

seeing that so much time was wasted by people who had less interesting things to say than Mr. Biggins had, and knowing also that the Socialist party in the Congress was in a slender minority, he might not have prevented the proposer of so important an amendment from speaking in favour of it. G. J. Marks seconded the amendment, and pointed out that at present the so-called co-operators were making profit out of the non-co-operators, and that if they passed this amendment all the rest of their work would go to the winds and their reputation be saved. Ten votes were given for the amendment and 56 against. Thus fared the first attempt of Socialism to make its way into the Congress. The rebuff is not enough to discourage it, but just enough to make the Socialists a little more active in preparing for the next Congress, by which time the minority should have at least doubled itself.

On Thursday night came the great event—greater than the Congress itself—the banquet. Not the only banquet, for the Congress had complimentary banquets beyond number, at least beyond the number of regular honest meals a man ought to have in a week. But this is *the* banquet, because they pay for it themselves, whereas the others are given by patronising capitalists, town councillors wheedling into popular favour, and thoughtful M.P.'s who, no doubt, put it down in their private accounts as part of their election expenses. There is always a deal of trouble and dispute about "balancing the political parties" in the invitations. The simple and perfect way of effecting this would be to keep them both out. This plan would also, as a matter of course, raise the tone of the company, but the trades' leaders have not yet risen above the stupid and servile idea that a cluster of M.P.'s is an honour to a working-men's meeting. The toasts included the Queen, the clergy, the Corporation, the Congress, the M.P.'s, the ladies, the Press, and the President. The chief speech was by Mr. Broadhurst, M.P., and a weak, wandering, water and milk affair it was. His boast of what trades'-unionists had done was a sorry one, as it must be, since they have only worked for their own interests and nearly always been heedless of the interests of the workers "below" them. He also took occasion to water down the remarks on employers in the president's opening address: "He was quite sure that their president had never intended a single word he had used to be unkindly applied to the large body of employers in this country." Mr. Broadhurst told them plainly not to dispute with their masters about wages, but to turn their attention against the landlords. A pretty piece of advice. Mr. Broadhurst very strangely argued that ground rents rose without the least relation to the rate of wages or the depressions of trade, and if this be so it is difficult to see why wage-earners should bother themselves about ground rent. Superficial and opportunist talk of this kind went down with the delegates, although of course it raised no enthusiasm.

On Friday there was more discussion, Factory Acts and other comforting legislation for particular trades. Mr. Broadhurst was also re-elected Secretary to the Parliamentary Committee, from which it seems that this office is to be kept as a cozy retreat for an individual when his political patrons are out of office. Mr. Mawdsley brought up the report of the Paris International Congress. Mr. John Burnett got up to warn the Congress that if they approved the Paris programme (and surely it is meek and mild enough!) they would be endorsing the French Social Democrats. C. L. Biggins pointed out, in spite of renewed attempts to deprive him of a hearing, that all their business was at least tending towards Socialism; but this was met with expressions of dissent. The programme was rejected except the last clause, which provides for an International Trades' Union Congress.

The last day of the Congress was taken up with minor matters, chiefly amendments to Acts of Parliament, which are discussed every year and seem never to go forward at all. At the wind up there was, of course, a huge string of votes of thanks to all kinds of persons, companies, officers, corporations, etc.

A number of meetings were held during the week in consequence of the Congress sitting. Radicalism, temperance, religion, international arbitration, Socialism, and heaven knows what else, all had their fling. The first and sorriest of them was a meeting on the Sunday before the Congress, to discourse on the "Religious aspect of Trades'-Unionism." It was popularly supposed that this title was a mere cloak for covering a meeting to promote trades'-unionism. There were seven speakers, and as the first four in succession announced themselves local preachers and Sunday-school teachers, and then delivered tame, dreary, spiritless discourses befitting such people, a feeling of disappointment and even dismay spread over the audience. The meeting has been reported as enthusiastic. I beg to say that that report is a lie. There was no enthusiasm and nothing to call forth any. The speakers drawled out a small sermon each and the chairman cautiously spun out another. It was not without some absurd touches either. One speaker began to brandish quotations from Shakespeare—"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players" grandiloquently chirruped forth the speaker, and then came the application. "We are players on the field of labour," profoundly continued the orator, and the audience sleepily applauded, while the smothered laughter went unnoticed. The meeting finished with the doxology, at which I fled.

