

WEEKLY.

THE COMMONWEAL

A REVOLUTIONARY JOURNAL OF

Anarchist Communism.

[Vol. 7.—No. 269.]

SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 1891.

[WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.]

"RESPECTABLE" SOCIALISM.

THE influences against which Socialism has to contend to-day, are more insidious than those which it has had to combat at any previous period of its history. Formerly the only idea conveyed to the minds of the unthinking multitude by the name which could only be spoken with bated breath, was the picture of some social Ishmael, whose hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him, whose slouched hat formed a convenient shelter for his sinister features, and beneath the ample folds of whose flowing garment lay concealed the weapon which was to deal indiscriminate destruction to all around. To-day all that is changed, we are no longer the Pariahs of the community, ostracised from respectable society because we bear the once hated name; on the contrary, we have heard Sir W. Harcourt declare "We are all Socialists," and Lord Randolph Churchill confess he was not afraid of the name. Yes, we are now essentially and eminently respectable, and some Socialists do not scruple to herd with the swine of iniquity, clad in the tall hat and kid gloves common to the masquerade fraternity. Of course there can be no manner of complaining to any man adopting that style of raiment which seemeth to him best, if it were not for (if I may be permitted to use the language of my childhood's innocence) "the inward and spiritual grace signified." Already the effect is only too apparent, and professedly Socialistic organisations do not hesitate to give, both by voice and pen, lessons on constitutionalism and moderation; distinctions are drawn between evolution and revolution, and one at least of these superfine individuals has had the timidity to assert that Socialism is not incompatible with a Monarchy, and in the columns of the capitalist press describe the Anarchists "Socialists of the bloody shirt."

Now, though no one who was not either criminal or lunatic would desire to see the amelioration of communal existence brought about by riot and bloodshed, still, if it is not presumptuous, I should like to ask these too, too, awfully sensitive young gentlemen if it is not foolish to bury one's head ostrich-like in the sands of commercial and political chicanery, rather than fearlessly face probabilities, unpleasant though they may be, and so boldly do what you can to smooth the way of the coming revolution, and so help it to a speedy and successful termination.

That there are catastrophic incidents in evolution cannot be denied by any person with any knowledge of nature, and to attempt to draw any line of demarcation between these and the immutable laws of nature themselves savours of the veriest ignorance, and cannot be defended by one shred of evidence. That one of these catastrophic incidents is at hand must be patent to every impartial student of Sociology. Every such cataclysm, whether happening in the physical or social organism, is invariably preceded by a refusal of some member or members to reform their ordinary functions, and is not this strikingly the case with communal existence to-day. Men starving for food and clothing, willing to work if they were allowed. Nature's gifts—the raw material—lying abundantly in all directions, waiting for the fructifying labours of the worker, yet the one is unreasonably separated from the other, by the workings of an obsolete system which having answered its purpose in the past now only remains to be swept away.

But, say our cultured friends, would it not be better to oblige our condescending friend the capitalist—whom they assure is not such a bad fellow after all—by prolonging the death agony of commercialism and putting off the evil day by the introduction of what is vaguely described as reformatory and ameliorative legislation. But the very remedies which are proposed, are a more damning indictment against the present chaotic condition than could be formulated by the most extravagant revolutionist, for whether you go to the ultra-conservative with his theory of protection from the unfair competition of the foreigner, the radical with his protection of the farmer from the ravages of the landlord, or the state socialist with his governmental machinery permeating every crevice and detail of social existence, and regulating our every movement like the drill of an army, all are founded on the one fatal admission, that the interests of the various classes of society are not identical—that on the contrary they are extremely inimical—and that existence to-day is neither more nor less than a state of continued and remorseless warfare.

This then is the basis of our object to reform, and our demand for an entire re-construction of society on the basis of love, liberty, and happiness. A condition where freed from the worry, turmoil, and uncertainty of commercialism, man shall have time and opportunity to develop those powers of the mind which the Roman historian Sallust declared were "common with us and the Gods."

Under such conditions life would not only be pleasurable to everyone but would greatly exceed the present allotted span; for medical men all agree that the anxiety and uncertainty of commercial operations play a most desperate havoc in the prolongation of life; and I came the other day across a paragraph in one of our periodicals entitled "Curiosities of the Last American Census," where we are informed of a family of five generations, the eldest of which credited her longevity to the fact of her primitive mode of existence, freed from the worry and high pressure of the outer world.

