



All literary communications should be addressed to the Editors of the COMMONWEAL, 13 Farringdon Road, E.C. They must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication.

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

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### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

NOTICE TO ALL SOCIALISTIC NEWSPAPERS.—The *Commonweal* will be regularly sent to all Socialistic Contemporaries throughout the world, and it is hoped that they on their side will regularly provide the Socialist League with their papers as they may appear.

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

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

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

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

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

### NOTES.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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