

# THE COMMONWEALTH

The Official Journal of the Socialist League.

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DECEMBER, 1885.

ONE PENNY.

## ON THE EVE OF THE ELECTIONS.

By the time this paper is published, the country will be in the thick of the elections; indeed it may be possible to get some idea by that time as to their possible result, but it must be admitted that before the first few come off, any prophesy on this can be little more than mere guessing.

It seems to me, however, that one may set aside the chance of an actual Tory majority, and that the chances lie between a Liberal majority large enough to swamp the united (?) Tories and Parnellites and a majority too small to carry the Liberal party through in the teeth of such a combination.

We Socialists, I think, need not be over anxious as to which of these events will take place. In the first case of an overwhelming Liberal majority, the Parliament will certainly be one of inaction; although the Parnellites will not have it all their own way, yet they will be strong enough to hamper the Government terribly if they do not give way to their demands. Apart from the Irish Question, it will be the aim of the Government not to stir anything which might divide the Party; some slight and "safe" concessions will probably be made to the demand for Social Reform, and for the rest as near nothing as may be. A Great Whig Liberal majority will exhibit to the eyes of those that can see, more clearly than ever heretofore, "the Representatives of the People" engaged in their natural function of holding together with as little change as possible, the mass of suffering, injustice and chicanery which is dignified with the name of Orderly Society.

Whether the Radicals revolt and break up the party or not in this case, this spectacle of the incompetency of Parliament for anything except repression, will be advantageous to the cause of Revolution; but in the other case of the Tories and Parnellites together outnumbering the Liberals, though the consequences may not be more disruptive of Parliamentary government, they will probably be more dramatic. For not only will some attempt at the solution of the Irish Question be forced on Parliament, but also the Radicals will most likely be driven into forming a separate party, and the Great Moderate Party, upon whose advent I have speculated before, and which I believe will be the final enemy of Revolution, will be definitely formed. Perhaps some of our Radical friends will be surprised when they see who will adhere to it amongst those whom they have considered their own special champions.

Meantime something may be learnt from all the late speech-making and maundering, besides what has been already noted in these columns. And first it must surely strike a Socialist (or indeed anybody else) how strong the tendency is, in our representative system, towards personal government.

What hopes, for example, were hung on Mr. Gladstone's appearance! How he was not only to undo the harm done by Mr. Chamberlain's impatience (save the mark) but also to give spirit and meaning to the whole Liberal attack. There was the man; we were all to wait for him: then we should see!

Well, now the oracle has spoken what has it said? Commonplace and twaddle enough; that we expect as a matter of necessity, just as the ancients expected the verse of the Delphic oracle. What else? An indefinite and indeed oracular bid for the Irish support, received by Mr. Parnell with solemn, one would almost think ironical courtesy and an awkward request to state more definitely what concessions to Home Rulers Mr. Gladstone would be prepared to make.

And next? A declaration against the disestablishment of the churches, English and Scotch; a declaration made necessary in a sense by the obvious dissatisfaction of the Moderate Party, but which taking into consideration the tone of the speech in which it was made, must show clearly to all not blinded by party tactics that Mr. Gladstone has ratted to the Conservatives. Nevertheless, if one is to believe the Liberal and Radical papers, Mr. Gladstone is still the trusted leader of the Party of Progress. Little as a Socialist can sympathise with the hopes of the so-called Radicals, one cannot help hoping, however, for the sake of manliness, that there is some muttered protest in the Radical ranks; but if there is it is inarticulate.

And to think that persons apparently reasonable, should accept as

a proposition having any reason in it that the matter of disestablishment has not yet been long enough before the nation to be made a matter of Parliamentary discussion. Surely when the great Liberal leader said that, a twitch, that might have grown into a sardonic smile but for special self-command, must have come into the solemn mask which has so long been shown to the public.

Worthy people of England, that are so proud of your Representative Government, take note once more how the Parliamentary Machine has been once again used, as it always will be, to sweep aside inconvenient questions. To check all aspirations towards progress; never to pass any law, however much desired by everybody, till the whole country has grown sick and tired of the subject; and then only to pass half of it, so that it becomes worse than useless—this is, it seems, the business of your Representative Parliament that governs you. When will you learn to do your own business yourselves?

WILLIAM MORRIS.

## THE LESSON OF THE FRENCH ELECTIONS.

As our English elections are so close at hand, a few notes on the past French ones may be useful. The elections of France have been a puzzle to many English Liberals, and a cause of much alarm to many others. English Liberals cannot understand this triumph of the reactionary parties. This we are not surprised at, since they cannot understand even the fall of the Gladstone Cabinet. We are told that the people of France are not fit for liberty, and that ere long there will be the restoration of the Monarchy or the Empire.

The fall of the Opportunists is a blow to Liberal policy, which the Liberals of England did not expect. But when the Liberals of France or of any other country pursue a course of expediency instead of principle; when they equal if they do not excel in deeds of blood those of the most blood-thirsty tyrants, what is there in a name that should save them from the natural consequences of their own rascality? The petty fillibustering expeditions of the Ferry Government could not fail to disgust every thinking person; petty wars in which there was neither honour nor glory nor advantage of any kind, and which meant only ruin and disgrace to France. M. Ferry fell as Gladstone fell, but the Brisson Cabinet did not repudiate the Ferry policy. It is still the spirit and the policy of Opportunism which is the curse of French political parties. After the fall of M. Ferry the break-up of the Opportunist party was only a question of time.

The people of France cannot to-day be dazzled and fooled with military glory. Of that they have had more than enough. With a national expenditure of £140,000,000 a-year and an enormous and ever-increasing local expenditure, no wonder the people are tired of piratical expeditions to distant regions. But when English Conservatives predict the early restoration of Imperialism, they forget that the people are still living who suffered and bled under the accursed rule of the arch-traitor Napoleon the Third. That scoundrel found in 1851 the public revenue £50,000,000, and in 1869 he had raised it to £85,000,000. He found at the former period the debt at £221,000,000, and by 1869 had raised it to £573,000,000. The war of 1870 added to that debt another £560,000,000. The people have not forgotten these things, and the country is still suffering from the terrible effects of an enormous debt and a heavy taxation. It is true we are often told that the days of the Third Napoleon were the golden days of France. But let us just look at the composition of the population of Paris in 1869, which numbered about 1,820,000. The gentry numbered 168,980; the professional classes 75,238; the commercial classes 214,341; banking, etc. classes 124,649; military and police 40,557; public functionaries 59,678; and thieves and prostitutes 95,218; making a total of 778,754, living on the vitals of the working classes. Dark for France and dark for the civilised world would be the day when the blood-stained Empire should be restored in France.

But we admit there are dangers and great dangers that threaten the Republic of France. France is essentially a military nation, and the military element has ever to be reckoned with in every crisis. It is a great and a most serious danger. But the greatest of all dangers is the fact that the bulk of the rural population, if not hostile, are at least indifferent to the existence of the Republic. They find themselves crushed to the earth by the weight of taxation, both local and national, and they find as a natural result their interests suffering; and as is the case with the Fair Traders of England, when promised relief by the

agents of the Royalist parties, absurd and impossible as the promise may be, they are eagerly embraced by the thoughtless. ~~we are surprised at this state of things.~~ The Republics of 1848 and of 1871 (we do not include the Commune), have been nothing more than what are termed "Conservative" Republics. That of 1848 was known to the peasantry of France far more by the burdens it imposed than by any advantages it conferred. Under the present Republic all the weight of the Imperialist burdens has had to be borne, and added to them have been those of the shameless wars of the Opportunist faction. No wonder the rural population is thrown to a great extent into the arms of the royalist and priestly parties.

As for the town population, the Republic has done but little for them. The same burdens that have crushed the rural population have also crushed the people of the towns. Those burdens have very largely destroyed the purchasing power of the people, and as a consequence the home trade suffers. Distant wars to extend the export trade have crippled still further the home trade. To-day the cry of distress rings through the whole of France. Hundreds of thousands are out of work, and tens of thousands know not how to live from day to day. Nor can those burdens be swept away except by revolution. The situation is grave and the danger great, but the restoration of the Empire would but aggravate existing evils, would but increase the national burdens, and would be sure to be followed by a bloody revolution.

