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LETTERS FOR WORKING MEN.

No. VI.—MR. DUNCOMBE AND THE CHARTER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE STAR OF FREEDOM.

SIR,—In my letters for Working Men by which I mean men who work, be they of the handicraft class or not, I shall not care to turn aside from the course I chalk out for myself to notice such observations as may be provoked by my opinions, or the manner of their expression, unless such observations seem to me called forth by some misconception of my meaning, or that they bear directly upon the points I undertake to argue. I find two such matters worth notice in the 'Star' of last week. The one is Mr. Rogers' letter, the other in the article by 'L'Ami du Peuple.' Mr. Rogers has quite misunderstood me, if he thinks I would depreciate my good friend Mr. Duncombe. I thought that speaking of him so would have prevented any misapprehension. I yield to no man in respect for the service rendered by Mr. Duncombe to the People's Cause. Frank, chivalrous, honest, indomitable, untrifling,—I know not if we ever had his fellow. It has always been enough for him to know that a wrong needed redress, and his generous and constant service was ensured; or that a right needed advocacy, and he was the prompt, unflinched, and fearless advocate. I had too much to do with him in his exposure of the rascally government spy system at the Post Office (of which I will shortly have to speak, since I see the Austrian tool, Sir James Graham, is already prophesied of as one of the 'coming men') not to be well aware of the deep debt of gratitude which we owe him so far as that question was concerned; and as regards the Charter, its history can never be fairly written without placing in the foreground the Charterist Member of Parliament, Thomas Stingsby Duncombe. But my unreserved admiration for his steady adherence to our cause,—my perfect faith in his high integrity, do not, and may not, prevent me from criticising his propositions, and speaking of them what I deem the truth. I think then that his proposition of a new Charter is unwise; and his stipulation of residence, even for six months, quite enough to damn it, even if it was wiser. Surely we have not forgotten the old terms of hiring country servants, for so many weeks, in order that they might not get a parish settlement. Surely the case of Molton in Yorkshire is sufficient in point—Molton, ruined by Free Trading, Lord Fitzwilliam, who raised all his rents—the rents of the whole town, because his candidate was opposed. Without leases, what masses of workmen would be sure of their six months' residence in a given district, when once their political tendencies were known? And if you beat down, our argument of the mischievous abuse of this residential, of any residential qualification, by showing that it would not be a disenfranchising enactment, then we have a fair right to re-join. For what purpose do you have it? It should be required of the proposer of all these residential, and rateable, and other disqualifications, to show us very satisfactorily what numbers and what classes would be effected by them. Till they do this, and very exactly, we are bound to be suspicious of the schemes (no matter who the schemers; honest men often ignorantly propose dishonest plans) and to reject them on the ground that not rate and residence, and such like, is the reason why a man should be enfranchised, but for the satisfaction of his natural right to perform all the duties of manhood. It lies on those who would deprive any of this right to show why; and it lies on those who propose grounds of deprivation, to show how many would be thereby effected. I look on all these things as dodges; and when, as in the present case, I find a man of undoubted honesty proposing one, I simply say he does not see the bearing of it. I turn from Mr. Duncombe to my other friendly opponent. 'L'Ami du Peuple' cannot tell what is to be gained by the adoption of the proposition of *Spartacus* to go for Manhood Suffrage only, sinking all details. What is to be gained is an access of numbers to the cause, and that from the very class most able to help the cause—the intelligent and well-principled portion of the middle class—the class that has political power. What is to be gained by it is the chance of carrying them our one point, with such assistance. Without that assistance the working class, which will not fight, and which has no constitutional means of self aid, cannot carry even that one point; no, not though they utterly reform their conduct, and forego all their past errors except this one, this one, which has lain at the root of all Chartism, though being satisfied with a class movement, and that a peaceable movement, of the class which has no power except in their strong bands. Do not mistake me to be lamenting the abstinence from insurrection. We had no means of turning that to account, and would have failed that way too. Neither do I recommend insurrection now; I recommend the other course—the only course really open to us—that of making our movement national. It is well to blame others for the stupid folly which will refuse the aid of the middle class 'even for the Charter'; but on a smaller scale, and in a quieter way, we follow the same folly, when we insist on that which a long course of years and experiments shows us to be equivalent to refusing their aid. The middle class will not become Chartists. I, myself, would not become so now, if I was just about to join a movement. Chartism (however perfect the enactments of the Charter) is the name of a class movement; and one class no more than another has the right to dictate what a national movement shall be. It should be subject of agreement, not of dictation, under any circumstances; but when we know that our terms will be refused, is it not something akin to asking a rejection to insist upon them? And further, in every matter of agreement, the fewer the heads or details the more likely the agreement. Resolutions, at public meetings or elsewhere, which aim at combining numbers by even what is called the compromise of putting in something to please all, always fail in their object. If you have two heads, you throw off all who agree with only one of those heads, and retain only those who agree with the combination. Have three heads, your chances of agreement are so much worse. How is it possible to be otherwise? What is to be gained therefore by holding to simply the Principles of the Charter, and abandoning, for the present, the name and details? Is the greatest possible number of adherents to be the main object of our wishes? Once settle that point, and it will be easy to learn what other points can be added to the bond of agreement without too much weakening or loosening that bond. What is to be gained by this, therefore, just the one thing we have always wanted—the element of success. 'L'Ami du Peuple' must forgive me for not thinking much of the danger of unsettling 'all that has been determined, not merely by Chartist localities, but by the enlightened conclusions of wise and faithful reformers.' The actual determination at which Chartist localities have arrived, is only the non-payment of a title of debt and the inability to maintain even the poorest shadow of organisation. It is by no means pleasant to have continually to be crying out that the dead should be removed out of the way of the living; but what else can one do when the public thoroughfare is so continually blocked up? This pretence of life in Chartism prevents all other action. Will any friend of the people name to me ten men—only ten men—who will undertake to stand together till this Chartism, which they tell me is not dead, shall be upon its legs again? And not any more of its 'last legs.' What is the use, then, of talking of Chartist localities? Why keep up the delusion? I know that within twenty miles of London are localities—villages of some 2,000 souls, with yet, after all our labours, not ten nominal Chartists there. I know manufacturing towns, with their tens of thousands of inhabitants, and not ten Chartists banded together even there. And I know more than one of our agricultural counties in which, spite of all our ten years' noise they can scarcely tell you what a Chartist is. We have all to begin over again; and therefore we may as well begin upon a wiser footing—upon a broader one, at all events. And for the conclusions of wise and faithful reformers, I would conclude by asking, Are none wise and faithful now, or is Democracy to be so traditional? Verily I find no stancher Conservatives than among my friends, the Democratic Chartists, who will hold out for a name or the minutest point like any Tory of them all. That which is needed is, indeed, 'that good and true men should come forth.' Let us be thankful if we can get them by any surrender short of principle. I say not—care nothing about details; but only let them be subject to the determination of wise and faithful reformers, enlightened enough to combine upon the repeal principle.

