

FREE SPEECH AT STRATFORD.

A MEETING was held at Stratford last Saturday on the same ground as on the former week. Comrades Aveling and Morris spoke for the League, and Messrs. Ellis (of the Peckham and Dulwich Radical Club) and Rose (Whitechapel Liberal Club) also spoke. A solid and attentive audience at once came together as soon as the first speaker began; about 300, I should think, was the number of the actual meeting. Our two Radical friends spoke well and strongly on the right of free speech, and the audience was obviously in complete sympathy. At the close of the meeting, which lasted an hour, comrade Aveling called for a show of hands in favour of free speech generally, and of maintaining it on that spot, and all hands were held up. The police did not interfere, although there were many about and in the crowd in plain clothes, and an inspector came up to the skirts of the meeting several times to take note of our proceedings.

It must have been clear to all those present that there was no real obstruction caused by the meeting; and it should be the opinion of all those interested in free speech that it is most important to keep up the meetings here. Most meeting-places, except those held in parks or on commons, are attackable on the same grounds as this is. Nor will it do merely to challenge the police to remove bodies speaking there other than Socialists. In their zeal for getting rid of Socialist meetings, the Respectables are quite capable of accepting the challenge and getting rid of Temperance, Christianity, and Radicalism at one blow, in order to get rid of Socialism. All those, therefore, who care at all about the expression of advanced opinion should take warning, and remember that it is no use standing aside to be eaten up last. Any excuse will be made use of in order to clear the streets altogether of everybody but proletarians hurrying to and from their daily toil and sauntering fine ladies and gentlemen. To make the world outside Respectability one huge prison is the darling wish of the Respectables, from Matthew Arnold the pensioner down to some petty vestry tyrant at Stratford. Sweet alliance of the Superfine and the Bumble! Lovers of freedom, combine to overthrow this alliance, which is dangerous though ridiculous.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

BELGIUM.

F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, the editor of *Recht voor Allen* (Justice for all) has at last been prosecuted by the Government of Holland for seditious libel. The trial will commence on Thursday the 10th of June at 10 o'clock. Great interest is manifested by our comrades in the Netherlands.

SPAIN.

Thirty or more dead and four hundred maimed and injured by the recent cyclone in Madrid, nearly all the sufferers coming from the ranks of the "disinherited." These facts give eloquent testimony, says *El Socialista*, that we live in a world so well-balanced that even natural catastrophes fall almost exclusively on those who endure already those of an artificial origin. A public washhouse and several wretched houses gave way before the hurricane, burying their unfortunate inmates in the ruins. Pitiful is it to think that bourgeois greed and extortion rob the workers of the cheapest luxuries; for the foul sties where they are compelled to "live" are not only devoid of pure respirable air, but do not allow them to enjoy a sense of security in time of storm. Hygiene and solidity of building are reserved for the palaces of those who, when such misfortunes occur, cry to heaven and shed insincere tears over the victims of their own rapacity. We have had touching descriptions in the bourgeois journals of the queen displaying her kind sympathy and tenderness of heart on this occasion by visiting the scene of the disaster. She did so with the sanction of her physicians, and it is with heartfelt satisfaction we learn that the drive did her more good than harm. Long may the perfume of her gracious sympathy hang over the ruined homes!

In a certain printing-shop in Madrid the employé receive about 21s. wage for a week's work of from 75 to 80 hours. This is (unfortunately) not remarkable, but the master justifies the exploitation of his men in the following truly farcical manner: The work-day, apparently so heavy, he explains, really consists of the regulation ten hours *net*, for it is necessary to abstract from it two or three hours which it is calculated the employé loses in talking and smoking (and breathing?).

The Northern Tramway Company of Madrid intending to increase the working day from sixteen to eighteen hours, and the employé striking in consequence, the authorities have put a considerable guard at the disposal of the Company in case of an emergency. What courageous men these capitalists are! With what eagerness do they plunge into danger with their eyes open!

In a cotton-factory at Juan las Fonts lately, a boy of ten was caught by a machine and had his arm broken. So as to lose no time, the overseer called in another little lad to take his place the same day. He was immediately caught in the machine by the hand, and had three or four fingers crushed. Human food for the machine-monster! Bring more and yet more; the supply is surely inexhaustible!

M. M.

From the enthusiasm of Socialists arises a new danger for the coming generation—in Spain at least. In the civil register of a Spanish town a child has been entered under the names of *Anárquico Neptuno Washington*,—"not without serious difficulty," my informant, a Socialist paper, gravely remarks. While congratulating the parents on gaining their point, I am inclined to think that the "difficulty" raised by the registering clerk was nothing more seriously political than the impulses of a kindly heart and a good-natured expression of sympathy with the unfortunate Señor Anárquico Neptuno Washington X—, when arrived at years of consciousness! In another town one blameless infant has had bestowed upon him the names of *Progreso Universo Libre*. In the name of the coming generation I must protest against such an abuse of parental authority! Think of a letter signed "Yours fraternally, Fraternity Jones;" or, "Yours in the Cause, Human Progress Robinson!" The mind reels before such a possibility!

M. M.

LITERARY NOTICES.