Now if it be true that the next step in the social evolution is to be catastrophic, it follows as clearly as light follows night that the coming condition must be one of less complex organism, else nature would not be true to herself, consequently the State Socialists must be on the wrong track entirely, for instead of lessening the complexity of the commercial organism, they would increase it to such an alarming extent as would render it "fearful and wonderful to contemplate."

The great danger then to Socialism is that so many of its professed adherents become intoxicated with the plaudits of the outer world, and thus have their attention diverted from the real points at issue, and are content to become mere political hacks in the interests of one or other of the parties, in return for some questionable piece of reform, which, as soon as it is granted, becomes evident was not intended for use, but merely as a piece of electioneering chicanery.

Nothing but the entire re-construction of society can in any way benefit either the worker or the unwilling creature of circumstances, who is driven into the ranks of useless toil or enforced idleness. To further that end then must be the duty of every true Socialist, and this he can best do by keeping himself untainted with political jerry-mandering which can only serve to direct his attention from the real object at issue, viz., the complete social emancipation of the workers and the down-trodden.

The croaking of our pessimistic friends may be disregarded where they dilate on the viciousness of humanity, and deplore the prospect of an untrammelled people. Man is acknowledged to be a gregarious animal, which is simply an acknowledgement that he, like the rest of the universe, is governed by the circumstances by which he is surrounded, and recognises the desirability, nay, the necessity, for communal existence. That the utmost either pro or con, which we as individuals can exercise in shaping the onward course of development is but small goes without saying, it is for us to see that influence, infinitesimal though it may be, is cast on the side of justice, humanity, and nature.

CATILINE.

EVOLUTION AND REVOLUTION.

By ELISEE RECLUS.

(Continued from page 62.)

THE external form of society must alter in correspondence with the impelling force within; there is no better established historical fact. The sap makes the tree and gives it leaves and flowers; the blood makes the man; the ideas make the society. And yet there is not a conservative who does not lament that ideas and morality, and all that goes to make up the deeper life of man, have been modified since the "good old times." Is it not a necessary result of the inner working of men's minds that social forms must change and a proportionate revolution takes place?

Let each ascertain from his own recollections the changes in the methods of thought and action which have happened since the middle of this century. Let us take, for example, the one capital fact of the diminution of observance and respect. Go amongst great personages: what have they to complain of? That they are treated like other men.

They no longer take precedence; people neglect to salute them; less distinguished persons permit themselves to possess handsomer furniture or finer houses; the wives of less wealthy men go more sumptuously attired. And what is the complaint of the ordinary man or woman of the middle-class? There are no more servants to be had, the spirit of obedience is lost. Now the maid pretends to understand cooking better than her mistress; she does not piously remain in one situation, but is grateful for the hospitality accorded her, she changes her place in consequence of the smallest disagreeable observation, or to gain two shillings more wages. There are even countries where she asks her mistress for a character in exchange for her own.

It is true respect is departing; not the just respect which attaches to an upright and devoted man, but that despicable and shameful respect which follows wealth and office; that slavish respect which gathers a crowd of loafers when a king passes, and makes the lackeys and horses of a great man objects of admiration. And not only is respect departing, but those who laid most claim to the consideration of the rest, are the first to compromise their superhuman character. In former days Asiatic sovereigns understood the art of causing themselves to be adored. Their palaces were seen from afar; their statues were erected everywhere; their edicts were read; but they never showed themselves. The most familiar never addressed them but upon their knees; from time to time a half-lifted wall parted to disclose them as if by a lightning flash, and then as suddenly enfolded them once more, leaving consternation in the hearts of all beholders. In those days respect was profound enough to result in stupefaction: a dumb messenger brought a silken cord to the condemned, and that sufficed, even a gesture would have been superfluous. And now we see sovereigns taking boxes by telegraph at the theatre to witness the performance of *Orphée aux Enfers* or *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein*, that is to say, taking part in the derision of all which used to be held most worthy of respect—divinity and royalty! Which is the true regicide, the man who kills a sovereign, doing him the honour to take him as the representative of a whole society, or the monarch, who mocks at himself by laughing at the Grand Duchess or General Boum? He teaches us at least that political power is a worm-eaten institution. It has retained its power, but the universal respect which gave it worth has disappeared. It is nothing but an external scaffolding, the edifice itself has ceased to exist.