SPARTACUS.

To Correspondents.

Mr. T. P. GREEN is thanked for his encouraging letter. Mr. SEARSON'S 'Medical Adviser,' advertised in last week's 'Star of Freedom,' is published at One Penny, and not at a shilling, as announced.

THE REFUGEE.—Among the Polish exiles who were recently expelled from Republican France, for being Republicans, is a veterinary surgeon, who completed his studies in the celebrated Veterinary School of Alfort, near Paris. Besides a perfect knowledge of the art of treating the different maladies peculiar to all animals, he is also versed in the stuffing of quadrupeds and birds, in which—having studied zoology—he excels. We give insertion to these few lines thinking that some of our readers might be in want of such an assistance. An act of philanthropy would at the same time be performed by giving him employment. Furthermore information can be acquired of Mr. Kryniski, French shoemaker, 10, Crawford-street, Baker-street, New Road, London.

WE have no room for 'Old John.'

Mr. F. B. EDWARDS.—We are so overwhelmed with matter that we are unable at present to give insertion to the communication which, however, shall have publicity at the earliest opportunity.

WE should be glad to hear from Henry Groucher, who lived, some years since, at Messrs. Swan and Edgar's, Regent-street, London, should be changed to see the 'Boy Jones' has been at Buckingham Palace again. The same writer suggests that a certain principle of 'reciprocity' means a mutual TAKEN. The Lord preserve us from 'Panthers'!

Mr. HARRISON.—New Bedford, thanks.

Mr. HARRISON.—Received. Thanks.

A SORRE, consisting of a

TEA PARTY AND PUBLIC MEETING, IN HONOUR OF

"THE STAR OF FREEDOM."

Will be held in the Literary and Scientific Institution, John-street, Tottenham-court-road, on Tuesday evening, June the 8th, 1852. The following friends to political and social reform will attend and take part in the proceedings:—Louis Blanc, Esq., Mr. La Bland, Walter Cooper, G. Julian Harney, Samuel M. K. Kild, Gerald Massey, D. W. Ruffy, and John Pettit.

T. S. Duncombe, Esq., M.P., Thornton Hunt, G. J. Holyoake, Esq., and others, are also invited, and expected to attend. Tea on table at half-past six o'clock precisely; and the public meeting to commence at eight o'clock.

Admission to the Tea and Public Meeting, 5d. each. To Public Meeting only, Gallery, 3d., Hall, 2d.

Tickets may be had of John Shaw, 23, Gloucester-street, Commercial-road, East India Dock, 29, Broad-street, Ratcliff; Wm. Driffield, Globe House, Mile-end-road; A. E. Delafosse, 10, North-square, Portland-place, Globe-road, Mile-end; Mr. Kell, White Horse, Horse-street, Bethnal-green; Wm. Davies, 17, Margaret-place, Hackney; C. P. Nichols, 10, Great Winchester-street, City; John Washington, 138, Golden-lane, Barbican; George Taylor, 162, Goswell-street; John Bezer, 185, Fleet-street; Henry Holyoake, 3, Queen's Head-passages, Paternoster-row; James Grassby, 36, Regent-street, Lambeth; John Kline, 1, Union-street, Beckley-square; Isaac Wilson, 6, Sheffield-street, Clerkenwell; Robert Parks, 32, Little Windmill-street, Haymarket; D. W. Ruffy, 13, Tottenham-court-road; John Arnold, 11, Middlesex-place, Somers Town; and Edward Trevelyan, at the Institution, N.B.—The proceeds will be given to the HEROES' FUND.

THE ORGANISATION OF REFORMERS. WHAT DOES IT MEAN, AND HOW IS IT TO BE ACCOMPLISHED?

ON SUNDAY EVENING, May 30th, at Half-past Seven o'clock, Mr. G. J. Holyoake, Editor of the 'Star of Freedom,' will lecture on the above subject at the Literary Institution, John-street, Fitzroy Square.

Admission—To the Hall 2d., Gallery 3d.

N.B.—The Apollonic Society will perform before and after the Lecture.

THE STAR OF FREEDOM. SATURDAY, MAY 29, 1852.

In the 'Star of Freedom,' of Saturday next, will be Published, Notices.

A SMASH FOR THE SMASHERS.

THE OLDEN SPIRIT AND THE OLDEN POWER.

'It is mournful to hear our young men talk,' says a morning contemporary. It is, indeed, mournful. Puerile ideas seem to be the only ones by which their minds are capable of being impressed. All lofty and manly thoughts are far above the mental capacity of the majority of them, and should their attention be directed to such, they seem to consider them matters with which they have not any capability for interference, or profess any interest in. How widely does the present youth of the nation differ from that of the olden time! Even the best educated are becoming little better than absolutely foolish, for, in accordance with the modern educational system—a system as fatal as it is absurd—the mind is attempted to be forcibly developed, while the body is left uncared for—or, rather, it is too much cared for, wrapped up as it is, and shaded from even the gentle breezes of spring, as if the insensate parents and so-called 'educators' would outlaw nature, contradict her laws, and change all the causes of health and disease.

