



"HAVE YOU NOT HEARD HOW IT HAS GONE WITH MANY A CAUSE BEFORE NOW: FIRST, FEW MEN HEED IT; NEXT, MOST MEN CONTEMN IT; LASTLY, ALL MEN ACCEPT IT—AND THE CAUSE IS WON!"

Communications invited on Social Questions. They should be written on one side of the paper, addressed to the Editors, 13 Farringdon Rd., E.C., and accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication.

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Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday August 24.

ENGLAND		HOLLAND	
Justice	Milwaukee (Wis.)—Volksblatt	Hague—Recht voor Allen	
Anarchist	San Francisco (Cal) The People	Amsterdam—Voorwaarts	
Londoner Arbeiter-Zeitung	St. Louis (Mo.)—Die Parole		
Norwich—Daylight	Denver (Col.) Labor Enquirer		
Labour Tribune	Fort Worth (Tex.)—South West		
Worker's Friend	Detroit (Mich.)—The Advance		
Jus	Kansas (Mo.)—Sun		
UNITED STATES		ITALY	
New York—Der Sozialist	Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily)	Milan—Il Fascio Operaio	
Truthseeker	Le Revolte	Naples—Humanitas	
Leader	Lille—Le Travailleur	Marsala—La Nuova Eta	
Volkszeitung			
John Swinton's Paper	FRANCE		
Freiheit	Liege—L'Avenir		
Boston—Woman's Journal	Brussels—L'Avant-Garde		
Chicago (Ill.)—Labor Enquirer	Antwerp—De Werker		
Vorbote	Ghent—Vooruit		
Hammonton(NJ)Credit Foncier	SWITZERLAND		
	Geneva—Bulletin Continental		
		AUSTRIA	
		Arbeiterstimme	
		Berlinia—Volks Tribune	
		ROUMANIA	
		Jassy—Lupta	
		DENMARK	
		Social-Demokraten	
		SWEDEN	
		Stockholm—Social-Demokraten	
		Malmö—Arbetet	

A NOTE ON PASSING POLITICS.

THE Gladstonians are very naturally triumphant at the Northwich election, and the Tories as naturally have been attempting to explain away their defeat; which, however, taken in conjunction with the other bye-elections, does seem to an onlooker to mean the extinction of the Chamberlain party, the absorption into definite Toryism of Lord Hartington and a few other nobodies, and in short, the defeat of the revolt in the Liberal party against Mr. Gladstone, who seems destined to have one more triumph before he dies. To some ardent Liberals the way seems so direct to Liberal victory that the *Pall Mall Gazette* urges the Gladstonians to force on a dissolution by means of obstruction at once. That no doubt would be good tactics for them if the party were really what the writer of the article in the *Pall Mall* seems to think it—a party with principles and a steady aim. As it is, one may be quite sure that they will attempt nothing so revolutionary or anti-respectable as that: their advent to power will come by a longer road, with many more turns in it. For the respectable part of them have no very burning desire to pass a real Home Rule measure, and indeed don't think much about that or anything else except the mere party triumph. However, doubtless in the course of time we shall see a Liberal ministry in power again, with somewhat more pretensions to Radicalism than a ministry has had yet, and with the mandate to pass a Home Rule Bill. The said Bill will also, of course, be one of compromise; but we may suppose that it will do something to give the Irish question a little rest, though with its accompanying Land Bill it will not be so easily settled, even temporarily, as some people seem to suppose. But a truce once made with the Irish troubles, what will the new Gladstonian government do next? That is the rub. It will be expected to do something, and if it values its life must try hard not even to appear to do anything. To appear, I say, because, except as regards the franchise, the instrument of parliamentary democracy, there is no longer anything for that democracy to do. There may, and probably will be, a sharp fight in Parliament over the franchise, which will split up the party once more and give the Whig-Tories another innings; but when that is over and the democratic sword sharpened duly, where will be the enemy to be smitten by it? Doubtless there will be a new Allotments Acts, a Leasehold Enfranchisement Act, and other devices for dividing the power of our landlord masters without lessening it; and also doubtless some rubbish about perpetual pensions and the cultivation of grouse-moors and the like. But all this will be but using the newly-whetted democratic sword for cleaving a pat of butter instead of a helmeted head: it will be doing nothing. Nevertheless it will have an appearance of doing something and will lead to the death of more than one "Liberal" ministry, if constitutionalism lasts as long; so that what between disgusting real democrats with really doing nothing, and terrifying respectability with seeming to do something, the Gladstonian party is likely to have a rough time of it, and may well pray for a continuance of the Irish quarrel, in which

they have managed, after a deal of standing on alternate feet, to take up a position apparently not (to their thinking) too dangerous to constitutionalism.

