

THE COMMONWEAL

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

NOTES ON NEWS.

"FAIR words make fools fain," and the fools of the world have been cackling like mad over the rescript of the German Emperor. As was said last week in this column, all that this most philanthropic emperor did was to throw an anchor to windward against the coming gale. Well! its holding qualities have been overtried even by the passing gust of the present elections, and the ship of empire has been driven a good deal nearer the rocks. Even taking them at the lowest estimate, and allowing for the doubtful nature of a good part of the Socialism which was concerned in them, the German elections mark an immense advance in the Socialism which can be open and avowed in Germany; and though what they mean in the way of more advanced but unavowed Socialism can only be guessed, it must also be very large.

As will be seen from the agenda-paper given in another column, the Labour Conference Under Imperial and Royal Auspices is not going to progress alarmingly. The only points in which the programme touches the question of the regulation of the hours of labour of adult males are connected with work in mines. The Conference is to discuss the "limitation of the shifts in peculiarly unhealthy mines," and a restriction of the output of coal by an international agreement for a more general restriction on the hours of miners' work. It is curious to note that female mine-labour was the first kind of adult labour interfered with in England, and the precedent so formed was soon applied to factories. There can be little doubt that the same process will be repeated both here and on the Continent once that male adults have been dealt with.

The *Pall Mall* must, of course, come in with a patriotic note:

"The other points in the Berlin programme are all matters of ancient history in the factory legislation of this country. Our factory laws, in spite of one or two curious inconsistencies and deficiencies, regulate the labour of women and children far more effectively than any similar laws in other countries. No English child may go to work under ten years of age; children from ten to thirteen are half-timers; 'young persons' from thirteen to eighteen, and all women, are prohibited from working more than 56½ hours a-week in a textile, and more than 60 in a non-textile, factory. If the German Emperor can persuade the Reichstag to impose limits as close as these on the labour of the female and juvenile operatives of the Fatherland he will do more than the most sanguine Socialist yet dares to hope for."

If you emphasise the *yet* in that last sentence, it will bear a meaning to which we can agree: the Emperor is not yet reduced to sacrificing the capitalist in order to save himself. "Hunger must be great when wolves eat one another."

"CALCUTTA, Wednesday.—The Bombay Millowners' Association proposes to stop working eight days each month. Three or four mills are likely to stop altogether for the present. The proposal to work short time is due to over-production, the China market being found to be glutted.

"CALCUTTA, Friday.—At the annual meeting of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to-day, it was stated that the Jute Mill and Press owners strongly opposed the new Factory Bill. The President said that both employers and employed would be united in opposition to any change in their existing relations. Nothing in India called for an alteration in the law."

"They that are bound must obey" is somewhere near the explanation of the "unity" with their masters which the employed are displaying in opposition to "any changes in their existing relations." Eight compulsory days of idleness in a month, not holidays, for all, and chronic idleness for many, with hunger and misery thrown in as a make-weight, are the boons which benevolent millowners have been conferring on their hands; who, if they are not as cravenly contented as their English fellows, must be anxious to "change existing relations" with the aid of a rope.

Here is another move:

"The London Trades Council have issued a manifesto to the trades and labour organisations of London, calling attention to the urgent necessity for every branch of industry to be 'not only well organised in itself, but also to be associated with all other bodies having for their object the general elevation of labour.' It is stated that the disputes which took place during the past year have increased the membership of many existing societies, and

infused a desire for union among workmen who had hitherto been without any organisation whatever, and it is added that 'everything done in this direction can only be effective when a given trade or industry involved in difficulty is acting in unison with all workers on a larger scale.' 'This,' the manifesto states, 'demonstrates the necessity of a Central Council, thoroughly representative of all the organised industries of the metropolis, for the purpose of mutually sustaining and advancing each other's interest.' The Council advises the metropolitan workmen to increase the London Trades Council's power and influence, and combine 'within its pale the united voice of metropolitan labour.'"

If it could only be hoped that any means at present possible would get London labour to act as a whole, their manifesto might be something for Socialists to hail with pleasure. If even one could believe in the honesty of the effort to get "all other bodies" associated in the attempt, it might still be hailed with hope. But when one reflects on what the London Trades Council has been hitherto, and is, and thinks of the place-hunters, self-seekers, bummers, and dead-beats who will be mixed up in this new development, there is nothing left but the feeling that it is good anyway to see this discredited and reactionary clique making an onward move of any kind. S.

It is refreshing to hear that an attempt is to be made to bring about a common understanding between all who are interested in land nationalisation as to future and immediate action. As the greater includes the less, so all Socialists are land nationalisers, I take it; therefore we must all feel interested in furthering this important propaganda.

Expediency will no doubt be urged in defense of the Single Tax and Compensation ideas, which some, and only some, land nationalisers hold. Nothing could be more damaging to the cause of Revolutionary Socialism than even to appear to sanction for one moment such a method of getting back our own as is implied in taxing out the land thieves; and it is impossible to conceive a Socialist listening without loud protest to any proposal of "compensating" them for having stolen our birthright.

No compromise is possible on this all important question; it would be a cowardly surrender of principles for "policy's" sake which the awakening workers are not likely to stand. If compensation is to be discussed, let it be compensation of the broken-down and worn-out workers, the "wastrels" produced by our accursed system. Compensation! who will or can compensate the toiling masses for all the mental and physical misery they have so long endured through being bereft of their birthright? No; land nationalisers, you that are men and not mere politicians, let your cry be: The land for the people, its rightful possessors; and no compensation to the thieves who have kept it away from them.

Replying to a question in the House, which, as we read in "News from Nowhere" will one day, appropriately enough, be made a Dung Market, Mr. St. John Broderick said that the factories where Army Clothing was made were inspected from time to time to ascertain whether the factory clauses were observed. No "squaring" goes on, of course? Nothing was said of places from which people took work home, eh, Mr. Broderick? Nor was any mention made of the places, oh deluded volunteers! where your ill-paid and infected shoddy clothing is made! No inspector goes there; he only goes to the cutting-rooms of the firm, has a drink, and comes away again. The horrors depicted by Kingsley in "Alton Locke" are as bad as when he wrote; but then anything is good enough to be shoved on to fools who believe in patriotism, or defending other people's country and property instead of defending themselves against the deception and treachery of their masters.

No true man, or workman at any rate, would "serve the Queen," even as a volunteer, if his mental eyes were opened as to the real meaning of what he was doing—helping to hold up with the point of his bayonet the system which dooms him and his to irremediable misery—adding one more to the armed slaves who keep their brother slaves quiet under the lash of their plunderers and parasites.

C. W. M.

NEWS FROM NOWHERE:

OR,

AN EPOCH OF REST.

BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

CHAP. IX.—CONCERNING LOVE.

"YOUR kinsman doesn't much care for beautiful building, then," said I, as we entered the rather dreary classical house; which indeed was as bare as need be, except for some big pots of the June flowers which stood about here and there; though it was very clean and nicely whitewashed.

"O, I don't know," said Dick, rather absently. "He is getting old, certainly, for he is over a hundred and five, and no doubt he doesn't care about moving. But of course he could live in a prettier house if he liked: he is not obliged to live in one place any more than anyone else. This way, Guest."

And he led the way upstairs, and opening a door we went into a fair-sized room of the old type, as plain as the rest of the house, with a few necessary pieces of furniture, and those very simple and even rude, but solid and with a good deal of carving about them, well designed but rather crudely executed. At the furthest corner of the room, at a desk near the window, sat a little old man in a roomy oak chair, well bechushioned. He was dressed in a sort of Norfolk jacket of blue serge worn threadbare, with breeches of the same, and grey worsted stockings. He jumped up from his chair, and cried out in a voice of considerable volume for such an old man, "Welcome, Dick, my lad; Clara is here, and will be more than glad to see you; so keep your heart up!"

"Clara here?" quoth Dick; "if I had known, I would not have brought— At least, I mean I would—"

He was stuttering and confused, clearly because he was anxious to say nothing to make me feel one too many. But the old man, who had not seen me at first, helped him out by coming forward and saying to me in a kind tone:

"Pray pardon me, for I did not notice that Dick, who is big enough to hide anybody, you know, had brought a friend with him. A most hearty welcome to you! All the more, as I almost hope that you are going to amuse an old man by giving him news from over sea, for I can see that you are come from over the water and far off countries."