We would rather see again the happier days of our forefathers, than these days of degeneracy, disease, and death. If men did then possess less intellect, they were endowed with vigorous and healthy frames, and noble and manly feelings; and although, in their ignorance, they submitted to kingly and priestly tyranny, they did not do so from any feeling of cowardice, or inability to right themselves; but because the double usurpation of fraud and force had been handed down to them, time-honoured and unquestioned.

Very different are the feelings and the power of the men of the people of to-day. They have gained enough intelligence to know their wrongs and to hate and execrate the tyrannies under which they are crushed, and which have none of the hallowing associations of those of old. But they have altogether lost that physical power necessary to enforce the decrees of justice, and they have moreover been deprived of arms, and of a knowledge of their use.

Such are the insidious cankers that are eating away the heart of the nation. Such are the evils that are undermining the foundations of our national greatness, and hastening the fall of our national power and glory. They are two-fold, the radically bad system of education, or, say rather, compression; for it is not really education, but the dwarfing of the mind and body of the future man, and that execrable social state, which has deprived the masses of the people of the many holidays they once enjoyed, of pure air, and of healthy exercises and amusements; turned, in fact those who should have been men, into wizened-faced, weak, and listless toiling machines.

As regards the first, consistently with the very liberal, but not very ennobling 'principle' of *laissez aller*, the education of the young has been left to paternal stupidity and incompetence, notwithstanding that every page of history is a distinct demonstration of the great truth, that the education of the nation's children can be efficiently performed only by the nation itself. If that was a faulty system which followed the fall of the Lower Empire, giving to the body all the strength and powers of endurance of which it was capable, while the mental powers were allowed to lie dormant, that which succeeded it—the attempt to educate the mind alone—was not merely faulty, but was absurd and impossible. If the body be weakened, or its forces allowed to remain undeveloped, it will not be long before it pulls down the mind to the level of its own condition. The only possible method of raising an intelligent and physically vigorous people is by an education which shall develop all the powers of the individual—those of the body, as well as those of the mind. Military training, forming part of such a system, we should have constantly raised a body of *tertius Militia*; an army of enlightened and stout-limbed citizens, soldiers ever ready to be the nation's defenders against internal and external tyrants.

Yet small would be the benefit to society if our youth, thus trained, were to be drafted from the National Schools into the pestilential factory and workshop; and this brings us to the second part of our inquiry.

The martial spirit of the people is degenerating, as their physical powers become enfeebled, by over-toil and confinement in the deadly atmosphere of the places in which they are pent up; and if the causes continue, the effect will increase until we become a nation of women, at the disposal of our guard of hired assassins, or lie at the feet of some foreign conqueror. For this there can be no remedy, until we abolish the cause. Let us have comfort and healthy exercise for the now pining overworked toilers, and we shall soon awake in them the old English spirit, which will be the best of all National Defences.

To do this, we must have something more than any Militia Bill that comes from our incapable and short-sighted rulers, whose measure will but take a few of the workers from their industrial dungeons for a week or two in the summer, then return them to be weakened and murdered as before. 'Men must have sports,' says the 'Daily News.' 'Let us make our own master on cricket-grounds. Let us have wrestling-matches for our exercises. Let us have foot-races and leaping matches, as our preparation for matches. Let us set up our targets, and see how nicely we can pick out the bull's eyes. Let our swimmers seek out the strongest streams, and show how valiantly they can charge the enemy, and cast him off from their broad breasts.'

Yes; let us indeed have all this! But what opportunity have the workers for engaging in manly sports and healthy exercises, when an absence of five minutes during their long hours of labour will cause them to be deprived of half their day's scanty pittance? You will know, hypocrite as you are! that there is no such fate in store for the people, while the selfish Capitalists, whose cause you advocate, possess their present unlimited power over the children of toil. If you really desire to see again a nation, concede our political rights and establish the reign of equality, give us the Franchise, and we will work out our own regeneration! Deprive us no longer of our just rights, and in the liberated nation we will awake the olden spirit, and build up the olden power!

POPULAR PROGRESS.

