

Correspondence.

SOCIALISM AND REMUNERATION.

Whilst agreeing in the main with comrade Smith's remarks upon the payment of labour in a Socialist State, I should like to suggest, what I am inclined to believe would be an easier method of dealing with the difficulty, so far as production is concerned, and it is: to measure the individual's labour by product, or "piece," as usually understood, instead of measuring it by time.

My reasons I will state as briefly as I can. In the first place, taking men as we find them, the generality would object to bear one another's burdens. To tell the average man that it is his duty to do more work than his fellow for the same remuneration is not the way to attract him towards Socialism or impress him favourably respecting your sanity. The plague of it is because he does not believe himself to be merely an "average man." In his own opinion the only thing he lacks in order to shine, as a dazzling luminary in some particular walk, is the opportunity. It is a commendable feeling essential to progress, but it has been brutalised under existing conditions into that sordid selfishness which resents all effort unfringed with pecuniary gain.

The next reason is that in taking men as we find them, some of the faint-to-be loafers of society would find their way into the Brotherhood. These might be readily apt to fall, from set purpose, into the class of "inferior calibre," and so become a burden for their more generous brethren to bear. Whereas if a quality and quantity standard were fixed to be reached by every capable and accredited citizen in his, or her, special calling, it would serve to stimulate the activities of all in the performance of their necessary duties; since when the accepted standard was complied with, leisure and recreation for the individual would follow. Of course this method is mainly applicable to productive labour. It cannot be applied in distribution, transit and other forms of labour. Happily the time method can be brought into operation in these forms, with much greater surety and facility than in production.

I believe that the idle and selfishly disposed would soon die off in a Socialist atmosphere. Only the generous and fraternal would find the conditions genial to their growth. In the beginning would be the only difficulty; but given Society on a Socialist basis and a generation's trial, the salutary influences of fraternal, communal principles, as opposed to the brute competition obtaining, would so effectually regenerate men as to leave society able to dispense afterwards with the lightest of her man-made laws.

T. M.

"THE HUSKS THAT THE SWINE DO EAT."

"At the Aldershot police court, on Thursday, Henry Smith, labourer, was charged with stealing refuse food, value 3d., the property of William Newland. George Squires, provost corporal of the Medical Staff Corps, stated that he saw the prisoner taking food off the men's dishes as they were taking it to swill tubs for the contractor. In cross-examination the witness said that no soldier had any right to give any portion of his food away, whether he paid for it or not, as all broken food was sold to the contractor. Smith, for his defence, stated that he was hungry, and that a soldier asked him to take a little food off his dish. The accused was sentenced to a month's hard labour."—*Daily Telegraph*, Dec. 12th, 1885.

The Prodigal Son is starved out, then; "the husks that the swine do eat" are to have their full share in the apotheosis of property; they are become holy things, which no unprivileged person must touch. Ghost of William Cobbett, here is another "vast improvement" for you on the Scandinavian law that decreed a thousand years ago that he who stole from necessity of hunger was to go scot free. The whole case seems like a cruel practical joke, and it may be hoped that the Home Secretary will at least carry the jest on by pardoning Henry Smith for the crime of eating when he was hungry.

But when Henry Smith comes out with his prospects brightened by his having been in jail, if he has any leisure to think amidst the pangs of hunger, he might ponder on the meaning of the words *free, freedom, enfranchisement*, as they are used in political language to-day. He may have the leisure, if it be true that at one period in the process of death by starvation it is possible to think, or at least to dream.

Apart from the question of what punishment was given to a Roman slave at the worst period, or a plantation nigger for "stealing" 3d. worth of hogswash, I feel a curiosity on the following questions: How much hogswash Henry Smith ate? How it agreed with his digestion? What is in scientific accuracy the amount of nourishment (to a man, not a hog) in 3d. worth of hogswash? What weight of hogswash one can buy for 3d.?

It seems, though, this matter of hogswash for men is becoming a burning question; for I have noticed in the papers charitable suggestions that collections of that article shall be made and sold to our "poorer brethren"; sold, if you please, not given, lest pauperisation should result.

Two more questions yet: How much worse—or better—is Aldershot hogswash than the ordinary food of Henry Smith and of the many thousands that he represents? And lastly, How long is it to be borne?

W. M.

RECORD OF THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT.

HOLLAND.—A week or two ago our friend and indefatigable co-worker, F. Donela Nieuwenhuis spent a few days in London, and the account he gave of our movement in Holland was most encouraging. He has promised to send us a letter on the subject. Meantime I may mention one or two of the facts he told me. Of course it was easy to see even from the bourgeois press that Socialism is the question of the day in Holland as elsewhere; but few of us realise—I certainly did not—what immense strides have been made by our friends within the last three or four years. "There is not a town, barely a village," said Comrade Nieuwenhuis, "where we have not a considerable following. One reason of our success is that there has never been anything like the misery there now is in Holland. Not only the thousands of town-labourers out of work, but the peasants, till recently comparatively well off, are now everywhere on the point of starvation, and when we come and tell the people why this is they flock to hear us and soon become eager to work with us. In country places the people—men and women—often tramp ten, twelve, and in some cases as much as twenty miles to hear our 'gospel.' We

often sell as much as 60,000 copies of our paper. When the movement begins—and naturally it must begin in one of the large countries, our little Holland would soon be crushed if it rose alone—you will find us ready." Our friend also asked me to state that the so-called Socialist deputy Heldt is no Socialist at all, and has no more to do with the movement in Holland than, say Mr. Howell, has with ours.

