

# The Wolverhampton Worker

The Organ of the Wolverhampton Trades and Labour Council.

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## OF THREE REVOLUTIONS—WHICH?

REPLY TO ALDERMAN G. R. THORNE, "M.P."

### THE COMING BREAK-UP OF LIBERALISM.

Every day brings fresh signs that the time is drawing nearer when we shall see the dissolution of the Liberal Party. We see indications of it on all hands—in the country, in Parliament, and in the Press.

The latest of these signs was furnished the other day by Alderman G. R. Thorne, M.P. for East Wolverhampton, who deemed it necessary to rush into print to defend his own pet theories and those of his political friends.

Now, Alderman Thorne is a fairly prominent man in the Liberal Party; he is known to be ambitious; and we have heard talk, the effect of which is that his services to Liberalism will be recognised in the near future by promotion to the Ministry, or in some other way.

Therefore, when we find such a person having to "defend" his cause, it is a sure sign that a dry rot has set in, and that the end is approaching.

Alderman Thorne, in opening his case, says that "we (meaning Liberalism) are passing through a revolution," and then goes on—rather dolefully, it seems to us—to say: "We are 'passing' through it. Is the passage to be completed; or, on the contrary, is it even yet to be frustrated? If the latter, there are two other revolutions—one on either hand—waiting to take its place. The one is reactionary Toryism; the other revolutionary Socialism. Which of these three is our destiny?"

Which of these three is our destiny? Let us look into them.

1. THE REVOLUTION OF REACTIONARY TORISM.

At the outset we are prepared to admit that there is a great and grave danger, if ever the people of this country allow themselves to be persuaded into allowing the Tory party to use their tendencies for reaction. We pointed out in our last issue what the effect of a Tory Government would be. We are fully alive to the dangers of Protection, of Conscription, of the many other ways in which they would endeavour to stultify the efforts of the workers to better their own conditions. It is not the purpose of this article to go again into this subject. Alderman Thorne dealt with the Tories in a very hackneyed manner, and, to our way of thinking, he entirely failed to point out how and why the "Peaceful Revolution of Liberalism" is better than the "Reactionary Revolution of Toryism."

2. THE PEACEFUL REVOLUTION OF LIBERALISM.

He could not have chosen a worse title for his side. The peaceful, restful, sleepy programme of Liberalism—the policy of make-believe. It reminds one of the revolution of the sails of a child's toy windmill, moving restfully and peacefully and aimlessly, doing no useful work, but simply moving round and round in a vicious circle, in answer to any wind of chance.

It is a known fact that things must either move backward or forward; there is no room for standing still; the windmill is out of date. We cannot be satisfied with things as they are. The Tory wants to go back to the so-called "good old days." The Liberal says, "Let us be content with this system of things; let us palliate some of its evils—but let us keep this system which has grown up—let us stand still!" The Socialist says: "Forward! There must be no looking back, no standing still; there must be no playing with the disease—it must be cured."

Whatever Alderman Thorne may say to the contrary, Liberalism has stood still. He mentions the Insurance Act, which in itself is a monument to the art of standing still. To a great portion of those affected, it has made no beneficial difference, because they were already insured; it has only bound them more tightly with hundreds of miles of red tape. To the others, who were not previously insured, the Act brings nothing except what they themselves pay for. Both the employers' contribution and the State quota are really paid by the workers under the familiar process of "passing it on" to which Mr. Lloyd George bestowed his own blessing. Price-raising has made the workers much poorer than they were before the Insurance Bill was introduced. The case of those who are in no "approved society" is worst of all. If they are ill they soon run out of benefit—and it is their own money they receive—the rest going in "administration." Is this progression?

Take another point. Everyone will remember the coal miners' strike for a minimum wage. The reactionary Tory masters were actively supported by equally reactionary Liberal masters, such as Sir Clifford Cory and Mr. D. A. Thomas. Then the Liberal Government stepped in. They were almost persuaded that they must make a move—that they must jump. They did jump; but they came down again on the same spot—not an inch forward or backward. They passed a Minimum Wage Act which admitted a principle. They were asked to insert figures, but they refused. The principle had already been conceded to most Trade Unions. If figures had been inserted it would have been possible to move forward from this. But instead they admitted a principle which had already been conceded to many Trade Unions—in other words, they stood still.

Is it necessary to go on with the farce?

3. THE REVOLUTION OF SOCIALISM.

This is Alderman Thorne's title. We prefer to call it "The FORWARD Revolution of Socialism."

Alderman Thorne says Toryism is a backward revolution, and we agree; we also say that Liberalism means standing still. And we say further that we don't want to go backward; we have stood still long enough—we are getting cramped with this long rest and we want to go on—forward!

Mr. Thorne prates a lot about Home Rule, as if it is the end of all things. It is not even the first step. When Ireland gets self-government the fight will only just begin. Already the question is being asked whether Mr. Redmond will lead a Tory party, and Mr. O'Brien or Mr. Devlin a Liberal party. That means that the old game will begin in Ireland, and shows the urgent need for a Socialist party there to set the pace and see that the worker is not crushed between the Liberal capitalist and the Tory landlord.

Mr. Thorne says that Socialism would mean chaos and paralysis of industry. Can he inform us what we have got now? Is the competitive system a really beneficial institution after all? Is the State Post Office or the Wolverhampton tram business in a state of chaos? And are not the workers employed therein better off than those under private monopolies?

Ask the small trader who is being crushed out of existence by the competition of the combinations, and trusts. Ask the workman who is

(Continued on Page 2.)

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**OF THREE REVOLUTIONS—WHICH?**

(Continued from Page 1.)

being sweated in order to find profits for the employer. Could there be anything more brutal than this state of things, where even a generously-inclined employer is compelled to undercut and undersell in order to keep his head above water? This means that every time he cuts his prices he has either to cut his employees' wages or else put inferior material into his goods, or adulterate his foodstuffs. That means that the worker—being the largest consumer—suffers both ways. And yet we find Alderman Thorne upholding this state of things.

No, Socialism does not mean chaos in the future. It condemns the chaotic state of affairs under the present competitive system, and stands for the development of a well-ordered scheme of industry by which all people shall be ensured the right to live a better, brighter, wider, and nobler life.

There is no chaos in the already nationalised services. There is no chaos in those centralised services known as trusts and combines by which industries from one end of the country to another are run in the interests of a few shareholders.

Just as it is easy for a Tobacco Trust or a Dairy Company, or a Railway Combine to organise a national industry under one central headquarters in the Metropolis and place millions of profits into the pockets of a few, so is it possible for the nation to do the same and hand over the profits, after better wages and all other charges have been met, for the good of the nation.

Liberalism refuses to recognise these facts. It shuns them and prefers to work itself into a state of excitement over things that do not affect the daily life of the people. Mr. Asquith cannot entertain any proposals to nationalise the land, or the mines, or the railways. He adopts the old policy of *laissez faire*—leave alone—in regard to such vital matters, and wants his followers to become enthusiastic over another scheme for tinkering with the House of Lords. As a matter of fact, the wealthy magnates who provide the secret funds of the Liberal Party will not allow it to institute any real reforms—much less a revolution, and the workers are at last realising this. Therefore, the next development will be the break-down or break-up of the Liberal Party. Its wealthiest men (the majority) will go over to Toryism, and the more progressive minority will come into the Labour Party. Then the fight—the great fight of the future—will be between Labour and Capital, and everyone will have to decide, clearly and honestly, which side he means to defend.

R. M.

**WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION.**

The Wolverhampton Branch of the Workers' Educational Association, whose visit to Cosford Waterworks on Saturday, July 19, proved so successful, has had some very instructive and interesting visits this summer. Local places of historic interest have not been in any way neglected, and the attendances have been uniformly successful. The fact that the visits have been so well attended shows that the enthusiasm of the workers has not flagged. We hope that the enthusiasm will not be allowed to wane, for it is by enthusiasm and zealous work that the aims of the Association will be accomplished.

Another month and we shall be settling down to real sound education, by means of reading circles, lectures, and last, but not least, the University Tutorial Class on "Industrial History."

Although, unfortunately, working men and women are not in a position to attend the Universities, yet by means of these classes the University is brought to the worker. These Tutorial Classes are really outposts of the Universities, and those members who join the class cannot fail to be immensely benefited, the teacher being of the best calibre, and well qualified to take on the work of instructor.

J.S.

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**A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE WORKER AND THE WEALTHY.**

**AN APPEAL TO REASON.**

We have dealt with the Liberal Party and the Tory Party. In our June issue we showed how the party of profession have promised practically everything under the sun if the enlightened elector would only cast his vote for them, and we gave the result of those promises. It was proved in that article that the voter might just as well have voted for his neighbour's cat.

In our July number we had the Tory Party under review, and the result of that search for hidden treasure gave the same result. In fact, we showed that it was a case of Codlin and Short—that they were both friends, until after the electors had placed themselves into their hands.

When we look at these results of our efforts to discover what these people have done, we are painfully conscious of a feeling of even greater surprise than we have ever felt before that the people have so consistently listened to their fables and so consistently placed their trust in them time after time as the political pendulum swung backwards and forwards from one party to another. There is an old English adage, "Once bit, twice shy," but how it came into use for the life of us we cannot understand.

Let the worker look back over the last century—let him look back even over the period of his own lifetime—and then let him—be he Liberal or Tory—be perfectly honest and candid with himself and say exactly how much better off he and his class are for the years of Liberal and Tory rule.

And when the worker does ask himself this question—and if he is honest with himself—he has to admit that the result of all these years of Liberal and Conservative government has done himself no appreciable good.

On the contrary, the effect has been for the rich to get richer and the poor poorer. On the one hand we see riotous luxury for the few; on the other, dark, dismal, degrading, and heart-breaking poverty.

While the wealth of the already wealthy is increasing to such an extent that it is impossible for them to spend it in the ordinary sane manner in which the world until the last decade or so had been accustomed, the worker has had to wonder how it is that his pound, thirty shillings, or two pounds in wages do not seem to feed or clothe his family so well, or that he cannot save the small amount he had looked forward to saving so easily as it would have been twenty years ago.

If he is a man who has reached middle age, and has been a Trade Unionist, the probabilities are that his union has obtained for him one or two increases of about 1s. per week. It is easy to picture this worker making plans of how he would dispose of his extra money: perhaps he would bank it as a provision for old age; or perhaps he would save it for that holiday for himself and the wife which he had dreamed of but had been too poor to realise; very likely he had hoped to save it to keep his child a little longer at school, and give him the opportunity of a little better education than he himself had had.

How far were these dreams fulfilled? We again ask the Liberal or Conservative workman to be candid with himself. Whatever colour he voted, and whatever Government was in power, he knows that it was not very long before each successive increase was swallowed up in the increased cost of living—higher rent and higher provisions. And he has to-day to confess that he has not yet got that little nest-egg with which to meet old age; that he never got those much-looked-forward-to holidays; and that—perhaps his greatest disappointment—his son or daughter had to start work just as early as he did, and has the same dismal outlook—an outlook of lifelong struggle against poverty and all its attendant hardships.

The poverty and hardship of the life of the working classes (says Mr. Philip Snowden, M.P., in his book on "Socialism and Syndicalism") lead them into crime, and drive them to drink and to suicide; and send them to insane asylums. In the year 1909 there were 735,604 persons apprehended and prosecuted in England and Wales for crimes of all descriptions. There has been in recent years a very notable increase in the number of serious crimes against property. The number of cases of suicide is increasing at an alarming rate. The increasing severity of the struggle to make a living is largely responsible for this, and for the increase in the number of insane. In their Report for 1907, the Commissioners of Lunacy say 2 per cent. of the increase was due to "privation," and 19.3 per cent. to "mental stress."