We are sometimes inclined to think, that those of us who may live on for some thirty or forty years, on looking back, may say, 'Well, there has been some Progress in our time, but it has been so slow as to be almost imperceptible!' How often have we seemed to be on the verge of that great day which our firm faith assures us shall yet arise. Again and again have we thought the time had come of which the Prophets and Poets have foretold and sung, for which the Apostles of Progress have toiled and suffered, and for which the countless host of Martyrs have welcomed death with calm front and smiling soul, glad even to climb the scaffold, and strain their weary eyes upon the thick mists of ages, to catch one luminous glimpse of the coming glory, before they laid down their noble heads, with the scaffold-block for their last pillow, and bade a thankless world farewell. How often have we thought that this day of emancipation for the suffering, plundered poor, had at length arrived; and then, how bitterly have our hopes been dashed to the ground—how cruelly have we been deceived. The tide of re-action has set in; and our little schemes have been swept away by its destructive might, and our very footprints have been washed out from the shore and sand of time! Yet, in spite of these things, there is Progress withal. Doubtless, we are too sanguine, and build too largely on expectation, forgetting that a few years, which is much in the life of Man, is but little in the life of Humanity, and little even in the life-time of a People. Let us remember that this People, which is now the grand fact of the time, whose very name excites a thousand stirring memories, and a thousand throbbing hopes, was scarcely whispered about before the French Revolution, save as the 'Mob.' Up to that time they were looked upon somewhat in the spirit of the old French law, which empowered certain nobles, who might return hot and weary from the chase, to embowel two—only two—of their serfs, that they might bathe and refresh their royal feet in the warm entrails! And they were treated something according to this grim and bloody shred of feudal barbarism, and used up for the gratification of their lords. But what a part has this same People played since that Revolution! The People have come upon the stage of History and the pride of Kings and Princes has withered, and their hearts have perished within them in its majestic presence. There was a time when we thought a 'Lord' a superior sort of being, made of Nature's porcelain, while we were only common clay. We saw him only in the gloom of our ignorance. Now, as we look on our miserable impostor-nobles in the light of knowledge, we see they have not even got a natural crown on their heads, like the common cock that struts at the barn-door; therefore, we have ceased to hail them as cocks of the world's walk any longer. Indeed, we find that their brains do not lie so near to their eyes as our own do, but are mostly at the back of their heads. The workers, as a class, no longer think it right that they should toil and sweat, and drain out their very life's blood, that pimple after pimple may adorn the aristocratic, millicentric, or aldermanic nose, that the palaces of the rich may be heaped with princely splendours, and their tables laden with all the fruits and luxuries of the earth, while they, the producers, live scantily, are wretchedly clothed, and exist in dirty dens, feverish alleys, andague-stricken hovels! The workers are thinking, and do not drudge on in contented silence, as in times gone by. Where the heart does not burst out into bitter words of rebellion against the present state of things, the scowling brow, set lips, and the clenched fists, will tell what is going on within. The light of knowledge is springing like sunrise in the eyes of the toilers; a light which shall enable them to see the incubus which has crushed them in the dark so long, and marshalled them for the death grapple with wrong and oppression. They are silently thinking out their revolution, which must be thought out before it can be wrought out. They are thinking at the loom, in the field, in the red forge-light, and the murky mine. And, as all institutions are based on ideas, so shall the people's institutions inevitably follow the people's thinking. It is the ignorance which covers the multitude as with a sea of darkness, that tyranny drops its anchor of safety, and maintains itself aloft; let this ignorance be removed, and the king-CRAFT, the priest-CRAFT, and the state-CRAFT, shall be swept away down the stream of time, by the irresistible and rushing waves of Progress. We are making some progress; witness the many movements, Socialist, Co-operative, Temperance, Poor-law, and numerous others which are springing into existence around us, for the amelioration of the condition of labour and its emancipation. We are manifesting the greatest progress in our belief, in self-reform, and in our growing reliance on ourselves. We have learned that if we would have freedom we must win it ourselves. We have learned that a man who is a tyrant in his own heart would be a tyrant still, though the Charter were the law of the land to-morrow. We have learned that men may be called Democrats, and yet be the veriest slaves and humbugs. We have learned, that if we would carry our cause to victory, it is not sufficient that we rally round men, but round principles, and, if need be, we must cheerfully sacrifice men at the shrine of those principles. We have learned that our greatest curses is in the tyranny we exercise over ourselves, and that our governors can afford to laugh at all our brag and bluster, and mock at our impotent struggles to obtain Reform, so long as we are content to spend annually in drink more than the cost of the whole imperial taxation, which is now done, as is proved by Government returns. We have learned in short, that a vicious, tyrannical, Government can only exist by virtue of the vice and slavishness of the people which it mal-governs. This is much that cannot pass away. This is something on the road of Progress. The people are thinking—let us aid them, let it be our duty to supply them with fitting food. There is much to be done in the work of education which has been neglected. Let us teach them what to do to win the Charter, and what to do with it when won, rather than be eternally harping upon the one string of self, and what the Charter will do for us. Set the people—the whole people—thinking, and action will follow, as the fruit follows the flower, and Spring follows Winter, and there is no power on earth can prevent a people—ripe for freedom—from hastening to a swift fulfilment of its glorious destiny.

RUSSIA DOMINANT IN EUROPE.

We have long held the opinion that the 'Holy Alliance' of Kings would not for any length of time exist as a fraternal fact with co-equal members; but that all the divisions of the army of absolutism would coalesce under the banner of the Czar. And so it has come to pass. Every despot and would-be despot vie with each other in their endeavours to obtain the patronage of the Emperor of Russia. Through the land of the murdered Blum—through that Germany, so celebrated for the genius and the bravery of her children, the assassin of Poland and Hungary, rides in triumph, and in every town which he visits in the enchain'd Fatherland of the Germans, there is some one of her many tyrants kneeling at the feet of the Muscovite, and owning the Emperor of the Russians for his lord and master.

It is patent to the world that Austria does not even now exist as a great power; that from the day when the Cossack hordes burst into Hungary to crush the conquering army of Republican freedom there, there was nothing conserved of the once mighty Austrian Empire but the bare name, and that it then became a mere Russian province, and its NERO-imitating Emperor nothing more than a lieutenant of the Czar. As such he has been treated by NICHOLAS during the late visit of that crowned brigand to Vienna, where he accepted with glorious condescen-

sion all the servile attentions of his imperial vassal, and the miserable, sickly, 'popular, enthusiasm' carefully got up by the government, with the aid of bayonets and gold.

Not alone, however, has the ruined and rotten Austrian Empire cast itself into the arms of the Arch-despot of Northern Prussia, or, rather the King of Prussia has also sunk to the degradation of being the vassal of a foreign power. At a banquet given to NICHOLAS at Berlin, the royal drunkard and hypocritical knave, FREDERICK WILLIAM, pledged his liege lord, and prayed that God might 'preserve him to that portion of the world which he has given him for an inheritance, and to our epoch, to which he is indispensable.' The people of Germany would do well to take note of these words, as it is of much importance they be remembered upon the arrival of the new revolution, when the nation shall again be in possession of power. They will demonstrate the futility of the attempt to transform kings and princes into good and loyal citizens, and to show them that there is no cure for tyranny but extirpation. Here have we the man who in 1848 doffed his hat before the triumphant revolution, and bowed down with respect in the presence of the sovereign people in arms, declaring that the millions of Russia, the Caucasians, and the Pole are the property of this mercenary tyrant, bestowed upon him by the ALMIGHTY GOD, to be butchered or brutalised by him at his pleasure. Can there be any hope for humanity while there exist monsters who entertain such atrocious sentiments, and who have not any fear or shame to express such abominable blasphemy.