Does not the spread of an education, which gives the same conception of things to all, contribute to our progress towards equality? If instruction were only to be obtained at school, governments might still hope to hold the minds of men enslaved; but it is outside the school that most knowledge is gained. It is picked up in the street, in the workshop, before the booths of a fair, at the theatre, in railway carriages, on steam boats, by gazing at new landscapes, by visiting foreign towns. Almost everyone travels now, either as a luxury or a necessity. Not a meeting but people who have seen Russia, Australia, or America may be found in it, and if travellers who have changed continents are so frequently met with, there is, one may say, no one who has not moved about sufficiently to have observed the contrast between town and country, mountain and plain, earth and sea. The rich travel more than the poor, it is true; but they generally travel aimlessly; when they change countries they do not change surroundings, they are always in a sense at home; the luxuries and enjoyments of hotel life do not permit them to appreciate the essential differences between country and country, people and people. The poor man, who comes into collision with the difficulties of life without guide or *cicerone*, is best qualified to observe and remember. And does not the great school of the outer world exhibit the prodigies of human industries equally to rich and poor, to those who have called these marvels into existence and those who profit by them? The poverty-stricken outcast can see railways, telegraphs, hydraulic rams, perforators, self-lighting matches, as well as the man of power, and he is no less impressed by them. Privilege has disappeared in the enjoyment of some of these grand conquests of science. When he is conducting his locomotive through space, doubling or slackening speed at his pleasure, does the engine-driver believe himself the inferior of the sovereign shut up behind him in a gilded railway-carriage, and trembling from the knowledge that his life depends on a jet of steam, the shifting of a lever, or a bomb of dynamite?

The sight of nature and the works of man, and practical life, these form the college in which the true education of contemporary society is obtained. Schools, properly so called, are relatively much less important; yet they, too, have undergone their evolution in the direction of equality. There was a time, and that not very far distant, when the whole of education consisted in mere formulas, mystic phrases, and texts from sacred books. Go into the Mussulman school opened beside the mosque. There you will see children spending whole hours in spelling or reciting verses from the Koran. Go into a school kept by Christian priests, Protestant or Catholic, and you will hear silly hymns and absurd recitations (in Latin or incomprehensible French). But even in these schools the pressure from below has caused this dull routine to be varied with a new sort of instruction; instead of nothing but formulas the teachers now explain facts, point out analogies and trace the action of laws. Whatever the commentaries with which the instructor accompanies his lessons, the figures remain none the less incorruptible. Which education will prevail? That according to which two and two make four, and nothing is created out of nothing; or the old education according to which everything comes from nothing, and three persons make only one?

The elementary school, it is true, is not everything; it is not enough to catch a glimpse of science, one should be able to apply it in every direction. Therefore Socialistic evolution renders it necessary that

school should be a permanent institution for all men. After receiving "general enlightenment" in a primary school, each ought to be able to develop to the full such intellectual capacity as he may possess, in a life which he has freely chosen. Meanwhile let not the worker despair. Every great conquest of science ends by becoming public property. Professional scientists are obliged to go through long ages of research and hypothesis, they are obliged to struggle in the midst of error and falsehood; but when the truth is gained at length, often in spite of them, thanks to some despised revolutionists, it shines forth clear and simple in all its brilliance. All understand it without an effort; it seems as if it had always been known. Formerly learned men fancied that the sky was a round dome, a metal roof—or better still—a series of vaults, three, seven, nine, even thirteen, each with its procession of stars, its distinct laws, its special *regime*, and its troops of angels and archangels to guard it! But since these tiers of heavens, piled one upon the other, mentioned in the Bible and Talmud, have been demolished, there is not a child that does not know that round the earth is infinite and unconfined space. He can be hardly said to learn this. It is a truth which henceforward proves a part of the universal inheritance.

It is the same with all great acquisitions, especially in morals and political economy. There was a time when the great majority of men were born and lived as slaves, and had no other ideal than a change of servitude. It never entered their heads that "one man is as good as another." Now they have learned it, and understand that the virtual equality bestowed by evolution must be changed into real equality, thanks to a revolution. Instructed by life, the workers comprehend certain economic laws much better than even professional economists. Is there a single workman who remains indifferent to the question of progressive or proportional taxation, and who does not know that all taxes fall on the poorest in the long run? Is there a single workman who does not know the terrible fatality of the "iron law," which condemns him to receive nothing but a miserable pittance, just the wages that will prevent his dying of hunger during his work? Bitter experience has caused him to know quite enough of this inevitable law of political economy.

