THE COMMONWEAL.

August 28, 1886

"HAVE YOU NOT HEARD HOW IT HAS GONE WITH MANY A CAUSE BEFORE NOW? FIRST, FEW MEN BELIEVE IT; NEXT, MOST MEN CONTEND IT; LATTER, ALL MEN ACCEPT IT—AND THE CAUSE IS WON!"

Communications are invited from all concerned with recent questions, they should be written on one side of the paper only and should be addressed to the Editors of the COMMONWEAL, 15 Farrington, E.C. They must be accompanied with name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication.

As all articles are signed, no special significance should be attached to them because of the position they may occupy in these pages. None, therefore, are to be taken more than in a general manner expressing the views of the Commonweal as a body, except it be so explicitly declared by the Editors.

Registered MSS. can only be returned if a stamped directed envelope is forwarded with them.

Subscriptions.—For Europe and United States, including postage, per year, 4s.; six months, 2s.; three months, 1s. 6d. All business communications to be addressed to the Manager of the COMMONWEAL, 15 Farrington, E.C. Business communications must not be sent to the Editors. All remittances should be made in Postal Orders or halfpenny stamps.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

NOTICE TO ALL SOCIALIST NEWSPAPERS.—The COMMONWEAL will be regularly sent to members of the Central Fabian Committee, and it is hoped that they on their side will regularly provide the Socialist League with their papers as they may appear.

W. R. (Halifax).—Would you mind communicating with the Manager at this address?

News

PERIODICALS RECEIVED DURING THE WEEK ENDING WEDNESDAY AUGUST 25.

THE CONCERT OF THE PROVINCES.—The National Labour Congress in Canada, and the Labour Organization Conference held in the United States, were both arranged for the late summer. Lord Selborne, who is the President of the Board of Trade, has declared that the discussion of questions of trade reform and industrial peace is of the highest importance. The two conferences were held in London and New York. The former was attended by delegates from the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States of America. The latter was attended by delegates from the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States of America.

IMPORTANT EVENTS OF THE WEEK.

The COMMONWEAL will be sent to all members of the Central Fabian Committee, and it is hoped that they on their side will regularly provide the Socialist League with their papers as they may appear.

MISANTHROPY TO THE RESCUE!

A paper read by Mr. Wordsworth Donisthorpe at the Fabian Conference has been printed in the Arweitch. It excited much interest as some shoed, and argued no little indignation in the minds of some of the Socialists that heard it; but printed, it does not seem a very remarkable piece, being simply an example of the ordinary pessimistic paroxysmal exercises which are a disease of the period, and whose aim would seem to be the destruction of the meaning of language. Thus Mr. Donisthorpe declares himself an evolutionist, but his evolution simply runs round the circle; and in fact what he really means is the ordinary assertion that no condition of things but the present one is really natural and enduring; or, to put it in another way, that slavery is a necessity and that the latest development is the best, as it is the most veiled and therefore the safest for the slaveholder. This is indeed the due conclusion for the secretary of Liberty and Property Defence League to arrive at; but it is a little curious that some people should have been enanred by his not very ingenious fallacies, and supposed that he was covertly supporting some advanced doctrine or other. To these I commend his concluding sentences: "The best system that I could bethink myself of if my opinion were asked would be the system of private property. To every man the fruits of his labour. Might one make bold to ask Mr. Donisthorpe what are the fruits of the labour of a duke, ashareholder, a lawyer? The worst enemy of the non-producing classes would scarcely grudge them the fruits of their labour—nothing, to wit. If Mr. Donisthorpe is not misrepresented, this sentence is a curious one to come from such a man as this, effects such a mass of thought.

