

LIBERTY



• CONTENTS •

Dangerous Fallacies. S. Merlino
Death of Stepniak.

W. Therkesoff

*Why I am not an
Anarchist.* S. D. Shallard

The Lanchester Case.

The Single Tax. H. Seymour
Economics Made Easy.

G. O. Warren

*International Workers'
Congress.*

Wishes. L. S. Bevington

Between Ourselves.

Correspondence.

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ONE PENNY.

DANGEROUS FALLACIES.

Anarchists, whether individualistic or communistic, and even some Social Democrats, are fond of speaking of the "absolute sovereignty of the individual," and they claim for each individual "free access to the means of production." "Let everybody do whatever he likes," they say, and the implication is that society will then be organised to perfection, or rather that it will do without organisation, individuals will agree or disagree, groups will cooperate spontaneously, without any coercive power, without any settled plan, and without any permanent individual initiative. Every man will go to his work, will choose of his own accord or be allowed the occupation most congenial to his own aptitudes, and yet that will happen to be the very sort of work society at that moment is peculiarly in need of. Each individual will likewise consume what he may take a fancy to, consulting but his own pleasure, and yet he will not waste the resources of society—he will not destroy the means for further production, nor appropriate to his secondary needs that which is essential to the subsistence of his fellow men. And it is also said, that in spite of the complications of social relations—of individual interests, in spite of the variety of needs, capabilities, climates, customs, civilisation, etc., no man would try and get the best of his neighbour, each would act in a true spirit of solidarity, and no conflict of any kind would arise, but perfect order and harmony would prevail. And it is sometimes assumed that science would suggest to each individual the right function to perform in society, would prescribe his food, measure his volume of air, light, etc., and would indicate the best purpose to which might be turned each parcel of the soil and each stock of commodities. Indeed, each individual would carry in his head the whole plan of social economy, and, wonderful enough, the plan of each would exactly coincide with those of the hundreds of millions of his fellow men. And ultimately there would be such an abundance of all the good things of this world—each region, perhaps each group if not each individual, would supply all necessary requirements, that even exchanges would not be any longer requisite.

Such things have been said and repeated with an insistence and a good faith worthy of a better cause. No doubt many a great truth underlies such paradoxes—truths which it is all-important to bring home to the people. For instance, it should be known that human society is not even now altogether led by the weak threads called laws, rules, and punishments, handed down by cunning and rapacious men to suit their own interests. There are other forces at play besides police and tribunals—besides rent, profit, and interest. There are ignored or suppressed energies in the masses of the people, the powerful spring of common interests, the manifest advantages of cooperation, and lastly, but not least, the senti-

ment of solidarity; and these may grow by education and constant practice to become part and parcel of human nature.

But, this admission having been made, we must look the practical difficulties of a social re-organisation square in the face, and admit that society is much more complicated than it appears to some people to be. We have to discard the notion of the "perfect individual," which is at the bottom of many of the views just referred to.

We must also, however unwillingly, refuse to believe that science can provide us with an incontrovertible ready-made solution of the problem of the organisation of labour and distribution of the produce. Science may perhaps one day give us the data for such a solution, or rather for a variety of solutions, the number of possible combinations being infinite, but the practical solution must be found out by man in each particular case.

We must also dismiss the supposition of such an abundant supply of the various commodities being at once obtained that men shall have more than they require for the actual satisfaction of their needs. Of course if such an abundant supply of commodities were the immediate result of new social surroundings things might proceed smoothly enough under almost any system. Men's needs, however, are not a fixed quantity—they admit of indefinite expansion. The production of superfluous commodities is not likely to occur, but as soon as there be enough of a certain commodity other commodities will be produced and the standard of life will be raised.

There is but one argument left in favour of the views which I am criticising—that the individual will exercise discretion in his choice of labour, and in his choice of consumption—that he will not shirk work, nor take more than his legitimate share of the common stock—that labour will be a pleasure and consumption will be a matter of indifference to him.

Speaking however of the immediate future we must expect there will still be people who, by education, tradition, and instinct, will be willing to live at other people's expense. It will suffice that a few such people set an example: many more will follow.

But let us waive this objection, and suppose a society composed of the very best men. How could the individual know what particular labour his fellow-men expect of him at any time? How could he know what commodities he might consume without injury to them? How could each group know what raw materials it might receive of other groups? How could it be prevented that one or many groups, severally or jointly, took advantage either of the more favourable situation of their land, factory, mine, or railway, of a new invention, the opening of a road, or even of their own greater industry, skill, or thrift, in order to dictate harsh terms to other groups or individuals, accumulate wealth, and ultimately become a menace to the liberty and well being of the people?

These problems admit of no solution so long as we take our stand on the principle of the liberty or the will or the needs of the individual, and leave social interests—(by which I mean the permanent interests of a community, in the continuity of its existence over and above the monetary or apparent interests of the individual)—to chance arrangements of individuals.

What the real Anarchist-Socialist solution of those problems might be I will try to explain in another article.

S. MERLINO.

WHY I AM NOT AN ANARCHIST.

I am asked as a Social-Democrat to give my ideas on anarchism. Not a grateful task. I had rather be making more Socialists than criticising any section of those already existent. But I may not shirk my task. So here goes!

I think that my conceptions as to my relations with the universe differ fundamentally from those of the Anarchist. I parted company with Orthodox Christianity when I came to realise how small a factor was the Christian community in this earth—the earth, how small a factor in our system—our system, how infinitesimal a consideration among known systems—these known systems being a mere point in the boundless universe! But if a community of 400,000,000 of persons in thus insignificant, how miserably trivial does any one of these persons become! The individual, then, is to me relatively of no importance. My unit is the largest homogeneity with which I can practically deal, namely human society. I seek, not the well-being, or liberty, of the individual, but the well-being and freedom of society.

"Why contrast freedom and liberty?" you ask. I will attempt to define. Let us take our old friend Robinson Crusoe. When alone on his island he "enjoyed" absolute liberty. No living being might dictate to him. He was above criticism, coercion, or punishment, other than that of nature herself. Taxes, excise, rent, conscription, police, laws, and bylaws troubled him not. In one sense he was "monarch of all he surveyed." But was he free? Was he not in reality the slave of all he surveyed? Hour after hour, day after day, must be given to procuring the barest necessities of existence. Some days no time even for an entry in the diary. Guns, powder, cutlass, and grain he had. But these things he owed to his former connection with society as organised on a coercive basis. Failing these he must have manufactured flint implements to obtain food. Failing his ability to do this his liberty must have spelled death. It was only on returning to civilised and organised society that he became free—free to cultivate his higher faculties, to develop. No longer a monarch, merely an insignificant item in a complex machinery, he had lost his liberty but he had gained the blessings of freedom. Or rather he had exchanged one for the other, freedom only being obtainable by a sacrifice of liberty.