The *Paterson* (N. J.) *Labour Standard* is rendering itself unpleasantly prominent by its constant use of "news" drawn from sources of information controlled by the enemies of labour, thus giving currency to many malicious lies and unfounded slanders. During the excitement occasioned by the "riots" here on February 8, and also during that arising from the Chicago and Milwaukee troubles, it gave prominence to many sensational items obviously concocted with a view to foster prejudice against "foreigners" and Socialists. From the contrast between the tone of its editorials and that of the "news," we should imagine that the latter is purchased by the yard ready-made, or that it is another case of "patent outside."—S.

We are very glad to note the rapid growth of revolutionary papers in Spain, and the high quality of their articles. They are more fortunate than their Italian contemporaries, which have but a precarious existence, owing to their constant suppression by the authorities. We have received lately the first few numbers of several organs of the various Spanish revolutionary parties. *La Justicia Humana*, Barcelona (Communist-Anarchist), contains leaders clearly and well written, in spite of the modest assertion in the manifesto of the first number that the editors lay no claim to a literary or cultivated style. There are several interesting articles and extracts from foreign papers. *El Socialismo* (Cadiz) has some good original matter, several well-chosen extracts from the writings of Krapotkine and others, a translation of E. B. Bax's lecture on the "Coming Revolution," an original poem, and various "Echoes." *Acracia* (Barcelona) for May contains a long report of a meeting of the Anarchists of that city, in celebration of the Paris Commune. The programme consisted of revolutionary discourses, interspersed with instrumental and vocal music, etc. Such a meeting, familiar enough in one form or another to us in England, is something of a novelty in the South.—M. M.

Truth—"in small doses, from the women for the men"—is a little paper started by four women comrades of San Francisco, who are not quite satisfied with what the men are doing, and intend to keep them up to the mark by weekly advice and encouragement. To these women of the far West success in their unpretending but most useful effort is assured if they only make every number of their tiny organ as smart and readable as the first.—S.

To-Day for June has a brightly-written dissertation upon the advantages and disadvantages of the teaching to children what their parents no longer believe, by Frances A. Blackett: some dainty verses, "A Lover's Prayer," by Philip Marston; and the continuation of "Broken Lives."—S.

The Home Ruler. H. Vickers & Co. A small weekly journal, advocate of Home Rule and Imperial Parliamentary Federation. No. 1, dated June 5, contains some scathing remarks on some of the prominent opponents of the Home Rule Bill, and the first instalment of what promises to be a valuable exposure of the London press, under the heading "London Public (?) Opinion on Home Rule."—B.

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

OFFICES: 13 FARRINGDON ROAD, E.C.

Notices to Members.

Library.—The librarians, May Morris and W. Chambers, attend on Mondays and Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m.

Reading Room.—Open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. All papers received by the Secretary are sorted and filed and are at the disposal of members.

Notices to Lecturers and Branch Secretaries.

To avoid confusion and mistake, lecturers and Branch secretaries are requested to at once advise the Lecture Secretary of all engagements made by them. Branches will find it more convenient to make their arrangements with speakers through the Lecture Secretary, who will undertake to make all necessary announcements unless otherwise instructed.

Second Annual Conference.

13 Farringdon Road, London, June 13. Delegates assemble at 10.30 a.m. and adjourn at 1.30 p.m.; resume at 3 p.m., and continue till business is disposed of.

Agenda.

First sitting, 10.30 p.m.: (1) Appointment of Chairman; (2) Appointment of Scrutineers and Secretary; (3) Reports from (a) Executive Council, (b) Treasurer and Financial Secretary, (c) Secretary, (d) Editor, (e) *Commonweal* Manager; (4) Report of Branch Delegates for their respective Branches.—Second sitting, 3 p.m.: (1) Appointment of Chairman; (2) Motions of which notice has been given, (a) by Lane and Charles on Constitution of the League, (b) by Leeds Branch on Rules; (3) Election of Officers; (4) Discussion on Policy and Tactics.

Excursion.

Train leaves Cannon Street at 8 a.m. on the 14th, returning at 8 p.m. All intending to go must advise Committee by Friday night 11th, at latest.

Branch Subscriptions Paid.

Marylebone to March 31. Bloomsbury, Hackney, Hammersmith, Leeds, Norwich, Oxford, Dublin, to April 30. Manchester, Bradford, Croydon, North London, to May 31. Hoxton (Labour Emancipation League), to June 30.—P. W.

The "Commonweal."

Branches are reminded of the absolute necessity of their paying for the paper week by week.

Copies of the cartoon by Walter Crane given with the first number of the weekly issue, can now be had printed on fine hand-made paper for framing, price 6d., postage 1d.; protection roll, if desired, 2d. extra.

Boards for the use of newspapers can be supplied to Branches at 1s. each.

Branch Reports.

(Reports and Notices should be addressed to the printer, and to insure insertion in the current issue must reach the office not later than 10 a.m. on Tuesday.)

BLOOMSBURY.—This Branch opened their new place, Arlington Hall, on Friday 4th, with a lecture by William Morris, which was attended by a mixed audience of from 250 to 300 people. Sale of literature and collection good.—T. E. W.