Thus, whatever be the source of information, all profit by it, and not the worker less than the rest. Whether a discovery is made by a bourgeois, a noble, or a plebian, whether the learned man is Bernard Palissy, Lord Bacon, or Baron Humboldt, the whole world will turn his researches to account. Certainly the privileged classes would have liked to retain the benefits of science for themselves, and leave ignorance to the people, but henceforth their selfish desire cannot be fulfilled. They find themselves in the case of the magician in "The Thousand and One Nights," who unsealed a vase in which a genius had been shut up asleep for ten thousand years. They would like to drive him back into his retreat, to fasten him down under a triple seal, but they have lost the words of the charm, and the genius is free for ever.

This freedom of the human will is now asserting itself in every direction; it is preparing no small and partial revolutions, but one universal revolution. It is throughout society as a whole, and every branch of its activity, that changes are making ready. Conservatives are not in the least mistaken when they speak in general terms of Revolutionists as enemies of religion, the family and property. Yes, Socialists do reject the authority of dogma and the intervention of the supernatural of nature, and, in this sense, however earnest their striving for the realisation of their ideal, they are the enemies of religion. Yes, they do desire the suppression of the marriage laws; they desire that unions should be free, depending on mutual affection and respect for self and for the dignity of others, and, in this sense, however loving and devoted to those whose lives are associated with theirs, they are certainly the enemies of the legal family. Yes, they do desire to put an end to the monopoly of land and capital, and to restore them to all, and in this sense, however glad they may be to secure to every one the enjoyment of the fruits of the earth, they are the enemies of property.

Thus the current of evolution, the incoming tide, is bearing us onward towards a future radically different from existing conditions, and it is vain to attempt to oppose obstacles to destiny. Religion, by far the most solid of all dikes, has lost its strength; cracking on every side, it leaks and totters, and cannot fail to be sooner or later overthrown.

(To be continued.)

NOTES.

The orthodox middle-class world is still greatly horrified by the last great scandal. We hear of clergymen uplifting their voices denouncing the wickedness of a royal prince who not only plays at cards, but introduces the game he loves into every country house that he visits, and carries gambling counters about with him. Religious associations pass resolutions regretting that "gambling is directly supported and encouraged by those whose wealth and station should lift them above its temptations and make them guides and guardians of the moral sense of the nation!" Surely it is enough to remark that a nation which could find no better "guides and guardians" for its "moral sense" than people like the Prince of Wales would be in a rather *bad way*.

The middle-class press also joins in the outcry, and his Royal Highness has been warned, that his fondness for the gaming table may have as evil influence upon his fate as the affair of the Diamond Necklace had upon that of Marie Antoinette in the last century. As the affair of

the Diamond Necklace had much to do with bringing about the French Revolution by convincing the people of the inherent rottenness and corruption of the court; and as in that revolution Marie Antoinette's head fell beneath the guillotine, this is therefore pretty strong language for the middle-class press to use, and we know that there is a general feeling that these journals have not greatly exaggerated the situation.

For a long time these highly respectable people, who are now so indignant, must have known that his "Royal Highness" was not the sort of model whom they would recommend for the imitation of their sons. They knew well enough that he was not only a gamester but a selfish voluptuary, who cared for nothing in life but the grossest sensual pleasures. But there is not one of them who would not have felt proud and honoured, if his "Royal Highness" had deigned to visit their houses. Would they not have been as eager as the Wilson's to please his "Royal Highness," and if he had pleased to introduce other "amusements" to which he is addicted as well as gambling, great would have been the gratification of these flunkeys. Therefore it is not because the "Prince of Wales" does these things, but because he has been found out, that their "moral indignation" is so greatly stirred.

Since Sir William Gordon Cumming's conviction on evidence upon which no honest man would have hung a dog, he has been expelled from the army; but the Prince of Wales and other army officers who did their best to hush up the "foul play," and were therefore accomplices after the fact, are to retain their positions. Sir William Gordon Cumming is therefore the scapegoat for the sins of the heir apparent, and he is to be hunted from society, as too base to associate with worn out rouds, debauchees, gamblers, and sodomites, of which it is composed, for it would be awkward for his "Royal Highness" to admit he had condemned an innocent man, his own intimate friend, to a living death on the evidence of cringing creatures like the Wilsons.

