

## THE LABOUR STRUGGLE.

BRITAIN.

A sliding scale for the regulation of wages has been signed between the representatives of Messrs. Bolckow, Vaughan & Co. and the men employed at their Cleveland Steel Works. The sliding scale is to be in operation for two years.

The strike in the iron shipbuilding trade in Belfast continues. About 6000 persons have now been upwards of six weeks idle and a large proportion of them are in a most destitute condition. Several efforts at an agreement by arbitration have failed, and the men still firmly declare they must receive their wages weekly else they will not return to the shipyards.

The General Committee of the Iron Trades Employers' Association have decided to place the funds of the Association at the disposal of the Executive Committee to expend as they may see fit for the assistance of the employers in connection with the strike at Bolton. When will the workers make common cause in like manner, recognising that an injury to one is the concern of all?

A local auctioneer, who had occasion to clear some premises the other day, came upon a mass of interesting papers in reference to foreign-made articles, chiefly scissors, brought to Sheffield to the order of Sheffield houses. These were mainly invoices of goods, and they proved—some two dozen of them shown to me—that the business in foreign scissors and other kinds of cutlery was very considerable indeed, and engaged in by merchants and manufacturers who were not supposed to encourage foreign work.—*The Engineer.*

FORTH BRIDGE.—The men at the Forth Bridge, owing to the great number of accidents that have recently taken place, have made a demand for one penny an hour more wages. The dispute has been going on for some days and a strike is threatened, through the masters state that they will bring surplus labour from the Tay Bridge, which is now nearly completed. The contractors want to deal with each workman separately, but it is to be hoped the men will hold together and not allow the bosses to manipulate them.

The award in the wages dispute in the West Cumberland coal trade was issued last week. The umpire finds that the wages for the quarter preceding April 1st were after the rate of 6½ per cent. above the fixed standard, and as this was an advance on the previous quarter, the men are entitled to receive wages at the same rate, because there is no fall in the price of coal of a full 1½d. per ton below the point which caused the advance. The wages, therefore, remain at 6½ per cent. above the standard.

THE STRIKE OF CHAIN-MAKERS.—A meeting of chain-makers was held on June 10 in the Salvation Army Barracks, Cradley Heath, under the presidency of Mr. Thomas Homer. The chairman said that certain masters had not been paying the list price for work executed. He believed that, let them work at whatever price they might, the masters would not be satisfied, but would still try and force reductions upon them. The following subscriptions were announced: from Bristol, £2; Colonel Stewart, £15; Mrs. Jope, 15s. It was resolved to continue the strike.

The Preston Operative Spinners' Association have issued an address in which they say:—"The ring of New York and Liverpool are cornering cotton to such an extent that the master cotton spinners of Lancashire and adjoining counties are earnestly engaged in agitating the trade in short time, their object being to crush out of existence the gambling cotton speculators, who hamper and worry the trade to such a ruinous degree that the margin between cotton and yarn is approaching a miserably low figure. We feel it our duty to fight on the side of the employer shoulder to shoulder, against the common enemy of our trade, the gambling speculators."

On Saturday afternoon a delegate meeting of Mid and East Lothian miners was held in the Scientific Hall, Dalkeith, Mr. W. Holman, Niddrie, presiding, to consider the claim of the miners employed by the Clippens Oil Co. for remuneration for the carrying of propwood, consequent upon a change in the internal working of the mine known as the "long wall system," which is alleged to involve more labour and an extra risk of accident. After a long discussion the meeting agreed to recommend that the Clippens' miners adopt the five days a-week system with a view to arriving at a satisfactory settlement of the dispute, failing which that the County Board support the men should circumstances necessitate the extreme measure of a strike.

At Wood Green there is a large sweet-factory known as Barrett's Factory, at which a large number of persons are employed. Besides those working in the factory, women are supplied with work at their own homes, in making up and packing sweets. They are obliged to fetch the materials and goods from the factory, and carry back the finished packages themselves. For this work the pay is from 1½d. to 2½d. per gross of small packets. By the most attentive toil this cannot be earned under at least an hour. This is a parallel case with that of the match-box makers. It is not known whether the proprietors make 22½ per cent. on their capital as Bryant and May, Limited, are reported to do, but they are doing a "tremendous" trade. I could not ascertain the wages paid to those working in the factory, but one can form an idea from the above of what it might be.—P. C. W.

