

THE LABOUR STRUGGLE.

BRITAIN.

COLLIERS' STRIKES.—At Bolton 400 men have come out on strike at the D'Arcy Lever Collieries to protest against deduction for dirt, a question which is creating considerable interest among colliers. The Union are supporting the men in their action.

The workmen employed at the House Coal Colliery, Ynyshir, in the Rhondda Valley, have given a month's notice in consequence of a dispute in reference to a strata of rubbish, commonly called "clod," which, it is stated, falls with the coal whilst the latter is being hewn, and causes a great deal of annoyance and extra labour to the men, who, therefore, demand extra pay.

There was great excitement at Ebbw Vale on account of the strike of 1,600 colliers. Three men were dismissed from the Waunlwydd pit because they refused to shift some rubbish. The matter was taken up by the rest of the colliers, who insisted on the reinstatement of the three men. In the absence of the manager the officials of the colliery refused to interfere, and 1,600 men then struck. After a few days the officials gave in and the men resumed work on Saturday. The three men were reinstated and wages are to be reconsidered.

On Wednesday a meeting of miners was held at Princes End to consider the question of allowance coal. A proposal was made by certain employers to discontinue the allowance coal, which had taken the men by surprise. It was said that in 1887 they raised in the whole of the United Kingdom about 32,000,000 tons more than in 1874, at 40 per cent. less wages, and with fewer hands.

MASON'S STRIKE.—The masons and labourers employed on buildings in the Heckmondwike district, struck work on the 25th ult. for an advance of wages—the former from 3s. to 3s. per week, and the latter from 2s. to 2s. 6d. A similar advance has already been obtained by the bulk of the masons working in Dewsbury.

STEELWORKERS' STRIKE AT WORKINGTON.—About 500 men are reported to be out of employment owing to the strike of rail-mill and steel furnacemen at West Cumberland Iron and Steel Works against the proposed reduction of 25 per cent. in wages. The Bessemer department rail-mill finishing works are stopped in consequence.

IRONWORKERS' DISPUTE AT GREAT BRIDGE.—Week before last we reported a meeting of iron-workers on July 2 at Great Bridge, to consider a dispute about "fours." The deputation then appointed subsequently waited upon the employers with respect to the proposal of a reduction of 6d. per ton. After a protracted discussion, in which both sides adduced arguments in favour of their claims, the masters withdrew their proposal. Consequently the men who were on notice will still continue to work and receive the 6d. per ton for making "fours."

DOCK LABOURERS' STRIKE.—A number of East India Dock labourers have struck for an increase of wages. These men are paid 5d. per hour, and receive in addition, in accordance with their stations, a share of the surplus over in each contract for unloading a ship. In the lower grade one share only is received, and this means one penny per hour. Latterly shares have not been so plentiful, owing to dullness of trade, and the men on strike have asked to be paid 6d. per hour, agreeing to forego all claim to shares, and this not being granted they turned out.

ANOTHER STRIKE OF GIRLS.—The employees of George Griffin and Co.'s tin box manufactory struck on the 13th on account of fines. There are fifty or sixty girls engaged at the above firm, and they have all gone out. On seeing a bill posted in the window—"Press Hands wanted"—they covered the bill with mud, and as fresh hands applied they were also pelted and hustled about. The manager sent for the police, who were hooted a good deal. They soon "dispersed the mob." The girls, however, soon returned and pelted the male employees with red ochre and flour. They need looking up and being helped to organise.

STRIKE OF PIT LADS AT NORMANTON.—The Don Pedro pit, Loscoe, near Normanton, had to stop work in consequence of a strike amongst the pony drivers, who demanded an advance. About 400 men were thrown out of work. Several miners compelled their lads to go to work, but two who had done this were waylaid and well kicked by the lads out on strike. On Tuesday (10th) the lads returned to work after being on strike for a week. They have not succeeded in obtaining an advance, but it is stated that shortly they are to be paid by contract, and this is regarded satisfactorily both by the lads and the miners. The 400 miners who were thrown out of employment in consequence of the strike have also resumed work.

