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Fabian Tract, No. 49.

HON the first of November, 1893, the Fabian Society published, in the *Fortnightly Review*, a manifesto charging Mr. Gladstone's Government with having failed to make good the professions of friendliness to Labor which gained its majority at the General Election of 1892, and recommending the working-classes, through their trade organisations, to take matters into their own hands at the next General Election by sending fifty working men as independent labor members to Parliament.

This manifesto made a great commotion among the out-and-out supporters of the Government. The Liberal ministers were not only unable to deny the charges made by the Fabian Society; they were not even prepared to authorise their supporters to offer any substantial promises of amendment. The *Daily News*, the organ of the Government, having nothing to say, said nothing. The rest of the Gladstonian papers, with the honourable exception of the *Westminster Gazette*, took advantage of the fact that the high price of the *Fortnightly Review* kept it out of the hands of the working-classes, to boldly denounce it as a Tory manifesto, and to heap personal abuse and accusation of corruption on the members of the Fabian Society. This lasted about a fortnight, and then, the Fabian Society being none the worse, and its manifesto making more and more impression, some of the more advanced Gladstonian papers plucked up courage to steal the Fabian thunder and to begin criticising the Government a little on their own account. At the present moment no Liberal paper in London could, without making itself ridiculous, repeat the language that was used about the Fabian manifesto the day after its publication. First it was "a Tory job"; then it was "the Fabian revolt"; then it widened into "the Radical revolt"; and then its complaints and arguments began to appear piecemeal in leading articles and editorial notes in the Radical papers, a process which is still, we are happy to say, actively going on; whilst from first to last not one word of disapproval of the attitude of the manifesto to the Government has come from any organisation in the ranks of Labor.

The time has now come to put into the hands of the people the substance of the *Fortnightly Review* article. It is not necessary to reprint it in full, since the working-classes will understand the plain facts of the case without having them served up in the sort of sauce that is relished by the readers of a fashionable magazine. Besides, the *Fortnightly Review* went into particulars only as to

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the charges against the Government, whereas here we must save our space as much as possible for the question of how to prepare for the important step forward which the working-classes should make at the next election.

Our first stroke was to convict the Government of sweating, and at the same time to make a clean sweep of the excuse constantly offered by supporters of the Government that it was being prevented from showing its goodwill to Labor by the opposition of the Conservative and Unionist party in the House of Commons. The following long extract from the *Fortnightly Review* article will explain how we did this:—

“Liberals who discuss politics in first or second-class railway carriages cannot reasonably ask Mr. Gladstone why he has not dis-established the Welsh Church, ended or mended the House of Lords, or saved them, for the future, the bother of attending to registration. Everybody knows that Mr. Gladstone has not had time—that ‘Tory obstruction’ and the Home Rule Bill have made it impossible, under the existing procedure of the House of Commons, to accomplish any legislation of a controversial sort. But these considerations, which at once excuse the minister and inflame the party zeal of his middle-class followers, do not apply to the case of the trade unionist. For him the Government is, before everything else, an employer of labor, far and away the largest of all employers, raised high above that commercial competition which drives private capitalists to beat down the price of labor, and holding in one hand the standard of life of the State laborer, and in the other that fiscal power which can throw the cost of all improvements on shoulders well able and morally bound to bear it. The first question the trade unionist asks of a government is, ‘Are you a “rat” house or are you a fair house?’ And by this he means, ‘Do you pay starvation wages and keep your men working sweaters’ hours, or do you pay trade union rates, prohibit overtime, and observe an eight-hour day?’ The present Government can claim the distinction of being the first that ever came into power in England on the understanding that it was a fair house. The London School Board election of November, 1888, and the London County Council election of January, 1889, both of them fought on progressive lines, were followed by an immediate consideration of the wages paid by the contractors working for those bodies, and by the passing of resolutions to give contracts only to fair houses, thereby making an end of the infamous ‘lowest tender’ system under which an employer’s chances of getting a public contract were in direct ratio to the poverty of the men to be employed on the job. The Liberals won the general election solely by their acceptance of this policy—that is by committing themselves to Progressivism as against the Manchesterism of the lowest-tender school, now known as ‘Moderate.’ Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, speaking in the name of the Government in the House of Commons on the 6th March, 1893, solemnly abjured competition wages for State employees. ‘We mean,’ he said, ‘that the Government should show themselves to be amongst the best employers in the country;’ and no Conservative dared gainsay him.

“Unluckily for the present Government, and happily for the nation, the pledge to act as a fair house is not one which needs legislation to redeem it, and which can, therefore, be put off on the ground of want of time or factious opposition. A few strokes of the pen from the heads of the departments, and a due provision in the budget, which must be brought in, obstruction or no obstruction, time or no time, and the thing is done. If, after sixteen months, it has not been done the Liberal Ministers have broken their pledges and ‘sold’ the trade unionists. No evasion or denial is possible: the conditions are clear, and the facts beyond controversy. Let us see now how Mr. Gladstone’s Cabinet has acted on this question of the wage-earner’s standard of life, which the working-classes, after years of struggling, have at last forced into politics as the most vital of all questions, and the most infallible touchstone of the good faith of a party professing to be the friend of labor.

“Let us begin with the Post Office under the command of Mr. Arnold Morley,

Labour party (United Kingdom).

of whom we are told that he is 'unimpeachable in his Liberalism,' and who enjoys the distinction of having been specially selected by Mr. Gladstone to administer a department employing 117,000 persons. His predecessors, Mr. Raikes and Sir James Fergusson, had incurred much odium for turning a deaf ear to all the complaints of Post Office 'sweating,' and for rigorously putting down every attempt by the Post Office employees to better their condition. Mr. Arnold Morley, as a member of a Government which had come to overthrow the Tory oppressors of labor, was expected at least to reinstate the victimised trade unionist postmen and telegraphists, as a preliminary to the adoption of the London County Council minimum of twenty-four shillings a week, as the Department's lowest rate of pay for adult men.* He could then have modified the contracts under which the mail-cart drivers work fourteen hours a day and promised to bring the men eventually into direct public employment, taking care at the same time to make the postmen's nominal eight hours day a reality, and granting the same boon to the artisans in the Post Office and Telegraph stores and workshops. All this lay ready to his hand, and, had he done it, he might perhaps have been forgiven for turning a deaf ear to Mr. Henniker Heaton's demand for a penny post to the Colonies, and other postal reforms; perhaps even for making no arrangements for the technical education of the telegraph boys, of whom many are now turned adrift when they outgrow their duties. But, although Mr. Arnold Morley has recognised the right of his staff to hold meetings without official spies, he has reinstated only some, not all, of the dismissed trade unionist postmen and telegraphists, thereby effectually maintaining the old official intimidation of Trade Unionism; and except for some fractional increases of what were starvation wages and are still hardly worthy a better title, he has done nothing else. The most Conservative of new brooms could hardly have swept less clean than he.

"Let us turn to the War Office. Here Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, who uses fair words about the eight-hours day, might actually have established it in all the War Department arsenals, factories, and stores, and have replaced the present competitive wages of seventeen shillings to twenty shillings a week by at least the minimum on which a family can be maintained in decency. He might have stopped the nibbling at trade union wages that goes on at Woolwich, and acceded to the repeated demands of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers for the recognition of its standard rate; he might have withdrawn all Government custom from the worst kind of sweating dens by expanding the army clothing factory so as to produce under its comparatively healthful conditions, and with the additional advantage of an eight-hours day, not only some, but all the clothing required for the army, militia, if not also that for other public departments and local authorities and for the volunteers; he might have further superseded the sweater by establishing an army accoutrement factory for all saddlery and accoutrements; he might have cleared all 'rat' shops out of the War Office list of contractors; he might have faced the industrial problem presented by the annual recruiting of the unskilled labor market by semi-pauperised army reserve men, and seen to it that these were turned out competent tradesmen instead of half-skilled handy-men; and, at least, he might have put a stop to the wantonly inconsiderate practice, long and vainly complained of, by which so many War Office pensioners are tempted to become pauper drunkards, living usually in the workhouse, and coming out once a quarter to drink away, in one rapturous bout, the quarterly payment that should, in common prudence and humanity, be divided into weekly allowances.

"Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, with these opportunities, has done nothing, being content with the distinction conferred on his tenure of office by the appointment of the Duke of Connaught to the most important command in the whole British Army.