Meantime, after all the Tory Government is not going to die tamely; they have plucked up heart to pass the Lords' amendments to the Land Bill and proclaim the National League, and seem to be going to put their foot down; probably because they perceive that their Chamberlainist friends are of no value to them, and that they must play their last card of attempting to drive the Irish people into violent action, which might turn the respectability of the Liberal party against Home Rule again. Fortunately they are probably too late once more; the mind of the ordinary person not pledged to the cause of reaction is getting used to the idea of Home Rule, and any outbreak on the part of the Irish that is not systematic will be looked on as a mere incident in the struggle.

Some measure of Home Rule is now certain; and all we Socialists can hope is that it will not be too long in coming; for what we want now is a professedly popular government in power, which, face to face with the real question of the day—whether labour is to be free or the slave of monopoly—will not be able to deal with that question, because it and the parliament which has produced it are and must be essentially the guardians of that very monopoly. **WILLIAM MORRIS.**

IS LIPSKI'S CONFESSION GENUINE?

So Lipski has confessed and all is right, "he has been brought to a frame of mind that has enabled him to make the reparation," says the *Daily News*. Bourgeois justice and the Home Secretary are triumphantly vindicated. Thus, doubtless, thought the "respectable" world on Monday morning.

There is nothing to be surprised at in Lipski's confession. Indeed, it was just what was to be expected; those who have never believed in his guilt have no need to do so now, the evidence is entirely against such an hypothesis; but that under the circumstances the world should be given to understand that he has confessed, and "admitted the justice of his sentence," was absolutely essential to the stability of the government, of the system of capital punishment, and to the credit of our judicial machinery generally. What goes on within the walls of a prison is known only to those in the swim of the bureaucratic trade, and we do not pretend to decide dogmatically with respect to the origin of the document. We need only call the reader's attention to the fact that the bureaucrat is by the necessities of his profession a liar, skilful or unskilful; the value of official disclaimers is proverbial.

Who knows what kind of cajolery or even threats might not have been employed, since the occasion was so urgent and so much was at stake?

In connection with this it is well to remember that the witches who were burnt in the seventeenth century almost always confessed their guilt, and "admitted the justice of their sentence"—or were said to have done so. It must not be forgotten, moreover, that Lipski, who came from Russian Poland, remembering that in his own country a confession of guilt is necessary before a condemned criminal can be executed, and that there torture is admitted to be used on occasion to extract such a confession, might have a confused idea that the same thing might happen here, and seeing his case was hopeless and that he had to die, submitted to what he might think was a general formula for the sake of dying without unnecessary worry.

Anyhow the document bears upon it the stamp of unguineness. Lipski says that he had not begun to search for money before Miriam awoke and alarmed him. Does it seem likely that a man not being a maniac would murder a woman for fear of discovery, simply because she had found him in her room, and before he had committed any crime?

He says the aquafortis he swallowed had no effect on him. Is this probable?

He didn't know how his arms were abraded, and did not feel it at the time. Is this probable if the statement next above is true?

These objections lie on the surface of the confession, but no doubt other discrepancies will occur to other searchers into the document. Under any circumstances the main point to be remembered is that the evidence on the trial was insufficient for a jury to convict upon if undirected by the judge, and bearing in mind the maxim so often put forward by those who boast of the immaculate nature of English law, that a doubt should be interpreted in favour of the accused.

E. BELFORD BAX and WILLIAM MORRIS.

THE SCOTCH PLOUGHMEN.—Some hopes were entertained that the Scotch Ploughmen's Union would develop into a thoroughgoing labour organisation; but at the last annual conference one of the officials stated that the union was strictly a benefit society, and not in the least way connected with trade union or political purposes. It is certainly a pity to see such a large and important class of workmen, who might wield a great power in the labour movement busying themselves with a mere benefit society. If they are determined to rigidly exclude themselves from all interference with the great social problem that confronts the working class, they need not expect that their flourishing financial condition will interest anyone but themselves. A working-class body which deliberately refuses to have anything to do with the great economic question, and repudiates any connection with even trades' unionism and politics had better call itself a "slate club" and drop such a title as the "Ploughman's International Union."—J. L. M.