Let us take a more familiar instance of this. To-day you are compelled to pay rates for paving, cleaning, and lighting. At one time you had liberty on these points. Liberty to slip down on the muddy streets, or plant your foot suddenly in an unseen hole: liberty to hire the light of a link-boy if one were about and you had the means to engage him. The streets were filthy, dark, uneven and full of holes—in every way dangerous and uncomfortable. To-day you are coerced to pay a rate. The main thoroughfares at any rate are well lit, well laid, well cleaned; the traffic is admirably regulated. The gain is tremendous. But this freedom from a hundred dangers and discomforts has only been obtained by a sacrifice of "personal liberty." We have agreed to compel ourselves to have these things done. Otherwise, such is human nature, they never would have been done. No club could be carried on unless the committee had arbitrary power as to exclusion of defaulting members. Whenever and wherever two or more persons combine, a certain measure of liberty is lost by each. But each by seeking the good of all will secure his own well-being. The municipality aims at securing the comfort of the city as a whole. The committee works for the good of the club. The individual citizens, the individual members, as parts of the whole enjoy the results.

Society then, is to me not an agglomeration of individuals, but an organism. I deny that an individual has any "rights". He is one result, one culmination of countless generations of society, has no "rights" apart from society. Nature does not countenance individual rights. The roots of a plant, the heart and lungs of an animal, are not allowed to consume and enjoy the nourishment they work so hard to obtain. The best of the nourishment goes to the flower or the brain. On the other hand, the farmer to obtain full and ripe ears, the gardener to obtain perfect blossoms, tends and trains the plant, paying particular attention to the roots, which are unseen and unthought of by the casual observer. The plant, the animal, is only healthy when each part duly subordinate, is acting and reacting for the benefit of and towards the perfection of the whole organism.

In my ideal society each will give of his best, recognising that this is the very condition of his being. The first thought will have to be, not how much to get, but how much to give. "He that would be chief among you let him be the servant of all." Ah, but you say, is not this our ideal? "From each his capacity, to each his necessities."

That may be so. If so, it seems to me that you deny your own ideal by exalting the individual. If it is not your ideal, then that is where we join issue, comrades mine. I am like a weaver to whom no thread is more important than another: the fine, the coarse, the bright, the dull—each goes towards the pattern. The important point is to create the harmonious whole. Or an artist, to whom the pieces that make up his mosaic are equally unimportant yet equally precious.

I seek the harmony of all harmonies—a happy well-ordered human society. Work, production, distribution—these are material means to the higher end. These then must be organised and ordered. If they are to tend to the well-being of society, then society must organise and control them. Such control and organisation is what I understand by social democracy. As this orderly conduct becomes habitual and ingrained, the clumsy restrictions of law and enforced control will fall into disuse, never to revive. Social and material perfection will then have been reached. The never-ending march of moral, intellectual, and spiritual progress will then have seriously commenced, leading us—who knows where?

S. D. SHALARD.



MISS LANCHESTER'S CASE.

A well-attended public meeting took place at St. Martin's Town Hall, on December 19th, for the purpose of appointing a public deputation to wait upon the Commissioners in Lunacy to induce them to follow up their public-spirited action in releasing Miss Lanchester, by causing Dr. Blandford (who signed the "urgency" order on grounds which have no connection with lunacy at all) to be criminally prosecuted. Herbert Burrows presided, and spoke at length on the case and on the object of the proposed deputation. Miss Wardlaw Best moved the resolution which embodied the object of the deputation as above-mentioned. She gave a scathing denunciation of the private asylum system, and instanced cases of improper detention within her own knowledge. Oswald Dawson, of the Legitimation League, seconded the resolution with a vigorous speech, pointing out that the evils of public asylums were shown to be as bad as those of private ones, if not worse, and that official corruption was not the newest thing under the sun. Eleanor Marx Aveling said that the Property regime was the root of the evils under consideration, and that many persons were undoubtedly incarcerated for

money motives, who were saner than a good many outside. Miss Amy Morant referred to the new tyranny, which under the guise of science, and behind the shield of a medical diploma, was insidiously introducing itself among the people. If it were already possible to legally carry off a person for a mere difference of opinion with the doctors, there was no telling where things would end. She was glad to believe that the public attention which had been called to the Lanchester case had had the effect of causing a great number of medical men to denounce Dr. Blandford's act, and this case would make a similar action difficult in future. Eternal vigilance was now as ever the price of liberty. —Mrs. Mary Gray spoke next at some length on the shameful conduct of Miss Lanchester's relatives, who pinioned her in her own house while they forcibly carried off her "comrade." —Miss Lanchester received an ovation on rising to address the meeting, and if any doubt had previously existed in the minds of those present, it would have been dispelled by her well-reasoned speech, which abounded with good points. She detailed her experiences from the time of her abduction to that of her release, and betrayed no undue excitement whatever, calmly pausing as she proceeded only to make point upon point. She concluded by saying that she had acted, not on the influence of a passing impulse, in setting the marriage laws at defiance, but on a long and deep conviction that they hampered the development of her sex and made freedom impossible.

Organisation and Majority-Rule.

Allow me to say a society has been started in London with the name of "The Associated Anarchists": its aim is to propagate Anarchist-Communism by organised effort. To a great extent it is a recrudescence of an idea of Merlino's before he was arrested, which was for a society to draw up a sheet of non-compulsory agreements to be accepted before any comrade was to be considered a member: this the "Associated Anarchists" have done. The main agreements are first that there shall be a perpetual right to secede, secondly that no person vote unless he or she wish to act collectively, and thirdly, that the action of those who have voted be guided by the majority.

This letter is published in LIBERTY in order that there may be a discussion as to the merits and demerits of such a society.

It is urged on its behalf that it will effectively unite comrades and promote enthusiasm in themselves and the movement. It is maintained that the ordinary anarchist policy of always separating whenever a difference occurs is eminently destructive of social cohesion between comrade and comrade, and as an immediate result interest in the propaganda flags disastrously. It is pointed out that being guided by the majority when it is the minority that decides whether it will be guided or not, is not majority rule, but minority consent. The society declares that minority consent in a great many matters is an absolute necessity for present day organisation.