NEW TREDEGAR, MONMOUTH.—There is a serious misunderstanding about the price of cutting the 3-foot seam in Elliott's pit, New Tredegar, which it is considered must now be determined. The vein is only three feet thick with a bottom of fourteen inches, which makes it much more difficult for the miner. The price paid is only the same as in the old pit, which the workmen say is very unfair. A first-class workman can only earn 17s. 6d. per week, out of which he has to pay for blasting powder. Mr. P. Jones, the overseer, has visited the place several times, and when he brought the matter before the Sliding Scale Board, he was told that it was not understood that there was any misunderstanding. The workmen are determined to have a settlement. They are willing to submit to arbitration, but if that is not accepted, then a notice of termination of contract will be handed in. *Later.*—It has been determined by the workmen that a month's notice be given for the completion of all contracts, to end the 30th June.—*Tarian-y-Gueithawr.*

THE STRIKE IN THE BOLTON IRON TRADE.—On Monday the ironworkers of Bolton entered upon the fifth week of the strike, which has been begun with a view to getting a return of the reduction made in wages 16 months ago to the extent of about 7½ per cent. As a consequence of the strike some hundreds of non-society hands are now idle, and it is estimated that altogether nearly 2000 men are out of employment. The society men state that assistance is coming in from near and far, and that they will be in a position for some weeks to keep up the full rate of strike pay. The mayor of Bolton (Mr. Ald. Fletcher) was much disappointed at the failure of the

conference brought about by him between employers and employed, and will try to bring representatives of the contending parties together again, with a view to an agreement or understanding being arrived at by which the men may resume work.

THREATENED STRIKE OF MINERS IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE.—At a meeting of the Executive of the Yorkshire Miners' Association, held at the Miners' Hall, Barnsley, on Saturday, under the presidency of Mr. Cowey, the dispute at Monk Bretton Colliery, one of the largest in South Yorkshire, and the decision of the men to give in their notices was considered at some length. A deputation from the men employed at the colliery attended before the executive, and the following resolution was passed:—"That the Monk Bretton case be left in the hands of the officials of the association to arrive at an amicable settlement, if that is at all possible, between now and next Council meeting. That Mr. B. Pickard write to Mr. Pepper, sen., stating the facts of the case, and that the matter go before the district for their consideration and decision as to whether the men go out on strike or not." Mr. B. Pickard, M.P., states that the officials are opposed to a strike, but the men are very determined and declare they will send in their notices.

The North Yorkshire and Cleveland Miners' Association held their sixteenth annual demonstration and gala on Wednesday week. Addresses were delivered from a platform to an appreciative assembly. Mr. Joseph Toyn, agent and president of the Cleveland Miners' Association, presided. Mr. Joseph Arch was one of the speakers, and the following resolution was passed:—"This meeting, believing (1) that the present system of land tenure is detrimental to the interests of the nation, and (2) that decentralisation of government is necessary to enable Parliament to deal with this and other questions of national importance, is of opinion that the reform of the land laws and the question of local self-government should receive the earnest and speedy attention of the Government, and calls upon them to introduce into Parliament at the earliest possible moment Bills dealing in a comprehensive manner with these most important subjects." A resolution condemning the Crimes Bill was also passed.

The short time project in cotton spinning is being strongly supported in Oldham, Ashton, and surrounding districts. In Rochdale all the limited spinning companies have signed in favour of the proposal of the Manchester Cotton Spinners' Association. It is now stated that the mills in Darwen will soon close entirely. At Church and Accrington it is understood the mills have agreed to support the united movement. In several directions lessened production on a free scale has already commenced. In addition to a long stoppage at Whitsuntide, the following companies will close entirely the whole of next week:—Prince of Wales, 68,500 spindles; Tonge Vale, 55,392 spindles; Abbey, 45,100 spindles. The Star Company (103,536 spindles) is still closed. The large spinning mills of Messrs. H. Whittaker and Sons, Royton, have begun to work three days a-week. The Oldham Twist Company, Hollinwood, have stopped for an indefinite period eight pairs of mules. At Church, Messrs. Watson have begun to run half time, and Messrs. B. and R. Walmsley have closed one mill. Short time in spinning and weaving is reported from Smallbridge, near Rochdale.