As Opportunism is dead and Imperialism (or Monarchy in any shape) is impossible, there remain only the Radicals and Revolutionary parties. The second ballotages gave the Radicals a good majority, and they may be able to control the Government. But even the Radicals can retain power only by being revolutionary. The great burdens must be greatly diminished, if not swept away, or the trade of the country cannot revive. If existing institutions are to continue, if the country is still to bear the present enormous weight of taxation, a mere change of Government will accomplish but little for the people. But the accession to power of the Radical party will pave the way for the triumph of the revolutionary parties. And then, and then only, will the great burdens—the monster evils that crush alike the town and the rural population, be swept away. But the mistakes of the past must be carefully avoided. A thorough Social Republic will be thoroughly revolutionary both in its home and its foreign policy. It will act from principle and not from expediency. It will free government from tyranny and corruption, society from oppression, and make labour supreme through all the ramifications of society. It will hold out the hand of friendship—of brotherhood—to the oppressed of every land, and will neither seek nor recognise any compromise with existing despotisms. It will raise on high the glorious standard of equal liberty, of equal justice to every human being, and will proclaim a holy war for freedom and the fraternity of nations. And while freeing the people at home from the curse of tyranny and the scourge of usury, it will grasp hands with the oppressed of every country in the name of eternal right, of eternal justice. Hail, then, ye down-trodden of every class, the approaching triumph of the Social Revolution!

J. SKETCHLEY.

## OUR EXCHANGES.

### I.—AMERICAN.

FEW even of those interested in our movement, have any conception of its magnitude, and of the goodly number of journals published in the various languages of the "civilised" world which are industriously carrying on the war against capitalistic tyranny. The general Press carefully excludes all mention of our papers, and consequently it is well-nigh impossible for any save those who are exceptionally situated to become acquainted with them.

These articles have been projected in order that readers may have some idea of the journalistic abilities arrayed upon our side, as exemplified in the various periodicals with which the *Commonweal* is exchanged, although these do not by any means exhaust the untiring and intrepid men and women who spread the light of Socialism through the medium of the printing press.

In this first article it is intended to hastily sketch a few of the American pioneers of progress, and succeeding articles will deal with those of other countries.

The only order of classification attempted is wholly geographical. The journals are treated of in the order in which their birthplaces stand from east to west.

Boston is the most easterly, and from Boston comes the *Woman's Journal*, a bright, brave, eight-page weekly devoted to the woman-question. It is owned, edited, written, and managed by women, and is certainly in itself a most cogent argument for the cause it represents. Although not a "Socialist" paper, perhaps, in the restricted sense of the term, it occupies an advanced standpoint. Striving for the amelioration of the degrading lot imposed upon woman by modern laws and usages, it is distinctly in the line of progress, and is rendering noble service to the cause of humanity, for, surely as fate itself, so soon as woman wakes to a sense of her true position will the present system totter to its doom.

Boston also is the home of *Liberty*—the journal thus named, an able expositor of Anarchy, edited by B. R. Tucker, best known by his translations of Bakounine, Tchernyehewsky, etc. Consisting of eight pages, somewhat less in size than those of the *Commonweal*, neatly printed on good paper, it is published weekly at five cents.

Another Massachusetts town, Princeton, produces the *Word*. This includes in its comprehensive platform Socialism, Spiritualism, Free Love, and Spelling Reform; and gives in every issue this editorial admonition—

"Pay no Interest, Rent, Profit, Taxes, or other unjust demand; Produce, Exchange without restriction, and without robbery. Marry not at all; but serve, reprobate, finding in Reason Religion, in Love Law."

Its Editor, E. H. Heywood, has been many times imprisoned for his opinions, and may without exaggeration be said to have lived the larger portion of his life under chronic persecution. Stephen Pearl Andrews, the veteran reformer whose views it was founded to promulgate, is too well known to need more than mention.

New York numbers among the many journals it produces, *John Swinton's Paper*, a four-page weekly, somewhat less in size than the London *Echo*. Edited and published by the man whose name it bears, who was for many years Managing Editor of the New York *Times*, afterwards of the *Sun*, it is characterised by advanced aims and great literary merit. Its attitude may be seen from the following—

"THREE PLAIN DEMANDS—We are preparing the way for the establishment of the natural rights of man: 1. His right to a footing on the earth; 2. His right to labour; 3. His right to the fruits of his work";

and its tone and temper from this editorial view of the functions of the press cut from a recent issue—

"It is a pitiful view of the press that reduces it to a mere echo of public opinion. It should stand up unflinchingly for truth, right, and freedom, regardless of current clamour, selfish interest, or menacing power. It should be an enlightener; it should be a propagandist of righteousness; it should be a champion of new ideas which are true ideas; it should be a shield for the wronged, and an avenger for the oppressed. It should do its readers the greatest of all possible services, not by being their echo, but by being their informant, counsellor, and corrector. Of what use to any man is a paper that is merely the echo of his own mind?"

*Spread the Light* is a small eight-page monthly working on Henry George's lines—Land Nationalisation and Tax Reform.

*Progress*, the organ of the Cigar-makers Progressive Union of America, is an eight-page monthly about the same size as the *Commonweal*, is well-printed in English, German, and Bohemian, and is doing good work for the cause among the special class it represents.

From New York also come the *Freiheit*, *Der Sozialist*, and *Volkszeitung*, which will be spoken of, rather out of their place, perhaps, with the other papers printed in German.

The Cleveland (Ohio) *Carpenter* is an eight-page monthly, got up in good style and printed in English and German, published by the "Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America." While not professedly Socialistic, its principles are those of advanced and progressive Trades-Unionism, and it fully recognizes that Labour to secure its just rights must go beyond mere unionism.

The *Labor Leaf*, of Detroit, an enterprising weekly of four pages, represents the "Knights of Labour," that mighty federation of trades, which is leading up to, and preparing for the realisation of Socialism in America. Avowedly a Socialist paper, it seeks to enrol all who labour into unions, and once there to educate them to the higher development we seek.

Organ of the "Working People's International Association," advocate of physical force and dynamite when other means fail, the Chicago *Alarm* is the most pronounced exponent of militant Socialism in America. To read the accounts of it and its utterances, given from time to time in the ordinary Press, an uninitiated observer would imagine that it was possessed of an insane desire for "gore," and persistently called for that of all and sundry, in an uninterrupted, incoherent screech! Really it is trenchantly, not violently, written; and it would be well for the pharisaical hirelings who abuse it if their sheets contained occasionally such thoughtful articles as "even this *Alarm*!"

The *Voice of Labor*, from Petersburg (Ill.) is a four-page weekly, an admirable specimen of a local labour-organ.

From St. Louis (Mo.) comes the *Altruist*, a small, smart, four-page monthly, "devoted to Progress and Reform, Mutual Assistance and Support, and Equal Rights to All." Edited and mainly written by the veteran Communist, Alexander Longley, it exerts an unobtrusive but powerful influence for good.

In Denver, that wonderful Colorado city which has in so few years progressed from the proverbial "two small huts and a yellow dog" to the position proudly claimed for it as "the Emporium of the West", is published the *Labor Enquirer*, organ of the "Trades Assembly." Something larger than the London *Echo*, it is published weekly, has four well and closely-printed pages of live, readable matter, and attains a wide circulation. Its columns are open to the expression of the most widely divergent views, but its own "line" is educational Socialism, and its watchword "Organise!"

The "Associated Labour Press," is a co-operative union of twenty-one labour weeklies, only two of which are named above. They almost uniformly reach a high level of excellence, and have a total circulation of about 125,000.

Space forbids further detailed criticism, but enough has been said to show that the Labour-party in America has cause for considerable pride in the pen-warriors who so faithfully serve it. To Englishmen the reflection that not like these are their "organs" can bring but sadness. Too often has it been found that these manufacturing of enlightened (!) opinion are either lukewarm in their friendship to the worker, or are mercenary braves in the pay of his exploiters.

H. HALLIDAY SPARLING.

## Payment of Labour in the Socialistic State.

"WHEN you are in possession, do you Socialists propose to establish a system of equal pay for all, whatever a man's occupation may be, and regardless, not only of his natural capacities, but also of his willingness or unwillingness to exert those capacities to the utmost for the common good? You will admit that some men do more and better work than other men, at the same jobs and in the same time."

This inquiry, answered briefly last month, seems to call for more attention. The first point to be considered is whether the average man in a certain occupation ought to be paid for his work at the same rate per hour as the average man in any other occupation, that is to say, whether the average physician, clerk, shoemaker or agricultural labourer, ought to be remunerated at the same rate. I think the same rate ought, in all justice, to be paid, provided the occupations are equally healthy. Should one occupation be more unhealthy than another, competent medical men will find out how much shorter a time a man must work at it than at the other in order to maintain himself in the same bodily and mental health under both conditions. This problem is for medical experts to solve. Suppose it is found that a man, in order to remain as healthy as another working at a certain trade six hours a day, must work only three hours a day at his; then the former ought to be paid at double the rate the latter is, so that he may be enabled to earn the same daily wages if he wishes.