We ask our readers to think on the spectacle presented at Tranby Croft. At a time when the cry of the poor grows louder, while thousands are starving for lack of bread, while others are slaving long hours upon a scanty pittance, and life is indeed bitter to the people, the idlers who live upon their labour meet together, in richly furnished rooms after passing the day among blacklegs and bookmakers upon a race course, and being flushed with wine and gorged with dainties, they join in a friendly game at baccarat, at which one of them wins £225 in a single evening's play.

Suppose now the 'bus men had demanded wages that would have amounted to this sum in the course of the year. What a outcry would have arisen from the middle-class press and the 'bus directors, and the men would have been overwhelmed beneath an unanimous howl. Yet judge, jury, all society in fact, seems to look upon £225 as a moderate sum for a "young gentleman" to win or lose at cards. No wonder when thousands are won and lost nightly in the gambling hells of the West End of London. And yet workmen are fools enough to let a system continue which allows brainless idiots like Jack Wilson and Lycett Green, not only to live in idle luxury, but to squander in gaming the wealth that has been created by their labour.

The Monarchy is doomed, that is certain. The race of swine, who have defiled even the palaces of England with their presence, since George I. was brought to rule this great and happy country in the interests of the rising middle class, will have to go. If the "manhood of England," could bear to be ruled by a Prince, who would spend his time between a harem of women and the baccarat table, it would never be able to remain quiet during the reign of the young gentleman who left the country for the benefit of his health during the exposure of the Cleveland Street Scandals. The Guelphs will have to go, and with them the class of whom they are fit representatives, that class which can also boast of the vilest and most hoggish vices, and which also like the Guelphs is not able to throw around its crimes the glamour of the intellectual and artistic cultivation, as could the Stuarts or the French aristocrats of the last century. The war cry of the Anarchist and Socialist, "Down with the middle classes" means also "Down with Monarchy;" and both will fall with a crash together. N.

Sheil, the Westminster magistrate, makes no disguise of his sympathy with the Rich. There is a frank brutality about him which in its way is really refreshing. Occasionally he speaks out in a fashion which must make the hypocritical bourgeois wince a bit. In sentencing a 'bus striker to a term of imprisonment the other day, he declared that he should not take into consideration the fact that the Strike was over:—"No one knew how far this illegal violence, intimidation and coercion conducted to make the strike over." Sheil, it will be seen, agrees that the policy of energetic resistance and revolt, the policy of terror ("illegal violence, intimidation and coercion," as he styles it), is likely to terminate strikes in favour of the strikers. That is precisely the doctrine which is preached in these columns.

There was much talk in such organs of bourgeois-dom as the *Star*, of the sympathy of the "public" (i.e., the middle-classes) with the 'busmen during the Strike. It now appears (according to Shipton's report to the London Trades Council) that "in spite of the publicity given to the Strike by the press for six successive days, only £263 9s.

6d. was contributed by the public, although earnest appeals were made for funds." It would be strange indeed if the idle thieves who live on others' toil were to help revolted wage-slaves to any appreciable extent. Their help and their sympathy, even if tendered, are only delusions and snares. The proletarian will never win freedom by sneaking to the rich for a pitiful alms; he must take it for himself. Paunchy Albert Edward Guelph loses or wins more than this £263 in a half-hour's "play" at Sir Charles Russell's "capital round game."

Colman's Mustard *Star*, by the way, did not fancy our Sunday demonstration in the Park on behalf of the General Strike. It is dreadful to talk of "blood and barricades" (although in point of fact quite other things were talked of) when one might be holding up one's hand in favour of some Act of Parliament or other which, even if passed, will leave Colman's Mustard exactly where it is. The *Star* young man (since "French of Paris is to him unknown") is annoyed too, with our comrade Louise Michel for speaking in that "dreadful sing-song" Gallic tongue, instead of in the "truly elegant" Cockney lingo preferred by him. It is, of course, foolish indeed of our Parisian friends to give full force to their vowels and to roll their r's, when they might so easily soften and clip their a's and e's, drop their h's, and hiss—hiss—hiss in our London fashion.