A meeting of the Heckmondwike Auxiliary of the English and Scotch Carpet-Weavers' Association was held at the Mechanics' Institute and Club, Heckmondwike, on June 8th, Mr. F. Fisher being elected to the chair. There was a fairly good attendance of weavers—one of the best that has been held for some time. The deputation to the joint meeting of masters and men, held at Carlisle last Friday, gave their report, the first speaker being Mr. Joseph Lodge. He mentioned that the proposition upon the masters' programme of a reduction of 10 per cent., and also of a lowering in the price of tying on short lengths in broad looms, had been abandoned on the ground of informality, no intimation of such reductions having been previously given to the Weavers' Association. The only propositions of the weavers granted were to pay for half yards, and that the 1d. to the shilling for winding be paid 2d. per yard extra. Mr. Goodall, the other delegate, having spoken, the report was eventually adopted, and several suggestions were made for the better government of shop committees, etc., also to offer different facilities to the weavers for weighing off at Messrs. Kelley's.

### FRANCE.

At the Hotel de Ville on Wednesday last week the Socialist Municipal Councillors of Paris placed before the sitting a motion "inviting the Director of Works to proceed immediately to the opening of the greatest possible number of work-yards, to take all possible hygienic measures to assure the health of the population and those employed in the works," etc. This motion has not yet received full consideration and discussion at the Hotel de Ville; when it does, the discussion will assuredly be a lively one.

MARSEILLES.—*L'Intransigeant* says, "This evening (June 9th) at the meeting-place of the Union of Labour Syndicates, a preliminary meeting relative to the formation of a labour-fund has taken place, the municipality and the General Councillors representing the canton of Marseilles, taking part in the same. The formation of a labour-fund was agreed upon, and the mayor has promised the moral and financial support of the town. A committee will be named for the elaboration of the scheme, the members to be composed of Municipal Councillors and those belonging to the Syndicates.

LE CREUSOT (SAONE-ET-LOIRE).—The *Cri* gives in one of its latest issues some information concerning the situation of the miners at Le Creusot. At present, it seems, the mines only employ below ground 150 workers at the most, under the pretext that there is scarcely any coal to be extracted now. These 150 slaves are bound to extract more than 580 *dennes* of coal in the twenty-four hours; their work comes to one-third beyond what they were accustomed to some time before, and their wages from 75 to 50 centimes less per day, the pay averaging formerly 4 fr. 75 c. and the maximum now being 4 fr. 25 c. per day. In some branches of the work the wages from 3 fr. 50 c. are lowered to 2 fr. 50 c. These miners, it seems, are in happy possession of a *Watrin* for an overseer, to use a word coined by the foreign Socialist journals since the execution of that hero.

MEHUN-SUR-YEVRE.—The syndicate of porcelain-workers of Mehun thank the syndicates of fellow-workers who have kindly sent subscriptions to the strikers. The strike, finishing in a demi-victory, leaves on the street some five-and-twenty men with families absolutely without resources.

### BELGIUM.

In the Charleroi coal basin most of the strikers have gone back to work, with many a fair promise of reform and attention to their needs from the Liberals ringing in their ears. Wherever they return to their former work, the most intelligent, the most active among them being considered as the "leaders," have been dismissed pitilessly. So much for the "good faith" of the capitalist—and so much for the "universal strike" that was to bring

great things with it. "Thanks to the good sense of the Belgian workers, work has recommenced," says one of the bourgeois journals, rubbing its hands with sleek satisfaction.

"The Belgian coal industry is a question of life and death. Its existence depends upon cheap production. It has keen competitors in German collieries on one side and French on the other, though it has itself been organising an opposition to the English trade in the direction of exports. The nature of the mines renders the extraction of coal costly in the way of machinery and waste, so that a low price can only be maintained by cheap labour. Belgium has a dense population, and though the people are intelligent enough, they have yet to become acquainted with correct ideas on the subject of their own industry. In their ignorance they give too much heed to the doctrines of Socialists and Anarchists."—*M. André in the 'Colliery Guardian'*.—Ignorant truly! Not to see the overwhelming importance of an industry that in order to keep itself going must reduce them to mere starvation! But, Messieurs the Belgian Capitalists, what is to be done? You can it seems work your mines with half-dead men, a fact which surely redounds to your ingenuity, and your usefulness as Captains of Industry; but not even your ingenuity can work them with men wholly dead. Don't you wish it could? Surely in that case the governments would issue game licenses to kill for that purpose, not partridges, but men. O you damned scoundrels!—W. M.

[Branches, members, and readers might easily do a great deal to assist in rendering more complete this weekly record of the Labour Struggle. Every one should send any information in their possession to the SUB-EDITOR at this Office, by Tuesday in each week, marking envelope "Labour Struggle."]