He looked at me thoughtfully, almost anxiously, as he said in a changed voice, "Might I ask you where you come from, as you are so clearly a stranger?"

I said in an absent way: "I used to live in England, and now I am come back again; and I slept last night at the Hammersmith Guest House."

He bowed gravely, but seemed, I thought, a little disappointed with my answer. As for me, I was now looking at him harder than good manners allowed of, perhaps; for in truth his face, dried-apple-like as it was, seemed strangely familiar to me; as if I had seen it before—in a looking-glass it might be, said I to myself.

"Well," said the old man, "wherever you come from, you are come among friends. And I see my kinsman Richard Hammond has an air about him as if he had brought you here for me to do something for you. Is that so, Dick?"

Dick, who was getting still more absent-minded and kept looking uneasily at the door, managed to say, "Well, yes, kinsman: our guest finds things much altered, and cannot understand it; nor can I; so I thought I would bring him to you, since you know more of all that has happened within the last two hundred years than anybody else does.—What's that?"

And he turned toward the door again. We heard footsteps outside; the door opened, and in came a very beautiful young woman, who stopped short on seeing Dick, and flushed as red as a rose, but faced him nevertheless. Dick looked at her hard, and half reached out his hand toward her, and his whole face quivered with emotion.

The old man did not leave them long in this shy discomfort, but said, smiling with an old man's mirth: "Dick, my lad, and you, my dear Clara, I rather think that we two oldsters are in your way; for I think you will have plenty to say to each other. You had better go into Nelson's room up above; I know he has gone out; and he has just been covering the walls all over with mediæval books, so it will be pretty enough even for you two and your renewed pleasure."

The girl reached out her hand to Dick, and taking his led him out of the room, looking straight before her; but it was easy to see that her blushes came from happiness, not anger; as, indeed, love is far more self-conscious than wrath.

When the door had shut on them the old man turned to me, still smiling, and said:

"Frankly, my dear guest, you will do me a great service if you are come to set my old tongue wagging. My love of talk still abides with me, or rather grows on me; and though it is pleasant enough to see these youngsters moving about and playing together so seriously, as if the whole world depended on their kisses (as indeed it does somewhat), yet I don't think my tales of the past interest them much. The last harvest, the last baby, the last knot of carving in the market-place, is history enough for them. It was different, I think, when I was a lad, when we were not so assured of peace and continuous plenty as we are now—Well, well! Without putting you to the question, let me ask you this: Am I to consider you as an enquirer who knows a little of our modern ways of life, or as one who comes from some place

where the very foundations of life are different from ours,—do you know anything or nothing about us?"

He looked at me keenly and with growing wonder in his eyes as he spoke; and I answered in a low voice—

"I know only so much of your modern life as I could gather from using my eyes on the way here from Hammersmith, and from asking some questions of Richard Hammond, most of which he could hardly understand."

The old man smiled at this. "Then," said he, "I am to speak to you as—"

"As if I were a being from another planet," said I.

The old man, whose name, by the bye, like his kinsman's, was Hammond, smiled and nodded, and wheeling his seat round to me, bade me sit in a heavy oak chair, and said, as he saw my eyes fix on its curious carving—

"Yes, I am much tied to the past, *my* past, you understand. These very pieces of furniture belong to a time before my early days; it was my father who got them made; if they had been done within the last fifty years they would have been much cleverer in execution; but I don't think I should have liked them the better. We were almost beginning again in those days: and they were brisk, hot-headed times. But you hear how garrulous I am: ask me questions, ask me questions about anything, dear guest; since I *must* talk, make my talk profitable to you."

I was silent for a minute, and then I said, somewhat nervously: "Excuse me if I am rude; but I am so much interested in Richard, since he has been so kind to me a perfect stranger, that I should like to ask a question about him."

"Well," said old Hammond, "if he were not 'kind,' as you call it, to a perfect stranger he would be thought a strange person, and people would be apt to shun him. But ask on, ask on! don't be shy of asking."

Said I: "That beautiful girl, is he going to be married to her?"

"Well," said he, "yes, he is. He has been married to her once already, and now I should say it is pretty clear that he will be married to her again."

"Indeed," quoth I, wondering what that meant.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

IN AUSTRALIA.

OUT of an adult male population of about 75,000 there are 15,000 trades unionists in Queensland. The Central Carriers, the Labourers, and the Shearers Unions have unanimously agreed to the Labour Federation proposals. The Bushmen are also expected in. The Western drovers have formed a union, their headquarters being at Tambo. The telegraph operators have also formed a union. The railway employes received consideration when the Civil Service Bill was before Parliament, but the P.O. and telegraph employes did not get any concession, although they were bitterly opposed to the bill. They were not organised then.

The annual delegate meeting of the labourers' unions of the Central district terminated at Blackall on Saturday week. It was unanimously decided to affiliate with the Labour Federation, and assist in establishing a journal in the interests of labour, though the proposed name of *Swagsman* was objected to. The new monthly will consist of eight pages, *Boomerang* size. Several conferences also took place between the Employers Association and the Labourers Union to consider the proposed reduction of the labourers' wages to 25s., but no satisfactory conclusion was arrived at. The men want 30s. as the minimum wage, and the employers want 30s. to be the maximum.

The Queensland shearers have decided to amalgamate with the N.S.W. union, and will send delegates to the conference in February. As an instance of the good feeling prevailing between the shearers of the two colonies, the employes on Corona Downs Station, Queensland, have sent £10 to the fund for the Brookong shearers, who have now been in prison over fifteen months.

The master bakers of Sydney make out every 100 by selling bread at 1½d. per pound they have only made 3d. on every 100 pounds of flour manufactured (or 4½ per cent. on their outlay), and that is why they have determined to raise the price to 3½d. per 2lb. loaf. It further appears that after all they have decided to sell their bread at 3d. Inference?

There is a case to come before the Albury Quarter Sessions in a week or two of a man who "mistook" 1,250 sheep—and mis-took them. He isn't a workman and therefore not a thief.

A Mr. John Farrell has been writing in the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* on "The Philosophy of the Single-Tax," and in so doing went out of his way to misrepresent Socialism. Whereupon comrade Yewen arose and smote him in a letter which has attracted a good deal of attention. You will be glad to hear that Yewen has very much improved in health since he has been here. He is doing valuable work for the Cause.

We have lectures and debates every Sunday evening at our rooms, 533, George Street, and they are very well attended. The Free Reading Room is a great success, and much used. We have a very fine collection of the Socialist, Labour, and Radical papers of the world, which are doing great good in letting the people here see how things are going on elsewhere. "Smallest contributions thankfully received."

The Melbourne Socialists are fighting valiantly the battle for free speech on the Wharf. Some of the prominent men have been fined and imprisoned by the Victorian Nupkinses for their persistence, but they keep right on. There are two things over which the battle rages there—Free Speech and the Sunday Opening of Museums and Libraries. They look like winning, but meanwhile the struggle is a fierce one. CORNSTALK.

Sydney, N.S.W., Jan. 14, 1890.

Never did the proletariat more literally deserve its name than since the advent of the factory period, their rapid and degenerative increase, indeed, primarily representing "the progress of investments."—*The Evolution of Sex*, by Prof. Geddes and J. A. Thomson.

HUMANITY'S HERO.

WHEN the rights of man lead forward, then the hero turns not back,
Though beneath the scaffold's shadow looms the torture of the rack,
While Truth's angel flits before him, fearless following her track,
He still goes marching on!

The people rise and follow, though they march o'er many a grave,
For his high example thrills them, and the coward heart turns brave,
As each broken shackle falling, shows a man for every slave,
As they go marching on.

Crouching in the age-long shadow, blinded by her lingering night,
Woman rises to her feet at last, and hails the coming light,
Echoing back with feeble voice the hero's shout of woman's right,
As he comes marching on.

Labour deafened by the factory-hum or bent above the soil,
Losing manhood's hope and manhood's heart in weary drudge and toil,
Sees the better day ahead of honest wage for honest toil,
As man goes marching on.