"Lord Spencer, at the Admiralty, also had his opportunities. The scandal of the starvation wages at the Deptford and other victualling yards had become too great to be any longer ignored, and this amiable peer actually did set himself to play the good employer. Like his colleagues, enjoyed in this field plenty of good advice and some excellent examples. The Government's brand-new Labor Department made him a special report as to what he ought to pay, and brought

* The rent of a decent single room in London is quite four shillings a week.

forcibly to his notice the damning facts as to what he did pay.* Like Mr. Acland, in the Science and Art Department, he might frankly have accepted for all the dockyard workmen, the recognised standard rates of the various trade unions concerned. Like the London County Council, he might have resolved that the State should pay no wage on which a family could not decently exist. He might have put a stop to the practice, recently exposed in a tragic case, of not paying the laborers until their wages are a week overdue, thus driving them to the pawnbroker to borrow at heavy interest the money due to them by the British Government, which pays them no interest at all on the compulsory loan, and so throwing them on the tender mercies of the pawn-shop. He might have abolished the middleman who at Deptford drove poor Pluck † to suicide at the very moment of the departmental inquiry, and taken all the Admiralty workmen into direct public employment. He might have established the eight-hours day in all the Government dockyards. He might have rescued from the sweater the manufacture of navy and coast-guard uniforms by setting up a navy clothing factory. He might have introduced weekly payments to sailors' wives and weekly remittances of navy pensions.

"It is pleasant to be able to add that Lord Spencer has actually done something. He has raised the wages of the shipwrights, not to the standard rate of the Associated Society of Shipwrights but to something below it. He has given the coopers in the London Victualling Yard, not the standard price list settled between the Philanthropic Society of Coopers and the Master Coopers' Association, but the prospect of a shilling or two towards that minimum. He has raised the Admiralty laborers to nineteen shillings a week, those in Woolwich and Deptford being graciously accorded one shilling more than their provincial brethren, out of which to pay the trebled rent of a London lodging. The result, therefore, of all the protracted inquiries, during which some of the men died of underfeeding, is that Lord Spencer, far from adopting the 'docker's tanner' or the London County Council 'moral minimum' of twenty-four shillings a week, has deliberately put the London laborers of the admiralty a shilling below Mr. Charles Booth's 'poverty line' of a guinea per week, under which a family can scarcely exist in London with decency. By this shining example to the private capitalists whose employees have been so eloquently commiserated from the platforms of the National Liberal Federation, Lord Spencer has earned the distinction of having done more than Mr. Campbell-Bannerman's nothing.

"It may not have occurred to Lord Ripon at the Colonial Office, or to Lord Kimberley at the Indian Office, that any labor reforms were expected from them. That is, perhaps, why they have not refused to contract for supplies with firms not observing trade union conditions; not directed the Crown agents for the colonies might have been directed to put the model London County Council clauses against sweating in their numerous contracts executed in this country; not taken the clothing required for the Crown colonies out of the hands of the English sweater; and not establish the eight hours day in the London wharves and workshops of the Indian Store Department.

"Mr. Fowler, at the Local Government Board, came into a splendid position—one in which he might, by merely administrative Acts, have covered up all the shortcomings of his colleagues. Great reforms usually require legislation, and even Mr. Acland has to submit his Education Code to the ordeal of House of Commons objections. But, practically, the whole structure of the system of Poor Relief rests only upon Orders of the Local Government Board, and can be altered by them. By a few strokes of the pen, Mr. Fowler—had he but known his business, and been really intent on raising the standard of life—could have swept away the worst anomalies and inhumanities of our Poor Law. He might, to begin with, have virtually abolished the 'nominated guardians' by refusing to appoint any; and have transformed the Metropolitan Asylums Board by putting on Collectivist

* The report was of such a character that the Cabinet, after publicly announcing that it had been called for, persistently declined to publish it.

† The readers of the *Fornightly Review* needed to be reminded, though working-class audiences do not, that Pluck was a laborer in the Deptford Victualling Yard, employed under a middleman on Admiralty work. He was insubordinate enough to sign a respectful request that he and his class might be allowed to enjoy the coming Bank Holiday, and was promptly dismissed for so doing. Unable to support his wife and family, he drowned himself in the Surrey Canal.

County Councillors instead of Individualist Justices of the Peace. A stirring circular to Boards of Guardians might have done much to lead to a widespread system of pensions for the aged, by driving into the minds of all his inspectors and clerks, and through them to Boards of Guardians everywhere, the much-needed lesson that the objections to outdoor relief do not apply to the aged, and that what would virtually be honourable pensions ought to be freely given from poor-law funds to destitute veterans of labor. By another series of Board circulars and inspectors' instructions he might have revolutionised the workhouse and the casual ward in every Union throughout the country; might, for instance, as regards the wards of the aged and infirm, have improved the diet, insisted on the liberal provision of tobacco, games, and newspapers, and peremptorily forbidden the present imprisonment in 'the house,' for weeks at a time, of well-conducted aged paupers, to whom a walk every fine day is as necessary as it is to other people, and would be as pleasant were it not for the hateful special pauper garb, which Mr. Fowler could equally have abolished. The scandalously backward poor-law schools might have been transformed into efficient educational institutions by calling in the now jealously excluded inspectors of the Education Department; by insisting on the employment of trained teachers and the proper remuneration of these, and by threatening to disallow the cost of all schools falling below a certain standard, the level of efficiency of these State nurseries could have been enormously raised and thorough technical education, extending up to at least fifteen years of age, secured for every pauper child. For a moment, indeed, Mr. Fowler took heart of grace, and reduced the guardians' qualification to £5. Then he sat down to wait for the report of a royal commission, so badly framed that no democratic reform can possibly come out of its lucubrations, and Poor Law Reform, at any rate so long as Mr. Fowler fills his post, came to an end.

"And if Mr. Fowler had been but a little less than a quarter of a century behind his time, what a field he would have found in other directions! Had he but been really in sympathy with the House of Commons' repeatedly-expressed desire to put down 'sweating,' what a circular he could have issued to all the local authorities in the Kingdom, commending to their notice the model clauses of the London County Council, stimulating them to the establishment of an eight hours day for all their employees, and urging them to follow the House of Commons in abandoning the competitive rate for a living wage.* And with local authorities everywhere eager for guidance on the ever-present problem of the Unemployed, a really democratic President of the Local Government Board would hardly have let himself be put to open shame by ignoring the very existence of Acts of Parliament enabling the guardians to set the poor to work, nor would he have refused to come to any decision as to whether local authorities should or should not be allowed to try their own experiments in this direction.

"It can hardly add much to the evidence of his conspicuous failure as a member of a Government depending on a working-class electorate, to add that, as regards London, Mr. Fowler has achieved the unexpected distinction of causing everyone to sigh for the return of Mr. Ritchie. Whenever the London County Council has approached him, it has got a snub for its pains. Whenever it has asked for anything, it has been told that what it seeks is impossible—as, indeed, it is to Mr. Fowler, who could not even carry out the transfer of further Government powers to local authorities actually drafted by Mr. Ritchie, and requiring no more than the formality of a Provisional Order Bill. It has needed only the final disappointment over the Equalisation of Rates Bill, thoroughly to convince Progressive London that its hard-earned conquest of twelve Conservative seats had been thrown away by the disaffected weak Whiggery of the respectable family solicitor to whom Mr. Gladstone was infatuated enough to entrust the Local Government Board.

"After Mr. Fowler, some relief is necessary. Let us, therefore, take Mr. Acland next. He has been one of the successes of the present Government, and has done pretty nearly as well at the Education Office, as Sir William Harcourt would allow him. And yet even Mr. Acland has not been able to destroy the existing sectarian monopoly of training colleges; nor seen his way to requiring the systematic public audit of the accounts of all schools aided from public funds; nor stepped in to

* Sir George Trevelyan might have sent a similar circular to the local authorities in Scotland.

prevent such scandalous pieces of administration as the diversion by the Charity Commissioners of the great endowments of St. Paul's School from the poor to the rich; nor struck at the exclusion of his inspectors from Poor Law schools; nor abolished the old, bad system of payment by results in the Science and Art Department. What has hindered Mr. Acland from carrying out these administrative reforms? After his excellent administration of the Free Schools Act; his startling new departure in the Evening Schools Code; his prompt decision—how unlike his colleagues!—that no workman in his department should receive less than trade union wages, or work more than trade union hours—in face of all this, will anyone pretend that anything but lack of backing from the Cabinet, and a total lack of sympathy in the Chancellor of the Exchequer have stood in the way of the other reforms?

