



"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.

R. I.—Address of the secretary of the provisional committee of the "National Labour Party" is T. R. Threlfall, 19 Sussex Road, Southport.

MINER.—The *Miner* is ld. monthly, and its address is Cumnock, Ayrshire. It is the recognised organ of the miners of Scotland and the "Sons of Labour."

J. W. B.—Thanks, but unsuitable.

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday November 9.

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| <b>ENGLAND</b><br>Die Autonomie<br>Labour Tribune<br>London—Freie Presse<br>Norwich—Daylight<br>Our Corner<br>Personal Rights Journal<br>Railway Review<br>Radical  | Chicago (Ill.)—Vorbote<br>Denver (Col.) Labor Enquirer<br>Hammonont (NJ) Credit Poncier<br>Milwaukee (Wis.)—Volksblatt<br>St. Louis (Mo.)—Die Parole<br>San Francisco (Cal) The People<br>Arbeiter-Zeitung<br>Albina (Oreg.)—Weekly Courier<br>Buffaloer Arbeiter-Zeitung<br>Fort Worth (Tex.)—South West<br>Detroit (Mich.)—The Advance<br>Coring (Iowa) Revue Icarienne | Brussels—L'Avant-Garde<br>Liege—L'Avenir<br>Ghent—Vooruit<br>SWITZERLAND<br>Zurich—Sozial Demokrat<br>ITALY<br>Marsala—La Nuova Eta<br>SPAIN<br>El Productor<br>Madrid—El Socialista<br>Cadiz—El Socialismo<br>PORTUGAL<br>Lisbon—O Protesto Operario<br>GERMANY<br>Berlin—Volks Tribune<br>AUSTRIA<br>Arbeiterstimme<br>Vienna—Gleichheit<br>ROUMANIA<br>Jassy—Lupta<br>SWEDEN<br>Malmo—Arbetet |
| <b>NEW SOUTH WALES</b><br>Hamilton—Radical<br>SOUTH AUSTRALIA<br>Adelaide—S. Austral Register<br>INDIA<br>Bankipore—Behar Herald<br>Madras—People's Friend<br>UNITED STATES<br>New York—Der Sozialist<br>Truthseeker<br>Volkszeitung<br>Leader<br>Boston—Woman's Journal<br>Liberty | <b>FRANCE</b><br>Paris—Le Travailleur (dail)<br>La Revolte<br>Lille—Le Travailleur<br>Guise—Le Devoir<br>HOLLAND<br>Hague—Recht voor Allen<br>Amsterdam—Voorwaarts<br>BELGIUM<br>Seraing (Ougree)—Le Reveil   |  |

## HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY; OR, THE INCONVENIENCE OF STEALING.

[A DIALOGUE between MR. JAMES BROWN, a business man, and MR. OLAF EVANS, a kind of artist and literary man; neighbours.]

### PART II.

SCENE—A Room in MR. OLAF EVAN'S house, a good deal littered with odds and ends of art and literature; pipes and tobacco, and materials for grog on the table; in a conspicuous place a rather large bundle of MS.

Brown. Well, you see I've come.

Evans. Yes, and thank you for coming. Do you know, this morning you were very nearly quarrelling with me. However, let us hope the Bruce will mend all that."

B. (hastily, and looking furtively at the MS) Oh yes, I was glad to come and have a talk with a neighbour.

E. Well, light up, and let me mix you a glass of grog before I begin.

B. (taking his eye from the M.S., and looking hard into a corner of the room.) Oh, thanks, thanks, presently; I'm not in a hurry.

[Lights his pipe and smokes busily.]

E. How is business?

B. So-so; it's the old story. I have got to do twice the business to make half the money that my father did.

E. How do you account for that?

B. Competition; things must be sold cheap or down you go.

E. A good thing for the country though, especially for the working-classes.

B. Well, I'm not so sure of that; to tell you the truth, taking them all round, I don't think they are so much better off; if they get nominally higher wages they don't get such constant employment, and some don't get higher wages. There are the clerks now—do you call them part of the working-classes?

E. Well, yes, as things go. They certainly don't belong to the proprietary classes.

B. Well, I tell you that they are not as well off as they used to be, by a long way; I can get a steady going German who knows three languages thoroughly for 30s. a-week or less. Some years ago there would have been a fight for such a youth at the price.

E. Still, to have things cheap ought to be a benefit.

B. Well, I don't want them cheap. And look here, if things go on at this rate I shall have to sell my business at what it will fetch, and live as well as I can on the interest of what I have saved. I can't go on for ever slaving for 2½ per cent. And what I shall do other people will do, and are doing. Capital will be withdrawn from business wholesale, and then a nice mess your working-men will be in with nobody to employ them.