But there are not many occupations which in themselves are detrimental to health; most of them are dangerous owing to the long working day and to the unsanitary condition of the environment of the worker. These two evils will disappear, of course; for people will be so free as to be able to refuse to do any disagreeable, unhealthy or dangerous work, except such as is absolutely necessary for the community, and such work must be done by those most capable for it, voluntarily or not. In the society of the future too, when labour will get its due reward, all waste in production and distribution being avoided and idlers swept away, most people will be content with a very short working-day—at any rate they will not work so long at any one occupation as to hurt their health.

Speaking of the working-day, I do not think there will be any necessity for a compulsory universal working day then, as arrangements can be made very easily to allow each one to work as long or as short a time per day as he pleases, without injuring any one's prospects of getting work to do. Normal working-days such as we have now, will be unknown. These are simply poor devices in our present enslaved condition, to try and prevent the workers from being too heavily oppressed. In the new state of things another peculiarity will be that people will probably choose to have, besides an indoor occupation, a regular out-door one; and this will do much to maintain them in good health.

Before going further, I must state that the grand principle we have to guide ourselves by in all these questions—the principle of justice—is that it is our duty to bear one another's burdens. We must consider then in fixing what relation the rate of remuneration in one occupation ought to bear to the rate in another, whether the burdens of a worker in the one occupation are, owing to the nature of the employment, heavier than those of a worker in the other. Now, if people are left perfectly free (as they are not, but as they will be) to choose their own profession, every reason will disappear for paying different rates of remuneration in the various trades or professions, because each one will choose the employment which he likes best, and for which, therefore, he is probably best fitted—that is, he will choose that work which will lay upon him lighter burdens than any other kind of work will.

To any given man the inconveniences and difficulties of employments vary, owing to his possessing limited faculties and powers; and he is therefore entitled to say that such-and-such a work is difficult or disagreeable to him. But he has not the right to assert that such work is difficult or disagreeable to every other man, because, since men have been born with very different capabilities and inclinations, others may find this the easiest and most delightful work. For this reason then, brainworkers ought to be paid at the same rate as manual labourers. The brainworker finds it as easy to do his work, as the labourer to do his. A managing partner of one of the largest commercial firms in this country admitted to me that it was as easy for him to manage the affairs of his firm as for the scavenger to sweep the streets. Why, then, should this mental worker be paid at a higher rate than the scavenger? Certainly not because he has a heavier burden laid upon him by his work than is laid upon this day-labourer by his. He has been born with special gifts for his post.

It is said, sometimes, however, that brainworkers are of more importance to the community than mere manual labourers. It is quite true that, if the brainworkers are available also for manual labour, in case of emergency they may be more useful than stupid labourers. But I think that manual labourers are no more unable to use their brains than brainworkers are incapable of doing physical labour. In any case, in a highly developed and differentiated order of society, we can find work for the weak in intellect yet strong in body, as well as for those who have active and able minds, but maimed or feeble bodies; and there is no reason why the one should not be paid at as high a rate as the other, and each at as high a rate as the man who is fit for both mental and physical labour.

The second point to be considered is whether those "men who do more and better work than other men at the same jobs and in the same time" ought not to be paid at a higher rate than the others, if all are equally diligent. It is evident that they can work faster and better

simply because they have been born with better parts than others, and in strict justice they ought not to be paid higher for their talents. The Socialist view of the duties of those who are specially gifted by nature is that they owe a larger return to the community than those who are less naturally gifted. I contend therefore that they ought to be paid at the same rate per hour as their less fortunate fellows—that by this means they are only helping to bear the burdens of their fellow-workers who find it difficult to turn out the same quantity and quality of work which they produce so easily.

Of course, if a man be notoriously unfit for the work which he prefers, he must in the interest of the society either turn himself to some work which he is better fitted for or be content to receive lower remuneration than his fellow-workers in proportion to his incapacity. But it is not probable that in a free community a man would persist in doing work he was unqualified for—he would not care to turn out inferior work and would therefore devote himself to the occupation wherein he would have a chance of success. He would be taught too, that it is not dishonourable for any man to be unqualified for a work which seems important, but that it is one's duty to find out and do what one is fitted for, however humble it may be, drawing courage from the knowledge that in many other ways than by the work he does for his daily bread a man may make himself of value to humanity.

Some hold that certain workers ought to be paid at a higher rate because they have served a longer apprenticeship—because the education necessary to fit them for their work was extraordinarily expensive. I am of opinion that, in this case, should the worker be obliged to pay the expense of training, he ought to be paid at the ordinary rate and receive in addition as soon as possible the sum which he has laid out. But in a just society the consumer of any article will pay the expense of training the producer of it as well as provide the capital, that is, the tools, machinery, etc., necessary for its manufacture.

The last point to be considered is, in plain words, whether the lazy will be paid as highly as the diligent. I say most emphatically they ought not to be. Some way must be devised to detect their laziness and pay them only for the time they could have done the work in had they been diligent. It is an easy matter to detect lazy workers; their mates can point them out in any workshop or office without much difficulty.

In this short paper it is impossible to do more than give the faintest idea of the method of determining the just remuneration of labour in this complex state of society. Probably many questions will arise in the minds of the readers and many objections present themselves. In any case, let them try to solve the problem by the light of the command given us by justice, "Bear ye one another's burdens."

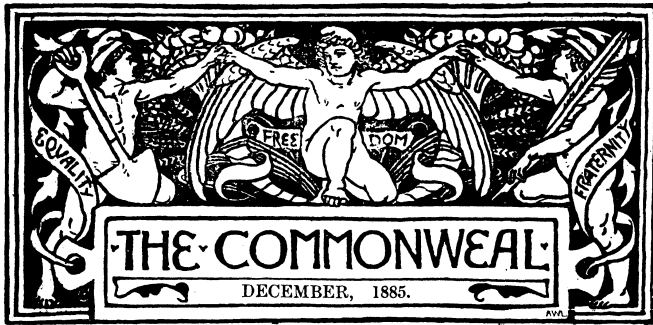
J. H. SMITH.

## The Swell "Cracksmen."

It is difficult to draw distinctions in infamy; but for bare-faced unblushing brigandage, probably the present Burmese war exceeds the previous exploits and excesses of that accomplished gang of ruffians—the British Amalgamated Company of Office-and-Market Hunters. The present little plot was ingeniously arranged. For some two or three years past the press has been persistently serving up accounts of alleged atrocities committed by King Theebaw on his cousins, or his uncles, or his aunts. An ingenuous outsider might have wondered why such a fuss was made about King Theebaw, knowing that few barbaric and semi-barbaric potentates treat their relations as kindly as they should. The said outsider might also have remarked on the comparative silence of the same press on the hideous barbarities, affecting not a petty kingdom, but a considerable portion of two continents, of which the Russian Czar is the responsible author. But to the observer practised in the ways of latter-day nineteenth century civilisation, the meaning was plain. Burmah was the next morsel which the "amalgamated company" had marked for their own. If we may believe a statement of Lord Dunraven's, the Anglo-Indian authorities were in such a hurry to "leave their damnable faces and begin," that they actually "egged on" the unfortunate king to insult the British embassy on the pretext that such insults would be favourably received. At all events, the band of thieves calling themselves the British Burmah Trading Company at the same time took to violating the contract for timber-cutting they had entered into with the king, and on being remonstrated with, raised the cry of "trade in danger." The response, of course, was prompt. An insolent ultimatum was despatched (just in order that forms might be complied with as far as possible) practically demanding the surrender of the country. Meanwhile troops were hurried up and the reply to this document was pronounced unsatisfactory even, on the admission of the Indian authorities themselves, before it had been translated. The Burmese reply, as it has since transpired, was as "dignified" and "conciliatory" a production as any European diplomatist could have concocted. But what did that matter? War, ruthless commercial war for annexation, had already been decided upon.

And what will the Burmese do now? Defend their territory doubtless. If they string up every representative of the British Burmah Trading Company at Mandalay, it will be no more than bare justice—indeed that they have not done this already, shows a magnanimity worthy of more deserving objects. But after all, what does it all come to? Be it Zululand, be it Afghanistan, be it the Soudan, be it Burmah, it all points one way, that these crimes will and must continue, as we have always said, until that huge structure of villainy and rottenness called the British Empire, is shivered to atoms.