We would ask comrades to discuss the following points. Is not the movement very dull and sluggish, and what is the probable reason of this? Is it necessary that non-compulsory agreements should be drawn up, if not, why not? Can Anarchists by voting amongst themselves settle friendly differences and not split up in all directions? Is it against our principle to choose to go with the majority for the sake of collective action? —Yours in the cause,

C. T. QUINN.

70, Grafton Street, Tottenham Court Road.



SERGIUS STEPNIAK.

On the 23rd December, 1895, the famous Russian revolutionist and author, Sergius Mikhailovitch Kravtchinsky-Stepniak, was killed at a level railway-crossing by a passing train. His death is an irreparable loss, both to Russia and the International Socialist movement.

Stepniak was one of those rare men who combine in their individuality the most heroic action with distinguished literary talent and unusual breadth of beneficent thought. Since he came of age, and throughout his whole career as agitator and writer, he was the unflinching champion of social justice and popular freedom. As a revolutionist he wielded an immense influence over the youth of the Russian nobility and bourgeoisie, while he guided artisans and peasantry towards the impending and implacable struggle with the despot and the exploiter. Along with his fellow countrymen and his friends (incomparable friends!) Perovskaia, Zasoulitch, Viemar, Jeliaboff, and others, he took part in the heroic struggle organised by the Executive Committee, which not long ago startled the whole world. And among all these devoted, brave, and courageous hearts he was one of the boldest. He fought oppression and tyranny hand to hand, in the light of day, and with unquailing prowess.

Afterwards, when circumstances forced him to make his home in a foreign land, by means of his sympathetic pen and his impassioned speech he won innumerable friends; and for the sacred cause of Russia, and on behalf of the noble martyrs among his countrymen, he pleaded with such irresistible eloquence as to gain the ear and enlist the sympathy of the civilized world. He pictured the

unfortunate lot of the Russian peasant in such a manner as to influence the opinions of the governing classes all over Europe, in relation to the affairs of Russia—its tyrants and its abominable bureaucratic administration.

As a revolutionist Stepniak was indeed a hero: as a writer he reflected glory on his country. Alas, that a man of such courage and talent—so noble, modest, gentle, and good, such a faithful heart, should have been so suddenly snatched from his friends by so cruel a fate!

*Quel cœur noble cessa de battre!
Quelle carrière sublime vint d'être brisée!*

W. THERKESOFF.

The calamity referred to in the foregoing occurred on a Junction of the North London Railway connecting Hammersmith with Acton, and not far from the house in which Stepniak lived. He was on his way to Shepherd's Bush, to the house of Felix Volkhovsky, in order to resume a conference adjourned from the previous day. Stepniak had not been gone from home more than ten minutes when a labourer, who had witnessed the accident and who knew Stepniak, rushed into Mrs. Stepniak's presence and exclaimed "Your husband lies killed on the line." So terrible an announcement and made so suddenly occasioned grief and mental agony that was heart rending.

From the evidence given at the inquest it may be concluded that Stepniak while crossing the line was deep in thought and did not notice the whistle announcing the approach of the train. He was made aware of his danger when too late, and although he made a strenuous effort to get out of the way he was struck by one of the engine-buffers and thrown on the rails. The body was forced along for some distance, and became shockingly mutilated.

Saturday, December 28, was the day chosen for the funeral. The occasion led to one of the most genuine demonstrations of respect for a departed friend that London has witnessed for many years.

The more immediate friends of the deceased met at Chiswick, and witnessed the starting of the hearse and other carriages by road for Waterloo Station. At this place the chief public demonstration of the day took place. There was a very large and thoroughly representative gathering—all sections of the socialist, democratic, communist, anarchist and revolutionary party having some of their members present.

Short addresses, full of sympathy and imbued with earnest love of the principles so long fought and struggled for by Stepniak, were delivered by Felix Volkhoffsky, Edward Bernstein, Peter Kropotkin, William Morris, Herbert Barrows, Eleanor Marx Aveling, Keir Hardie, John Burns, Dr. Spence Watson, Errico Malatesta, M. Nazarbek, and others. Elisee Reclus, who had specially journeyed from Brussels in order to be present, did not arrive until the arrangements had begun for removing the body to Woking Cemetery for the purposes of cremation.

Many of the friends of the deceased accompanied the body to Woking, and deferred their final farewell until the last available moment.

Stepniak was a native of South Russia, and was born in the year 1852. His parents were nobles, living on their own estate, and it was there Stepniak passed uneventfully the early years of his life. From home he passed into a Military Gymnasium, received the customary training, and became an artillery officer. It was while in the army that he began his career as a revolutionist. He was one of the first men of culture and good birth who entered upon a secret propaganda of democratic teaching among the peasants. He sacrificed his position in the army and went among the villages in order that he might more effectively spread a knowledge of democratic principles. While he was thus engaged he was arrested. He managed, however, to escape from his captors, and succeeded in reaching Odessa, where he was sheltered by Felix Volkhovsky. He now began to make his influence felt as a writer, and his "Story of a Penny" found readers throughout the Russian territories. He was proclaimed an "outlaw," and could only move about the country by disguising himself. He was one of the prime movers in the agitation which became known as the "White Terror." In the expedition to St. Petersburg, and the stirring events which took place there in 1875-6, he was an active participator; he assisted in the escape of Prince Kropotkin from a fortress, and made a daring but unsuccessful attempt in a street in Odessa to rescue his friend Volkhovsky. In every revolutionary act of those times his hand and brain were so conspicuous, and his presence anywhere such a formidable danger to the authorities, that every possible attempt was made to apprehend him. As a consequence he was compelled to leave Russia. For a time he resided in Switzerland, and ultimately took up his residence in London—to which place then or afterwards many of his exiled co-revolutionists found their way.

"Underground Russia," one of Stepniak's best known works, was issued from London. "The Russian Peasantry," "Russia Under the Tsars," "Russian Storm-Clouds," "Career of a Nihilist," "Nihilism as it is," and "King Stork and King Log: a Study of Modern Russia," together with a large number of articles in both English and Continental newspapers and magazines, are a proof of the activity and untiring energy evinced by Stepniak up to almost the hour of his untimely death.

KROPOTKIN'S ADDRESS.