Below the ordinary working-class whose condition of life is one of unceasing struggle to obtain the bare necessities of life, and a struggle which in such a large proportion of cases does not avail to avert actual privation, there is a submerged class of homeless, vagrant, unemployable, criminal persons, who are the refuse heap of our social system—the products of a system which makes these beings at one end as the price of millionaires at the other. The London County Council has undertaken five censuses of London's homeless poor, and on the last occasion in 1910, on a cold and bitter night in February, there were found 2,700 men and women and children crouched on staircases, under arches, and in the streets, having neither shelter nor means. On the same night the Salvation Army and other shelters were accommodating an equal number of homeless human beings. In that great and wealthy city there were these thousands of men and women whose condition of poverty and wretchedness was far deeper than that of the most abject savage.

On the other hand we have a class which is so rich that human ingenuity cannot devise any rational means of spending its wealth. The daily newspapers report from time to time items of expenditure on luxuries and frivolities which, when remembered in connection with the lot of the toiling millions, make one think that all these pictures of social contrasts must be a hideous nightmare. A West End tradesman gave some time ago details of the expenditure upon dress of the Englishwoman of fashion. These total up to an expenditure of £10,836 a year. "Of course," the tradesman observed, "the number of women who spend that amount is comparatively few, but still it is a very fair estimate of the extravagant woman's yearly dress bill." As a confirmation of this extraordinary statement, it may be mentioned that the London *Daily Chronicle* reported at length, on March 4, 1906, the trial of an action in the High Court in which a lady of fashion was sued for a dress account, when the lady made the admission that she spent between £8,000 and £9,000 a year.

The newspapers are constantly reporting other instances of the extravagant expenditure and luxurious living of the rich. The enormous prices which are paid for pictures, antique furniture, and silver, arise out of the fact that there are people so rich that they can afford to give any sum to satisfy a whim, or to possess some article, perfectly useless in itself, which has the merit of rarity. Paragraphs like the following are taken at random from the columns of the London daily press:—

Huge prices were the rule yesterday at the sale of jewels at Messrs. Debenham and Storr. Among the lots were an exquisite ruby set with two beautifully shaped brilliants and a graduated collet necklace of forty-eight brilliants. The pearl necklace was knocked down for £4,500, a handsome *collier de chien* for £1,975, whilst a single row pearl necklace ran to £5,300.

Society's demands on Mr. Scott, the Burlington Arcade dog-outfitter, for the

coming winter include a dog's bedstead, fur coats, handkerchiefs, laced boots (half a guinea a set), silk-braided blankets, motor goggles, and nickel-plated foot-warmers for Fido when travelling.

And so again we ask the Conservative or Liberal working man to be honest with himself. He must admit that these things are so—there is evidence of them on every hand.

The reason of it all is that he has allowed the rich classes to divide the workers at the ballot box and fought on the side of Liberal or Tory, who are both out to exploit him. They make the laws to suit themselves, and the worker has to pay.

Although he has learned the value of combination to fight the Liberal and Tory employers in the industrial field, he has not yet seen the necessity to combine in the political field, with the consequence that his employers and their friends make the law, so that they are enabled to get back anything they lose industrially.

The worker is a faithful believer; if he is Tory he says, "It will be better next time when we have Tariff Reform." If he is Liberal it is something else. It is always in the future. These promises of betterment have gone on for generations, and still remain unfulfilled. Yet he goes on hoping and voting.

But this same faithfulness and loyalty—so long attached to the false prophets of politics—will in future years be the workers' greatest bulwark. He is slowly but very surely creating a new Party by means of which he will earn the power to change the social system and to put an end to a state of things under which one idle woman can squander £10,000 a year on dress whilst his own wife dare not dream of spending £10 a year in that way. And when the worker has, by sacrifice and devotion, raised up his own Party to a position of far greater importance and responsibility than it occupies to-day, he will defend and maintain it with even greater loyalty than he has ever shown towards the twin parties of the capitalists.

**THE EDITOR'S POST BAG**

**JOHN BRIGHT AND THE PRESENT SYSTEM.**

Sir,—I have been perusing your valuable issue for July, 1913, and there are many things in it of real interest to working men. What other voices in Press and Pulpit dare not say, the *Worker* is prepared to proclaim in outspoken terms. Now that is very good, and I was just wondering if you would publish in your next issue what is to follow in this letter.

The late John Bright, at the close of one of his great speeches, said:—"You may have an ancient monarchy, with all the dazzling glitter of a Sovereign, and you may have an ancient aristocracy, with its fine mansions and large domains, and you may have an Ecclesiastical hierarchy that scattereth wealth and songs, but I tell you that the whole fabric is rotten and doomed ultimately to fall, for the people that support them are poor, low, and degraded."

John Bright was no random politician; he was remarkably sober in what he had to say, and he belonged to a sect that goes by the name of Quakers. Now I firmly believe what Bright said. We have these factors which he cites in our midst, and for the present they are exercising a dominant note. Where did John Bright get his information from? I should imagine that he got it out of the Old Book, which has a great deal to say about the sweeping away of the Powers that Be. He says the whole fabric is rotten, and if any more evidence in support of it is wanted, we have it in the exhibition we are getting in the Black Country. Young women slaving the week through for a paltry seven shillings, and their so-called Christian masters would smoke that much away in one night in cigars.

The world is not Christian; it is anything but Christian. I should like to commend to your readers a book called "Christendom Astray." It is on loan at the Wolverhampton Free Library, and a copy can be had for 1s. 8d. post free, from C. Walker, 21, Hendon-road Sparkbrook Birmingham. I am not advertising the book for sale, but I just drop it in for the benefit of your readers. I read it over twenty years ago. It has a great deal to say about the rotten system in which we now live, and its sweeping away, and also what is to take its place after this is all done. God's goodness has been fraudulently squandered. The provision sufficient for competence for all who breathe this mundane atmosphere has been rapaciously plundered by the unprincipled and the strong, and stored away in accursed garners from famishing millions. This is as true in the present twentieth century of civilisation as it was in the ruthless days of yore.—Yours, etc.,

A. CLARKE.

# CHRISTIANITY AND THE SOCIAL ISSUE.

## THE RELATION OF RELIGION TO THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT.

### EVIL CONDITIONS AND EVIL CHARACTER.

(By the REV. R. W. THOMPSON, M.A., B.D.)

Events and circumstances of the past few decades have made the social question the most absorbing topic for multitudes of our people. In one form or another the social problem is the dominant issue in present day English life. I have been asked to say something about the relation of Christianity to the social problem, and I gladly take the opportunity.

#### Christianity a Religion.

Christianity is more than a social lever. It is a religion. It has in it a social programme. It teaches principles which are the backbone of any real social life. But Christianity is a faith, and a faith covers the whole area of a man's life—both his attitude to men about him and to the universe. Part of a man's life is physical. He has to settle down in this world with others and live for a space of years under bodily conditions.

While Christianity covers those other and wider relations of the human life, yet *it does touch every social relation in which men are placed with each other.*

So that Christ not only had a message of eternal life for the needs of the soul which reach beyond this life. Christ had a message dealing with man's physical and social existence here.

#### Christ's Social Ideal.

He called it the Kingdom of God on earth, and I make bold to say that it is the broadest, noblest, completest social ideal the world has ever seen. From Plato down to H. G. Wells, there is no conception of human existence so wide or fine as this. It touches not only every man, but the whole life of each man. It reaches out to all humanity. It sees a man or woman in every human life, and would set every life in true relation to every other. The social ideal of Christ is a community living while on the earth in happy and perfect harmony under the holy love of God.

Now, I am aware that there is an idea abroad that Christianity concerns itself too much with the next world and neglects this. I am willing to admit that Christians have often misinterpreted Christ's teaching in that way. True, it would be indeed a hideous thing to have allowed men to enter the stage of existence and live for a while with instincts and cravings after an immortal existence and then subjected them to the blind, uncertain, yet inevitable stroke of Death.

Yet it is a fatal blunder to separate the one life from the other. We are here with bodies, in a world with other people. And we have a right to expect that our relations with them and our life in the world shall yield us at least the chance to live out our powers in some happiness. This is the driving thought behind the social problem.

I know that this is not always the conscious thought. But just as we cannot understand the Churches or Christianity unless we judge them in the light of their ideal, so we cannot judge the social movement aright unless we see it in the light of its ideal.

It is quite easy to say that the Churches do not live up to their ideal. Nor does every social worker. Social Reform can easily degenerate into mere materialistic gain, into the thirst for "beer and skittles."

#### The Gulf.

Somehow or other the Churches and social workers have fallen apart in many cases. There is no hiding the fact that the present generation of social workers do not trust the Churches. Indeed, we are reaping to-day the deliberate teaching of the last generation that Christianity (especially as represented in the Churches) has no message for the workers, and is unfriendly to their aims.

Now, I think it a very unprofitable

thing to cry over spilt milk. We had far better face the future than quarrel over the past. I believe the Churches might have been a great deal truer to Christ by being far more sympathetic with the social and economic distress of the people.

#### The True Solution.

But may I point out what I think to be the true relation between the disciple of Christ and the social worker, who, by the bye, is and should be, very often the same person.

As far as I see it, the obstacles to social betterment are of two kinds. One group of obstacles we can call evil conditions, environment, actual fetters and tyrannies. The other group of obstacles we can summarise as evil personal conduct or evil character. These two evils react on one another. It is useless to argue which is the first or the biggest obstacle. But we can do nothing until we realise that both obstacles are real and must be removed.

A sick man needs a clean bed and pure food and air. But he needs a cure for his complaint. If the bed is foul and the nourishment poor the doctor's work is hindered. But it is not a bit of use changing the man from one bed to another unless his disease is tackled.

We are coming to see, as I say, that evil conditions and evil character are twin foes to progress. We shall never make England happy by removing evil conditions if we leave evil character untouched. Selfishness, laziness, greed, impurity will corrupt any social state. On the other hand, evil housing, insufficient wages, cut-throat competition debase and corrupt character.

One man sees one side of this double need. He is roused to passion by the fetters and barriers which keep the people from a larger life. Another man sees clearly that evil character corrupts any scheme of improvement.

*Why should each man not recognise the necessity, not only of his own work, but of the work of the other man? Why quarrel? Why mistrust one another?*

Personally, I feel called of God to try and fight evil in conduct and character, and to preach and teach and try humbly to live out the grace of God in Jesus Christ that can cleanse conscience and purify character.

But I feel myself to be the brother of any man who is labouring to improve the wretched conditions of the people. If we want to help the bottom dog we must face the bottom facts. They are of two sorts: (1) Poverty and (2) Moral Wrong. They inter-act on each other. Both must be remedied before the Kingdom of God can come on earth. It is no use at all dealing with a man's conditions unless we can tackle the godless selfishness, whether in the churches or out of them, that gives birth to all manners of social diseases. I go further, indeed, and say that the first requisite in those who would lead the people into a larger and better social life is personal character. Defect of character has delayed reform and destroyed betterment.

