

from the waggon with his son, and the crowd roaring with fury rushes on. The rest of the people in the waggon follow, carrying the other flags. There are seventy police, the whole available force from Bow Street, upon the ground. These rush upon the men bearing two of the flags, one of which has the inscription "The brave soldiers are our friends" upon it, and drag them from them and break the flags to pieces. They, however, let the crowd rush on unmolested. The people pour on to the number of six or seven hundred down Coppice Row and through Cowcross Street to the city. In Skinner Street, Snow Hill, an arms shop is sacked. Young Watson rushes in, pistol in hand, demanding arms. Another young man, a Mr. Platt, in the shop, seized with a fear that Watson is going to shoot him, grapples with him, and in the struggle the pistol goes off and Platt is seriously wounded. The mob then rush through Snow Hill to Cheapside, down to Royal Exchange. The gates of the Royal Exchange are open and they rush through it. The Lord Mayor and some city constables are in waiting, and they charge on the crowd and capture Hooper and the remaining tricolour. The people who have got through the Exchange turn to rescue their comrade, but the gates of the Exchange are closed by constables and Lord Mayor. The rioters endeavour to force the gates, and discharge their guns and pistols through the bars at the upholders of law and order. Finding it impossible to force these solid barriers, they pour off towards Bishopsgate, young Watson leading their sword in hand. They reach Bishopsgate Street, and rushing down Houndsditch arrive at the Minories. In the Minories at that time were several gunsmiths' shops, and two were broken open and pillaged. In one of them near Tower Hill the people found two small field-pieces, and in obedience to orders received from the leaders, a sailor began to sponge and load one. Meanwhile Thistlewood and the elder Watson went on to the Tower. There were a number of soldiers on the ramparts, attracted by the tumult, for many of the crowd were loading and discharging their muskets and pistols in the air, to the alarm and consternation of the timid shopkeepers. Thistlewood climbed on the rails in front of the moat, and called upon the soldiers to join the people and hand over the Tower to the populace. The soldiers made no response to these overtures. Finding that the military would not fraternise, the people returned towards the Minories. They had just reached the top when a wheel came off one of the small pieces. This caused some confusion, and young Watson called on the people to form themselves in military order. But before they had complied with the request the Guards rode into the Minories and the crowd fled in confusion, throwing away their arms in all directions; and the leaders, deserted by their men, were forced to follow their example. Thus ended the famous disturbances of Spa-Fields.

D. J. NICOLL.

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

In answer to our comrade Blackwell's suggestion, and in default of someone else beginning that free discussion he speaks of, I wish to note down a few thoughts suggested by reading the clauses of the Anarchist Congress at Valentia, as stated by our comrade; premising that I do so in no polemical spirit, but simply giving my own thoughts and hopes for the future for what they may be worth.

I will begin by saying that I call myself a Communist, and have no wish to qualify that word by joining any other to it. The aim of Communism seems to me to be the complete equality of condition for all people; and anything in a Socialist direction which stops short of this is merely a compromise with the present condition of society, a halting-place on the road to the goal. This is the only logical outcome of any society which is other than a close company sustained by violence for the express purpose of "the exploitation of man by man" in the interest of the strongest. Our present "society" dominated by capitalism, the society of contract, is a form of this class-society which has been forced upon those who hold the slave ideal by the growth of knowledge and the acquirement by man of mastery over the forces of nature. The history of "society" since the fall of feudalism has been the gradual freeing of class or slave society from the fetters of superstition, so that it might develop naturally within its prescribed limits of "exploitation of man by man," and that stupendous and marvellously rapid growth in power and resources of modern slave society is due to this shaking off of superstition.

Communism also will have to keep itself free of superstition. Its ethics will have to be based on the recognition of natural cause and effect, and not on rules derived from *a priori* ideas of the relation of man to the universe or some imagined ruler of it; and from these two things, the equality of condition and the recognition of the cause and effect of material nature, will grow all Communistic life. So far I think I can see clearly; but when I try to picture to myself the forms which that life will take, I confess I am at fault, and I think we must all be so. Most people who can be said to think at all are now beginning to see that the realisation of Socialism is certain; although many can see nothing further than a crude and incomplete State Socialism, which very naturally repels many from Socialism altogether. All genuine Socialists admit that Communism is the necessary development of Socialism; but I repeat, further than this all must be speculative; and surely in speculating on the future of society we should try to shake ourselves clear of mere phrases; especially as many of them will cease to have a meaning when the change comes that we all of us long for. And here I join issue with our Anarchist-Communist friends, who are somewhat authoritative on the matter of authority, and not a little vague also. For if freedom from authority means the assertion of the advisability or possibility of an individual man doing what he pleases always and under all circumstances, this is an absolute negation of society, and makes Communism as the highest expression of society impossible; and when you begin to qualify this assertion of the right to do as you please by adding "as long as you don't inter-

fere with other people's rights to do the same," the exercise of some kind of authority becomes necessary. If individuals are not to coerce others, there must somewhere be an authority which is prepared to coerce them not to coerce; and that authority must clearly be collective. And there are other difficulties besides this crudest and most obvious one.