But not only do these royal villains pretend that it is by the will of the Supreme Being that they are seated upon their absolute thrones, and have the power to scourge and oppress the suffering people; but they actually arrogate to themselves the right to dictate to the whole world; and to decree that no nation whatsoever shall burst its bonds of slavery, or awake to a life of freedom and progress; but that the whole of the human race shall for ever remain crushed under the iron sceptre of brutal and debasing despotism. It is for no other purpose than that of preparing for a crusade against the last remnants of European liberty, that the Czar (who is indispensable to the epoch of Kings) is marching triumphantly through his extended territories, giving his counsels, and issuing his commands to his servile and obedient dependents, in Germany. LOUIS NAPOLEON has tolled in their cause, by slaughtering and oppressing the people, and for this he has received the thanks of the red monarchies of Europe; but he is too slippery, and not respectable enough to become an adopted son of the Czar—much as he has sought the honour. Besides, he has reached his blood-stained throne on the back of the hated Revolution, and cannot appeal to that 'divine right,' which is to be the tyrants' only charter. France, therefore, must be restored to the BOURBONS; while the timid constitutionalism of Belgium and Piedmont must be overthrown, and the 'infamous radicalism' of Switzerland be for ever annihilated by the Polandisation of the land of Tell.

When this 'holy' work of 'legitimacy' and absolutism shall have been accomplished, the whole continent, bound in the chains of 'order,' and ruled by the Russian despot, through his satellites, it will be time to crush England, and punish her for her sympathy with foreign patriots, and her many other crimes against the curse of European 'law and order.'

But shall Britain, the certain victim of this conspiracy of the Czar and his serfs, allow them to work out their libidinal plans without hindrance or molestation? Shall she not rather fling down the gauntlet to this most unholy alliance, and raise her yet powerful arm in defence of human freedom? She might do so, if the people, the veritable people, would awake from their apathy, and see it done. If the British nation would but rouse itself early into action, and clasp the hand of their American brother, which is now being stretched out to them so eagerly, they would be invincible, and would be able to hurl the Cossack from his throne, and strike off the fetters which bind the suffering and oppressed nationalities of Europe.

COLLIERS: 'KILLING' IN COAL-PITS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE STAR OF FREEDOM.

SIR,—It is in our nature, our education, and habits, to reject inquiry into the causes of human suffering. Each section of society is apt to confine itself to its own specialities, casting it may be an occasional glance at others, but ever returning in its vitality to its own immediate interests. There is, it is true, much in common among men; but it is equally true, that certain grades are stamped with the impress of their own vocations, and are at once recognised and recognisable by all. In most cases, the matter ends there.

The underground portion of the British population, and chief among those the colliers—are a distinct and separate class, which can only be understood by examining in person, or by direct and authentic evidence, their tastes, habits, associations, manners, customs, labours, dangers, and rewards.

The Colliers of England number many thousands; and to their industry, in a great degree, our country is indebted for much of her manufacturing greatness. According to Parliamentary evidence, the Colliers enjoy, on an average, relatively, a fair share of the comforts of life. Their food is homely and plentiful, and, since a law was passed to prevent the employment of women in coal mines, their domestic enjoyments have been vastly increased—a fact especially deserving of notice, showing, as it does, that in the end profound humanity is the wisest economy.

A boy, at an early age, enters a coal pit as a *trapper*, so called from it being his duty to sit in a small cavity in the coal pit for ten or twelve hours, as the case may be, and open a trap door when he hears the *putter* approach with his coal tub. In time, the *trapper* becomes a *driver*, the *driver* a *putter*, the *putter* a *heaver*. The duty of the driver is, to drive a horse, to which is attached waggons. The *putter* fills the waggons. The *heaver* heaves or digs the coal out of the seam.

The leading manager of a coal pit is the *viewer*, whose duties consist in planning and managing the working of a coal mine. Next in rotation is the under-viewer, whose duties are subordinate to those of his chief. Next in rank are the overman and deputy overman, whose duties are to superintend the practical working and safety of the pit.

All of these grades have their share of personal responsibility. The *trapper* boy, by neglecting to shut the trap door, may endanger the lives of all the persons in the pit. We have often heard the Colliers in the north complain of the risks to which they were exposed by danger in this respect. *Driver*, *putter*, and *heaver*, may, by inattention, endanger the lives of others; but the chief cause of coal pit accidents is, in many cases, inefficient ventilation.

The greater part of the life of a collier is underground; his work to all not engaged in it must be esteemed unpleasant. When above ground the collier associates with his own order; and a collier village presents to the eye of the visitor the abodes of an industrial colony of an exclusive class. The cottages are small one story buildings; their furniture, in some cases, for their rank in life, is good—in others, indifferent. They invariably burn large and blazing fires—the doors of their dwellings being generally open. We have mixed much among them, and have found them confiding, generous, and hospitable. The old practices of dog-fighting and marston fighting are on the decline. Methodism and Chartism have each contributed to bring about and accelerate that improvement. Methodism is the predominant form of religion. So far as our experience goes, Chartism is the ruling political faith.

The Colliers complain of many hardships, and frequently suffer grievous injuries, arising from the over-reaching practices of some of their employers and overlookers. 'Strikes' are, therefore, of frequent occurrence, and, as usual, leave in their wake disastrous consequences. The last great 'strike' was in 1843 or 1844. We were present at many delegate and other meetings, and pay a willing tribute of respect to the self-sacrifice, personal courage, and enthusiasm of the Colliers of Durham and Northumberland. But these are virtues, which, against the power of united capital are all but powerless.

As to the physical condition of the Colliers of the north, perhaps nothing can be more expressive than the following quotation from the appendix to a Parliamentary Report, published in 1842. Mr. William Morrison, the medical attendant of the Lambton Colliers, says:—'The outward man distinguishes a pit-man from every other operative. His stature is diminutive; his figure mis-shapen and distorted.

tionate; his legs much bowed; his chest prominent, and greatly developed; his brows are overhanging, and the forehead retreats; the cheek bones are prominent, and the cheek hollow. I have seen aged cultural labourers, blacksmiths, carpenters, and even 'jolly' might not unaptly be applied, but I never saw a 'Jolly Collier.'