CABLE-CHAIN MAKERS' STRIKE.—At a meeting of the cable-chain makers who are on strike in the Cradley Heath and surrounding districts, it was stated that some employers had offered an increase of 3d. It was, however, resolved to continue the strike until the list-price demanded was conceded. The men claim an advance of 4d. per cwt., and it is thought probable that the concession upon the part of the employers will lead to a compromise. At a large meeting of cable-chain makers belonging to the South Staffordshire and East Worcestershire district at Cradley Heath on the 9th, it was stated that Hingley and Sons, and Wood, Aston, and Co., had conceded the required advance, viz., 4d. per cwt., and it was resolved that the men should resume work. It was decided to continue the strike at the factories where the employers refuse to concede the advance.

COLLIERS' WAGES.—A correspondent of the *Labour Tribune* puts an important point well before his comrades. He says: "At one colliery where the field price per ton has ranged from 2s. 4d. to 2s. 6d., the men have been told that 2s. per ton will be the highest price paid, and that they can either work at it or leave it; while the owner of the said colliery can support a racing stud, a mansion, and other luxurious surroundings. I met a man on Saturday evening last who told me he had worked six days at another colliery, and all the money he had received from the office was £1, 12s. 6d. Out of this sum he paid his drawer 14s., and expended in powder, fuse, and tools 3s. 1d., making a total of 17s. 1d., and leaving for six days' work—and hard work too—15s. 1d., or one penny over 2s. 6d. per day. Promises had been made that a day's wage should be made up, but as these promises are apparently made only to be broken, they would be better not made at all. Fellow working-men, do not these facts show you that the masters anticipate an advance in wages and they want to pull off, bit by bit, more than a ten or fifteen per cent. would bring back? Let us try to be wise in time."

COLLIERY STRIKE AT PONTYPRIDD.—An adjourned delegate meeting of the Rhondda District Miners' Association was held on Saturday week, when the dispute, in consequence of which 600 men have been on strike for the last eight weeks, was again considered. At last meeting the question of

whether the Albion Company's offer of open arbitration be accepted was referred to the collieries for re-consideration. When the question was now put to the vote it was found that 4,900 men were in favour of arbitration, dissentients 4,000. The offer was therefore declared accepted, and arbitrator chosen. Six delegates voted against a motion that pending the arbitrator's award the Albion men should be allowed to resume work, while 14 voted in favour. It was therefore agreed that the men resume work soon as agreement is drawn up between W. Abraham, M.P. (Mabon), on behalf of the district, and the Company, under which the latter, if award be against them, refund the difference in price for working the two seams from date of resumption of work. A resolution was passed that the arbitrators should not delay their award longer than two months. W. Abraham, M.P., the district agent, was authorised to proceed against certain colliery officials who are alleged to have dismissed without legal notice some of the Albion men who had been employed by them.

MAIL CART DRIVERS' WAGES.—Replying to a letter in the *Postal Service Gazette* (quoted in this column of No. 130), "A Poor Driver" says:—"As regards the wages of the men employed as mail cart drivers, I beg to state that the wages never were £1 to £1 15s. per week, for the highest of all was £1 7s. per week, and now there is only one driver receiving that amount, and the others receive £1 to £1 5s. per week. That is the nominal sum for working 15 to 16 hours per day, and out in all weathers; and if a poor driver feels inclined to do any extra duty, such as Sunday work, he would receive the great sum of 3d. per hour, besides putting up with all kinds of insults from his superiors, as they are connected with the Post Office. Now, as regards the clothing, we receive one suit per year, and they are a disgrace to the Department before half that time is expired. We have to give our old ones up on receiving the new ones, instead of being allowed to retain them for repairing purposes, so that is one privilege we are deprived of. The public look on these situations as being first-class, but they never have seen anything in black and white to tell them different, therefore they have been shut out of it all. Fancy a man with a wife and two or three children, or perhaps more, only getting £1 per week, and having to pay 5s. 6d. per week rent out of it, how much is there left for him to support his family?"

