

# THE COMMONWEAL

## The Official Journal of the SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

### NOTES ON NEWS.

No Compensation! is becoming a popular watchword. No Compensation to Irish landlords! No Compensation to English publicans! are both cries with which you are certain to stir the people.

"Why should we compensate the publican? Why should we reward a man for spreading misery, disease, prostitution, and death broadcast among the people?" say our temperance friends. Quite right, too. We certainly should not reward any person for doing mischief. In fact, our obvious duty to society is to stop him at his evil work by every means in our power. But is the publican the only person who is engaged in cheating, starving, poisoning, degrading, and murdering the people? Look around you and see.

Think of our friend the Irish landlord, and what has been his work. Living idly on the rack rents wrung mainly from a starving peasantry, who starve not because they are idle, oh dear no! If starvation always followed idleness how would the landlord get on? No, they starve because they are industrious; and though they toil like slaves upon the soil yet they only get a bare existence, while the wealth produced from the land goes into the pockets of the landlord, who grows fat and flourishing upon pillage and plunder.

But the Irish landlord is not the only robber, is not the only tyrant. In England, Ireland, Scotland, and throughout the civilised world, peasants and agricultural labourers alike are ground down to the lowest depths of misery, ground down to such wretchedness that everywhere they flock into the towns to escape from it, to fall into the hands of the sweater, or to be used as blacklegs by a Norwood or a Livesey to cut the throats of their brother workmen in the towns. Those who read the papers will remember that at the time of the gas strike an agricultural labourer, who had been brought up to London as a blackleg, was asked by one of the pickets "Why he came to take the places of men who were only struggling for their rights?" What did he reply, "At the place I have just left I was earning 2s. a day; my place is open now, and you can go there and take it, if you like!" Such is the enviable condition of the workers on the soil, who slaves his heart out for this scanty wage, that the wealth he produces may yield rent to an idle land thief.

Let us think now, have we named all those who live upon the plunder of the poor? Some of the very people who are rich and respectable, and who are ready enough to lead crusades against landlord or publican, are not in such a very sinless condition themselves that they can afford to cast stones at others. Pious philanthropists like the late Samuel Morley, for instance, who are foremost in "temperance and gospel work," and yet who pay their workwomen such wretched wages that they are driven upon the street to sell their bodies to get bread. These people, at least, have no right to exclaim against landlord or publican.

After all, is the publican alone responsible for drunkenness and the miseries that sometimes flow from it? In the case, for instance, of girls driven upon streets by pious and philanthropic capitalists like Samuel Morley and Messrs. Bryant and May? These poor girls drink to forget the horrors of the horrible and unnatural life into which they have been forced by "pious and godly men"; and strange as it may appear, perhaps the drink after all is perhaps a better friend to them than the good men above mentioned. It is the beneficent spirit which makes tolerable for a few moments the hell into which these girls have been thrust by these sublime moralists in the struggle for fortune.

I wonder, also, if the sweated worker, doomed to a long lingering life of hopeless toil, slaving fourteen hours a-day in a close, unwholesome garret, is much to blame, after all, if he reawakens his exhausted vitality by drinking long and hard. If the lives of the slaves of the present system could be made bright and happy, without exhausting toil, with cheerful homes, and those rational pleasures which are now

denied them, and with enough to eat and drink would not the vice of drunkenness gradually disappear? But how could they gain all this? There is but one way—to sweep away the idlers who live upon the plunder of labour. This is the remedy for the poverty which creates the drunkard and the prostitute.

Let us consider the whole social question. Look upon those splendid mansions, those gorgeous palaces that surround Hyde Park on all sides. Who live in them? The workers who built them? Are they for the only useful part of society? No, they are built for grinding landlords and sweating capitalists by the workers, in the same way as the workers pile up their fortunes for them, leaving for themselves only misery, squalor, wretchedness, and hunger. And when workers and idlers stand face to face; when the people, as they will surely do, demand their own, the land and the wealth which they have produced, will they talk of "compensation" to these idle rich thieves? No, they will not. They will say, "No compensation! Down with the plunderers of the poor! If they want compensation they shall be paid with steel and lead. That is the only compensation they will get from us."

D. N.

### DOWN A COAL PIT.

FIVE o'clock in the morning! If we are to catch the "Paddy Mail" we must turn out quickly, for it will leave the station in half an hour. So we hasten up, snatch a mouthful of breakfast, and sally forth into the chill morning air. We are soon mingling in a crowd of men and boys hurrying in the same direction as ourselves, and carrying with them their grub in all manner of tins, baskets, or handkerchiefs. The clatter of their clogs, or ironshod boots, echoes through the silent streets with a hollow sound: and the disturbed sleeper curls himself up snugly again, with a feeling of satisfaction that he will not need to put in an appearance until the streets "have been aired a little." Arrived at the station we all pack into the workman's train, or "Paddy Mail" as it is mostly called, presumably on account of the number of Erin's sons who patronise it. Our compartment has evidently not seen a paint brush for many years, and we sit on rough boards, which doubtless once were cushioned—but that was long ago, when the carriage moved amongst the aristocratic rolling-stock on the main line; it has gone down in the world since then, and is now serving its last purpose before being broken up for fire-wood. We also become conscious of a scarcity of glass in the windows, which is only poorly compensated for by a piece of flapping "brattis cloth," that is doing its best to keep out the cold wind. After half-an-hour's ride we arrive at the colliery which is our destination, and find that the men who live hard by have already commenced to go down.

While the rest are being lowered and getting to work, we go to look at some of the machinery on the surface. We see the smoothly running fan-engine exhausting the foul air from the pit, and causing a constant fresh supply to rush down the other shaft. It never stops except for repairs; night and day it drives the great forty foot fan, the beating of whose blades makes the air dither with a curious vibration. We go on past the long nest of boilers, which the firemen are feeding with coal, into the winding-engine house. There we stand some time watching the great engines with their iron arms turning away at the large drum, upon one side of which the steel wire rope is steadily coiling, while from the other it is uncoiling. One turn of the drum raises or lowers the rope twenty yards or more, and half a turn too much would send the cage full of men up into the head-gear; if the safety hook was to hold good there they would hang, but if not—well, it would be four hundred and twenty yards to the bottom! We look with some interest at the engine-man, to whom we shall presently entrust our lives, and are astonished at the easy and apparently careless way he handles the massive engines. The bell rings; with one hand he puts down the reversing lever, with the other he gives a jerk at the throttle valve, and off she goes; he sits unconcernedly watching the finger on the dial. As it approaches the end he gently raises the lever and steadies her a bit, then clang goes the indicator bell—only one more turn; the lever is raised a little more; clang again, another slight jerk of the lever, a whiff of steam against

her, and she comes to a stop within an inch or two; all done with the reversing lever, the brake is never touched except in case of emergency. Then the driver turns round with a casual remark about the weather, showing a kindly face with a bushy beard and a quiet self-possessed look, which inspires confidence at once.

