gain at the expense of our defeat? Show the same spirit as our comrades in other industries are displaying.

Strike! Strike all together! Stand together and win!

Printers' Strike Committee, Red Star

GEORGE EVANS, Sec.

Coffee House, Clerkenwell Green.

GEORGE WALDEN, Treas.

We hear a good many howls from the capitalists concerning "intimidation," but a more dastardly piece of the worst kind of intimidation would be hard to find than that contained in the following letter:

WATERLOW AND SONS, Limited,

Finsbury Factory, August 27th, 1889.

Dear Sir,—I have to inform you that your son was absent from his work this afternoon, and has presumably joined the boys on strike. I think it right to inform you that unless he presents himself at his work as usual to-morrow morning, he will render himself liable to lose his situation.

Yours faithfully,

CHARLES E. LUKER,

Manager Machine Department.

We warn the capitalists that people may be inclined to follow their bad example if this sort of thing is to be carried on.

G. C.

### Passports among Cabinet Makers.

A crowded meeting was held on Thursday evening (Aug. 29th) in Princes Street Hall, Spitalfields, of the men who were called out on Tuesday and Wednesday. The chairman was Mr. Harris Goldberg. The position of the strikers was explained by Mr. C. Adams, the secretary of the East End branch of the Cabinet Makers Alliance, who said they had refused to work until the system of passports had been abolished. These passports are printed forms, which are given by the employers to the men when they leave one shop to go to another, and on which it is stated what work, wages, etc., the workman has been used to. But the real object is to coerce the men who are the most active in the trade union. The meeting was also addressed by J. E. Williams, W. B. Parker, and L. Diemshietz. Since then other firms have been brought out.

N.

CASTE FEELING AMONG WORKERS.—One of the most formidable obstacles to the success of the labour reform cause (says the *Journal of United Labour*) is the caste feeling among workers. The brainworker, editor, book-keeper, or teacher thinks himself above the mere mechanic. Although no class suffers more from the oppression of capitalism, yet, in nine cases out of ten, the intellectual worker ostentatiously sympathises with the exploiters of labour, or withholds his support from a movement which is as much in his interest as in that of the manual labourer. The skilled mechanic too often looks down on the unskilled toiler. The saleswoman considers herself the social superior of the factory girl, and the latter again affects to despise the domestic servant. While this feeling continues, and prevents the working class from acting harmoniously together in the interests of the whole, we cannot fairly or consistently blame others because they are dominated by the caste feeling. The skilled artisan who contemptuously refuses to co-operate with the labourer in the common cause has no right to feel aggrieved and indignant at any slight put upon him by the fashionably-dressed idler or the purse-proud capitalist. They are only showing the same hateful and contemptible spirit which he himself exhibits toward his less fortunate comrades in the army of toilers. The man who is always looking for somebody beneath him to insult and look down on by way of revenge for the contumely heaped on him and his class by those above him in the social scale has altogether failed to grasp the significance of the movement for labour's enfranchisement. All honest labour is dignified and honourable. Once admit that there are shades and distinctions—a skilled aristocracy and a plebeian herd of inferiors—and you practically justify all the wrongs and insults heaped upon labour, irrespective of such distinctions by the "superior classes," who live by controlling the means of production.

MANHOOD SUFFRAGE LEAGUE (founded 1875), "Three Doves," Berwick St., Oxford Street, W.—Sunday September 8, at 3.45 p.m., Lothrop Withington, "False Lights of Revolutionary Wreckers: Was the Great Strike only a clever piece of stockjobbing after all?"

YARMOUTH.—On Wednesday evening William Morris gave a lecture in the Corn Hall on "Monopoly"; chairman, C. Reynolds. There was a very good attendance, mostly workers. After the lecture a few questions were asked of the usual sort, which our comrade answered satisfactorily. Our comrade Morris offered to come and spend a Sunday with us in about a month's time. On Sunday morning Brightwell held a meeting at Brackwell. We also held a large meeting on Priory Plain; Reynolds was assisted by a stranger.—C. R.

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Notice to Branch Secretaries.—Membership Cards can now be had by the Branches at 9d. per dozen from Central Office.

Branch Subscriptions Paid.—1888:—Oxford, to end of September. 1889:—Bradford and Hammersmith, to end of April. Norwich, Glasgow, Yarmouth, and Mitcham, to end of May. East London, Clerkenwell, and St. Georges East, to end of June. Manchester, North London, to end of July. Leicester, to end of August.

Notice to Branch Secretaries.—Please remit to Central Office your Branch Capitation fees as soon as possible.

