



"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.

As all articles are signed, no special significance attaches to them because of their position in these pages. None to be taken as more than in a general manner expressing the views of the League as a body, except it be so explicitly declared by the Editors.

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### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. K. (Hampstead).—Not in our line.

C. W. B.—"It is the Day," and "Awkward for the Coo," accepted with thanks. "London," d. w. t.

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday August 3.

ENGLAND	Chicago (Ill.)—Labor Enquirer	HOLLAND
Our Corner	Vorbote	Hague—Recht voor Allen
Justice	Fort Worth (Tex.)—South West	Amsterdam—Voorwaarts
Jus	Hampton (N.J.)—Credit Foncier	ITALY
Londoner Arbeiter-Zeitung	New Haven (Conn.)—Workmen's Advocate	Milan—Il Fascio Operaio
Labour Tribune	Milwaukee (Wis.)—Volksblatt	Marsala—La Nuova Eta
Church Reformer	Philadelphia (Pa.)—Carpenter	SWITZERLAND
Freedom	Denver (Col.)—Labor Enquirer	Zurich—Sozial Demokrat
To-Day	Albina (Oreg.)—Weekly Courier	SPAIN
SOUTH AUSTRALIA	FRANCE	El Productor
Adelaide—S. Austral. Register	Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily)	Barcelona—Acracia
Melbourne—Honesty	Le Revolte	AUSTRIA
INDIA	Lille—Le Travailleur	Brunn—Volksfreund
Bankipore—Behar Herald	BELGIUM	HUNGARY
UNITED STATES	Liege—L'Avenir	Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik
New York—Der Sozialist	Antwerp—De Werker	ROUMANIA
Freiheit	Brussels—L'Avant-Garde	Jassy—Lupta
Truthseeker	Ghent—Vooruit	SWEDEN
Leader	Seraing—Le Reveil	Stockholm—Social-Demokraten
John Swinton's Paper		NORWAY
Volkszeitung		Kristiania—Social-Democraten
Boston—Woman's Journal		
Liberty		

## BOURGEOIS VERSUS SOCIALIST.

WITHOUT wishing to carry on the debate any further which has been going on in the *Commonweal* between comrade Bax and Mr. Bradlaugh, it is natural that we should print a few words on it, as it is clear that there must have been a good many words said on the subject.

In the last paper, Mr. Bradlaugh complains that there has been no real debate on the question Will Socialism benefit the English people? Perhaps after all this is likely to be the case in all so-called debates where the disputants differ as to principle: clearly they must take some things for granted or they would stick fast from the first. This debate is now the third I have noticed carefully, and in all the three the disputants on either side, though in all cases very able persons, seemed, so to say, to find it hard to get at each other and strike the big stroke. However, one thing they can do and should do, if they are to claim any success; each may at least state what his position is; and though this is specially incumbent on the one who takes the affirmative or positive side, yet even the one who takes the negative side must not be so wholly negative as not to show the basis of his objections: he must not be a mere objector, but must object on principle.

Now it seems to me that in this debate our friend Bax has stated his position quite clearly, and to every one not prepared from the first to pick holes in his statement, quite unmistakably. Mr. Bradlaugh, on the other hand, has done nothing but make objections, some of them merely verbal and frivolous, others rather what I should call debaters' objections—the sort of thing which catches cheers in an oral debate; and some, no doubt, the objections of the kind which naturally occur to a person prejudiced against a change in the basis of society. Bax has been under the disadvantage of having in his second paper to follow Mr. Bradlaugh through the whole string of questions which he thought proper to put, so that his restatement of his position had to be deferred to his last paper, which was somewhat languidly replied to by Mr. Bradlaugh; of whom in truth I fear it must be said that he does not take much interest in the whole subject. In fact throughout he has not really been attacking Socialism, but rather has been desperately defending a statement which he stumbled on in his anxiety to be considered "practical," that there may be or is an essential difference in

<sup>1</sup> By the way, when I was last lecturing in Scotland I got on more than one occasion "a dressing" for using the word English in too inclusive a sense (though I meant no harm by it). Perhaps the same thing would happen in Wales—let alone Ireland.