But, it is time for us to be going below; so we bid the engine-man good-morning, and getting each a safety-lamp we soon stand by the pit ready for descending. The banksman rings three to the onsetter below, that means there are men to go down; he replies, one, two, three, and will keep the other cage empty; a few seconds and we get the signal one, "All right," and are allowed to step into the cage, an iron structure about 9 ft. by 3 ft. with two decks; there is just room to stand upright in the deck we enter. The signal is given to the engine-man, we are raised an inch or two to free the props on which the cage has been resting, then drop. Down we go into the darkness, faster and faster, while the air rushes upwards past us and we feel as if our hearts were rapidly rising into our mouths; we begin to wonder whether we are not falling loose, certainly we cannot feel our feet! Still faster we go; then, like a flash, past goes the other cage at the speed of an express train; two or three seconds more and we begin to have a sense of standing on our feet again; in fact, so great is the contrast that we seem to be going up! But no, the light on the side shows us that we are still descending; then for the first time we really feel that we are hanging, and as we steady down we feel every check of the engine by a sort of elastic pull on the rope, until a faint light appears and we gently rest on the bottom, having dropped four hundred and twenty yards in 35 seconds. It seems very dark, and we are led into a little cabin to collect our senses, and get our eyes accommodated to the dim light of the safety lamps; and a poor dim light it is after the morning sunshine which we have just left! Small wonder that the men would rather run the risk of working with a naked tallow dip than use a safety lamp.

We are each provided with a little leather cap to protect our heads from bumps, and a short stick to walk with, and then we set out towards the face, which lies nearly half a mile away. For the first few yards there is plenty of head room, and the roof is nicely arched with brick; but that soon ends, and we have to look out both above and below, which, with the dim light of our lamps, is not so easy. We have not gone far before one of our party collides with a beam a little lower than the rest, and finds himself sitting on the ground rather mixed up with a wire hauling rope which is creeping along between the little tram-lines.

It may be well to explain here that it is usual to cut all roads as far as possible in the coal, partly because it is more easily worked, and partly because the coal got helps to pay for the cutting of the road. The height depends upon the thickness of the seam and the nature of the roof. If a good solid rock comes immediately above the coal that will form a roof, and the road will be cut just the depth of the coal, which in these parts runs generally from four to six feet, though in different districts seams vary from eighteen inches upwards. Very often a thin layer of clod or loose hind lies between the coal and the solid rock, in which case it is cut away too, leaving the rock still for a roof. But in many places there is no safe rock to be come at, then the roof has to be timbered. To do this props of larch are put up on each side with bars of the same wood across the top resting on them, and if necessary rough slabs or planks across these again. Where the roof is bad it is marvellous how these bars, ten or eleven inches thick, will be bent and broken in roads only five or seven feet wide. One may walk for hundreds of yards and see nearly all the bars bent down in the centre, and many of them already splitting in two. Men accustomed to inspect the roads—deputies and underviewers—get to know from the look of the beams and the nature of the roof when they become unsafe; but to a stranger they look rather dangerous, and no doubt very often the line is not drawn far "on the safe side"!

Much has been done by the Mines Regulation Act to make coal pits safer, probably nearly all that can be done in that direction, for already many of the hard-and-fast regulations, by means of which alone a law can be operative, are being resented by the men; and it is often easy to raise in them a spirit of antagonism to the inspectors only less keen than that of the colliery owners. While the profits of the pits, or the earnings of the men, in any way depend on the greater or less margin of safety allowed—which practically means while pits are worked for a profit at all,—it cannot be but that many lives will be lost which might have been saved, and many limbs unnecessarily broken!

We have not travelled far down the plane—the coal is dipping a little here—before we find out the meaning of the wire rope. We hear a great rumbling coming towards us, and hasten to get into one of the refuge holes which are left at intervals along the route; then presently there emerges out of the darkness a long train of thirty tubs, full of coal, being drawn into the pit bottom there to be wound up to the surface. The rope is worked by an engine on the top, and comes down the shaft. When this full train reaches the pit bottom a train of empties will be attached to the rope, and they, running down the incline, will carry the end out ready to draw another full train up. Sometimes, if the roads are nearly level, an endless rope is used which is kept always running; then the tubs are attached to either side, according as they are going out or in, and slipped off again when they reach their destination. Presently we see a light coming towards us, the first we have met since we set off from the little cabin at the bottom of the shaft. It turns out to be a deputy; he is leading a little lad who is crying, his pony has crushed him against the side of the road. He seems but young to be working down in such a place; he may have to go several hundred yards alone with the pony, taking

the tubs down to the plane for the rope to haul them out, a mere child twelve or thirteen years old perhaps! Many of them having passed their standards go into the pit at that age; and when they are men some of them will go to night-school to learn again to read and write! Such is British economy.

Resuming our tramp we soon arrive at the bottom of the plane. Here lads are hurrying to and fro with their ponies, bringing the loaded tubs out of the various banks and taking back empties to be filled. We make our way up one of the gates, and are soon at the face watching the actual working of the coal. By this time we are almost accustomed to the dim light of our lamps, and are getting skilled at clearing beams above or rollers and sleepers below; but we find it very trying to our backs to have to walk so much in a half-stooping position, and cease to wonder that so many of the older men look nearly doubled up. Coal-getting is all contract work. A stall, i.e., a part of the face from twenty to forty yards long, is allotted to one or more coal getters, who are paid at so much per ton for all they send out. Under them will be working one or two, and sometimes three or four fillers, who will be paid by the day. The ponies and pony drivers are generally provided and paid directly by the employers. There are a few places, however, where it is customary for a sort of contractor to take a district, comprising several stalls, and to find men, ponies, and everything. But the most usual way is for the colliery owners to provide ponies and lads and pay them directly, while the stall men pay their fillers. But here there is a curious division of authority. The stall men are responsible for, and have to pay their fillers; they have entire control of them while at their work; but generally they have no power either to engage or to get rid of them. A sort of custom in each pit mostly settles the details of the arrangement, as, for instance, how many fillers there shall be in each stall, what they shall be paid, and how much notice shall be taken of complaints about them from the stall men. But in case of any dispute, all authority lies with the manager or his deputies. The manager will settle what the filler shall be paid—though he has not got to pay him. He can send as many fillers into the stall as he thinks well—though the men who have to work it, and who will have to find their wages, may not want so many! So long as custom is sufficiently strong in any pit to regulate these little details, things go on fairly well in spite of the muddle, but a great deal of friction is often caused by it. And probably the arrangement is partly responsible for the abominable way in which some of the stall men nigger-drive their fillers. To the ordinary mind, drilled in modern commercial ideas, to be obliged to employ a man chosen by another, and whose wages are fixed by another, must seem quite a sufficient justification for nigger-driving!

As to wages it must be understood that there is a good deal of variation from district to district, and even between pits comparatively near together. But as things are now, with a total rise of 35 per cent. over the wages which were current a while back, the pony drivers and other lads will get from 1s. 8d. to about 2s. 6d. per day, according to their age, strength, etc., and their ages will vary from twelve to twenty. The fillers may be any age over eighteen, and their wages will run from 4s. 6d. or 4s. 8d. per day upwards; the top wage for old experienced hands, men who have been or could be stall men, is about 5s. 9d. The filler, according to the Act, must work two years at the face before he can take charge of a stall.

R. U.

(To be concluded.)

### THE "STAR" ON CO-OPERATION.

THE *Star* is greatly charmed at the progress of co-operation. In speaking of Lord Rosebery's speech at the recent congress at Glasgow, it says: "Lord Rosebery had a remarkable tale to tell of the progress of co-operation. A capital of four hundred and ninety-one millions realised in twenty-six years profits amounting to thirty-nine millions, and annual sales of two millions. These are healthy figures. . . . Accumulated capital was pushing co-operators forward; they did not go to the State whining for assistance; and they worked out their own salvation. This is a really noble record of self-help. When Socialists can show results like these, it will be time for them to appeal to the sympathy of the British public."