E. H'm—well now shall I mix for you—and begin the business of the evening?

B. Oh, we needn't be in a hurry, there's plenty of time. Let us talk.

E. Very well, I'm agreeable; only I hope we shan't quarrel.

B. I don't think we shall. You are in a reasonable humour now, I can see, and inclined to listen to people when they talk on subjects that they understand better than you.

E. Yes, there are many business matters I don't understand. I'll ask you a question or two presently.

B. Do; and one thing I can easily make clear to you, that an employer of labour doesn't lie on a bed of roses in these days. Everything that's done now must be for the benefit of the working-classes; as to the middle-classes, the real back-bone of the country, the real working-classes, mind you, they may take care of themselves.

E. Well, they can do that pretty well, I think.

B. How, I should like to know, with prices falling and wages rising on all hands?

E. But I thought you said you could get clerks (who we are agreed are working-men) cheaper than you used to do.

B. Not in proportion to the profits I make.

E. Well, let that pass; for I want to raise your spirits by showing you how the middle-classes can take good care of themselves, and in fact do so. Only I think you must abandon your ideal of their all retiring from business, and all living on the interest of their savings.

B. Well, I warn you that you trades' unionists and Socialists may drive us to that if you don't take care.

E. If we could only drive you to trying it! but it won't go quite in that way, I fear. But I admit that many of you can retire without bringing the whole thing about your ears, and can so take care of yourselves; while the rest of you take care of themselves by going down to their offices and looking at their clerks, and doing other laborious work for four hours a-day when they are not holiday-making.

B. Now, Evans, you are getting unreasonable again; talking about matters you don't understand.

E. Excuse me, Brown, my questions, the answers to which are to enlighten my ignorance, are just going to begin. What are you going to live on when you retire disgusted with 2½ per cent. profits, on what I imagine to be a biggish turnover?

B. (rather crustily) On my earnings.

E. On what you have made?

B. Yes, of course, on the money I have made.

E. Oh! I didn't know you made money, I thought you made soap.

B. Yes, of course. I manufacture soap, but I make money.

E. Manufacture—to make with the hands—soap is a cheapish article. What a lot of soap you must have made with your hands to live on your earnings in the style in which you live! You must be one of the cleverest men alive; I am quite proud of your acquaintance, Brown.

B. Here come these nonsensical paradoxes again! However, go on; go on.

E. Paradoxes? Don't you make the soap with your hands then?

B. Why, you know I don't, not an ounce. Go on with your questions.

E. But you manufacture many tons of it?

B. Why, of course I do. How could I live else?

E. And who does make the soap with his hands which you manufacture?

B. With his hands? Why, I employ over 500 men at my works.

E. Oh! I see! But I can't understand how soap is so cheap then. Because as those men make the soap and you don't, and you I suppose are only a kind of hanger-on or parson to them, of course they must live as comfortably as you do, and like you can retire from business when they are tired of slaving for small profits! How can it be done?

B. (who has mixed for himself, with a grin.) Well, I answer you to keep up the game, because of course you know better than that; the men in my works, the mere workmen, get from 18s. to 30s. a-week.

E. Ah! they need some other people to take care of them then, as long as that lasts. But I want to get at what your manufacturing means in modern speech, since it seems its etymology goes for nothing. You doubtless see to the men's work, superintend the mixing and boiling, and whatever goes on there.

B. I can't say I do; the foremen and managers of the departments do that.

E. And what style do they live in? Can they retire on their earnings? Not that I much care though if they cannot, since the other men cannot.

B. Well, they get £2 and £3 a-week, and the managers more.

E. Well, the soap being made must be sold. Who sells it?

B. It is travelled; the travellers sell it; and then there are the clerks and old Jackson.

E. And could they retire from business and live on their earnings?

B. You heard what I said about the clerks; as for the travellers, no, of course not. Old Jackson might, he has always been a close man; I think he's warm. But look here, of course I know what you

are driving at, Evans, and you must admit that I've kept my temper well. Come, now, ask me what I do.

E. Well, I ask it.

B. I'll tell you. First I find the capital, that you understand; and since you must admit that that is necessary, if I'm not to be paid for that what am I to be paid for? Well, then there is my risk consequent on my allowing my property to be used for the production of wealth; then am I to be paid nothing for superintending such a vast affair? and then remember in these days of sharp competition what a job it is to look after the markets and keep pace with the march of commerce. I tell you it's a regular war with the other manufacturers. I say that I earn my money well, much better than if I helped to make a few tons of soap every week; all the more as it's the machines that do it, much more than the men. (*Getting hot.*) I heartily wish it was all machines and no men; such a bother as we have with them.

