BEFORE the last number of this journal was published, Mr. William Penn, whose illness I had but just noticed, was counted among those who have passed beyond our knowledge. His was no extraordinary career, simply that of a steady, persevering, industrious man, who in his spare time helped along our cause by patient and persistent effort according to his opportunities.

William Penn was born on the 11th of November, 1840, in London. His father was in business as a wheelwright in Shoreditch, and, seeking for his son a good trade, placed him with Mr. Archibald Leighton, of 4 Ashby-street, Clerkenwell, to whom he was apprenticed on the 24th of April, 1856. He joined the L.C.S. early in 1864, and during his first few years, as a journeyman, shifted about the trade, working at Messrs. Edmonds & Remnant’s, Messrs. Burn & Co.’s, and other shops, until he went to Mr. B. Collins, in whose establishment he remained—with the exception of a few months at a slack time—for twenty-seven years. In the winter of 1865 he had a severe attack of typhus fever, from which it was not expected he would rally, but he did, and the interest he had then begun to take in Society affairs was resumed as soon as he could get about. In January, 1871, he was elected a member of the financial committee, and was made one of the auditors for the year 1871-2, an office he held repeatedly afterwards. Towards the close of 1871 the nine hours movement commenced, and Mr. Penn was appointed one of the special committee having charge of that great trade reform. From that time forward the great majority of his spare hours were occupied in trade work of some description. He became secretary to the shop association of Messrs. Collins & Sons’ employés, a post which he held with great honour to himself and benefit to those whom he served for a period of nearly seventeen years, ending at the close of 1891, when he received a testimonial from the shop recording that “his integrity was never once called in question.” He was elected a member of the committee of suggestions prior to the revision of the rules of the Society. In 1889 he was elected to the annual committee of the Society, a post always full of responsibility, but that year made doubly so by the inquiry into the cheap labour question; the same year was marked by the great upheaval of labour, commencing with the dock strike.

During the last two years of his life he had failing health, suffering from he knew not what, until at last the fatal Bright’s disease manifested itself, and after some months of intense suffering his worn-out body succumbed to the malignant disease, and he died on Friday morning, September 23rd. The funeral took place on the following Wednesday, September 28th, when the shop association sent Messrs. A. Fensham and A. Grimes to pay the last tribute of respect to their dead comrade.

WILLIAM PENN.

“No floral spray, no laurel wreath I bring; My voice is mute; no song my lips could sing Can tell him that I grieve, but still I miss The earnest voice, the heart that moved at this Or that of others’ troubles, and could give A thought betimes of how some others live. Dear faithful friend and colleague, who didst share The work that others often would not dare To take upon themselves, at least, I may Upon thy grassy mound this tribute lay: What’er the prize, for others it was won, And well and faithfully thy work was done.”

The vellum binders had some serious questions to face at their last quarterly meeting that required a speedy settlement, since they were threatening the very existence of the organisation, and I am glad to see that with tact and firmness the wise and moderate
proposals of the committee have been carried. One passage from the report of the committee is significant of the strain upon this branch of our trade:—"The struggle in which we have just taken part, costing in the aggregate nearly £10,000 (of which nearly £7,500 was paid to our own members), the cost to this Society being £2,900, has considerably weakened our resources; but though weakened, there are funds in hand to meet current expenses for out-pay, funeral claims, annuities, etc., from which all claims have been faithfully met." A levy of sixpence per week is to be continued until the quarterly meeting in December, and a new system of monthly payments instituted, instead of the quarterly subscription as heretofore. The out-of-work pay has been arranged on a sliding scale according to the term of membership, and for the future all important questions are to be settled by ballot. It is to be hoped that these moderate proposals will bring all the members closer together, with a firm determination to put the Society upon as substantial a basis as it has hitherto held. Some of the other societies have gone through quite as hard an experience and yet recovered their lost ground—ay, improved upon it, and in organisations outside our trade the same thing has occurred over and over again. The whole principle of trade unionism is built up upon self-sacrifice, and if those in work will consider that it might have been their lot to have been out, and how they would have expected those in to help them, I am sure the fortunate ones will not shirk their duty in helping those upon whom the brunt of the battle has fallen.

The L.C.S. quarterly meeting was well attended, and the "paying on committee" folks took considerable interest in the measures proposed for bringing them up to the scratch. The proposal to adjourn the question, in order to arrive at some working plan in conjunction with the other societies, was of course the best thing that could have been done, and it was a good pointer to the lesson that has been standing before us for some time—AMALGAMATION. Half our movements are hampered for want of a greater centralisation of power, and the good and effective work performed by the joint trade committees should be a convincing proof of the beneficial results to be derived from the union of forces, even if of the two London societies only.