#### My Message.

*My message to my friends the working men is: Get the ablest, wisest leaders you can to organise, with your loyal, thorough co-operation a better life for yourselves and those about you. But remember that ability without character will destroy the power of any social leader to lift England to better times.*

I feel most strongly that the resources which will be sufficient to give strength to those who toil for social welfare are resources supplied not out of human power alone, but the eternal, infinite resources of God as we know Him in our Brother and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

With all their past failure and present weaknesses the churches do contain men and women of the most powerful char-

acter. I believe many churches are eager to help the people. It is a delusion to say that working people do not go to church, when most of the Free Church members (at least) of Wolverhampton are working people. (I speak of the Free Churches simply because I know them the best.) And it is a delusion to say that ministers put their principles in one pocket and the money of the capitalist in another.

"For social reformers to separate themselves from Christianity would be to abandon the only power which can transform their ideals into realities. For Christian workers to regard social conditions as outside the sphere of their activity and influence would be to fail to grasp the full meaning of Christ's teaching and of His life and death."

#### The Work of the Churches.

As organised societies, the Churches can do no better service than to insist on the need of personal character, without which we shall never

"build Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant land."

As individuals, I hold that Christians must live out in daily life the principles of Christ's teaching, and should unite with any who have ability and knowledge of social questions, so as to improve the outward conditions of human life.

You cannot pull a boat along with one oar. Two oars are needed if the boat is not to go round and round. I wish God-speed to every man who is honestly striving to save our people from the miseries and tyrannies that afflict them. I quarrel with no genuine social worker; I quarrel with any man, whatever his professions, in the Church or out of it, whose life is unsound. Human nature is tough stuff. It will not yield easily. It will never yield to men who do not back their social striving by sound character.

And I know no power save the grace of God that can deal with character and build up the soul in strength sufficient to toil unceasingly until the life of our land is clean and happy and free. Nor do I know of any other power that will deal with the needs of a soul that, though living in time and space for a brief span of years, is yet made for the eternal life that stretches out beyond the grave.

#### THE TOILER.

I have broken my hands on your granite,  
I have broken my strength on your steel,  
I have sweated through years for your pleasure,  
I have worked like a slave for your weal;  
And what is the wage you have paid me?  
You masters and drivers of men—  
Enough so I come in my hunger  
To beg for more labour again.

I have given my manhood to serve you,  
I have given my gladness and youth;  
You have used me, and spent me, and crushed me,  
And thrown me aside without ruth;  
You have shut my eyes off from the sunlight,  
My lungs from the untainted air,  
You have housed me in horrible places,  
Surrounded by squalor and care.

I have built you the world in its beauty,  
I have brought you the glory and spoil,  
You have blighted my sons and my daughters,  
You have scourged me again to my toil;  
Yet I suffer it all in my patience,  
For somehow I dimly have known  
That some day the worker will conquer  
In a world that was meant for his own!  
—Berton Braley, MILLGATE MONTHLY.

#### FAILURE OF PROFIT-SHARING.

Mr. Edward R. Pease's lecture on "Profit-sharing and Copartnership: A Fraud and a Failure," lately delivered to the Fabian Society, is now published as Fabian Tract No. 170 at one penny. A few sentences will indicate Mr. Pease's conclusions:—

"Probably, if the truth be known, profit-sharing schemes have failed because the workmen have studied too carefully the publications of the advocates of the system. The fraud on the workers is too palpable. The men have found out that they are like the dog who fed off his own tail. They earn the bonus (if there is any), and their employer returns them a fraction of what they have produced. Moreover, they may easily earn it and yet receive none of it. They properly object to let their remuneration depend on the skill or luck of the heads of the business.

"But the final and conclusive objection to profit-sharing is that it necessarily tends to working-class disintegration. All intelligent workmen recognise that industrial solidarity is the basis of all working-class progress, and profit-sharing is intentionally, or incidentally, destructive of this solidarity."

#### Just for Curiosity.

By THORAX.

The little hamlet of Willowton is one of the prettiest little spots one could imagine, and the countryside for many miles around is ideal. Yet, if one were to thoroughly explore this pretty spot, they would find it marred in a peculiar manner, for in the outlying districts dozens of cottages are to be found which, although many of them look pretty at a distance because of their well-kept gardens, upon closer inspection are nothing more than tumble-down "shacks"; in fact, the majority of them are fit for nothing better than pigstyes—let alone for human habitation.

It was in one of these "cottages" that Tom Downes lived (or existed) with his wife and family, about half-a-mile from Goring's Farm, where he was employed. The wages received by him for his labours—11 hours hard work per day—were considerably short of £1 per week, and with several children to keep they found it very hard to make ends meet. Mrs. Downes, like her husband, was hard-working and steady, and in order to keep her children respectable she had to contribute to the "family exchequer" by taking in washing.

When he left work each evening Tom was all but "worn out," but unlike most of the other labourers he mostly stayed at home and "did a bit" in his little garden, except Monday evening, when he would be seen with a clean collar and tie and clothes well brushed, wending his way to the village Conservative Club, where the members were often addressed by "big men from the city," and sometimes by the Tory member for the division, Sir John Trelawney, whom Tom regarded as a "fine big squire." Now Tom did not go particularly to hear the speech (in fact he understood little of what they spoke about), but merely to shout for his "fine squire"; and because his "boss," Mr. Goring, went he thought that it was sure to be the best side. He absolutely ignored all meetings held by the Liberal candidate, Mr. Biggs, and "other meetings" he had heard Sir John ridicule, and which, of course, he too laughed at.

One evening, finding that he required a few more pea sticks, Tom took a walk into the village, and seeing a crowd gathered in the main square, strolled up to see what was the matter. On getting nearer, he discovered it to be one of those "other meetings," and being in no particular hurry he thought he would stay and listen to what the "crank" (as his party termed him) on the platform had got to say.

The things he heard, to his surprise, were altogether different from what he had expected, or from those which "his squire" had told him they said, and Tom soon began to get interested; in fact, before the meeting closed, he found himself saying, "quite right" and "hear, hear" to the speakers' remarks, and on his way home that night he thought about things he had never before had interest enough in to trouble about.

At the next meeting of the Conservative Club addressed by Sir John, Tom was again present, this time not to shout and clap, but to listen to and digest everything "his squire" said; and it was from that night that his faith in "him" began to waver, and he began to think that what "his squire" said was not altogether correct! Somehow he found himself anxiously awaiting the date fixed for the next of "those other" meetings, and when that time arrived it found Tom listening intently to the speaker's plain-spoken remarks, and putting them side by side with those of Sir John.

Having got so highly interested he decided to attend some of the Liberal meetings, so that he could hear some of all three sides, and thus compare them; so imagine the surprise of the village Radicals when they saw Tom at their meetings.

Several weeks went by, during which time Tom had attended several Liberal meetings and all those of his own club, besides those held by "those others." He thought about things at home and could not help but be convinced that Sir John was wrong. The Liberals, somehow, he thought, seemed a little better, but he could not understand why they promised so many good things, and yet when they were in power did not do them!

No, there was no doubt whatever about it, "those others" were right—they were fighting for the workers, they were trying to get them better conditions, better wages, and better housing! Sir John Trelawney and Mr. Biggs were looking after themselves!

How glad he was that he had stopped that night "just for curiosity" to listen to the LABOUR MAN! Otherwise he would perhaps never have known anything but the "tommy-rot" preached by Sir John.

But, alas! there are many like Tom Downes who are Tories and Liberals just because their bosses are, or because the candidates are rich and "big men." Are you one of those who have never troubled about these things, who have never stopped and listened to a LABOUR MAN? If so, the next time you see a LABOUR meeting stop—and listen—and you in turn, like Tom Downes, will get interested—"will begin to think about things"—and cannot help but be convinced that LABOUR, and LABOUR alone, is fighting for the workers, and that Liberals and Tories alike are out simply to get the best they can for themselves.

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Workers' Educational Association  
(WOLVERHAMPTON BRANCH).

UNIVERSITY TUTORIAL CLASS.

The above class on "Industrial History" will commence next month (September). It is necessary that all members and friends wishing to join the class should send in their names at once. Anyone wishing for further information can obtain full particulars from the Hon. Secretary, John Shore, 15, Fellows St., Blakenhall, Wolverhampton.

Amalgamated and General Union Societies of  
Carpenters and Joiners.

Branch Meetings held on Saturday evenings as follows:  
No. 1 Branch, Town Hall Hotel.  
No. 2 .. Labour Assembly Rooms.  
General Union: Hand and Bottle, Victoria Street.  
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Inquiries as to advertisements should be addressed to the Advertising Manager, at the office of this paper.

AUGUST, 1913.

### A DISCONTENTED CAPITALIST.

WHEN presiding over the recent annual meeting of shareholders in the great multiple firm known as John Brown and Co., the chairman, Lord Aberconway, gave definite expression to the present-day capitalist's discontent with the enormous amount of wealth produced for him by Labour. Like Pharaoh of old, the Noble Lord said, in effect, "Ye are idle."

This in spite of the fact that the directors' report showed that a clear profit of no less than £271,901 had been earned, and that a dividend of 7½ per cent. was to be paid for the fourth year in succession, after carrying forward a matter of £89,721 (equal to another 2½ per cent.) as a reserve towards some future "share-out" when the trade boom may have subsided. In the midst of this fat profit-making Lord Aberconway grumbled about labour disputes "which come so often to disturb one's prosperity," and went on to complain that the men would not put in as much time as the firm required, that this appeared to be worst in the shipyards, but "they were not getting, in any trade, quite as much out of their workmen as they thought the high wages would entitle them to expect." What this chairman was brutally ungrateful enough to say in public thousands of greedy magnates are saying privately every day in their sumptuous clubs and mansions. And yet the workers elect a majority of these persons to govern them in Parliament! Lord Aberconway is not only a typical capitalist—he is a typical present-day Liberal; just the sort of person who controls that Party. Better known as Charles Benjamin Bright McLaren (a nephew of the great John Bright who advocated Free Trade but opposed the Factory Acts), the now

was at one time a briefless but adventurous barrister. He secured a practice at the Chancery Bar, and entered the House of Commons as Member for Stafford in 1880. He became a K.C. in 1897, and, for services rendered, his grateful Party made him a Baronet in 1902 and raised him to the Peerage in 1911. Now he has two country mansions, another in Belgrave Square, and yet another in France. In addition to presiding over the profiteering operations of John Brown and Co., he is chairman of the Metropolitan Railway Company and the Tredegar Iron and Coal Company, also a director of the Sheepbridge Coal and Iron Company. Furthermore, he belongs to the Reform, National Liberal, Savile, and Royal Automobile Clubs, and has two sons in the House of Commons (Liberals, of course), as well as a son-in-law, Sir Henry Norman, who married his youngest daughter in 1907. Blessed with all this power and prosperity, respected by the faithful rank-and-file workers in the Liberal Party, and honoured as a "pillar of society" by the uninformed general public, Lord Aberconway has proved out of his own mouth that his heart is the heart of a ruthless money-grubber, who, in the seventh decade of his existence, can only say to his profit-earning workers, "Ye are idle." And of such are the big bosses of the Liberal Party and of the Tory Party.