Another Radical newspaper, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, took opportunity from that same demonstration to repeat the thousand-times exploded lie that our Chicago comrades were done to death because they threw or were party to the throwing of bombs among policemen. I state again here, for the benefit of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the simple facts as they appear in every report of the trial,—although these facts are by this time pretty well known to the workers of the world. In the result, it was not even contended by prosecuting counsel or judge that our comrades knew aught about the one bomb thrown, or had more to do with it than the *Pall Mall Gazette* Editor. They were convicted of what (in the State of Illinois) is seemingly known as "constructive murder," because in the opinion of a packed jury, phrases used by them at different times in speeches and articles might, apart from their context, have operated upon the mind of the bomb-thrower, whoever he was.

Our comrades were convicted upon this wide-drawn legal theory. They were executed because of their Anarchist opinions; for their lives would (as they were told) have been spared if they would have eaten their words and repudiated their beliefs. Are we Anarchist-Communists not right in calling these noble comrades of ours, martyrs? I may add that the person who did throw the bomb threw it at policemen armed with deadly weapons who were advancing to disperse a lawful and peaceable meeting (lawful and peaceable in the judgment of the hostile Mayor of Chicago himself.) If I were to say that in my opinion the bomb-thrower may have been justified, and some lunatic or provocative agent were hereafter to throw a bomb at the police—say in Trafalgar Square—I might, on the Illinois doctrine, be convicted of murder. I hasten to declare that I am saying nothing of the kind.

I predicted that, although the Labour Commission would of course be absolutely powerless to heal our moribund society, it would yet not be altogether useless, since it would collect a great mass of facts valuable for propaganda which otherwise would not have been generally known, even by workers. Already it would seem, the prediction is coming true. The docker, for example, has been represented to us as (since the Strike) a sort of Jeshurun's ass who has waxed fat and kicks. In reality, as has been proved, he is a poor wretch who receives, if he is lucky, a pittance of 13s. a week on the average, week in and week out (before the Strike it was 9s.) Out of the 13s. he has to pay mayhap 4s. 6d. a week in rent. He is often driven to live in a single room, and sometimes (if he has a large family) there are ten or a dozen males or females in that one room. For his Sunday joint his wife buys him a threepenny "piece" from a barrow. His work is done under sanitary conditions which the modesty of the capitalist press will not put into print. Some day surely these men will say that it is better to die fighting than to live such lives longer.

Various well-meaning people were at the tenth annual meeting of the Land Nationalisation Society at the National Liberal Club,—amongst them Herbert Burrows, who should surely have known better. Dr. Russell Wallace presided and made pathetic appeals to Socialists to rally to the Society. He was "in principle a thorough Socialist himself." "The whole fabric of society rested upon a rotten foundation, and the only way to get rid of present horrors of starvation, misery, and vice everywhere around, was a radical reform which would destroy the regime of individualism and competition which had so miserably failed to secure the general well being, and replace it by a complete system of co-operative Socialism. If they could once get the land into the hands of the people the capital of the country would soon follow it" (Cheers). That last sentence is the kind of thing people always cheer at public meetings because it sounds as if it meant a great deal, while in fact it means nothing. Only by seizing "capital" as well as land—seizing it by force from the holders of it—can capitalism be destroyed.

A certain Miss Jessie Fothergill, in the course of a story which is given honourable place in the *Weekly Dispatch*, draws a portrait of a Socialist lecturer in a manner which is creditable to her imagination at least. It appears we are disreputable and sinister persons who make a practice of stealing surgical knives and stabbing Irish landlords with them. This is really instructive, but Miss Fothergill's "Socialist

lecturer" is rather vague. Our friends the Fabians call themselves Socialists and lecture a good deal; surely this charitable lady cannot suspect such respectable people? Why not identify the villain as a wicked Anarchist at once? Miss Fothergill should really accept this suggestion of mine if she should ever republish this amazing tale of hers.

R. W. B.

CAPITAL AND LABOUR.

ONCE a master and his slaves,
Had cause for disputation,
And took their case to a pack of knaves,
Called a board of arbitration;
"Tis plain," said they,
"Your master pay
A 'fair' wage for your labour;
Your heads have got
Some tommy rot,
From a Socialist agitator."

A few months passed, and then the men
Were wanting shorter hours;
They sent their case to parliament
(The self-styled higher powers).
The premier thought
That this was nought,
And formed a Royal Commission,
Which used red tape
And sealing-wax,
And came to no decision!