The following is the full text of the speech made by Kropotkin on the day of Stepniak's funeral—a speech delivered, it need scarcely be said, with much suppressed emotion:

It is very hard for me to speak at the grave of my friend Stepniak, who was so young, so full of energy and hope, and so ready to work for the com-

mon cause—to continue the work which he had done for all his life since his very earliest youth. He was so full of force that we expected from him his work for many years to come. What he has done for Russia, for the Russian revolutionary movement, is shown by the hundreds of letters and telegrams which have reached us, every one saying how the writers feel grieved for the loss of this man who all so deeply loved, and who was so much attached to us. He created in this country a current of sympathy in all classes of society with the Russian revolutionists, with the Russian movement, with the Russian literature, with the Russian nation, with the Russian people. He could not support any sort of oppression. He could not bear the feeling of slavishness or submissiveness, and wherever he saw people ready to revolt he was there with them with a rifle in his hands, in Montenegro, or in Italy, and he sympathised with all his young heart with the Arminian immigrants. He could not live in the narrow feeling of party worship—he stood much above all that. And when it came to him to discuss with anybody whose opinions he did not agree with, he never abandoned his opinions, but in those beautiful, gentle, and soft loving eyes of his you could see the very depths of his heart; he understood your emotions and warm-hearted feelings, which he was always ready to share with you. Only the great poets are gifted with such pure sympathy. He was happiest in the society of children, and his happiest moments in America were those he spent in a negro school with negro boys. He would not allow anyone to oppress another in his presence. He was always ready to cry a revolt upon the oppressor. This is the man we have lost, but his image will live amongst us. The wave of revolution will reach Russia, it will spread over its flat lands, and this will be done the sooner if every one of us remember that beautiful image of Stepniak to encourage us in our further work.

Our Contemporaries.

We have to acknowledge with thanks copies of the following periodicals: *La Sociale*, (Pouget's up-to-date, real, thorough, lively journal)—*Les Temps Nouveaux* (cramped with well written articles)—*The Rebel* (in which Comrade Mowbray and his colleagues are showing "go" and ability)—*The Firebrand* (the comrades producing which are stemming their difficulties with the utmost courage, and issuing a real anarchist journal that does them much credit)—*Liberty*, New York (in which Tucker and Yarros fight fearlessly in defence of their individualistic principles)—*Le Liberaire* (the new venture in the world of French journalism to which Sebastian Faure, Louis Michel, and other well known writers are giving attention)—*Der Freie Gesellschaft*, New York (a monthly journal for the most advanced ideas in social science, printed in Hebrew, the current number of which contains a good portrait of Proudhon)—*La Revue Feministe* (which has attained its sixth issue, and well maintains its character as an able journal for educated women)—*Le Cyclone*, from Buenos Aires (an anarchist paper that is giving publicity in a new field to the writings of Kropotkin)—*Der Sozialist*, Berlin—*Freie Wacht*, Philadelphia—*La Question Sociale*, Paterson—and *El Oprimido*, Lujan.

"LIBERTY" is a journal of Anarchist-Communism; but articles on all phases of the Revolutionary movement will be freely admitted, provided they are worded in suitable language. No contributions should exceed one column in length. The writer over whose signature the article appears is alone responsible for the opinions expressed, and the Editor in all matters reserves to himself the fullest right to reject any article.

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LIBERTY,

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BETWEEN OURSELVES.

Scratch an official and you find a capitalist; this without doubt appears to be the case with Mr. James Mawdesley in the light of his utterances at the Congress of the American Federation of Labour: "If I were a capitalist I would be just as wicked as they are, and I do not think there is a man here who would not be the same." We will not for one moment question this candid confession of innate depravity but honestly believe it applies to the official mind generally; hence their pliability in the hands of the politician, their lust for office and big salaries. That it holds good of society as a whole we deny emphatically, it being self-evident to anyone of ordinary intelligence that society would cease to exist were it not for mutual aid among men.

That he should deliver himself of these sentiments is not surprising when we consider that he spoke as the representative of the Parliamentary Committee which is in its essence and spirit reactionary and deficient in the power of observation. Another instance of measuring other people's corn by one's own bushel; and again this other utterance of his "If you want to compete with capital on equal grounds, and use its weapons, you must get your best talent and use it, and pay for it. Would religion be flourishing if parsons were not well paid? Would lawyers thrive if they did not get big fees?" No one knows better than he does the impossibility of competing with the capitalist on equal terms. Has it never entered his head that it is competition and capitalism which are the root causes of poverty? What a ridiculous attempt to gull the workers! For this is exactly what the capitalists want us to do. They can easily beat us at that game; it is like an invitation from the Devil to play at dice with him while he plays with loaded pieces. It is very late in the day to have to expose the fallacy that the best talent can be got by paying the highest price for it. To argue thus he only exposes his ignorance of Art and Literature Past and Present. What sane man is concerned whether the parsons flourish or the lawyers thrive? They, like the official and politician are but the parasites of the monopolists. All must be swept away in order that the labourer shall get the fruit of his labour.

William Morris lectured on the first Sunday in the New Year on "One Socialist Party"; he considered that the time had now come when an attempt should be made by Socialists to form one Party, that some sort of test should be made, not too wide nor yet too narrow, so as to include Socialists of all parties. He thought the trade unions had lost their old narrowness. With regard to what socialism meant he defined it as meaning a society where there would be an equality of condition. It was impossible to do any real work on a vestry or elsewhere where there were conflicting interests. Mere differences of opinion might easily be smoothed over and a workable under-

standing arrived at, but no decision could be arrived at when interests were antagonistic.

The lecture was from many points of view a remarkably good one revealing many flashes of deep insight into the social life of the people. When asked whether nationalisation of the land with its inevitable officialism would not mean antagonistic interests, Morris replied that we rather read the present into the future; and again as to whether he thought the test for the one socialist party should be wide enough to admit the non-political Socialists or Anarchists, he was of the opinion that it should.

An interesting discussion took place afterwards in which our friend G. B. S., took part and talked about William Morris's pencil, his own typewriter and someone else's bicycle as being "means of production". He also pointed out that the tactics adopted at the Zurich Congress for expelling Anarchists signally failed, as there were as many Anarchists left in their capacity as trade union delegates as there were expelled: the whole affair wasted time and prevented real business being done.

We disagreed from our friend Shaw in the former part of his speech, for pencils and typewriters are not means of production in the Communist sense of the words and it is absurd to attempt to read that meaning into the phrase.

