

Of course, other economies are also suggested. Thus the labourer is advised to discard his pipe, to walk to his work instead of riding, to shun the theatre and eschew the music-hall. These very social reformers, he it remarked, would oppose tooth and nail any attempt to open the museums, etc., on Sunday.

Such, then, are the means whereby these philanthropists would set the world on its legs again. They skilfully ignore the fact that the stoppage of the liquor-traffic, the tobacco-trade and others which contribute to the small ray of sunshine that occasionally brightens a labourer's life, would have the effect of throwing thousands more into the already bursting ranks of the unemployed. But we will not consider that point. We will suppose that, by some miraculous means, every operative in the country economises £10 annually on his present expenditure. Let us see how it affects him.

Now it is evident that however severe competition for employment may be, it has its limits. No man will work for a wage with which no conceivable amount of squeezing and pinching will suffice to eke out his existence (with women, for obvious reasons, the case is different). Male labour-remuneration never descends below one degree above starvation-point, for if it did so, if the labourer were literally starved on what he earned, he would soon be physically incapable of continuing work. All mine and factory owners and other large employers of labour, therefore calculate the remuneration they will give, taking as a basis the needs of the labourer. We will call starvation-point¹ n , and the point above that x .

Now we will imagine A and B competing with one another for a certain office only yielding sufficient employment for one. A and B are of equal capabilities and usefulness, and the livelihood of each for the nonce is dependent upon his securing the vacancy. It is clear then that the employer who has the vacancy to offer can only lower the rate of remuneration to x . For if he goes still lower, A and B being without other means, could not maintain themselves at such a wage, and would both refuse the post. But if A has a private income of £10, he can afford to and will compete with B down to $x - 10$, which will probably come below what to B is n .

It is this illustration that we have now to apply on the large scale. Through unlimited competition, labour-wages (I am speaking generally, as some exceptions are still sustained through trades-unionistic efforts) may now be considered as having sunk to x , i.e., the minimum at which a working-man can subsist without denying himself one or more of what are considered the necessaries of life, and which may include (for we are speaking of men and not of animals) not only bare dry bread, but beer, tobacco and recreation. But if all the workers agree to resign such recreation, such beer, such tobacco, they simply shift the points x and n lower down. In other words, competition would reign among them exactly as before, and the extra £10 which pseudo-economists speak of, instead of going to buy the wretched labourers more bread and more meat, would go into the pockets of their astute exploiters without ever reaching them at all.

Of course we know the majority or even any considerable number of working men would not be so senseless as to adopt the theory of operative extravagance, but individual workmen with the, under the circumstances, stupid trust in their "superiors," which characterises their class, have already been and are being entrapped, and such men, by lowering their own standard of life, force their fellows, by the law of competition, to lower theirs. It is not our business to show our employers upon how little we are able to live; any more than it is his to submit the books of his business to the inspection of his trade-rival. It is not for us to economise in order to keep up middle-class profits or dividends. Let the operative pause before he agrees to still further diminish the small sweets that existence yet retains for him. Let him frequent the few temples of art or pleasure which are still left stranded in the capitalistic wilderness, let him recreate himself as much as his scanty means allow, and forget occasionally, for an hour or two, that he is but the impersonal and degraded tool of a heartless and no less degraded taskmaster.

KARL L. LAUNSPACH.

SOCIALISM IN THE PROVINCES.

I AM asked by some comrades to give a brief of report of my lecturing tour to Sheffield, Liverpool, and Norwich. I do so, therefore, believing it of some use to give the impressions of a Londoner as to our prospects in other parts of the country.

I gave two lectures at Sheffield on Sunday February 28th, in the Secularist Hall: both were well attended, although I was told that the religious rancour which runs high in Sheffield would keep many people away from the Secularist Hall. Both lectures were well received, the evening one, the more plain-spoken and less historical of the two, particularly so: indeed I have never stood before a more sympathetic audience; and it seemed to me that the interest in the subject had much increased since I was last in Sheffield about a year and half ago.

On the day following, I attended a private meeting of about thirty sympathisers, called to discuss the possibility of starting a definite Socialist body. Of course I went as an advocate of the League. I found much interest in the subject amongst these friends, also some doubts and hanging back from that step of association, a step undoubtedly harder to take in a provincial town where people are so much more known and as it were ticketed than in London. The doubts had reference, some to the religious question, but

¹ It must be understood that by "starvation-point," I mean that situation where a man has to dispense with what, in the eyes of a European, are considered necessary to life, though as a matter of fact, not necessarily literally so; e.g., meat, etc. Of course, a Chinese or a Hindoo might live on a few handfuls of rice a day. Their "starvation-point" is consequently lower than our own, and they are paid accordingly.

mostly I think they turned on our repudiation of the Parliamentary method, the reasons for which I did my best to explain. However it was determined to set on foot a Socialist body, of which I hope we shall hear more soon; as undoubtedly several will join it who are both intelligent and eager to do something. Sheffield, I was told, is a specially good town for open-air meetings; and those who gather at them have every reason for listening to speaking which offers a remedy for the present state of things, as labour is very badly off there, and as far as I could make out from what I heard, political matters are sufficiently mixed up. It is worth noting in relation to the matter of would-be Parliamentary Socialism, that an advanced Radical association with a semi-Socialistic programme, which had been established in the town, was swept away by the General Election, the Radicals belonging to it joining the regular party, as they are pretty sure to do under such circumstances.