A few more years and then there came,
The glorious unexpected;
As a General Strike in all the land,
Unplanned and undirected.
"All tricks we've tried,"
The people cried,
"There's left but one solution;
And all can see
That's Anarchy—
The Social Revolution."—CYRIL BELL.

THE PROPAGANDA.

GLASGOW.—On Sunday, 14th June, Joe Burgoyne, D. McNaughton, of the Social Democratic Federation, and Cyril Bell, of Edinburgh, addressed a meeting numbering over 300, on the Jail Square, during which a good amount of literature was sold. In the evening at St. George's Cross, Comrade Bell delivered an excellent address on the "Distribution of Wealth," during which we had displayed a large diagram of "Our National Cake," who makes it and who eats it, which immediately caught the fancy of the people, and caused them to crowd pretty closely and to form the largest meeting we ever held at the Cross. Joe Burgoyne and McNaughton also spoke strongly against the existing system of monopoly, after which Comrade Anderson (in his maiden speech) soundly rated the working men for their apathy, and urged them to bestir themselves in the cause of the workers. At this meeting a quire of 'Weals' were sold, "Facts for Socialists," "Socialist Catechism," and Kropotkin's "Appeal to the Young," being sold out; there was also a number of the "Anarchist Labour Leaf" sold. We have now a splendid medium for disposing of advanced literature in the Labour Literature Society, Limited, situated at 105, London Street, which was started by a few Socialists and Trade Unionists, and is now increasing its membership every day despite the fact that the Society pays no interest on shares, the profits accruing from it being devoted to the interests of Labour generally. Another feature of the Society is that it keeps no literature printed in rat shops, all the goods being got at recognised fair houses.

C. F. F.

ABERDEEN.—A split in the ranks of the Aberdeen Socialist Society a few months ago, gave birth to a Revolutionary Socialist and Anarchist organisation called the Aberdeen Revolutionary Socialist Federation. The Federation has had a fair amount of success, large crowds assembling in Castle Street on Sunday evening to hear Comrades Addie and Duncan, to whom they give an attentive hearing. At the start of the Federation Duncan was the only outdoor speaker, but Addie has dared and done great things—his manipulation of figures being a source of great information to his listeners. The Propaganda of the Revolution has, it would appear, something in it that the "canny" Aberdonians like. Perhaps politicians have so often cheated him that he will turn to Revolution for his salvation at last. The Federation is slowly but steadily increasing its membership, and though we have not got a long list of members the energy and activity of those who are members is steadily increasing. We went to Stonehaven last Saturday, a small town about fourteen miles south of Aberdeen, to see if we could spread the light any more, and we got a surprise instead, and after we had sung the "Marseillaise" and two other songs, and Duncan speaking to an audience of about fifty children, one fisherman, and two swells from Aberdeen, for about five minutes, a crowd began to gather, and inside of a quarter of an hour, we had what an old man said was the biggest crowd he had ever seen in the square. The crowd appeared to appreciate Duncan's heavy blows at the landlords, capitalists, and sky pilots, and when he finished he was loudly applauded. We have promised to go back in three weeks and carry on the work now begun. This run into the country has given us hope that there is life amongst the agricultural labourers yet, and it only requires a little hard work on the part of Socialists and Anarchists to make them really alive to their position. Aberdeen is now about half mad concerning Champion, and in Labour circles the question, being discussed with a vigour worthy of a better subject, is whether Champion is a fit representative for South Aberdeen or not. The Federation has done its level best to show Champion in his true colours, and to keep the workers from putting their trust in him or any other would be politician.

E. S.

NOTICES.

LONDON.

Commonweal Club.—273, Hackney Road, N.E. Lectures every Sunday at 11 a.m. and 8 p.m. Admission free. Membership: 1s. entrance fee, and 6d. per month subscription.
Club Autonomie.—6, Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road. Young Anarchists meet every Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock.
International Club.—40, Berner Street, Commercial Road, E. Discussion Class every Tuesday evening at 8.30.
South London.—Comrades willing to help in forming a South London Group of the Socialist League should communicate with G. Atterbury, Clayton House Manor Place, Walworth Road, S.E.

PROVINCES.