While agreeing with the major portion of the lecture, and whilst being strongly in favour of a united socialist party, we took occasion to call attention to the fact that in the previous attempt to form a socialist alliance, the failure thereof was not due to the Anarchists: they strongly supported the idea; but rather to those political Socialists who could not sink their personal differences. And in view of Mr. Mawdesley's speech at New York, and the attitude of the Trade Unionists with regard to the forthcoming International Socialist Workers' Congress we think the Trade Unionists have lost little of their old narrow exclusiveness.

It is about time to call attention to what socialism really means, as there seems to be confusion about its exact meaning in the minds of many persons who speak as Socialists. Socialism to our mind means economic and political freedom, which could not be realised if the state owned the land, and the politicians manipulated the government. Leading the people to believe in the possibility of capturing parliament is only to lull them to apathy, and in the meantime teaching them to rely on leaders.

On another page will be found an article on Stepniak, by Therkesoff, full of feeling, sympathy, and touching discernment of his friend's characteristics. It is claimed by some that Stepniak had returned to a belief in constitutional action; this to a certain extent may be true, and those who appreciate the difficulties of propaganda in Russia will understand the necessity of all kinds of attack; but that he was blind to the dangers of the state was far from being the case, for only the night before he died he owned to some friends at his house that democracy too had its dangers.

Those who think that living according to antagonistic principles is a thing of the past, or an unrealizable dream of the

future, would do well to read an article that appeared in the "Quarterly Review," for October last, entitled "Village Communities in Spain." It consists of an interesting summary and review of some recent works by reliable Spanish authors on the existing communes in the provinces of Leon, Castile, and Upper Arragon. The description of the communal methods of managing affairs still continuing in these places, in spite of all that the Spanish governments have done to centralize administration and turn the communal woods and pastures into private property, is very encouraging to those who like us look for the time of a world-wide friendship and communism. Of course these hardy and friendly peasants cannot afford luxuries, and, apart from the land and its produce, and their flocks, they do not seem to be troubled with much "property." Still, although they lead a life of frugality, there are many social pleasures within the reach of these healthy, free, and uncorrupted people, and amongst whom pauperism is unknown.

There is an article on another phase of communism in this month's "Nineteenth Century," by P. Kropotkin. The vitality and persistence of the communistic feeling among men is thoroughly dealt with. In France, South Germany, and Switzerland a communal management still flourishes in some parts of those countries, although hampered by official interference. Mutual aid, and a desire of each to do his best at the necessary and common works, blended with willing cooperation in the various occasions of hearty enjoyment that occur—such seem to be some of the characteristics of the peaceful country folk in those parts referred to. In the Basque Provinces the members of the Communes have the common name of "neighbours"—this name pleasantly reminds us of Morris's "News from Nowhere")—and their life towards each other fully bears out the real meaning of this word.

One of the saddest deaths that has come under our notice was that of H. Severing, who committed suicide on December 21st at Birmingham. He left Germany in order to escape serving in the army, only to be exploited here by an English employer who paid him 14s. a week as a brass finisher, and finally to be drawn by cruel conditions to be "one of the unemployed"—like thousands who have no inquests and leave no message; and, after enduring great privations, was driven in sheer despair to take his own life. The letter found on his person bore evidence that he was a young man of rare intelligence. His keen appreciation of William Morris led him to conclude his letter with the following:

I heard men saying, Leave hope and praying,
All days shall be as all have been
To-day and to-morrow bring fear and sorrow,
The never ending toil between;
When earth was younger, 'midst toil and hunger,
In hope we strove, and our hands were strong
Then great men led us, with words they fed us,
And bade us right the earthly wrong.

The coroner (Mr. Oliver Pemberton) seized the occasion to give utterance to the Jingo sentiment "that he (deceased) had failed in his duty to his country, that he came to England to preach dissatisfaction, and that his philosophy was false in every sense of the word." The coroner's observations proved conclusively that he was entirely unacquainted with the literature and philosophy of socialism. Is he not aware of the brutalising nature of the military system—how rotten it is, how it allows robbery, rape, and brutality of all kinds? No, his insular egotism seems to have sufficed. We wonder how far 14s. would go in the house of this exalted person. Morris's poetry was Greek to one so dead to the finer feelings of human nature as Coroner Pemberton proved himself to be.

It was with pleasure we noticed that the comrades of Severing, not lacking in social duty, claimed the body of him whom they knew as a quiet, unobtrusive colleague, and buried it in Key Hill Cemetery. Over the grave Comrade E. J. Sale delivered a simple but eloquent and impressive speech, which was followed

by other speeches of a like sympathetic nature; the proceedings terminated by singing "England Arise" and the "Marseillaise". There was evinced throughout a determination to destroy a system which claims so many victims.

ANARCHY AND THE FARMER.

Usually the farmer and his vocation are overlooked in discussions on social questions, the city toiler and the factory operative occupying the entire attention of the discussionists. The farmer has stood so clearly out against the political sky as an individualist, that the state socialists have instinctively recognized in him a great barrier to their schemes of governmentalising everything. The farmer loves his lands, his flocks, his orchards, and does not take kindly to the idea of having his farm taken by the government, and his work laid out for him by a committee. The farmer feels the pressure of "hard times" and is "squeezed" as long as there is any wealth to be squeezed out of him. Unable to get cash for what he has to sell, he is compelled to mortgage his belongings in order to pay his rent and taxes. To the farmer the mortgage is a constant source of fear. It stands over him as as a monster, taking away his produce as interest, and threatening to take from him his home.

When the farmer understands that anarchism proposes that he shall keep his farm as long as he likes, that it will never be sold for taxes, and that he will have no interest to pay or mortgage to meet in anarchy, he very easily and quite readily takes up with anarchist theories. If anarchism prevails he can retain his farm, if he so desires, or which is most profitable, when he sees that cooperative effort is more desirable, he can unite his land with the land of his neighbours and work with men like himself, farmers, on such plan as their experience points out as best. In anarchy no sheriff to foreclose a mortgage, or intermeddling committee to dictate the season's work, will ever molest the farmer. Then the true desirability of rural life will become manifest. By cooperative working of the land, and the village plan of living, the work can be reduced to the minimum, for both the men and the women, and the greatest enjoyment be attainable.