The profit of thirty-nine millions naturally catches the commercial eye of the editor of the *Star*. Perhaps it reminds him of the thirty pieces of silver, the price which Judas received for his treason. What was the amount of the subsidy which the *Star* received from Messrs. Gladstone and Morley for selling the Christ of modern Labour, the mocked, despised, and tortured? Or was it the promise of a free advertisement in Sir William Harcourt's speeches, or the prospect of a nice little sinecure, with a few hundreds yearly, in the next Liberal Government? We should like to know: will T. P. explain in his next issue? It might impart a little interest to a paper which is now as dull, stupid and respectable as the *Daily News* or the *Times*.

But let us return to our friends the co-operators. It is perfectly true that we cannot show high profits as the result of our work; but we can at least say we have not taught workmen to sweat their brothers. Can the co-operators say as much? Unlike Mr. T. P. O'Connor, we do not believe that the salvation of the people is to be obtained by the creation of a mass of small tyrants in the shape of peasant proprietors or small shareholders in co-operative factories or stores. And we regret to see a movement which was started by a noble and disinterested Socialist, Robert Owen, should sink into the petty greed of grasping traders or the cold cruel slavery of the infamous sweater. If the present system of co-operation really benefited the people, Lord Rosebery would not preside at these conferences; nor would they have the apostolic benediction of the editor of the *Star*.

As to the taunt concerning whining to the State for assistance, we leave that to a certain "able editor" in search of a "job." Whatever may be the opinion of the namby-pamby politicians who once pinned their faith to the coat-tails of T. P. O'Connor, we do not believe in State assistance. Nay, some day we may show capacities for "self help" which will considerably astonish capitalist Liberals and the traitorous pariahs, who fawn upon them and do their dirty work.

N.

## NEWS FROM NOWHERE:

OR,

## AN EPOCH OF REST.

BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

CHAP. XVII. (continued).—HOW THE CHANGE CAME.

"BUT the measures passed for the relief of the workers, though to the upper classes they seemed ruinously revolutionary, were not thorough enough to give the people food and a decent life, and they had to be supplemented by unwritten enactments without legality to back them. Although the Government and Parliament had the law-courts, the army and "society" at their backs, the Committee of Public Safety began to be a force in the country, and really represented the producing classes. It began to improve immensely in the days which followed on the acquittal of its members. Its old members had little administrative capacity, though with the exception of a few self-seekers and traitors, they were honest, courageous men, and many of them endowed with considerable talent. But now that the times called for immediate action, came forward the men capable of setting it on foot; and a great network of workmen's associations grew up very speedily, whose avowed object was the tiding over of the ship of the community into a simple condition of Communism; and as they practically undertook also the management of the ordinary labour war, they soon became the mouthpiece and intermediary of the whole of the working classes, and the manufacturing profit-grinders now found themselves powerless before this combination: unless their committee, Parliament, plucked up courage to begin the civil war again, and to shoot right and left, they were bound to yield to the demands of the men whom they employed, and pay higher and higher wages for shorter and shorter day's work. Yet one ally they had, and that was the rapidly approaching breakdown of the whole system founded on the world-market and its supply; which now became so clear to all people that the middle classes, shocked for the moment into condemnation of the Government for the great massacre, turned round nearly in a mass, and called on the Government to look to matters and put an end to the tyranny of the Socialist leaders.

"Thus stimulated, the reactionist plot exploded probably before it was ripe; but this time the people and their leaders were forewarned, and before the reactionaries could get under way had taken the steps they thought necessary.

"The Liberal Government (clearly by collusion) was beaten by the Conservatives, though the latter were nominally much in the minority. The popular representatives in the House understood pretty well what this meant, and after an attempt to fight the matter out by divisions in the House of Commons, they made a protest, left the House, and came in a body to the Committee of Public Safety: and the civil war began again in good earnest.

"Yet its first act was not one of mere fighting. The new Tory Government determined to act, yet durst not re-enact the state of siege, but it sent a body of soldiers and police to arrest the Committee of Public Safety in the lump. They made no resistance, though they might have done so, as they had now a considerable body of men who were quite prepared for extremities. But they were determined to try first a weapon which they thought stronger than street fighting.

"The members of the Committee went off quietly to prison; but they had left their soul and their organisation behind them. For they depended not on a carefully arranged centre with all kinds of checks and counter checks about it, but on a huge mass of people in thorough sympathy with the movement, officered by a great number of links of small centres with very simple instructions. These instructions were now carried out.

"The next morning, when the leaders of the reaction were chuckling at the effect which the report in the newspapers of their stroke would have upon the public—no newspapers appeared; and it was only towards noon that a few straggling sheets, about the size of the gazettes of the seventeenth century, worked by policemen, soldiers, managers, and press-writers, were dribbled through the streets. They were greedily seized on and read; but by this time the serious part of their news was stale, and people did not need to be told that the GENERAL STRIKE had begun. The railways did not run, the telegraph-wires were unworked; flesh, fish, and green stuff brought to market was allowed to lie there still packed and perishing; the thousands of middle-class families, who were utterly dependent for the next meal on the workers, made frantic efforts through their more energetic members to cater for the needs of the day, and amongst those of them who could throw off the fear of what was to follow, there was, I am told, a certain enjoyment of this unexpected picnic—a forecast of the days to come, in which all labour grew pleasant.

"So passed the first day, and towards evening the Government grew quite distracted. They had but one resource for putting down any popular movement—to wit, mere brute-force; but there was nothing for them against which to use their army and police: no armed bodies appeared in the streets; the offices of the federated workmen were now, in appearance at least, turned into places for the relief of people thrown out of work, and under the circumstances they durst not arrest the men engaged in such work; all the more, as even that night many quite respectable people applied at these offices for relief, and swallowed down the charity of the revolutionists along with their supper. So the Government massed soldiers and police here and there—and sat still for that night, fully expecting on the morrow some manifesto from 'the rebels,' as they now began to be called, which would give them an

opportunity of acting in some way or another. They were disappointed. The ordinary newspapers gave up the struggle that morning, and only one very violent reactionary paper (called the *Daily Telegraph*) attempted an appearance, and rated the 'rebels' in good set terms for their folly and ingratitude in tearing out the bowels of their 'common mother,' the English Nation, for the benefit of a few greedy paid agitators and the fools whom they were deluding. On the other hand, the Socialist papers (of which three only, representing somewhat different schools, were published in London) came out full to the throat of well-printed matter. They were greedily bought by the whole public, who, of course, like the Government, expected a manifesto in them. But they found no word of reference to the great subject. It seemed as if their editors had ransacked their drawers for articles which would have been in place forty years before, under the technical name of educational articles. Most of these were admirable and straightforward expositions of the doctrines and practice of Socialism, free from haste and spite and hard words, and came upon the public with a kind of May-day freshness, amidst the worry and terror of the moment; and though the knowing well understood that the meaning of this move in the game was mere defiance, and a token of irreconcilable hostility to the then rulers of society, and though, also, they were meant for nothing else by the rebels, yet they really had their effect as 'educational articles.' However, 'education' of another kind was acting upon them with irresistible power, and probably cleared their heads a little.

"As to the Government, they were absolutely terrified by the act of 'boycotting' (the slang word then current for such acts of abstention). Their counsels became wild and vacillating to the last degree: one hour they were for giving way for the present till they could hatch another plot; the next they all but sent an order for the arrest in the lump of all the workmen's committees; the next they were on the point of ordering their brisk young general to take any excuse that offered for another massacre. But when they called to mind that the soldiery in that 'Battle' of Trafalgar Square were so daunted by the slaughter which they had made that they could not be got to fire a second volley, they shrank back again from the dreadful courage necessary for carrying out another massacre. Meantime the prisoners, brought the second time before the magistrates under a strong escort of soldiers, were the second time remanded.