ANTI-SWEATING CIRCULAR.—The London Tailors and Machinists Society are sending a circular on sweating to London and provincial master tailors. As the report of the Lords' Sweating Committee will not be published for some time, the society thinks that in the interval something might be done to better the condition of the workmen. Masters are therefore asked—(1st) To open workshops to be under your direct control, and pay your workers by your own cashier. Hours of labour to be eight per day. (2nd) That each worker be allowed a space for work of no less than 250 cubic feet; that ventilating shafts be fixed to each workshop. (3rd) That the workers be allowed to make their own rules respecting fines, with your approval; such fines to be distributed as the workers direct. (4th) That every man and woman employed in your firm to be a member of a trade society. (5th) That any workman known to defraud the public by bad workmanship to be dealt with by a committee of workmen selected by the workers in your firm every six months. The Marylebone branch of the Amalgamated Society resolved on the 11th that the enquiry into sweating ought to be "extended to the West-end, as there is ample justification for such extension." The Chester tailors having held a meeting about sweating, waited on a representative employer, and the reply being unsatisfactory are meditating a strike.

DARLASTON NUT AND BOLT STRIKE.—The notice given for restoration of 1881 list, less 5 per cent., expired on Saturday, and 200 operatives turned out on strike. The action of these men has had a good effect on those in receipt of full price, and to-day all the principal works are standing, only those being in full swing where the list is given in its fullness. The feeling amongst the men is one of remarkable unanimity in favour of the assertion of their rights, and not a few have made considerable sacrifices in order to support those upon whom the success of the agitation depends. There are now only four factories working at the full price. As early as half-past five on Monday morning about 100 men assembled near the London Oak and Phoenix Works to ascertain if the workmen would return to their labours at less than the list price. A couple of police officers were present, but the men behaved themselves right nobly, and these functionaries were of no avail. The employees who turned up at six o'clock threw in their lot with those on strike, and their numbers were augmented by those who came after breakfast. Meanwhile other contingents had been stationed at other works, and their efforts were also successful. The result was that a procession was formed to the Cross Guns, New Street, where a mass meeting was held. The large room was crowded, many of the operatives being unable to gain admission.

SETTLEMENT OF THE MATCHMAKERS' STRIKE.

On Tuesday 17th a deputation from the London Trades' Council, accompanied by the girls' Strike Committee, had an interview with the directors of Bryant and May. After a long discussion, the following terms were agreed upon for submission to a meeting of the strikers, who were awaiting the result in Charrington's Hall:—(1) Abolition of all fines; (2) abolition of all deductions for paint, brushes, stamps, etc.; (3) restitution of "pennies" if the girls do their own racking, or payment by piecework of boys employed to do it—(the result of this latter will be more than equal to the penny); (4) the packers to have their threepence; (5) all grievances to be taken straight to the managing directors without the intervention of the foremen. The firm further said that they would as soon as possible provide a break-fast-room, so that the girls will not be obliged to eat in the room where they work, and also expressed a strong wish that the girls would organise themselves into a union, so that further disputes may be officially laid before the firm. These conditions were submitted to the meeting at Charrington's Hall by the Strike Committee, and the girls unanimously decided to agree to them, the payment of boy helpers by piecework being accepted as a full equivalent for their pennies. The wax-workers returned to their work on Wednesday and the wooden match-workers on Thursday. All the girls and boys to be taken back, no distinction being made as to ringleaders.

The following letter was sent to the newspapers of Wednesday: "The satisfactory settlement of the matchmakers' strike does not relieve us from the necessity of providing support for the girls on Saturday next. They can only receive one day's wages this week, and we desire to make up what will be lacking. The girls have behaved admirably, and deserve public support. They turned out against intolerable grievances, they have not created any disturbances, they are returning to work the moment their grievances are redressed. Any money left over after paying them on Saturday will form the nucleus of their union fund. . . . Subscriptions can be sent to us at the subjoined address.—ANNIE BESANT; HERBERT BURROWS. Office of the *Link*, 34 Bouverie Street, E.C."