“At the Home Office the change from Mr. Henry Matthews to Mr. Asquith has been so beneficial that even the Conservatives must, as human beings, share the general relief; and Mr. Asquith's credit might stand the Liberals in good stead, had he not—forgetting Mitchelstown—allowed official feeling to betray him over the fatal affair at Featherstone. It may be too much to expect from a Liberal Home Secretary that he should ‘hesitate to shoot’; but he might at least gauge the situation better than to omit the apology which would certainly be forthcoming if the Lee-Metford bullets, of whose effects the *Lancet* has given us so revolting a description, had found their billets in one of the capitalists upon whose initiative this particular labor war arose, and who, as Mr. Asquith well knows, have been left practically undisturbed by the Liberal Lord Chancellor in their magisterial monopoly of the power of calling for troops to fire on the public. But except for this lapse of tact Mr. Asquith has done very well. His administration of the Factory Acts has been able and spirited; his appointment of working-men sub-inspectors and women inspectors was dead in the teeth of permanent officialism; his vigorous inquiry into unhealthy trades will save scores of women from such incidents of capitalism as ‘lead colic’ and the ‘wrist drop’; and he restored Trafalgar Square to the London workmen. The most striking contrast, however, between him and his colleagues comes out in what he drafts. When the old-fashioned Whig minister is at last screwed up to proposing a reform, his main pre-occupation seems to be how he could cut down the popular concession to the barest minimum. When Mr. Asquith, aided by Mr. Haldane, produced his Employer's Liability Bill, the trade union leaders recognised with joy that it actually gave them everything they had for thirty years been fighting for—absolute compulsion, no contracting out, and universal application, excluding neither Government workmen nor seamen.*

“It will perhaps sound extravagant to suggest that a Lord Chancellor can do anything useful, but the fact remains that Lord Herschell might have appointed as many Democratic J.P.'s in the other counties as Mr. Bryce has done in Lancashire; he might, under the Judicature Act, have expanded the existing rule providing for the payment of juries in certain cases,† into one covering all suits, thus enabling working men to serve; and instead of putting one or two working men on each borough bench, he might have taken care that at least one-third of the magistrates in all industrial centres belonged to the class which makes up four-fifths of the population.

“And Mr. Bryce himself, in addition to setting that excellent example which Lord Herschell has not followed, might, as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, have seen to it that two, if not four, representatives of the Liverpool dock laborers were appointed by the Crown on the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board; ‡ might have instigated the making of a rule establishing payment of

* The railway directors and other capitalists, sitting on both sides of the House, tried hard to kill the measure; and twenty Liberals voted against their party on the vital question of ‘contracting out.’ Now the House of Lords, at the instance of these same railway directors and capitalists, has mangled the bill.

† Rule provides.

‡ Under the ‘Consolidated Mersey Docks and Harbour Act, 1889,’ the three ministers of the Crown who are ‘Conservators of the Mersey’ (at present Mr. Bryce, Lord Spencer, and the Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests), jointly appoint four nominees to the Board which administers the Liverpool Docks, and which is otherwise made up exclusively of shipowners and merchants elected by shipowners and merchants.

juries in the local Palatine Courts of Justice, and might have taken care that the local benches of magistrates comprised, not alone one or two working-men, but at least enough to make up one-third of their numbers. That would hardly have over-represented the five-sixths of the men of Lancashire who live by manual labor.

“ Sir William Harcourt we pass by for want of words to convey any adequate idea of the impulse he has given to the cause of Independent Labor organization by discrediting Liberalism with everyone whose income is less than £500 a year. It would be absurd to pretend that the Cabinet as a whole was anxious to go ahead, but there was all the less need for Sir William to pull it back. However, if a formal indictment is wanted, it may be mentioned that he might, as the virtual head of the Treasury Board, have insisted on all public departments paying trade union wages, and in no case less than 24s. a week; he might have greatly mitigated the difficulties of the unemployed by directing, in a Treasury circular, every department to aim at regularity of work, and at equalising the seasonal demand for labor; he might have stepped in, as ultimately responsible for the Revenue Department, to put an end to the starvation wages paid to the unfortunate out-door Customs' officers and boatmen; he might have put his foot down against the refusal of the Stationery Office to exclude 'unfair' houses from its list of tenderers, as well as against its practice of employing middlemen to do its cartage, and thus to 'sweat' the carmen and drivers working in its service; he might have carried out the declared wish of the House of Commons for payment of members by putting the necessary item in the Civil Service Estimates; finally, he might at any rate have drafted a budget which would give us a 'Free Breakfast Table,' and the taxation of ground values, if only by the simple expedient of adding a special penny or so to Schedule A of the Income Tax, instead of coolly ignoring the financial pledges of the Newcastle programme.*

“ Above all, he might have encouraged and facilitated the departmental reforms set on foot by Mr. Acland, Mr. Asquith, and Mr. Mundella, instead of snubbing them, and publicly declaiming his continued allegiance to the old Whig ideal of cutting down the functions of Government to the lowest possible minimum.†

“ Here we have a formidable list of omissions, which cannot be put down to the loquacity of Messrs. Bowles and Bartley, or the obstructive wiles of Mr. Chamberlain. Had the will existed, there would have been no difficulty about the way, as was shown by Mr. Acland, when he insisted on the payment of trade union wages to his South Kensington mechanics.‡ And it is significant of the whole feeling of the Liberal leaders that in recommending the Liberal party, as their custom is, to the gratitude of the country, they have never alluded to this action of Mr. Acland's. They are probably ashamed of it, and they will certainly have no other feeling concerning their failure to follow his example than one of self-congratulation on having escaped the appalling violations of Manchester principles which we have shown in our lists of 'might have dones.' ”

To this indictment of the Liberal ministers as employers of labor, the only defence offered by the Government was a speech of Sir Charles Russell's to the London Liberal and Radical Union, on the 6th November, in which he pleaded that the War Office had *tried to prevent sweating under its contracts*, and laid great stress on the fact that the Admiralty had raised wages.

This is no answer to the Fabian indictment, but virtually an admission of its unanswerableness. The *Fortnightly* article

* It is an open secret—Sir William has indeed boasted of it—that the draft Budget which represented the utmost that he could have brought himself to lay before the House of Commons, even if Mr. Gladstone had allowed him to take time for it, contained neither of these reforms, and was confined to the one proposal of making the freeholder pay as heavy a Death Duty as the leaseholder.

† See his Budget Speech, 2nd April, 1893.

‡ Speech in the House of Commons, 31st July, 1893.

not only stated that the Government had raised wages at the Admiralty, but went on to do what Sir Charles did not dare to do—that is, to give in plain figures the scandalously inadequate sums to which wages of the unfortunate employees of the Government had been raised. We will now clinch the matter by giving the following exact particulars and references.

On the 6th March, 1893 (see Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, vol. 9, page 1,127, &c.), Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, speaking in the name of the Government in the House of Commons, said:—

“When we say we agree to the proposition contained in the amendment, we mean that the Government should show themselves to be among the best employers of labor in the country; that they should, if I may use the expression, be in the first flight of employers. . . . I accept in the fullest sense, the principle that the terms of Government employment should be beyond reproach. . . . *We have ceased to believe in what are known as competition or starvation wages.*”

This was the promise. Now for the performance. From the House of Commons return, No. 386, dated the 23rd August, 1893, we learn the following facts as to the Navy Establishment. The “established” unskilled laborers are to get eighteen shillings a week, with a shilling extra at Deptford and Woolwich.

The “hired” unskilled laborers are to get seventeen shillings the first year, eighteen the next, *standard rate nineteen shillings*, with a shilling extra at Deptford and Woolwich. “Skilled laborers hired” are to get twenty shillings for the first year, rising by a shilling at a time to a maximum of twenty-seven shillings. Bricklayers and masons are to get twenty-eight shillings a week if “established,” and thirty-one if “hired.”

It is hardly necessary to remind those who worked to establish the London County Council twenty-four shillings a week and an eight-hour day for unskilled labour, that a “standard rate” of nineteen shillings (classed by Mr. Charles Booth as a chronic poverty wage), accompanied by a refusal of the eight-hour day, is not a satisfactory fulfilment of the promise to place the Government “in the first flight of employers.” *

The *Fortnightly* article, having shown the sort of employers the Liberal ministers were, proceeded to deal with them as legislators, as follows:—

“Let us now pass from the administrative disappointments to the legislative ones and from the trade-union point of view to that of the middle-class electorate, And here the ardent Gladstonian will, no doubt, begin to breathe again, feeling that in this department his defence of ‘Tory obstruction’ and want of time is

* It may be well to mention here that Sir Charles Russell's speech to the London Liberal and Radical Union was delivered on the 6th November, and was immediately claimed by the Gladstonian papers as “a splendid record of good work actually accomplished in the interests of Liberalism,” and a humiliating refutation of the Fabian Manifesto. The meeting, however, was adjourned to the 13th, on which date Sir Charles Russell abruptly resigned his chairmanship of the Liberal and Radical Union, confessing that his position as a member of Mr. Gladstone's Government was incompatible with the presidency of the London Radicals. Nothing has since been heard from the admirers of Sir Charles's defence.