the economic basis of life between the various countries that make up civilisation; and he has also been fighting against the admission that modern production compels the aggregation of capital. It is hardly worth while arguing seriously against either of these queer pieces of perversity; but it is really strange to find a man of ability who has not been struck by the international character of modern capitalism, and who cannot grasp the argument that if capitalism is international, the foe that threatens it, the system which is put forward to take its place, must be international also. As to the other point, which, though not an essential one for the general argument, Mr. Bradlaugh defends very stoutly and returns to more than once, the denial of the tendency toward the aggregation of capital under our present system, what can one say but that it is one of the commonplaces of the day that competition forces people to produce cheaply, and that you can only produce cheaply by producing on a large scale? Anybody who doubts this and has money to throw away had better try it in practice—as I have done. Mr. Bradlaugh in his last paper taunts Bax with not being able to bring more instances of this generally admitted fact; I may perhaps be allowed to give another, as coming under my own notice. Textile printing used to be done wholly by means of blocks on long tables, and there used to be a great many small businesses of this kind, employing down to as few as ten or a dozen men; but when the cylinder machine was perfected, and a man and two boys at one machine could do the work of 200 blockers and their attendant "tearers," these businesses had to shut up, as they could not find work for even one machine. Again, in my small business I am obliged to refrain from doing certain kinds of weaving I should like to do because my capital can't compass a power-loom. But really there is no need to multiply examples to prove what is patent: one can only stand aghast at Mr. Bradlaugh's hardihood in denial.

In short, Mr. Bradlaugh thinks Socialism an unpractical matter, and therefore cannot bring his mind to bear upon it sufficiently to conceive of it. He has not even tried to understand what Socialists mean by monopoly, and says, though rather guardedly, that he sees no class in the country which has the monopoly of the means of production. Again, one can only say that if he were a manual workman he would soon find out whether he could work for his livelihood without paying the tribute demanded by the monopolist; nor would he be long in doubt as to the fact that his master was not an individual but a class, when he sets to work to try how much more reward he could get for his labour from Peter than he could from Paul.

It is a pity that Mr. Bradlaugh will not try to understand his Socialist opponents, but in this matter he acts pretty much as the ordinary bourgeois does, and shows the usual persistency in reading incidents characteristic of the present condition of things into the future. At the bottom of all this lies, not, it may be, a want of information as to the mere facts of history, but an entire incapacity of understanding their significance and their continuity; in short, a practical denial of the doctrine of evolution. To persons of this turn of mind the class struggle in the past is nothing more than a confused contest, with no steady, though often unconscious, aim in it; to such persons at some arbitrary point determined by the interest, prejudice, or taste of the individual, all that contest comes to an end, and Society, which has been ever changing through so many thousands of years, is at last stable, though it lacks no element of revolution which the last epoch of change had, but holds them all, possibly changed in form but certainly not in essence. To such persons it is a kind of theological proposition that the status of Society consists of a great middle-class with an unnecessary encumbrance above it in the shape of the aristocracy, and a necessary encumbrance below it in the shape of a proletariat. The presence of the workers cannot be wholly denied, because they are there before our eyes, weaving, metal-working, building, and the rest of it; but they are not looked upon as a class with common interests, which force them to act together even against their wills, but as a series of accidents; they are a mere collection of potential middle-class persons, or failures from the middle-class.

And what is to be done with these abnormal persons? That is not a question which presses for solution, think our friends who sustain the orthodox holiness of bourgeoisdom. To reduce the numbers of the successive generations of them, and to raise the wages of those that would be left—that were good if it could be done, but it doesn't much matter, because, whether or no, Society is stable on its present basis (established by the Reform Bill of 1832).

It is true that some glorious but dim vision floats before the eyes of these "practical" persons of a time when the whole of these accidental misfortunes in a human form shall, by the exercise of thrift and Malthusianism, be absorbed into the great middle-class, cleared by that time of its upper encumbrance, and a bourgeois paradise will supervene, in which every one will be free to exploit—but there will be no one to exploit. How the great middle-class will then live, deponents say not; but the setters forth of this doctrine are happy in the fact that their Socialist opponents are not in the habit of asking them many questions as to their Society of the future. On the whole, one must suppose that the type of it would be that town (surely in America and in the neighbourhood of Mark Twain) that I have heard of, whose inhabitants lived by taking in each other's washing.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

Let the hiring scribblers and spouters call us what they will. We cannot please them except by being cowardly and treacherous, and it is not wise policy to gratify our enemies. Let us not crave for or expect praise from them. It is our duty to disarm them, and they know it, if we don't.—RADICAL JACK in Chicago *Labour Enquirer*.