The bond of Communistic society will be voluntary in the sense that all people will agree in its broad principles when it is fairly established, and will trust to it as affording mankind the best kind of life possible. But while we are advocating equality of condition—i.e., due opportunity free to everyone for the satisfaction of his needs—do not let us forget the necessary (and beneficent) variety of temperament, capacity, and desires which exists amongst men about everything outside the region of the merest necessities; and though many, or if you will, most of these different desires could be satisfied without the individual clashing with collective society, some of them could not be. Any community conceivable will sometimes determine on collective action which, without being in itself immoral or oppressive, would give pain to some of its members; and what is to be done then if it happens to be a piece of business which must be either done or left alone? would the small minority have to give way or the large majority? A concrete example will be of use here, especially as it affects my temperament. I have always believed that the realisation of Socialism would give us an opportunity of escaping from that grievous flood of utilitarianism which the full development of the society of contract has cursed us with; but that would be in the long run only; and I think it quite probable that in the early days of Socialism the reflex of the terror of starvation, which so oppresses us now, would drive us into excesses of utilitarianism. Indeed, there is a school of Socialists now extant who worship utilitarianism with a fervour of fatuity which is perhaps a natural consequence of their assumption of practicality. So that it is not unlikely that the public opinion of a community would be in favour of cutting down all the timber in England, and turning the country into a big Bonanza farm or a market-garden under glass. And in such a case what could we do, who objected "for the sake of life to cast away the reasons for living," when we had exhausted our powers of argument? Clearly we should have to submit to authority. And a little reflection will show us many such cases in which the collective authority will weigh down individual opposition, however reasonable, without a hope for its being able to assert itself immediately; in such matters there must be give and take: and the objectors would have to give up the lesser for the greater. In short, experience shows us that wherever a dozen thoughtful men shall meet together there will be twelve different opinions on any subject which is not a dry matter of fact (and often on that too); and if those twelve men want to act together, there must be give and take between them, and they must agree on some common rule of conduct to act as a bond between them, or leave their business undone. And what is this common bond but authority—that is, the conscience of the association voluntarily accepted in the first instance.

Furthermore, when we talk of the freedom of the individual man, we must not forget that every man is a very complex animal, made up of many different moods and impulses; no man is always wise, or wise in all respects. Philip sober needs protection against Philip drunk, or he may chance to wake up from his booze in a nice mess. Surely we all of us feel that there is a rascal or two in each of our skins besides the other or two who want to lead manly and honourable lives, and do we not want something to appeal to on behalf of those better selves of ours? and that something is made up of the aspirations of our better selves, and is the *moral conscience* without which there can be no true society, and which even a false society is forced to imitate, and so have a sham social conscience,—what we sometimes call hypocrisy.

Now I don't want to be misunderstood. I am not pleading for any form of arbitrary or unreasonable authority, but for a *public conscience* as a rule of action: and by all means let us have the least possible exercise of authority. I suspect that many of our Communist-Anarchist friends do really mean that, when they pronounce against all authority. And with equality of condition assured for all men, and our ethics based on reason, I cannot think that we need fear the growth of a new authority taking the place of the one which we should have destroyed, and which we must remember is based on the assumption that equality is impossible and that slavery is an essential condition of human society. By the time that is assumed that all men's needs must be satisfied according to the measure of the common wealth, what may be called the political side of the question would take care of itself.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

THE NATIONAL AMALGAMATED SAILOR'S AND FIREMEN'S UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.—Among the chief objects of this recently formed but already very powerful Union are:—(1) To improve the condition and protect the interests of all classes of seafaring men. (2) To establish homes for seamen in all places where the Executive Committee deem it expedient. (3) To make advances of money to seafaring men at low interest on security of their wages and allotment notes. (4) To endeavour to obtain reasonable hours of duty, and to maintain fair rates of wages. (5) To assist members whose interests have been damaged by reason of prominent services rendered to the society. (6) To afford legal assistance, either as plaintiff or defendant, to any member of the society in respect of matters arising out of, or incidental to, his employment as a sailor or sea-going fireman, cook or steward, including claims for wages, damages for breach of contract for wages, compensation for injuries, claims for salvage, alleged liability for negligence or misconduct involving loss or forfeiture of wages or involving penalties, and all claims and liabilities, whether under the Merchant Shipping or any other Act or Acts of Parliament, or otherwise, of what nature soever, so arising or incidental as aforesaid, nevertheless, to the rules of the society; and to provide for the maintenance of members detained on shore till their cases are tried. (7) To use every effort to provide for the safety of ships work in order to prevent loss of life at sea. (8) To provide a better class of men for the merchant service, and to see that all members that are engaged through the Union shall be on board at the appointed time and in a sober condition ready for work. (9) To provide assistance to shipwrecked mariners. (10) To provide assistance to members who are travelling in search of work. (11) To put seafaring men, intending to become members but for the time being unable to pay, on the same footing as paying members, except with regard to financial benefits, by granting them Privilege Cards. (12) And to provide funds for the relief of members in sickness or temporary disablement, and for their respectable interment." Full particulars on application at any of the branches of the Union, or at the office of their organ *Seafaring*, 150, Minories, E.