The Congress cannot be said to be hopeful for the cause of the people, at least not directly. But if it was not infected with the spirit of the new cause, at least it was not foolishly enthusiastic about the old apology for one. Everything went on like a meeting of railway shareholders. There was none of that heartiness and hopefulness which is to be seen in even the smallest body of men who think they are fighting in a great social movement. The whole affair passed off in a callous official kind of way that, however repulsive in itself, suited

the business in hand. The delegates freely abandoned themselves to the feasting and flattery and conventional nonsense offered them by the dignitaries of the town. They put up with intrusions of commonplace cant from patronising bigwigs and suffered without a murmur. In return they passed resolutions complimentary, congratulatory, commiseratory, with a lavish readiness and recklessness that showed how little they valued them. Votes of thanks were indiscriminately chucked at every person and every society that had favoured them with a nod of welcome or approval. No "conference" of promoters of middle-class fads, nor lionising committee, could have done the empty honours and compliments with more profuseness. The workman's aping his betters was raised to the pitch of an organised art and carried out with a zeal that would have done credit to a drawing room of army officers and old ladies.

But in spite of all this there is no reason for grave discouragement. The very completeness and listlessness with which the show was gone through is encouraging, as showing that the delegates have no interest in, but merely indifferent toleration for, all this trivial tomfoolery. The plain fact is that they are led into it, and through it, by the old stagers who figure as their leaders. The first thing is to pitch into and show up these, Broadhurst and Burnett and Burt and the other trimmers. If a few thoroughly earnest and business-like Socialists be on the next Congress they will find it an easy task to shake the foundation of the old supremacy and narrow bigotry in a single session. Plenty of the delegates are ready for a new departure, but none of them have spirit enough to lead the way. Let it be our duty to push our propaganda right into the heart of trades'-unionism, heedless of the cool or angry reception we may get at first, and confident in the ultimate success of our cause. Let us point out the inevitable decline and failure of trades'-unionism if it persists in its present antiquated and reactionary methods, and picture the vast and noble work before it if it will but enter into the work of abolishing this state of masters above and slaves below, and organising the future community of labour and equality of rights.

J. L. MAHON.

THE REWARD OF "GENIUS."

It is a very common incident at a debate on Socialism for an opponent or doubter to take up the cudgels on behalf of "brain-work" as opposed to hand-work. Even before you avow yourself a Communist (as I have to do), such a questioner is anxious about the future of brain-work in the transitional stages of Socialism. Though this subject has been ably treated before in these columns, I will nevertheless venture on a few plain words in addition to what has been said; which I hesitate to do the less because I have had some small experience of hand-work, though not of the most laborious kind, and abundance of experience of "brain-work," so-called.

Our objectors dwell upon diverse aspects of their anxiety for the future of the brain-workers. Some, for instance, seem most exercised on the question of what is to become of the men of genius when Socialism is realised; but I must beg them not to let this anxiety destroy their appetites or keep them awake at night, for it is founded on a perhaps popular, but certainly erroneous, conception of that queer animal the man of genius, who is generally endowed with his full share of the predatory instincts of the human being, and can take remarkably good care of himself. Indeed, I can't help thinking that even under a Socialistic condition of things he will pull such long faces if he doesn't get everything that he wants, and will make matters so uncomfortable for those that he lives amongst if he falls short of his ideal of existence, that good-natured and quiet people will be weak enough to make up a purse (or its equivalent) for him from time to time to keep him in good temper and shut his mouth a little. I must further say, though, that they *will* be exceedingly weak if they do so, because they will be able to get out of him all the special work he can do without these extra treats. For the only claim he has to the title of a "man of genius" is that his capacities are irrepressible; he finds the exercise of them so exceedingly pleasant to him that it will only be by main force that you will prevent him from exercising them. Of course, under the present competitive system, having been paid once for his work by getting his livelihood by it, and again by the pleasure of doing it, he wants to be further paid in various ways a great many times more. Neither under the circumstances can I blame him much for this, since he sees so many people for doing nothing paid so much more than he is, except in the matter of pleasure in their work. But, also of course, he won't venture to claim all that in a Socialist society, but will have at the worst to nibble at the shares of those who are weak enough to stand it. So I will in turn dismiss *my* anxiety, with the hope that they will not be so weak as to coddle him up at their own expense, since they will have learned that so-called self-sacrifice to the exactions of those who are strong in their inordinate craving and unmanliness does but breed tyrants and pretenders.

But furthermore, I do not see, and never could see, why a man of genius must needs be a man of genius every minute of his life. Cannot he work as well as ordinary folk in some directions, besides working better than they in others? Speaking broadly, all men can learn some useful craft, and learn to practice it with ease. I know there may be exceptions; just as there are cultivated people who cannot be taught to write (the late Dean Stanley was one, for instance); but they must be considered as diseased persons, and the disease would die out in a generation or two under reasonable conditions of life. In short, the "man of genius" ought to be able to earn his livelihood in an ordinary way independently of his speciality, and he will in that case be much

happier himself and much less of a bore to his friends, let alone his extra usefulness to the community.