E. BELFORD BAX.



All literary communications should be addressed to the Editors of the COMMONWEAL, 15 Farringdon Road, E.C. They must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication.

Rejected MSS. can only be returned if a stamped directed envelope is forwarded with them.

All business communications to be addressed to the Manager of the COMMONWEAL, 15 Farringdon Road, E.C. Business communications must not be sent to the Editors. All remittances should be made in Postal Orders or halfpenny stamps.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THE following leaflets have been issued by the League:—No. 1. "Why be Transported?" No. 2. "Down with the Socialists!" No. 3. "To the Radicals"; No. 4. "The Cause of Prostitution"; No. 5. "The Worker's Claims and 'Public Opinion'"; No. 6. "Tram-car Slavery: an Address to Tram-car Men and the Working Class in general." Copies sent to anyone on receipt of stamp for postage, and supplied for distribution at 2s. per 1,000.

NOTICE TO ALL SOCIALISTIC NEWSPAPERS.—The *Commonweal* will be regularly sent to all Socialistic Contemporaries throughout the world, and it is hoped that they on their side will regularly provide the Socialist League with their papers as they may appear.

J. BROADHOUSE.—Most unfortunately your letter has only just reached our hands as we go to press. Its consideration must be deferred until next number.

LIVERPOOL.—Anyone willing to form a Labour Emancipation League here is asked to communicate with Fred Willis, 49 Wood Street.

BEKANNTMACHUNG!—Genosse Theodor hält jeden Donnerstag abend einen Kursus für Elementar Unterricht in der englischen Sprache, woran alle Genossen welche derselben noch nicht mächtig sind, theil zunehmen eingeladen werden. Näheres beim Secretär, 13 Farringdon Road, E. C.

RECEIVED—England: Anarchist—Worker's Friend—Daylight (Norwich)—Christian Socialist—Church Reformer—National Review—Republican—Journal of Vigilance Association—Justice—To-Day. Belgium: Ni Dieu ni Maître—L'Insurgé. France: Cri du Peuple (daily)—La Revue Socialiste—La Question Sociale (Paris)—Le Socialiste (Paris). Greece: Harden (Athens). Germany: Neue Zeit (Stuttgart). Italy: La Question Social (Turin)—Il Paria (Ancona). Morocco: Almoghreb Al-aksa (Tangiers). New Zealand: Watchman. Portugal: O Campino—Voz do Operario—O Protesto Operario (Lisbon). Roumania: Drepturile Omului (daily, Bucharest). Serbia: Tchas (Belgrade). Spain: El Angel del Hogar—Revista Social (Barcelona)—Bandera Social (Madrid). Switzerland: Sozial Demokrat. U. S. A.: (New York): N. Y. Volkszeitung—Der Sozialist—Freiheit—Progress—John Swinton's Paper—Spread the Light. (Boston): Liberty—Woman's Journal—Index. Denver (Col.) Labor Inquirer—Chicago (Ill.) Alarm—Detroit (Mich.) Labor Leaf—Princeton (Mass.) Word—Cleveland (O.) Carpenter—Brattleboro (Vt.) Woman's Magazine; National Bulletin—San Francisco (Cal.) Chronicle—Stockton (Cal.) Mail—Petersburg (Ill.) Voice of Labor—New Haven (Conn.) Workmen's Advocate—St. Louis (Mo.) Die Parole—Kansas (Mo.) Sun—Pittsburg (Pa.) Labor Herald—Paterson (N. J.) Labor Standard—Baltimore (Md.) Labor Free Press—Valley Falls (Kan.) Lucifer.

SINCE last acknowledgment books for the library have been received from Lawie (Carlisle) and Lane.

#### Notice to Members.

Library and Reading Room.—All papers received by the Secretary have been sorted and filed and are at the disposal of members. The librarians, Nicoll and May Morris, attend on Mondays and Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m. for the purpose of exchanging books.

Choir.—The choir meet for practice every Friday evening at 8 o'clock.

Standing Committees.—Meet on Wednesdays at 7.30 p.m.

General Meeting.—On fourth Monday of the month at 8.30 p.m. Council meets an hour earlier.

Discussion Class.—This class, for members only, meets at Farringdon Hall every Sunday morning at 11.

SUBSCRIPTIONS will be received at the office of the *Commonweal* for the under-mentioned papers, or intending subscribers may remit direct:—The *Altruist*, a monthly paper, devoted to common property, united labour, mutual assistance and equal rights to all. 50 cents a year. A Longley, editor, 712 Chestnut Street, St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A.—The *Carpenter*, published monthly by the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, of America. Fifty cents a year post paid. P. J. McGuire, Lock Box 180, Cleveland, Ohio.—*John Swinton's Paper*. One dollar a year; three cents a copy. 21 Park Row, New York.—The *Labor Enquirer*, Official Organ of the Trades Assembly. Two dollars per year. J. R. Buchanan, editor. 368 Larimer Street, Denver, Colo., U.S.A.—The *Alarm*, a Socialistic weekly, published by the Working People's International Association. One dol. fifty cents per year; five cents per copy. Theodore Fricke, 107 Fifth Avenue, Chicago, Ill., U.S.A.—The *Labor Leaf*, published weekly by J. R. Burton, 50 Larned Street, West, Detroit, Mich., U.S.A. 50 cents a year.—The *Monthly Review*. Devoted to discussion of political, social, and general subjects. S. Hayes, 15 George's Place, North, Dublin. 1s. 6d. per year.—*Le Socialiste*. 17 Rue de Croissant, Paris. 5 francs per year.

#### AN APPEAL FOR THE CHILDREN.

It has been decided by the Council of the Socialist League that the beautiful old Pagan Festival that celebrated the death of darkness and new birth of light, is a very fit one for little Socialists to keep. We, too, want "little children to come unto us," and so we are going to give them a "Tree," a good romp, tea and cake, on Saturday, December 26th (Boxing Day), at our Hall, 13 Farringdon Road. Will friends help in the way of simple presents for the tree, and money to get the tree and the food? Any who are willing to help either with subscriptions, or work (or both) may write to Mrs. Wardle, 9 Charlotte Street, Bedford Square; May Morris, Kelmscott House, Hammersmith; Mrs. Lane, 38 Anisite Street, Bethnal Green Junction, E.; or to myself, 55 Great Russell Street, W.C.

ELEANOR MARX-AVELING.

#### TO OUR READERS.

THE *Commonweal* has now been in existence for eleven months and the editors think that at the end of this first volume they have some reason to congratulate the Socialist League on the support which its organ has received, and on the progress which it has made in the teeth of more difficulties than usually beset a young paper.

The editors with, they believe, the general assent of the League, have done their best to keep up the literary and educational quality of the journal, but within those lines have always been anxious to get as much variety as possible. They are glad to think that it is attracting young writers, and hope that this will go on growing, especially as all available talent will be needed when the paper takes its weekly form.

The editors appeal to those outside the Socialist party to subscribe to and read a paper which is the recognised organ of a school of thought and politics which they have no right to be indifferent to if they have any claim to be interested in the progress of humanity or the expression of free opinion; however small our beginning may be, they may be assured that it is the cloud no bigger than a man's hand which is destined to spread over the whole sky.

This number concludes Vol. I. of the *Commonweal*. It is thought best to make our first volume of 11 numbers, that subsequent volumes may run with the year. An Index for 1885 will be given away with each number of the January 1886 issue. Covers for binding the 1885 *Commonweal* can be obtained at the office, price 2s.

WILLIAM MORRIS.  
EDWARD AVELING.

#### FREILIGRATH'S "FREE PRESS."

(Translated by J. L. JOYNES.)

FIRMLY to his fellow-workers, "Mates," the master-printer said,  
"Lo, to meet to-morrow's signal, nothing need we now but lead—  
What, while here the type is handy! March to-morrow in your sets,  
But to-night for ammunition melt your metal alphabets!"

"Melting-pots are here in plenty, stoves replenished, coals renewed;  
Locked are all the doors that no one may be able to intrude.  
Come and set to work at once; let each man do his best to-night,  
That our freedom's manifesto may be brought at last to light."

Straight he throws a case of letters in the furnace at his feet;  
Bubble "diamond" and "long primer," melted in the fervent heat;  
Bubble "Romans" in the brazier, here "italics," there "brevier,"  
Sturdy type that needs no more the Censor of the Press to fear.