ready and efficient. We need not meet this by pointing out that there has been no want of time, but only a monstrous waste of time by a government so conservative that it will face a storm of obloquy for 'gagging' and 'guillotining' sooner than make these measures unnecessary, and get its business done by bringing the standing orders of the House of Commons up to date, and make an end of its insufferable exhibition of speechmaking and of those silly traditions of 'the best club in London' which the country has now far outgrown. We can substantiate our case without resorting to that argument, because the delays of the Opposition, though they may have retarded legislation, have not prevented this most maladroit of Governments from boasting of what it would do if it only had time. It has thus announced beforehand that it is going—when it has time—to offer its political creditors a penny in the pound in settlement of its Newcastle liabilities. The great Reform Bill, which was to include not only One Man One Vote, but payment of the returning officers' expenses and payment of members, as 'necessary parts of the Liberal programme,' and 'the only means of securing an adequate representation of labor in the House of Commons,' now turns out to be a Bill for shortening the registration period to three months, and nothing else, not even remedying the exclusion of lodgers from the County Council franchise. Comment on this must be either uncivil or inadequate: let it suffice to congratulate the Conservatives on the impossibility of underbidding their opponents in this direction. Next we come to 'Home Rule for London,' the promised Act for cutting at the monstrous monopoly by which the ground landlords of that great city, which we now know by Mr. Booth's terrible 'poverty maps,' as we never knew it before, take annually over £16,000,000 absolutely for the use of the bare ground. This august metropolitan charter has now assumed the concrete form of a pettifogging measure for a small further equalisation of the London rates which, as it will not cost the ground landlords one farthing, nor relieve any ratepayer except at the expense of another, may be taken as the most carefully conservative instalment of reform that even a Whig Government could decently propose. The one advantage of its inadequacy is, that no one has professed any great concern for its fate, since the Government deliberately refused to pass it through that second reading, which it was in their power to secure, and condemned it to the indefinite postponement of a future session. If the London ratepayer goes to the poll at the general election with undiminished burdens, he owes this fate in the main to the active hostility of Sir William Harcourt, and the weak complaisance of the President of the Local Government Board.

"It must be confessed that the force of this double disappointment had been largely broken by the Budget, which served as an indirect but unmistakeable announcement that the Newcastle programme had been taken up merely to catch votes, and that the Cabinet, as a whole, had neither a touch of its spirit in them nor any intention of even pretending to act up to the letter of it. The Budget was really a masterstroke of disillusion. It was eagerly looked forward to for the redemption of the three great vote-compelling promises of the Government. First, the 'free breakfast table' with its cheapened tea, coffee, chicory, cocoa, currants, raisins, prunes, &c. &c. Next, the shifting of at least the final straws of our fiscal burdens from the struggling tradesman to the receivers of the 500,000,000 of our national income which goes to those to whom Mr. Chamberlain applied the saying 'they toil not; neither do they spin,' or, as Prince Bismarck put it, 'who have only to clip coupons with a pair of scissors, or write rent receipts.' The Liberals, though not bound by the observations of Mr. Chamberlain or Prince Bismarck, are responsible to the ratepayers for the hopes founded on Mr. Morley's speech at the Eighty Club in _____, and Mr. Gladstone's oration at the Memorial Hall on _____ with its significant allusion to '_____

Finally, there was the question of questions, 'payment of members,' provision for which in the Budget was, as the Radicals showed unanswerably, perfectly feasible. Cabinet Ministers out of _____ were pledged to this reform; and Mr. Gladstone's letter already quoted was either a promise of payment of members or a deliberate equivocation.

“ Probably there never was a Budget from which the Radicals expected so much as from this first one after the triumph of the Newcastle programme. The moment of parturition came amid breathless expectation; and the papers next morning announced that Sir William Harcourt had been delivered of an extra penny on the Income Tax. Nothing else—absolutely nothing but an extra penny all round, undifferentiated between the idler and worker; ungraduated between the millionaire and small tradesman. The Fabian Society can only ask the public, with sardonic satisfaction at the complete fulfilment of its own prophecies, whether anything is likely to save a party infatuated to the extent of allowing Sir William Harcourt to make them impossible in this fashion. Can their most thoroughgoing partisan keep his countenance whilst pretending that even if a miraculous conversion of the Opposition to Home Rule gives them unlimited time and unlimited opportunity, they will take one step forward except under the most ignominious compulsion from their infuriated dupes? ”

A word now as to the Parish Councils Bill. In our desire to give the more progressive section of the Cabinet its due for what it had done to redeem the promises of the Government to Labor, and to make the best of the proposals with which it was identified, we did not say a word in disparagement of the Employer's Liability Bill or the Parish Councils Bill. Whilst the Liberal Press was still unblushingly trying to persuade the country that we had ignored both Bills, the Gladstonians were very unpleasantly taken aback by a letter in the *Westminster Gazette* from the Rev. W. Tuckwell, “ the Radical parson,” a tried supporter of the Liberal party. What had he to say of the boasted Bill which we had spoken smoothly of as “ the great success of the session,” and “ the most serious attempt yet proposed to provide the agricultural laborer with a means of escape from his dreary serfdom ”? We have not space for his whole letter; but here is his summing up:—

“ Other defects in the Bill might be condoned if the allotment clauses were satisfactory; unless amended in Committee they are a mockery of all our promises, showing little or no improvement upon the worthless Allotment Acts of the late Government. In its present form the laborers will look upon the Bill as a betrayal. They will not vote Tory; for Toryism is to them synonymous with oppression; but they will stay away from the polls, and they will be wise.”

On this the Government climbed down. Without pretending to defend his own Bill, Mr. Fowler gave notice of his intention to amend it, so as to satisfy Mr. Tuckwell, by a clause empowering Parish Councils to hire land compulsorily, to be let as allotments.

Here, then, we may leave those sections of our Manifesto which contain our indictment of the Government. After much swagger, bluster, abuse, ridicule, and reckless misrepresentation from the friends of the Government, they remain as they stood at first, unanswered and unanswerable. There is one way, and one way only, in which Mr. Gladstone could rally Labor to his side after such an exposure; and that is by abolishing the departmental abuses complained of by us, and making the next Budget a really Radical one. And how can he do this (even if he were willing) with a party still so dominated by capitalist interests that he cannot keep it together, even on so antiquated a measure as the Employers' Liability Bill? If Labor does not help itself at the next General Election, it will have Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour back for a second six years' instalment of those “ Twenty years of resolute government,” of which we have already had a foretaste.

We now pass on to a paragraph in the *Fortnightly* article which gave great offence to the Home Rulers. Here it is :—

“The result of the General Election was remarkable. Home Rule was neither a success nor a failure in England; the masses were simply indifferent to it. The Newcastle programme, as expounded by the Collectivist Radicals and Socialists, won twelve seats in London, and was successful wherever it was whole-heartedly advanced. The Liberal candidates who confined themselves to Home Rule and Disestablishment, and were obviously reactionary on social questions—some of them being actually opposed to Trade Unionism—made no headway. Without the Collectivist Radical vote Mr. Gladstone would have been in a minority on English questions, just as without the Irish vote he would have been in a minority on Home Rule. From the first, therefore, it was plain that since the House of Lords, by throwing out the Home Rule Bill, was certain to send him back to the country, it was only by combining Home Rule with the most popular measures in the Newcastle programme that he could rally the English wage-workers (who did not and do not care a damn one way or the other about Irish Home Rule) against the Peers. The position was so obvious that no mediocrity of talent could have prevented the Liberal leaders from grasping it if only they had been in the least in touch with the political movement on which they had just come into power.”

When the Fabian Society says that “the English wage-workers did not and do not care a damn one way or the other about Home Rule,” it simply faces the facts which the Gladstonians are running away from. At the General Election of 1886, the Conservatives went to the country with a program of Unionism *without Coercion*. The Liberals opposed them with a program of Home Rule, and were routed at the polls. When the Conservatives treated their election pledges of No Coercion, much as the Liberals have so far treated their Newcastle Program pledges, the English Radicals were indignant. They detested Mr. Balfour's *régime* of Coercion; his Suppression of Free Speech and Right of Public Meeting; his imprisonments of political opponents in Tullamore Jail; his batonings, and shootings, and “removable magistracy.” But there is all the difference in the world between an anti-Coercion agitation such as sprang up in England in the years 1887-9, and a Home Rule agitation. The moment Coercion slackened, the English feeling on the Irish question slackened too; and when the General Election came, the result was exactly as described in the above extract from the *Fortnightly Review*.

The plain truth is (and we deplore it) that the English Radical working man, though a determined opponent of Coercion in Ireland as well as in England, and eager for reforms in both countries, besides being a good hater of the jingo spirit of social domination to which Lord Salisbury openly appeals on the Irish question, is not in the least likely to give his vote to capitalist manufacturers who are notoriously hostile to his class for no better reason than that they may be relied on for nothing, except to vote for Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill. For why is it to be assumed that only Mr. Gladstone's capitalist supporters are to be relied on when the Irish Question is in hand? Are the present Labor members less to be depended on in matters affecting the Irish working class than those Liberals who vote with the Conservatives on Employers' Liability, or who, in the last parliament, supported the directors of the North Cambrian Railway in dismissing a station master for

giving evidence before the Labor Commission? The answer to the question is so plainly in favour of increased Labor representation that it is impossible not to see that what the anti-Labor Gladstonians are really afraid of is that the working class is incapable of winning seats, and that the only effect of its interference will be to split the vote and allow the Unionist candidates to get in. It will be seen later on, when we come to deal with the method of organising Labor candidates, that we do not propose mere election wrecking, and that what has proved possible in Battersea, South West Ham, and Middlesborough, is equally possible elsewhere. But if the Liberals believe that a three-cornered fight must mean the triumph of the Conservative, they are quite welcome to withdraw the Liberal opponent of Labor in the fifty constituencies on condition that the Labor candidate pledges himself to vote for the Home Rule Bill. That will satisfy both the Labor party and the Irish party perfectly.

