

It means, in plain English, that the capitalist has sweated the happy English worker till he can sweat very little more out of him, and he is now going to try his hand on the unfortunate American.

We Socialists should rejoice, for it only proves that the great commercial crisis, which will smash up the present system, is not far off, and that the far-seeing capitalist is getting out of a country which will soon be too hot for him. We shall soon have experience of the fact that by his system of wholesale robbery and greedy extortion, he has brought England to the verge of bankruptcy and national ruin. The birds are already beginning to fly before the coming storm.

Bryant and May have only been able to declare a dividend of 15 per cent. in place of the usual 20, and this in a time of improvement in trade! Surely you would think that this excellent firm, which is so generally noted for its "kindness" to its employees, ought to increase its dividends when trade is "improving." It seems, after all, that the Socialist advice to boycott certain firms is bearing good fruit, and that Bryant and May's advice (see advertisements) to the British consumer to patronise "British industry" in the persons of Bryant and May's shareholders, has not had the effect which doubtless the advertisers hoped.

Meanwhile, we can only advise our comrades to go on recommending people to boycott Bryant and May. If we can knock off 5 per cent. every year, in a very little time that firm of slave-driving Quakers will be in the bankruptcy court, which, at least, we trust will be "some consolation to mankind." D. N.

## IMPRESSIONS OF THE PARIS CONGRESS.

Concluded from p. 234.)

ON the Wednesday, after the introduction of a delegate from the far-off country of Finland, who was received with much enthusiasm, Bebel began the reading of the reports with a history of the German movement in more recent days. This took two hours in the delivery, I should think, and of course could not be translated; a short resumé was all that could be given in French and English, but even from that it was plain that the original was able and exhaustive. I should mention that most, if not all, of the reports have been handed in in writing and will be printed; so that we shall have the benefit of noting the views of the delegates as to the position of the movement in the various countries.

A Spanish delegate (I think) followed Bebel, and spoke in his native tongue, which was translated by Lafargue. His address seemed emphatic and pithy.

In the evening the veteran Lavroff read a long and interesting report from Russia. After which came a threatening of the repetition of the fruitless noise of Monday evening, for what cause I, as a stranger, am utterly unable to say. The chairman (Anseele), however, disposed of this pretty easily, though I think in England we should have thought him a little too ready to adopt the last resort of "chucking out."

Then Jules Guesde got up and delivered what as a speech must be considered as *the* speech of the Congress, and was certainly splendid oratory. It was hardly a report, however, and to some of us there seemed too strong a flavour of electioneering in it; which, considering the position of the French Social-Democrats, was of course to be expected.

Next morning, after some preliminaries, I was called upon to report for England. I should mention here that we S. L. delegates were strongly of opinion that Keir Hardie, who represented the Parliamentary side of English Socialism, should have an opportunity of speaking to that side, and that we pressed this on the Committee. In the light of what occurred later, I think this ought to be noticed.

I was told that the time now pressed so much that the rest of the speakers of reports would be asked to keep within ten minutes, which I tried to do—and I think kept within twenty. I handed in my written report later on.

I was followed by Adler, for Austria, who by no means imitated my brevity (nor did any one else). Volders reported for Belgium; Italy, Holland, and Poland also reported. After these national reports came the special reports—*i.e.*, for associations, etc. Keir Hardie spoke for the Scotch miners; I missed his speech, and chiefly remember a speech of the delegate for the Waiters' Association—very straightforward and to the point, complaining of the irrational contempt in which these luckless slaves of the well-to-do are held even by their working brethren: and also a speech of Madame Zetkin, who represented the working women of Berlin. This last was in fact a very clear and closely reasoned essay on the relation between the industrial position of women and Socialism. When printed it will be valuable as clearly establishing the difference in view between the Socialist and the "Woman's Rights" women. It was received with as much applause as any other speech; more than any, I think, except Guesde's.

The fag-end of this sitting (a very long one) was devoted to short speeches by various delegates. Here Kitz, as a result of a great deal of pressing on my part, was allowed to read the text of a resolution condemning the privileged thieves of society for their brutal treatment of the "criminals" who have been first manufactured and then punished by our robber sham-society. We understood that he would have an opportunity of moving this resolution; but the opportunity did not turn up.