It did not want any very strong argument to induce those present to kick over the already toppling Federation of the Printing and Kindred Trades. The lines upon which it was established were unsound, and it is more than probable that it was only devised to help the Manchester printers to a shorter working day, but after the treatment meted out to us in the violation of both letter and spirit of rules 9 and 12, as I pointed out in February last, it needed little more to make us all feel what a fraud the whole thing was. We only wanted time to deal with it, and when Mr. R. A. Goddard thrashed the empty scarecrow, and showed that the membership of the London Society of Compositors was never more than a farce and pretence, and that at the recent meeting of the Federation, it was only after sending two telegrams to London that any definite reply could be got as to their actual membership, with a sickening disgust at the imposture, it was determined to give notice of withdrawal. I am in favour of federation, but we must not be deceived by high-sounding names; we must examine the principles upon which to federate. Except in fables, lions and mice do not work well together; the mouse may graze away a lion's bonds, but the lion then walks off all very fine and large, and the mouse sinks off to rest his weary jaws, and may think himself lucky that the majestic animal has not crushed him in getting out.

Those who were not present at the Bookbinders' Annual Meeting missed a most delightful evening, for the concert at "The Greyhound" on Saturday, October 8th, was the best that has ever been held, at least I am so informed by those who have the opportunity of judging. There was a good attendance, some fine music, and the committee were cheered with a liberality little expected, from the proprietors of the house. Mr. J. Gibbs took the chair, and Mr. H. White the vice-chair. Mr. Gibbs sang in fine style "My Playmate Jack and I"; Mr. White, "Neapolitaine"; Mr. C. Longlands, "The Black Sheep among the Flock"; "As you were before," and the sneerer, "It may be so," his efforts being enthusiastically received; Mr. C. P. Austing, "Alice, where art thou?" Mr. Prigmore, "Queen of the Earth," "The Village Blacksmith," and another song, all of which were splendidly rendered. Mr. W. Barnett came to give his well-known "Imitations," which made a pleasant variety to the entertainment. Mr. Tom Griffin was suffering from a cold, but "The Star of Bethlehem" was loudly encored, when he sang "Come into the Garden, Maud," and later on "The Pilgrim of Love." Messrs. Martin and Eames gave "The Larboard Watch;" Mr. W. Renvoise, "Leinore" and "Mona;" Mr. A. Edmunds, "Ho! How the Winds Blow;" and Mr. D. Mitchell recited "The Two Homes," a piece written by himself for advocating the claims of the Pension and Asylum Society. Mr. W. Dillimott proposed the "Prosperity of the Pension and Asylum Society and the Health of the Pensioners," to which Mr. McBride replied. Mr. Gibbs thanked those who had attended, and said he had expected the last meeting would be the last he should preside over, but he had been invited to take the chair once again, and after thirty years' experience he thought this was the proudest night he had known, and he hoped these meetings would go on and improve.

I have received a prospectus of a new society to be called "The Apprentices' Aid Society," which is about to be formed, to be enrolled as a friendly society for the purpose of ensuring that the rising generation of workmen and workwomen now in, or about to enter the embryo state of apprenticeship, shall be able to compete with other nations, and uphold England's prestige in the markets of the world, on attaining their majority, both in design or invention and in craftsmanship.” These are very fine words with a strong smack of the catch-penny advertisement about them, but some of the objects of the proposed society are good enough to demand a little attention. (a) To accept as members any boy or girl intending to bond fide serve an apprenticeship to any craft, at and above the age of thirteen, without entrance fee; to assist them in the choice (a) of a craft for which they are
suitable, and (b) of an employer who will interest himself in teaching them their trade thoroughly; and, where premiums are required, to advance such, without interested, upon good surety, to be repaid by weekly installments. (2) To accept as members any apprentices, indentured or otherwise, bona fide learning a trade, on payment of a small entrance fee, increased according to the length of time already served; to assist them in the purchase of such technical books, working tools, etc., as they may require, by advancing on good security, without interest, such monies for this purpose, repayable by fixed weekly installments. To provide sick benefit, death allowance, medical advice and medicine, legal advice, lectures and other means of advancing education, prizes for good conduct and travelling scholarships, and for the remuneration of journeymen told off to teach such apprentices.

