

THE LABOUR STRUGGLE.

THE MAY DAY DEMONSTRATION.

DESPITE the prophecies of failure from the faint-hearted and the police proclamations of Mr. James Munro, we are glad to say that the May-Day Demonstration was a complete success. Long before the procession started, large crowds assembled, and the Embankment between Westminster and Blackfriars presented a lively spectacle. The police were there in strong force. A small regiment of mounted men were ranged at the side of the roadway where the ground rises towards Blackfriars Bridge, and 2,000 foot and horse guarded the narrow hilly streets which lie between the Embankment and Fleet Street and the Strand.

The police greatly distinguished themselves during the day. A procession of our East-end comrades was broken up in Aldgate. Some of our friends from France were reminded that they were living in free and happy England by being set upon by the police in St. Martin's Lane. These bullies kicked and cuffed the "bloody foreigners," as they elegantly termed them, without mercy, and broke to pieces a flag they were carrying. On Clerkenwell Green our gallant police attacked the women who were on strike from Fenner's envelope factory in John Street, Clerkenwell, and knocked them about with the savage ruffianism with which we are now familiar. This didn't, however, frighten these plucky girls, who marched down to the Embankment and joined the procession.

At half-past three we started for Hyde Park. As we marched on, the people who thronged the pavement poured into our ranks till the procession became one vast mass of people marching onward. On we swept past the battalion of police who guarded the entrance to Northumberland Avenue, the "Marseillaise" ringing out defiantly as we marched up the hill to the House of Commons, the red flags and banners of the procession waving gaily over our heads in the bright May sun. The banner which headed the procession bore the following inscription, the motto of the demonstration—"Workers of the World, Unite!" in English, French, and German. "Workers of the World, we Hail you as Brothers!" declared another. While a third proclaimed the self-evident truth that "Those who dare not celebrate this day are Slaves!" The banner of the North London Branch of the Socialist League bore the motto, "No Master, High or Low!" while the banner of the Commonweal Branch had upon it these words full of meaning as to the revolution we preach—"Away with Authority and Monopoly! Free access to the means of Life!" A cartoon on a large white banner representing a fat capitalist being kicked in the air by the hob-nailed boot of Labour created great amusement. The Metropolitan Railwaymen bore a flag which had this announcement, which showed the value of our "freedom of labour"—"Metropolitan Railwaymen boycotted for joining the Federation." There were also the banners of the different branches of "The National Federation of Trades and Industries," and the banners of the Firewood-cutters, the Painters and Decorators, and the South-Side Labour Protection League; while over all floated the red flag, the emblem of the revolted labour in every land.

As we entered Hyde Park, the rising ground around the Achilles Statue was densely crowded. When we reached the Reformer's Tree, some 20,000 people gathered round the platforms of the Socialist League and the Federation of Trades and Industries. On the League platform the speakers were Morris, Kitz, Mowbray, Turner, Mainwaring, Tochatti, and Nicoll; while John Williams, Votair, John Wood, James Macdonald, Miss Edith Lupon, J. Baker, Bentley, Buckenridge, Cores, and Greenman spoke on the Federation platform. The resolution of the Socialist League was carried at both platforms. It ran as follows:

"That this meeting hails with joy the awakening of Labour which is taking place throughout the civilised world; declares the necessity for the union of workers in all countries to obtain complete freedom from the monopoly of capitalists; asserts that the only possible remedy for the poverty and misery of the workers is the free access to the resources of nature, and the management by the workers of the organisation of Labour; and calls on all workers to accept the task of bringing about this freedom as a necessary duty paramount over all others."

Resolutions condemning the despotic action of the authorities at home and abroad were also carried.

In the evening, a very successful torchlight meeting was held on Clerkenwell Green. Parker, Kitz, Mowbray, Nicoll, Hicks, Mrs. Lahr, and others spoke. About 5,000 were present. The parson of the neighbouring church endeavoured to annoy the speakers by making a hideous row with his bells, but the attempt failed in any way to mar the success of the meeting. We all hope and trust that now we have begun the battle, next year the workers of London will demonstrate on May Day, and not put it off till the Sunday to please their masters and the reactionary members of the London Trades Council. English workers will then show their solidarity with labour all over the civilised world.