On the effects of labour in producing premature decay, Dr. Elliott states:—'That premature old age in appearance is common; men of thirty-five or forty years may often be taken for ten years older than they really are.' Mr. Thomas Greenhalgh, Esq., Walker Colliery, North Durham, says:—'They have an aged aspect somewhat early in life.'

In some parts of England the Colliers are not so small in stature and decrepit in appearance as in the Northern Counties; but, in all, 'an old Collier' is Colliers begin work—the years of life they spend underground—the painful position they are forced to assume in excavating the coal, sometimes creeping for the contracted motion of their arms, squinting on their hams, sometimes in one posture, sometimes in a state of nudity, or almost so, exposed in many cases to damp and draughts, subject to rheumatism arising therefrom, it is not surprising that Mr. Morrison never saw a 'jolly collier.' Despite of these muscular power, and many, but for such obstacles, would have been models of strength.

Every now and again, the heart of England is shocked by the news of some fearful coal-pit accident, some horrible tragedy, in which human beings in tens, twenties, or hundreds, are hurried out of existence. 'No reckoning made.'

Within the range of a few days sixty-four lives are snuffed at Aberdare; twenty-seven at Penybryn; twenty-two at Hebburn; thirty-four at Coggall; in all, one hundred and forty-seven human beings are sent to their accounts—wives, sisters, mothers, brothers, and fathers steeped in grief. We have been eye witness to the sequel of a coal-pit accident. Women and men, the streaming eyes, and some too much overcome by grief to know the balm of tears. O, horrible! too horrible!

The recent coal-pit accidents are not accidents out of the usual course, they are the every day lessons of a Pitman's life. Each accident brings with it the time-worn assertion statement is as often false as it is true. It is not natural that the Pitman should become 'foolhardy.' It is not reasonable to expect that he will become reckless of danger, when all the practical teachings he receives and that he makes him. Who instructs him into the danger of his rare exceptions—'not the overman, the viewer, the driver, or the proprietor? It was not without good and sufficient reasons that the government commissioners took note of two things. The almost invariable practice of attributing accidents to the foolhardiness of the men, and the unwillingness of surgeons to present them with a register of accidents.

It sometimes happens that a coroner's inquest on the bodies of the dead does not end without a reference to the living. Such was the case at Hebburn. The jury could not 'separate without expressing an opinion that there was been a great want of caution in the safe working of the colliery. They further recommended, that an additional trapper be placed in the district, that the whole of the lamps be locked, and that no blasting take place in that part of the colliery wrought by lamps.' A recommendation which implies that had such precautions been taken, no explosion would have occurred, and therefore twenty-two men would not have been killed.

Whose duty was it to see that the pit was in 'safe working' condition? Such was the duty of the owner. Who neglected that duty? Such was the duty of the viewer, or his assistant, the driver, the putter, the heaver, the trapper, or the proprietor? The recommendations of the jury answer our question.

By every rule of equity, supported by reason, the case of Hebburn Colliery should pay an indemnification to the heirs of the deceased, for the losses they have sustained, because of the deaths of their husbands, fathers, or brothers, as the case may be. Such a practice is now recognised in all cases of railway accidents, arising from neglect on the part of railway companies or their servants. Why should coal pit proprietors be exempted from like penalties? If the owner or owners of Hebburn Colliery had to pay down £10,000 to the relatives of the deceased colliers killed, because of neglect—because there had been a want of caution in the safe working of the colliery—we are much mistaken if such a penalty would not, in future, secure the 'safe working' of that and other coal pits.

The Collier is constantly exposed to danger—sometimes from water, as in the case of the Pembrey Colliery in South Wales—sometimes from inflammable gas, as in the case of Hebburn, and often from other causes; and it may be that it is impossible to render his vocation free from risks, to which other trades and crafts are not liable. The fact, however, that the collier is exposed to unusual risks, should render him an object of care on the part of society and the Legislature. Government should ensure that he have the power to shut up all coal pits that are not in safe working condition until they be made so, and under a strict law of deodand; the owners of coal pits should be held responsible for the lives of all persons engaged under their superintendence.

Any measures short of these will prove futile. Any lessening of the numbers of colliery accidents, in the absence of some such restrictions as we have hinted at, will be looked for in vain. 'Coal Kings,' like 'Railway Kings,' and 'Cotton Lords,' are, in many cases, apt to forget the responsibility of property, and in their ambition to strive for a large dividend, and pocket-handkerchief profits, subject their dependents to unnecessary danger. If our countrymen wish to escape the horror of such fearful colliery accidents as they have lately heard of, and some of them have witnessed, they will lose no time in seeing that such means are adopted as shall secure to the unfortunate collier all the advantages that science has suggested for his behalf, and negligence and avarice alone prevent him from reaping the benefit of. Were the interests of labour as much cared for as those of capital, at no distant day matters in the case of the Collier would be much improved.

GRACIOUS.

THE REBELS OF '43.

The 'Galway Vindicator' publishes a long letter from one of those who figured in the 'year of troubles,' 1843. The writer is Mr. William P. Dowling, a young Irish artist, who resided in London, and took an active part in the Chartist Demonstrations of '43. He was transported to Van Diemen's Land, under the not which prohibited no open and advised speaking. Of his companions in exile he says:—'Guffy is working at his trade, which, until lately, was a very brisk; but the recent coal discoveries in the neighbouring continent has made every trade good now. He is much respected as a sober and industrious man. He is always been in constant employment, and he is considered a shrewd and shrewd workman in the colony. Lucy is employed in a shop in Launceston, and she has been very successful in her trade, and he is in a fair way of making a fortune, having a great number of men employed, and, particularly since the gold discoveries, has received more orders than he can procure men to execute. Ritchie has not been very fortunate, but is now in employment. With respect to the country Chartists, none of them have been able to get employment at their trades, there being no factories or manufacturing consequence in the colony; they are, however, employed somewhere in the interior as gardeners, &c. Smith has O'Brien, since his acceptance of a ticket of leave, has been living in great privacy and retirement in his cultivated mind, having in order to employ his highly cultivated mind, considered it expedient to give up his business, and retired to the presence of his amiable and beautiful bride. O'Donnoghue is at present in this town, and has just completed a list of the persons in this colony, which would be published immediately, but in consequence of the gold discoveries, printers cannot be procured at any price—they are all put to the 'diggins.' He proposes to have it published in Dublin and London, for the benefit of his family, and re-vegetate in the colonies and emigration. Letters have been sent to the Rev. Father, and the Rev. Father has given his cards to a friend, and has been appointed to prepare the reply. The assembly will be occupied on the following day entirely with routine business. It appears that the incomes of the Scottish ministers in all the country parishes have been seriously diminished by the alteration in the corn duties; and it

Trades' Intelligence.