The farmer is strong and courageous, and in the revolutionary period just before us, depend upon it, every farmer who has caught a glimpse of these possibilities, who knows what the Anarchists want, will do his share of the work necessary to bring it about. Life on the farm might be all that poets have described it, instead of the constant and hopeless drudgery that it is to-day. But it cannot be such as a result of political reforms, or of anything short of freedom—anarchy.

To reach it we must not only think and desire but dare and do. And our doing must be effective and intelligent. To make it intelligent we must never miss an opportunity to spread our ideas, our literature, and our periodicals amongst the farmers. —HENRY ADDIS (in the "Firebrand".)



WISHES.

Oh, would it could be known to *all*
 What thought the scient thinks:
 How weal of one, by weal of all,
 To smallest import shrinks:
 For then some sad might learn to see
 Their sadness less distressfully.

I wish it could be felt of *all*,
 What glow the poet feels,
 And how his quivering life responds
 To life's minutest wheels:
 For then were all men just and kind,
 And mind no more should harass mind.

Oh, would it could be shared by *all*,
 That vision of the soul,
 Whose will, in tune with social due,
 Needs but its own control:
 For then a brave "new earth" would be
 Where all should love, and *all were free*.

L. S. BEVINGTON.

The foregoing was amongst the last of the contributions received from our late comrade, L. S. Bevington. For the portrait over the poem we are indebted to Comrade Wess, of the "Workers' Friend."

The International Workers' Congress.

To the *Editor of LIBERTY*.

When the invitation to the International Workers' Congress was read at a meeting of the Independent Tailors-Pressers and Machinists Union, some of us contended that it meant that all Trade Unions sending delegations were to believe that the solution of the labour question lies in parliamentarianism. But we are now living, I regret to say, in a world of politics, and our Union also contains politicians. These have decried us non-political Unionists to be liars and disturbers of the peace. The majority of the members have believed them, and decided to send a delegate. Accordingly I have sent a letter to the Secretary of the International Congress Committee (Will Thorne) asking him if a Trade Union not believing in Parliamentary action would be entitled to send a delegate. Here is the answer I have received:

"Comrade Baron,—Yours duly to hand, for which accept my

thanks. In reply I may say that all Trade Unions recognise the necessity of political action: that being so, the Zurich resolution covers them. But those people who are complaining about not being admitted to the next International Congress don't believe in the necessity of political action: that being so, the Zurich resolution will shut them out. Best wishes from, yours fraternally, W. THORNE"

There is no doubt that a handfull of politicians wish, by force, to make everybody believe that all Trade Unions are political, only instead of saying this openly they go a round-about way to do so. In any case let the Unions take good notice of this fact, and if they hold as real the true principles of workers unionism, if they value their motto "Union is strength" they ought to energetically protest against this invitation, and not allow themselves to be thus used for political purposes.

L. BARON,

Member Independent Tailors-Pressers
 and Machinists Union.

—From the "Workers' Friend," Dec. 27, '95.

ANARCHIST COMMITTEE.—The committee appointed by the conference of London Anarchists held on Boxing Day, 1895, met for the first time on the evening of Wednesday, the 1st January, 1896. It was agreed that James Tochatti should act as Secretary, W Wess as Treasurer, and T. Reece as Assistant Secretary. Correspondence relating to the status of Trade Unions and other working-class organisations not binding themselves unreservedly to political action, in the above Congress was read and discussed. The committee decided to open up communication with the provincial Anarchist groups and non-political working-class bodies for the purpose of securing concerted action against the unjust and despotic action of the Organising Committee of the Congress in shutting out the delegates of that section of the labour movement which does not believe in the efficacy of political action. The Secretary was accordingly instructed to endeavour to obtain some expression of opinion from these various bodies, and report at the next meeting. It was also resolved that a direct appeal to Trade Unions, on the lines of the one circulated prior to the Zurich Congress, should be issued, and as early in the month as possible. A fund to meet printing and incidental expenses was opened, to which contributions are earnestly solicited. All monies to be sent to W. Wess, 42, Cressy Houses, Cressy Street, Stepney, and all other communications to James Tochatti, Car magnole House, Hammersmith, who will supply any information required. All contributions will be acknowledged in *LIBERTY* and *FREEDOM*, and a monthly balance sheet will be published.

The committee will meet weekly, and the cooperation and financial support of all comrades and lovers of fairplay and justice is invited.—T. REECE, Asst. Sec.

Comrade J. Sketchley (27, Salthouse Lane, Hull) has just published a pamphlet entitled "Shall the People Govern themselves?" It is full of facts, figures, and statements in favour of an affirmative reply to the question—and its closing words are "We demand the referendum to enable the people to govern themselves, to manage their own affairs, to determine their own destiny." Sketchley always puts his case clearly, and generally with considerable force: he has been very successful in this instance, and his pamphlet should have a wide circulation.

"The Popular Phrenologist," edited by "Cranion." No. 1. (46, Goswell Road, N.)—This endeavour to establish a penny monthly periodical, with a view to extending and popularising a knowledge of the science of phrenology, deserves to succeed. "Cranion" has started his work in admirable form. The periodical is readable from its first page to its last. A better medium for gaining the attention of those unacquainted with phrenology could scarcely have been devised. The contents are as varied as they are appropriate, and are made up of character sketches, biographies, lessons, anecdotes, health notes, stories, correspondence, reports, etc.

THE SINGLE TAX.

The more furious of the opponents of Malthus have propounded a scheme for the purpose of arresting the startling diminution of population, by means of a tax on the unmarried. It is thereby assumed that those who have had the good luck to reach the age of maturity (since the mortality amongst children is the highest) will go to any length to evade the tax-collector. Mr. Arthur Withy does not belong to this set, but, in November LIBERTY, he waxed eloquent over the national blessings which he thinks would be certain to accrue from the imposition of another kind of single tax, one which he says is destined to swamp all other taxes and become the monopoly tax—the tax par excellence, and which he is assured will, by an extraordinary circumlocution, fairly destroy monopoly altogether. This homœopathic medicine is nothing more than a tax on land values.

Let us first pay a passing consideration to the fiscal aspect of the proposal. "In this country (says Mr. Withy) the first step towards the single tax would be to impose upon the present value of all land the existing tax of 4s. in the £, now levied on the value of 1692, and bringing in a paltry £1,020,000 only. The rental value of the land of the United Kingdom is estimated at £160,000,000 to £200,000,000, so that a tax of 4s. in the £ levied on present values would net from £32,000,000 to £40,000,000, and the existing rates and taxes might to that extent be remitted. We would then proceed by annual increments of 1s. in the £. In nine or ten years the whole of the present rates and taxes, amounting to £123,000,000 per annum, could be abolished; and in sixteen years the whole of the rent would flow into the public coffers."