COTTON TRADE.—Last week end the operative spinners in Bolton received the 5 per cent. advance agreed to by the employers at their Manchester meeting, but one firm at Tyldesley has refused the advance and the men are on strike. The card and blowing room hands have not been as fortunate as the spinners, more than one firm having declined to give the advance to the whole of their hands. At Shipton Mill none of the cardroom hands got the advance agreed upon, and at several other mills only a portion of the workpeople got it. A special general meeting of the Card and Blowing-room Operatives' Association was held at the Spinners' Institute on the 11th, to consider the matter. It was reported that the matter was likely to be amicably settled. At Blackburn on the 9th the weavers of Moss Street Mill struck in consequence of excessive infusion of steam in weaving shed. Over 700 looms are stopped through the strike. At Huddersfield on the 5th about eleven o'clock, the cardroom hands of Waterside and Bridge Mills ceased work on account of the firm not granting the 10 per cent. to the strippers, grinders, and blowing-room, as paid at Oldham, Hyde, and other places. After they had stopped their machinery, a telegram was sent to London to the boss, and a reply came to close the firm until further notice. Work was resumed on the 11th, amicable terms having been made and the advance conceded. At Barrowfield the strike of spinners which took place on the 3rd still continues. It is stated that men have seen the employer, who promised to investigate the matter, but up to the time of writing nothing has been arranged. At Macclesfield the weavers at the Lower Heyes Mill, to the number of 540, tendered their notice on the 11th, to leave work in a fortnight if the advance of 5 per cent. was not given. The directors afterwards affixed a notice that those who wanted to work could do so, and that those who wish to leave their employ may carry out their wish, all contracts being broken.

REVOLUTIONARY CALENDAR.

WEEK ENDING JULY 28, 1888.

22	Sun.	1789. Foulon hanged, with grass in his mouth. 1848. Habeas Corpus Act suspended in Ireland. 1852. Battle of Six Mile Cross. 1877. Burning and sacking of Pennsylvania R. R. at Pittsburgh. 1885. Police attack on a Socialist funeral at Frankfurt.
23	Mon.	1795. Trial of Henry Yorke (or Redhead) for conspiracy. 1803. Rising in Dublin. 1866. Hyde Park railings pulled down. 1870. General Council of International Working Men's Association issue manifesto on the war.
24	Tues.	1821. Trial of Carlile's sister for publishing Paine. 1836. Armand Carrel died. 1851. Window-tax repealed.
25	Wed.	1792. Coblenz manifesto of the Allies against French Revolution. 1793. Wm. Winterbotham tried for seditious words. 1794. André Chenier guillotined. 1826. The Decembrists, K. F. Rileeff, S. T. Mouravieff-Apostol, M. P. Bestuyeff-Runin, and P. A. Kakhovski, hanged. 1844. Brothers Bandiera shot. 1877. General Treppoff flogs a political prisoner, for which he is afterwards shot by Vera Zassulich.
26	Thur.	1792. Quarrel between Jacobins and Girondins. 1794. Robespierre's last oration to the Convention, denouncing the stockjobbers. 1869. Irish Church Disestablishment Bill passed.
27	Fri.	1777. Murder of Jane M'Crea. 1794. Fall of Robespierre (9th Thermidor). 1830. Second Revolution in France begins.
28	Sat.	1794. W. M. Byrne hung. 1835. Fieschi's attempt on Louis Philippe. 1884. 250 arrests at Warsaw.