The oppressed of every nation, looking out across the sea,
Catch the faint and far-off echo of the time that is to be,
When each man shall own his manhood, and each hand and brain be free,
As Truth goes marching on.

Then shout aloud the heroes' name with glad exultant voice—
All heroes who for life-work have made manhood's right their choice;
And as we shout we'll follow, and while following rejoice,
And all go marching on.

MINOT J. SAVAGE.

IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

THAT the natives in Johannesburg have not altogether lost all thought of the way the "Chamber of Mines" and the police treated Mama Letsya and the 150 men he brought with him from Basutoland, in October last, is evidenced by the number of companies which are complaining of the great numbers of natives that have deserted from the works. The "Jumpers" Co. are only working 60 stamps, while other companies are also shorthanded, and find great difficulty in getting natives to stay. And the colonial press wonders at the scarcity of native labour! Such purblind ignorance—or is it, as I am almost forced to believe it is, wilful ignoring of the cause of the scarcity of native labour?—one can hardly imagine as existing amongst aught else than gibbering idiots.

Mr. Livesey will be no doubt flattered to hear—if he is still alive—that his "bonus scheme" has found its way to the gold-fields of South Africa. "During a discussion in the Chamber of Mines on the scarcity of native labour, the chairman stated that it had been suggested that a bonus be given to natives who had been in the employ of companies over twelve months, and he thought it a good idea. The shortfall in the number of natives in the mines was quite 5,000. In the first place it was decided to ask the Government to get supplies of Kaffirs from the northern part of the Transvaal, and to make arrangements to get the boys (natives) conveyed from their districts to the mines. It was also suggested that 20,000 coolies be imported. Mr. Hoskins proposed that there should be an agreement amongst the mines to jointly make arrangements to import the boys and regulate the rate of wages. This last suggestion the chairman considered unfeasible till the supply of labour exceeded the demand" (*Johannesburg Star*).

Owing to failure of crops, another famine is feared on the "Rand" during the winter months. If there be any tradesmen in Britain who would like to imitate Dr. Tanner or M. Succi of fasting fame, then come out to the gold-fields and pay £2 5s. per week (board and lodging) for doing so. Many of the Australian miners who came here some six months ago have already gone back to Australia, sick and thoroughly disgusted at the South African gold-fields. One old miner with whom I got acquainted told me that he would rather work in Australia for £5 per week than on the "Rand" for £10.

In a short time the unemployed will be a standing feature of Johannesburg; as it is, there are over 2,000 men out of work, and gangs can be seen going about in the most miserable plight. Many have no shoes on, whilst others have their feet wrapped up in rags. On the whole, there are sights to be seen in Johannesburg which are aught but pleasant for any thinking man or woman to look upon. Although the industrial development of South Africa is as yet only in its infancy, still the results of our cursed system of production for profit are more evident, more plainly seen here than in Britain, where the crowding together of thousands of workers in large centres of industry partly blinds them as to their real position.

It is Carlyle who writes that "if a red indian but quarrel with his squaw on the banks of the Mississippi, the price of beavers' skins will rise in the home markets." This is true all over the industrial world. If the De Beers Diamond Co. but restrict their output—as they have done for the sake of larger dividends—the price of diamonds straightway rises in the home markets, and as a result 7,000 diamond cutters and polishers are thrown out of employment in Amsterdam. When the Scotch miners were about to resort to the same thing—i.e., restricting the day's darg to increase their wage—how the press and coalowners in general, and some labour members in particular, cried out against "artificially increasing the price of coal." I rather think the diamond-cutters would have to cry long and loudly before the press took up their cry. But then the case is different, you know.

The eight-hour day is gradually being carried all over the colony. First Natal showed the way; then Johannesburg took it up; now the following notice, which appeared in the leading colonial papers, shows that the feeling is spreading:

"NOTICE TO ARTIZANS.—Notice is hereby given that all employers in this town have agreed to the eight hours system, with the exception of Mr. R. A. Falconer, of the New Exchange Buildings. We, the Workmen's Committee, therefore advise artizans not to enter into any engagements with the said Mr. Falconer until further notice.—E. C. Perkins, G. Barnes, A. T. Thomas, committee. Potchefstroom, S.A.R., Jan. 6, 1890."

Has the Queen turned trader in her old age, or has her son's son-in-law prevailed upon her to take up a few of the £1 shares in the South African

Chartered Company? Her name (if she has got one) does not figure in the list of directors or shareholders; yet one would infer that there is some sort of connection between them from the following advertisement, which I clip from the *Diamond-Field Advertiser* of January 16:

"O. H. M. S.—British South African Company's Police.—Enrolment of men for the above force is now taking place at Colonel Sir F. Carrington's house, Dutetspan Road, next door to Dr. Smith's, where particulars as to Service Act may be obtained, or of Sergt.-Major Bodle, Transvaal Hotel."

Some years ago I remember either *Punch* or *Fun* ridiculed the red-tapeism of the War Office at the time when reinforcements were urgently needed for the troops in Egypt, by reproducing what purported to be an order from the Horse Guards to the effect "that a detachment of 1 lance-corporal and 6 privates will hold themselves in readiness to proceed to the front to reinforce the troops under General So-and-so." Of this failing the War Office seems to have got cured, if one can judge by their action with regard to the Chartered Company, at whose disposal they have apparently placed the British army. Colonel Carrington has been all over the colony beating up recruits for the company's police, whilst officers of volunteers have been made do duty for this gang of titled land-robbers. Reuter's cablegrams also tell us that Her Majesty has been pleased to dispatch the sergt.-major of the Life Guards with a letter to Lobengula, the chief of the Matabeles; also several officers, including Colonel Brackenbury, whose services are placed at the disposal of the Chartered Company. Turning the soldiers into gas-stokers is only one remove from turning them into servants of the Rudd-Rhodes Syndicate. The company have so far only been reckoning with Lobengula; they have yet to reckon with the Matabeles, and the reckoning may after all be much different than that expected. Four Friesland bulls have been imported by the syndicate and dispatched to the king, as a part of the concession price. Let us hope for the sake of the Matabeles that the bulls are well-behaved brutes, else should they happen to frighten his kingdom, some of his followers might lose their lives in consequence. To explain: Some other concession-hunters gave to a tribal chief, amongst other things, a pair of boots—part of the concession price paid by them for the mineral rights over a large tract of territory. The boots, however, so hurt the monarch's toes that in his anger and irritation he ordered the execution of the poor native who had put them on the royal feet. The Matabeles are beginning to look with suspicion on the company's doings, and threats are being uttered against the king for handing their country over to the whites. Like the blacks in the colony of Liberia, on the east coast of Africa, they ought to have been wise in time. "The constitution of Liberia is a 'close' one. Any black is welcomed and gets twenty-five acres of land free, and any number of acres more for a merely nominal sum. Missionaries are allowed in the country, and are given a hundred acres of land if they wish it; but they are not allowed to trade, and when they leave, their land and all upon it goes back to the State. White traders are on no account allowed to settle, and it is contrary to the fundamental articles of the constitution to sell them or grant them land. The Liberians, judging by painful experience of their own, as well as knowledge of the countries around, are satisfied that if they once admit the white man as a settler, they will be driven out of their own country" (*Cape Argus*). The Matabeles ought to have done likewise. The plot as regards their country and the Chartered Company is thickening, and what the next stage of its development will be is hard to say just now.

Here is the first valuation of property for municipal purposes ever made in the Transvaal. It will no doubt be of interest a few years hence, if only by way of reference:

"The valuation of property in Johannesburg for rating purposes is completed, and gives a total of about six millions sterling. A rate of 1d. in the £ will bring in a yearly revenue of close upon £20,000. Gold mining claims and machinery are not assessable, but the buildings alone of one company have been assessed at £10,000. The valuation raises a very important point as to whether properties like the Boksburg Tramway, the outcome of Government concessions, are liable to be rated."

This Boksburg Tramway, like the Delagoa Bay Railway, has cost more in men's lives than will ever be well known, but the Manager of Works admitted some few months ago that "hundreds of natives had died on the works and been buried without any medical inquiry." The Delagoa Bay Railway is said to have cost a man's life for every sleeper laid. There may be a little exaggeration in this, but not so much as most people would be apt to imagine.