This is something worth thinking over, and as correspondence, suggestions, and criticism is invited, I hope some of our friends will send for the full particulars to Mr. John W. Harland, 2 Newcastle-street, Strand, London.

Died on October 5th, Mrs. Helen Jackson, aged 82. She was elected to the Pension and Asylum in April, 1873.

Died, on October 12th, in Southwark Infirmary, Mr. F. Burton, aged 73. He was the latest pensioner of the L.C.S.

The action of the Shops' Council in reading out the names of defaulters to the Shop Associations connected with the Council has made some guilty ones feel very sore, but it has already had the effect of inducing some to pay up their dues, and as that is the object the Council had in view, it is to be congratulated in having done some little good, which I hope may become much greater in the future.

I walked into the crowded meeting of the Society of Women Employed in Bookbinding, at the St. Peter's Schoolroom, Onslow-street, Clerkenwell-road, on October 18th, and some of the ladies were so glad to see me. They had quite forgotten to invite me officially, but a private member sent me a bill calling the meeting, with the attractive word “refreshments” pencilled on it, and I thought, being the eighteenth annual meeting, I should be admitted, so after asking whether I might remain, and receiving a reply in the affirmative, I settled down with more assurance.

Miss Heather-Bigg, who was in the chair, was just telling her audience that they should not accept every man's hand; that many proffered their hands who were not to be trusted, and that they (the ladies) should learn to rely upon themselves and not accept the assistance of the men before they could walk for themselves, or they might be led she knew not where. The awful possibilities suggested evidently affected the audience greatly, for they sat wrapt in profound silence and meditated upon their lucky escape from such a doom, and the lady had to liven them up by referring to the pretty little recitations and songs they had heard in the past about "Bother the Men," etc. I felt that it was getting quite interesting, and that was just about the right kind of talk for a trade union meeting, and might be introduced elsewhere—say in some of our Societies—with marked effect. To some it might seem strange that the fathers, uncles, brothers, husbands, or sweethearts should not be the trusted advisers and helpers of a woman's movement, and that, instead, ladies and gentlemen knowing little about the trade or the conditions of those working at it, should be set up in their places. But no sense of the absurdity appeared to upset the listeners, and Miss Heather-Bigg delivered herself in her nice musical, chatty style, quite as an authority upon the subject.

Mr. H. R. King then appeared to tell the meeting that the men's societies were with them in all their movements; they had housed the young Society from its start, and even before it was actually formed, and were always willing to help if the ladies needed it. He thought, however, that the Society was not advertised enough. At present it was not large enough to make any movement for better conditions even in one shop. If the men wanted something they called meetings, talked the matter over, and got what they wanted. They had helped the women considerably in the dispute which took place some twenty or thirty years ago at Watkins', when the religious public were aroused at the condition of women's labour on Bible work, and if any struggle ever took place again they might expect from the men every help possible. One thing was certain, in many hundreds of cases women were not paid properly, and if it was not for help received from fathers and brothers, the wages they received would be literally a starvation wage. He had had some experience of this, and if that help was removed, they would, many of them, find it out. He had read of the new union lately started, and that they had in a few days got 400 members; he did not believe it, but he knew that the advertisement it was receiving, and the enthusiasm it evoked, would help it along very quickly. He was glad to hear that several had joined during the year, and though some had dropped out it must not discourage them; they should take hold of every young girl as she came out of her time, and bring her up to join. The benefits paid during the year, £50, showed the good which might be done, and it must be a great source of consolation for them to know how they had assisted those who needed it.

Some formal business was then transacted, when it transpired that there had been a deficit of eighteenpence on the last soirée, and it was resolved not to continue the concert and ball, but to arrange a tea party and concert, to which male friends might be invited.

Later in the evening, Mr. W. H. Edmunds moved a vote of thanks to the Rev. C. Canney for the use of the hall, and to the auditor for his services, with some rather caustic criticism on the lack of organising energy, remarking that if this Society did not wake up, it would be swallowed up by the more alive body just started before two or three years were over their heads.

Mr. D. Leahy did not agree with the last remark, but thought it would be well for the Society to take the advice conveyed in the other parts of Mr. Edmunds' speech well to heart. Nothing could be got
from employers but by the force of unionism, and they would never be a power till they realised that and united themselves together right through the trade.

The tea and cake were then served.