"The strike went on this day also. The workmen's committees were extended, and gave relief to great numbers of people, for they had organised a considerable amount of production of food by men whom they could depend upon. Quite a number of well-to-do people were now compelled to seek relief of them. But another curious thing happened: a band of young men of the upper classes armed themselves, and coolly went marauding in the streets, taking what suited them of such eatables and portables they came across in the shops which had ventured to open. This operation they carried out in Oxford Street, then a great street of shops of all kinds. The Government, being at that hour in one of their yielding moods, thought this a fine opportunity for showing their impartiality in the maintenance of 'order,' and sent to arrest these hungry rich youths; who, however, surprised the police by a valiant resistance, so that all but three escaped. The Government did not gain the reputation for impartiality which they expected from this move; for they forgot that there were no evening papers; and the account of the skirmish spread wide indeed, but in a distorted form, for it was mostly told simply as an exploit of the starving people from the East-end; and everybody thought it was but natural for the Government to put them down when and where they could."

WILLIAM MORRIS.

TO BE CONTINUED.]

(This Story began in No. 209, January 11, 1890. A few sets of Back Numbers can still be had.)

## 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING MEN'S CLUB, BERNER STREET, E.

THE 5th Anniversary of the above Club will be celebrated on Sunday, June 8th, 1890, on which occasion a Tea, Concert, and Ball will take place. Wm. Morris will preside, and among others who will address the gathering will be P. Kropotkin, Stepniak, J. Turner, Janovsky, H. Sparling, and Feigénbaum; C. Graham, M.P., and John Burns are also expected. The Hammer-smith choir will render revolutionary songs. To begin at 4 p.m.

**Cours Fund.**—Amount already acknowledged—£28 18s. 10d. Received—And. Scheu, 5s.; A Friend, 1s. 6d.; Etudiant en Médecine, 2s.; J. Tochetti, 5s.

**ERRATUM.**—Comrade W. H. Chapman presided over the Annual Conference, not E. C. Chapman, as stated in last week's issue.

**SHEFFIELD.**—Our comrade Bruce Glasier of Glasgow has been with us during Saturday and Sunday, and gave us some stirring addresses. We held two meetings on Saturday, three on Sunday, and one on Monday, at which about 230 *Commonweal* were sold, and many more could have been sold had we not sold quite out of the first six quires early on Sunday. A quantity of other literature was sold. Next week we open a campaign in the mining districts; and generally must report splendid progress; fine meetings, growing interest taken in our propaganda by all sections of workers, and a largely increased sale of literature. R. Bingham, J. Bingham, Bullas, and Charles addressed these various meetings, and were opposed at Rotherham by a typical Mr. Stiggins in the shape of a local Methodist parson, who told us we should have equality in heaven, but it was wicked to strive for it here. He further told us that he preached fifty-two Sundays in the year for no payment, but after being pressed by Glasier, he admitted that he received some £100 or so for the other six days in the week for attending to the secular work of the church.—F. CHARLES.



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.

Advertisements can only be inserted if unobjectionable in all particulars. Scales of charges and special quotations may be obtained from the Manager.

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Remittances from abroad must be made by International Money Order.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CORRESPONDENTS who order literature should prepay postage, or state if they wish their parcels to be sent per rail or carrier, "carriage forward." To prevent inconvenience, subscribers and friends will please note that the following pamphlets are out of print:—Useful Work v. Useless Toil—Aims of Art—Address to Trades Unions—Organised Labour. These will shortly be reprinted. Speeches of the Chicago Anarchists now in the press. L. H. (Manchester).—"Socialism in England," by Sydney Webb (Sonnenschein, 12, Paternoster Square; price 2s. 6d.) is probably the work you want.

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Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday June 4.

ENGLAND	Boston	HOLLAND
Justice	Woman's Journal	Hague—Recht voor Allen
London—Freie Presse	Investigator	Middelburg, Lichten Wahrheit
Labour Tribune	Nationalist	BELGIUM
Norwich—Daylight	Buffalo—Arbeiter-Zeitung	Antwerp—De Werker
Railway Review	Chicago (Ill)—Vorboten	Ghent—Vooruit
Rochdale Observer	Cincinnati (O.) Volks-Anwalt	ITALY
Sozial Demokrat	Detroit—Der Arme Teufel	Milan—Il Fascio Operaio
Unity	Philadelphia—United Labour	GERMANY
Worker's Friend	S.F. Coast Seaman's Journal	Berlin—Volks Tribune
INDIA	Paterson Labour Standard	AUSTRIA
Bankipore—Behar Herald	Anarchist	Brunn—Volksfreund
UNITED STATES	FRANCE	DENMARK
New York—Truthseeker	Paris—La Revolte	Social-Demokraten
New York—Der Sozialist	Paris—Bourse du Travail	Copenhagen—Arbejderen
New York—Freiheit	Le Parti ouvrier	SWEDEN
Labour Advocate	Le Proletariat	Stockholm, Social-Demokraten
Twentieth Century	Little—Le Cri du Travailleur	Malmö—Arbetet
Volkszeitung	Lyon—L'Action Sociale	

ANTI-PARLIAMENTARY.

MOST of those into whose hands this paper will fall know that as the organ of the Socialist League the *Commonweal* advocates abstention from Parliamentary action; that the Socialist League neither puts forward candidates, nor advises its members to vote for this that or the other candidate; that the readers of these columns will indeed find Parliament mentioned in them, but never with respect, and most commonly only to point the moral of the corruption of these latter days of capitalism. Our policy is, in short, abstention from all attempts at using the constitutional machinery of government, whereas

to some Socialists this seems the only means of bringing us to the verge of the Social Revolution. Now this policy of abstention seems to some mere folly, and perhaps to others seems inexplicable. Let us, then, try to explain it, and leave others to call us fools if they needs must after having listened to our explanation.

What is the purpose of Socialist propaganda? Surely it intends to make it clear to all the working-classes that society (so-called) as it exists to-day, is founded on the robbery of the "lower" classes by the "upper," of the useful by the useless, of the many by the few; that so long as this privileged robbery goes on, those who do all the useful work that is done will be constantly deprived of the refinements of life which are supposed to make the difference between the civilised man and the savage; while their lives will be much more laborious and much more pleasureless than the lives of most savages. In short, thorough discontent with their position and a sense of its unfairness is the first thing we want to impress on the minds of the workers.

Next, we want to make it clear to them that this position of slavery, this unfairness which makes them so wretched and so bitter, is not a necessary condition for those who live by producing the wealth of the country (that is, the only people in it who have a chance of being honest); that these working-men and women could still work, live, and be useful if they were working for each other, that is to say, for their friends and not for their privileged masters, *i.e.*, their enemies.

Again, we have to make it clear to the workers that this privilege of a few to compel the many to live miserably, is merely an explanation of the phrase, *The institution of private property*; that he who declares that he wishes to abolish privilege means to say that he wishes to abolish the Institution of private property; that he who defends the Institution of private property defends privilege, the gross inequality of rich and poor, the consequent misery of all genuine workers, and the consequent degradation of people of all classes. Let it be clearly understood that only two systems of society are possible, SLAVERY and COMMUNISM; all who know the A B C of Socialism know that this is so. Communism or the abolition of the individual ownership of property is our aim, the aim of all real Socialists.

Will Parliament help us towards the accomplishment of this aim? Take another question as an answer to that first question. What is the aim of Parliament? The upholding of privilege; the society of rich and poor; the society of inequality, and the consequent misery of the workers and the degradation of all classes.

