CORRESPONDENCE.

COMMUNISM AND ANARCHISM.

I have to excuse myself for being so long in answering our comrades. My journey to the Paris Congress, and business necessary to be done before and after, have prevented me from doing the greater part of what I should have done. Not knowing what to say to answer our friends who have written to the Commonweal. I must premise, by the way, that I have let a typographical error of importance go unnoticed: for "moral conscience" our friends should read "social conscience."

And now I find that one difficulty in dealing with the friends who are dissatisfied with me, is that a little is read from what they think, but considerably from what they write—e.g., comrades Anarchist and Commune—usage suggests a certain flatness to every word you like so long as you don't interfere with your neighbour to do as he likes with a negative; which he cannot mean to do. Anyhow, I assert it with a feeling of some hope that a participation in the same convention and common to every man, will forbid such individual interference, and use coercion if other means fail; and also that without that there can be no social conscience of a society is impossible: I must have time to find out if this is so. I may say that I percieve here that the unhappy misprint of moral should have been made to go to private, and not to social.

Comrade II. Davis misunderstands my use of the word Communist in supposing me to use it as the Owennes did, as implying life in separate communities, whether those communities were scattered accidents amidst a capitalist society or not; whereas I use it as a more accurate term for Socialism as implying equality of condition and consequently abolition of private property. In this sense, of course, you could not live Communistically until the present society of capitalism or contract is at an end. Equally of course, the living in small communities is not in any essential of this great change, though I have little doubt that it would bring about such a way of living and abolish big cities, which, equally with capitalism, must be much crowded. In his reference to Philip drunk and sober, comrade Davis does not of course really mean that any obnoxious person shall be allowed to tyrannize over us after this is done, but only that it is a step towards the end, with his words mean.

As a matter of majority rule, let us look at the matter again. All rule must be, as comrade Davis sees, majority rule—i.e., of the effective majority. If at any time the minority rules, it is because they are better organized, have the more energetic adherents, in fact, because they counted majority: this effective majority therefore coersons the minority; and as long as it can coerce it, will. The time may come, and I hope it will, when the effective majority will be so high developed that coercion will be impossible, even on the part of the community: but then in those days, when the Community is a powerful one, or the state, as the Communist that there will be no chance of any of them attacking his neighbor, I'm in any way. All reasonable men, whatever they may call themselves, whether they are St. Simonists or the Left, or the Commonweal, will, as I am afraid the effective majority in the Community that there may be brought about as long as private property exists, that I desire the abolition of private property, and am a Communist.

The sooner more is the sooner Mines is, because I am driven to admit that such a condition of things is a long way ahead. And what can we do in the meantime? I remember that the great traveller Dr. Wolff, travelling in the eastern wastes, inhabited a tent alone with a stalwart Greek servant of his, who 'abitually got drunk on the feast-days of his church, and when drunk, habitually beat poor Wolff. The latter objected, and said to his servant (I quote his own words), "You must either not get drunk, or when you get drunk you must not beat me." But the servant said to Wolff, "I alone must obey the commands of the state!" Being the weakest physically, had to submit; but if there had been two Wolffs, and he had been in the weakest of the two, and if the servant had the drinking, they would certainly have put a stop to the beating. And really I think we should all of us have done in like manner, and have been two of a kind the man to the two of us, and as sure it will always be so, as long as the individual acts unsocially: in that case he has no right against the society, which he himself has cast off. And as long as the whole community is not under this state, however much the unit of association may be divided, people will have to associate in a collective sense, and that means, a new principle.

E.g., a community discuss the building of a bridge; some say Ay and some No, and persist in that opinion after all possible arguments. Comrades assembled in the smallest village or our community, would be no dispute about it as to principle, and in detail, as above, the few would have to give way to the many; I should hope without any rancour. This might afterwards become necessary to define the present state of things, and yet at the same time imagine a possibility of friction from things now are: a quite illusory hope, since those of us who are supposed to be the unanimity are in reality quite divided.

Comrade Blackwell suggests that since the majority is no more likely to be right than the minority, as Aristotle suggests, it is in vain to seek to prevent any business being done, and could in such matters thereby establish the fact of the majority's having no right or power to act. The other side of comrade Blackwell's remedy is a system of perpetual compromise, which would be disastrous if it were possible, for it would so hinder all reasonable work or progress that it could not be submitted to. Comrade Blackwell suggests the object of "vague anarchism", "vague," but he himself furnishes a specimen of their vagrancies in the plain form of the Pittsburg Congress in 1883. He adds, "Now I believe most members of the Socialist League are very ready to accept the principle of "vague anarchism," and every other Socialist also; there is nothing distinctly anarchistic in them. And this I find is often the case with "Communist-Anarchists"; this kind of person is the result of the difference between the two forms of the words, it consists in a somewhat exaggerated fear of a possible re-growth of some of the original mental conditions of the doctrine of the new Society having any definite form. On the other hand, I have met with Anarchists who were not at all vague, and who definitely opposed all organization. This is the truth, it is indeed true, that they wished to abolish organized monopoly; but they supported unorganized monopoly, or the rule of the strongest individual, taking for their guide the works of individualists, who supposed that association, a private property with no association to uphold it, a position impossible to the conception.