### THE CONDITIONS OF HEALTH.

The very human address on this important subject delivered by Dr. Malet to the Annual United Meeting of the Adult Schools on Sunday, July 20, affords useful food for reflection and will long be borne in memory by those who had the pleasure of hearing it. All the advice offered by the genial doctor was eminently sensible, being based upon the foundation fact that, physically, man is best fitted for the work of earning his living by cultivating the ground, and that in so far as we depart from that mode of life our health suffers unless we take some equivalent out-door exercise, and in all cases take plenty of rest. But he went much farther than that, and demonstrated that, having minds and spirits as well as lungs and muscles, we needed pleasant recreation, music, literature, science, hobbies, society, and love. All these were essential to health, since the mind reacted on the body and *vice versa*. The good doctor freely admitted that most of his audience probably had too much hard physical "exercise" already in their daily work, and that they did not get nearly enough rest. He was also conscious of the fact that modern industrial conditions are generally unhealthy, and seemed aware of the cruel limitations imposed by low wages—23s. a week for instance. But, really, a big reduction in the hours of labour, the building of pleasant work-places and healthy homes in garden suburbs for all the people, the ensuring of an abundance of good food and clothing for all the people, the development of pure and noble ideas in all the people, the ample provision of means of happy recreation for all the people—that involves nothing less than the fulfilment of the aims of the Socialists! And why not, seeing these are the essential conditions of health?

### CLAIM YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE.

On Friday, August 1, a new printed list of voters will be hung on the doors of churches, chapels, and other public buildings, also inside the Post Office. Every man should make haste to see whether his name is included. If it has been omitted he should go at once to the Labour Assembly Rooms in Queen Square and see Mr. James Whittaker about it. He is the Labour Party's Registration Agent, and will give full information on the matter, together with assistance towards securing inclusion on the revised lists which will be compiled in September. Caretakers and lodgers (including sons residing with parents) are usually eligible for voting but are frequently omitted from the official lists. So also are householders who have effected a removal. All claims for inclusion must be made by August 20, and local Trade Union officials and members are urged to make these facts well known throughout every workshop in the town

## THE OUTLOOK

By LEO HENRY.

### THE WORKER & THE SHIRKER

In prehistoric times every human adult worked. There were no misleading statistics as to the production of wealth, or controversies involving questions of imports or exports, patriotism or anarchy. The men who loved to roam the forests in search of food, or to meet an enemy, were honoured. They who desired to live upon the labour of others were either given a painful exit or compelled to be slaves of the workers. I would not suggest that they were devoured, even though the tribe may have been cannibals, for I venture to think that the body of the native who desired to live at the expense of the honest worker would be viewed with disgust, mingled with the deepest hatred.

Times have changed. There are misleading statistics, not only of imports and exports, but of life and death. How many valuable lives are lost through want of proper nourishment? Statistics mislead us in so far as this and many other causes are never really investigated. The worker who searches for his food is still with us, only with this difference: He can have food on condition that he, together with a number of other workers, procure sufficient for themselves and other people who neither search nor supply the means of searching. I say emphatically the worker must, and does, under present-day conditions, supply the idler with the means of life. But even this is not the worst aspect: In order that the worker may be allowed to procure food for existence he must consent to present it to the idlers who never work, and they in their wisdom retain the luxuries for themselves and present the scraps to the worker.

Every sane individual agrees that it was a sensible idea which permeated the so-called uncivilised peoples when they either exterminated or enslaved the idler. Everyone agrees that the shirker is a nuisance to honest society. Is it not astounding, therefore, that so many of the persons who produce the necessaries of life and the luxuries which should provide pleasure for the nation, are content to allow the idlers and rich wastrels to have choice of the good things of life, while they themselves receive that which is often worse than the idler's wife presents to her fondled lap dog? The joy of life to the worker is compressed into a very few hours of his life; most of his time he is manufacturing and presenting luxuries, pleasures, and innumerable comforts to the idler. The Great Teacher knew exactly what he was talking about when he said, "Ye have eyes that see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that do not understand."

To-day men's eyes are being opened, the ears are becoming sharp to catch the sound of the Emancipator's voice. Their hearts are beginning to understand that the time has come, and they are stirring themselves from the slumber which has allowed the drone to monopolise all the honey. I rejoice that men see a brighter future for themselves and their children.

I do not recommend either of the methods used by the savage, yet I imagine that he had a more correct notion of justice than seems prevalent to-day. Slavery of the wealth producer, and the aggrandisement of the shirker, however, must be abolished. There would be few problems involved in the accomplishment. First of all, the workers must understand that no matter what their trade or profession may be, their interests are exactly the same. The interests being the same necessitates the use of a tool called "united action" against the people who exploit the workers and choose the luxuries. These people have already learned the value of this united action as proved by their action during the recent strikes, when they even went so far as to employ the army to achieve their ends. The Trade Unions supply this "united action" tool to the worker, and in order that the worker may be able to use it to the best advantage it is imperative that the soldiers be prevented from protecting the interests of the exploiter against the just demands of the worker.

How can the worker do this? It is plain that the Government protects the interests of the exploiters. Then we must change the Government. If we make a Government of either Liberal or Tory we put the enemy to govern us, for are they not both exploiters? The only way, then, is to send a man belonging to our own class—a working man. Choose men—the most intelligent of your own class. Send them to the Council, Board of Guardians, Parliament—in fact, in every position where the interests of the worker are concerned. And the worker who is chosen by a brother worker will fight for the good of the class to which he belongs. The capitalist, no matter to which party he belongs, will fight for the capitalist class. The working out of salvation is quite easy if we devote a few moments' thought to the question of why the worker who produces all the wealth possesses nothing, and

**IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS.**

By Our TELEPHONE OPERATOR.

**1.—Dr. BADGER**

(School Medical Officer).

WOLVERHAMPTON WORKER: Hello! Are you there, Exchange? Put me on Dr. Badger, please.

EXCHANGE: Right you are.

W. W.: Is that you, Dr. Badger?

Dr. BADGER: Yes. Who are you?

W. W.: The local Labour paper. Just a word or two about your remarks at the Food Reform Association.

Dr. B.: Yes. What about them?

W. W.: Well, we think you are mistaken.

Dr. B.: Tut, tut, sir. Where?

W. W.: Well, you are reported to have said that "children attend school in a filthy and disreputable condition, and that poverty is not the cause of most of it."

Dr. B.: Yes. What's wrong with that?

W. W.: Poverty is the cause of most of it: the poverty of the system under which we live is the root cause of it.

Dr. B.: Nonsense, sir!

W. W.: It's true. A child of a poor parent is born in a slum, reared in a slum, sees dirt and filth all round it; habit becomes second nature, the child is stunted, anæmic; its intellect is stunted and incapable of receiving a good education. It is fed badly, and so under our present society we are producing "the unfit," and yet you say poverty is not the cause of it. Would folks live in slums if they had better conditions to live under?

Dr. B.: Oh, I suppose they wouldn't, but it can't be helped!

W. W.: Then there's that report you issued in 1909, in which you say "that very few schools conform to such a standard of cleanliness necessary for her home by a good housewife."

Dr. B.: Yes, yes!

W. W.: If your schools are dirty, how can you expect children to cultivate habits of cleanliness? Hello!

Dr. B.: Hello! That's not the question.

W. W.: On page 35 of your report you say, in reference to cleanliness of clothing, "that it is almost invariably worse when the mother goes out working."

Dr. B.: Yes—well?

W. W.: Are you aware why the mother goes out working?

Dr. B.: To keep the home, I presume.

W. W.: Yes, of course. In our highly-civilised state we do not pay the father sufficient wages to bring up a family equal to a workhouse standard. The wife assists by working long and tedious hours for a very small wage at the expense of herself and the home; and then the ladies of the employing class severely censure her because her children are neglected.

Dr. B.: Ah, yes! What would you do?

W. W.: Alter the system, make it the nation's first duty to provide every man, woman, and child with enough to keep them in the best of health all their life! Hello!

Dr. B.: Hello! Eh? What's that?

W. W.: I say when your class cease preaching at the workers and do a little more by building decent dwelling houses with bathrooms, paying living wages, establishing municipal laundries, washhouses, bakehouses, etc., then the workers will be able to cultivate habits of cleanliness. Hello!

Dr. B. (faintly): Hello! That's Socialism!

W. W.: Yes, it is. If it's good for you to be Socialistically employed to inspect children, surely it's good to employ a doctor to cure the ills you have specified, and good to employ the workers for the good of the community.

Dr. B.: Impossible.

W. W.: Not at all, sir. When the workers awake to their own importance, they will not need lectures on cleanliness, etc.

Dr. B.: Perhaps not.

W. W.: Another funny thing is that the people who lecture the poor on morality are the same people who invest their money in slum property, pawnshops, drink shops, and factories—dividend producers—and are careful enough to pay the workers just sufficient to keep them in need of those places; therefore it is those people who are the cause of the workers' ills.

Dr. B.: Tut, tut, sir!

W. W.: Further, these are the same folks who have built an East and a West End in every town, the palaces and poverty, the Tettenhalls and Monmore Greens, and the industrious are housed near the factory smoke and filth in hovels, which their employers would not dare to step in.

Dr. B.: Well! What would you do?

W. W.: Run all the businesses by the people and for the people collectively; the Corporation to set the example by paying higher wages than private firms, municipal housing, etc. Hello!

Dr. B.: Hello! It can't be done.

W. W.: No; as long as the workers send the landlord and publican and the employer and moneylender to govern us, but when the worker elects to govern himself—Hello! Hello! Hello! Ring off, please. Ting-a-ling!

**LOCAL NOTES AND COMMENTS.**

By "THE CHIEL"

*A chiel's amang ye takin' notes,  
An', faith, he'll prent 'em.*

—BURNS.

**The Floral Fête.**

The 25th Annual Floral Fête was a huge success, and the committee are deserving of the heartiest congratulations of all for the magnificent show which was provided. Such affairs as these cannot but have a beneficial effect on everyone who took the trouble to attend. There is nothing more ennobling than the study of Nature in her most beautiful form, and anything which encourages people to take up the cultivation of flowers, etc., deserves the highest commendation. The one thing to be regretted is that so few working men have the opportunity of going in for gardening. I am of opinion that more space should be given for gardens attached to workingmen's dwellings than is allotted at present. What is wanted is a good town-planning scheme. As an inducement to householders to cultivate their gardens it would not be a bad idea if the committee were to offer next year prizes for the best-kept gardens in various classes, according to the size of the garden and the rent paid. I happen to know that although many people cannot raise absolutely perfect or abnormal specimens of plants, their gardens are very well kept, and give great credit to their cultivators. This idea, if carried out, would do much to achieve the very objects for which the fête is promoted. I was glad to hear that Mr. Walkden was an interested spectator on the opening day.

**The Municipal Scrap Heap.**

I mentioned in my last notes the case of three aged employees of the Wolverhampton Corporation, and that a resolution had been passed by the Gasworkers' Society and forwarded to the Team Committee asking that these men should be allowed to earn a few shillings per week in addition to their old age pensions. I commented on the fact that such a resolution should be necessary at all, but it seems that our Council do not do things that way, for here is the reply from the Town Clerk, addressed to the Secretary:

July 2, 1913.

Dear Sir,

AGED EMPLOYEES, TEAM DEPARTMENT.

Your letter of the 2nd ult. was laid before the Team Committee at their meeting held on Monday last, when I was requested to inform you that, as the committee have already given every consideration to the above question, they cannot see their way to adopt the suggestion contained therein.

Yours faithfully,

HORATIO BREVITT, Town Clerk.

Just that and nothing more; curt and to the point. Ah, well! wear a man out and then scrap him; there's plenty more at the same price. Thus is faithful service rewarded. And the Corporation are supposed to be "model" employers. I shall really have to inquire who are the councillors comprising the Team Committee. I wonder how they would like it.

