

## CORRESPONDENCE.

As notwithstanding our explanation, Mr. Fox Bourne still desires the publication of his letter (sent to us a fortnight ago concerning some remarks by Dr. Aveling in the *Commonweal* for May 15) we print it, with Dr. Aveling's reply; and we must ask that the matter be allowed to end here:

41 Priory Road, Bedford Park, W., May 18, 1886.

GENTLEMEN,—My attention has only just been called to the "Notes" by Dr. Edward Aveling, in your last issue, containing unfounded statements and slanderous insinuations concerning me. I am bound to assume that these angry and offensive utterances were only allowed by you to be made public through inadvertence, and that, had you understood their purport, you would have refused to print them. I therefore ask you to repudiate them.

I happen to know so much about Dr. Edward Aveling's antecedents and present occupations that, feeling assured none of my friends can be in the slightest degree influenced by anything he may say about me, I should prefer to treat his remarks with silent contempt; but as some of your readers may not be thus prepared, I feel it right to protest against these misleading and libellous "notes." I do not care to rebut them in detail as, apart from their personal animus, they only state clumsily and unfairly a fact which I admit—namely, that my Socialism differs very materially from Dr. Edward Aveling's and that propounded generally both in the *Commonweal* and in *Justice*. The questions involved are too deep and broad for me to venture on discussion of them in this short letter.

As one who, though outside your ranks, is as anxious as any avowed Socialist can be for the ultimate, and the speedy success of all that is really true in the principles of Socialism, I take the liberty of asking, however, whether such advocates of it as yourselves are aware of the prejudice and odium you incur by indiscriminate and ungenerous attacks on those who do not agree with you in all respects.—Your obedient servant,

H. R. FOX BOURNE.

As to Mr. Fox Bourne's letter, only two notes. (1) According to his own letter my Notes "state . . . a fact that he admits." He does "not care to rebut them in detail." Nor does he rebut them at large. There is absolutely no denial of that which cannot be denied. (2) Of my "antecedents and occupations" Mr. Fox Bourne (whom I have seen thrice in my life for ten minutes a time on the average) can know nothing at first hand beyond the fact that I have the misfortune to belong to the same calling as himself—journalism. Only I sign my articles whenever an editor will let me.

EDWARD AVELING.

## SOCIALISM IN DUBLIN.

No doubt many of the readers of the *Commonweal* would be glad to hear now and then of the progress of Socialism in the capital of the "Isle of the Saints." Any one having even a superficial knowledge of the ideals of the Irish people, both on political and religious subjects, will readily admit that it is no easy matter for Socialists to hold their own amongst them. There are difficulties to be overcome here that the exponents of Socialism in England are not in the habit of meeting with. The majority of the people will not tolerate any movement that appears to them to be out of harmony with the national sentiment; they believe that the mere attainment of a Parliament on College Green will be a cure for all the ills they are afflicted with; reason and logic are powerless in the face of appeals to race-hatreds and past wrongs. The great difficulty is the religious one; the priests have the people so well in hand, that anything they set their faces against has more than ordinary difficulties to overcome. Their influence at the present time is most powerful on account of the change of front on the part of the hierarchy in their attitude to the national movement. Ireland being so much isolated, and the attention of the people being so much devoted to one particular subject, it is scarcely to be wondered that they are less advanced on subjects of more importance to their welfare. All things considered the wonder is not that we have done so little, but that we have been able to keep the flag flying so long in the face of all the difficulties we have had to contend against. Up to the present time there has been no organised attempt to break up our meetings. This in itself is a sign of progress when we consider that in an attempt to found a Branch of the International here some years ago, the meeting was dispersed by force, and its promoters subjected to violence at the hands of an infuriated mob.

The visit of comrade Morris has been productive of a great amount of good, and the seed that he was instrumental in sowing will in due time bring forth good fruit. From reasons over which we had no control, we have been compelled to give up our public meetings during the summer months, and content ourselves with meetings of members and their friends, pushing the sale of *Commonweal*, distributing leaflets, etc. We have been rather unfortunate in the way of securing suitable rooms for our meetings, being evicted three times by landlords. Our meetings have not been as successful as they otherwise might have been had we been able to secure a room at a reasonable rent, without running the risk of being ejected on the slightest reference to any topic that our landlord didn't sympathise with.

Comrade Hayes, literature secretary, has been actively engaged in inducing newsagents to sell the *Commonweal*, and expose contents bill. Several of them have promised to do so, the Branch guaranteeing to take any numbers that may remain unsold. Arrangements have also been made for selling *Commonweal* in the principal streets of city on Saturdays. Several members of the Branch have been actively engaged in placarding the city with "The Worker's Claims," the police in several instances dispersing the crowds that were reading them.

The bottle-makers' strike has been brought to a successful ending, thanks to the energy displayed in the matter by Comrade Schuman. The Messrs. King, who imported the Swedes to take the place of the men on strike, were compelled to capitulate and hand over to the Trades' Council the sum of £3 to send home the Swedes, and pay (the fines of to the Bottlemakers' Society) the men that refrained from joining their comrades. The noble and self-sacrificing action of the Swedes in this matter has convinced all sensible men that trade unionism to be a power must be international, that no local trade in itself will be able to dictate terms to capitalists except it has the support of trades unionism all the world over.

We are very much behind the time here as far as the views of the working men are concerned on the labour question. The all-absorbing topic is to keep the trade in the country, no matter at what cost to the workers;

indeed, a prominent member of the Corporation had the audacity a short time ago to suggest that working-men should be content to work longer hours and for less money in order to keep the trade at home. No doubt if they obliged his class in this matter, the next suggestion would be that they should live on rice in order that capitalists may be able to compete with the Chinese.

