COMMUNICATIONS ON SOCIAL OPERATIONS.

Correspondents are asked to remember that one or two things that most of them forget. The Editors and the Manager are separate and distinct people, with differing functions. Letters intended for one should not be addressed to the other. MSS., reports, notices, etc., are for the Editor: business communications and cash for the Manager. Letters addressed to any other person or sent to any other address are at writer's own risk. Reports, notices, etc., should not all be mixed up together on one piece of paper and on both sides of that; this entails the labour of re-writing the whole thing, and we cannot afford to be so backward.

ENGQUIST.—We are trying to arrange for an exhaustive article upon the French National Workmen's Congress. You are right, they were never given a half chance of success, but were ruined by bourgeois violence and ignorance.


Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday October 5.

E. and R. E. A. (Eng.)—There is nothing further, to our knowledge, to be said about the case.

T. FORGARE.-The account of the case is correct.

W. R. V.—The letter is in our files, and will be forwarded. It has not been published in any other paper.

THE CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications of a Social Character.

Correspondence is particularly solicited on the following points: (1) communications on social operations. They should be written on good paper, addressed to the Editors, 15 Farringdon Rd., E.C., and accompanied by the name. (2) personal communications for the previous issue should be written on good paper. As all articles are signed, no special signature is required, in order to be sure of their position in these pages. No letters are to be sent to any other address, or sent to any other person. (3) all communications, personal or social, should be addressed to the Manager, 15 Farringdon Rd., E.C. Remittances in Postal Orders or half-crown stamps.

FREE SPEECH IN AMERICA.

Our readers will see that meetings to protest against the cold-blooded judicial murder of the seven Chicago prisoners are to be held within the next fortnight. Since this number of the Commonwealth may come into the hands of persons who have not read other numbers and who have but a vague idea of the bearings of the whole case, or as is most likely, have been prejudiced by the misrepresentations of the press, we feel it our duty to publish the sterner facts of the American capitalist's power, and the ruthless lies of the English press. It may be that this leaflet will be of service to the real crime of these men in that it may be determined whether their execution was an act of justice or a crime.

These seven men are condemned to death for being present at a meeting called to protest against the murder of the seven Chicago prisoners on a demonstration of workmen on strike by the police and the hired swashbucklers of the capitalists. At that meeting a bomb was thrown which killed and wounded several policemen. The police then fired on the crowd, and the capitalist government took this opportunity of hatching an accusation against our comrades, brought them to trial and condemned them in the teeth of the evidence. On their appeal they have been kept in prison for more than a year and re-condemned by a court which is practically the same as the first one. These men are really condemned for supporting the workmen in their strike and for speaking out their opinions on the vile, mis-called "Society" of America and civilisation generally. They are persecuted for holding and expressing the opinions which we hold and express whether we call ourselves Anarchists or Socialists, and for applying those opinions to the events of the passing day and the oppression of the American workmen going on under their eyes. Their persecution is an in tertertum measure directed against freedom of speech in America; and it will be a disgrace to the British workmen, whatever their politics may be, if they do not express themselves clearly and emphatically on this attack on the liberties which the United States have been supposed to guard so jealously, but which it would seem are but a one-sided affair after all. We appeal, above all, to our Radical and Democratic friends to whom we are now thrust on the moral base and Irish prejudice once so current in this country, not to consider men outside the pale of fair-dealing because they express revolutionary ideas; and to remember that whether they may think our Socialist theories right or wrong, we claim at least equal liberty for all, and that amid the present welter of politics in which reaction is struggling so hard to lift up its head, if we do not guard the liberties we have won with the utmost care and jealousy we shall find them encroached on day by day. At last Realism will arise to do the work of Socialists that they are the slaves of the rich and powerful in all senses.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

CONDITION OF WORKERS.

FARINGDON, BERKS, AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

This is a fair example of a farming neighbourhood in Berkshire or Oxfordshire. Population of town, 1,239.

Wages normally 10s. weekly in small cottages, 12s. in winter half of year for farm workers; least wages of men 8s., boys less. Extra money in harvest, or at Michaelmas, but much less than formerly. For some kind of work, usual length of hiring is 16 weeks, in Michaelmas, for the year, but sometimes half year. Some landowners keep on their labourers without lowering the wages agreed upon in more prosperous times, and only dismiss for "misconduct." At Coleshill, the Earl of Radnor also gives a pension of 7s. weekly to men who in his service have become too old or infirm to work. In the town of Faringdon live many whose wages are not higher as a rule, but who go out as extra hands in summer, and are out of work in the winter. Houses and small gardens sometimes free in addition to wages. Before the equalisation of poor rates within each union, many cottages were pulled down to drive the people into the towns, from which they have not returned to the country. At Coleshill, the Earl of Radnor has a large house which probably costs £300 to build, and a good sized garden, provided for each family, at a rent of five guineas a year. In Oxfordshire those landowners have done best who have improved old picturesque grey stone and stone slated cottages, instead of building new ones. In Faringdon the rent of a cottage with a small garden is in most cases 2s. 6d. a week, and no allowance in wages is made to meet the rent.

Allotments can generally be rented at the same rate per acre as the farms, which is from 10s. per annum upwards, with great differences for different land, and various arrangements as to parochial rates and (with railways) as to additional rates. In the parish of Wantage, the Wantage district to plough the labourer's potato or corn allotment gratis, but sometimes he changes the ground allotted from year to year. In the town of Faringdon are some cheap allotments, belonging to a society, but the rest are let at the rate of 6s. and some £16 per acre yearly.

Remarks.—The workers dare not take any steps to help themselves towards the prevention of some of the abuses practised by the shopkeepers, to whom last both farmers and workers are much in debt. The small shopkeepers are almost ruined by the large ones, and a further lowering of wages would surely stop them from recovering debts from labourers.

Witney, Oxfordshire.—Blanket making is still carried on here. The machinery is driven chiefly by water power. Wages 10s. weekly for men, 1s. 3d. weekly for women, no men employed except the toilers. Cowgrove in Minter Lovel parish, near Witney, founded by Fergus O'Connor. In spite of former mismanagement and present heavy burdens, the allotment holders, having security of tenure, are able to plant fruit trees, and keep hens and ducks, and have even built houses sometimes, but they only want to see more employment for their small"holdings," or take several holdings.

Lechale, pop. 1,176, and Buscot, pop. 571. Wages.—Eight years ago a 1s. per week, now 1s. 6d; and the labourers 1s. 5d. weekly. There has been much piece work also, and contract work. Steam ploughmen by piecework might make 30s. weekly. In farming work this has for the last four years come to an end, with the result that the men on the larger farms now live 1s. 5d. with many exceptions, better or worse; a few still get as much as 1s. 6s. 3d. for 1s. 5d. for 1s. 6d. for 1s. For extra work, men at 2s. 6d. for 2s. 3d. for 3s. 4d., and women at 1s. 6d. for 2s. 6d. for 3s. These wages are not given in harvest, but most of the other labourers are only 1s. 5d. weekly, generally less. There is an iron foundry in Lechale; the ordinary trades are much combined, many small employers with working with their men, and carrying on more than one trade assisted by the same hand. Most men can also work on the farm, though they are usually independent.

Houses with gardens in Buscot, 1s., in Lechale, 2s. weekly; sometimes given in addition to wages from 11s. to 14s.

Allotments in Buscot at £3. 4s. per acre weekly with parochial rates in addition, but not tithe, this rent being 4s. per acre more than the rest of the farm under the same landowners. In Lechale, a large