

THE PARIS TRADES' UNION CONGRESS.

MR. BURNETT has written an article to the *Pall Mall Gazette* in which he has given his views of the International Trades' Union Conference recently held in Paris. Considering Mr. Burnett's position and that of the English trades' unions at present, this is a document of some importance, and it would be well to understand what the drift of it is. He writes as a trades' unionist, and clearly is anxious to establish the superiority of the English workman over the French, who from his point of view is more backward as being less of an unionist, and also as being worse paid than his English brother. As to the latter point I need say nothing, save that Mr. Burnett's figures help to confirm the Socialist view of the general industrial depression all over the world. For the rest, he speaks of the French trades'-unionists as belonging to the Possibilist section of the Socialists, who, I must remind our readers, are the most backward section of the party, being sorely tainted with opportunism, and aiming at mere State Socialism; so that I must assume that the French trades'-unionists, though they may go further in a Socialist direction than the English do, are nevertheless not amongst the most advanced of French workmen. As for the resolutions for which the English delegates refused to vote, it is true, as Mr. Burnett states, that some of the measures they indicate have been in force in England for some time; but the two most important of them are the claims for an international minimum of wages and for a maximum of eight hours for the day's work, which of course have not been touched here. However, Mr. Burnett states that the English delegates would have affirmed their assent to them, "but for the first clause, which required the workmen of the different countries represented to urge their respective governments to open negotiations for the purpose of concluding international conventions and treaties concerning the conditions of labour." Now the neutrality of the English delegates on these terms does seem, as the *Cri du Peuple* calls it, "grotesque," because these resolutions imply the continuance of the present state of things otherwise, and can only be carried into effect by the existing machinery of government; so that to a plain man the meaning of the neutrality seemed to be, "Yes, we agree to these measures, but we do not want to have them carried out."

Of course to us Revolutionary Socialists the resolutions seem no approach to a solution of the labour question; and to try to carry them as an instalment of our claims seems a more than doubtful step, as it is possible that after a long agitation they might be yielded to by the masters, who, though they would then be in a worse position perhaps, would still be the masters; labour would not be emancipated, while the workmen would be "contented" by the concession—i.e., put off from the real issue.

But, also of course, the neutrality of the delegates was not based on this objection: they were not afraid of State Socialism, but of Socialism. Nor, indeed, can we pretend to be surprised that they were not prepared to vote on this point with the other delegates, who were all avowed Socialists of some shade or other. Mr. Burnett's phrase of "the English unions depending for their advancement upon themselves" is a mere phrase, and really means the reverse of what it seems to mean. It means that the English unions are not prepared to accept the responsibilities of freedom, that they are still contented with their position as a check on the masters—a check whose tendency is to ensure the existence of the employing class. But it is clear from Mr. Burnett's article that they are shaken somewhat, as the following quotation from it shows decidedly: "It was felt that with so strong a Socialistic feeling now manifesting itself in England, it was not possible to stand on the high ground of three years ago, as if no such feeling existed."

There is a certain weight in these words, coming from Mr. Burnett, whether we look upon him as "Chief Correspondent to the Labour Bureau of the Board of Trade," or as a trades' union delegate: in both capacities he is bound to be very cautious. We may fairly hope that three years from this time the trades' unions will not be "sitting on the fence," but will be in the lists, and on the right side there.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

The form of Mr. Bradlaugh's question in the House as to the imprisonment of John Williams was rather unlucky, since it allowed the Home Secretary to evade the real point of the extreme harshness of the sentence on both defendants, for Mainwaring's was exactly the same as Williams's. Of course the Home Secretary told the now well-worn falsehood of the absence of discrimination on the part of the police; also he said nothing on that important part of the sentence which binds our comrades over to keep the peace and find a surety for twelve months. If John Williams were to pay the fine, he could not come out of prison until he had satisfied this part of the sentence also. In short, Assistant-Judge Edlin has managed to bamboozle people as to what the sentence really was; and now the Home Secretary is helping him. In any case, the public may rest assured that the sentence was directed against the Socialists because they were Socialists, and for no other reason.

A (PROFIT-SEEKING?) CIVILISER.—Whether this man be honest or not, whether his motive be a high one or base, matters little to the unfortunate victims of his exploiting "improvements":

"The young Maharajah of Manipur is setting to work in earnest to improve his estates and give employment to his subjects. He has imported machinery from England at a cost of over Rs. 55,000, and has established works at Lakhipur, Cachar, for sawing and preparing timber for building purposes, and for the making of furniture and tea boxes. The valuable forests of Manipur will yield an unlimited supply of timber, and the cost of preparing it for industrial uses will now be greatly reduced. Machinery for working soorky-mills and for paddy-husking has also been added to the resources of the State, and will no doubt bring in a considerable accession of revenue. The young Maharajah is certainly moving in the right direction; and if he continues to show the same intelligent interest in the welfare of his people, he will secure their loyal attachment while adding to the material prosperity of the country."—*Times of India*, Aug. 10.

THE SONG OF THE WORKERS.

(REMEMBERING THE MARTYRS OF THE COMMUNE.)