Poured into the moulds for bullets hisses high the metal then—  
Through the livelong autumn night are working twenty honest men;  
Deep they breathe among the cinders, melt, and rake, and stir about,  
Till to smooth and heavy bullets all the type is melted out.

Packed away in bags and baskets lies the stock upon the ground,  
Ready to be used at dawn, and hot and scalding handed round:  
Sooth, a stirring morning journal! Ne'er have critics seen before  
Such a stern and bold defiance pass the poor old office door.

Lo, the master folds his hands, and knits his brow, and speaks again:  
"That it must be force and warfare causes all true workers pain.  
Yet, since nothing else is left—no other means—no other way,  
Only in the shape of bullets can our type be free to-day."

"True it is that Force shall fail, that Truth shall crowned and conquering  
smile;

But they trod her underfoot, and flung her into durance yile.  
Well, so be it! Down the musket let the ramrod drive ye in,  
E'en with that composing-ruler ready still to fight and win!

"Fiercely fly against their forces; pierce their frowning castle walls;  
Sing a stinging song of freedom, hurtling through their high-built halls;  
Smite the slaves, and slay the hirelings; give an honest ounce of lead  
To the fool who drew the wrath of this free press upon his head!

"Homeward to the true free press returning after strife and strain,  
Soon from corpse and wreck and ruin we will dig ye out again;  
Shape ye into sharp-cut letters, be ye ne'er so smooth and round—  
Ha! a knock upon the door! and hark! I hear the trumpet sound!

"There a shot!—And there another!—'Tis the signal!—Tramp of feet,  
Shock and sound of hoofs and horses wake and shake the sleeping street!  
Here the bullets! there the muskets! Quick we go! The noise is near!—  
Hark! the rattle of the volley! Revolution's self is here.

#### LESSONS IN SOCIALISM.

##### VII.—CONSTANT AND VARIABLE CAPITAL RATE OF SURPLUS VALUE.

Thus far, in our analysis of Marx' "Das Kapital," we have tried to make clear the meaning of the following fundamental terms: commodity—a product of human labour not to be consumed by the actual producer; use-value—that property of a body that satisfies a human want; exchange-value—the proportion in which a use-value exchanges with other use-values; value—the human labour embodied in any commodity. We have further studied the various formula for exchange of equivalents, and the important formula  $M-C-M'$ , for capitalistic circulation. We have seen that  $M' = M + \Delta M$ , and that  $\Delta M$ , or the excess of returning  $M'$  over advanced  $M$ , is surplus-value. Labour-power has been defined as the sum of human faculties that put into action can produce use-values; labour, as the realisation of labour-

power. The equivalent of the means of subsistence of the labourer and of those absolutely dependent on him is produced by him before he begins to produce surplus-value. The essentials for production have been shown to be labour, means of labour (tools, machinery, etc.), and objects on which to work. Finally, a concrete example was taken by which the general method of surplus-value making was shown. The source of capital is unpaid labour.

Let us again concentrate attention on the process of production, and its three essentials. Labour working through certain means of labour on certain objects, a product results, and if this is not consumed by the labourer himself, this product is a commodity. Now, in this process, labour plays a double part, and from the confusion of its two functions many mistakes and much deception of oneself and of others arise. First, labour transmits value (we always use this word in its technical sense); second, it creates value. It transmits to the product the value of such means of labour as are actually consumed, and also the value of such raw material as may be used as object of labour.

But labour also adds a new value, not in existence before. This new value is general, not special. It is due to the labour having lasted a definite time—not to any specially useful character of the labour. The special character of the labour only determines the nature of the values that are transmitted of the means and of the objects. Or we may put the same very important fact in this way. Labour has a two-fold nature. By one of its properties (quality) it transmits, by the other (quantity) it creates value. It is only by this latter, that any creation of surplus-value can be effected.

Surplus-value, which to the orthodox political economist is a re-appearance of a value previously advanced, is to the Socialist school the excess of the value (not of use or exchange-value) of the product over the value of the three factors of that product—viz., labour, artificial means of production (machinery and the like), objects that are raw material. Or again, it is the excess of capital received over capital advanced.

We are now in a position to understand the two phrases, constant capital and variable capital. These must not, on any account, be confounded with the two phrases of the orthodox economists—fixed capital and circulating capital.

Constant capital is capital that is transformed into raw material (object) and artificial means of labour. Variable capital is capital that is transformed into labour. The former cannot vary. All the value, as we are ceaselessly repeating, of raw material and means, is passed on by labour, in its qualitative aspect, to the product. The latter can vary because the commodity in which it is invested, labour-power, can produce surplus-value.

Fixed capital and circulating capital are phrases of the orthodox. Fixed capital may continue to perform its functions for a long period and through a series of repeated actions. Machinery, buildings, railroads are the stock examples. Circulating capital is consumed by a single use. The food of the labourer and raw materials are examples. It will be noticed that these are not capital in our sense of the word. Machinery, buildings, railroads, are means of labour. Capital may be transformed into them. But they are not capital. Food for the labourer, again, is a means of subsistence. Capital may be transformed into this. But the food is not capital.

The capital employed in the making of what is called "fixed capital" is our constant capital. There is no source of surplus-value here. The capital employed in the purchase of the means of subsistence of the labourer, *i.e.*, of certain "circulating capital," is a case of variable capital. Here surplus-value becomes possible.

But the second example of "circulating capital" shows how the phrase is not even indirectly parallel to our variable capital. That example was raw material. This comes under the orthodox definition of circulating capital, for it is consumed as raw material by a single use. But it comes under our category of constant capital. For as all its value is transmitted to the product, from it no surplus-value can arise.

It must be clearly understood that variable capital is a definite quantity; it represents a definite amount of former pre-expended human labour. It is definite to begin with. But in the process of production, functioning labour-power takes its place and surplus-value may result.

Two new formulæ may now be used to simplify and to make memorable the points just reached. Let C stand for the capital used in a process of production. Let C' represent the value of the product. Let c. c. represent constant capital, and v. c. variable capital. Let s. v. finally stand for surplus value ( $\Delta M$ ). Then  $C = c. c. + v. c.$ ; *i.e.*, the constant capital used in a process of production + a certain quantity of variable capital (in labour).

But  $C' = c. c. + v. c. + s. v.$ ; *i.e.*, the value of the product = the constant and variable capital advanced + the surplus value produced by the labour into which the variable capital, v. c., has been turned. Of these, v. c. and s. v. only are created in this particular transaction. C. c. existed before, and its value is only transmitted to the product by labour.

The labourer, then, produces first his own means of subsistence or their equivalent. A certain part of the working day is necessary for this. That part is necessary working-time (n. w. t.). Necessary labour is the labour given out in that time, *i.e.*, in the production of the means of subsistence for the labourer.

All the time in the working day beyond this necessary working-time is surplus working-time. All the labour given out in that time is surplus labour. This is the labour that creates surplus-value.

The rate of surplus value is found by dividing the surplus-value by the variable capital. Constant capital has nothing to do with surplus-

value. Hence, the rate of surplus-value is represented thus:  $\frac{s. v.}{v. c.}$  Or it may be represented thus:  $\frac{s. w. t.}{n. w. t.}$ ; *i.e.*, surplus-working time divided by necessary working-time. Or again, thus:  $\frac{s. l.}{n. l.}$ ; *i.e.*, surplus labour divided by necessary labour. These fractions, all of which express the rate of surplus-value, give the key to the degree of exploitation of labour-power that is going on. Not to the amount of that exploitation; only to the degree.

For example. Suppose 5 hours are necessary to reproduce the value of the means of subsistence of the labourer, and that he works also 5 hours of surplus-working time. Then  $\frac{s. w. t.}{n. w. t.}$  or the rate of surplus-value or the degree of exploitation of labour-power =  $\frac{5}{5} = 1$ . Again, if n. w. t. and s. w. t. are each = 6 hours, the rate =  $\frac{6}{6} = 1$ . But in the second case the amount of exploitation is greater by  $\frac{1}{5}$  than in the former.

Now the ordinary calculation of rate of interest and profit generally is based, not on the variable capital (v. c.) but on the total capital advanced C.  $\frac{s. v.}{C.}$  or  $\frac{s. v.}{c. c. + v. c.}$  is the expression for this, and this is clearly less than the true calculation  $\frac{s. v.}{v. c.}$ .