Notice.—All letters on League business, except those intended for Editors of Commonwealth, to be addressed to me. No other person is authorised to sign any official communication. FRANK KITZ, Secretary.

"COMMONWEAL" GUARANTEE FUND.

The following further sums have been received towards this fund:—Webb, 1s.; C. Saunders, 2s.; Kitz, 6d.; Mainwaring, 1s.; Mrs. Lahr, 6d.; B. W., 1s.; and Greenwood, 3s. 9d.

REPORTS.

LONDON OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.—Chelsea.—A good meeting was held on the Chelsea Embankment on Wednesday evening last, when Samuels, who was ably assisted by the local branch of S.D.F., addressed the meeting, where 3s. was collected for the "Strike Fund" and half a quire of 'Weals' sold. Mile End Waste.—Good meeting held on Friday night on behalf of the dock labourers; some 1500 people present; speakers, Mowbray, and Welsh (S.D.F.). Some opposition offered by a good Christian, who said that we were not prepared for a bloody revolution, and attacked Socialism in general; Mowbray replied in a stirring address; some thousands of leaflets distributed. Old Plough, Kilburn.—A good meeting held on Sunday; 16 Commonwealth sold; among the buyers were an inspector, a policeman, and a detective. The meeting commences at 12 noon.

CLERKENWELL.—Good meeting Sunday evening on Clerkenwell Green; the speakers were S. Presburg, Mowbray, and McCormick; 4s. 6d. collected and handed over to the treasurer of "Printers' Labourers Strike." Good meeting in hall; McCormick in chair; W. Blundell (S.L.) lectured on "The Moral of the Docker's Strike." Many questions asked and very interesting discussion followed, dealing mainly with the general strike. Commonwealth sold well and 1s. collected in hall.—S. F.

EAST LONDON.—On Thursday, near Hoxton Church, Kitz spoke to very large meeting; Saturday at Mile End Waste, Welsh and McCormick spoke; and on Tuesday at same place, Kitz, Panker, Davis, and other friends held a magnificent meeting.—G. C.

NORTH KENSINGTON.—Comrade Lyne, sen., held a meeting at Sloane Square on Saturday at 12 o'clock, and collected £5 5s. 6d. for dock strikers. The branch held a good meeting at Tavistock Road, Notting Hill, on Saturday evening at 8 p.m.; speakers were Lyne, sen., Crouch, and Maughan; Mrs. Lyne, Annie Lyne, Sharp, and Spry collected £1 7s. 8d. for strike fund. A good meeting held at Latimer Road; speakers were Crouch, Lyne, sen., Mrs. Lyne, Sharp, and Spry; collected 8s. 6d. for strike fund; Commonwealth sold well. At St. Ann's Road, we held a good meeting at 12 a.m.; speakers were Lyne, sen., A. J. Smith, and Maughan; the collectors rose the amount in hand for strike fund with 5s.; Commonwealth sold well. Hyde Park at 3.30 we had a large meeting; speakers were Kitz, Lyne, jun., Lyne, sen., Crouch, and McCormick; Commonwealth sold very well; Mrs. Lyne and young Morris collected for strike fund £3 10s. 4d. We held a good meeting at Cambridge Gardens at 8 p.m.; speakers were Crouch, Lyne, sen., and Maughan; all 'Weals' sold, and collected for strike fund, 12s. 0 1/2.

NORTH LONDON.—At Ossulston Street on Thursday, Nicoll and Mrs. Lahr addressed a large meeting; some discussion; 2s. 7d. collected for dockers and 22 Commonwealth sold. Saturday at Hyde Park, Nicoll and Mrs. Lahr, with Williams and Furlong (S.D.F.), held a good meeting; 24 'Weals' sold and £2 16s. collected for dockers. Regent's Park on Sunday morning, a large audience was addressed by Kitz and Mrs. Lahr, and 16s. 1d. collected for dockers strike.

STREATHAM.—We held a good meeting on Sunday evening, Sept. 1st; Moore addressed the meeting, and we collected 9s. for the dock labourers; Commonwealth sold well.

ST. GEORGE'S EAST.—Usual meetings held by branch. We have during the strike given way to numerous others mostly having reference to the strikers. Collections have been on their behalf and sent in to the Star. Double the usual quantity of 'Weals' taken this week, and all members have worked well in selling them and other literature. Thousands of leaflets have been distributed, and we intend keeping it up as long as the strike lasts.