Clearly if this is its aim, its reason for existence, it will only exchange its aim for ours if it be compelled to do so, or deluded into doing so.

Can it be forced? Well, Parliament is the master of the Executive; that is to say, of the brute force which compels the useful classes to live miserably; it will use that brute force to compel those classes into submission as long as it dares. When it no longer dares, it will practically no longer exist. Now I, for my part, say as I have always said, that in the last act of the Revolution the Socialists may be obliged to use the form of Parliament in order to cripple the resistance of the reactionists by making it formally illegal, and so destroying the power of the armed men on whom the power of the parliament and the law-courts really rests. But this can only come in the last act; when the Socialists are strong enough to capture the parliament in order to put an end to it, and the privilege whose protection is its object, the revolution will have come, or all but come. Meantime, it is clear that we cannot compel Parliament to put an end to its own existence; or, indeed, to do anything which it does not believe will conduce to the stability of Privilege, or the slavery of the workers.

Well, then, can we jockey Parliament into Socialism, into Communism? It seems to me a most hopeless enterprise. We shall not find it difficult, perhaps, to put so much pressure upon it as to make it pass measures for "the amelioration of the lot of the working classes." But what will that mean save the "dishing" of the Socialists?—who, if they do not take care, will find that instead of using Parliament, they will be used by it. Let us remember, too, that the knowledge of Socialism is growing with tremendous rapidity, and that even M.P.'s and their wirepullers will soon get to know what it means, and will then strain their ingenuity to take the sting out of any measures that look Socialistic on the outside; or at last, and perhaps before long, will stiffen themselves up into mere rejection of anything that looks like Socialism. The failure of the attempt to capture the *Star* for the parliamentary Socialists ought to be a sufficient lesson to them of the power of the reactionists, Liberal as well as Conservative, and the way in which they will refuse to be driven into a corner.

Well, then, if we cannot force Parliament to declare its function of safeguarding privilege at an end, when it is obviously in vigorous life; if we cannot jockey it into furthering the very thing which it hates most, and has most reason to hate—Socialism, to wit—what can we do? "Nothing," say our parliamentary friends. I cannot see that. Is it nothing to keep alive and increase discontent with the vile slavery of to-day? Is it nothing to show the discontented that they can themselves destroy that slavery? Is it nothing to point out to them what lies beyond the period of struggle, and how workers can be happy when they are not robbed of all the pleasure of life by the idlers that live upon their labour?

Moreover, the events of the last twelve months are producing a different spirit in the mass of the workers, and they are now beginning to learn how to combine in earnest. It is now far more hopeful than it was five years ago to turn their attention from the Parliament of their masters to their own organisation. In short, the true weapon of the workers as against Parliament is not the ballot-box but the *Boycott*. Ignore Parliament; let it alone, and strengthen your own



organisations to deal directly with your masters in the present, and to learn how to manage your own affairs both now and for the future, and keep steadily in mind, and work for, the day when you will have to use the great weapon which your own wretched position of unrewarded toil puts into your hands, the weapon of the *general strike*. See to this, and let politicians elect politicians; let the upper and middle classes by themselves choose for themselves members of the Committee for the Continuance of Slavery, which should be the name of the House of Commons, and you will see what terror you will inspire in the hearts of the canting hypocrites who call themselves statesmen. A terror which will be fully warranted by events; for such an anti-parliamentary boycott will show your determination to be free, and will give you the instrument of attaining your freedom.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

## INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

### FRANCE.

Republican France has rendered to despotic Russia the service of arresting a number of Russian Socialists who were engaged, as it appears, in some scientific experiments destined to advance the progress of chemistry. The Czar and his Government don't like chemistry, and the pseudo-republican ministry of democratic France must, of course, now and then do something, however contemptible it may be, to preserve their alliance with autocratic czarism. Hence the arrest of comrades Reichstein (man and wife), Feodorovna, Bromberg, Nakatchiz, Stepanoff, Katchinzen, Pefloff, Wolgrine, Lavremius, Atschinazi, Diemski, and Mendelsohn. The police have also searched the apartments of our esteemed comrade Peter Lavroff, but without success. According to French law, the possession of such engines as those found in the lodgings of some of the arrested Socialists would bring them within the power of the criminal code. It is very strange indeed that people should not be allowed to study chemistry as much as they like.

The French Possibilists have sustained a great loss through the death of their most prominent leader, the veteran Chabert, member of the Municipal Council of Paris, who died a few days ago, at the age of seventy-two. He took an active part in the revolutionary movements of February and June 1848, June 1849, December 1851, and of the Commune of 1871.

The fifth issue of the monthly review, *L'Idee nouvelle* (The New Idea) has appeared at Paris, and we are requested by the editors to note the contents of the May number. Here they are: The First of May; The German Bully, by Chirac; The Relativist Altruist Socialists, by Jac; The Victims of Work, by J. Dormoy; Gambling, by Caron; The Social Republic; Socialist Ephemerides; Evolution and Darwinism, by Rendoz; Economic and Social Enquiry, by Bopartz; Literary Review, by Lefebvre; Belgian Correspondence, by Henrion; Ascanio, by Gervaise; International Socialist Gallery: Edouard Vaillant, by Pasquin.

Comrades August Chirac, one of the editors of *L'Egalité*, and Chammiën, publisher of the same paper, who had been sentenced to six months' imprisonment and a heavy fine for having incited to rebellion, have now been acquitted by a superior court.

### GERMANY.

The Socialist muzzle-laws are not to be renewed, as our readers know, but it seems that the magistrates are inclined to replace them, as well as they possibly can, by increasing the dose of "jail" for those who happen to fall within the power of the penal code. A fortnight ago Karl Schulze, editor of the *Thüringer Tribune*, was sentenced to four months' imprisonment for having "offended" the Director of the Royal Gun-manufacture at Erfurt, by saying that he had reduced the wages of his workers. At Zwickau, a labourer was found guilty of having libelled a director of a coal-pit by asserting that he had committed a breach of confidence, and he got one year's imprisonment for it!

The strike funds of the lightermen at Hamburg, together with the whole of the papers of their committee, have been seized by the police. The money found only amounted to some two hundred marks. The strike is now regarded as at an end.

Through combination of the manufacturers of Maingau, ten thousand workers, engaged in the shoe-materials trade, have been thrown out of work, and relief is badly wanted. Friedrich Weinreich, Herrnstrasse, 46, Offenbach on the Main, has volunteered to receive any assistance that may be sent. At Gera, three thousand weavers have also received notice to quit the works, because they refused to submit to new regulations which they considered as being unfair and oppressive. Fifteen thousand of their fellow-workers in the town and neighbourhood have resolved to stop work "on principle."

### AUSTRIA-HUNGARY.

On the 28th of last month the first issue of a weekly Socialist organ, entitled *Delnicky Listy*, has appeared at Vienna, under the editorship of comrade Joseph Tobola. The offices of the paper are: VI, Gumperdorferstrasse, 79, Vienna.

From the 1st of June appears, also at Vienna, another working-men's paper, under the title of *Arbeiterschütz* (Protection of Workers), which will be published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Austrian Relief Societies. The editors intend to deal chiefly with insurance and labour legislation questions. Offices: VI, Gumperdorferstrasse, 64.

### BELGIUM.

Several conferences have of late taken place in Belgium. The International Miners' Conference at Jolimont, Province of Hainault, has so far resulted in a considerable success. It has been resolved that a general strike shall be set on foot next May Day. This decision, if the miners stick to it, is certainly a very important one.