Sunday's Eight-Hour Demonstration.

I feel in writing of this demonstration, first the impossibility of saying anything that has not been said before, and next that the subject is too colossal for description in the scanty columns of the *Commonweal*. It is enough to say that the Embankment was thronged from end to end by dense masses of people; that all along the line of route were huge crowds waiting for the arrival of the procession; that Hyde Park was filled by an immense multitude that no man could number; that the clangour of bands filled the air; that the innumerable processions beneath a leaden sky of woeful gloom were enlivened by the bright banners of the trade unions and Radical clubs and the red flags of the Socialist societies; and that on the whole the demonstration was an unparalleled success, before which political demonstrations sink into utter insignificance.

There can be no question that the world of labour has been stirred to intense discontent with existing misery, and the thought must have occurred to many present that there were enough men in Hyde Park on Sunday, if they had been determined, to have swept away our rotten society, with all the misery which presses upon their shoulders so heavily. You had only to look at most of the processionists to see how they suffer beneath the tyranny of the capitalist classes. Stunted forms, faces crushed into brutalised stupidity by the heavy degrading toil, or with figures and faces shrunken and worn with hunger, want, and care. I thought as I looked upon them whether these men are likely to wait till the State Socialists can get a measure through a House of Commons composed of their worst enemies? I don't think they will. I heard a grey-headed workman exclaim, as he listened to an eloquent orator who was perorating concerning the manifold

advantages of an eight hour day, "Yes, but you will have to have a universal strike to get it." True, and when the next trade depression comes, and devouring hunger grows sharper, and discontent and despair becomes fierce and deadly, the House of Commons and wealth and respectability may be swept away before an overwhelming torrent. The immense demonstrations held all over the civilised world must convince the most sceptical that we are on the eve of great events, and that the end of the reign of the capitalist is not far off.

The Provinces.

Big meetings have been held in the provinces. At Sheffield on May Day the League resolution was carried unanimously at an enthusiastic meeting at Gower Street. On Sunday 4th a large demonstration was held at the Monolith, and three other meetings were held in other parts of the town. Ten quires of *Commonweal* sold, and 16s. collected. Speakers, Bullas, Bingham, Edward Carpenter, Raymond Unwin, and Sanders (Walsall). A large and enthusiastic meeting was held at Hallamshire Hall by the Sheffield Labourers' Union, addressed by Sketchley, Hanson, Garbutt, and Bryne. Eight hours and S.L. resolutions carried. At Edinburgh, the meeting in the Meadows was a remarkable success. Hamilton, McWaters, and Keir Hardie spoke to an eight hours resolution; while the speakers for the resolution of the S. L. were Smith, Davidson, and Bruce Glasier. The meeting broke up with cheers for the Social Revolution. Collected, 22s. 1d.; literature sold, 10s. At Manchester an immense demonstration was held in Stevenson Square on Sunday by the whole of the Socialist organisations in Lancashire. Eight hours resolution was spoken to by Sharples, Boyden, and Parkinson; after which the S.L. resolution was moved by Mowbray, and carried unanimously. Collection, £2 16s. 10d.; a large quantity of literature and *Commonweal* sold. At Leeds on Sunday 36,000 people attended the demonstration. Speakers—Paylor, Cockayne, Samuels, Sweeney, Braithwaite. 12s. worth of pamphlets sold. A resolution expressing solidarity with the international demonstrations of the workers and demanding the eight hour day was carried unanimously. At Dublin, the Irish Socialist Union, at its meeting on May 3rd, adopted a resolution of sympathy with the International Labour Demonstrations on May Day, addresses being delivered by King, Hamilton, Fitzpatrick, and Kavanagh. On May 5th, a meeting in favour of the eight hour movement was held in Phoenix Park. Despite the inclemency of the weather, several thousand people attended. Addresses were delivered by J. A. Poole, M. A. Foreman (Railway Servants), Shields, Kelly, and others. At Yarmouth three most successful meetings were held on May Day and Sunday in favour of international solidarity amongst the workers. Speakers—Ruffold, Headley, and Brightwell. The S.L. resolution was carried unanimously at each meeting. "No Master," "March of the Workers," and other songs were sung. *Commonweal* sold out.