GLASGOW.—At mid-day on Jail Square T. and J. Burgoyne were the speakers, the audience being more than usually interested, owing to London strike. In the evening the same speakers addressed good audience at Paisley Road. Between both meetings we collected 4s. 8d. for the strikers.—J. B.

MANCHESTER.—Usual meeting at Middleton addressed by Mason and Stockton on Saturday night. On Sunday morning we tried a new station; got a sympathetic audience; Marshall and Baillie spoke; 21 Commonwealth sold. In Stevenson Square a good meeting was addressed by Bitson, Baillie, and Barton; 4s. 3d. collected for dockers; fair sale of Commonwealth. Another meeting held at Chester Road.

NORWICH.—Sunday morning, meeting opened by Mrs. Tochatti singing, followed by Fuller, J. Tochatti, and Saint (London). In the afternoon a very large meeting was held, opened with singing, addressed by Tochatti and Saint, who appealed on behalf of the dock-labourers; at the close three hearty cheers were given for the men. In the evening another open-air meeting held in the Market Place, Tochatti, Saint, and W. More spoke; a resolution of sympathy with the dock-labourers carried unanimously. Collected for dock-labourers £1 7s., for Propaganda 17s. 6d.; sale of literature 11s. 7d. After the meeting we adjourned to the hall, where Socialist songs were numerously rendered by various comrades. A meeting was also held at St Faiths; Morley spoke. Monday evening a meeting was held by the Branch in favour of the dock strikers; comrade Poynts opened, followed by Mr. Crotch and comrade W. More; collected for strike fund, 4s. 6d.

DUBLIN.—At Progressist Club, 87, Marlboro' Street, Saturday, August 31st, G. King lectured on "The Connection between Socialism and Trades Unionism"; good audience; brisk discussion, Wilson, Hamilton, O'Gorman, Mackey, and others taking part.

NOTTINGHAM SOCIALIST CLUB.—Good meeting in Sneinton Market on Sunday morning; Peacock and Proctor spoke; 2s. 7 1/2d. collected. In the evening, in Great Market, Rooke, Whalley, and Peacock addressed a large crowd. Collection for School Board contest realised 4s. 7 1/2d.—P.

LECTURE DIARY.

LONDON.

Clerkenwell.—Hall of the Socialist League, 13 Farringdon Road, E.C. (4-minute from Farringdon Station, 1 minute from Holborn Viaduct). On Sunday, Sept. 8, at 8.30 p.m., a Concert will be held, to be followed with Ball at 10.30, to defray expenses for new Branch premises which this Branch will shortly take over. Admission with programme, 3d.

East London.—A very important Business Meeting will take place at 12 Basing Place, Kingsland Road, on Sunday Sept. 8th, at 8 p.m. Members please attend.

Hammersmith.—Kelmscott House, Upper Mall, W. Sunday Sept. 8, at 8 p.m., Lecture by J. F. Oakeshott, "Moral Basis of the New Society." Thursday 12th, at 8, Choir practice. Friday 13th, at 8, French Class; at 8.30, Business Meeting and discussion.

Mitcham.—3 Clare Villas, Merton Road. Meets every Sunday, at 11 a.m. North Kensington.—Clarendon Coffee Tavern. Meets every Wednesday at 8 p.m. North London.—6 Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Rd. Meets every Friday, evening at 8 o'clock.

Whitechapel and St. Georges in the East.—Branch meetings at International Club, 40 Berner Street, Commercial Road. J. Turner, organising secretary.

PROVINCES.

Aberdeen.—Organiser, J. Leatham, 7 Jamaica Street. Branch meets in Odd-fellows' Small Hall, Crooked Lane, on Monday evenings at 8. Singing practice at 46 Marischal Street on Thursdays at 8 p.m.

Bradford.—Laycock's Temperance Hotel, Albion Court, Kirkgate. Tuesday at 7.30.

Glasgow.—Ram's Horn Hall, 122 Ingram Street. Branch meets on Thursday evenings at 8 o'clock and Sundays at 7 o'clock.

Halifax.—Socialists meet every Sunday at 6.30 p.m. at Helliwell's Temperance Hotel, Northgate.

Leeds.—Clarendon Buildings, Victoria Road and Front Row. Open every evening. Business meeting Saturdays at 8 p.m.

Leicester.—Hosiery Union Offices, 11a Millstone Lane. Fridays at 8 p.m.

Manchester.—Working Men's Educational Club, 122 Corporation Street, corner of Hanover Street. Weekly meeting of members every Tuesday at 8 p.m. Secretary's address, 5 Landaff Street, Harpurhey.