Our friends who have been discussing this subject do not, I know, agree with this view, but let it be Communists though they find stumbling—of the way, for me, to equalize, equality, with whatever drawbacks, will content me, and I find that at bottom this is the ideal of all Socialists. So I think the fewer party-names and distinctions we can have the better, leaving people scope for the inevitable differences between persons of different temperaments, so that various opinions may not make serious questions.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

PARIS CONGRESS.—A DISCLAIMER.

Sir,—In your number of the 10th of this month, Mr. F. Kitz pays me the compliment of having "carefully, very carefully translated" in German Keir Hardie's speech. Mr. Kitz is right. I did it "carefully, very carefully," as I always want to do to my duty. Since Mr. Kitz has omitted to mention it, I may add that I read Mr. Kitz's speech with exactly the same care and love; and if Mr. Kitz had made a speech as interesting and as instructive as those of his two countrymen, I should have repeated them to the service. W. LITTLEWOOD.

Brindisi, near Leipzig, August 11.

SOCIALISM AT YARMOUTH.

Our comrades at Yarmouth have been employing their times proficently recently, that as their report went wrong last week we are only fairly to pit them against the "We began our campaign on Monday evening, July 29th, when Reynolds gave an excellent address at North Denes, and on Wednesday, Mrs. Besant and Barber took advantage of the fair to hold a meeting on the Green at Martham. The address was given in a good Auditorium, and the public was considerable. What the devil the Socialists wanted here spelling their audiences; and another little one was held the following day, but Barber knew his character too well as a sweater of the worst kind, and expected to get wrong with the tell-collector, because we told the stall men that the lord of the place must have a licence for the purpose of a meeting. There was a fair attendance of a hundred or more. B. W. of the value of little worth of literature. In Yarmouth, on Friday evening (3rd inst.), Mrs. Tochatti held a public meeting near the Yarmouth Castle. There were many of your friends and singing, and little Tochatti, not yet 8, gave a neat little socialist speech. On Saturday evening, Reynolds, Mrs. Tochatti, and A. Barker held a meeting in the Market Place. At the meeting of the "Socialist Working Men's Society," which we placed our platform they were not there but just before we began the captain and one other made their appearance, read our placard but said nothing. But as soon as we began they started to sing. Well, we let them, but as soon as they left off singing we began, and those godly people sent for their drums (which the authorities had forbid), and for more than an hour they shouted and bunged, but Reynolds stood his ground, and took advantage of any huf to tell the people about the "Society of Combination," as he called it, and the Socialists in the day. The captain fetched a constable in uniform, who told Reynolds to desist, and he set about him with a club and the other members of the society instructs he had received. Then a detective came and tried to get us out of the street, but he had not the strength of the others. We continued our last, from sheer exhaustion, the drum and Gospel-grinding water-drinkers had to go. Reynolds moved a vote of thanks to the captain for the advertisement and the collection we had gained through their efforts, and our comrades wanted to shake hands, but the captain indignantly declined. By this time there were several hundred presence: the article, which we had been asked to keep the meeting up till nearly 10 p.m. Well, wonders never cease, we were all voted out of the meeting, and played our organ and sang till three in the morning, when we went to meet Tochatti and Turner and the others, when we thought the train we expected. So we adjourned to South Town station to meet the train, and we sang the "Maritlule from station to station. When the train to the station up came a detective and says, 'Now, don't you know better making this row?' He asked comrade Thomas (of Ipswich) his address, and before our comrades could scarcely answer him he took him to the station; but no train was seen, and he made an appearance against his name and address being taken. On Sunday we had three splendid meetings, went out to the country in the morning; Tochatti followed with an earnest and telling address. Tochatti met with the admission and the admission and our comrades has made a good impression; sold 54 Commons and collected 106.

SAILORS' STRIKE.

The Coast Seamen's Journal (San Francisco) takes the Glasgow Socialists to task for interfering in the sailors' strike, and alleges that their action has split and weakened the movement. The London Seamen's Union went amongst the sailors distributing literature, and some of the union leaders abused them; that the men resisted this and supported the Socialists, and so a secret meeting of the coast seamen was held, and the "Seamen's Journal, scientific theories, i.e., Socialism, would defeat the object of the sailors, who are fighting for better wages and the principle of unionism." The meeting decided to replace it with free fraternal co-operation. Militant Socialists could not fight the spirit of their fellow men, and rather than quarrel they decided "neither desire to, or, hinder trade union construction, they exercise both a right and a duty when they point to the object, lesion of strikes and lock-outs, and the "Seamen's Journal," which refuses to feel the same sympathy as those who believe some pertinent comments upon the action of the London Seamen's Union are submitted. The General Secretary of the Coast Union sent a friendly message to the Channel steve, and the opportunity for exacting their union!—P. C.