I cannot close this letter without referring to the mockery of such talk as the Prince of Wales gave utterance to at the banquet in aid of the Leprosy Fund, when he said that "the Cape Government deserved great credit for the measures they had taken in the matter." Not many weeks ago I looked on Robben Island and the lepers, and turned away sick and downhearted at the condition of these unfortunates. Let me tell your Royal Highness if you don't know—but I'm afraid, like the Cape Government, you know quite well—that these very men and women whom the Legislative Assembly "deserve great credit for attending to" are housed and fed infinitely worse than your Royal Highness's dogs. Even Dr. Wynn, one of the medical officers of the Island, on leaving a few weeks ago, was careful in bidding good-bye to the patients to tell them that he was in no way responsible for the manner in which they were housed or fed, but that he hoped to meet friends who had interested themselves in their condition and would try and help them. No one who has not looked on Robben Island and its inhabitants can have any idea of the hopeless miserable lives these poor sufferers are doomed to endure; not the shade of a single tree to sit under, not a stretch of grass to freshen the eye or rest their poor shrivelled diseased bodies or limbs. One poor fellow I noticed, with a lump on the side of his head as big as an ostrich egg, sitting in the dust of the roadway in the shade of the gable of an outhouse, his clothes and hair covered with sand and dust; another sitting not far off, right in the glare of a blistering sun, was flicking away with a handkerchief the flies which kept buzzing round his face. I was glad to get away. But it is not possible to forget the brutal way these men and women are treated by a people and a country which calls itself Christian. Such *Christianity* is fit only for hell.

Cape Town, February 5th, 1890.

JAMES BAIN.

SMALL rogues in hempen ropes oft swing,
While great ones gain a red silk string:
The trade is learned in half an hour—
To spare the rich and flay the poor.

Homer Burlesqued, Yahoo, p. 72.

No man loveth his fetters, be they made of gold.



OFFICES: 24 GREAT QUEEN STREET, LONDON, W.C.

HAVE YOU NOT HEARD HOW IT HAS GONE WITH MANY A CAUSE BEFORE NOW: FIRST, FEW MEN HEED IT; NEXT, MOST MEN CONTEMN IT; LASTLY, ALL MEN ACCEPT IT—AND THE CAUSE IS WON!

THE COMMONWEAL is the official organ of the Socialist League; but, unless definitely so announced by the Editors, no article is to be taken as expressing in more than a general way the views of the League as a body. In accordance with the Manifesto and Statement of Principles of the League, the COMMONWEAL is an exponent of International Revolutionary Socialism. On minor differences of opinion the widest freedom of discussion is maintained. As all articles are signed, no special significance attaches to their position in the paper.

Articles and letters dealing with any phase of the social problem are invited and will meet with earnest consideration. They must be written on one side of the paper only, and accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication. MSS. can only be returned if a stamped directed envelope accompanies them.

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Labour Tribune	St. Louis (Mo.)—Die Parole	Barcelona—El Productor
Norwich—Daylight	FRANCE	Seville—El Proletario
Railway Review	Paris—Bourse du Travail	GERMANY
Social Demokrat	Le Proletariat	Berlin—Volks Tribune
Seafaring	Charleville—L'Emancipation	AUSTRIA
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Cincinnati (O.) Volks-Anwalt		

COMMUNE OF PARIS.

THE ANNIVERSARY of the PROCLAMATION of the COMMUNE OF PARIS will be celebrated on

WEDNESDAY MARCH 19th, at 8 p.m.,

At South Place Institute,

SOUTH PLACE, FINSBURY, E.C.

(Close to Moorgate Street and Liverpool Street Stations)

The following Comrades will address the Meeting:—

JOHN TURNER, H. H. SPARLING, D. J. NICOLL, C. W. MOWBRAY, WM. MORRIS, E. MALATESTA, PETER KROPOTKIN, R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM, M.P., B. FEIGENBAUM, and EDWARD and ELEANOR MARX AVELING.

The Hammersmith Choir will sing Revolutionary Songs.

REFORM OR REVOLUTION.

THE state of society in nearly every part of the world, whether Christian or otherwise, convinces me that man has not yet reached that happy condition of life for which nature has fitted him. Towards this, nevertheless, he incessantly tends. The obstacles which stand in his way he seeks to put aside; and the efforts he makes for this purpose, when they fall short of their aim, are seditions, insurrections, rebellions; but when successful, are denominated revolutions, and regarded as blessings the world over. The authors of the former are stigmatised as criminals and put to death, while history celebrates the latter as patriots and covers their names with glory.

Much is often said about the civilisation of the age in which we live, and it may be that we are not in many respects behind our forefathers, or neglectful of the advantages springing out of our position. But if we look over the whole continents of Europe and America, and perhaps Australasia, we shall perceive nothing but depressed peoples, populations reduced to degrading servitude, the many held in subjection by the few, absolute kings ruling by the bayonet, secret leagues of despotic governments formed for mutual support, insignificant communities calling themselves free, but instead of perfecting their own internal affairs, engaged perpetually in sanguinary struggles; monarchies without power, as in the case of England, Portugal, Spain, Italy, etc., etc.; republics without freedom, as in France, America, Switzerland, Argentine, etc., etc.; ignorance and superstition, occasionally glossed over and cemented by respectable names.

There is still, therefore, much, very much indeed, for revolution to accomplish, and the future history of the world for a long time will most likely be little but a record of contests between the possessors of wealth and power on the one hand, and the disinherited slaves of capitalism on the other. In England, because some old abuses have in many cases been swept away, there are those who maintain that nothing remains to be done. But in the words of Burke, it is not to be argued that we endure no grievances because our grievances are not of the same sort with those under which our fathers laboured formerly; not precisely those which we bore from the Tudors or vindicated upon the Stuarts. Hitherto the people have been restrained from the attempt to emancipate themselves by ignorance, which has concealed from them their own strength, as well as the way of developing it usefully, and has held them in the chains of terror by propagating false notions of duty, of birth, place and power, authority, etc., and of whatever else that can influence the happiness of the peoples of the world. But at last the clouds of oppression seem breaking, and the sun of freedom bursts forth in all its splendour; for a doctrine which has hitherto been despised and whose truth only reached a few, seems in a fair way to leaven the whole mass. The people all over the world are growing weary of oppression, and see at last that their rulers are everywhere upheld by bayonets, which seem to be in a fair way of being levelled against the oppressors instead of the oppressed. To conduct mankind to the turning point at which they may emerge from the domain of authority and enter upon that of freedom, it is now only necessary to impregnate their minds with true ideas of justice and injustice, and to destroy those opinions which, operating like idolatry, withhold them from asserting their rights.

To accomplish this is not the task of cold speculation, looking forth from perfumed and gilded chambers upon the great prospect of humanity. It must be the work of strong conviction, rooted in the belief that freedom should obtain for all, and that they best do their duty as men who break the chains of the mental and economic slaves and enable them to look up and stand fearlessly before the world as freemen. No doubt the apostle of liberty must reckon on fierce opposition; the more he is in earnest the more will he be persecuted. Grandeur will behold in him an enemy; society at large will regard him as a disturber of public tranquility; literature will repudiate his efforts as things scarcely reconcilable to her effeminate rules; and even the people themselves, deluded and misled by custom, will perhaps for awhile stand aloof from him and refuse the expression of that sympathy which constitutes his best reward. But liberty has always had its martyrs, and there is no good reason why the race should ever cease.

What can be effected by individual exertion may seem comparatively little. The word written, by whatever power it may be accompanied, moves at first in a limited circle, obstructed by the differences of language, or national prejudice, sometimes by the direct interference of governments, by variations of creed, and by the natural indolence which restrains men from embracing what seems a novelty; still, what is put forward here in England finds its way by degrees to the Spaniard, the Italian, to the German, Pole, or Russian—and *vice versa*. I mean, the ideas penetrate, divorced from the name of the author: but this should perhaps be regarded as an advantage. The true friend of the people does not labour for fame, but is content if perchance it falls to his lot to break or loosen the chains which to-day binds his race in slavery. Liberty is too sacred a thing to be served for gain; no offerings to her must be offerings of the heart, and we should covet no reward save the consciousness of having contributed to enlarge her empire.