E. Shall I tell you a little fable, Brown?

B. Oh, go on—go on!

E. Well, once upon a time the lion and the other carnivorous beasts went a-hunting,<sup>1</sup> and had good sport; and at the end of the day they met to divide the spoil, the lion in the chair. The chairman bade the carcasses be separated into four equal portions, besides the guts and other offal, which was put in a heap by itself. Great expectancy there was among the beasts: the leopard purred and waved his tail; the bear rolled about jovially; water ran from both sides of the wolf's mouth; the jackals whined happily;—the fox, though he smiled a good deal, as his custom is, was the only one that seemed uneasy. "Friends," said the chairman, "here is the wealth which our united labour has produced; I thus apportion it according to the sacred rights of property: the first is mine because I am called lion; the second because I kindly allow you to live; the third because of my strength, beauty, and nobility, without which the world were a dull place indeed; as for the fourth, let him touch it who dares; but yonder heap of offal you may divide it amongst you as you please; but if you follow my advice you will consume it with thrift and temperance." So said the lion; and the other beasts, like the law-abiding citizens they were, declared themselves contented.—Well, Brown, it seems to me that the lion managed to take good care of himself.

B. Again I see what you are driving at; but I don't think much of your fable as applied to a captain of industry.

E. Well, you see, Brown, all fables have their weak places, this amongst others. As you have noticed, I suppose, the lion probably did a good share of the hunting, being in that respect quite unlike the captain of industry. But, to leave fable and come to your statement of what you do, you say you find the capital: yes, pretty much as those—individuals—found your pears last night. And as to the risk you run in employing what you have found, I daresay they run some risk in turning these findings into the universal equivalent. As to your payment for superintending such a vast affair, you as good as told me that Jackson in the office and the managers at the works did that: so at any rate don't take too much—the lion's share—for that service. There remains your payment for that war with your brother soap-boilers which you told me about, which I admit under the circumstances seems necessary: yet don't you think it rather rough on those that make the soap that they should have to pay for that incident of its manufacture?

B. Rough on them—what do you mean? What have they got to do with it?

E. Nothing, I admit.

B. Well, you have got some preposterous utopian nonsense in your head, so you had better bring it out at once, since we have got on this unlucky subject again.

E. My utopianism drives me to wishing that the word "manufacture" could be used in its original sense, and that there should be no occasion for using it in its modern sense.

B. Well, you see the fact that it has so changed its sense ought to show you how much more important in the production of wealth is the direction of labour than the labour itself.

E. (*softly, as if to himself*). H'm: the foremen couldn't retire, nor the managers at the works; Jackson might, perhaps, and you certainly could,—a sliding-scale of usefulness at all events from the foremen downwards: the men who do most get least.

B. You are getting ruder again, Evans.

E. I am afraid I shall get ruder presently. I really must say that the—individuals—who—did business—in your pears have a right to claim the title of manufacturers—so far as they went.

B. (*emphatically, but not angrily*). Meaning that I'm a thief?

E. Well, you are not a thief—morally—not at present; because, till you have heard all I have to say and thought about it, you know no better. But it does seem to me that your very respectable business of manufacturing soap really means stealing soap and selling it, and sticking to the plunder. I admit by the circuitous process of robbing the people who make it.

B. Yes, I thought we should come to it again. However, go on.

E. Well, in for a penny in for a pound. This morning you called stealing the worst kind of war—a beastly miserable destructive vice. Isn't your account of what business is coming to proof positive of that? See what a market you are bringing your pigs to! You have achieved complete success in producing wares marvellously cheap, and the result is, if it stops there, that the workmen, take them all round, are none the better for it; and as for yourselves, the employers, you are threat-

ening to give up employing, because that war which forces you to crush out the life and individuality of your workmen bids fair to ruin yourselves—the conquered conquered and the conquerors undone. All that comes of stealing.

B. Well, Evans, I see I was wrong to think that you were not in earnest. But since you acquit me of the moral guilt of theft—and you must remember, by the way, that here I am in my position, and even supposing I wanted to get out of it, how can I—since you admit what you do admit, why do you use such hard words?