Hyde Park Railings.—Monday July 23, 1866, is one of the most peculiar days in the whole of our Calendar. It can claim to be a day to be kindly remembered by both democrat and aristocrat. As stated a few weeks back, at the period in question there were in the ranks of the active agitators a few with some grit; the grit has all been washed out since, and very little else but mud remains with such as are alive to-day. Having called a meeting, the conveners were not to be bluffed off by Dicky Mayne. About four o'clock the clans began to gather at the usual centres. At five o'clock the park gates were closed and locked, the authorities having first allowed—with fine display of tactics—a large number of people to gather inside. About seven o'clock Beales and others of the committee arrived at the Marble Arch entrance and made formal demand for admission, which was refused; whereupon they returned to their cabs and proceeded to Trafalgar Square, which had been advertised as the alternative meeting place. Having, however, arrived in force outside the park, and many not caring to emulate the brave old Duke of York, who led his men up the hill and then down again, the processionists tried a rush or two, which were beaten back by police staves or by the horses of the mounted men. 1,600 police were of little avail for keeping from the railing people along two sides of the park, and very soon was seen the effect of having allowed a lot of people to assemble inside, for the word went along outside that a meeting was being held; the outsiders of course wanted to see if this were true, crowded up to the railings, climbed on the coping, hanging on man behind man, and naturally these iron railings, like all English iron railings, only a fraud of protection and a sham of strength, first quivered and then fell. In Bayswater Road was the first breach; but having made one, others soon followed, and soon about a mile of railing was prone on the ground, and Ruskin's ideas of iron railing was justified, for in throwing this stuff over revolutionists have the advantage of removing a barrier and providing themselves with weapons—if of fair quality, such as, say, round Kennington Park, long and wrought to good point, not to be despised. The commotion spread from the Park to the Square, and down Parliament Street to the House; and Walpole wept and Downing Street funked, but English native good sense—or slavish respect for Law-'n'-Order—soon asserted its power and the storm passed. Next night there was a somewhat warm debate in Parliament, when John Stuart Mill, Ayrton, and one or two others spoke out for the right of public meeting, which—Toryism being somewhat scared by the shadow of Revolution—has been fairly well respected for twenty years. J. S. Mill in the debate dared the Government to act on the advice of the Tory scribes and prohibit all open-air speaking: "I promise them that they will have to encounter an opposition of a very different kind, and from different persons, to any they have yet encountered"; and one wonders if he would back up Cunninghame Graham or Conybeare in Trafalgar Square to-day, which in that day was the very place suggested as more suitable than the Park. As quite in the natural order of things, the broken heads and arms of the masses were ultimately exploited for the benefit of the classes; for the falling down of the railings along Park Lane was taken advantage of to very considerably widen that thoroughfare, and what had been a lane became a wide handsome road, to my lords' great gain.—T. S.

Window-Tax repealed.—In 1688 was repealed the Hearth Tax. Some seven or eight years later a rather large sum had to be made up to make good the miserable state to which the coin of the kingdom had come by clipping and sweating. To defray this re-coinage charge, in 1696 was imposed the Window Tax, certainly one of the meanest and wickedest taxes ever conceived. Every inhabited house except cottages—i.e., houses not paying to church and poor rates, a very small exemption—was charged: Less than 10 windows, 2s.; from 10 to 20, 2s. and 4s. additional—i.e., 6s.; 20 or more, 2s. and 8s. additional—i.e., 10s. After the union of England and Scotland these sums were increased. In 1803 great increase was made. In 1815 about £2,000,000 was raised by this tax on air and light. Well might Shelley write in scorn of the commercialism under which "all things are sold: the very light of heaven is venal." In 1829 the yield was £1,163,760. In 1840 the duty was raised 10 per cent. In 1845, 1848 a strong agitation was raised against the duty, but it was not until July 1851, under Sir Chas. Wood (afterwards Lord Halifax) that the final repeal was made—14 and 15 Vict. ch. 36, July 24, 1851, removing the Window Tax and granting the Inhabited House Duty in lieu thereof. This will be more fully dealt with shortly.—T. S.

Murder of Jane M'Crea.—No single event contributed so much to the unrelenting defiance of the American republicans to the power of the British crown as this atrocious tragedy. Every circumstance tended to heap ignominy upon Lord North and his bull-headed agents. Burke had thundered at Westminster with all his crushing eloquence against the employment of the barbarous red-skins in the odious coercion war. This employment had made the otherwise lukewarm farming colonists throw in their powerful support with the commercial rebels of the American ports. To heap ignominy upon the stupid ministry in London, it was a beautiful and inoffensive girl, sweetheart of one of their own friends, a young American Tory officer, who fell a victim to the indiscriminate bloodthirsty brutality of the Indian allies of royalty.—L. W.

SOCIALISM IN THE MIDLANDS.