The Secretaries of Trades' Unions and other bodies associated to protect and advance the interests of Labour, will oblige by forwarding reports of Trades Meetings, Strikes, and other information affecting the social position of the Working Classes.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNITED TRADES.

"FLY JUSTITIA."

"If it were possible for the working classes, by combining themselves, to raise, or keep up the general rate of wages, it need hardly be said that this would be a great benefit to the country, and to be welcomed and rejoiced at."—STRAIT MILLS.

The Executive Committee of the above Association, from a conviction that a national combination of labour is now a national necessity, and that this fact has at length reached the minds of leading men in the ranks of labour, who have been heretofore in the habit of doubting either its practicability or efficiency, have fully resolved to make another and a vigorous effort to bring the subject prominently before the Trades, and to ask them seriously to determine whether they will tamely and slavishly surrender those rights, which lawfully belong to them, to the avarice and tyranny of Capital, or make an united effort to claim and maintain their most undoubted right of dealing with their own property—their labour, as they may conceive best for the general interests of their order. We think it must be admitted that this is a question, not only of the greatest, but of the most immediate importance to every grade and description of working men—equally to the highest paid and to the lowest paid; to the skilled workmen in the same degree as to the unskilled. It has become the fashion lately to classify the working men as skilled and unskilled workers, and to endeavour to exclude the latter from a participation in the protective safeguards with which the latter environ themselves. We have never recognised, and do altogether repudiate, as absurd and odious a distinction. We recognise no distinctions among working men but workers and idlers, and every individual who depends for his bread upon the wages of labour is alike entitled to our sympathy and active co-operation, whether he receives as the reward for his labour a pound or a shilling. We propose to form a National Association of Workers, and not a class association of skilled artisans, exclusively. Upon this point we do not wish our principles to be misunderstood, or confounded with any existing or projected movement. We reckon, as constituting the "Trades of England," the workers in Wool, Cotton, Woollen, Iron, and the other metals; Leather, Paper, Flax, Silk, the workers on Land and on Water, &c.; and we consider that every man, woman, and child who contributes by their labour in the production of anything useful and necessary, as essentially coming within the category of "The Trades." This view accords with the letter and spirit with the constitution of the National Association; and its practice has always been in strict accordance with this theory. To the Trades thus understood, the law gives the right of combination—the right of an absolute control over the amount of their wages, the hours of their labour, &c. not, as it is remembered, to the working classes individually only, but to the working-classes collectively, that is, combined together in numbers for these objects, and for the general protection of their mutual interest. That is the law of the land. That is the right secured to labour by an express legislative enactment. But a conspiracy of capitalists exist, whose declared determination it is to defeat the objects of the legislation, and to rob the working man of this important right. They have set up a sort of *imperium in imperio*—that is, a government within a government, a mock legislative cabinet, and they presume to issue decrees abrogating the laws of England; and to this impudent assumption of power they expect the workmen of England to submit! Will they? That is the question to be asked of, and answered by, the Trades of Great Britain. That is the question that we are commissioned by that staunch and faithful section of the Trades, who have stood so long, so firm, and so trustfully, through evil report and through good report, to this movement, to once again submit to the Trades of this country. We are instructed by our members, who can hear ample testimony as to the benefits they have derived from the National Association, to ask of their brethren, are they content to hold their industrial rights upon sufferance? Are they content that the right of combination should be sectionally trampled upon at the caprice of any junta of employers who choose to resist the inquiries of the Wolverhampton &c. or to resist the Napoleonic decrees of the Buckinghams plotters? Are they willing to see the organised Trades of England annihilated, because, unable single handed to cope with capitalist combinations, which, upon any important occasion, can be so speedily brought into existence? If not, then surely is so time to "rise, the danger is near, the wolf is at the threshold of our organisations; having destroyed the stalwart body of the A. & A. of the Trades, and compelled the majority of them to swallow that soul-drenching declaration what trade, we ask, dare lay the fattering union to its soul, that it can escape the same ignominious necessity?

The National Association does not advocate nor recommend an aggressive policy, but rather protective and conservative.

W. PEEL.
259, Tottenham-court-road.

WEAVERS' STRIKE AT BARNESLEY.

Messrs. M'Lintock and Co.'s weavers have again struck work, and thrown themselves upon the sympathies of their fellow workmen for support, until such times as the grievances of which they complain be redressed. The principal ground of complaint is, that Messrs. M'Lintock pay daily wages, instead of paying by the piece, according to the manufacturers' list, and in conformity with the general rates of the trade. By this means a tyrannical and undurable system is introduced, against which the trade generally, strongly protest, and are taking measures to bring it to an end. A meeting of the weavers and the employers of this firm was held a few days since, to take the subject into consideration, and after considerable discussion, the following resolution was agreed to:—"That we, the weavers of Messrs. Joseph M'Lintock, and Co., do unanimously agree to work no more under the present system; we furthermore take this opportunity to state, that we intend to be paid by the manufacturers' list of prices, and upon no other terms do we intend to work at the Old Mill Factory." The above resolution was communicated to the weavers of the various factories, and the trade generally, when it was deemed right to convene a public meeting of the workpeople of the town and neighbourhood. A meeting was accordingly held on Monday night, in Pickering's large room, when it was resolved:—"That the weavers of Barnesley and its neighbourhood, both steam and hand loom, after hearing the determination of Mr. M'Lintock's men, do unanimously agree to give every assistance in their power until the weavers and labourers obtain their very reasonable demands;" and, to the effect the above resolution into effect, a committee was thereupon appointed. The committee have issued an appeal, in which they state that the cause of Mr. M'Lintock's weavers is the cause of the whole industrial community, and that "trust that the trading and sheep-stealing public will at once see that it is their interest and duty to render every assistance in their power to prevent any reduction in the wages of the weavers of Barnesley as it must be evident to every one that the present paltry pittance is insufficient to secure that comfort and happiness which all families are entitled to receive in return for an honest industry."