Which would make precious little difference to the *tenants*. Of course, Mr. Withy's conclusion is substantially sound, if we grant that his propositions are anything better than question-begging assumptions.

It is of the utmost importance in correct deduction to be certain beforehand that your propositions are not in the least open to question. The means within our reach for the avoidance of fallacies of ambiguity and the discovery of agreements, is the simple application of observation and experience. And the first lesson the political philosopher learns through these is that governments *always have* increased, and reasoning from analogy he has no reason to suppose otherwise than that they always will increase, the burden of taxation upon the people to the maximum degree which they (the people) will stand. If this proposition is inserted in the stead of that vague hypothesis which turns on what the government *might* do, we shall arrive at a very different conclusion.

We are told that "a substantial tax on land values would inevitably break down the barriers of land monopoly, and give labor and capital freedom of access to all land not actually in use, because the tax would be levied upon the full annual value of the land whether the land were put to use or not, and no landowner could long afford to pay out the tax while receiving no return from the land. This freedom of access to the land would at once solve the unemployed problem, and make the workers economically independent; for no man would work for another for longer hours, for lower wages, or under worse conditions than he need work for himself on the land."

Profound argument!

The immediate effect of a tax on land values would be the enhancement of land values to that extent. Every periodical addition to the tax, *pro rata*, would only tend to force up land values to a corresponding degree. That would be the natural economic manifestation. Now suppose the landlords adopt the policy of the trade-unionists, and combine to still further enhance their blessed land values. They would have every incentive to adopt such a "protectionist" policy, and nothing in the nature of things as at present constituted could prevent them. What kind of a quandary would confront us then? We will suppose that an assessment of 4s. in the £ is levied on £200,000,000 land values next year, and that the landlords are therefore compelled to hand over to the Government the sum of £40,000,000. Whether or not this sum would be put to the lessening of taxation in general we will not consider—we will only deal with probabilities. The landlords thereupon resolve to double their land values, or, to be more precise, their rents. What would happen? Simply that the landlords would

be more than 50 per cent. better off than ever, as the following table shows:

Rent.	Tax.	Landlords' Income.
1895.—£200,000,000	£0	£200,000,000
1896.—£200,000,000	£40,000,000	£160,000,000
1897.—£400,000,000	£80,000,000	£320,000,000

Of course, some tenants holding under leases at fixed rentals would escape for a time, at the expense of the other tenants not similarly protected.

If Mr. Withy is sufficiently expert in arithmetic to explain how a further annual increment of 1s. in the £ will operate to reduce the landlords' net income we may be induced to go back to school. Of course it goes without saying that, in any event, the workers will have the tax to pay. Mr. Withy's contention that the tax would "give labour and capital freedom of access to all land not actually in use" quite passes my comprehension. If rent were abolished at once labourers would have free access to all land not actually in use, but in that case their condition would not be permanently improved in the slightest, for they would merely be enabled to still further compete amongst each other for the opportunity to be employed by capitalists, and ultimately bring about precisely the same ratio of wages to prices as existed heretofore.

"This freedom of access to the land would at once solve the unemployed problem, and make the workers economically independent." For the sake of argument, let us assume that freedom of access to the land is established for the labourers. By what process of logic do we reach the extraordinary conclusion that the unemployed problem is thereby solved, and the workers made economically independent? Only by a begging of the question, to be sure: by assuming, firstly, that the unemployed problem virtually depends for solution on a larger extension of agriculture, and, secondly, that the workers are able to engage in the production of wealth without capital. The inference that the workers would be economically independent is drawn from the assumption that no man would (voluntarily) work for another for longer hours, etc., than he would work for himself on the land. The question, however, to consider is, not what the workers would do, but what they can do. It is self-evident that the three requisites of production are land, labour, and capital. Mr. Withy evidently proposes to eliminate capital from production. But how?

The latter portion of Mr. Withy's article is confined to a statement of the ethical basis of the single tax. Here he indulges in a feat of dialectical gymnastics which fairly beats the record. He completely out-George's George. He propounds at one and the same time two separate and conflicting moral "arguments," which certainly possess this merit, that if you are not convinced by one you have the other to fall back upon. He says "I am a single-taxer because I believe in freedom—in the equal right of all men to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Whereupon he constructs the following clumsy syllogism—"All men have equal rights to life. Since the use of the earth is essential to the life of all men, then all must have equal rights to use the earth."

It is very certain that no such conclusion can be logically drawn from the premises. While it is true that the use of the earth is essential to the life of man, or, to be more exact, that the use of a portion of the earth is essential to the life of each man, all that follows from this (granting equal rights) is that all men have equal rights to use a portion of the earth. We certainly are not permitted to jump from the particular to the general and declare, as Mr. Withy does, that all men have equal rights to use the whole earth, for that is what is involved in the terms of his concluding proposition, and by which it is reduced to absurdity—being manifestly impossible.

Mr. Withy puts the other moral "argument" in this way: "Without population land has no value. It can have no value until at least two people want the same piece." Therefore "The rental value of the land is created by and belongs to the whole community."

This does not follow. The premises simply lead to the conclusion that land values arise only in those special circumstances where two or more persons desire one piece, and prefer to pay a rent rather than go without. But we are reasoning in a circle. If land is to be classified as a commodity (!) it certainly must be subject to the same laws which govern the values of other commodities. If the supply of a commodity be equal to the

demand for it, its value will be equal to its cost of production. Therefore if the available land be equal to the people's requirements (and there is no evidence of population pressing upon available acres at present) its rent will be zero, since its cost is nothing. Since land costs nothing, that is to say—since labour does not enter into its production, it cannot be included in the category of value at all, and would not but for the land laws.

Rent only arises through the State having given a comparatively few persons a right of ownership in the land, thereby compelling the rest of the community to pay tribute to these land "lords" for its use. What is erroneously called "economic rent," consisting in a superiority of some areas over others in fertility or situation, would have no more economic significance under a regime of free exchange than the fact that machinery assists the fittest amongst the producers to survive, while relegating the unfittest to occupations for which they are more fit; and while the latter undoubtedly suffer a temporary inconvenience, which under liberty would be materially minimised, but which is necessarily contingent on economic progress, the community as a whole derive greater advantages therefrom than it could possibly be pretended they would do by means of a tax on machinery, which the community as a whole (and not the individual owners) would be condemned to pay in the inevitable rise in prices.