**A Public Hall for Wolverhampton.**

Since my reference to this matter last month things have moved. The Agricultural Hall has been acquired by a Picture Syndicate, and is to be converted into a picture show. The Corn Market has received notice to quit, and now there is an outcry for accommodation. The Council do not seem to want to hurry themselves over the matter. It has been decided that the Lecture Hall in Garrick-street be made a suitable place for the Corn Market, but that will not solve the question of a public hall. I submit that it is the duty of the town authority to consider the question immediately, and to find the best means of settling the question. The time at present is opportune. The Corporation have plenty of sites on which they could build. They possess land in North-street, in Skinner-street, and Victoria-street, which otherwise they would probably sell at a loss, on which an assembly room could be erected. And then there is the old Technical School site in Garrick-street which could be utilised after the new school is built.

**The Motor Peril.**

It is being realised at last that something must be done to curb the reckless spirits who drive about on motor-propelled vehicles in a manner which suggests that they hold the opinion that they own the earth, that they are the only people who ought to be on it, and that all the rest are mere vermin, who ought to be crushed out of existence underneath the wheel of the Juggernauts. I am ready to admit that it is only a small proportion of the motoring fraternity who are the offenders in this respect, but at the same time that does not minimise the evil. Lately there have been several prosecutions for reckless driving, and I am glad the police are taking a serious view of the question. Nothing but extreme measures will knock it into the heads of some people that pedestrians have a right to the use of the public highways as well as themselves, and a good stiff fine will go a long way towards teaching them. Meanwhile, I commend the suggestion that the motor manufacturers of the district should combine in building a track on which to test their cars. I should imagine that in the end it would prove a valuable asset to the industry concerned.

**The Great Strike.**

The great strike in the Black Country is over at last, and I congratulate the strikers and their leaders on the signal victory they have won. In face of starvation and its attendant evils they have won through bravely, and surely no victory was better deserved. They were met with point-blank refusals on the part of many employers to consider their demands. But they organised into the respective Trade Unions, and now, after an eleven week's struggle the value of Trade Unionism and industrial solidarity has made itself felt, and the battle is won. Public opinion all through was on the side of the strikers, but it was not until the Board of Trade sent down Sir G. Askwith that the employers were made to see the reasonableness of the men's demands. It comes as something of a shock to even hardened Trade Unionists to know that to get even a mere pittance like twenty-three shillings it is necessary to starve for eleven weeks.

**Ministers and the Struggle.**

I have been interested in the opinions which have been published of the ministers of religion of the district on the men's demand for the 23s. minimum. I think the true note was struck by the Rev. T. J. Pennell, of Cosley, when he said:—"I fail to see how he can 'live' on less. He may be 'unskilled,' but he is a man, with a man's needs and rights, and if he has a family, they also have to live." The rev. gentleman has taken up the commonsense position that a man

**THE REV. R. W. THOMPSON**



The popular pastor of Queen-street Congregational Church, who contributes an able and interesting article in this issue.

has a right to live. There can be no question of what a man is worth under a certain amount. If a man has a right to live at all he has a right to that which it costs him to live. The question of worth must come above that. In the interests of the community people should not be allowed to exist under such conditions as have been found in the Black Country. I do not admit that 23s. is a living wage; a little inquiry would soon prove the contrary.

**Could They Do It?**

But what can one say of those clergymen who said that they could not express an opinion as to whether a man could live on 23s. a week or not? It seems to me an astonishing thing that people who profess that their work lies among the poor should not have acquired a sufficient knowledge as to say something one way or another. The best advice I can give is that they should try it for a week or two and then come along again and tell us what they really think. But the most astounding assertion made was that of one gentleman that "clergymen should not take sides." If my knowledge of the New Testament is correct, Jesus of Nazareth never considered whether he was taking sides when he had a message to deliver. I wonder if this gentleman really thinks he is following in the steps of his Master. Or perhaps he thinks discretion the better part of valour.

**The Housing Problem.**

That the formation of a Tenants' Defence League was justified was amply proved at the last meeting of the Town Council, when it was agreed to form a Housing Committee to deal with the question. The Tenants' League were able to prove to the Health Committee that there was a serious state of overcrowding in the town, and the result was a recommendation to the Council that the Housing Committee should be formed. It is to be hoped that the new committee will commence its duties early, and that

ere long something will be done to relieve the position. In the meantime the tenants themselves are using the League to get their houses put into proper sanitary condition. It is a powerful lever for those people whose landlords are reluctant to keep their houses in that state of repair which is necessary to health and comfort.

**Diseased Meat.**

One of the features of the insane struggle for profits which is going on all around us, is that even in the question of the food supply people have to be careful in what they buy, in order to ensure that they are not having unsound or adulterated food thrust upon them. I am reminded of this by a recent prosecution in the Wolverhampton Police Court, when a local butcher was fined £5 and costs for exposing diseased meat for sale. I think we may congratulate ourselves that our local inspectors are as vigilant as they are, but it may come as a surprise to many that in most of the smaller English towns little or no attempt is made to examine the meat on sale in the shops. Farmer and butcher are therefore left a free hand. Not only is this true, but it is also a fact, however unpleasant, that people sometimes buy and eat the tainted flesh of animals that have suffered from anthrax, tuberculosis, cancer, fever, and foot-and-mouth disease. Frequently, farmers and dealers are known to kill ailing and diseased cows, and offer them for human consumption, and their opportunities in this direction can be guessed when it is remembered that according to official figures there are in the United Kingdom at least 80,000 tuberculous cows.

In this age of competition, when every man is for himself, it is not to be wondered at that attempts will be made to sell deceased meat rather than that the owner shall stand the loss of an animal which he can ill afford to lose. Just as it has been necessary to control the water supply in the interests of the public health, so are these prosecutions an argument for the control of the food supply by the public authorities. No greater condemnation of private enterprise could be found.

**The Woman's Question.**

It was a remarkable meeting which assembled on the Market Place to hear the band of non-militant Suffragists who are marching from Carlisle to London with the object of drawing attention to their demands. There is no doubt that their methods of advertising are more effective than those of the militants, and they are doing much to recover lost ground. On the whole, they had a good time in Wolverhampton, and have done much to advance their cause with the people of this district.

**THE TRUE IMPERIALISM.**

Here, while the tide of conquest rolls  
Against the distant golden shore,  
The starved and stunted human souls  
Are with us more and more.

Vain is your Science, vain your Art,  
Your triumphs and your glories va,  
To feed the hunger of their heart  
And famine of their brain.

Your savage deserts howling near,  
Your wastes of ignorance, vice, and shame—  
Is there no room for victories here,  
No field for deeds of fame?

Arise and conquer while ye can  
The foe that in your midst resides,  
And build within the mind of man  
The Empire that abides.

WILLIAM WATSON.

**THE FALL IN REAL WAGES.**

The Daily News and Leader some time ago contained an interesting article under this heading by Mr. L. G. Chiozza Money, M.P., in which he quoted the following table, which was prepared by Mr. G. S. Barnes, of the Labour Department of the Board of Trade, for the use of the Parliamentary Select Committee inquiring into the conditions of employment in the Postal Service. This table is intended to show the decline in the purchasing power of a sovereign since 1895:—

Year.	s.	d.	Year.	s.	d.
1895	...	20 0	1904	...	18 0
1896	...	20 0	1905	...	17 11
1897	...	19 3	1906	...	18 0
1898	...	18 6	1907	...	17 11
1899	...	19 4	1908	...	17 2
1900	...	18 5	1909	...	17 3
1901	...	18 4	1910	...	16 11
1902	...	18 3	1911	...	17 0
1903	...	17 11	1912	...	16 3

In seeking to find out how housewives have managed to adjust stationary incomes to increasing prices, Mr. Money says cheaper qualities of food, clothing, and other goods have had to be bought, "combined with sheer going without." Although, says Mr. Money, cash wages have risen broadly by about 12½ per cent. in 1895-1911, that is not enough to compensate for the increased cost of living, and real wages have therefore fallen.

We believe many railwaymen are looking forward to an increase in wages in consequence of the companies receiving power to increase rates; but if the companies' customer's recoup themselves by increasing the prices of commodities bought by railwaymen, how much better off will the latter be, and "where is it all going to end?"

# A FARTHING A WEEK.

## WHY POLITICAL ACTION IS NECESSARY.

### PLAIN TALK TO TRADE UNIONISTS.

The Trade Unions (No. 2) Bill is now law. It is nothing like what the Trade Unions would have wished, but here it is, and the best must be made of it. But mild as it is, there is already on foot a campaign of opposition to it, not by members of Trade Unions themselves, but engineered by political opponents of the Labour Party in the country.

When the ballots are taken by the various Unions, the Trade Unionist will be confronted by all sorts of advice (not entirely disinterested), couched—such advice always is—in the most plausible language, that in the midst of it all, if he is not very careful, the possibility may be that he will lose sight of the real objects of his Trade Union, and only realise the fact that he has helped to strike a most serious blow at himself when it is too late. In this article, which we address to Trade Unionists generally, we try to make a few of the objects of Trade Unionism clear, and the reason why it is absolutely necessary they should take part in political activity.

You are a Trade Unionist because you are a wage worker. The commodity you have to sell is your labour. You want to get the best price you can for that. You want a good wage—the best wage you can get. You want good conditions too.

The wages of labour is not merely the money the workman gets at the week-end. The hours of work, the sanitary conditions of the workshop or factory, the safeguards against accidents, regularity of employment—these and many other things are of great importance to the workman.

You have joined with your fellow-workmen in a Trade Union to protect your labour because you know that "Union is Strength." The individual workman is powerless to obtain a standard rate of wages. He cannot himself enforce protective regulations; but by men in the same trade joining together they are able to make collective bargains, and to get wages and conditions otherwise unattainable.

Trade Unionism teaches three things: (1) That the most important things for the workman are wages and labour conditions; (2) that to advance wages and improve conditions workmen must act together; (3) that united action by Trade Union workmen in the past has secured great benefits for them.

Trade Unionism is Labour's **First Line of Defence and Attack.**

But the right to form Trade Unions and the powers Trade Unions may exercise depend upon the law—that is upon politics.

The right to combine, the right to your funds, the right to strike, the right to picket—all these are rights which workmen have wrung from Parliament. *Parliament which gave these rights can take away these rights.* Political action by the Capitalists can take away the rights and powers which Trade Unions now have. There is a Bill before the House of Commons now which proposes to limit the Right to Picket and to place Trade Union funds at the mercy of Law Court decisions.

There is only one way in which the rights and powers of Trade Unions can be protected. That is by Trade Unionists controlling the authority which legalises Trade Unionism. That means that Labour must control politics. It is surely the height of folly to leave in the hands of the Capitalists the political power which can maim and destroy the workers' industrial organisations—that is their first line of defence.

The experience of the Taff Vale decision is surely not forgotten. It was Parliament which restored the previously-existing rights of Trade Unions.

**Eternal Vigilance is the Price of Freedom.**

That great political victory for Trade Unionism teaches three things:—(1) That Trade Unions rest on political sanction; (2) that the Capitalists, aided by

the Law Courts, are always on the watch to take away Trade Union powers; (3) that Labour must be alert, too, and must not hand over the source of its power—namely, political action—to the employers and their class.