To sum up, the proposal of the anti-Labor Home Rulers, stripped of all rhetoric, is simply that the government of the kingdom for six years after the next general election shall be competed for by two sets of capitalists, one backing "Integrity of the Empire" and the other Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, the working classes abstaining from all claim to representation. The proposal of the Fabian Society is that the working classes, numbering four-fifths of the electorate, should have fifty seats, all of which are likely to be filled by men far more in sympathy with popular claims, whether in Ireland or England, than the men they will replace. We leave the two proposals to speak for themselves without further argument, only reaffirming our conviction that Home Rule cannot win an English Election until it is coupled with reforms which affect the English people as well as the Irish, and that if the Irish members understand their own interests they will take care that working men rather than capitalists shall be selected as the Home Rule candidates for English constituencies for the next House of Commons.

We will now quote, more for the information of our readers than for their instruction, the paragraph which so grievously knocked the wind out of those Liberals who felt that they had said everything that was necessary when they had pointed out that the present Government has gone further than any other Government that had ever been in power in this country, as if that were not necessarily true of every Government that does not absolutely turn about and go backward.

"The present Gladstone Government is not more superior to the Conservative Government of 1886—92 than that was to the Liberal Government of 1880—85, or that again to the Beaconsfield Government of 1874—80. Ever since 'the unparalleled political treachery' of 1867, when the Conservatives trumped the Reform Bill they had just defeated by a more advanced one, which enfranchised the town artisans, the Government of the day has always been (from the Labor point of view) better than its forerunner. And it is as certain as anything in politics can be that if Lord Salisbury were to return to power to-morrow, his Government would (provided only and always that the working classes keep up their voting pressure) prove itself a better Government than the present in such moments as it could

spare from passing an Irish Local Government Bill which would possibly, in everything but the name, be a considerable advance on Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill. This, be it observed, is not an argument in favour of bringing in the Conservatives, for the next Government will equally be a better one even if it be another Gladstonian one. Pending the formation of a Labor party, the working classes need not greatly care which party divides the loaves and fishes, provided only the Government has a sufficiently narrow majority to make it highly sensitive to pressure from without. The only advantage offered by Conservative Governments as such is that the workers press them rather more vigorously; whilst the Liberals are never so progressive as when in opposition. But at present this consideration is reinforced by the furious disappointment caused by the virtual abandonment of the Newcastle programme, and the anti-labor bias in the administration of those public departments which have fallen to the 'old gang' Ministers."

Part II.—CONSTRUCTIVE PROPOSALS.

We now come to that part of the *Fortnightly* Article without which all the rest would have been worse than useless.

"The Fabian Society, as has been intimated, can afford to keep its temper, being in a position to prove that it was too wise before the event to be among the dupes. In the various editions of its tract *The Workers' Political Programme* (1887-1891), in the Fabian Essay entitled *The Political Outlook* (1889), and in the *Fabian Manifesto* for the General Election of 1892, ample warning will be found as to what was to be expected. The Manifesto, though it attained a large circulation, was received in sullen silence, because of its bitter but well-deserved reproaches to the working class for allowing another general election to find it unprepared for anything, except trusting to the promises of a Government dominated by men so hopelessly out of touch with the aspirations of the new electorate as Messrs. Morley and Fowler, Lords Spencer and Kimberley—above all, Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Gladstone. One passage from the Manifesto may be quoted here:—

"If the Liberal party obtains a majority at the general election, much will depend on the sort of men who compose that majority. If they are a flock of subservient Gladstonians to whom the Newcastle programme is nothing but a trap to catch working class votes in, then the great disappointment of 1880 will be repeated; and we shall again find out how little there is to choose between Whig capitalists and Tory ones."

"Well, the great disappointment *has* been repeated, with the result as prophesied; but the present situation differs in one very all-important particular from that dealt with by the Manifesto. Then, on the eve of the election, it was too late to do anything but tell the workers that since they were not ready to take the field themselves, they had better do the best they could with the Newcastle programme, as being, at least, better than the No Programme at all with which the Conservatives were foolish enough to go to the poll. But now there is time for action. Let us make one more quotation from the Fabian tract (No. 41) on the point.

"The official leaders of the Liberal party cannot now turn their followers back; they can only refuse to lead them and sit as tight as they can under the circumstances. The Radicals are at least conscious that the leaders are obstructing them; and they are now looking for a lead in attacking the obstruction. They say to us, in effect, "Your policy of permeation has been successful: we *are* permeated; and the result is that we find all the money and all the official power of our leaders, who are not permeated, and cannot be permeated, arrayed against us. Now show us how to get rid of those leaders or to fight them."

"But the Fabian Society's function ceases when the permeation has been carried to saturation point. That point was indicated by the election last September of a Collectivist parliamentary committee by the Trade Union Congress.

The trade unions must do the rest; and by the rest we mean provision of a parliamentary fund of at least £30,000, and the running of, at least, fifty *independent*-labor candidates at the next general election. This is clearly the right policy, not only from the independent-labor point of view, but from every other point of view possible in the working class. To working-class Home Rulers it is the only chance of keeping the Irish question in the hands of Mr. Gladstone by bringing up a labor contingent in Parliament to rescue liberalism from the reaction produced by the conduct of its leaders. To the Unionists it is the only safeguard against the likelihood of a Conservative majority taking advantage of the 'integrity of the Empire' to abuse its powers in the interests of the rich classes. Those who are superstitiously afraid of 'splitting the Liberal vote' may comfort themselves with the reflection that no harm can be done by that in attacking a 'safe Tory seat,' and that the throwing over of the Newcastle programme has practically placed the whole country on that footing for the next election. If the Liberals fear the split vote, they had better at once address themselves to passing a second Ballot Bill, as 'Do not hesitate to split' will most assuredly be a labor watchword for some years to come.

"To those working men who look solely to the interests of labor we need not address any lengthy argument for putting the Reform Bill of 1885 to its proper use, by largely increasing the representation of labor in Parliament. The fact that in a House of Commons six hundred and seventy strong, and governing a country in which four men out of every five are wage-workers, only twelve out of the six hundred and seventy are labor members, is altogether disgraceful to our great labor organizations.* How long will the four hundred thousand employees of the railway companies be content to allow Employers' Liability Bills and Railway Regulation Acts to be mangled by the directors having seats in the House of Commons, without one representative of the railway workers to defend their interests?

"The Operative Society of Bricklayers finds its advantage in maintaining one of its members as an Alderman of the London County Council. Would it not be still more useful to have its own representative in the assembly which controls the whole of the Government works? Do the compositors enjoy having their funds drained by the seasonal irregularity of employment, which a better distribution of the vast public printing orders would greatly mitigate? And if, as is probable, the next Parliament sees the renewal of the Government printing contract, now given to a 'closed house,' will the thirty thousand members of typographical societies and the London Society of Compositors leave their interests to be watched by the representatives paid for by the miners and seamen? Does the Amalgamated Society of Tailors really want to put down sweating? If so, had not its thirty thousand members better send their own representative to the Assembly which alone can amend the Factory Acts, and insist on their being carried out? And may we not without offence ask the astute council of the United Textile Workers Association whether it is quite worthy of them to go, cap in hand, to the fifty-five capitalists who sit for Lancashire constituencies, whenever they want an amendment of the Factory Acts; and to wait abjectly until the employers put up some Lancashire member willing to introduce the Cotton Spinners' Eight Hours Bill? We might multiply such questions beyond all patience if we had enough space at our disposal. The case for the fifty candidates, the £30,000, and the prompt and energetic organization of the labor vote, is unanswerable. The question is, who is to do it?

"There is, unfortunately, no such thing as completely effective and general organisation of the working classes, in this or in any other country. But there is one organising agency which is so much more effective and advanced than any other, that its superior fitness for the political work now in hand is beyond all

* There are already six members of Parliament maintained directly from the funds of their respective trade unions. The Northumberland and Durham Miners' Association send three; the Miners' Federation two; and the National Union of Seamen and Firemen one. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers had decided, by vote of its 72,000 members, to make a threepenny levy for parliamentary expenses, which will raise over £800. The National Society of Boot and Shoe Operatives, with members, has voted to maintain one member. The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, having members, is also seeking a representative, whilst the National Union of Teachers has decided to run two candidates, who, as regards general politics, will be one Liberal and the other Conservative.

question; and that is the Trade Union Organisation. There is nothing in the labor world that can compare even distantly with it. Before the 'New Unionism' movement, which was begun by the London gas workers in 1888, and brought prominently before the public by the London Dock strike of the next year, the Trade Union Organisation was limited to little more than half-a-million men, by the high contributions and special qualifications required from its members; but even at this figure it was enormously richer, more numerous, better officered by men of practical ability and experience, and consequently more powerful and more deeply responsible for the condition of the labor movement than any other body in the country. Since that time new arrangements have been adopted by the great unions, which practically enables every wage-earning voter in the country to belong to the union of his trade, even if he can only afford to join the 'trade section.' This change and the establishment of a great number of unions in formerly unorganised trades, has about trebled the numbers, and greatly increased the political power, and with it the political responsibility, of the Trade Union Organisation. There is no other organisation able to cope with a general election. Attempts have been made, and are still being made from time to time, to establish general societies, leagues or federations of the whole working class, to relieve the trade unions of their political duty; but at the present moment, if the unions polled their entire voting strength at a general election, they could probably put not less than two thousand voters into the field for every single voter in the ranks of the most successful of their rivals.