On Sunday last, July 15th, the Socialists of Nottingham, Sheffield, and Chesterfield met for a picnic at Ambergate, where the little Amber runs into the lovely Derwent, a place beautiful in spite of its railway junction, and surrounded by hills and woods which made one long to wander in them. But on Sunday only the more hardy comrades ventured to explore a little of the district, for St. Swithin sent us his very worst weather—evidently sharing the common objection to Socialists—and we were forced to take our chief pleasure indoors, in the meeting of so many comrades from the three centres. All our parties were smaller than they would have been had the morning been fine, but we mustered about fifty in spite of it, and spent a very enjoyable time together at a country inn. We joined in singing many of the 'Chants of Labour,' which went very well, the tunes being taken up capitably considering so few of the comrades had heard them before. I think it will be found when the songs get sung more at our meetings that the tunes have on the whole been very happily chosen, and the singing of them will, I feel sure, greatly help to create that unity of feeling which is so much wanted among us.

In our pleasure we did not forget the more serious struggle going on in London. Some account was given of the match-girls' strike, and the following resolution was passed and forwarded to Annie Besant, together with £2 1s. 8d. collected amongst the comrades: "That the Socialists of Nottingham, Sheffield, and Chesterfield gathered at Ambergate desire to express their profound sympathy with the match-girls now on strike in London, and will do all in their power to help them to compel the Bryant and May Company to accede to their moderate demands. They also protest against the sweating system generally as now existing, and ask the people to support the Socialist party in their endeavour to introduce a new social system, in which such abominations as are now being revealed shall be impossible."

After tea we all returned home cheered by the meeting of comrades, and hoping for better weather for our gathering next year—for we intend to make it an annual institution. R. U.

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

OFFICES: 13 FARRINGTON ROAD, E.C.

The Offices of the Socialist League will be open for the sale of *Commonweal* and all other Socialist publications from 8.30 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day except Sunday. The Secretary will be in attendance from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

Socialist League Propaganda.—H. Samuels, Is. Help is earnestly asked from all friends and sympathisers to extend the educational work of the Socialist League. Printed forms for collections can be obtained from the Secretary on application.

Strike Committee.—Collected in Regent's Park, Sunday July 8th, 4s. 6d. J. LANE, Treasurer.

"COMMONWEAL" PRINTING FUND.

Langley, 2s.; P. W., 6d.; C. J. F., 2s. 6d.; K. F., 1s.

REPORTS.

CLERKENWELL.—On Sunday, July 15, the members of this branch and their friends met to open our new meeting-room. A substantial tea, speeches, songs, recitations, and then the Marseillaise, ended a very pleasant gathering.—B.

HYDE PARK.—In spite of the inclement weather, a meeting was held on Sunday afternoon in this park to protest against the imprisonment of Dillon and the murder of Mandeville. Some members of our League (with the large banner) joined the procession on Clerkenwell Green and marched to the Park, where, with our comrades of the S.D.F., speeches of protest were made by Culwick, Parker, and Henderson, the pouring rain breaking up the meeting prematurely.

BRADFORD.—Sunday 15th, Paylor (of Leeds) lectured at Laycock's Temperance Hotel. Considerable interest is evinced in these lectures, which we intend to continue till the debating society commence its winter course and require the room.—P. B.

NORWICH.—Good meeting at Yarmouth by Poynts and Mowbray. On Sunday large meeting in Market Place by Mowbray. In evening another, when Mowbray gave an address on "The Old Nobility." After meeting members adjourned to hall and held a social meeting. Very good sale of *Commonweal* and good collections.

WALSALL.—At Bilston Liberal Club on Friday, Sanders delivered a second address, followed by open discussion, when our teetotal friends undertook to supply more than Socialism without even troubling to deal with economics at all. We shall have a branch here shortly, as several good men have already joined. Sanders received his expenses, and has handed same over towards a Socialist club in Walsall. On Saturday, usual outdoor meeting addressed by Sanders, Tarn, and Burns (of S.D.F., Birmingham). Literature sold well, and 7s. 3d. collected for the Bryant and May Strike Fund.—H. S.