The workers are regulated in a hundred ways, both in their work and their social life, by laws passed by political action. Parliament is always interfering for good or for ill with the lives and work of the wage-earners. This kind of legislation will occupy the time of Parliament more and more. Take some of the recent Acts of Parliament—Old Age Pensions, Workmen's Compensation, Coal Mines Regulation, Trade Boards, Minimum Wage, Health and Unemployment Insurance, Labour Exchanges, Merchant Shipping, Housing, Small Holdings, and Taxation.

united industrial action by the workers with common interests. The workers have common interests of a wider character which political action alone can promote. Politics is now a contest between the interests of the workers and those of the Capitalists. Just as division among the workers industrially weakens their powers and serves the interests of the employers, so division among the workers politically prevents them from deriving the full benefit of political action. Political division among the workers is playing

**Into the Hands of the Capitalists,** who are clever enough to know the value of political power and sufficiently alive to their own interests to secure the control of it. *Capitalists keep the workers divided into Liberals and Tories by pretending that politics is something more than the*



In order to further the sale of the workers' paper a *Citizen Week* has been held in Wolverhampton, and many meetings addressed. The photograph shows the unique manner in which the *Citizen* has been advertised.

All these are of vital moment to the working class. Surely, then, they ought to have the main say as to what the legislation shall be. *If the workers leave political power to landlords and Capitalists they cannot expect that legislation will be in their interests.*

The Trade Unionists must remember another matter of the greatest possible importance. *Parliament is now becoming the place where labour disputes are settled.* The railway strike was settled by Parliamentary action, so was the coal strike. It is suicidal for Trade Unionists to put employers into Parliament to settle trade disputes. Yet

**That is what they do**

when they return Liberal and Tory candidates.

Then there is another very important matter. The laws which Parliament passes have to be administered. Very often more depends upon the character of the administration than upon the law itself. Unless the workers have direct representation in Parliament they have no means of correcting the abuses and neglect of administration. The few Labour members now in Parliament have done immense service in compelling the Government departments to make and to carry out better industrial regulations.

You will see, then, that political action by the workers is just as necessary as Trade Unionism. The one without the other loses more than half its usefulness. Trade Unionism and political action are like the two blades of a pair of scissors; they are like the two arms of one body.

Intelligent workmen combine in Trade Unions because they realise the need for

*welfare of the workers. Every political question is a workers' question.*

The necessity and value of a Labour Party has been proved by the experience of the last eight years. A small body of Labour members in Parliament has forced legislative reforms of a valuable nature. The Trades Disputes Act gave back to Trade Unions the protection of its funds and the right to strike. The Workmen's Compensation Act, in the last six years, has provided over £20,000,000 in compensation for accidents. It was political action by the Trade Unions which secured these.

But the influence of the Labour Party in Parliament is greatly lessened by the disunity of the workers outside. How can you expect the forty Labour members to have the influence they ought to have when Trade Unionists vote for Liberal and Tory employers at elections?

If the Trade Unionists would be as united politically as they are industrially they could have a Labour Party in Parliament strong enough to get all the reforms which the

**Trade Union Congress Resolutions**

have been demanding for so many years. It is not fair to blame forty Labour members for not doing more. They are only powerful as they are backed up by a powerful and united Labour vote in the country.

When Trade Unionists vote against a Labour candidate, and for one of the employing class, they are acting just as foolishly as if they elected the employers' manager to be Trade Union secretary.

One farthing a week from every Trade Unionist would raise a fund of £150,000 a year.

With that sum in hand Labour could have its own candidate in every industrial constituency, and could maintain a perfect electoral organisation.

Is not all that you can gain in improved conditions of life and labour worth one farthing a week?

The condition of Labour is unsatisfactory because the workers have neglected to use politics for their advancement. Do not neglect this essential weapon any longer.

**When Your Union Ballots, Vote in Favour of Political Action.**

It is absolutely necessary to protect your Trade Union, and it is necessary if you want to secure the right to live by Labour, the right to leisure, the right to culture, rights for your children, and the right to the wealth which labour creates.

### A CHRISTIAN SOCIALIST.

**Rev. Frank Ballard at Darlington-st. Church.**

Now false thoughts have lost their splendour,  
From the summit of our ray  
The redemption songs we'll render  
Shall resound through endless day,  
Since the shadows have departed  
And the mists have roll'd away.

Through the service rendered to the cause of "Socialism" by Dr. Ballard in Darlington-street Wesleyan Chapel on Sunday, July 6, the few foregoing lines may now well be sung by many who had a strong antipathy and even fear of Socialism.

It was evident by the large congregation which attended the afternoon service that those responsible for the choice of subject had a good knowledge that there were many earnest seekers after truth on this most important subject.

In opening his address Dr. Ballard explained that he was not responsible for the choice of the subject, "Socialism," but he was pleased nevertheless that this subject had been chosen, as he was aware that many were anxious to know something about the relationship of Christianity to Socialism, and *vice versa*. Those who know the enthusiasm and fire of Dr. Ballard's eloquence will easily understand that the address was not easy to summarise. It was an appeal for War against Social Wrong, and to him the remedy lay through Christian Socialism.

The lecturer said that Socialism and Christianity have very much in common, and this will be the more easily realised when it is known that hundreds of ministers of Christ's gospel are Socialists. He further stated that there was nothing in Socialism which was anti-Christian, nor in Christianity which was anti-Socialist.

If the founder of their church were alive to-day he (Dr. Ballard) was confident John Wesley would be a Christian Socialist. Dr. Ballard differed very much with the editor of the *Clarion*, Mr. Robert Blatchford, in some of the views he held, but with many of his opinions he was in full agreement.

The line of demarcation ran between Mr. Blatchford's Agnosticism and Socialism; to the first he was strongly opposed, while with the latter he was just as strong in approval; in fact, many of Mr. Blatchford's writings and views were so noble, inspiring, and just, as contained, for instance, in his *Altruism*, that he for one would not contend his being in direct Apostolic succession.

To those who wished to understand Socialism he could do no better than recommend Mr. Blatchford's writings: *The Clarion*, "Britain for the British," "Merrie England," etc.

Dr. Ballard, continuing, said he had no patience with those who stuck to the views of their forefathers and accepted them as correct without question, and who at the same time abused those who claimed the right to question and differ from them. We might just as well go back to the use of oil lamps for lighting purposes and refuse to approve of the use of our modern and scientific system of gas and electricity. Why not try and make the best use of all the latest results of study and research?

He welcomed the Higher Criticism, and hoped that all who wished to arrive at the truth would study it. Much contained therein he could not agree with, but the study of such writings were most helpful to the thoughtful student.

Socialism stood for the recognition of the principles of brotherhood—not only national brotherhood, which is good, but international brotherhood, which is far better.

The one thing better than Socialism which he knew of was Holiness, and the more Christian Socialism was applied to the life of the people the more holy they would become.

Although the truths have been recently denied in influential quarters, the universal Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man lie at the very heart of the gospel. The influence of heredity and environment may be exaggerated, but they must not be under-rated. Often society forces men to live like beasts.

Conversion stands not simply for restoration, but realisation of what is latent in every man. Christianity as well as Socialism is, therefore, pledged to attack all innocent suffering; a consideration which should turn politics into the most human expression of belief in God.

No serious British Socialist now contemplates cataclysms or revolution, but evolutionary socialisation, which, the speaker also held, was the only possible way of real advance. Truly a great speech from a great teacher, and one which will go far to kill political ignorance, bias, and prejudice. J. F.

## THE TOWN COUNCIL.

Singular Request from Grammar School Governors.

### THE HOUSING QUESTION.

Several matters of interest were considered at the last meeting of the Wolverhampton Town Council. Perhaps the most important, so far as the ratepayers of the borough are concerned, was the request contained in a letter sent to the Council by the Board of Governors of the Grammar School. It was to the effect that the ratepayers of the town should make a gift to the school of £400 per annum, without any special conditions attached thereto. That means to say that the town is coolly asked to make a capital grant of something like £11,000, and not to be able to say how the money shall be spent or to have anything whatever to do with it. While we are ready to admit that the school is doing good work, and that the town is getting some return for the £300 per annum which they at present grant to the Grammar School, we fail to see on what grounds the governors base their claim for extra assistance. We are of opinion that the town ought to take over the control of the school altogether and take full responsibility for its maintenance. If the governors of the school will not consent to this the other course left to them is to raise the fees. We do not see why the average ratepayer, who cannot afford to give his child the advantages of a secondary school education, should be called upon to provide it for those who can afford to pay, unless they are allowed to have fuller control over the institution and be able to say in which way the money shall be spent. Already the town pays £13 10s. per annum for every scholar they send there, and the governors tell us that there is a loss of £3 10s. each, but they evidently have forgotten to mention that the Government grant amounts to £5, thereby covering the deficit, with something to spare. The matter was referred to the Education Committee, and we hope they will make a full inquiry and insist on conditions before they recommend a grant of any description.

### Housing.

The Health Committee's recommendation to appoint a Housing Committee to consider the advisability of the Corporation erecting further houses under the provisions of Part 3 of the Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1890 was accepted, and it was left to the General Purposes Committee to appoint the committee. Councillor Walsh (who is treasurer of the Tenants' Defence League), in seconding the adoption of the report, had some pertinent things to say in regard to conditions in the borough, and altogether the Tenants' Defence League are to be congratulated on the success of their efforts.

### The Minimum Wage.

The finishing touch was given this question when the Council adopted the report of the General Purposes Committee to pay the minimum wage of 2s. to all adult able-bodied workmen of the Council. Thus is another important question successfully carried through, and everyone is grateful to our Labour Councillors for the strenuous work they have done in helping to bring this matter to a successful conclusion. It ought to have been done long ago, but it shows the need of others being sent along to help them in the work they are doing in the interests of the workers of the borough. We anticipate that next November will see a change, and then we may expect things to move a little faster than they do at present.

### Municipal Trading.

The report of the Electricity Committee was another argument in favour of a more general acceptance of the principle of municipal trading. The accounts showed a gross profit on the year's working of £26,598 16s. 9d., and a net profit of £8,392 1s. 9d., out of which £2,125 had been transferred to the relief of the rates. This is the kind of thing which does the most to prove that the Labour Party are perfectly right in their statements that the community can manage these things for themselves equally as well as private enterprise, with the additional advantage that the proceeds come back to the people instead of going into the pockets of the few. What is necessary now is that the town should take over the management of the gas supply.

### Bad Roads.

At the previous Council meeting Councillor Frost raised the question of badly-kept roads in Blakenhall, especially Cross-street South, which is in a disgraceful condition. He was promised that this should be remedied as soon as possible.

As a member of the Public Works Committee he has further interested himself in providing, if possible, a through road on to Penn-road, and we now hear that not only has property already been bought, but that successful negotiations are going forward with the landowners, and this proposed new road promises to be one of the best outlets to the country on the west side of Blakenhall.

### The Next Mayor.

It is announced that Councillor F. H. Skidmore is to be the next Mayor of the borough. Mr. Skidmore is an auctioneer by profession, and represents Park Ward. He is a member of the Finance, Markets, Parks and Baths, and Public Works Committees.

T. C.

## EDUCATION.

HOW THE LOCAL COMMITTEE SAVE (?) THE RATES.

### One-fifth of a Farthing.

Medical inspection of school children was made compulsory in 1907; all newcomers and all leaving school have to be medically examined, and all defects have to be tabulated and recorded in systematic order.