One of the most effectual means of promoting the cause is to extirpate from the breasts of the people their traditional reverence for States and Parliaments, for usurpers and despots. What is just and good they will continue to respect, as it is right they should; but the basis of government throughout the world being neither goodness nor justice—for government is a negation of goodness and justice alike—it deserves not their respect, but their antagonism.

The great lesson which mankind has to learn is, how they may most speedily deliver themselves from the economical and political theories which enslave them to-day. To aid them in the performance of this duty is the object of all Socialist teaching. The greatest abilities have been from time immemorial engaged in rivetting or polishing their chains, though truth and freedom have not always wanted worthy advocates. I rely greatly on the sacredness of the Cause, and trust my earnestness and sincerity may be accepted in lieu of any other qualities which nature may have denied me. If the popular mind be disenfranchised, the road to liberty will be short and easy. The people's mission at the outset is to destroy what is bad. It must be for their teachers while engaged in this process to consider what is to be substituted for the vast apparatus of evil which they are trying to remove. Revolutions are brought about in various ways in the course of time, by gradual changes, when they bear the name of reformation; or suddenly, by conspiracy, insurrection, and armed conflict—when they are given their natural designation. Philosophers, commonly inclining to the form of dominion established in their country, have too frequently counselled innovations imperceptible from their minuteness, in imitation, as they say, of time, which, though the greatest of all innovators, brings about its changes by slow degrees. But this, to my mind, is timidity, sheltering itself under the disguise of prudence. The life of nations have necessarily their paroxysms when the principle of *laissez faire*, after a protracted struggle, is overcome by the principle of change. The work of years is then crowded into a day, enthusiasm and passion are enlisted in the service of wisdom, sufferings are endured, life is sacrificed, but society emerges from the turmoil advanced whole centuries beyond the point at which it stood at the bursting forth of the tempest. If these periodical visitations are distasteful to the rulers and monopolists, the certain means of avoiding them is by ceasing to exist as rulers and monopolists and taking their fair share of the world's useful work.

C. W. MOWBRAY.

(To be continued.)

COAL IN KENT.

THE news that coal had been discovered in Kent, and that it would probably be found to be workable, has no doubt sent a shock of hope and expectation to some hearts and of terror to others. Amongst those who have anything to lose, those who are able to live in tolerably pleasant places without being too stupified by poverty to prevent their enjoying them, among the cultivated middle-classes in short, I should think the latter feeling prevails. The threat of the creation of a new black country on the ruins of the rural beauty of some of the most beautiful country in England, and close to London also, must impress most well-to-do people, who do not claim direct relationship with Mr. Podsnap, as a real terror not to be compensated by the hope of that vague and somewhat doubtful advantage, additional commercial prosperity. This feeling shines pretty clearly through the conventional twaddle which is being written in the newspapers about the splendour of the discovery, and the splendid energy of that great and beneficent employer of labour, Sir Edward Watkin, whose virtues this grand discovery is advertising in a quite providential manner. We know pretty well that though a few capitalists may make fortunes over the job, and a few landlords fill their pockets with the royalties for working the coal-field, the discovery if it leads to anything serious will be to the well-to-do public a ghastly disaster, which will not be compensated by the possible reduction in the price of coal used for household purposes; a benefit which could be obtained at a much lower price by compelling the railways to carry the coals at reasonable rates. (I say nothing about the profits of the coal-masters and the royalties of the landlords of the existing coal-fields, as they should go to the miners and other workmen engaged in getting the coal and making it marketable).

But some of our working-men readers will perhaps cry out, "O damn the well-to-do classes!" (a sentiment in which a knowledge of facts compels me to concur.) "Won't this new discovery be a great benefit to the workers?"

Well, I don't think *Socialist* working-men are under any delusions on this point. I think they know pretty well that whatever loss they may suffer from the establishment of a new manufacturing hell in the south-east of England, will not be compensated to them by any amelioration in the lives of, for instance, the workers in London. They have learned by this time that Sir Edward Watkin and his pals will stick to whatever swag they may filch out of Kentish coal, which belongs to the people not to them, and will only yield to the workers what they are compelled to yield.

But to non-Socialist workers I must point out that whatever gains may be made will pass by them. The new coal-fields will give employment? Yes, but at no higher rate of wages than workmen receive now; that is, wages which just take the place of the slaves' housing and rations of ancient days; wages also subject to all the precariousness which curses the lives of all other workers at present. It will cheapen the price of coal to all London workmen? Well, if it does so permanently and generally, with such an article of necessity as coal, it will on the other hand reduce the wages of the workers throughout London. As a matter of fact, as far as the present condition of the London workers are concerned, it will leave them in the same condition as they are in now, and will but destroy the beauty of the country which will one day be theirs in reality, and not in name only as it is now. A few rich men will be richer; that is to say, they will waste more of the labour of the workers than they do now; but

no poor man will have advanced one step nearer towards the attainment of wealth, that is, to a decent enjoyable life.

For the rest, surely a new manufacturing district is the thing of all others which England least needs. Double, treble, fourfold if you will (and I think you can) the yield of victuals from the fields of Kent, and you will have done some good; for though the profit-monger will in the present eat up the extra produce, and keep it from reaching those who need it, yet with the first days of the break-up of monopolist capitalism (*i.e.*, class robbery) it would at once become real wealth to be used by our teeming population.

But fresh groups of manufactories for producing the inanities and abortions of civilisation, what shall we say about them? This—in the present they are instruments for carrying on the robbery of the poor by the rich, for producing counters to be used in the gambling market, which at once dominates and supports the capitalistic system of production. That is one function of their production; and the other is the making of goods for poor people, which none but poor people (*i.e.*, slaves) would buy. To make useless luxuries for the rich, and to force shoddy rubbish on the poor, will be the office of the manufacturing districts in the present if we are cursed with them. And in the future when we have become free, and no longer need the toys of the fool or the rags of the slave, what shall we do with them? They will be mere nuisances to be got rid of at the expense of labour and trouble.

Let us hope, then, that coal in Kent will turn out an empty scare; that is, *nothing but* a blatant advertisement for the worker's friend,
Sir Edward Watkin.
WILLIAM MORRIS.

CORRESPONDENCE.

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIALISM.

Mr. Rickarby's letter, though written in a friendly and conciliatory spirit, requires, I think, some answer. Let it be admitted that Christianity, like all religions which include a system of morality, has something in common with Socialism. Let it also be admitted that many of the "sneers and unjust charges" of which Mr. Rickarby writes, are aimed at the stupidities and hypocrisies of the Christianity of the day, which no doubt men of Mr. Rickarby's stamp sincerely condemn; granted this, yet if Christianity is "a revelation addressed to all times" it can not be neutral as to political and social institutions, which, if they are to be binding on men's consciences, and not merely pieces of arbitrary coercion, must be founded on a system of morality; and that morality must not be founded on explanations of natural facts or a theory of life in which people have ceased to believe. At the risk of offending "real Christians," however well-meaning or honest they may be, we must ask "Is this true?"

Mr. Rickarby's contrast between real and actual Christianity evades the point of difference; that real (I should call it ideal) Christianity has never existed at all. Christianity has developed in due historic sequence from the first, and has taken the various forms which social, political, economic circumstances have forced on it; its last form moulded by the sordid commercialism of modern capitalism being the bundle of hypocrisies which, as I have said, Mr. Rickarby with other Christian Socialists condemns. When this beggarly period has been supplanted by one in which Socialism is realised, will not the system of morality, the theory of life, be all-embracing, and can it be other than the Socialistic theory? Where then will be the Christian ethic?—*absorbed in Socialism*. No separate system of ethics will then be needed; there will be no protest needed against the theory of life which will then be commonly held, we shall only have to guard the freedom which we have won.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

THE IMPERIAL MOUNTAIN AND ITS MOUSE.