"The money difficulty, which is the great bar to parliamentary representation of the working class, does not exist for bodies which can raise a thousand pounds by a levy of from a penny to sixpence per member. A subscription of a farthing a week for a year from every member of a trade union in the country would produce more than £400,000; and though such a subscription is not completely practicable, the calculation at least shows how easily the great unions alone, with their membership of a million, could provide £30,000 to finance fifty Labor candidates at £600 apiece.

"On the whole, then, we may take it that the representation of the working classes at the General Election will depend on the great national trade unions, and not on the Socialist bodies; neither the Fabian Society nor the Social Democratic Federation, neither the Labor Electoral Association nor the society known as the Independent Labor Party, has the slightest prospect of mustering enough money to carry through three serious candidatures, much less fifty. Their part will be to provide the agitation which will enable the trade union leaders to obtain the support of the rank and file in rising to the occasion. Much remains to be said as to details of organisation; and none of this will be missing when, a month hence, the Fabian Society converts this article into a Manifesto, and sends it throughout the length and breadth of the Labor world in the form of a Fabian tract. In its present state it will suffice to let our Liberal friends, whose warm acquaintance we made in the heyday of the Newcastle programme, know what to expect when they next go forth on the war-path. Our success in forecasting the action of the Gladstonian Cabinet encourages us to hope that we may not have miscalculated the moment at which Labor is likely to take the field. But it remains with the workers themselves to make our words good; and it is to them, and not to us, that the Liberal leaders had better address any remonstrances that may occur to them."

To this we must now add emphatically that if the workers do not make our words good, the Conservative party, which will in that case reap all the advantage of the discredit brought on the Liberals by the failure of the Cabinet to fulfil its pledges to the trade-unionist wage-earning classes, will probably feel itself justified, when it comes into power, in treating the workers exactly as it treated them from 1886 to 1892. What is more, Mr. Gladstone cannot be reasonably blamed by the working classes for dropping the Newcastle Programme, which was only adopted by him in deference to a supposed Labor movement. When the General

Election resulted in the addition of exactly three English Labor members to the House of Commons, bringing up the total Labor representation to fifteen, including two Irish members, he probably came to the conclusion that the Labor movement was a bogey with which the National Liberal Federation had foolishly allowed itself to be scared, and that English working men on the whole preferred to be represented by the lawyers, railway directors, and coal owners, who made up so large a part of his majority.

Yet no part of the Fabian Manifesto has been received with more confident ridicule than the proposal to return fifty Labor members. It has been asserted that there are not fifty men among the eight million adult males working for weekly wages in England fit to contest a parliamentary seat. Even among the advocates of Independent Labour Representation the idea has sometimes been scouted that nothing will be done except by the society called the Independent Labor Party. Now the more the "Independent Labor Party" can do the better. But it must come into the field as the ally, not as the rival, of all the other organisations which are moving in the same direction. The relations between it and the Trade Unions and the socialist and political Societies which exist for the purpose of forming a Labor party in Parliament, need not be otherwise than entirely friendly, provided only all the political societies will work loyally for increasing the representation of Labor in Parliament, and not merely for the representation of their own particular Society there. If each society declares that it is the only genuine organ of labor representation, that its program is the only genuine labor program, that its candidates are the only genuine candidates, and that all other societies, programs and candidates are frauds, then they will give a signal proof, not only of their political incompetence, but of that sectarian bigotry, which is the greatest moral obstacle to the solidarity of the working classes. Already some little sore feeling has been expressed because the Fabian Society has appealed to the Trade Unions rather than to "The Independent Labor Party." But as the Fabian Society is urging that fifty candidates should be run, it must turn to some organisation which has the means of carrying out that large order. In the *Fortnightly Review* we said that "neither the Fabian Society nor the Social-Democratic Federation, neither the Labor Electoral Association, nor the society known as the Independent Labor Party, has the slightest prospect of mustering enough money to carry through three serious candidatures, much less fifty." Even if this prove a miscalculation, and the bodies mentioned could and would run fifty candidates apiece, we should still urge the Trade Unions to run fifty more. But there is no evidence that we are mistaken.

It has been claimed that the late municipal elections shew that the Independent Labor Party can depend on the votes of per cent of the electorate. Even if we accept this sanguine estimate, it does not prove that this per cent of the electorate will find Parliamentary candidates ready, with their expenses paid and their election campaigns organised. If nothing but votes were needed,

there would be already a Labor majority in Parliament. We, therefore, ask the Independent Labor Party, at their forthcoming annual Conference at Manchester, or on some other convenient occasion, to announce the number of properly financed candidates they can send to the poll—in short, to name the constituencies they can answer for at the next General Election. There is no proposal to interfere with such candidates: on the contrary, when they are Trade Unionists, their Union may reasonably be asked for a levy to help with their expenses. But the Independent Labor Party will hardly suggest that the constituencies they cannot answer for are to be abandoned to the enemy. More vague hopes, aspirations, good resolutions, and boasts of growing numbers and influence are of no use in the face of a General Election. The right course is for each body to take an electoral map of England and mark on it the seats it is prepared to contest efficiently. The Independent Labor Party is already, we presume, in a position to guarantee a contest at Barrow, West Bradford, Huddersfield, Halifax, Dover, and South West Ham. The Battersea Labor League will guarantee a victory at Battersea; and the Woolwich and District Labor League at least a first rate contest at Woolwich. Newcastle will look after itself; the National Seamen's and Firemen's Union will guarantee Middlesborough; and the Social-Democratic Federation may be expected to pledge itself to send its candidate to the poll at Burnley.* If any of these bodies can do more than this, so much the better; but it is clear that even if they do twice or even four times as much, the Trade Unions must still come to the rescue if the total of fifty is to be made up. Therefore it is the business of all these bodies, instead of disparaging one another as interlopers and rivals, to honestly declare what each can do; to express their regret that it is so little; and to call on the Unions to come into the field with their comparatively magnificent resources, and make up the deficiency.

In this way local or branch Independent Labor Parties and Social Democratic Federation branches may do excellent work in constituencies where they cannot run candidates by agitating for a demand signed by a thousand registered working electors for a Labor candidate. Such a demand, if forwarded to any large Union which had a strong branch in the constituency, would probably lead to the Union financing a candidate from their trade. We desire to lay great stress on this suggestion, because the Unions are much more likely to act on an application from a constituency than on their own initiative. The policy of the Fabian Society is not to run Labor candidates itself, but to get Labor candidates run and to help to get votes for them. The Fabian Society was made for the use of the Labor movement, not

* None of these contests can be successful without warm support and pecuniary help from sympathisers outside the ranks of the bodies named, backed up at the polls, by the votes of thousands of working men who call themselves Liberals or Conservatives at present. All that is meant is that the bodies are in a position to secure that support and to organise the candidature.

the Labor movement for the use of the Fabian Society ; and though this " Permeation policy," as it is called, has been much ridiculed by Socialists who seem to think the opposite view the nobler one, we can at least plead for its adoption by all Socialists in those constituencies where the anti-Fabian Socialists and Labor men are too weak to take matters into their own hands. For any knot of men to say that because they cannot have one of their own number as candidate no candidate shall be run, is surely the worst sort of political dog-in-the-mangerism. And, we must add, no existing political society on the Labor side will pretend for a moment that £30,000 can be honestly procured from any other source than the funds of the Trade Unions unless it wishes to deceive the working class as to its own numbers and pecuniary resources.

On the whole then we may take it that the Election depends on the great national Unions. They have themselves formally undertaken the work by appointing, at the last Trade Union Congress (Belfast, 1893), a committee charged with the duty of "
and consisting of Messrs.