Medical treatment is optional. We must spend the ratepayers money to find out defects, we may please ourselves whether we spend any money on the cure; so the Wolverhampton Education Committee please themselves and thus save the rates.

In 1908 a schools medical officer (Dr. Badger) was appointed to inspect the children; two nurses have since been appointed, and a clerk for the office. Defects have been recorded by the thousand; reports have been issued from time to time, and the staff have no doubt done a very big and a very necessary work. The cost of inspection in 1908-9 was £227, and has risen to £750 for the present year, so that it has nearly trebled.

Inspection revealed the fact that "77 per cent. of all scholars examined fell short of a standard to which every child born healthy might reasonably be expected to attain under the most favourable conditions." (Doctor's Report, 1910; page 16.)

"That only three per cent. of scholars aged 13 had sound teeth." (Doctor's Report, 1909; page 44.)

"That five per cent. boys and four per cent. girls examined were deficient in nutrition." (Doctor's Report, 1909; page 39.)

"That 61 observations made in poor districts, as to size of families, showed that for every 100 brothers and sisters living 48 had died; the same number of observations in a more prosperous district showed that for every 100 living only 29 had died. In 54 observations similarly taken at two of our best schools the corresponding mortality was only 19." (Doctor's Report, 1909; page 75.)

"That a considerable number of scholars were found to be anemic. In some scholars the anemic condition was probably caused by the presence of defective teeth." (Doctor's Report, 1909; page 48.)

"That there is 10 per cent. more dull-witted among the malnourished than among the average scholars." (Doctor's Report, 1911; page 24.)

"That the standard of height and weight is below that which the British Association sets up for the average for the county. (Doctor's Report, 1909; pages 49 and 50.)

Defective vision, hearing, heart, lungs, throat, and many smaller ailments are each and all calling urgently for attention on behalf of the little one and on behalf of the nation.

At the beginning of 1910 the committee began to consider a scheme for medical treatment. They had been inspecting for nearly two years, and at the beginning of 1912, two years later, they decided on a scheme. Last month—that is 18 months later still—they decided not to proceed with the scheme.

When they (the sub-committee) recommended the scheme they said they would like to emphasise the fact that "the work of medical inspection, involving an expenditure of £700 a year, was money thrown away unless followed up by medical treatment."

At the meeting when it was decided not to proceed with the scheme of treatment, the doctor and the clerk got an increase in salary, and the two nurses had put in applications for increases.

When the scheme was passed it was to include a "cleansing station," which has since been built at a cost of £330, and is now waiting for conversion into something else.

The scheme of treatment was to cost about £500; three-fourths of this was to come from the National Exchequer, and one-fourth from the local rates, but Alderman Bantock pointed out that we had not been getting the full three-fourths from the Government, but had suffered a reduction of 20 per cent.; and "unless and until a definite guarantee on these lines were given in writing we do not proceed with the scheme."

The Government had promised it verbally, but we could not trust their spoken word, it must be in black and white, and on this pretext the children are left to suffer.

Supposing the Government had not kept their word and we had suffered a 20 per cent. reduction, it would have made a difference of about £80. Six voted for the scheme being proceeded with, ten voted against; so they saved the rates less than a quarter of a farthing in the £.

If they had squandered this huge sum of money and put this extra burden on the ratepayers, many of these small ailments would have been cured. The attendance at school would have been greater, and as each attendance earns a penny grant, perhaps they saved the ratepayers nothing!

But the children have still got to suffer, and defectives have still got to be reared, and sanatoriums will still have to be built; but they did save the rates, didn't they?

G. LAWLEY.

## THE BLACK COUNTRY STRIKES

The unrest which had been steadily gathering for months throughout the Black Country touched Wolverhampton by the men "downing tools" at—

Thompson's Boiler Yard, Ettingshall; Lewis's Britannia Works, Ettingshall; Lewis's Tube Works, Monmore Green; Brotherton's Imperial Tube Works, Monmore Green; and The New Brotherton Tube and Conduit Company, Commercial Road.

Only a very small number of the men were members of Trade Unions, and the lesson of the value of effective combination had to be learnt by the bitter and harsh method of hunger and want.

Very early in the course of the struggle, the Trades Council issued an appeal for financial help, and the result of this was seen in generous aid being rendered at all the works wherever the collecting boxes of the strikers were in evidence. In this respect, whilst it would be invidious to give figures which might savour of comparison, it is impossible to avoid mentioning what was done by the Trade Unionists at the Sunbeam Works. Quite irrespective of what may have been given in collecting boxes, they subscribed on collecting sheets nearly £50.

Some of the unions made grants, and these are given here for the purpose of acknowledgment.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS TO TRADES COUNCIL FUND FOR STRIKERS' RELIEF.

	£	s.	d.
By Balance from Last Strike, per Mr. Flavell	0	19	4
Typographical Union (1st grant)	0	7	0
" (2nd grant)	0	10	0
Per Mr. Bellis	0	3	4½
Enginemen and Firemen, per Mr. A. Davies	1	2	0
Gasworkers, per Mr. Shaw	0	16	6
"	0	13	3
Hairdressers' Union	0	10	6
National Union of Railwaymen, No. 1	2	2	0
Carpenters	1	0	0
National Union of Railwaymen, No. 2	0	10	0
Operative Tinplate and Sheet Metal Workers	3	0	0
	£11	13	11½

Help in "kind" came from a variety of sources. The editor of the *Birmingham Gazette* sent some hundreds of 1s. grocery tickets to the chairman of the Trades Council (Mr. J. Whittaker). The local co-operative society also came forward with a number of 2s. grocery tickets to the value of £20, and the Co-operative Wholesale Society £10 in 2s. tickets. Mr. Jackson, of Wednesfield Road, sent Mr. Ellery 200 four-pound loaves of bread for distribution.

At Ettingshall, Mr. Cheadle gathered some friends around him, and found breakfasts for the children each morning, and at Monmore Green the manager of the British Oak, and, later, Messrs. Mitchells and Butlers, gave two substantial meals to the strikers' children. We cannot pretend to mention all the instances of help in this respect, but sufficient has been stated to indicate the truth, that in times of stress, however much we may have differed before, "the hearts of the people are right."

In personal service there stands out conspicuously the aid given by the Women's Labour League, the Rev. J. A. Shaw, M.A., and Mr. J. Whittaker.

The minimum wage has been won. The hope of all of us is that it will be kept "won" by the men joining and being loyal to their unions.

### ILL.P. NOTES.

The local branch is now busy arranging to celebrate the "Coming-of-Age" of the I.L.P. as a national organisation.

An "I.L.P. Week" is to be arranged, when meetings will be held all over the town on every available spot, which will be addressed by prominent local I.L.P.-ers.

To wind up, a mass meeting will be held on September 23, when Comrade F. W. Jowett, M.P., will be the chief speaker.

As a result of the effort it is hoped to enrol many new members, and to strengthen the branch.

Another reminder of the annual picnic on August Tuesday to Stretton by boat. Those desirous of accompanying the trip are advised to get their tickets now. The boat starts from Newbridge at 10 a.m. Tickets, 1s. 9d. (children half-price), may be obtained from Mr. H. J. Payne, branch secretary. E.F.

### NATIONAL UNION OF LIFE ASSURANCE AGENTS.

The Wolverhampton Branch of the above was formed some fourteen months ago with a membership of seven. Owing to fear of victimisation, the branch has had a very uphill fight, but it is satisfactory to note that this and other obstacles are now being overcome, and the membership is appreciably increasing.

This is also true of the district around Wolverhampton, where the Union is going along splendidly, particularly at Bilston, where twenty-two men attached to one company have joined up.

Bro. H. J. Payne (president), has been nominated by the local branch for a seat on the National Executive. The branch are confident that his experience in Trade Union work and Labour will prove invaluable to the national body, and are therefore hoping that his election will be secured.

## JOTTINGS.

"The rank is but the guinea stamp;  
The man's the gowd for a' that."  
—Burns.

A financier is identical with a pawnbroker, but with more imagination and less conscience.

I notice Messrs. A. Bird, M.P., and G. R. Thorne, M.P., have joined the merry throng of political jesters. Harry Lauder and George Robey will now have to look to their laurels.

Mr. G. R. Thorne, M.P., at a recent garden party, and in a subsequent article in a local newspaper, appealed for unity in the Progressive forces. Mr. Thorne requires no telling how that unity can best be secured. He had better make his appeal to the members of that exclusive Liberal club.

It appears to me that he is beginning to feel the effects of the situation in the West Division.

He can also take it from me that he will feel the effects considerably more—in the near future.

I would remind our readers that when the term "worker" or "working men" is used in this publication, it is not the man who lives around the corner who is meant, but yourself.

A lot of people appear to imagine that if they wear a collar and a flowing tie they are not working men, and the Labour Party would not therefore appeal to them.

The Labour Party comprises a considerable number of brain workers as well as manual workers. It welcomes all who are doing useful work whether of hand or heart or brain.

I am pleased to see that the recent strike is settled, and that a considerable number of men have obtained increases in wages thereby.

Perhaps it would not be out of place to note the fact that the Wolverhampton Labour Party has played a considerable part in the recent strikes.

What is now required is to strike in a political sense from the conditions imposed by Liberals and Tories alike.

As you are now aware, you have to fight for better conditions industrially, so you must fight for better conditions politically, and the latter is equally as necessary as the former.

Just get this fact firmly fixed in your mind. A Labour candidate, whether political or municipal, is financed by working men's pence, and consequently is put forward by working men to specially legislate for them.

It is very much different in the case of Tories and Liberals. Their expenses are always paid by rich men, and with them it is mainly a question of having M.P. tacked after their names, to belong to the most exclusive club in Britain, as some of them term it, with the chance of dropping in for a job at £5,000 a year.

Have you noticed that the main plank in the Tory programme appears to be to revile Labour M.P.s by suggesting their main consideration appears to be the safety of their £400 per annum?

It is as well to state here that out of the 670 members of Parliament only 11 have refused the £400.

Whether they accept it or not, the fact remains they are solely kept by the workers of this country, mainly by means of high dividends.

Of course, they have to be careful in attacking the Labour Party, as in each case they appeal to working men at election time for their votes.

And the more they can appeal to their passions and not their reason, the better they like it, and the more successful they are.

That explains greatly the Tory love for Home Rule and Welsh Disestablishment, as controversies. They are mainly academic subjects, and do not touch the pockets of themselves or their friends.

C. VERE.

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# THE WORKERS.

## What the Various People's Movements are Doing.

### TENANTS' DEFENCE LEAGUE.

Owing to the local industrial strikes and general unrest which has prevailed during the last month in and around Wolverhampton, the strike against high rents has been somewhat obscured. The officials of the Tenants' Defence League, however, have been active and working on constitutional lines.

At the last meeting of the Executive Committee a deputation was appointed to visit Stafford to obtain data with respect to the housing question as it affected that town. The deputation was courteously received at Stafford by Councillor Simmons, who gave them sufficient information to prove that a house famine can be overcome, and that houses could be built for the workers at reasonable rents to suit their requirements and pockets from the lowest to the highest-paid worker.

Councillor Simmons took the deputation to see the houses the council built ten years ago. These have a sixteen feet frontage, with a self-contained backyard of two hundred square yards. They are three-storey buildings, with two large rooms on the ground floor, two bedrooms on the second floor—one a very large one, the other a single bedroom—and the top room a double-bedded room, each room being separate. Each dwelling was fitted up with thorough sanitary arrangements, and the rent is only 4s. 6d. per week. It is not necessary to say there is a big demand for these houses, which are let to people only with large families. The councillors are proud to say they have not lost a farthing on them since they have been built.