ACCORDING to the *Reichsanzeiger*, the following is the agenda-paper of the Labour Conference called by the German Emperor:

I. Regulation of Work in Mines: (a) Is work underground to be prohibited for children under a certain age, and for females? (b) Are the working hours to be limited in mines in which the work is particularly dangerous to health? (c) Is it possible in the general interest, in order to secure a regular output of coal, to subject the work in coalpits to international regulations?

II. Regulation of Sunday Labour: (a) Is Sunday work in general to be prohibited, except in cases of emergency? (b) What exceptions are to be permitted in case of such prohibition being issued? (c) Are these exceptions to be decided by international agreement, by law, or by administrative ordinances?

III. Regulation of Children's Work: (a) Are children up to a certain age to be excluded from industrial work? (b) How is the age up to which exclusion takes place to be decided? is it to be the same for all branches of industry, or different? (c) What restrictions on working hours, and the sort of work permitted, are to be enforced for children permitted to take part in industrial work?

IV. Regulation of the Work of Youths: (a) Is the work of young people who are past the age of childhood to be subjected to restrictions? (b) Up to what age are the restrictions to apply? (c) What restrictions are to be prescribed? (d) Are exceptions to be made from the general rules for single branches of industry?

V. Regulation of Women's Work: (a) Is the work of married women to be restricted in the day time or at night? (b) Is the industrial work of all females (married and unmarried) to be subjected to certain restrictions? (c) What restrictions are to be recommended in this case? (d) Are exceptions to be permitted from the general rules for single branches of industry, and for which?

VI. Putting into Practice of the Regulations adopted: (a) Are provisions to be made for carrying out the regulations adopted, and for their control? (b) Are repeated conferences to be held by the representatives of the respective Governments, and what questions are to be submitted to them?

THE LABOUR STRUGGLE.

Mr. Livesey Triumphant.

Mr. Livesey was in his glory at the meeting of South Metropolitan shareholders on Wednesday February 26. He was able to stand before them as the hero who had vanquished the strike fiend. Of course, the whole aim of his speech was to represent the union as a devouring monster which would have swallowed up all the dividends of the shareholders if it had not been for the great Livesey. Now, even supposing the union had done this, it would have been no crime, for the simple reason that it is the workers composing the union, and not the shareholders, who create the dividends, and therefore by their action the men would have only taken the result of their labour. But this is what they have not done, as is proved by Livesey's own statement, that if it had not been for the strike the shareholders would have received a dividend of 13½ per cent. Such is the reward of the shareholders for sitting still with their hands in their pockets while the men who created this wealth toiled like slaves, stripped to the skin, in the heat and glow of blazing furnaces. And it was because the union men thought of reducing this monstrous dividend to unproductive idlers that Livesey determined to smash the union for making such an "unreasonable" demand. Livesey's triumph over his victory reminds one of the chuckling delight of a little dwarf who has gained a temporary triumph over a giant. For though the gas-stokers' union has received a check, the labour movement is as strong as ever, as Mr. Livesey may find to his cost. His announcement that "they had got free of the union and meant to keep free" tells us plainly what this sham philanthropist, this teetotal advocate, this pious Pecksniff meant by his desire to improve the condition of the men by his profit-sharing scheme, and that was to break up the union and to bring back the old slavery of long hours at killing toil. Probably in a month or two the eight hours system will be entirely swept away, as it has already been at several stations where the blacklegs have "unanimously" decided to go back to the old system. When these blacklegs are slaving twelve hours a-day in Livesey's hell, and the old tyranny is completely restored, even they may rebel, and Livesey may not find that he has gained so much after all by dooming hundreds of honest workmen and their families to misery and starvation.

The Strike at the Wharves.

There is little to report this week. The men at Hay's Wharf are still out, and are not likely to give way; this is the seventh week of the strike. At Oliver's Wharf the men have returned to work under an agreement drawn up at the London Chamber of Commerce, at an interview between the Labour Conciliation Committee, the proprietors of Oliver's Wharf, and Tom Mann and Ben Tillett, of the Dockers' Union. Negotiations are also proceeding for settlement at Sharp's Wharf.

The men on strike at Hirsch's Oil Mills still hold out. Blacklegs who have left the works give a doleful account of the state of affairs inside. They state that the food is bad, the beds are haunted with vermin, and that over 100 tons of oil-cake have been returned to the mill as damaged by blundering blacklegs. Mr. Hirsch has tried to tempt some of the old hands back to work, but the men refuse to return till every blackleg is sent about his business and all the old hands taken back. The men in other oil mills are loyally supporting the strikers, and the Dockers' Union has raised their strike pay from 10s. to 13s. a-week.

Bradlaugh and Labour.

Mr. Bradlaugh has once more distinguished himself as a defender of the divine right of capital in his attack upon Cuninghame Grahame in the House of Commons. It must be a great pleasure to him to be so vehemently applauded by the Tories, who now look upon the honourable member for Northampton as a more valuable defender of the existing social order than even the Archbishop of Canterbury. How they must chuckle over their own stupidity when they reflect that they actually fought for years to keep this good gentleman out of the House of Commons as the enemy of property and god, to find they have now got in him an eloquent believer in rent, dividends, and profit. It is true he has made no public profession yet of his belief in a deity, but still we are confident that even that may come in time, and surely his want of religious belief is made up by the fervency of his faith in the Almighty dollar. Who knows but if a profession of personal piety is necessary to a seat on the Treasury bench, that he may not even then be equal to the occasion? At any rate, however popular Mr. Bradlaugh's attitude towards labour questions may be with the Tory party, he is not improving his standing with the workers. Workmen who have hitherto been among his most earnest defenders, have been heard to use ugly words like "Traitor" and "Renegade" in referring to a once popular politician during the past week. Mr. Bradlaugh is of course only following eminent examples in kicking down the ladder by which he climbed into power; but still, if he is in too much of a hurry about it, he may chance to come a very nasty cropper.

The Threatened Miners' Strike.

It is certain that if a fight comes off, the struggle will be a desperate one. So desperate is it likely to be, that the leaders of the miners rather shrink from a labour war which may extend in a very short space of time through the length and breadth of the country. On the other hand, the employers also feel a hesitation in provoking the conflict; so it is possible that the conference between owners and men on Tuesday may end in a compromise.

Meanwhile, the miners are sending in their notices in every district throughout the country. On Thursday Feb. 27, 13,000 miners in Nottingham handed in their notices. At some collieries negotiations for a satisfactory arrangement are in progress, but the full 10 per cent. has not in any case yet been granted. In Warwickshire the men have also sent in their notices, and here many of the masters have announced that they are willing to give the 10 per cent. if the owners in other countries will also do so. At the Stavely Coal and Iron Collieries, 4,000 men and boys have handed in their notices, which expire on the 22nd of March. The Yorkshire men, as usual, are the most determined, and lead the van. The officials of their association report that all the notices sent out, with few exceptions, have been served. They call attention to the fact that while notices of Lancashire miners terminate on March 15th, some in Yorkshire take effect from 11th, 12th, and 13th days of March. The Denaby Main and Oaks miners have given notice to cease work on the 15th. A very different attitude has been taken by the North Wales men, who, alarmed at the

determined attitude of the coalowners, have withdrawn their notices. The Durham miners, who demanded an advance of 15 per cent., on having the question submitted to them by ballot, have agreed to take the owners' offer of a 5 per cent. advance.

Later.—The owners are playing a game of bluff. On Tuesday, at the conference between them and the leaders of the men, they refused to make any concession except to allow the inspection of their books. There is, therefore, at present, a complete deadlock, but there can be no question that the owners will give way if the men show their determination to strike sooner than yield. They have only the weakness of their leaders to thank for their present position.

The Expected Strike of Bootmakers.

There is to be a conference between masters and men on March 24th. The masters have offered to do away with work at home if the men will submit the wages question to arbitration. It is expected that a general strike will be averted.

Dock Strike at Liverpool.

2,000 men struck work at the North Dock at Liverpool last week. The men working in the hold of a wheat vessel demanded 7s. a day, but were offered 5s. by the stevedores. The men then came out, and were joined by the labourers, carters, and coal-heavers. Affairs are very unsettled in the docks at Liverpool.

Threatened Strike of Irish Railway-men.