Aberdeen.—Revolutionary Socialist Federation. Meetings are held in Oddfellows Small Hall, Crooked Lane, on Wednesday evenings at 8.
Glasgow.—Lectures and Discussions every Sunday evening, at 7, in the Hall, Antiqua Place, Nelson Street, City.
Hull.—Club Liberty, 1 Beets Court, Blanket Row.
Leeds.—Socialist League Club, 1 Clarendon Buildings and Front Row, Victoria Road. Open every evening. Business meeting Saturdays at 8.—International Educational Club, near St. James's Hall, York Street. Open every evening. Lectures every Saturday at 4. All kinds of Socialist literature for sale at both clubs.
Leicester.—Room No. 7, Co-operative Hall, High Street. Members meet on Thursday at 8 p.m. Lecture in the Spiritualist Hall, Silver Street, every Sunday at 6.30.
Manchester.—Socialist League Club, 60 Grosvenor Street, All Saints. Open every evening. Weekly meeting on Tuesdays at 8.
Nottingham.—Socialist Club, Woodland Place, Upper Parliament Street. Club contribution, 1d. per week; Dancing every Wednesday, 8 till 10.30—fee 3d.
Norwich.—Members' meeting held every Tuesday at 8.30.
Oxford.—Temperance Hall, 25½ Pembroke Street. First Friday in every month, at 8.30 p.m.
Sheffield.—Socialist Club, 63 Blunk Street. French Class, Tuesday at 8.30. Discussion Class, Wednesday at 8.30.
Walsall.—Socialist Club, 18 Goodall Street, Walsall. Meetings every night.
Yarmouth.—Socialist League Club, 56 Row, Market Place. Open every evening. Business Meeting, Tuesday at 8. Singing Practice, Wednesday at 8.30. Discussion Class, Thursday at 8.30. Elocution Class, Friday at 8.30.

The Sheffield Group of Anarchist-Communists will hold a Conference on Sunday, June 28th, at 47, Westbar Green, Sheffield. Comrades from other Groups are invited to attend.

A CONCERT AND BALL, together with a Grand Distribution of Socialist, Anarchist, and other Works, will take place on Wednesday evening, July 8th, at the Hall of the London Socialist League, 273, Hackney Road, N.E., for the benefit of the *Commonweal*, at which over 200 Prizes, to the value of £23, will be given away. Tickets Sixpence each, to be had at all Anarchist and Socialist Clubs and meeting places.

STANLEY'S EXPLOITS; or Civilising Africa. Price One Penny. A full account of the fiendish atrocities committed upon the natives of Africa by the "Buccaneer of the Congo." Suitable for circulation at Stanley Meetings; a large stock still on hand. To be had of the Secretary, 273, Hackney Road, N.E.

JUST OUT. Labour's May Day, by Walter Crane, on fine toned paper, suitable for framing. Sent in cardboard protector, post free, 5d.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST SCHOOL, 19, Fitzroy Street, Fitzroy Square, W. Conducted by Louise Michel and A. Coulon. Free Education in English, French, and German. Any friend taking an interest in the School can now obtain a portrait group of teachers and scholars on application to A. Coulon, Secretary, at above address.

TO LET, for Trade Union Meetings, Lectures, &c., three nights a week, the Large Hall of the London Socialist League, 273, Hackney Road. For particulars apply to the Secretary.

Comrades and Sympathisers can each do something to help the Cause, and those unable to help otherwise can subscribe to our Fund for the propagation of Anarchist Communism in the Army and Navy. Subscriptions addressed to the Secretary will be duly acknowledged in the *Commonweal*.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

SUBSCRIBERS who find that the Retail Agents are unable to obtain the *Commonweal* from their Wholesale Agents, are reminded that R. Forder, 23, Stonecutter Street, London; W. Reeves, 186, Fleet Street, London; Simpson and Co., Red Lion Court, Fleet Street, London; and Appleyard and Co., of Poppin's Court, Fleet Street, E.C., are Agents for the *Commonweal*.

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS AND EXCHANGES.

The 'COMMONWEAL' being now the property of the newly-constituted London Socialist League, all communications should be addressed, "The Secretary, 273, Hackney Road, London, N.E.," and remittances made payable at Post Office, Hackney Road.

Printed in the London Socialist League Printery, and published in the name and on behalf of the London Socialist League, by C. W. MOWBRAY, at 273, Hackney Road, London, N.E.