

a pyramid, in which the best, as he considers them, get to the top, and all are stimulated by the chance of rising to do their very best. This is, I think, a fair statement of the advantages claimed for a competitive society. Let us see how far these are realised, and with what attendant evils.

First, then, who is it that get to the top, and in what way are they the best? Evidently they are best at getting for themselves, either money, position, or honour; and it by no means follows that they do the best for society while engaged in the struggle to get themselves on. For their first aim being to make money, they will only make good articles so long as these pay them best; if they can make more money by selling shoddy clothes, the good of society will weigh very little with them. In order to be successful their best energies must be used, not to make really good and beautiful articles, but to get the better of their fellow competitors in the market—any device must be resorted to in order to undersell them. It is true that some of the devices may be a benefit, that the pressure of competition may lead to the discovery of useful labour-saving machinery; but I fear it more often leads to the discovery of adulterations and shams. The great difficulty there is of getting good, honest or beautiful articles, and the enormous quantities of shams and rubbish which are to be found everywhere at the present time, are proofs enough that competition does not tend to produce good articles, granted that it does bring plenty of them.

But even if this were less evident, there is still to my mind a more serious objection to competition as a system upon which to base society—namely, its influence on the production of something more important than commodities—men. What is likely to be the result on the character of a race of men if they are set to compete one with another, each to get the better of his neighbour? Surely they must become selfish and heartless. The most selfish will get on best, the one who thinks most of his own interest and least of the interests of others. Where would the modern business man be who, when selling out shares which he believes will go down, should stop to think of the ruin he may bring to some poor family? Again, has it not become a bye-word that a certain amount of dishonesty is necessary in all trades? To get up the pyramid of a competitive society it is before all things necessary to have no regard for the feelings of those who must be trodden on in mounting. Only a few can mount at best; the many must always be the down-trodden. And this process is graced nowadays by the title of the survival of the fittest! Christ would have said the fittest for hell!

As modern society embodies this principle of competition, so would a Socialist society embody the opposing principle of co-operation, under which men would join together to make good things because they wanted them. It being manifestly to the interest of all to have really good serviceable articles, and to the pleasure of all to have them beautiful, such only would be made. If men were co-operating to produce what they wanted they would take care not to waste their labour on bad material, for they would see that it was to no one's advantage to have more labour to do than was necessary; and the best way to economise labour is to use it only on the best materials, which last long when once made, and to make them up in such a way that they will not need much repair. Hence we see that co-operation would take away all interest in bad work or shoddy goods, and so would abolish at once all the dishonesty of trade as at present carried on. A useful emulation in the doing of good work would be enough to ensure steady progress, and the desire of leisure to follow various studies or pastimes would be enough stimulus to the invention of labour-saving appliances. Quite a different side of man's character would be drawn out by such a system; his selfish side would find little encouragement; there would be no rising on the backs of his fellows, but he would soon develop the love of common interests in place of his own; he would be proud to be received as an equal by all around, and would get to hate to be cringed to as a superior. Were he a Christ he would feel it more honour to walk arm in arm with an uneducated fisherman than to be knelt to by the wisest.

I have only touched on a few points of contrast between these two principles. I have said nothing of the killing of all happiness and mirth by the scramble which competition invariably becomes; or of the crushing out of all love for, and so of all knowledge of, what is beautiful; nor have I shown how co-operation, by taking away the spur which goads us on, would leave us at peace to enjoy things as we do them, and find us leisure for art and mirth. But enough has been said, I think, to show that we must get rid of this competitive system if we are to have any pleasure in our lives or any love left in our hearts. Socialism offers the only way of doing this. It will only be by the workers refusing longer to be the dupes of competing capitalists, and uniting to produce goods for their own use and not for others' profit, that we shall get rid of the evils of competition and gain the blessings of co-operation.

RAYMOND UNWIN.