THE FACTORY ACT.

TO THE FACTORY OPERATIVES OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

Fellow-workmen,—I beg to inform you that, according to announcement, a meeting of delegates took place on Sunday last, May 23rd, 1852, at the house of Mr. William Farr, Cotton Tree Inn, Great Ancoats-street, Manchester, Mr. Paul Hargreaves presiding, when the following number of delegates, from the undermentioned districts, were present: Manchester fine-spinners, 1; Manchester Central Committee, 2; Manchester power-loom overlookers, 1; Bolton S. T. C., 2; Ashton S. T. C., 2; Preston S. T. C., 2; Blackburn spinners, 1; Blackburn spinners, 2; Blackburn S. T. C., 1; Chorley spinners, 1; Dukinfield S. T. C., 3; Chorley spinners, 1; Tyldesley spinners, 1; Oldham Weavers' Committee, 2; Mossley spinners, 1; Enfield S. T. C., 1. Number of delegates, 24, from 13 districts; by letter, Radcliffe, Chorley, No. 2 district, and Burnley.

The deputation to the Secretary of State for the Home Department having delivered their report, the two following resolutions were adopted:

"That the report of the deputation to the Secretary of State is highly satisfactory to this meeting, and that it be therefore received."

"That the thanks of the delegates assembled be voted to the deputation for the manner in which they have executed their mission."

A committee having been elected by the meeting to draw up resolutions, embodying the views of the delegates assembled, as to the most desirable course to be pursued in order to secure an effective Factory Bill, the following resolutions were then submitted to, and adopted by the meeting:

Manchester moved, Dukinfield seconded:—"That after having heard the report of the deputation to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, it is the opinion of this meeting of delegates that they should, at the present time, restrict the moving power, however desirable such restriction may be, would end in disappointment and entail an enormous expense upon the factory workers—believing that the constitution of the House of Commons, and the state of public opinion, will, for some time to come, render the accomplishment of that object altogether impossible;—they therefore recommend to their respective constituencies to exert their best energies to secure such improvements in the present Factories Act as will ensure full protection to those for whose benefit it was passed."

Tyldesley moved, and Preston seconded:—"That the thanks of the delegates now assembled be gratefully tendered to all masters throughout the country who have uniformly observed the present Factories Act."

Chorley moved, and Blackburn seconded:—"That the Central Committee, in their endeavours during the present year to secure the enforcement of the present Factories Act, having involved themselves considerably in debt, this meeting of delegates would urge upon their fellow operatives the necessity of raising the necessary funds, so enable them to discharge their liabilities as soon as possible."

Bolton moved, and Dukinfield seconded:—"That the delegates cannot separate without expressing their deep regret that a difference of opinion should exist in reference to the best means to be adopted to obtain an effective Factory Bill; and as the present opportunity has not been embraced by all parties interested, to come to such an understanding as is calculated to ensure ultimate success to their endeavours; to effect that object, the Central Committee be authorised to call a meeting of delegates for that special purpose, on Sunday, July 4th, 1852; and that the districts referred to be not only summoned to attend in the ordinary way, but be specially written to for that purpose."

The Central Committee having been re-elected, and the thanks of the meeting voted to the chairman, the meeting separated.

Signed on behalf of the Central Committee, THOMAS MOWSE, Secretary.

Central Committee Room, Cotton Tree Inn, Great Ancoats-street, Manchester, May 24, 1852.

Stripped is the substance of the reply of the Home Secretary and Lord Derby to the deputation.

They believe the present Factory Act is doing a great amount of good, and ought to be maintained. They also believe that the act is being violated. They wish the deputation to understand that they are not opposed to legislation on the subject; but having pledged themselves not to introduce any measure likely to create any lengthy discussion, especially in the present state of the session, they do not feel justified in introducing any new measure of factory legislation. They will, however, appoint one or more additional sub-inspectors to reside on the spot where the act is violated, which, if not effective, will afford additional argument for the introduction of a further legislative measure in the first session of the new parliament.

IRELAND.

THE IRISH EXILES AND THE VICEROY.

The cold and callous refusal of clemency to the exiles of '48 on the part of the Lord Lieutenant has called forth a very natural outburst of indignation on the part of the "Nation" and other journals. The editor of Mr. Duffy's paper concludes a very severe comment in the following terms:—

But there is one phase of this transaction which is characterised by unfeeling baseness. All through the preliminary negotiations the objects of the memorial were absolutely encouraged by influential members of the government to make the appeal to them, some of them promising to be present at the last moment, and to believe that they had only to solicit and that their demand would be granted. Relying with confidence on such assurances, they were certain of success, and were accordingly to find themselves disappointed and treated with contempt. They were led into all the dealings between this country and England were not known any even which exhibits more insolence than this. Irish gentlemen, who would scorn to ask anything for themselves, are lured there with a promise of a reward, and then are treated with a piece of deliberate treachery deserving of the treadmill and the knout. Last night of Lord Exmouth's in which we expect the venom and truculence of the English Chancellor, be treated in the system which has been the basis of the Irish question. It is not the least of the dealings between this country and England were not known any even which exhibits more insolence than this. Irish gentlemen, who would scorn to ask anything for themselves, are lured there with a promise of a reward, and then are treated with a piece of deliberate treachery deserving of the treadmill and the knout. Last night of Lord Exmouth's in which we expect the venom and truculence of the English Chancellor, be treated in the system which has been the basis of the Irish question. It is not the least of the dealings between this country and England were not known any even which exhibits more insolence than this. 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