Another congress, that of the Belgian Relief Societies, has been held at Ghent, under the auspices of the Executive of the Belgian *Parti ouvrier*. Twenty delegates represented some seventy thousand confederates. It has been decided to create a Federation of all the Relief Societies working under Socialist principles, and also to hold another conference in September next, for the purpose of examining and discussing the rules and regulations of the new Federation.

A new Socialist paper has appeared at Brussels, under the title of *La*

*Réforme Sociale* (the Social Reform), and will be issued weekly, with comrade Octave Berger as chief editor. The offices of the paper are: 15, rue des Petits-Carmes. The new venture intends to do popular and conciliatory work in the field of revolutionary, independent, and scientific Socialism. We hope that comrade Berger, who is an acute thinker, will succeed in his task. At any rate, he has our best wishes.

### DENMARK.

The stonemasons of Copenhagen are still out on strike, and their energy in the battle has from the very beginning been really astounding. They claim a workday of nine hours and wages at the rate of 34 cents an hour. Five hundred masons have already left Copenhagen, in order to work elsewhere, and so to relieve their fellow-labourers on strike. The committee of the strike, however, finding that outside assistance has become necessary, have issued an appeal for help and solidarity, and ask that all subscriptions may be sent to P. C. Olsen, 22, Romersgade, Copenhagen.

Our friends of the *Fedraheimen* have issued a very good pamphlet of sixty-four pages, entitled "Kann politikken hjelpe oss?" (Can Politics Help Us?), and, of course, the question is answered in the negative. The author of the pamphlet is our comrade R. Steinsvik, one of the editors of the *Fedraheimen*.

### ENGLAND.

The East London Communist-Anarchist Group have started the monthly issue of a paper, entitled *The Anarchist Labour Leaf*. The first number contains three articles very well written indeed, and we have no hesitation in saying that this *Leaf* of our East-end comrades deserves to be encouraged and spread as widely as possible. I understand that some three or four thousand copies have been sent gratis, and that in future a larger number still will be circulated in the same way, but for that purpose money is of course urgently needed. Those who feel inclined to help the little paper, can enter into communication with comrade H. McKenzie, 12, Basing Place, Kingsland Road, London, E.C.

This week appears, also in London, the first issue of a 20 pp. journal, called *Free Russia*, which contains information for Western Europe concerning the atrocities of Czarism.

V. D.

## IN AUSTRALIA.

HENRY GEORGE has been here, as you already know, and the visit has done us good in many ways. Not that the profit-hunter of San Francisco is any more on our side now than for a long while past. Oh no! he is even more decorous and modestly but firmly respectable than ever before. But he has been troubling the waters, and we have been fishing therein. Before he came, there had been a good deal of talk about his double-posing campaign as a quick-change artiste, appearing alternately as a Free Trade hawk and the "inspiring influence" of the Single Tax, and there were several controversies in the papers, of which we duly took all the advantage we were allowed to. While he was here we heckled him all we could, and the result was that his "arguments" against us got worn too smooth by constant use to pass current any more, and he finally refused to answer us anywhere, or to meet any of us in debate. However, we still managed to keep up a scattering fire of correspondence in different papers, and have also held lectures and debates upon his alleged panacea. I don't think he will ever have much of a following here, whatever he may have elsewhere; not that I should imagine it likely that the Single Tax would ever arouse much enthusiasm in the most eager and soulful breast—it is such a queer and undefined halting-place that those who have once started on the road of progress are not likely to stop short there; for there is nothing to stick to or hold by, and if they didn't go further on they would soon find themselves sliding down again on the back-track. We have published a pamphlet on the subject, which has been having a great run at George's meetings.

On Sunday last (Easter Sunday, April 6th), W. H. McNamara lectured at our rooms on "Henry George and Charles Bradlaugh: their attitude on the Labour Question," and the lecture was well reported in Friday's *Australian Star*. There was a right good audience, as there usually is now, both in numbers and in attention and enthusiasm, who punctuated the various points made by the lecturer with cheers and laughter. After referring to the action of the Trades and Labour Council of New South Wales, in refusing to take any part in the reception of Henry George as "he was no friend of labour," our comrade went on to detail the various phases of "the prophet's" picturesque and varied career, giving chapter and verse for most of his statements, and in all the large audience there wasn't a hand or a heart for George when the record was closed. That is only one meeting, of which I tell you as a sample, because it happens to be the last; the same sort of thing has been going on pretty widely, and has had, and will still more have, far-reaching effects. Bradlaugh was also handled without gloves. I will say there for Australians, that Bradlaugh began to be seen through here even before you on that side woke up to what he was.

But beating Henry George has not been our only work; we have only used him and the stir he made as a means of increasing our propaganda. We have to thank our chief enemy for helping us, at second-hand and reflectively as it were, by helping him. The *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, like its name-sake over your way, a snuffing compound of hollow cant, self-seeking hypocrisy, and ready prostitution for profit's sake, started correspondences on George and the Single-tax, and, following the example of its notorious name-sake, hired penny-a-liners to fight as gladiators on either side in the arena of its correspondence columns. So that it worked up quite a boom, and "everybody" talked of its conversion to the Single-tax. But the *Telegraph* was only playing a game, and it played it pretty low down too. The *Bulletin* comments on the affair in words that some of you at home might think of with profit as well as us:

"The Single-taxers now realise that they have been tricked and deceived. We are not sorry for them. Had their aggregated *crania* contained one grain of common-sense they would not have expected any other result. What—the *Telegraph* go straight for confiscation? What would become of Chairman Carey's mortgages? of Director Robert Sands' land-boom money? of largest Shareholder Gorman's enormous real-property-sales commissions? of Shareholder Walter Hall's Mount Morgan dividends? Did the cranks ever dream that a journal of which Bruce Smith, of the British Liberty and Property Defence League, is a reputed, and land-anchoneer Mills, a certain stockholder, would ever yell boldly for plunder by Act of Parliament, and shriek for legislative sanction to grasp it and smash at one swoop both the major source of its advertising income—land-sale "ads."—and the chief element of its subscription revenue—the pennies of Bill Jones and Tom Smith, who have sunk a life-time's hard-earned savings in a suburban allotment? If they did they are crankier than even we considered them. The Single-taxers merit no sympathy. They

may be clothed with the ashes of humiliation and in the sackcloth of despair, and the popular verdict is 'Serve 'em right.' They sought to use the *Telegraph*, and it has used them."

But the *Telegraph* helped to make the boom, and though it has eched the Georgites it hasn't hurt us, and as I said before we have been getting a good deal out of the stir.

The labour movement in general here is moving along at a great rate. Of course, the bulk of it takes trade-union form as yet; but one instructive sign of the times is the dislike for isolation that the different unions all show. Big or little, they are all on the track for federation—first of all local trades, then of the same trade inter-colonially, and then of all trades the same way; presently we shall see a federation of trades that means the organised labour of a continent; "the days of labour clans are nearly at an end." Here in Sydney there is a Trades and Labour Council of New South Wales, which, though one might well wish it would use its power better and go further on the right road, I am glad to say is getting stronger continually. Of course, they are still under the parliamentary superstition, and have drawn up a programme and will support candidates. If a "labour candidate" runs he must be a member of and accepted by his trade union; but if no labour candidate is running in any constituency, whichever of the ordinary candidates accepts the programme will get the support. The platform is as follows:

1. Abolition of plural voting. 2. Free and compulsory education. 3. Legislation on eight hours system. 4. A beneficial factories act. 5. Greater protection of persons engaged in the mining industry. 6. Extension of the franchise to seamen. 7. Extension to seamen of the benefit of the Employers' Liability Act. 8. Supervision of land and boilers, and the protection of persons engaged in such pursuits. 9. An elective Upper House. 10. Any measure that will secure for the wage-earner a fair and equitable return for his or her labour. 11. Amendment of the Masters and Servants Act. 12. Amendment of the Masters and Apprentices Act. 13. Amendment of the Trades Union Act.