End of the Irish Railway Strike.

Through the mediation of Archbishop Walsh, Professor Galbraith, and Mr. Harford (A.S.R.S.), the men decided on Saturday to return to work. The directors have promised that they will give a decision upon the terms of the men in a fortnight. The two Cork porters whose discharge was the original cause of the strike are to be reinstated, and the directors have also agreed to pay £10 fine inflicted upon the signalman Fitzgerald.

Women Strike and Win.

The machine folders at Fenner's envelope factory at Clerkenwell have gained a decisive victory. They struck last week against girl labour, a foreman having put on a girl to work a machine at 8s. a-week at which a woman could earn 16s. After they had been out some days, Mrs. Besant headed a deputation to the masters, who have promised that in future girls shall not be employed in the place of women, and that the sanitary condition of the workshop shall be enquired into. These brave women deserve their victory. Their indomitable courage should make some workmen blush for their cowardice.

Commonweal agent in Marylebone, W.—

J. G. Fogwell, 9 Northumberland-street, Marylebone

LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST SOCIETY.—1 Stanley Street, Dale Street.—Meets every Tuesday at 8 p.m.

ANARCHIST LEAGUE.—Sunday May 11, a meeting in Regent's Park at 11.30; and in Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, at 4.30.

SHEFFIELD.—At Hallamshire Hall, Westbar, on Sunday May 11, at 6.30 p.m., J. Sketchley, "The May Day Demonstrations: Their Meaning, and What is to be Done."

EDINBURGH.—SCOTTISH SOCIALIST FEDERATION.—Tuesdays, Reading and Discussion at 35 George IV. Bridge, at 8. Business meeting, same place and time; Sunday, meeting in Meadows at 4.30; local talent.

FABIAN SOCIETY.—A course of seven lectures on SOCIALISM IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE will be given in the French Chamber, St. James's Restaurant, W. (entrance from Piccadilly), on Friday evenings, at 8 o'clock. May 16 (third lecture), A. R. Dryhurst, "Bax, Kirkup, Gronlund, and Bellamy."

THE NORTH KENSINGTON BRANCH appeal to comrades and friends for their Band Fund. They have the offer of getting drums very cheap from a band that has become defunct, and want to raise about £2 4s. for this purpose. Please send subscriptions to Mrs. Fox, Clarendon Coffee Tavern, Clarendon Road.

SHEFFIELD SOCIALIST CLUB.—We have now opened some fine and centrally situated premises at 63 Blomk Street, containing meeting room, reading room and library, smoke room for games, etc. Open every evening, and on Sunday all day. Membership, 1d. weekly. French Class, conducted by Ed. Carpenter, every Tuesday at 8.30 p.m.; terms, 3d. weekly, which goes towards club funds. Discussion every Wednesday at 8 p.m. We have a good assortment of Labour and Socialist papers from various parts of the world on our reading tables, but should be glad of any books for library. We are very sanguine of being able to accomplish grand propagandas in Sheffield and district during the coming summer, and ask the earnest co-operation of all Socialists in this neighbourhood.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE 'COMMONWEAL.'

A CONCERT AND BALL for the benefit of the *Commonweal* will take place on Monday, May 12th, at the ATHENEUM HALL, Tottenham Court Road. The Choirs of the Hammersmith Branch of the Männer Gesang Verein, and the Communist Club will sing during the evening. "THE DUCHESS OF BAYS" WATER & Co. will be rendered by W. Morris, May Morris, H. H. Sparling, and others. Mr. Frinxell's Quadrille Band. Programme—Single, 1s. Couples, 1s. 6d., of F. Kitz, League Office, and all Branches and allied societies.