Now if this committee is to act on behalf of the Unions with the greatest attainable effect, it must avoid any appearance of taking the elections out of the hands of the constituencies. For example, if the Amalgamated Engineers were to say, in effect, " We wish to have a representative in Parliament ; and we will make use of Newcastle for that purpose," Mr. Fred Hammill would at once become, not the representative of the entire working class in Newcastle, but simply the Engineers' candidate, in which case a considerable body of small employers and other non-unionists and middle-class voters might hold aloof, and even the unionists in other trades might regard him with more or less jealousy. Clearly the candidate must be the candidate of the whole working class in the constituency, and not of a section only, however powerful and well organised that section may be throughout the country. The great Unions would be the first to recognise this if the central councils of the Independent Labor Party or the Social-Democratic Federation were to thrust a candidate of their own upon any constituency. But the Engineers may quite properly say to Newcastle, " If you will run a Labor candidate who, as a member of our union, would represent us as well as you, we will come to the rescue if you cannot find the requisite funds." It is evident, then, that whilst the great unions will be virtually masters of the situation, they will do well to act through local bodies composed of delegates from all the local trades, and from such purely political clubs and Societies as it may be wise for the local trades to add to the election committee. Such bodies already exist in the Trades Councils, which were originally established for exactly such purposes. Unfortunately, owing to the want of any concerted political action between the trades, the Trades Councils have been of late years much neglected, some of the most highly organised trades ignoring them altogether, and others treating the selection of delegates to

them as a matter of no great importance. The result is that at present some of the Trades Councils are entirely unfit to undertake the responsibility of acting on behalf of Labor at a General Election. The high officials of the great unions thrust them contemptuously aside when there is important work to be done; and too often, instead of being the peacemakers and political organisers of the Labor world, they are mere cockpits in which the local trades fight out their petty squabbles through delegates who cannot see beyond the separate interests of their own trade, and have standing quarrels with whole sections of the electorate. Men who have shewn no political instinct, and are behind the times in their view of the scope and future of the Labor movement, who are bigoted partisans of the Conservative or Liberal parties in politics, or, worse still, who are personally so self-indulgent that they are respected neither inside nor outside Trade Union circles, are, in some towns and by some societies, considered quite good enough to send to the Trades Council. But even if all the Councils were as bad as this, they would still be the only bodies so constituted as to form a centre of organisation for all the organised labor of the district. Their shortcomings can easily be cured. The leaders of Trade Unionism have only to give the word, and the Councils can be swept and garnished; made completely representative and authoritative by the arrival of delegates from the great unions which now ignore them; and manned by delegates fit for the emergency which is coming. It is much shorter and easier to do this than to form new bodies which would necessarily be nothing but Trades Councils over again under some other name. For the unions would certainly hesitate to place themselves in the hands of general political associations open without reserve to employers and non-unionists. If the Trades Unions are to pay the piper, they will take care that Trade Unionism calls the tune; and this can only be done properly by organising the candidature through the local trades.

The only valid objection to Trades Councils as centres of political organisation is their exclusion of small employers and of those sympathisers in the professional and middle-classes of whom a few are to be found everywhere doing good work in the Labor movement. But the election committee formed by the Council need not be exclusive. It can invite any Socialist Society, or Independent Labor Party branch, or Radical or Labor Club, to qualify itself for representation on the committee by contributing to the election fund.

An important exception to this rule of acting through the Trades Council is London, where the fact that there is only one Trades Council for sixty constituencies (in which the Returning Officers' fees alone would put the election expenses at £8,000 to start with), makes it necessary to form special local associations like the Battersea or the Woolwich District Labor League. Another exception is that of constituencies where one single trade is in such a huge majority (mining or agricultural labor, for

instance) that the national union of that one trade can properly instruct its local branch to act on its own responsibility as being sufficiently representative of local labor. But whether the organising body be a local London Labor League, a Trade Union, or a Trades Council, the local conditions of organisation will be much the same. And as Labor will probably have to rely mainly on the Trades Councils, it will be best to describe the method of action through them as the typical method for the forthcoming election.

The first step to be taken by the Trades Council is to form a political committee (not the election committee, which comes in at a later stage) to prepare for action. This committee should at once draw up a requisition to be signed by working-class voters, expressing their wish to be represented by a Labor candidate at the next general election, and promising to support a good one if he can be found. At least a thousand signatures should be procured, beginning, of course, with those of the members of the Unions represented in the Council, and as many more as can be added by the efforts of the Independent Labor Party, the Fabian Society, the Social Democratic Federation, and any other friendly bodies or individuals. No signatures should be accepted except those of registered electors; and the most jealous care should be taken to make the document a genuine one and to prevent deadhead signatures being passed for the sake of making a show. An election fund should then be opened in the name of three or more trustees of known integrity; and from that time forward all subscriptions whatever should be paid to these trustees, and on no account to the candidate himself or any irresponsible person. The committee should not consider itself in a position to act on the requisition until it is reasonably certain of being able to cover the Returning Officer's expenses, and so guarantee that the candidate will really go to the poll. A candidate who withdraws at the last moment and leaves the Labor electorate in confusion is worse than no candidate at all. Candidates "for the sake of propaganda" should be sternly discouraged. Propaganda under false pretences defeats its own object.

The moment it becomes known that the committee is in funds, a crowd of unemployed men will suddenly appear, offering their services as speakers, canvassers, collectors, clerks, or in any other capacity in which they can transfer some of the money to their own pockets. The claims of old acquaintance and pathetic hard-upness will be urged incessantly on the committee. To these appeals the members must harden their hearts and shut their ears. The rule must be voluntary service and pay your own expenses in the Labor cause. If, later on, a few paid men should be needed, they should be carefully selected for their own competence, and well paid, preference being deliberately given to men whose ability and character would enable them easily to obtain other work, and who are, therefore, not in the least likely to be objects of charitable consideration.

Great as is the circumspection that will have to be exercised in

spending money, even greater will be needed in receiving it. The conditions of the election will be such that the majority of Labor candidates will be organised in constituencies which usually return a Liberal, because these constituencies are supposed to be the most advanced, and therefore the most favorable to Labor. Unfortunately, this gives the Conservative party a strong incentive to encourage Labor candidatures; for a seat that is always safe for the Liberal as long as the Progressive vote is cast solidly for him, may often be easily won by a Conservative if the Progressive vote is divided between a Labor candidate and a Liberal. The Liberal Government has been repeatedly warned of this difficulty, and urged to remove it by introducing the simple electoral reform known as Second Ballot. The warning has been disregarded; and there can be no doubt now that in the majority of cases the Liberals will insist on running their candidates in opposition to the Labor candidates, and will accuse the Labor candidates of being subsidised by "Tory gold" to split the Progressive vote and let the Conservative in. And they will point out, as evidence of the charge, the fact that the Labor Party, as a rule, "attacks" Liberal seats and not Conservative ones, adding, in proof of their friendly feeling towards Labor, the handsomest offers from Liberal headquarters to give way to Labor candidates in constituencies where neither a Liberal nor a Labor candidate has the smallest chance against the Conservative.

The Conservatives will not be slow to improve the occasion. It may confidently be expected that offers of pecuniary support for Labor candidates will be received from the "men in the moon" who negotiate between the Conservative Party and the working classes in such emergencies. The temptation to spoil the Egyptians will be great; but it must be resolutely resisted on the ground of expediency even by those who cannot see any principle at stake in the matter, because the experience of 1885, when two Socialist candidates, running avowedly with Conservative money, in London, got votes between them, as well as that of 1892, when a "Labor" candidate, under suspicion of the same, polled 19 votes, proves conclusively that Conservative money utterly destroys a candidate's chances instead of helping him, owing to the existence of a strong public opinion that such negotiations are discreditable intrigues, and stamp the candidate concerned as either corrupt or too deficient in judgment to be worthy of support. Any workman who will support a Labor candidature only on condition that somebody else pays for it, should be told shortly that if he will not pay he must go without. The committee should rely mainly on union levies and small subscriptions from individuals. It should accept no donations from outside the Labor ranks except those which come from tried sympathisers; and in the event of an offer of a Conservative subsidy coming, not only should it be refused, but the letters or minutes recording the offer and refusal should be at once sent to the Press. Once a suspicious offer has been made, a moment's concealment, even of its refusal, is dangerous.

The only assistance from the Conservative Party that can be

accepted without discredit is an offer to withdraw their own Tory candidate and support the Labor man against the Liberal.

The amount required to carry the election through effectively varies from constituency to constituency, according to the area to be covered. In a compact town like Northampton, where a comparatively small number of polling stations would accommodate the entire electorate, and where a few dozen posters, properly placed, would come under the notice of the whole town, £250 would do more than £1,000 would in a big county constituency where the voters are scattered into little groups in villages miles apart. On that account it will be necessary to confine the efforts of the Labor Party chiefly to the compact towns. Roughly speaking, the election expenses, even with abundance of voluntary help, will run from £200 to £600. A thorough Labor candidature ought not to cost the candidate a single farthing; and in the event of his winning the seat he should be paid regular wages at the rate of at least as much as he could earn at his trade in London, provided it is not less than £2 a week, which may be regarded as a bare minimum for an unmarried working man in the position of a member of Parliament, pending the establishment, by legislation, of Payment of Members out of public funds. The leading Trade Unions pay their parliamentary representatives £10 a week; and this would not be considered decent pay for the same class of work by any professional man. When the expenses of a contest and a candidate are beyond the resources of a Trades Council, it must either give up the project or secure a candidate who is in a position to defray his own expenses wholly or partially out of his own private means. But to return a candidate at his own cost, though it may be better than nothing, is not a feat for the Labor cause to boast of.