As to the comparative wear and tear of "brain-work"—the work of the man, for instance, who is occupied in the literary matters—the theory of our objectors, apart from their strange ideas of the usefulness of this craft, is that he works hard—harder, they will often say, than the hand-worker. Well, if he works under bad sanitary conditions, doesn't get fresh air or exercise enough, no doubt that does exhaust him, as also if he works too long or is harassed in his work by hurry and anxiety. But all these drawbacks are not special to his craft; all who are working otherwise than in the open air work under the first of these disadvantages, and all wage-earners work under the last of them. There is any amount of humbug talked about the hard work of the intellectual workers, which I think is mostly based on the fact that they are in the habit of taking regular and, so to say, socially-legalised holidays, which are supposed to be necessary to their health, and we may admit are so, but which the "non-intellectual" workers have to forego, whether they are necessary to *them* or not. Let us test the wear and tear of this intellectual work very simply. If I have been working at literary work for, say, eight hours at a stretch, I may well feel weary of it, although I have not felt it a mere burden all along, as probably I should have done if I had been carrying a hod of bricks up and down a ladder; but when I have knocked off, I can find relaxation in strong physical exercise—can, for example, take a boat and row for a couple of hours or more. Now let me ask is the hodman after his eight hours' work fit for a couple of hours of mental work as a relaxation? We very well know he is not so fitted, but rather for beer and sleep. He is exhausted, and I am on the look out for amusement. To speak plainly, I am only changing my amusement, for I have been amusing myself all along, unless I have added disadvantages to my work which are not essential to it.

And again, has not the hodman's work dealt in some way with his brain? Indeed it has. I have been using my brain, but not exhausting it; but though he has not been using his, he has been exhausting it by his hand-work done at a strain, or else he ought to be able to take the mental relaxation corresponding to my bodily relaxation. In truth, whereas at present the hours of the intellectual worker are really always shorter than those of the hand-worker, the very reverse ought to be the case, or in other words the wear and tear of the hand-labour is far greater.

But our objectors have not as a rule got so far as to consider this matter from the wear and tear side of it. They think that the superior workman should have extra reward because he is superior, and that the inferior must put up with being worn and torn in the service of this divine right. That is their superstition of divine right in this business; but also from the economical point of view they consider that it is necessary to bribe the superior man, for fear that you should lose his talent. What I have said of the man of genius being compelled to work by his genius applies to all superior workmen in greater or less degree, and disposes of the need of a bribe. You need not bribe the superior workman to be superior, for he has to work in any case (we must take that for granted), and his superior work is pleasanter, and indeed easier, to him than the inferior work would be: he will do it if you allow him to. But also if you had the need you would not have the power to bribe, except under a system which admitted of slavery—i.e., tormenting some people for the pleasure of others. Can you bribe him to work by giving him immunity from work? or by giving him goods that he cannot use? But in what other way can you bribe him when labour is free and ordinary people will not stand being compelled to accept degradation for his benefit? No, you will have to depend on his aptitude for his special work forcing him into doing it; nor will you be disappointed in this. Whatever difficulties you may have in organising work in the earlier days of Socialism will not be with the specialists, but with those who do the more ordinary work; though as regards these, setting aside the common machine-work, the truth of the matter is that you can draw no hard and fast line between the special workman and the ordinary one. Every workman who is in his right place—that is, doing his work because he is fit for it—has some share in that "genius" so absurdly worshipped in these latter days. The "genius" is simply the man who has a stronger speciality and is allowed to develop it; or, if you please, has it so strongly that it is able to break through the repressing circumstances of his life, which crush out those who are less abundantly gifted into "a dull level of mediocrity." It is a matter of degree chiefly.

I am afraid, therefore, that our anti-Socialist objectors will have in the future—I mean under a social arrangement—to put up with the misery of not having more than they need forced on them in return for their occupying themselves in the way which pleases them most, and with the further misery of seeing those who are not so intellectual as themselves doing their work happily and contentedly, and not being deprived of their due food and comforts because their work is less pleasing and exciting than that of their luckier fellows. No doubt this will be hard for the geniuses to bear (though harder still, I suspect, for the prigs or sham geniuses); but if there be any truth in the old proverb that "other peoples' troubles hang by a hair," the rest of the world—i.e., all except a very few—will bear it with equanimity. Indeed they well might, if they consider in those happier days what enormous loss the world has suffered through the crushing out of so much original talent under the present system; for who can doubt that it is only the toughest and strongest (perhaps the highest, perhaps not) of the geniuses that have not been crushed out. The greater part of genius, shared in various proportions by so many millions of men, has been just wasted through greed and folly. WILLIAM MORRIS.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE FRENCH LABOUR DELEGATION AND LONDON SOCIALISTS.