When the people find out that mere political reforms will not make their lot anything better than what it is, Socialism is bound to make great headway amongst them, and although the clouds may look black at present, they are not without a streak of silver lining; and with steady work on the part of our members, Socialism in Ireland will rally to its side all whose sympathies are in favour of a better state.

BRUNO.

A friend writes that the number of men employed at Kildgrove by Messrs. Kimmersly is 1500 and not 17,000 or 18,000 as given in "Notes on News" last week.

## INSTRUCTIVE ITEMS.

The eight hours movement in America has not been the failure it is so loudly proclaimed. It is found, by actual computation, that nearly half-a-million have gained the eight hours system; that another half-million are working under the nine hour rule, and that not less than a million besides have succeeded in shortening the hours of labour in one shape or another. The fourteen and fifteen hours men have cut off two or three hours; the Saturday half-holiday men have largely gained their object, and the early closing and Sunday closing movements have been successful in most places.

"What should I go to see in Europe?" writes Lady Hester Stanhope, from the wild solitary home she has made for herself among the high lands of Palestine. "Nations worthy of their chains, and kings unworthy of ruling. Before long, your old Continent will be shaken to its foundations. All therein is worn out; the kings found no dynasties, they fall, borne down by death or dethroned for their faults, and degenerate as they succeed each other; the aristocracy, soon to fade from the world, will give place to a wretched and ephemeral Bourgeoisie without strength or vigour; the people alone still retain character and some virtues. Tremble, if they ever realise their own strength!"

Even in the villages and little towns of the country, as well as in the great centres of labour, employment is lacking. Bampton-in-the-Bush and Lechlade, two such towns on the upper waters of the Thames, have their share of this trouble I find. Some farmers that I was amongst in a second-class carriage between the two places amongst others gave me information (by their talk between themselves) on this point. At last the conversation took the following turn: "I was sorry," said the youngest man present, "that they couldn't do anything for that man who had cut his fingers off and came for medical relief." "Well, you see," said another, "we have to be very particular about such cases, or they would make up all kinds of stories." "He ought to have taken care of his fingers," quoth a third, a white-headed man of the small parrot-nosed, broad-faced type, with self-satisfied arched eyebrows, which proclaims the unfeeling fool without any admixture, and is common among well-to-do bourgeois in our moral country. Said the younger man: "He will have to pay a doctor to cure him out of 11s. a week." "He ought to have belonged to a club," said parrot-nose. The younger man said: "Well, he didn't, and it's a hard case." "He ought to have," said parrot-nose again; "he could easily have paid up weekly." Therewith the train stopped at a station, and the party broke up, not much dispirited at the idea of the maimed labourer and his position between the poor-law and civilisation.—W. M.

## ITALY.

In Italy the electoral contest continues to absorb public interest. The Labour party sends up fifteen candidates in all. In Milan G. Beretta stood as representative of the same, O. Gnocchi-Viani for the Socialist party, and Amilcare Cipriani for the Anarchists. Beretta formerly stated in *L'Italia* his resolution to have nought to do with matters political and parliamentary—"the work to be done is essentially that of propaganda." In a letter to the *Fascio* lately, however, he has reconsidered his decision, and consents to stand. Do these Labour candidates honestly believe that, with all their enthusiasm and single-heartedness, they will be able to pursue "the essential work of propaganda and organisation" in Parliament, and transform the Camera into a Socialist administrative body? As a means of releasing Amilcare Cipriani from a monstrously unjust and illegal imprisonment every one who recalls his name as a friend and colleague of Florens must however, be heartily glad of the success of those who worked for him.

At Turin the masons are striking for a shorter working day and more pay. They demand a ten hours' day, at 4½d. the hour. The bourgeois papers are unanimous in their praise of the quiet and dignified conduct of the strikers, but nevertheless the authorities have already found occasion to make many arrests. The city is crowded with guards and carabinieri, amongst whom the men on strike walk about quietly, carefully avoiding the least dispute or quarrel with them. The masters have issued a notice, containing paternal advice to the men to return to their work, "since their persistence in their unreasonable demands will constrain them (the masters) to close the work shops." Nevertheless, it is believed they will accede to the "unreasonable demands."

Here is a story—hardly credible—which the *Fascio* gives of the greed of masters and the ineffably foolish long-suffering of the exploited. At Castellazzo Bormida there exists a certain factory where women work for the maximum wage of 2d. a-day. This miserable sum is moreover only paid at the year's end, for the sake of the interest accruing therefrom to the master. The girls are very badly treated by the overseers, habitually loaded with insults, threats, even blows. It is not to be hoped that women who suffer such treatment, and their husbands and fathers who let them suffer it, will ever gain spirit and sense enough to attempt their own freeing.

Cigar-makers in Milan have shown more spirit. In a certain cigar-factory the women have for a long time been complaining that the leaves being very dry has hindered their work and lowered their wage. One girl went so far as to soak the leaves she was at work on, which coming to the ears of the overseer resulted in her dismissal. The women protested and struck, en masse, and gained their point to a certain extent. The spoiling of the Italians is often done with a beautiful simplicity and naïveté. To turn away "hands" on some frivolous pretext, after one or two months' gratis apprenticeship, during which time the work got out of them is generally equal to that of a regular paid worker—this is a mode of grinding down common among the "labour organisers."—M. M.