Twofold nature of labour	...	Transmits value of raw material and means of labour. Creates value.
Surplus value	...	Excess of value of product over value of its three factors.
Constant capital	...	Capital that is transformed into raw material and means of labour.
Variable capital	...	Capital that is transformed into labour.
$C = c. c. + v. c.$	...	Capital advanced = constant capital + variable capital.
$C' = c. c. + v. c. + s. v.$	...	Capital received = constant capital + variable value + surplus value.
Necessary working-time	...	Time necessary for production of labourer's means of subsistence.
Surplus working-time	...	Time in working day beyond necessary working time.
Rate of surplus-value	...	$\frac{s. v.}{v. c.}$ or $\frac{s. w. t.}{n. w. t.}$ or $\frac{s. l.}{n. l.}$
Ordinary calculation	...	$\frac{s. v.}{C.}$ <i>i.e.</i> , surplus value divided by capital advanced. Too low a calculation.

EDWARD AVELING.

## WHO ARE THE POOR?

TALKING the other day to an agricultural labourer who had seen his best days, and who, notwithstanding that he had worked all his life, had nothing to show for it except crooked limbs and distorted body, I asked him what the Squire gave him in return for the services that he was continually rendering.

"I get twelve shillings a week," he answered.

I said, "What do you do with that twelve shillings?"

"I get my clothes and my food, and my tobacco and my beer."

"Well now," I said, "who made your clothes and your food, and your tobacco and your beer? Did the Squire have anything to do with the making of them?"

"No, I suppose not," he answered, "I suppose it was other working men like myself."

"Exactly," I said. "True, they were paid their wages for making these things, but their wages were used in buying the very things that they themselves had made. The Squire doesn't give you anything at all really. What can he give you? What does he make? Does he make anything that you want? Does he make anything that *anybody* wants?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," replied the labourer; "I suppose we working chaps could do without him altogether and the likes o' him, and just exchange things amongst ourselves."

"Of course you could do without him and without every person that doesn't work; for what would be missing if they were away? Why, nothing except idlers and frivolars. Could he do without you, though? Who is it that built his mansion, and laid out his park, his gardens; who provides him with food, with coal, with clothes, with gold watches and chains and studs? What does he have that you and such as you have not made? He doesn't give you anything for working for him, he can't give you anything; for he has got nothing. He is as poor as a man can be, and when you and such as you realise that this is so, the reign of violence and anarchy and fraud will have ended."

There's another large class of people just as poor as the squires. A little conjuring, however, has deluded people into the belief that they are very rich; and that delusion, backed by a good deal of physical or police force, seems to serve almost as well as if they were really rich.

Here is a large factory—suppose we take John Bright's, for example. It is full of ingenious machines and all sorts of wonderful contrivances for making labour more and more efficient. Well, now, all this belongs to John Bright and all the stuff that is made by these machines and by the people in the factory belongs to John Bright. Why should they not belong to him? He has bought all these machines, he pays all these people their wages—*keeps them*, many people would say—and he paid the men that built the factory or rather factories.

To begin with the factory, which you say belongs to him because he paid the men that built it. How could he pay the men that built it? He saved money, you say, and was thus enabled to keep them in food

and clothing while they were building for him. He might have saved money—indeed he might have accumulated a pile of gold as big as the factory itself; yet he might have been perfectly powerless to keep these men while they were building. These men were not kept by John Bright at all while they were making his factory; they were kept by their fellow-workmen, the produce of whose labour they consumed. That factory could have been built easily enough without John Bright's or anybody else's money; it could certainly not have been built without the bricks (produce of labour), the timber (hewn and carried by labour), the tools that the builders used (made by labour), their food and clothing (also the result of labour). Even the gold and silver that John Bright may have given these builders were obtained by labour.

As to paying his workpeople their wages, or *keeping them*, as people say, how can John Bright or any other man keep a thousand or more people? Can he make enough food and clothing and provide shelter for so many people? It is absurd to suppose such a thing for a moment.

We are told that the produce of the labour of his workpeople belongs to John Bright because the machines that they use and the buildings that they work in are his. They are not his; they were all made by workpeople, and the implements that they were made with and the buildings that they were made in were made by workpeople. True, he enjoys the possession of them; but how is that possession maintained? By force. If any one doubt this, he or she has only to imagine the effect of withdrawing the police. Let the police force be withdrawn, let it disappear from this country or any other civilised country to-day, and to-morrow there would be no such possessions as those we have been considering. R.

## AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCES.

### II.

(Continued from page 87.)

STATE-ASSISTED immigration to Victoria has practically ceased since the year 1873. There have been no arrivals at all under this heading since 1880, and only some 300—a moiety being domestic servants—between the dates mentioned. The reason that rendered superfluous any measures for increasing the working population of the colony by fomenting emigration from the old country, was the fact that the system of free emigration being in full swing in South Australia, New South Wales, Queensland, and New Zealand, a large proportion of the immigrants—discontented with the conditions of their existence in the particular colony to which they had been accredited, and hearing on every side of the superior attractions of Victoria—of their own accord, and without any expense to the Government, continued to make their way thither.

There is no question but that, if Boston is the "hub" of the United States, and London of the United Kingdom, Melbourne occupies that proud position amongst the capitals and towns of Australasia. It is a fact pretty generally admitted by all, save New South Welshmen, that Victoria and Melbourne are as far ahead of all the other Antipodean colonies and cities in regard to wealth and intelligence, civilisation and culture, art, learning, and the humanities generally, as England and London are ahead of them.

Goodness knows that this accredited pre-eminence is not of a very exalted nature! Of the superiority of the climate of Victoria to that of the neighbouring colonies on the Australian Continent, there never was, or could be, any question, and if it was not for the plague of flies and mosquitoes in the summer months, and occasional hot winds and sand storms, the physical conditions of existence would be unrivalled in any part of the world. In fact, it is the only colony at the Antipodes barring New Zealand, in which an Englishman can engage in outdoor labour with comfort and safety.

Of course, little Tasmania, which is now bidding for immigrants, is always considered and treated as Victoria over the water, and is, in many ways, one of its most delightful provinces for touring, but not for money-making. The native male population go to the mainland to work in the summer time; hence there will always be a dearth of labour there at the most critical periods, unless those who are ignorant of the real nature of the case can be enticed from Europe. I think the Government is now wisely trying to attract Germans.

The smallest of the Australian colonies, containing some fifty-seven million acres—rather smaller than Great Britain—the attractiveness of Victoria has become so great that it is, to-day, the most populous of them all, claiming about 40 per cent. of the whole of the inhabitants of the continent, some 950,000 all told, a third of whom reside within a 10 mile radius of Melbourne. Here, then, is the "fountain and origin of the evil";—centralisation in its most acute and dangerous form, and every day increasing in intensity, while it is attributable to exactly the same causes that are ruining England. I refer to the utter impossibility for those destitute of capital to make a living out of the land, or for existing farmers to employ labour, other than that of their own families, to any extent.

Fancy London and its environs with a population of ten millions, three-fourths of them having to depend on daily labour for the means of subsistence, and no foreign trade for any of their manufactured goods! Still, if things here are allowed to drift much further, we shall, without doubt, be ere long, in a position analogous to what is really that of Melbourne to-day. No; whatever the influx of labour to London, we should be better off, for have we not a poor law and workhouses, and is it not ordained in England that no man, woman, or child need starve? There is no poor law at present in any of the Australasian colonies, and you have no alternative but starvation, as I hinted in my last article, if you cannot make wages or stimulate and enlist philanthropy on your behalf. Wisdom proverbially comes from the East, and, did a workhouse exist in Victoria affording the comforts and luxuries of the metropolitan institutions, for six months in the year every cadger and "sundowner" would desert the "Wallaby Track"—or abandon "tramping"—to avail himself of the proffered shelter.

Let me here, once for all, insist on the fact that life in a London workhouse is luxury compared with the lot of the agricultural labourer in Australia. Space forbids me to depict his existence, but, as this class of immigrant is now being extensively advertised for, I think I ought to make this bald statement, and sound a note of warning before I proceed further.

I will now treat of the means devised by the Victorian legislature, from time to time, to cope with a plethora of labour, and the exigencies of a population entirely devoid of capital, and so unable to start in business on

their own account. There were, in the first instance, two classes only to be dealt with. The one, a somewhat dilapidated and incongruous assemblage, composed principally of unsuccessful gold diggers, or those who had dissipated their "piles" in debauchery or speculation. These had, in many instances, in former years been associated with the upper crust now luxuriating in governmental or mercantile circles, and cognisant of the antecedents of their more fortunate mates, oftentimes might, if slighted, stir up dirty water. At any rate they were electors, and in a country where manhood suffrage and payment of members is decreed, and all place and patronage emanate from members of Parliament, voters have to be kept sweet.