From Sheffield I went to Liverpool and delivered my lecture at the Concert Room in Nelson Street, on March 2nd. The hall was crowded with an audience mostly of working men, who not only listened with very great attention, but took up all the points which they caught and understood with very hearty applause. After the lecture I had the group round the platform eager to ask questions, which one always encounters in these more northern towns, and there could be no doubt of their eagerness to learn. It is much to be regretted that the League has no branch at Liverpool: although the members of the Workers' Brotherhood are doubtless intelligent and in earnest, they seem to shrink from the full consequences of the change which they advocate: I must ask them to excuse my pressing on them the advisability of their forming themselves into a branch and rallying to them energetic people from the working classes. From all that I saw and heard at Liverpool, half-a-dozen, nay two or three energetic and uncompromising men pushing our principles there would soon have a following, especially if they spoke quite roughly and plainly to their listeners whether working or middle-class men.

On the 8th March I went to Norwich and lectured to a very good audience, some 800 I should think, at the Victoria Hall. Again the audience was mostly working-class, and was or seemed to be quite in sympathy with the movement. There was no opposition except from a clergyman, who I was told was a worthy man; he however only said that he disagreed, without giving his reasons.

It was strange to me for once to be preaching Socialism in a city like Norwich, with its beautiful architecture and strange half-foreign old-world aspect. But from all I can learn it seems as likely a place as any in England for the spread of Socialism. The working-classes there are in a sad plight; the old weaving industries are fast perishing; the modern industry of mechanical shoe-making is hard pushed by foreign competition, and the "hands" are terribly exploited. Like all other industrial towns its "reserve army of labour" or something more than that is all but disbanded. The magnates of the town have been forced to give them some employment, but it is a good illustration of the helplessness of the authorities in such a crisis that they are chiefly setting them to tumble the hillocks into the holes on Mousehold Heath, a rough uncultivable tract of land near the city and which now belongs to it, and where these sturdy bodies are producing under the bourgeois organisers of labour nothing at all, except—ugliness, and literally, platitude.

I had the pleasure, which was a real pleasure and not a mere conventional one, of meeting our branch before the lecture. And here there was no room for the regret one felt at Liverpool, for they seemed just the men wanted in such a place, with their hearts in the business, and with no thought of compromise, thoroughly understanding the futility of Parliamentary agitation. Here again they told me there was good opportunity for open-air work, and they intended to set about it as soon as the weather permitted.

Altogether it is not as a partisan but as an observer that I say that every where people are willing and eager to listen to Socialists, and that the doctrines will take root; and as a last word I appeal to all who are not afraid of the expression of opinion, to help us, whether they call themselves Socialists or not. Some of those who are better off, if their position or their sensitiveness, whatever that may mean, prevents them from joining us, or working actively, can at least help us with money; and let them remember that these people who want to know about that Socialism which is beginning to stir the world, and which offers them a remedy for their hardships and degradation, are poor and daily growing poorer. Some day they will assuredly move in a way which will shake everything and overturn much: surely it will be better even for you well-to-do people if they have an aim and a policy in their movement. And to help them to this is our purpose; therefore in our turn we ask help of all thoughtful people.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

"YE GENTLE BOY-CAT."

"They who would be free themselves must strike the blow."

EVERY mail brings additional evidence how thoroughly the workers of America, male and female, grasp the fact that their emancipation can only be achieved by their own united efforts—by acting in the spirit of the noble motto of the Knights of Labour, a motto that should be the rallying cry of the workers throughout the world, "The injury of one is the concern of all." We have lately received a handbill issued by the Can Makers' Mutual Protective Association, of Baltimore, Md., containing an engraving of their registered trade mark. Accompanying the handbill was a circular letter, which we reprint, in the hope that it may serve as a stimulus to our somewhat sleepy unions:

"To all Assemblies, Knights of Labor, Trades Unions and Labor Organisations, greeting. We come to you with this appeal to aid us in our struggle to get living wages. Since the introduction of child and female labor at inadequate wages, and machinery, with the use of acids, oils and other poisons, our wages have been reduced to under five dollars per week since 1883. Brothers and sisters, we do not ask you for financial aid, but appeal to you, to help us in this just cause of gaining and maintaining living wages, by creating a demand for the 'Canned Goods preserved in cans bearing the Union Trade Mark, 'C. M. M. P. A., Hand Made,' stamped in the tin in circular form on the bottom of the can. This Can is manufactured only by employers of Union hands, and as it is made with pure rosin, it is therefore recommended to the consuming public as the only safe can on the market; our action was approved by the Executive Board, G. A., in 1884, and also by the same, May 9th, 1885. Boycotts have been issued by D. A. 41, K. of L.—see *Journal United Labor*, June 25th, 1885—and Federation of Labor, Baltimore, Md., August 12th, 1885, and endorsed by the National Federation of Trades and Labor Unions at Washington, D. C., December 8th, 1885, against all cans not bearing this Trade Mark. We earnestly request you to place a copy of our hand bill, with our Trade Mark upon it, in conspicuous public places; in your meeting or assembly halls and in your kitchens, and see that your wives and all