WE drift along the streets, and hear our masters in their mirth.
They've slain our friends—our martyrs—but their spirits walk the earth:
They're moving in a silent realm of service for the race;
Their voices now are sounding from a hushed and awful place.

They now are calm and patient—they are for us, but can wait;
They're moving on forever in the silent round of fate—
Free as the winds and waters—all our earthly wall and bars
Have crumbled into ashes: they are moving with the stars.

We'll not forget, O comrades, how ye met the ravening hordes—
How shone out over all the earth the splendour of your swords;
How they lit up all the Future, all the golden years to be,
When the burden shall be lifted and the worker shall be free.

We'll remember how ye rallied, faced the ancient Wrong in wrath,
How your swords that lie in ruins cut the centuries a path.
We'll not forget your forms that loomed upon the barricades,
Nor how ye looked from silent eyes when laid asleep with spades.

Yours were the distant voices of the Revolution:—hark!
What noise is that of hurrying feet that gather in the dark?
The noise of pale men marshalling! Look! what tremendous Form,
Looming in outer darkness, throws its shadow on the storm!

It is the Terror marching on before the face of kings—
The light of hope that falls upon the anvil as it rings—
The sad and haggard Spectre that begins to hush the feast—
The Hand reached down to mortals in the furrow with the beast.

More terrible than bugles or the roll of startled drums
Will be their cry before us when the final battle comes.
Ring out, O voices, gather from the four winds of the night—
Ring on as rallying music in the fearful front of fight.

CHARLES EDWIN MARKHAM.

LITERARY NOTICES.

The *Little Socialist* of Denver, from which the Clerkenwell Branch took its idea of the *Labor Leaf*, has reciprocated the compliment by adapting to the advertisement of the *Labor Enquirer* the leaflet entitled "The Worker's Claims and Public Opinion," originally written by comrade Scheu to advertise the *Commonweal*. This is as it should be: whatsoever is of use for the advancement of our cause should be used by all.—S.

Essais de Critique (Giraud, 18, Rue Drouvt, Paris). Under this title, M. Charles Fuster publishes a number of studies of the most striking personalities and ideas in the literature of to-day. The article on "Pessimism and M. Paul Bourget" is one of the best in the book. In it the author discusses the theories of cotemporary pessimism in a spirited manner. M. Fuster defends throughout his book optimism, the dream and the ideal. It is a work of literary reaction, and, what is rare, written by a young man. Seldom has the school been so energetically attacked.

We have received Nos. 3 and 4 of the *Tribune des Peuples* (Paris), which bids fair to be a very useful publication. These numbers contain some well-written popular articles on subjects interesting to Socialists, and a good deal of varied foreign news, of which, indeed, the editors seem to make a special feature in their periodical. We wish our cotemporary all success.—M. M.

To-Day for September has two sonnets on "The Depths of the Sea," that, good as they are, are immensely over-matched by the subject with which they attempt to deal. The articles this month are up to the average. A special number has been published, consisting wholly of an instalment of Broadhouse's "Capital."

Christian Socialist is, as usual, fairly good reading. An over-zealous correspondent is tacitly rebuked for taking a recent rabid article on "Socialists and Purity" too literally, and is told "There is a high moral tone among its (Socialism's) London advocates as a rule."

Municipal and State Socialism (L.P.D.L.) is a reprint of the address delivered by M. Leon Say to the Liberty and Property Defence League. It is principally filled with a glorification of "individual energy and personal responsibility" as against social unity for common good. The international solidarity of the exploiters grows ever more complete—let the toilers take heed.

The Liberty and Property Defence League have also issued a broadsheet translation of M. A. Raffalovich's laudatory description of them, and of their work originally published in the *Journal des Economistes* (Paris). This contains a confession that the League was formed "under the pressure of necessity"—(the rats are being cornered and show fight)—and elsewhere explains: "It is certainly not a disinterested League, actuated by humanitarian motives; its bond is rather the upholding of the grand principle of individual liberty, and the preservation of property intact. Railway companies, shipowners, manufacturers, landowners, have had for some time separate organisations for the protection of their particular interests; these independent associations are grouped around the London League. It is an incontestable fact that these interests are powerful, dispose of large resources, and wield considerable influence in Parliament. Granted they are monopolies," etc., etc. Keep on explaining, and you will lighten our work!—S.

Six thousand tobacco-workers have struck work in Havana, because the employers would not raise their wages. Sixty-eight factories are stopped.

More capitalistic murders are reported this week. At Linkinghorne, near Launceston, a workman and his child were killed by the bursting of an unsafe boiler. Being only a workman he can be replaced at less expense than his employers were willing to go to for a new boiler.—F. H.

"Unreasonable devil! You're twice as well off as your grandfather was!" says the capitalist to the workman. But that isn't the point: the question is, is the workman as well off as he might be and ought to be? And if not, why not?—*Workmen's Advocate*. It is not only the capitalists who talk like this, but men, who imagine themselves to hold advanced opinions and who belong to Radical organisations, sometimes lecture Socialists upon their presumed unreasonableness because they refuse to be bamboozled with such ridiculous comparisons. Editor of *Radical* please note.—T. B.