### NORTHUMBRIAN NOTES.

THE strike being now a thing of the past, the affairs in Northumberland are resuming their usual aspect. Many of the pits are not at work yet, but there is little reason to fear that any of the trade of the district was lost during the strike. Amongst the men, however, there is a bitter feeling that their agents (as they call the leading officials of the Union) are very much to blame for the failure. At some collieries the men are threatening to leave the Miners' Union, so much are they disgusted with it. This, however, would be a terrible mistake. They should stick to their union, make it stronger than ever, and above all make their officials servants—not masters as they are now and have been.

During the past 16 years the miners' wages in Northumberland have been reduced fully 45 per cent. The miners get 15s. 9d. now for the same work that brought 30s. in 1874. This gives a better indication of the "National Progress" than Messrs. Giffen and Mulhall's figures. These are the dry unquestioned facts about one of the largest and most important trades in the country.

Some miners want to know why Mr. Burt's salary should not be reduced at the same rate as their wages. At the annual meeting of the union delegates a motion was made to this effect, and only lost by a narrow majority.

At Burradon (Northumberland) last week, four miners worked seven shifts and got 27s. for the whole of the work. A shift is seven hours from the time of leaving the pit bank till the returning. These men working hard got less than one shilling for seven hours' work. This may seem incredible to many people, but I have it on unimpeachable authority.

The Northumberland miners' gala will be held on July 30th at Blyth Links. The ballot for the election of speakers is now going on. The nominations at present include the Bishop of Newcastle, C. Bradlaugh, William Morris, John Morley, A. K. Donald, C. V. Conybeare, H. M. Hyndman, J. L. Mahon, etc. Generally Mr. C. Bradlaugh heads the poll in the ballot, the speaking being in the open-air, and Mr. Bradlaugh being the most effective open-air orator in the country. The newspapers carefully conceal that any Socialists have been nominated at all.

*St. James's Gazette* has a very ill-informed article on the strike. The usual silly application of the profit and loss test of the usefulness of the strike is put forward. In most strikes the amount lost in wages exceeds what is gained by the advance on the averted reduction. In this strike the loss has been both ways, for the reduction has not been averted. But it is ridiculous to think that therefore the strike was an error and a failure. The great value of such strikes as that just ended is that they are an active protest on the part of the workmen against the injustice inflicted on them. If the strikes are a dead loss it makes the protest all the more significant. It would be well if some of these journalists would really consider the full meaning of a strike like that just ended. It has many lessons which they do not see, and which are full of the gravest warning. J. L. MAHON.

FACTORY ACT PROSECUTION.—At Walsall, on Friday last, Ralph Richman, draper, was summoned for having, contrary to the Factory Act, had six young persons at work in his dressmaking department at ten to eleven at night. The defence was that he personally knew nothing about it. He was ordered to pay four fines of 20s. and costs, making £6 19s.

MR. DAVITT AND IRISH EMIGRATION.—Mr. Davitt has sent a telegram to Mr. Fitzgerald, president of the Irish National League in America, suggesting that the friends of the Irish cause and the Knights of Labour should visit President Cleveland, "with the object of calling his attention to the fact that England is driving thousands weekly from Ireland to the United States. The workers of America should protest against pauper labour being forced on their market."

Mr. Samuel Smith has been addressing his constituents. He referred to the tithe question, and said "the tithe seemed to be levied on principles which appeared very inequitable, and that complaint seemed to hold in England as well as in Wales. But the main objection which the Welsh people had to paying the tithe was that it went to support a church with which the bulk of them were not connected. He exhorted the people of Wales, however, to be patient until the Liberals were again in power." Wales can remember the Liberals being in power several times, and has not forgotten the advice which she received on those occasions. Wales was always told to be patient. When the Liberals are in Opposition, Wales has to be patient until they come into power. When the Liberals are in power Wales has to be patient to keep them there. Wales is not going to be patient any more, but is going to have the reforms she wants by sheer force. Wales has tried centuries of patience and got nothing. She is now going to try a strong dose of coercion. Wales has never lacked advisers like Mr. Smith. What she wants is somebody who will fight without knowing when he is beaten, and who will persevere until the necessary reforms have been obtained.—*Cambrian News*.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### MARX'S THEORY OF VALUE.

The Mallock fallacy is absurdly obvious. "Our manufacturing operatives" were working during the year on materials and with machinery which already contained a vast amount of "crystallised labour," which of course is reckoned into the final product.