The money difficulty having been duly weighed, the next step is the selection of a candidate; and this, of course, cannot be done without reference to the policy of the Labor party. Fortunately, no difficulty is likely to arise at the next election as to the political opinions of the candidate. Since he will have to oppose the Conservatives in all cases, and the Liberals in almost all—the only exceptions being where he may be able to drive the Gladstonian candidate out of the field, and force the Liberals to accept him in order to claim the credit of his victory (as in Battersea and South West Ham)—he is pretty sure to be either a Socialist or a Collectivist Radical, differing from a Socialist only in name. Therefore the danger is not that the candidate may not be advanced enough, but rather that he may have quarrelled with everybody except his own particular section for not being as advanced as himself. A candidate who makes enemies on his own side is out of the question: nevertheless there is great danger of Labor candidates falling into this mistake, especially those who have made their reputation as agitators. Ten years ago, in order to wake up the Labor world from its apathy, and to combat the reactionary quietism which had stolen over the Trade Union movement since 1874 (in which year the working class vote did much to throw out the Liberals for their refusal to amend the Law under which

Trade Unionists were being imprisoned for picketting), it was necessary for Socialists to make a rousing attack on the whole Labor world, sparing neither Radicals, Trade Unionists, Co-operators, or any other section. That attack soon achieved its object. The pupils of the Socialists of ten years ago are now the majorities in the Unions; the Radical programs are now more scientifically Collectivist than the cruder Socialist ones; and the old Unionism has embraced the new, Mr. Henry Broadhurst being now in line with Mr. John Burns on the crucial question of Eight Hours. Unfortunately many Socialists do not yet realize the change they have themselves brought about. From mere force of habit, which is as strong in public speakers as in other people, they treat their converts as if they were still scoffers, and seem to like those Radicals who are now their zealous rivals in Collectivist propaganda no better than in the old times when they were opponents. A Socialist who is behind his time in this way is perhaps the worst candidate the Labor Party can have. He is almost certain to begin his campaign by a violent and indiscriminate denunciation of "the Liberal Party," forgetting that all the working men in the constituency who voted Liberal in 1892, and whose votes he must get if he is to make a respectable show at the poll, will take mortal offence at his attacks; whilst Mr. Gladstone, Sir William Harcourt, Mr. Morley, Lord Kimberley, and the rest of the official leaders to whom his remarks do really apply, will never hear a word of them. A man who habitually speaks in public as if the 2,461,874 men who voted for Mr. Gladstone at the last General election are one and all reactionary Whig factory owners, exactly like (for instance) Mr. Alfred Illingworth may be of some use in waking up sleepy and backward districts which are not within five years of even beginning to organise for political action; but in a constituency advanced enough to undertake a serious Labor candidature he is worse than useless. The Fabian Society speaks without prejudice in the matter; for such a man is as likely to be a member of the Fabian Society as of any other body; and its emphatic advice is, whether he be Fabian, Independent Labor Party man, member of the Social-Democratic Federation, or what not, have nothing to do with him. Persuasiveness is the very best qualification for a candidate, and offensiveness the very worst. Therefore, if a Fabian, a Social-Democrat, or an Independent Labor Party man be preferred by the committee, let them select a persuasive one and not an offensive one. The same argument applies with equal force to Radicals and Trade Unionists. Ten years ago it was the fashion among Radicals to abuse the Socialists very heartily. Even so able a Radical leader as Charles Bradlaugh once referred to them as "lunatics, . ." Nowadays all that sort of re- crimination is past and done with among those who really know where the Labor Movement stands to-day. But just as there are Socialists who still keep up the old attitude of hostility to Radicalism, so there are Radicals and Trade Unionists who still hold the old language towards Socialists. Such men cannot win parliamentary seats; and it is waste of time and money to run them as candidates. A man who cannot pick up one working man's vote without

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dropping another's should confine himself to agitating. The vote of the Radical absolutely must be joined to the vote of the Socialist in the Labor contest, or failure and disgrace will be the result. The first general question put to a candidate might well be,—Do you insist on everyone who votes for you agreeing with you in everything, or are you prepared to do your best to conciliate and unite all the men in the constituency who have reason to prefer you, on the whole, to either of your opponents? In short, good manners, a level head, and high personal character will be worth tons of revolutionary principles at the poll.

When the candidate is selected he must go to the constituency with a program. It is a not uncommon mistake for Labor politicians to assume that all public curiosity as to a candidate's politics can be satisfied by a general declaration in favor of Nationalisation of the Land and of all the Means of Production, Distribution and Exchange, or, more shortly, by announcing themselves as Socialists, or "Revolutionary Social-Democrats." Phrases of this sort will not do for Parliamentary candidates. Men are sent to Parliament, not to declare general aims and principles, but to make laws; and the Socialist must explain what are the particular measures he proposes to support in the next Parliament if he wishes sober citizens to vote for him, especially nowadays, when everybody knows that the different sections of Socialists are not agreed as to the best method of bringing about Socialism. There is a serious danger to Socialist candidates in the tempting ease with which the Socialist formula can be made to answer all inconvenient questions. For instance, if a body of voters who are agricultural laborers, or miners, or cotton operatives, or shop assistants, ask how the candidate would propose to deal with their special grievances, nothing is easier than to answer that the only really effective and fundamental remedy is for the community to take over the land, the mines, the factories, and the shops, and work them for the common benefit of all, thereby abolishing wagedom altogether, and establishing a state of things in which all persons will be able to provide for themselves amply by working only four hours a day. But such a reply is simply exasperating to men who know perfectly well that the next Parliament will not be in a position even to discuss this program, much less carry it out; and that meanwhile they must continue to suffer unless they are helped by immediately practicable legislation extending the control of the community over their industry as it stands to-day, and not as it may stand a century hence. By all means let the candidate preach his ideal; but let him remember that very few men over thirty will vote for ideals, and that in any case the issue at the General election will lie, not between the present dispensation and the millennium, but between Parliament as it is to-day and Parliament with an energetic minority of Collectivist Radicals acting as a separate party in the interests of Labor.

This does not exhaust the objection to an exclusive reliance on the Socialist formula. Not only does that formula not explain itself, but it also leaves untouched many matters outside Socialism which the candidate will have to deal with if returned to Parlia-

ment. It is conceivable that the next election may find the public mind full, not of industrial and agrarian questions, but of South Africa, or Ireland, or the Church, or the Drink Traffic, or Sanitation, including the Vaccination question. The sort of candidate who would reply to all questions on these subjects by explaining that he was in favour of the Abolition of Capitalism, with the disappearance of which war, drunkenness, and disease must vanish from the earth, and the Church question be settled for ever by the advent of "true Christianity" in the shape of Communism, had better be avoided, as the enthusiasm of his meetings would most certainly not be borne out at the polling station. Fortunate as it is for the Labor Party and for the world that Labor questions are coming so fast to the front at elections, it would not be wise for Labor to place itself in the hands of candidates who would have nothing to say for themselves if a European war or an epidemic cut the Labor platform from beneath their feet at the critical moment. Even if nothing occurs to distract public attention at the last moment from industrial matters, there will be a certain number of questions before the country which are quite independent of the Labor question, but upon which, taking them one with another, a few scores and perhaps a few hundreds of votes will turn, even among the wage-working class. These votes may decide the election; and they are not likely to be gained by a candidate who has nothing to say for himself on these extra subjects.

The voters should, however, be reminded that they need not demand from a Labor candidate a complete Ministerial policy. There is no possibility of the next election sending Labor members to Parliament in an actual majority of the House. If the fifty Labor members are returned, the Queen will not thereby be compelled to send for a Labor leader and request him to form a Labor Ministry and undertake the Government of the country. Consequently there can be no question of foreign policy and imperial statemanship being thrown into the hands of the Labor Party yet awhile. The Labor candidate may therefore justifiably occupy himself mainly with Labor questions, taking care that he has something practical to say upon them, and that he shows an open mind and maintains a reasonable and sympathetic attitude towards voters who are mainly interested in other points.

In giving these tolerably broad hints as to the weaknesses to be avoided in candidates, the Fabian Society, as a Socialist body, has been particularly frank as to the weak points of its own party, and this for two reasons. First, because recent experience shows that the men to whom the working-classes turn when they want a candidate are almost invariably Socialists; so that the choice will lie not between Socialists and their opponents but between reasonable and capable Socialists and hotheaded and bigoted ones; and second, because when the faults of Socialists have to be pointed out it had better be done by a frank acknowledgment from the Socialists themselves than by a complaint from that section of the Labor world to which, until lately, they were more or less in opposition.