Le Courier de Londres, a French paper published in London, finds it opportune to censure the French working-men delegates who recently visited England, because while in London they frequently visited Socialistic working-men's clubs. With an odious anger the editor of the above paper attacks our French comrades for having visited the German Communistic Working-men's Club, 49, Tottenham Street, and asks passionately: "Have the French delegates so soon forgotten the deeds of 1870-71, that they are now able to shake hands with those accursed Germans?" This question shows clearly the mean spirit and historical ignorance of the writer, otherwise he would not make the working class responsible for the deeds and crimes of the ruling classes or their servants; but it is more than mean and ignorant to fling such a reproach at a body of Socialistic working-men, because it is well-known and has become an historical fact that the Socialistic working-men of both countries (France and Germany) loudly protested against the massacres of 1870-71 and their consequences, but they protested in vain, because the ruling classes and their servile newspaper editors did their utmost to stir up national spite between the two nations and so made themselves partners in the crimes committed by the Governments of Germany and France.

We think it well at the present moment to bring these historical facts again to the memory of the editor of *Le Courier de Londres*, and of the people at large, because at the present moment the ruling classes and their servants of the Press again try very hard to prepare the different nations for a new massacre against each other, only for the purpose of strengthening the tottering thrones of European monarchs, and the position of the capitalistic class. In the face of these facts we are very glad to see that the workers of different nations take every occasion of shaking hands with each other and exchanging their ideas about Socialism or Communism. We are very glad to say that it is our conviction that these proofs of international and fraternal harmony are increasing day by day among the working classes of all countries.

This was clearly shown at the entertainment given by the German Communistic Working-men's Club in honour of our French visitors, when the speakers of all nations pointed out the necessity of international union, and especially cautioned the working-men against being tools in the hands of the ruling classes in getting up a new murderous war and fighting against their fellow workers who accidentally speak another language.

In conclusion, we may say that we very much enjoy such spiteful expressions from our antagonists as we have quoted above, because for us it is a sure sign that we are on the right road, and that before long we will lead our noble principle to victory in the struggle between the proletariat and their oppressors.—For the Com. Arb. Bild. Verein.

H. CROESSEL, II., Secretary.

A FRATERNAL GREETING FROM NEW YORK.

We have received a telegram from comrade Rosenberg, saying that a Socialist mass-meeting of 10,000, addressed by Aveling and Liebnicht, unanimously resolved, "That this meeting at Cooper Union assembled, declares its full accord with the principles so ably advocated by the orators of to-night, and sends a message of sympathy to the Social Democratic party of Germany and the Socialist League of England, who sent over to us their three ablest representatives to spread the noble principles of Socialism among the working-men of America."

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST AND LABOUR NOTES. GREAT BRITAIN.

The lace makers of Nottingham are proposing to reduce the wages in some branches of the lace industry to the extent of 50 per cent. A general lock-out is feared.

The Staffordshire chainmakers who are out on strike, have succeeded in wresting an advance in wages from some of the employers, and have allowed the men to return to work in these shops. A victory, but how small a one. How long is this intestine strife, where the losses are all on the side of the workers, to last? When will they learn that it is not a paltry advance in wages to which they have a right, but the whole of the produce of their labour.—U.

HULL.—A meeting of the Trades and Labour Council was held on Thursday last to receive reports from the delegates to the Congress. Mr. Maddison repudiated the claim of Mr. Hyndman in the *Pall Mall Gazette* that he was a "Social Democrat." C. L. Biggins remarked upon the tone of the Congress towards Socialism, and criticised their timidity in rejecting the Parisian programme. J. L. Mahon objected to the conduct of some members of the Council in denouncing the French Socialists while they were admittedly ignorant of their aims. He pointed out that the Congress only represented a part of the working-class, and that the progress boasted of in the condition of the people only applied to the trades' men: the condition of the poorest workers, such as needlewomen and common labourers, being worse now than it was before. He warned them against giving too much attention to reforms in our present system, as such reforms only affected the better-off part of the working-class and left the condition of the poorer untouched. He also alluded to the attempts of the middle-class to fawn upon the trades-unionists, and to split the workers into two sections—a higher and a lower; the higher to play the game of the middle-class and assist in keeping down the lower. The short speech was well received by most of the Council, but one old member rose to protest against Socialism being talked in the Council, and threatened his resignation if it were continued. He also complained about Socialistic literature being given to the members, and refused to withdraw his threat. The local Radical papers complain about the attention given to Socialism by the Council.—J. L. M.

PRESTON.—The prospects of the workers for the coming winter are gloomy, and those of the manufacturers—as those who do not spin are oddly called—are even darker. Many mills will give insufficient employment, and others will run without "profit" to avoid the more serious loss of idleness. The