Norwich.—Tuesday, at 8.30, Members' meeting. Hall open every evening from 8 p.m.

Oxford.—Temperance Hall, 25 1/2 Pembroke Street. First Friday in every month, at 8.30 p.m.

Walsall.—Lecture Room, back of Temperance Hall. Mondays at 8 p.m.

Yarmouth.—Branch meets at comrade Headley's, near Co-operative Stores, every Tuesday evening. Elocution Class Friday at 8 p.m.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

SATURDAY 7.

- 7.30..... Hyde Park—Marble Arch .....Nicoll
8.30..... Battersea—opposite Christ Church .....Cores and Kitz
8.30..... Mile-end Waste .....Mowbray and Presburg

SUNDAY 8.

- 11 ..... Latimer Road Station .....Tochatti, Lyne junr., and Maughan
11.30..... Bethnal Green—Gibraltar Walk .....Mowbray
11.30..... Chelsea—Embankment .....Mrs. Lahr
11.30..... Eelbrook Common .....Hammersmith Branch
11.30..... Kilburn—"Old Plough," Kilburn Lane .....Brookes
11.30..... North Kensington—St. Ann's Road.....Lyne senr., Crouch and Saint
11.30..... Shadwell—Leman Street .....Nicoll
11.30..... Mitcham Fair Green .....Mrs. Lahr and Mowbray
11.30..... Regent's Park .....Turner
3.30..... Hyde Park—Marble Arch .....Mainwaring and Cores
4.30..... Victoria Park .....The Branch
7 ..... Chelsea—Town Hall .....Samuels and Mowbray
7 ..... Clerkenwell Green .....Nicoll
7 ..... Weltje Road, Ravenscourt Park .....Hammersmith Branch
7.30..... North Kensington—Cambridge Gardens .....North Kensington Branch
7.30..... Streatham—Fountain, High Street .....Mowbray and Mrs. Lahr
7.30..... Walham Green—back of Church .....The Branch

TUESDAY 10.

- 8 ..... Fulham—back of Walham Green Church .....The Branch
8 ..... Mile-end Waste .....Mrs. Lahr

WEDNESDAY 11.

- 8.30..... Chelsea—Embankment .....Samuels

THURSDAY 12.

- 8 ..... Ossulston Street .....Nicoll
8.15..... Hoxton Church .....Mrs. Lahr and Cores

FRIDAY 13.

- 8 ..... Bethnal Green—Gibraltar Walk .....Graham and Davis
8 ..... Islington—Prebend Street .....Parker

PROVINCES.

Aberdeen.—Saturday: Castle Street, 7 p.m. Edinburgh.—Sunday: Queen's Park, at 3.

Glasgow.—Sunday: Jail Square at 2 o'clock; Paisley Road at 5 o'clock.

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

Leicester.—Sunday: Russell Square, at 11 a.m.; Humberstone Gate, at 8 p.m.

Manchester.—Saturday: Middleton Market Ground, at 7.30. Sunday: Stevenson Square, at 3; Viaduct, Chester Road, at 7.30.

Norwich.—Saturday: Haymarket, at 7.45. Sunday: Market Place, at 11, 3, and 7.30.

Yarmouth.—Priory Plain, every Sunday at 11 and 3. Colman's Granary Quay, Sunday at 7. Bradwell, Sunday at 11.30. Belton, every Monday at 8.

SCOTTISH LAND AND LABOUR LEAGUE.

Carnoustie.—Meets every Wednesday, at 8 p.m., in the Carnoustie Restaurant. Edinburgh.—35 George IV. Bridge. Meetings for Discussion, Thursdays at 8. Galashiels.—J. Walker, 184 Glendinning Terrace, Secretary. Galloway and Dysart (Fife)—Meet every Tuesday at 7 p.m. in Galloway Public School. A. Paterson, 152 Rosslyn Street, Secretary. Kilmarnock.—Branch meets on every alternate Tuesday. H. M'Gill, 22 Gilmour Street, Secretary. West Calder.—Robert Lindsay, West Calder, Secretary.

DUBLIN.—Progressist Club, 87 Marlboro' Street, on Saturday September 7th, at 8 p.m., J. Wilson will deliver an address on "The Lessons of the Great London Strike."

A Debate will take place on "Social Democracy v. Communist-Anarchy," between Christie (S.D.F.) and T. Pearson (Freedom Group), on Friday, Sept. 6th, at the Britannia Coffee House, Prebend Street, Packington Street, Essex Road, at 8.30 sharp.

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