Our great want is a labour paper. W. A. Higgs, who started the *Labour Advocate*, which broke down after two or three good numbers, has still two libel actions hanging over his head, and nobody seems inclined to take on the job after him. Up in Queensland they have the *Worker*, of which you will have seen two numbers already. It's about the brightest and best thing we've had on this continent—meaning no disrespect to the *Boomerang* or *Bulletin*. This is a sample of its doctrine:

"Henry George is one of those American reformers who are running frantic on the 'Australian method of voting,' which is being fought for across the Pacific as enthusiastically as Prohibition ever was. That seems funny, at this distance. To Australian workers, who know only that here in Queensland a square foot can vote in every electorate, while a square man can wander voteless from one end of the country to the other, it is a huge joke."

The bakers here have struck, and are still on strike, for eight hours. They are slowly but surely gaining a victory, as shop after shop is giving in and taking on union hands. The Sydney millers have decided to federate with them and also with Victorian millers and bakers. This is the sort of thing I spoke of above. The Inter-colonial Wharf Labourers' Conference, which has been sitting here, also agreed to federate all the wharf labourers' societies right throughout Australasia. Thursday fortnight (March 27) the Dunedin (N.Z.) tramway men had a midnight meeting and resolved to form a union; they have been working quite as long hours as in London.

Sydney, N.S.W., Sunday April 13, 1890.

CORNSTALK.

## THE LABOUR STRUGGLE.

### The International Miners' Conference.

The most important resolution passed at the Conference of Miners is the following; that "The Congress declares itself in principle in favour of an international strike of miners, so as to bring about the triumph of the movement in favour of an eight-hours working day, and resolves that a second Congress shall assemble in April, 1891, to examine this question." This resolution, although it does not necessarily mean that a general strike will take place on May 1st, 1891, at least pledges the miners to the strike as a question of principle. This is in every way a step in the right direction. When we remember that the Congress was not a revolutionary one, for the Continental miners represented there were mainly Social Democrats, and yet they united with English trade-unionists to pass a resolution which they would have looked upon a little time back as dangerous and revolutionary. This would once have been thought impossible; but it has come to pass. How long will it take us now to permeate the workers of the world to go in for a general strike not only for the eight hours, but for the Social Revolution? Even that seems at present within "a measurable distance."

The Congress has been in every way encouraging. English and Continental miners seem to have in their hearts that feeling of international solidarity which is rather lacking among "British" delegates of the Shipton and Broadhurst school. The only note of sadness in the Congress was the description by the Continental delegates of the horrible tyranny exercised by the capitalists upon the wretched workers. Let me give a few instances. The report for the Charleroi district in Belgium (the country of that most Christian king who wants to "civilise" the Africans with the aid of Mr. Stanley) said that there were 18,000 union men in the district. Many women worked in the mines as hewers, working twelve to sixteen hours per day for 1s. 6d. to 1s. 9d. We wonder if this is the kind of Christian civilisation Leopold would like to extend among the "heathen." Another delegate, M. Fauvian, reporting for the Boninage district of Belgium, said the men worked from twelve to thirteen hours per day, the wages being from 3s. 2d. to 3s. 4d. per day; those who looked after the woodwork getting 1s. 8d. to 2s. 6d. per day. Women worked in the mines, and also on the pit bank. Children were allowed to work at fourteen year old. When the women got to be sixteen years of age, many of them filled per day seventy trucks of fifty hectolitres capacity. The Bohemian delegate reported that the average hours per day in Bohemia was about twelve; but if the masters required, they had to work longer, and sometimes they were in the mine more than twenty-four hours (cries of "Shame"). Children began work at fourteen years of age. The men earned 50s. to 58s. per month. The children got about 10d. per day.

And yet Mr. Burt is surprised at Continental workmen being "violent." Besides the resolution concerning the general strike, the miners have decided to form an International Federation Committee, each country to send two delegates; and a resolution was passed condemning the tyranny of Con-

tinental despots. On the whole, the Congress was wonderfully successful, and the international union of the miners is now no longer a dream.

### The Beckton Gas Stokers.

Matters are growing worse and worse at Beckton. The Gas-light and Coke Company are not content with turning the men out by the help of "the iron man" but want to reduce their wages from 5s. 9d. a day (the rate of payment which the men have received from Nov. 16th, 1889) to 5s. 4d. They also want to play the Livesey game by tying the men down to a monthly agreement, while they shall be able to discharge workmen at a moment's notice and confiscate their wages. If the company persist in their present tyranny, it seems by no means improbable that a strike may break out, which will spread to all the gas-works of the Gas-light and Coke Company. If the men strike they must make it a general one, and must leave without notice. It won't do to give the company time to bring up blacklegs, and it certainly won't do to allow them to beat the union in detail. Chivalry is a mistake with these huge corporations, they have no consideration for their men. Let the gas stokers remember how the South London men were beaten, and how the company trampled on them when they were down, simply because of the men's moderation.

### The Postmen.

More coercion. The Postmaster-General is determined to smash the Union. Thirty postmen have had the following form sent to them. It says: "You are requested to give an immediate explanation why you attended a meeting on the 16th instant, in contravention of the special instructions given in the printed notice issued by the Postmaster-General." This of course refers to the postmen's meeting held on Clerkenwell Green on the same night as the Postal Jubilee celebration at the Guildhall. It was on their way to this meeting that the postmen's processions were broken up by the police with such brutality. The spirit of revolt is strong among the postmen, and the proclamations forbidding them to go to the meeting had to be guarded in the post offices to prevent them being torn or defaced.

### Pity the Poor Police.

We confess that our hearts are not deeply stirred at the sad case of the unfortunate policeman. It is true that 24s. a-week, with a small pension at the end of your career, is a not tempting prospect, but still it is better than that of many unskilled labourers, who earn but 20s., and have the workhouse as a refuge after toiling all their lives to make profit for others. Still, it is an ominous sign of the times for the middle classes that the police should be so discontented that they should be talking of striking. We are afraid, however, that it is only talk. We should sooner expect a strike of flunkies than a strike of dastardly bullies who have bludgeoned old men, women, and children at the command of the despot of Scotland Yard. Some may consider this very unkind. But we can't help it. We have not forgotten Trafalgar Square. We are willing, however, to give the police a chance of repentance. *Let them begin their strike next time they are called upon to bludgeon a peaceable procession.* Then we shall believe them in earnest, and will treat them as brothers. But so long as they are only "courageous" in attacking poor, half-starved London workmen, we own we cannot feel very fraternally towards them. Still, the agitation has frightened the chiefs of the force. At the meeting on Clerkenwell Green a police superintendent was very conspicuous in urging upon the men not to listen to the "agitators."