Also they have taken down slum property and built on the site ten houses with four rooms that are let to people with no family at a rental of 3s. 9d. per week. Ten houses, each containing six rooms, were erected at a rental of 4s. 3d. per week. These were built at a very small cost to the rates.

Owing to the dearth of houses in Stafford some time ago, the Local Government Board were approached. The result was that an inspector was sent down to investigate, and the outcome of his visit was that the Council have had to set about the immediate erection of 60 houses ranging from 5s. to 7s. 6d. per week.

And so, when our Town Council are ready, we shall be able to meet them with facts and figures of what can be done.

Now, fellow-workers, rally; take this as an object lesson, and when the right time comes see that you return to the Council Chamber men pledged to further the Housing Question, and can be depended upon to put public interest before the interest of private individuals.

L. W.

### WOMEN'S LABOUR LEAGUE.

The usual work of the Women's Labour League has had to be put on one side during the past month whilst the members have been busily engaged in their best endeavours to alleviate the distress caused by the strike of the "bottom dogs" for a subsistence wage.

At the invitation of the Strike Committee, the W.L.L. formed themselves into a committee to especially look after the needs of the women and children, and many suffering ones will, we feel sure, remember the visits of our members to their homes, with the message of hope which they took with them. We are thankful that the strike is practically settled, but disappointed that all the demands for which the men struck have not been gained.

In visiting the homes (sic) of these poor people one could not help being struck by the quiet fortitude and courage displayed by the women-folk of the strikers, the determination to back up the endeavours of their men to get a living wage. No wonder we often heard them say they hardly knew how they managed to exist on the paltry earnings.

May the time soon come when none will have less than enough to maintain them in decency and comfort, when back houses in dingy courtyards will be swept out of existence and the bright sunshine be able to penetrate into the rooms of the workers.

The writers of letters in our local contemporary of recent date might, with profit to themselves, pay visits to the part of the town affected by the strike; they would then, we feel sure, admit that what Mr. Walkden said of those districts was perfectly justifiable.

The weekly sewing meetings of the League

have been suspended for the present owing to various reasons, but we hope to resume them after the holiday season with renewed vigour and energy.

In September we are to hold a conference on the question of school clinics, when Dr. Ethel Bentham has promised to attend. Further particulars in next month's WORKER.

A. D.

### FRIENDLY SOCIETY TOPICS.

At the last meeting of the Friendly Societies' Council, held at the Oddfellows' Hall, some strong things were said with respect to the method applied to elect the local Insurance Committee. It was plain that hundreds of votes would be completely thrown away, and that we should so lose the representation to which we were justly entitled. However, we must start to work for the next election. It will be three years hence, it is true, but it is no use waiting until the three years have gone, or otherwise we shall find ourselves in the same position as we are to-day, and I take this opportunity to give a note of warning to friendly society members, especially those connected with a big Order, to see to it that for the local committees the nominations are made locally. Had this method been adopted we should have been in a position to have placed just the number of candidates for which our votes would entitle us. For instance, I believe the number of votes required for a direct representative for Wolverhampton is 1,684. We have about 14,000 votes, so that we could have successfully put in eight members on the local committee.

As it takes time to arrange all these things through the ponderous machinery of a big Order, I repeat, start now, and then we may be prepared, because at the present time it is necessary to be represented to prevent misrepresentation.

That reminds me; it is essential for the same reason that friendly societies should have some one direct on the Town Council and the Board of Guardians. We have stood too long on one side, because by our rules we take no particular side in politics or religion, but now the time has come when we must safeguard our own interests, otherwise under the National Insurance Act we shall all be wiped out of existence. We are not now paying out the benefits we ought, since red tape is closing on us. We pay annually some millions of money in benefits to members who have a just right to them, and a great deal more might have been paid if the old members of our societies had been thought of by the Government as they should have been. However, we are looking forward for the earliest date on which we can pay to them that which we consider is their due. Unfortunately the only fault to be found against them is their age, and because they are old the Act says they must be disqualified, but then perhaps the next Act of Parliament will forbid anyone getting old!

J. H. B.

### GASWORKERS' UNION.

This progressive Union has been very busy during the past month, and as a consequence many new members have been enrolled. Perhaps the most important propaganda meeting was that at the Seven Stars Hotel, when a fairly large audience of the carters of the district was got together. So well was the case for Trade Unionism put by the various speakers that every man present signed his entrance form.

It has been found necessary to write the Parks and Baths Committee with the request that their uniform men shall be allowed one day off in fourteen days instead of one day per month as at present. The same committee have also been approached with regard to overtime for Sunday work done by youths in their employ. At present they do about four hours per Sunday, and in hot weather sometimes ten hours.

The Society has taken new quarters at the Seven Stars Hotel, and they are proving a great success.

At a committee meeting of carters held at the Seven Stars on Saturday, July 5, a resolution was passed that the Secretary be requested to apply to the Executive Council at their next meeting to put in the following memorial to the master carters:—25s. minimum wage for a 56-hour week, and 6d. per hour overtime; time and a half for Sunday work.

J. B.

### ADULT SCHOOL NOTES.

One way in which it has been found possible to stimulate interest in the work of the Adult Schools is the organisation of competitive events in connection with schools, such as flower shows, etc.

In the Birmingham district these are quite

common events during the summer, and have done much to popularise the schools. The number of entries, especially in some of the poorer districts, is remarkable. Some of these competitions are for plants grown in window boxes, and so it is possible for the artisan who has no garden to introduce a little of the brightness of Nature into his home.

In that district, also, in conjunction with the Bible lesson, it is the custom to follow the routine of the real Adult School scheme and to carry on a social service discussion. Now the term "social service" has had for a long time a too narrow definition. It is not always to be construed into something concerning economics; anything which tends to broaden one's outlook on life comes within the term. Therefore it has been the custom in some of the Birmingham schools for the half-hour social subject to study nature and gardening. And there can be no doubt that immense advantages must accrue from it.

I am glad to hear that Newhampton-road School are organising a flower show. The entries have just closed, and I hope they have been many. I shall be glad to give the results next issue. I should also be glad to see the idea extended throughout this district.

Stafford-street School will have a most interesting morning on Sunday, July 27, when the Rev. R. W. Thompson will address the combined schools from York-street, Heath Town, and Stafford-street. The rev. gentleman is very popular in the movement, and his presence at Stafford-street is keenly anticipated.

Dr. Malet gave an extremely interesting lecture on "The Laws of Health," at the Annual United Meeting, on Sunday, July 20. He has a very happy way of expressing himself, and delighted the audience. His apt remarks were enthusiastically received, and we give just three samples: "You can't be truly charitable if you've got a bad attack of indigestion"; "It is far better to have a faded carpet than a faded daughter"; "Adam's work was done in the open air—copy Adam."

J.

### P.S.A. NOTES.

All P.S.A.-ers will regret to hear of the serious illness of the President-Elect of the National Brotherhood Council (Rev. C. Silvester Horne, M.A., M.P.), and unite in wishing him a speedy return to health. Although Mr. Horne has been compelled to cancel his immediate engagements, it is good news indeed to learn that his medical adviser anticipates a recovery that will enable him to preside at the conference in September at Birmingham. We are looking forward to his visit to Wolverhampton on September 21.

As all readers of these notes are doubtless aware, the Agricultural Hall has been purchased by a London syndicate, and is to be utilised in the near future as a picture palace. Many would have been pleased had it been acquired by the municipal authorities—but the opportunity is lost—and now Wolverhampton is in sore need of a central hall for mass meetings, etc.

It is to be hoped that not only the Town Council, but also the many lodges and branches of the friendly societies and trade union movements in the town will, in conjunction with the Co-operative movement, take the matter in hand with a view to the erection of a building of this character.

The visit of the Rev. Frank Ballard, D.D., on July 6, attracted large congregations to Darlington-street Wesleyan Church. I had the pleasure of listening to Dr. Ballard in the afternoon and evening, and also at the open conference after the services. The impression I brought away is that it was a distinct triumph for Dr. Ballard—and Christian Socialism.

One could not help but appreciate the fair and open manner in which he dealt with all questions put to him, and also admire the generous tribute he paid to the editor of the *Clarion*. Our Wesleyan friends are to be congratulated upon securing Dr. Ballard for their services.

The Organising Secretary of the P.S.A. Federation wishes to make a final appeal to those secretaries who have not yet sent in the names and addresses of the speakers on their list to do so at once—if they are really desirous of obtaining a complete record of Federation speakers. This can only be done by the co-operation of every secretary in the Federation. The Organising Secretary's address is 49, Crowther-road.

I would like to point out to any Classes or Brotherhoods in this district not yet linked up with the local body, that they can only become connected with the Birmingham and National Brotherhood Council by affiliation with the Wolverhampton and District P.S.A. Federation.

Any information will be gladly supplied on application to the Hon. Secretary: Mr. A. Percy Thacker, 22, Drummond-street, Wolverhampton.

The "rumour" in last month's notes re Y.M.C.A. Brotherhood was soon afterwards verified by the appearance of a notice board outside that building announcing that "a new Brotherhood will shortly commence," etc. I wish Mr. Bates and his co-workers every success in their efforts. The vacant land (adjoining the Y.M.C.A.) in Art-street, would be a splendid site for a Brotherhood Meeting Hall.

I shall be pleased to receive any news of interest respecting individual classes that friends may send along, addressed to me, c/o the Editor, and marked in the corner "P.S.A."

F. J. T.

## FABLES OF POVERTY.

By BELLE ROBBINS.

"The poor are born poor and the rich are born rich," exclaimed a devout capitalist. "It is the will of Providence, I was not cut out to be a poor man. If I had to live in barns and hovels and wear thin clothes and eat poor foods I could not endure it; I would either die or commit suicide; I am sure of it." And it came to pass that this same capitalist had lost his sheekels and was reduced to penury, and that he had to don a pair of overalls and toil with the sweat of his brow for daily bread. And then he perceived the injustice and the wrongs of the poor, and he became a Labour agitator and a Socialist.

And it further came to pass that there was a poor working man who was blind, he had bound his own eyes and would not see. For centuries he dreamed that he and the master for whom he toiled stood upon an equal plane, and that he too would some day come to be a master and an employer of men—if he worked long enough and saved hard enough. From morn till night he toiled for many long years, and he spent not more than what was necessary to keep his soul within his wretched body, and when he was old and weary he found that he had not enough put by to save him from starvation. Then he tore the bandage from his eyes, and his soul rose in revolt at the injustice of the thing, and he, too, joined the ranks and became a Socialist.

And there came upon the earth a man, and he dreamed strange dreams—of love and the brotherhood of man did he dream, and unto his fellow-men he told his dreams, and some did hearken unto him; but what he dreamed pleased not the rulers of the land, and they took counsel of each other and proclaimed, "Behold, this man is a fool and his dreams are wicked dreams and dangerous to our well-being; therefore must we kill the man and thereby put an end to his dreams." And on a day they hanged this man—even unto the cross nailed they him.

And lo and behold, the fool of yesterday by martyrdom became a God; the cross became a holy shrine—a thing fore which men bowed down and worshipped, and thousands adown the ages gave ear unto his dreams and said: "Why, this is gospel truth!"

And what he dreamed at length hath come to pass—The brotherhood of man.

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