Two or three Anarchists spoke in this sitting, and spoke well,

though to my mind they did not put forward any distinctively Anarchist doctrines: they were well received by the mass of the delegates, who indeed throughout strongly applauded any revolutionary sentiments. The gibe of one Anarchist deserves to be noted. Apropos of palliation by legislation on labour, he said: "When I was a Collectivist I was taught the Iron Law so well by Marx and Liebnicht, that, I cannot forget it now I am an Anarchist."

That evening (Friday) the Paris Municipality threw open the splendid public rooms of the Hotel de Ville to the delegates of both Congresses and their friends, and entertained them very handsomely after the generous "custom of the country." Also there was a friendly meeting held at our friend Maxime Lisbonne's Taverne du Baigne, which is got up to simulate a prison, with (in all senses) fearful pictures on the walls: waiters dressed as convicts, and where for the consideration of 1½ francs you can be solemnly ironed in public (I don't know what charge is made for taking off the irons). Here Louise Michel spoke, and there was much enthusiasm shown. I was not able to attend either of these entertainments, as I had to spend the night in writing out my report from my notes.

On Saturday morning we found Cunninghame Graham in the chair, and we expected that Bebel's propositions would be formally put, debated on, and (certainly) carried by a large majority; but this was not duly done. I must explain here that for three days past I had handed in a resolution of a wide Socialist character, so that the Congress might pledge itself definitely to Socialism, which all our English comrades thought necessary to be done, if it were only to give our Congress a reason for existence in opposition to the Possibilist Congress. The organisers said that the preamble of Bebel's propositions practically carried with it the sense of my resolution. This was true; but I pleaded that a separate resolution ought to be put, as there were delegates present who would vote against Bebel's propositions who would assuredly vote for a Socialist resolution, and that moreover the resolution would not have the same force imbedded in a preamble which would not be noticed alongside of its "practical" deduction.

The organisers agreed therefore to the putting of a distinct resolution, and on this Saturday morning I spent some time in Conference with our French and German friends (including Bebel), and arranged for the modification of my resolution by the introduction of matter from the French and German preambles, which, however, did not alter the sense of the original resolution.

Coming back to the Congress Hall again nothing serious seemed doing, and knowing that the vast majority of the delegates were in favour of Bebel's propositions, believing also that nothing serious would be put forward in opposition, I left for Rouen after the morning session along with Kitz and Tarleton, and was therefore not a witness of the lamentable scene that followed; therefore, what I say of it is subject to correction by those of our comrades who were there.

It was clear that no discussion of the propositions was to be allowed, and the *clôture* was voted. Thereupon, our friend Merlino rose to protest against this proceeding, but was howled down; he was attacked in words by a delegate and accused of carrying on organised interruption, and his expulsion was ordered by the chairman. This was carried out with much brutal violence, against which the League delegates attempted to protect him. After his expulsion, Mrs. Schack and Tochatti rose also to protest, and then all our delegates present left and handed in a written protest against the violence and the smothering of the discussion.

Now surely, short as the time for discussion was, time could have been found for two speakers at least to put forward the contrary to the very propositions which from the first we had been called together to discuss; and since the Congress (though undoubtedly in the main composed of Social Democrats) had distinctly invited Socialists of *all kinds*, it must be said to have stultified itself in refusing to listen to opinions which everybody knew were held by some of the delegates; and the intolerance of the majority must remain a serious blot on what was otherwise a successful demonstration at least.

On the Sunday morning, the delegates went to Pere la Chaise to hang a wreath on the Mur des Federés, the death-place of so many of the murdered men of the Commune. Cunninghame Graham and Tochatti spoke there amongst others, and so came to an end this great gathering.

Looking back on it, it seems clear that if the Congress had gone on with its business instead of trying to stand well with the public by discussing the possibility of a fusion, which almost all of us knew was impossible, we should have gained at least one whole day for debating the pros and cons on Bebel's propositions; and if, in addition, the reports of the different nations had been taken as read (since they are all to be printed) we should have had time enough for a debate which would have satisfied everybody, and sent the delegates of all shades away contented. Because in the course of that debate everything could have been said that was necessary about the movement generally.

Finally, the impression made on me by attendance at this International Congress is that such gatherings are not favourable for the dispatch of business, and their real use is as *demonstrations*, and that it would be better to organise them as such. I mean that two or three great public meetings should be held (after the due formalities of verification, etc., have been gone through), that opportunities should be given for the delegates to meet each other in social and conversational meetings, and that there should be no voting, no "playing at Parliament." This is my wisdom after the event; but I think it is worth considering, as no doubt there will soon be another International Socialist Congress.

WILLIAM MORRIS.