The other was the crowd of artisans and labourers in their prime, who had come to some other colony from the old country, and emigrated thence to Melbourne. The "Gordian Knot" of the Victorian labour question of to-day—the town-born progeny of the working man, the redoubtable "Larrikin," corresponding in great measure with the "Hoodlum" of America—was not, at the time of which I am speaking, as yet to the fore. It is his appearance on the scene—I will not say his competition in the labour-market, for, though he likes to eat and drink, he does not like work—that has done more to dislocate the nicely-adjusted balance of Victorian State Socialism than any inherent flaw in the system, or extraneous agency. In a word he won't go into the country, or bush, to work, and as there is no army or navy to recruit, he is superfluous in town.

Perhaps I ought to explain the derivation of the word. "What are they?" said the magistrate to an Irish policeman who had three or four young roughts in custody. "Shure, sor, they was jist larrikin [larking] about there," was his reply; and his description of the individuals has ever since been used to designate the class.

Victoria had by this time fairly earned the *soubriquet* of the working man's paradise, and, to keep up the credit of the name, it was necessary that a gigantic system of public works should be inaugurated, so as to provide employment for all who required it. The real "hard graft"—principally railroads and waterworks in country districts and splendid public buildings in the town—was let to contractors at a price which left an ample profit to all concerned, and they employed the able-bodied and immigrant population, and got as much work out of them in return for their wages as they could. The "Government stroke" proper, the somewhat optimistic division of time comprised in the couplet—

"Eight hours' work, eight hours' play,  
Eight hours' sleep, and eight bob a-day,"

by rights only applies to public works of a simple and easy character, such as levelling and preparing land for building purposes, road making, drainage and dredging operations, in the vicinity of the metropolis, where the Treasury is paymaster, and there is no subletting to contractors. Here the only intermediaries between employer and employed are the Government engineers and superintendents, with gangers and overseers under them.

On these works it is only worn-out labourers who are electors, and, as a rule, supporters of the party in power, that are engaged. It is the determined persistence of their sons—the "Larrikins"—who, having attained the age of 21 years, are, equally with their sires, citizens and voters, to share their easy tasks rather than tackle the "hard graft," provided by the contractors, that has, within the last year or two, so rudely disturbed the traditional régime of the "Government stroke." In reality all Government works initiated in and around Melbourne are intended for the sole benefit and relief of the broken-down electorate, and to supply the place of a poor-law, without incurring the stigma attaching to such a disgraceful necessity. They are generally gross political jobs, designed at the same time that they relieve those in want, to subserve the interests of some ring, or private individual of position and influence. They are sometimes as purposeless in their character as the proverbial "digging a hole to fill it up again."

For instance, I was employed for more than six months in spreading a "silt"—or mud dredged from the bottom of the river in order to deepen the channel—over a sandy waste, with the very remote prospect of the land being ultimately sold for building purposes. Owing to the engineer having commenced operations in the wrong quarter, the drifting sand covered the made ground up again almost as fast as we spread the stuff. Nevertheless, in the face of this palpable mistake which, from the very first, was apparent, the work was still gaily proceeding when I left Australia. My mate—we worked in pairs, two men to a truck of silt—told me that he was once engaged for months in filling up certain hollows and uneven ground, on the same common, by trucking sand from some dunes two miles distant. I remarked that, when they had finished the job, I presumed they had to cart it back again, as there was no trace of any filling in with sand then apparent. "No," he replied, "we did not have to take it back; the wind did that!"

Another most important feature connected with the favourite Government work in Victoria, is that, as a rule, none but Irish need apply for it. When I first joined my gang, I thought they received my assertion that I was to be made a "boss" or ganger—he gets a third more wages and has only to look on and keep the time and not work—on the first vacancy that occurred, with incredulity. The remark was made that I was the "wrong colour" for such eligible promotion. They were right, for, as far as I could judge, Irishmen, either crippled or averse from work, were invariably selected for the easy and well-paid billets. The Australian colonies, but more especially Victoria, are "run" in the interest of Irish settlers, just as surely as parts of New Zealand are in those of Scotchmen.

I think this is a significant fact at the present moment, when we reflect how the home Government is, from political considerations, every day more and more influenced by the Farnellites. The "squattocracy" and principal contractors and plutocrats of the colony are, in great measure, of Hibernian extraction. This makes the conduct of the Victorian Legislature in bowing down to Irishmen, more excusable than that of the home Government.

Such a system of State employment as I have briefly sketched is, of course, only possible when foreign loans can be negotiated to "pay the piper," the colonists being far too "fly" to subscribe the needful for such a purpose. Melbourne floated into existence and splendour on a tide of gold, and, when it began to ebb, the British investor readily responded to the calls made upon him for "further developing the magnificent potentialities of the colony;" in simpler words "for keeping the labouring population employed."

The willing milk-cow freely gave the milk, whenever called upon, until the spring of 1883, when, a debt of some 28 millions having been incurred, the London Stock Exchange decided that a line must be drawn, and no fresh loans granted to Victoria to supply broken-down political supporters with employment. Only such amounts were countenanced as were absolutely necessary to meet existing liabilities as they fell due.

The result of this appalling decision is well typified by a cartoon which appeared, about that time, in the *Melbourne Punch*. A sign-post at the

bridge over the Murray river, which separates Victoria from New South Wales, points one arm towards Melbourne and the "workingman's paradise," the other towards New South Wales and Sydney. A stream of artisans and labourers, with their wallets and baskets on their backs, and their tools on their shoulders, have all got their faces set in the direction of the latter.

The New South Welshmen now took up the loan business with a will, and, not having yet eaten their cake or disposed of their lands available for settlement, after the fashion of the improvident younger colony, have been able to pile up some additional 15 millions—of course for "railway construction to open out the magnificent resources of the country"—within the last two years. But wool and wheat and copper have been steadily falling in price, and the sheep have been, and still are, dying in millions owing to the drought that has now lasted for some three years, and a great deal of "hogging," by means of "taradiddles" in the capitalistic press—emanating principally from the Agent-General—was required to float the recently-placed loan of five and a half millions. Meantime poor Victoria can only pitifully whine for "Australian federation," and for throwing their "magnificent resources," loans, loaning power and all, into hotch-potch, but New South Wales doesn't see it.

Space warns me that I must conclude and reserve further comments on the land question and Antipodean borrowings, for my next article. I will therein state my grounds for believing that the final breakdown of Capitalism will be attributable to the 300 millions British investors are reported to have placed in Australasian securities, and that the social revolution which we all so ardently pray for, will come from the East, its signal gun being the first shot fired by England in a war with some European Power.

I cannot refrain from appending a quotation from Sala's letter to the *Daily Telegraph* (Oct. 14th), and asking why the distressed South Australians—acclimatised as they are and used to colonial work—do not emigrate to New South Wales or Queensland or New Zealand, or some of the colonies where our philanthropists are always saying labour is so much wanted. These most desirable hands are already, practically speaking, on the spot, and I feel sure the South Australian Government would provide passages for any number that would emigrate. It is as follows: "On landing [at Port Adelaide] I was told that terrible depression was prevalent throughout South Australia in general and Adelaide in particular. Frantic land speculations had ended in a financial collapse. Wheat and copper were drugs in the market, and on her cereals and her copper the prosperity of South Australia chiefly depended. Distress too of the acutest type was rife, I was told, at Adelaide. Soup kitchens had been established for the sustenance of the hungry; hundreds of able-bodied men were out of work, and great meetings of the unemployed had been held to enforce on the Government the necessity of at once starting relief works. Of course the dissatisfaction of the unemployed had been accompanied by a fierce outcry against bringing any more labour into the colony, etc., etc."

How obliged the borrowing colonies must be to G. A. S. for thus inadvertently letting the "cat out of the bag"! LUCIFER.