BELGIUM.—From Belgium, too, comes good news. The correspondent of a Socialist contemporary, giving an account of a demonstration when 3000 workmen marched beneath the red flag from Gand to Ledeberg, says: "We marched silently, thinking of the past, dreaming of the future. . . . Flemish tenacity had surmounted all obstacles, was moving on in spite of everything. The tens of yesterday had become the hundreds of to-day, and will become thousands to-morrow. On the Socialist map the two Flanders hardly a year ago formed one enormous black stain only illumined by one great red mark at Gand, and two or three small ones near the French frontier. And now the map of these provinces is like a beautiful starry sky. The inert masses that had seemed hopelessly brutalised by centuries of bigotry and misery have awakened at the voice of their brothers. Their apparent indifference was only ignorance. The daily paper *Vooruit* (Forwards) and the *Tokomst* (the Future) were sold by volunteers in all the towns and all the villages of Flanders. As many as 20,000 copies were bought in one day, and eagerly read by the people, who there found set forth in clear words what they had only vaguely felt. . . . The new evangel of happiness and of deliverance roused sleeping hearts, gave new courage. . . . And associations were founded. Already hundreds of workers have come to strengthen the army of the proletariat. The weak to-day will, by uniting, be the strong of to-morrow. . . . Placed resolutely on the ground of the struggle of classes, they recognise only friends and enemies, and refuse every equivocal alliance. All soldiers of the same cause, with no other rivalry than that of devotion, they can trust all who follow their banner. . . . Full of confidence in the future of their cause, they have the courage to await the propitious hour. . . . The war (between Socialism and Capitalism) must break out one day; the atrocious consequences of the present system make this inevitable. The Flemish Socialists know this, and determined to conquer then, use the time left them to augment their forces and improve their organisation."

SPAIN.—While the bourgeois press is eagerly discussing whether a little baby of five is to "rule" over several millions of Spaniards, or whether she will be replaced a few months hence by a still younger baby or by a republic, the terrible economic crisis through which Spain is passing is completely overlooked, either intentionally or from sheer ignorance. This crisis has lasted for months, and is daily growing more intense. A Spanish friend writing to the *Socialiste* (Paris) says: "Thousands of arms are idle in Arragon in the ancient kingdom of Valentia, in Galicia, in Castille and Estramadura. In Andalusia the want of work and misery of the inhabitants have reached proportions unknown to this day. . . . The public powers, who only care for these questions when they threaten to endanger the interests of the bourgeois class, are rather uneasy—and they are right. For the misery of the workers of this vast region of Andalusia—celebrated for its fertility and its richness, this paradise of which the capitalist régime has made a hell—grows menacing. . . . In Catalonia, the chief industrial centre of Spain, the situation is the same. "Most of the factories are closed, others open for a short time, only to close again . . . so that thousands are without bread in this province. At Barcelona in the single industry of printed stuffs, that employs about 2000 hands, 1700 are out of work. 4000 engineers are idle. It is the same with thousands of weavers, spinners, bricklayers, tailors and shoemakers. The printing trade is in an almost more precarious condition. . . . Half the printers in Madrid are out of work. . . ." A bourgeois journal, *El Dia*, says: "The pawnshops and loan offices have not premises large enough to store the things brought thither by vice, but most often by misery. We must have no illusions: the precarious state of the population the hunger and the misery cannot wait." And our friend rightly adds "think what the situation must be when a bourgeois organ paints it in such black colours."

FRANCE.—A new weekly journal, *La terre aux Paysans* (The Land for the Peasants), gives some interesting facts drawn from the official agricultural report of 1873. According to this report, of 49 million hectares (about one million acres), peasants cultivating their own land possess only four millions, house property and gardens occupy 1 million, and the remaining forty-four millions are in the hands of idlers and exploiters, "old and new nobles, and bourgeois of all sorts." The idlers, therefore, have eleven times more land than the workers. And this within about 100 years of the "great revolution" that was to give the land to the peasant!

While there has been such a decided reaction of the bourgeoisie against not only free, but even against education of any sort in England, it is curious to note that the French bourgeoisie is equally anxious to prevent the "risks that social order will run from the spread of education." Some of the bourgeois are quite pathetic on the subject, while others, as our friend the *Socialiste* points out, are driven to plead for good education because the uneducated workman cannot compete with the educated. "Thus while the bourgeois on the one hand exclaim against the dangers and the cost of education, others proclaim its necessity in the interests of national industry." A pretty state of affairs!

AMERICA.—The papers announce a curious "new departure" at Harvard University. A "professor of Socialism", in the person of the Rev. John Graham Brooks, has been appointed. Of course we know the kind of thing the Rev. Mr. Brooks is likely to lecture about, and that he is not likely to preach revolutionary Socialism to the gilded youth of Harvard—but still the appointment is an interesting "sign of the times."

A labour journal published in North Carolina (*The Workman*) states that in the factories at Durham (N.C.), children for the least neglect of work or carelessness are whipped by the overseers. After all this is not so surprising in an old slave-state. The Knights of Labour are to look into the matter.

From New York comes a pleasant piece of news—another sign of the time, too—i.e., that artists are beginning to see that they must make common cause with the workers. The director of the Thalia Theatre, a German called Auberg, has lately employed a "scab" orchestra, specially imported by him to undersell the already ill-paid American musicians. These, through the Mutual Musical Protective Union, have appealed to the Central Labour Union, with the result that the latter has called upon the workers to "boycott" this theatre (which is a popular one), and to prevent so far as they can others from going there.

One thinks of South America as the land of constant "revolutions"—o