I am extremely loth to say anything that would appear harsh or uncharitable to any in the Society, but the truth plainly put is better for the women of our trade than any amount of hand-shaking and feeble platitude in speech. Here is a great army of labour unorganised, feeble, and helpless, for the want of zealous and able advisers. The women in the trade have no confidence or interest in the Society as it is at present conducted; they are perfectly satisfied as to the integrity of its officers, but it has no living interest for them, and not even the offer of £100 has been of any avail in rousing its officers up to a go-ahead policy. The men in the trade, on the other hand, feel and say that nothing can be done until some lady can be found who will come forward to stir the others up. Year after year the same ladies sit on committee, and the life-blood of the Association is stagnant; even the fear is expressed by members, “if anything happens to our secretary, whom could we find to take her place?” The machinery of government is too much in one person’s hands, and the ladies are not taught to interest themselves in the work of the organisation, except the few who get a commission for collecting, and that does not educate them in the questions concerning the conditions of women’s labour. What teaching there is for the general bulk of the few members is of the milk and water order: they are children, they cannot walk, they must not attempt to; and above all, beware of the men. Almost every entertainment has been marred by the absence of something or other which would have been provided by any body of practical men used to arrange such affairs. Men have had the training, women have not; it is part of men’s work, and they give their minds to it; yet the ladies will have none of such assistance. Well, it must become necessary, for the sake of our children in the future, that men should step in and point the way and lead to a more healthy condition of affairs. I have opened the subject, what have you to say to it, men and women of the trade? You who have often spoken of taking up the women’s cause, and to whom they do look, in spite of all foolish advice. What will you do? No milk and water sentiment should blind your eyes to the great and vital questions involved for our female workers. What will you do?

I am very sorry to have to report that Mr. William Bockett, secretary D.W.S., while on his way home from the “Cock” coffee tavern on Thursday night, 20th inst., slipped on the greasy asphalt paving, falling against some railings, and broke two of his ribs, fracturing another. To a man of Mr. Bockett’s years this is a very serious matter, and when I saw him on Friday he was in great pain, one of his ribs chafing the lung. That he may soon recover is the earnest hope of every member of the Society.

One other point, and I have done. Amalgamation! Keep it before your eyes. We were defeated upon this subject some few years ago, not because it was an unwise policy, but because the proposals made were not thoroughly understood, and the Society to whom they were made would give no opportunity of being heard to those who had charge of the proposed scheme. Sometimes such a chance, once thrown away, never returns, but out of our misfortunes there comes good at times. It is so now; one of the greatest difficulties in the amalgamation question for all Societies that have desired it, is the question of equalisation of finance. I venture to suggest that our misfortunes have minimised that difficulty and placed us upon a level better than we could have expected, and that now is the time for a fresh effort to be made—if it is desired—for the bringing together again of long divided members of one common family. We need it; we shall be stronger for it, we shall be richer for it, and no single person can suffer by it. Never mind about blotting stars out of a firmament, or any other sentimental twaddle! come to the consideration of the question free from bias and free from the demoralising prejudices of hygmeine times. We have worked together, you and I, through many movements, and may still, I hope, but why not under one roll of membership? in which I should hope to find the name of

WILL O’ THE WISP.

Answers to Correspondents.

W. H.—No; tickets are not sewn through the first, centre, and last sections, but threaded through holes pierced at each side of the first, last, and centre slips. The tickets are short pieces of catgut about eight inches in length and are used for strengthening heavy work. About every sixth section is tacked and the tickets are fastened around the slips on the back by twisting and knotting. Read last month’s article again carefully, and experiment, as you read, with a piece of cord, using the folding stick in lieu of a slip, and we are confident you will get at it all right. Articles on tree calf marbling will be found in Nos. 40, 41, 42, and 43.

DAGAEOUS JUNIOR.—In order to draw the board back, which you say is warping outwardly, no amount of polishing over the silks will be of any avail, you will only spoil the silks. If they are made properly, that is mounted on paper, it should be easy to take them up without spoiling, though you will probably have to line them again (see article on siding and pasting down in this month’s issue). When you have taken them up, clean off the board smoothly, line with thin pasted paper, well stretched on and let it thoroughly dry. Then replace silks.

A COUNTRY BINDER.—(1) See answer to “Gilt” in February number, No. 56, page 198. (2) We do not know what a “Hemp” means, probably it means a cord for sewing books on. Tapes are also used for the same purpose, made of either cotton or linen.

FORTUNA.—We cannot give you an analysis of the powders you send, but Nos. 1 and 3 may be bought of Messrs. Berry & Roberts and are known simply as white and brown blocking powders.

Several other replies which came late to hand will have to stand over till next number.