E. Why, in the first place, though I acquit you personally of moral theft, I don't acquit your class: that upas-tree of *Cant* which overshadows the whole middle-class in this country, and, for aught I know, throughout all civilisation, and poisons every action of our lives, and makes our pleasures, our art, our literature, our would-be aspirations even, sickening to any one who can think of an honest world,—is not this a symptom of our guilt? Year by year we of the middle classes, as we are getting more and more conscious of what ought to be, are getting more and more hateful and contemptible to ourselves and others—building up wrath against the day of wrath. How will the change come? What horrors may you and I live to see! Yes, that is the reason why I use hard words—or plain words—or bitter words, if you will: because I feel them and cannot help it. But, apart from the moral side of things, as to the material "inconvenience," there—

B. There, I admit at once that if you are right in condemning the system as dishonest the "inconvenience" of it—that is, the necessary disturbance and misery—is of course much worse than that which results from what we call stealing now, we respectables. Spasmodic stealing disapproved of by society in general we could almost afford to pass over without notice (when our gardens had not been just spoilt by it); but continuous stealing, approved of by respectability, authority, and religion,—well, if that really is the basis of our classes to-day, I must as an honest man who tries not to be a fool admit that no price would be too high for ridding ourselves of that: riot, ruin, civil war, revolution, would all be a cheap bargain. But you must convince me class society is so founded.

E. I will try to do so. Meantime I can't tell you how glad I am that we have got as far as we have done. When a man can see that the occasional theft of the product of labour is a joke to the theft in one lump of the whole of the raw material and instruments which alone allow labour to be, it is not difficult to argue with him.—Well, old fellow, it's too late now to begin on that "Birth of the Bruce"; so have another glass of grog, and then we'll say good-night in peace and quietness: though it *did* seem rather like a quarrel at one time.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

#### TORY LAW-BREAKING.

After the disturbance at Yarmouth reported in our last issue, it was feared that serious violence might be used against the next speaker who went there. However, as the meeting was arranged to be held weekly, our comrades determined to continue it. The following cutting from the *Eastern Daily Press* of last Friday contains an account of the meeting, and presents the complete defeat of the Tory roughs: "Last night, in accordance with his promise, Fred Henderson, the Socialist lecturer of Norwich, visited Yarmouth for the purpose of addressing a working-class meeting. He arrived by the 6.20 train, and punctually at 7.30 took up his stand in front of the Star Hotel on the Quay. There were several hundred people present awaiting his arrival, and as soon as he appeared a general rush was made to the spot, and a ring was formed round him. Henderson said that during the week he had received various anonymous messages containing threats against him if he ventured to revisit Yarmouth, but he wished them to understand that he should not on any account be deterred from carrying out his intentions. The address was heard throughout with great attention, no attempt being made at disturbance. Special police arrangements had been made in view of a possible emergency."

A. K. Donald also writes: Following up the tactics reported from Lowestoft and Yarmouth, the Birmingham Tories have endeavoured to prevent our meetings here. Finding hustling and the usual kinds of rowdyism of no avail, on Sunday a more serious and deliberate attempt was made to break up one of our meetings. Tarn had held a meeting in the morning at Springhill; I held a successful one in the afternoon at the Bull Ring, and again in the evening a second meeting along with Tarn at the same place; after which at eight o'clock we adjourned to the Council House to hold our usual meeting. I had spoken for twenty minutes when suddenly a bag of flour came smash against my face, then another and another—about a dozen in all. I got off my chair and addressed myself to one of a gang of constables to protect the meeting. The constable, with the usual red-tapeishness of officialdom, referred me to an inspector; so instead of wasting time on the police, I told three friends—Tarn, Shorter, and Barr—to keep a bright look-out, and the moment they saw another bag come to seize the man and hold him at any cost. I then mounted the chair again. By this time the crowd numbered four or five thousand, and I endeavoured to obtain silence. For a few seconds I obtained order, and got my address under way, when a half-full flour-bag came again in my direction. This time the man was noticed, and Shorter, Tarn, and Barr rushed forward to seize him. His name was Price, and he turned out to be a well-known "bruiser," hired by the Conservatives, and used by them as chief of their gang of "chuckers-out." The police moved forward, and a general scrimmage resulted; policemen and their inspector lay on their backs; two of our friends were knocked down and badly mauled by the Tory hired roughs. At last the man was secured between two constables and marched to the lock-up. When I arrived there, almost immediately Farndale the chief of the Birmingham police appeared on the scene. The upshot was that I was told I should have to summon the Tory bruiser Price, although he was caught red-handed in the act of creating a disturbance and assaulting our comrades. It is rather a mystery to me why I should be at the expense of prosecuting the smasher. It looks uncommonly like an attempt on the part of Mr. Farndale to put us Socialists to as much trouble as possible.

AMERICAN JUSTICE.—Mr. George S. Turner, a "wealthy cotton-mill owner," of Columbia, South Carolina, has been sentenced to five years' imprisonment for murdering one of his workmen who had asked for more wages. The prisoner was (of course) released on bail pending an appeal. The *New York Tribune* heads its report of the case "A light verdict for a rich murderer." This employer was an Anarchist; an Anarchist of the L.P.D.L. school, quite a different individual from the workman Anarchist.

<sup>1</sup> This illustration is taken from Proudhon's 'What is Property?' The fable an ancient one, as might be expected.