Whether this tax would be employed to decrease the public expenditure is, to say the least, hypothetical, but certain it is that a large proportion of it would be consumed in maintaining the additional staff of officials which such a scheme would necessitate. That much, in any case, would be unproductive, whereas under free competition the economic advantages of machinery would be distributed throughout the community without any such deduction. It must be ruled, therefore, that the tax is an element to be removed from, rather than added to, the more economical production and equitable distribution of wealth. And the single tax is no exception to this rule.

HENRY SEYMOUR.

Can Roman Catholics be Anarchists?

In answer to the above question I reply "No,"—and for two reasons. (1) As long as catholicism involves belief in a divine creator and governor of the universe, and as long as the whole phenomena of nature depend on a series of laws which postulate a lawgiver, so long must Catholics reject anarchy, which is the logical antithesis of the foregoing. (2) Because anarchy looks forward and works for the physical and temporal welfare of the race, as its only and supreme end in life, and rejects an after-life.

I need hardly say that, although the church rejects the first principles of anarchy, she has much sympathy and would not deny her help in altering the present state of society. Some socialist and anarchist objects and aspirations are merely a rehash of her own, as some of your leaders tacitly acknowledge. The following quotations will illustrate my meaning: "Catholicism did not create and has never blessed the modern industrial system, under which so many evils have flourished." The crushing commercialism of to-day is the opposite of the times still called by the ignorant "dark ages," although I am glad to say by a few Socialists. When the church ruled as well as reigned in Europe the present miserable state of things could not exist, and that vision of the old state of things has pierced deep into the conscience of to-day! Would to God that the old community life of the orders and guilds could be established as the foundation of school and college—of workshop and factory, it would transform the "iron law of competition" into a christian law of cooperation between those who labour and those who direct their labour.

There are plenty of Catholic authorities who can be consulted as to our views on social questions. Everyone knows of Cardinal Manning's dictum—that man has a right to bread or work. Does not the church curse the holder of riches, if he does not use them simply as the trustee of the Most High? Is not the usury by which so much of modern capital is amassed a thing for centuries under her anathema? But further and more sweeping in his denunciation is the German historian Jansen, who proves that had not the Reformation of the 15th century partially stayed her course the church would shortly have dealt, and was dealing with, the whole social question; but for that moral and political fiasco the terrible social ques-

tions between class and class, capital and labour, etc., which are threatening the dissolution of modern society, would never have arisen, or would have found a natural and easy solution.

As to the present position of Catholics on social questions—centuries of legalised robbery, years of hard struggles for justice and civil rights, have not failed to leave their mark on her; but the second spring time has come, and she will do now as she has done before—semper eadem: she alone has always stood up for the rights of man, and she alone can solve the whole social problem, and in the coming struggle you will need her—not she need you!

JOHN S. HOWELL.

Oscar Baker (in your December number) takes up a reasonable position on this question when he says that he must know what anarchism is before being able to answer it. But he does not write many lines without making it perfectly clear to anarchists what Roman Catholicism is. "The principles of the church do not change. . . . What they were in the past they will be in the future. . . . The church's love of liberty is the same to-day as ever, and will remain the same. . . . The utterances of the Holy Father will be accepted by his children with that obedience which his exalted position entitles him to."

This is the point we reach, then, that from Oscar Baker's point of view Catholics may become Anarchists in so far as their opinions and acts are not inimical to the interests of the Pope! Which is only another way of saying that casuistry may yet succeed in bringing Anarchists "to God," since the noose and the guillotine have so signally failed to accomplish that end—so perverse are these people.

We can understand why the Roman priesthood so zealously proclaim their affection for social democracy, and we can see plainly how and why they are so effectually pulling the strings of that movement. That is why we perceive there is no hope for oppressed humanity except in anarchy. And Anarchists must beware of this last move on the part of these Papists, which is to control anarchy by hoodwinking its devotees. The Society of Jesus has its tools in every court and cabinet in Europe. They head the effective offices of state, and practically control the administration of "justice." What they do is precisely what the people as a whole do not see. But they have not reached their supremacy yet. When the history of the Social Revolution shall have been written it will be a simple story—a fierce and fiendish struggle between the only two factions left which stand for spiritual life and spiritual death, viz., Anarchists and Jesuits. Between them there can be no compromise.

RODIN.

ECONOMICS MADE EASY.

CONSIDER: man produces wealth by applying his labour to the raw material of the earth, and the wealth that he thus produces is his wages. All wealth, therefore, is wages, for no wealth can be produced without the labour of individual men, and that which each individual produces by his labours belongs justly to him alone. Whatever wealth a man gets without labour—rent, profits, interest, taxes, or plunder—must of necessity be taken out of another person's wages. Subtract from the gross amount of wealth produced rent, interest, profits, taxes and plunder, and you have as a remainder the wages now received by the workers. The worker produces all. The Landlord gets rent, the Money lord gets interest, the Trade lord gets profits, the Political lord gets taxes, the wage slave gets what's left. Rent, interest, profits, taxes and plunder represent what is taken by force and fraud from the workers for the benefit of the idlers. The rent-taker, the interest-taker, the profit-taker and the tax-taker as such, are non-producers, who live by the labour of the producers. The labourer only deserves honour: he only is despised. —G. O. W.

COMING EVENTS.

There is to be a public meeting at the Chelsea Town Hall, on Wednesday, January 8th, at 8.30 p.m. prompt, for the purpose of exposing the actual truth about the recent hospital scandals. Miss Amy Morant will probably preside, and Miss Alice Bentley, who recently resigned as a hospital nurse, will speak in uniform, and will no doubt make matters unpleasant for the authorities. Comrades should turn up to support a movement against radical rascals and butchery.

On Thursday, January 9th, at 8 p.m., James Schatti will lecture (on behalf of the Acton Branch of the I. L. P.) at Purnell's Coffee House, 17, High Street, Acton: subject, "Human Nature and Socialism."

On January 17th, at 7.30 p.m., Henry Seymour will lecture at The Hall, St. James's Walk, Clerkenwell, the subject being "The Fallacy of Marx's Theory of Surplus Value."

Comrades desiring to have a small book, or pamphlet, printed and published, and wishing to know the cost, should write to the Editor of "Liberty."

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