Some time ago I noted the probability of a strike on the Great Northern Railway. The attitude of the men is now so threatening that the directors have offered to grant an increase of 6d. a week to the wages of all country porters, 1s. 6d. being the increase they offered previously. Mr. H. Scammel, the local secretary, at Belfast, has received a telegram from the Executive Committee of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, informing him that all members in the employment of the Great Northern Railway will be supported whether connected with the benefit fund or not in the event of a strike taking place. The men are not satisfied with this paltry increase, from which some of them will gain no advantage, and they are prepared to strike within a few days if their demands are not conceded.

Broadhurst's Successor.

Who is to take Broadhurst's place? The *Labour Elector* suggested, among other candidates, Mr. George Shipton as a fit and proper person for the vacant post. What next! Shipton in the place of Broadhurst! It is difficult to see what trade unionists would gain by the exchange. I wonder what virtue Mr. Shipton possesses to recommend him to Mr. Champion, save perhaps his connection with the Sugar Bounty agitation. "A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind," and it is possible that the gentleman who wishes to take the place of "Dear Peters" as an advocate of "Fair Trade" and "Tory Democracy," may find in Mr. Shipton a worthy fellow-worker in the same great cause. Some of the other candidates recommended by Mr. Champion are not much better. For instance, Mr. Henry Slatter, Broadhurst's double, who is as like him in general appearance as in his politics; or C. J. Drummond, a hanger-on of the privileged classes, whose fitness for the post probably arises from the fact that he participated with Mr. Shipton in the famous Sandringham expedition. Mr. Champion says in his defence of his protégés, "that few are perfect." True, very true. But there is little hope for the workers if they cannot find men nearer perfection than these.

Impending Strike of Fibre-dressers.

As some of our readers will remember, a strike in the above trade took place in Sheffield in the latter part of 1889, which ended after eight weeks' hard fighting in a great victory for the workers, and was the means of a general organisation of the trade both in Manchester and London. Encouraged by the success of the strike in Sheffield, the men in Manchester are seeking to get an advance on their present rate of wages, which are considerably lower than the Sheffield rate; and as the masters seem inclined to resist the men's demands, there is every chance of a strike taking place. It is to be hoped the men in London, who are still worse off than the Manchester men, will apply at once for an advance, and also sweep away the sweating system which so largely prevails. As many of the men are only getting from 14s. to 18s. per week on account of the sweating and the low prices paid for the work, there is plenty of room for improvement. It is to be hoped they will do as the bass-dressers in London did; instead of working for the miserable pittance that they work for, they will co-operate and try to reap the full benefit of their labour by doing away with the robbing class.

Strike of Clay-workers' at Leeds.

On Sunday afternoon a meeting was held at Vicar's Croft in support of the clayworkers on strike. The speakers were Maguire, Paylor, and Sweeney, who denounced Mr. Bruce, the magistrate who decided a test case against the men (on the technicality that the notices were not sent in at the proper time), thereby depriving them of £600, which is the aggregate amount of their wages due.

NOTTINGHAM SOCIALIST CLUB.—We had a field day on Sunday, when Edward Carpenter lectured in Sneinton Market in the morning on "The Breakdown of our Industrial System;" collection for lecture fund realised 3s. 8d. In the hall, Woodland Place, Parliament Street, at night, Carpenter spoke on "Present and Future Society" to a crowded audience; collection 7s. 9d.—P.

MANCHESTER.—Suitable premises have now been secured for the new Socialist Club. It is our aim to make it a centre for Socialist propaganda in Lancashire. A library, reading, recreation, and refreshment rooms will be some of its attractions. Aid is invited from friends who can assist, either with fittings, furniture, books, or funds. The Club, 60 Grosvenor Street, All Saints, is now open for members every evening. *Commonweal* and other literature on sale.

TREATMENT OF RUSSIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS.—At a committee meeting held at the Patriotic Club on the 21st Feb., it was resolved to hold a great Demonstration in Hyde Park, on Sunday the 9th of March, at 3 p.m., to protest against the inhuman treatment of political prisoners by the Russian Government, and to express sympathy with the Russian workers in their struggle for liberty. All particulars as to the line of route of the processions can be obtained from J. Hunter Watts, hon. sec. Workmen's Protest Committee, 18 Torrington Sq., W. C.

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

OFFICES: 24, GREAT QUEEN ST., LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, W.C.
 The Offices of the Socialist League will be open for the sale of *Commonweal* and all other Socialist publications from 8.30 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day except Sunday. The Secretary will be in attendance from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

Branch Subscriptions Paid.—1888:—Oxford, to end of September.
 1889:—Bradford and Hammersmith, to end of April. Norwich, Glasgow, and Yarmouth, to end of May. East London, to end of October. North London and Mitcham, to end of November. St. Georges East, to end of December. 1890:—North Kensington and Manchester, to end of January. 'Commonweal' Branch, and Leicester, to end of February.

Notice.—All letters on League business, except those intended for Editors of *Commonweal*, to be addressed to me. No other person is authorised to sign any official communication. FRANK KITZ, Secretary.

REPORTS.

NORTH KENSINGTON.—We held a good meeting last Sunday at Latimer Road; speakers were Crouch, Tochatti, W. H. Rogers, and Mrs. Schack. At the Clarendon Coffee Tavern, W. Morris lectured on "How shall we live then" to a good audience; questions and discussion afterwards; 43 'Weals' sold during the day and 3s. 6d. collected.

ABERDEEN.—At meeting on 24th an article by Kropotkin on "The Exile in Siberia" was read and discussed, the attendance being unusually large. Propaganda goes on gaily in newspapers; a debate is being arranged between Leatham and a prominent local Georgite; and we shall soon be thinking of re-commencing open-air propaganda.—L.

GLASGOW.—Meeting on Jail Square not held on Sunday. In the evening we held a meeting at Paisley Road Toll, where Glasier spoke amid a deal of interruptions from a gang of ill-mannered youths who had apparently been sent to annoy us. Our meeting, however, despite their efforts, was held longer than usual, and a number of questions answered at the close.

LEEDS.—At the Socialist League on Sunday night, Samuels read a paper on "The Woman Question"; a good discussion followed; 'Weals' sold out and good sale of pamphlets.

LEICESTER.—This last month we have had Sparling on "The Evoluted Cannibal"; fair audience, lecturer's replies witty and telling. Annie Besant next paid us a visit; hall crammed by enthusiastic audience. William Morris drew a good number to the Radical Club, February 2, to listen to "How we shall Live Then." Same evening Morris lectured at Secular Hall on "What Socialists Want"; good attendance again. The week following, G. B. Shaw lectured in the same hall on "Socialist Individualism"; capital discussion. Sparling's and Mrs. Besant's discourses have produced discussion in two of our local papers. We have also a correspondence in the papers on the right to place Socialist papers on the tables at the free library. In this dispute the Secularists and Individualists are taking part with us. One paper gives us extensive reports. We are not doing any out-door propaganda at present, but we have been invited to Newby Street Young Men's Debating Society, where a paper on Socialism has been read. The remarks that followed show that prejudice against Socialism is rapidly giving place to a disposition to study it.—T. B.

DUBLIN.—At Progressist Club, 87 Marlboro' Street, March 1st, A. Kavanagh lectured on "Education," advocating free, secular, and compulsory education in all grades. A lively discussion arose, in which O'Gorman, King, Pearson, Hamilton and others took part.

EDINBURGH (S. S. F.).—Comrade Blackwell lectured in the Moulders' Hall on Sunday, taking for his subject "Socialism without Government." A good many questions were put and replied to. In the discussion Blackwell was well backed up by Bell. The opposition was rather weak.

SHEFFIELD.—Hallamshire Hall, West Bar.—On Sunday February 23, comrade Sketchley delivered two lectures, on the following subjects: at 11 a.m., "The Events of the Week"; and at 6.30, "The Nationalisation of the Land; How and Why." The attendance in the evening was large, and the sale of literature very good. On Sunday March 2nd, comrade Sketchley lectured as follows: at 11 a.m., "The Events of the Week—Charles Bradlaugh and the Eight Hours Question"; at 6.30, subject, "What the Workers Want, and the Reason Why." Some little discussion followed, but which was hardly worth notice. All the lectures at the above hall are public. Admission is free, and discussion is always invited.