But indeed all these abstractions of Mr. Donisthorpe's are but Politics in the Moon. In spite of his dystopic pessimism, human beings will always take interest in one another, and will have some sort of common aspirations; even, what doubtless will be a frightful word to Mr. Donisthorpe, some religion, some bond of responsibility to each other. It is impossible for no other relations has it to exist long save those between the better and the bested, the slave and the slave-holder; society will arise and grow in spite of all the predictions founded on a one-sided view of men's struggles for self-preservation: say, it exists now outside the world it together by those arbitrary rules which are sustained for the upholding of private property, and which Mr. Donisthorpe really means when he speaks of 'liberty,' and indeed it is just that rudimentary and open society of well-wishers, into which people are attracted by the interest in each other as human beings, which holds the world together until it shall be forced into a completer society by the march of economical events. It is true, as Mr. Donisthorpe says, that the working classes are degraded, though whether they are more degraded than their degraders is another matter; but it is not because they produce that they are degraded, but because they are kept poor and kept in favour of property. But poor as they are, they now have before them the prospect of getting poorer, while at the same time they are growing less ignorant; or say the luxury of keeping masters to employ them is getting so expensive that it threatens to ruin both master and man, and that while the masters have no way of escape, the men have a simple one—to wit, the getting rid of their masters. This they are beginning to learn, and when they get more perfect with their lesson, and come to understand that they can produce without the help of the lookers-on who pocket so large a part of their product, in spite of all abstractions, and in spite also of misanthropical prophecies they will insist on having the fruits of their labours, and will be forced to take steps to having them from the breakdown of that very slave-system of which Mr. Donisthorpe is such a sedulous supporter. That slave is at best a preparatory stage, which the working classes are performing the last act that it is capable of; it is expending the last force that it has in giving force to the new order of things; it is patriarch, but still useful—as dung.

Let us then, take to heart the words of Mr. Donisthorpe's taunts, and use them for what they are worth. He tells us in a great many words, considering the simplicity of the statement, that if the workers can manage to prove in any one of the courts of law that they have a right to do so, and sarcastically cheer them on in the attempt. It is our business to accept the challenge; and we may at least thank him for not hypercritically deprecat ing the use of force as a wickedness and immorality in the ordinary fashion of the day. But though the day of change will come at last, surely it will come the quicker if we take to heart those taunts afor ed. True it is that it is the surrounding conditions that the workers acting on exactly the same material as that of the useless classes which has produced their degradation; but it is possible for men who have once had a religion implanted in them to make that religion override over the old-fashioned practical purposes of revolution. It has been seen over and over how a religion, a principle—whatever you may choose to call it—will transform proletarians into heroes, by forcing men to make the best of their better qualities and making the excess of what they have got in them that is good supply the defects of their lacking qualities. So I think we may, in spite of Mr. Donisthorpe, each one of us, make ourselves good enough for revolutionists, though in this generation we may fail it. Yet I admit that it is a difficult thing to do, for it means giving a sense of responsibility in greater or less degree to a great many people; so once more let us take warning by the enemy, and remember that the Religion of Socialism which our manifest virtue is to place us better than other people, since we owe ourselves to the Society which we have accepted as the hope of the future. William Morris.

A BENEFIT CONCERT

WILL BE HELD AT
FARRINGDON HALL, 13 FARRINGDON ROAD, E.C.,

ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH, AT 8 O'CLOCK.

For the purpose of raising Funds to pay the Fine (£50) imposed on Mrs. Donisthorpe, under the Summary of Jurisdiction Act, in consequence of her refusal to give up the work of the Arweitch. Admission by Programme only. . . Sixpence Each.

Which can be obtained from Wm. Blundell, 13 Farrington, E.C., or H. Arnold, 6 Little Carlyle Street, W; E. Popen, 6 York Street, Church Street, Bethnal Green, E.; and T. B. Wadell, 9 Charlotte Street, Bedford Square.

NOTE.—As some of the country Branches have written asking why Mainwaring and the others are not forthwith to be punished, the following statement is made: The case was a difficult one to decide. We undertake to explain the reasons we thought it was then right to adopt the course of the law, and that the prosecution of Mainwaring's furniture at their own prices, so we have determined to pay the fine. This is only through the kindness of the police and the Atty. Gen.

pro Concert Committee.

SALLET (Catalonia).—Seven factories here have stopped work or diminished the hours of work.

EASTER.—A large part of the employees at the bottle factory have struck, the remainder following suit.

CASTELLO.—The Printers' Society have declared a strike at the Arnegut establishment, and seem firm and determined to hold out.