The agriculturalists of the United States were working on the bare earth and except perhaps in the case of the Bonanza farms, with the usual simple implements in use in small agriculture. *Hinc ille lachrymæ.*

E. BELFORD BAX.

### CHRISTIANITY, POSITIVISM, AND SOCIALISM.

COMRADE,—Our friend Beckett, in his criticism of Cotter Morison's book, has, I think, missed the real point of the inconsistency in the Positivist's attitude with regard to Christianity. The "essential thought" of Christianity lies in the notion of "holiness"—i.e., a special relation between the individual soul and "God." This has as its correlate what is sometimes known as the "ethics of inwardness"—that is, a morality which centres in the personality and the attainment of this quasi-mystical relation with the divinity—or in other words, "Salvation." As a consequence, Christianity, though retaining elements of barbaric ferocity in its theology, in its moral sentiment invariably tends to become maudlin, and its practice commonly to hypocrisy.

Now Positivism, while abandoning the theological side of Christianity, retains its introspective and individualistic attitude in Ethics. The ethical aim of Positivism, like that of Christianity, is the perfecting of the individual character, and according to what is virtually the same standard, as is proved by the retention of so many Christian forms in the Comtean *cultus*, and still more in the adoption of the introspective and mystical *Imitatio Christi* of Thomas à Kempis as a text-book of life and conduct.

Socialism alone, in effect, definitively abandons this old ethical standard, and the code of morality growing out of it, by proclaiming the great modern truth, that Social Happiness, in its plain sense, is the one object of all moral conduct, and in refusing to be turned aside from this principle by specious attempts to reintroduce the rags and tags of a theological morality under another name. Morison is evidently sensible in a vague way of the distinction between Christian or personal morality (with "Salvation" for its end) and Social Morality, but he is apparently oblivious of the fact that Positivism has sucked in the former wholesale while rejecting the basis with which it is both logically and historically connected.—Yours fraternally,

E. BELFORD BAX.

A WORKMAN.—Your letter will be inserted in next number.

## THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

OFFICES: 13 FARRINGTON ROAD, E.C.

London Members.—The first meeting of London Members will be held on Monday the 4th of July.

Library.—The Library is open to members of the Socialist League and affiliated bodies. LIBRARY CATALOGUE, containing the Rules, 2d. D. J. NICOLL and W. BLUNDELL are the Librarians.

Outdoor Lecturers.—A special meeting of the outdoor lecturers will be held at the Offices, 13 Farringdon Road, on Saturday June 25, at 7 p.m., for the purpose of arranging the lecture-list for coming quarter. Branches are specially requested to send delegates.

### Resolution of Council.

"That all monies collected at open-air meetings must be duly handed to the treasurer of the League, and the receipt of same acknowledged in *Commonweal*."

### BRANCH SUBSCRIPTIONS PAID.

Leicester, South London, to December 31, 1886. Bradford, Croydon, Edinburgh, Hackney, Hammersmith, Hoxton (Labour Emancipation League), Hull, Ipswich, Lancaster, Leeds, Marylebone, Merton, Norwich, Shields, to March 31. Bloomsbury, Glasgow, North London, Oxford, to April 30. Clerkenwell, Walsall, to May 31.

### "COMMONWEAL" PRINTING FUND.

Hammersmith Branch (two weeks), £1.

### FOR PROPAGANDA.

Collected at Regent's Park, 4s. Collected at Hyde Park, 1s. 5d.

PH. W., Treasurer, June 14.

### THE NORWICH PRISONERS' AID FUND.

For Mrs. Moubray—A Few Fabians, per Annie Besant (weekly), 10s.

J. LANE, Treasurer.

## REPORTS.

BLOOMSBURY.—On Thursday, June 9, Rev. Stewart D. Headlam lectured on "Christian Socialism" to a large audience. There was considerable discussion. After the lecture a business meeting of members was held. On Sunday, an open-air meeting was held at St. Pancras Arches, 1s. 10d. being collected for the Missionary Fund.—U.

CLERKENWELL.—On Wednesday, June 8, W. W. Bartlett lectured on "The Meaning of the Social Revolution." Lively discussion followed. On Sunday, June 12, we held excellent meeting on Clerkenwell Green, addressed by Blundell and Wardle, and Doughty (H.K.) A resolution protesting against the Irish evictions was carried unanimously. Sold all literature we had with us, including 21 *United Ireland*. We want assistance at this station for Sunday mornings. In our hall, after the outdoor meeting, a large audience had gathered to hear A. K. Donald on "The Chain-makers of Cradley Heath." A very successful week taken altogether.—A. T. and W. B.