SHEFFIELD SOCIALISTS.—On Sunday evening, March 2, at the Central Radical Club, Mrs. Usher lectured on Stepiak's biography of Prince Kropotkin, and referred in conclusion to the principles, aims, and objects of Socialism, as understood and advanced by Kropotkin and other great thinkers and workers in the Socialist cause. Mr. Shaw took the chair. Good audience, and interesting discussion. *Commonweal* and Socialist pamphlets sold well.

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC ENTERTAINMENT

WILL BE HELD ON
SUNDAY, MARCH 9th, at 8 p.m.,
 By the 'Commonweal' Branch of the Socialist League,
24 GREAT QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.

Pianoforte Selection	...	...	...	...	Mr. H. ATKINSON
Song	...	...	...	...	Miss LEAH WADE
Reading	...	...	...	...	Mr. W. DARWOOD
Song	...	...	...	...	Mr. H. ATKINSON

DRAMATIC SKETCH—"THE HUNCHBACK."

Mr. W. DARWOOD	Miss LEAH WADE			
Song	...	...	...	Mr. H. ATKINSON
Reading	...	"The Dying Communist"	...	Mr. W. DARWOOD
Irish Song	...	...	...	Miss WADE
Reading	...	"The Polish Boy"	...	Mr. H. ATKINSON
Reading	...	"Greenwich Fair"	...	Mr. W. DARWOOD

To conclude with a comic sketch, entitled

"THE HAPPY PAIR."

Mr. HONEYTON Mrs. HONEYTON

The Proceeds are to be devoted to the benefit of the 'Commonweal.'
 Admission by Programme, 6d.

LECTURE DIARY.

LONDON.

Battersea.—All communications to E. Buteux, 45, Inwith Street, Battersea Park Road.

Commonweal Branch.—24 Great Queen Street, Holborn, W.C. Business meeting of members every Thursday evening at 8; Discussion Class at 9. Hall open every evening from 7 till 10. Concert on Sunday March 9, at 8 p.m.—see other column.

East London.—12 Basing Place, Kingsland Road. Members are requested to turn up on Sunday March 9, at 8 p.m., to arrange for course of lectures.

Hammersmith.—Kelmescott House, Upper Mall, W. Sunday March 9, at 8 p.m., a Lecture.

Mitcham.—"Lord Napier," Fair Green. Meets every Sunday at 12.30, to enroll members, etc.

North Kensington.—Clarendon Coffee Palace, Clarendon Road. Meets every Wednesday at 8 p.m. On Sunday March 9, at 8 p.m., G. Bernard Shaw, "The Evolution of Practical Socialism."

North London.—6 Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road. Meets every Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock.

Streatham.—Address secretary, R. Smith, 1 Natal Road, Streatham.
Whitechapel and St. Georges in the East.—Branch meetings at International Club, 40 Berner Street, Commercial Road. J. Turner, organising secretary.

PROVINCES.

Aberdeen.—Organiser, J. Leatham, 7 Jamaica Street. Branch meets in Odd-fellows' Small Hall, Crooked Lane, on Monday evenings at 8. Singing practice at 46 Marischal Street on Thursdays at 8 p.m.

Bradford.—Laycock's Temperance Hotel, Albion Court, Kirkgate. Meets every Tuesday at 7.30.

Glasgow.—Ram's Horn Hall, 122 Ingram Street. Branch meets on Thursday evenings at 8 o'clock and Sundays at 7 o'clock.

Halifax.—Socialists meet every Sunday at 6.30 p.m. at Helliwell's Temperance Hotel, Northgate.

Leeds.—Clarendon Buildings, Victoria Road, School Close. Open every evening. Business meeting Saturdays at 8 p.m.

Leicester.—Exchange Buildings, Rutland Street. Branch meets on Monday and Thursday, at 8 p.m. Tuesday March 11, at 8 p.m., in Co-operative Hall, High Street, William Morris will lecture on "The Class Struggle."

Manchester.—Socialist League Club, 60 Grosvenor Street, All Saints. Open every evening. Branch weekly meeting on Tuesdays at 8 p.m.

Norwich.—Sunday, at 8, Gordon Hall. Tuesday, at 8.30, Members' meeting. Thursday, at 8, Discussion Class. Saturday, Social Meeting. Hall open every evening from 8 p.m.

Oxford.—Temperance Hall, 25½ Pembroke Street. First Friday in every month, at 8.30 p.m.

Walsall.—Socialist Club, 18 Goodall Street, Walsall. Meetings every night.

Yarmouth.—Branch meets at comrade Headley's, near Co-operative Stores, every Tuesday evening. Elocution Class Friday at 8 p.m. On Sunday afternoons during winter a Discussion Class will be held at 3 o'clock.

All persons who sympathise with the views of the Socialist League are earnestly invited to communicate with the above addresses, and if possible to help us in preparing for the birth of a true society, based on equality, brotherhood, and freedom for all.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

SATURDAY 8.

8.30..... Mile-end Waste.....The Branch

SUNDAY 9.

11 Latimer Road Station.....R. J. Lyne, W. H. Rogers, and Crouch
 11.30..... Kilburn—"Old Plough," Kilburn LaneThe Branch
 11.30..... Mitcham—Fair GreenThe Branch
 11.30..... Regent's Park.....Nicoll and Parker
 3.30..... Hyde Park—Marble ArchParker
 3.30..... Victoria ParkDavis and Mowbray
 7 Weltje Road, Ravenscourt ParkHammersmith Branch
 7.30..... Walham Green—back of ChurchHammersmith Branch

TUESDAY 11.

8 Walham Green—back of ChurchHammersmith Branch

FRIDAY 14.

8.15..... Hoxton Church.....East London Branch

PROVINCES.

Glasgow.—Sunday: Jail Square at 2 o'clock; Paisley Road at 5 o'clock. Tuesday: Cathedral Square, at 8 p.m.

Leeds.—Sunday: Hunslet Moor, at 11 a.m.; Vicar's Croft, at 7 p.m.

Manchester.—Sunday: Philips Park Gates, at 11; Stevenson Square, at 3.

Norwich.—Sunday: St. Faiths, at 11; Market Place, at 3.

Sheffield.—Sunday: Monolith, Fargate, at 11.30 a.m.; Burngreave Road, near Vestry Offices, at 3 p.m.; Pump, West Bar, at 8 p.m.

Yarmouth.—Sunday: Priory Plain, at 11; Colman's Granary Quay, at 7.

DUNDEE.—James Davie, 6 Overgate, is agent for the *Commonweal* in this town.
LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST SOCIETY, 1 Stanley Street, Dale Street.—Meets every Tuesday at 8 p.m.

DUBLIN.—At Progressist Club, 87 Marlboro' Street, Saturday March 8, at 8 p.m., R. Pearson, "The Currency Question."

EDINBURGH—SCOTTISH SOCIALIST FEDERATION.—In Moulders' Hall, High St., Sunday March 9, at 6.30, Comrade Davidson.

NOTTINGHAM SOCIALIST CLUB, Woodland Place, Upper Parliament St.—Sunday March 9, at 7 p.m., T. Proctor, "The German Elections."

CLUB AUTONOMIE, 6 Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.—Sunday March 9, at 8.30, James Harragan, "Anarchism—How to bring it about."

CHELSEA S.D.F., Co-operative Lecture Hall, 312 Kings Road, Chelsea.—Sunday March 9, at 8 p.m., Ferdinand Gilles, "German and French Socialism."

SHEFFIELD.—At Hallamshire Hall, Westbar, on Sunday March 9, J. Sketchley, 11 a.m., "The Events of the Week"; at 6.30, "The Present Crisis in the Labour Movement."

THE NEW FELLOWSHIP, 267 Strand (rooms of the National Vigilance Association).—Tuesday March 11, Herbert Rix, "Count Leo Tolstol: His Ideal and Doctrine of Happiness."

MANHOOD SUFFRAGE LEAGUE, "Three Doves," Berwick St., Oxford St., W.—Sunday March 9, at 8 p.m., George R. Cox—Reading, with comments, of Dr. Norman McLeod's sketch, "A Life Story." Committee meeting at 7.30.

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