## THE SEQUEL OF THE SCOTCH LETTER.

ON Sunday 27th June I lectured on the "Political Outlook" at the Waterloo Rooms, Glasgow, the same place where my Thursday's lecture was given; this was under the auspices of the Branch, and our comrade Muirhead took the chair. There was a larger attendance than on the Thursday; howbeit several got up and went out almost as soon as I began: it seems there was some mistake as to my subject, as there was a religious meeting elsewhere on the premises, and some of the proper audience thereof had wandered into our hall. Moreover I sus-

pect that some found themselves "caught" by my title, and expected the lecture to refer to the present election instead of the wider subject which it dealt with. The audience was over 600, I should think, and was attentive and sympathetic. Instead of the cut-and-dried, meaningless vote of thanks, our comrades arranged to try the effect of a resolution, which was thus worded: "That all political action which does not aim at placing the entire means of production in the hands of the community, to be used by it for the equal benefit of all, is totally inadequate to raise the present labouring classes to the level which they have a right to claim as human beings." Comrade Glasier put this resolution in a very able speech, and it was seconded by Mr. Canninghame; and to my surprise no one proposed an amendment, or spoke against it: some half-dozen hands were held up against it; the rest, for. We afterwards appealed to the audience to make their resolution good by joining the League, and got some names at any rate. Mr. Bennet, once editor of the *Radical*, who said he had come in late by misadventure, made a sympathetic speech at the end of the meeting. The literature sold well.

The last lecture was on Monday 28th, at Bridgeton, the east end of Glasgow, and to speak plainly a most woeful abode of man, crying out from each miserable court and squalid, crowded house for the abolition of the tyranny of exploitation. But here we did not score a success. There were election meetings going on all about us; and I fear that our audience was just not that which we wanted—to wit, the poor folk of the district, who, if they only knew it, do so sorely need showing what it is that has doomed them to their special form of hell-upon-earth—one of the worst forms in existence, I should think. The audience was about 200, in a large hall, but entirely on our side. The monotony of acquiescence was only broken by an eager religionist, who turned his question-time into a kind of sermon addressed to us, which the audience listened to rather impatiently. A clergyman who elicited from me the answer that service as well as actual production of commodities conferred the title of good citizenship upon a man, seemed satisfied that this admission safe-guarded his craft in future society; but as he did not openly champion that position, it was not discussed. Comrades Glasier and Greer moved and seconded a resolution, the wording of which has escaped my memory, but which was rather more complete in its Socialism than the one of Sunday, and no hand was held up against it. Several names were taken for the Branch before we left the hall.

This was the end of my work; but I should mention that I had a long conference with the Branch on the Sunday, and must say that though circumstances prevent their propaganda from being showy, it is sound, and especially that there seems every chance of their developing the sale of *Commonweal*. I must add that the Branch of the Social Democratic Federation is on very friendly terms with them, and that they co-operated heartily in trying to make our meetings a success; and the members that I came across were very cordial to me.

Altogether the condition of opinion in the Scotch towns that I have visited is encouraging. It must be remembered that it was a bad time of the year for the kind of work I had in hand; to which must be added the much more important stumbling-block of the most exciting election-time of our days; and yet the halls were mostly well filled, and the audiences more than attentive—almost enthusiastic—and as above said, two of them passed Socialist resolutions. In short, not to make too much of outward tokens, one could not help feeling that the ideas of Socialism are taking hold, and that people are beginning to feel the hollowness of that kind of politics in which all reforms pass by those who need them most. Nor will the attachment to puritanic religion, which has been held up as such a bug-bear to us, be a very serious barrier to Socialism; the one or two appeals to it which were made in my hearing were received decidedly coldly. The Scotch, it seems, no longer care to mix religion with their politics, whatever influence genuine feeling, or habit, or respectability may have on them in the matter. I was told that when Henry George appealed to their old puritanic feeling on the occasion of his last visit, it fell very flat indeed; and I was not surprised to hear it, after my own small experience herein. Here, then, is good hope of harvest, and once again the labourers are few. Let us hope that will mend before long, and that Scotland will not be the last in the Revolution. WILLIAM MORRIS.

## A Word in Time saves Nine.

THOSE who think the eight-hour movement, if generally adopted, would benefit the working-classes, will do well to consult some of the American papers, which are engaged at the present moment in a fierce controversy as to the probable results of its adoption. It has been pointed out *ad nauseam*, by revolutionary Socialists—who, the events of every-day life prove, are the only persons able or willing to grapple with the labour question—that these so-called reforms are but myths in themselves, and are, after all, entirely useless in attaining that object for which they are supposed to exist.

A bourgeois weekly print, the *Brooklyn Morning Journal*, Brooklyn, N.Y., in a recent issue, commented rather strongly on this question, and placed the whole matter in a nut-shell, as will be seen by the following:

"Even if ten hours' pay is demanded and granted, working-men will receive no more than they are now receiving as a day's wages, says the Omaha Bee. But there is still another point to be taken into consideration. Shorter hours and the same pay for working-men mean an increased cost of production and consequently a decrease in the purchasing power of the dollar. On a basis of two hours less work for the same pay, manufacturers will have to