## Correspondence.

### COMPETITIVE DISHONESTY.

It is easy for any one in the upper middle-class to see the encouragement capitalism gives to wrong-doing. An intimate acquaintance of mine having a lucrative agency in the midland counties, says it is impossible to do without bribery, and shows me how the system works. He obtained an order from the master of a large factory, notwithstanding the unwillingness of the manager. Next time, he was answered that his wares did not suit; but the manager, whose salary was £600 yearly, secretly said he bought only when he received commission. At another place, on failing to get a second order from the master, this traveller bribed the manager at the rate of forty shillings a ton, and raised the price accordingly. He knows enough of capitalists to assert that their complaints about small profits are in a great measure false. Fifteen shillings are the full cost of making what he sells at £5. Oil for machinery he buys at 11d. and sells to manufacturers at 2s. 4d. £30 "worth" of belting this middle-man obtains for £20, whereas "favoured" customers pay £29 5s. A clergyman strengthens our opinion that, under capitalism, wares are often badly made, and machinery, instead of serving the workers, places them at the mercy of the monopolists. One of his congregation received an order for several hundred boxes for export. On expressing his inability to make them at the price stated, he was told that they need not be well made, that, indeed, they would be satisfactory if they held together until delivered to the natives, even if they then dropped to pieces. A nail-manufacturer states that profits and business are as good as formerly, a dull appearance being caused by the improvement in machinery, which yields a larger turn-out with fewer "hands," depriving the workers of employment. A chain-maker tells me of a manufacturer who pays only 2s. 10d. for drawing the silver and entirely making a dozen bracelets. The men cannot get more than 9s. in a week. Men of his calling are forced to sell their labour so cheaply because there has been little demand for it during several years, as they suffer first from trade-depression.

R. F. E. WILLIS.

### "PETER PAYS FOR PAUL."

A correspondent who writes asking for further information as to the League, etc., says in his letter:

"I am utterly disgusted with present social arrangements, and think hardly any change could be for the worse. I am a small capitalist myself and cannot help loathing the means by which I secure my "living," as our existence is called. My customers are good and bad. The good I have to take advantage of to make up for the bad, who often take advantage of me. My profits from good-hearted men are larger than from low mean scrubs whose only aim in life is to hoard up the dollars. Miserable wretches! What does it profit a man if he gain all the wealth in the universe, if he mislive his life?"

### JUSTICE.

57 Lansdown Road, Oldham, Oct. 17th, 1885.

Will the editors of the *Commonweal* notify to the Oldham and Manchester comrades that I never asked for any assistance from the Social Democratic Federation for paying £1 16s. 9d. fine and costs imposed by the Oldham bench of magistrates on me for attempting to hold a Socialist meeting in that town?

The notice in *Justice* of the 22nd of August in Answers to Correspondents, bearing the name of John Oldman, is misleading, and I have asked the editor of *Justice* to make the correction, which he has not done, up till to-day's date.—Yours fraternally,

JOHN OLDMAN.

[Omitted from our last issue inadvertently.]

## AN INQUIRY.

I see in a recent number of the *Commonweal* that the "Socialist League as a body does not concern itself with theological dogma." How is it, then, that we find the subject of Atheism cropping up so often in the speeches and writings of persons who profess interest in the progress of Socialism? Is not any honest opinion entitled to respect, unless, indeed, it leads to interference with the equal rights of others? I have been told that the speeches of Socialists consist mainly in denunciations of everybody and everything. Now is it not the system which is at fault and not individuals necessarily, and are not all classes more or less victims?

## LITERARY NOTICES.

"Revolutionary Rhymes and Songs for Socialists." This is a valuable addition to popular revolutionary literature. It is a collection of 15 poems not otherwise readily accessible and is published by T. Binning at 13 Farringdon Road. It should certainly command a very large sale, as it supplies a long and much felt want.

H. H. S.

"Socialism at St. Stephens, 1869-1885." A Speech by the Earl of Wemyss, Liberty and Property Defence League, 4 Westminster Chambers.—We are not a comic paper, as that comic body the Liberty and Property Defence League seem to think. But as that collection of humourists evidently believes that its latest Merry Andrew, the Earl of Wemyss, knows something of Socialism, we can forgive it any small blunder in the face of this gigantic one. For those of our readers who enjoy a laugh we can conscientiously recommend this production. Its definitions of Socialism are alone worth the trouble of borrowing the book from some obliging Liberty and Property Defence Leaguer. We should not give 4d. for it. *Punch* can be had for 1d. less and *July* for half the price of the Wemyssian joke.

E. A.

## EXIT MR. SAUNDERS.

The appeal of Lewis Lyons against the sentence of two months' hard labour imposed by Mr. Saunders at the Thames police court for an alleged assault upon constable Brind at one of the Dod Street free-speech meetings, ended in accordance with everyone's expectation. Lyons's conviction was quashed without the Middlesex magistrates deeming it necessary to hear the defence. Mr. Edlin, the Assistant-Judge of the Middlesex Sessions, presided. There were about half-a-dozen magistrates present, and the trial took place at the Guildhall, Westminster. The counsel were: Mr. William Thompson for Lyons, Mr. Mead for the Treasury, by whom Mr. Saunders's conviction was upheld.

Only three witnesses were called for the prosecution. Inspector Young was judiciously withheld, as his evidence would have entirely upset that of the other police witnesses. After Brind's examination and cross-examination, it was at once apparent that the conviction would be quashed. The man wriggled and twisted, but he was unable to tell a consistent story; his evidence completely broke down.

Mr. Edlin said the Bench had no hesitation in quashing the conviction, and Lyons was at once freed from the jealous attention of the jailer who was hovering like a bird of prey in his vicinity. Great were the congratulations which he received from the host of witnesses who were waiting in the corridor without to give evidence in his favour, many of whom incurred pecuniary loss by attending.

Mr. Thompson made an application for costs. The Assistant Judge stated that it was not usual to grant costs in these cases. This is a delightful illustration of our social arrangements. Without friends, Lyons at this moment would be working out his two months. With friends his conviction was proved publicly to be most unjust. Nevertheless his reputation suffered temporary injury; he was associated in penal labour with felons; he lost his situation; his comrades, poor men all, were put to enormous and unnecessary inconvenience; and this is the price at which by the law of England, a man was enabled to prove his innocence of a most reckless and unfounded charge!

Sincere thanks are due to the Free Speech Vigilance-Committee by whom the costs of the prosecution were borne.

LEX.

## THE PALL MALL GAZETTE CASE.

THE present termination of what is called the *Pall Mall Gazette* case calls for a word or two of comment. The important points thus far are that by the publication of the horrible facts in relation to child-prostitution, a certain distinct shock has been given to society; that this shock is not merely a moral but a social one; that the attention of thousands has again been called to the rotten state of our civilisation under which men are forced to prostitute their labour-power and women and children at once their labour-power and their sexual natures.

The comments of the press on the matter are of the to-be-expected character. Because certain men and women are sent to prison, therefore nothing exists of the evils that have been described. This is, of course, false, and probably every newspaper writer who has made the statement, knew it to be false. The Reports of the Lords' Commission bear witness to the fact that child-prostitution is in full swing in our midst.

E. A.

## RECORD OF THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT.

WITHIN the last few days two murders—murders the more foul and hideous in that they were committed in cold blood and after the sanguinary farce of "legal" trials and "legal" sentences—have been perpetrated by the Governments of England and of Germany. Louis Riel and Julius Lieske have been murdered—the one by the "free English," the other by the despotic German Government—to satisfy the insensate cry for revenge of a cowardly and frightened ruling class. One hardly knows which feeling is uppermost—shame and horror that such things can be, or absolute bewilderment at the idiocy of the Governments that thus help to dig their own graves. Germany will not easily forget Julius Lieske. And it requires no prophetic vision to foresee "Canadian difficulties" ahead.

To the details of Riel's case I need only refer here. All my readers remember the rising of the "half-breeds"—driven to this revolt, be it borne in mind, by the terrible wrongs under which they suffer. These wrongs no one has denied. Indeed, a pretence at redressing some of the more crying ones has been made. And yet the man who helped to tell the world what these wrongs were, whose only crime was that he took the only means in his power to help his people—this man has been done to death. At his trial he never faltered. It was not he who set up a plea of "insanity"—he declared that if to love his people, if to wish to redress their wrongs were insanity, then he was insane, but not otherwise. His death was brave and calm. His memory will live in the hearts of his people—and French Canadians will be ready to hold out a hand to the United States whenever the States may feel disposed to include Canada in the Union.

But monstrous as is the murder of Riel, that of Julius Lieske outdoes it in infamy—for here we have a man murdered for a "crime" he has not committed, and simply as a "warning example." In the August number of the *Commonweal* I gave an account of his trial, and I refer my readers to that. In addition to the facts given there I have only these to add. Firstly, it has now been indubitably proved that the chief "witness" against Lieske, one Mrs. Camphausen, was not only an altogether unreliable witness, but that she was in the pay of the police. I have not space here to give details, but German-reading friends will find them