### Police Spies at Workmen's Meetings.

Throughout the Miners' Congress in Belgium some police spies were present, and were denounced by some of the delegates. The editor of the *Labour Tribune* seized the opportunity to sing "Rule Britannia," and pointed out that in this matter "how peculiarly blest we are above the French and German." Cunningshame Graham wrote and replied that the editor is labouring under a slight delusion. Police spies are present at public meetings in England. He says:

"All through the unemployed agitation three years ago in London, police spies disguised as reporters were present at every meeting. During the recent strike in Liverpool the same thing happened. It happens at every large meeting in London. Now, though I agree with you that in some things we are in advance of the "blarsted furriner," still it is not well to assume that we entirely leave him behind in all things. This is, I take it, the position of affairs. In most foreign countries (United States included) the hatred of employers and employed is open and not disguised. The employer relies on his Maxim gun, like a Ben Benjeers as he is; the employed relies on the force of his numbers, and watches his opportunity. It is war to the knife, as Chicago and Paris know. Here in England the employers are not so stupid. Whilst relying on the Gatling gun (the great aid to law-'n'-order) as a last resource, and not in the least hesitating to use it if required, they see that humbug is still stronger and more potent. So they pretend to be the friends of the workers, and as Whig, Tory, or Radical, shoot them down with the bullets of cant, and damn it (Yes, must print me a damn), the workers fall into the trap, and, instead of laying down their lives as on the Continent, lay down their independence and become the dupes of those who pretend to be their friends. The friend of the working-classes is not and cannot be Gladstone, Salisbury, Parnell, Chamberlain, Churchill, nor even Cunningshame Graham. All these folks live off rent interest and surplus value. Therefore the friends of the workers are those who do not live off these things, i.e., themselves. However, to our police spies. They are as common in England as blackberries, as thieves on the Stock Exchange, or as duffers in the House of Commons. At least, the foreigner knows his enemy. Here in Merry England he too often hugs him to his breast and raises three cheers for him." The editor does not like Graham's criticism, with which I think all Socialists will agree. The editor says all he meant to say was that police spies are not present at Trade Conferences. Possibly not, because up till now trade unionists have been so very fond of law-'n'-order. But I think that if the English miners decide to join in the General Strike, they will not be able to boast much longer of their freedom from police supervision.

### International Labour League and Federation.

A special delegate meeting is called by this organisation for Saturday June 7th, 1890, at 4 p.m., at the East Finsbury Radical Club, 134 City Road, James Macdonald in the chair. All organisations interested in the spreading of international combination are invited to send delegates to attend. The following manifesto has been issued by the Provisional Executive Committee:

"FELLOW WORKING MEN,—The great cause of the recent May Demonstrations all over the civilised world was the principle of the international solidarity of all workers. Capitalism is international, and international therefore must be the

efforts of the awakening proletariat. And to strengthen the spirit of internationalism in this country, there is necessary a lasting strong organisation of the workers of all nationalities, slaving on these islands for the benefit of the capitalist classes. The recently-formed International Labour League and Federation, which already comprises fifteen different organisations, aims to become such an organisation, the following being its objects: 1. The wider and better organisation of all workers, skilled and unskilled, male and female, of all nationalities. 2. To give assistance in case of dispute in any of the affiliated organisations. 3. The diffusion of sound information on all questions affecting labour. 4. The agitation and organisation among the workers who are outside all present organisations. 5. International exchanges, preventing the supply of foreign labour during trade disputes. 6. And finally to take all possible steps to bring about the federation of all workers in all countries."

The Provisional Executive Committee is composed of delegates of the following societies, from whom further information may be obtained: M. Eagle (International Working Men's Educational Club); S. Fischbein (United Capmakers' Society); J. Land (International Labour League and Federation); S. Levy (Amalgamated Boot and Shoe Lasters' Society); M. Lightman (International Stick and Cane Dressers' Union; J. Macdonald (Amalgamated Society of Tailors, and L.T.C.); A. Siegel (Amalgamated Society of Tailors); J. Skitten (Vice-President, London Clothing Machinists' Union), *Treasurer pro tem.*; Ferdinand Gilles (Communist Working Men's Club), 26 Robert Street, Hampstead Road, N.W., *Joint Secretary pro tem.*; F. Verhoeven (United Stick and Cane Dressers', Umbrella Makers' and Mounters' Trade Union), 9 Nelson Street, Hackney Road, N.E., *Joint Secretary pro tem.*

We think that this is an excellent movement, and from what we know of the honesty and integrity of its promoters, we recommend all trade organisations to take part. The committee is thoroughly international, and trade unions by sending their delegates to the meeting will do much to bring about, not only the federation of workers in this country, but will do much to realise the grand aim of all Socialists, the international solidarity of the workers of the world.

## 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.

**Executive.**—We wish to draw the attention of Branches to the decision of the Conference re Branch Reports, viz., "That monthly records of the work done, condition of the workers, etc., be, where practicable, substituted for the short weekly reports."

**Branch Subscriptions Paid.**—1889:—Bradford, to end of April. Yarmouth, to end of May. Mitcham, to end of November. St. Georges East, to end of December.

1890:—Leicester and North Kensington, to end of April. Glasgow, Oxford, Hammersmith, North London, East London, 'Commonweal' Branch, Manchester, and Norwich, to end of May. Streatham, to end of December.

(Branch Secretaries will please send with remittances for Capitations the number of their membership.)

**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.

### NEW PREMISES FUND.

Collected at Council meeting, June 2nd, 5s. 4½d.

### "COMMONWEAL" GUARANTEE FUND.

The following further sums have been received towards this fund:—North London Branch, 6s.; B. W. J., H. R. (2 weeks), 2s.; 'Commonweal' Branch, 16s. 10½d.; P. Webb (3 weeks), 3s.; J. Bines, 1s.; Burnie, 10s.; C. Saunders, 2s.; A. F. H., 5s.; Glasgow Branch, 5s.; W. M., 14s.; and G. C. B., 4s.

## REPORTS.

**HAMMERSMITH.**—On Sunday morning at Bridge End, an excellent meeting; speakers were Morris, Davis, Tochatti, A. J. Smith, and H. Grant; 48 *Weals* sold. In the evening at Walham Green splendid meeting, H. H. Sparling speaking for upwards of three-quarters of an hour; Bullock and S. Grant also spoke; 19 *Weals* sold.—W.

**KILBURN.**—A very large gathering was addressed here by Mrs. Lahr on Sunday morning; 54 *Weals* sold. Many more could have been disposed of if a larger stock had been provided.

**NORTH LONDON.**—We have been holding some very successful meetings during the past three weeks. At our Saturday meetings in Hyde Park we sell about 40 *Weals*. At Regent's Park last Sunday we sold 80 *Commonweal* and collected 4s. 4½d., Cantwell, Nicoll, and Mowbray being the speakers. In Hyde Park on Sunday afternoon, the speakers were Cantwell, Parker, Miss Lupton, Mrs. Lahr, and Mainwaring; 78 *Commonweal* sold and 4s. 4d. collected.

**GLASGOW.**—On Sunday at mid-day on Jail Square, a fine meeting, addressed by Joe Burgoyne, was broken up before we had got right under way by a heavy downpour of rain. In the evening at Paisley Road, Joe and Tim Burgoyne spoke to a very large audience; *Weals* sold out.—J. B.

**EDINBURGH—SCOTTISH SOCIALIST FEDERATION.**—We had a very successful meeting on the Meadows on Sunday; Mackenzie, Hamilton, Davidson, Smith, and Bell all spoke well. There was slight opposition. *Commonweal* sold out.

**LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST SOCIETY.**—We held two meetings on Sunday. The morning attendance was excellent, owing to the Y.M.C.A. people again occupying our usual stand. We, however, took up our position back to back with them. While they sang hymns we sang the "Marseillaise" and other songs with considerable vigour, the audience giving three hearty cheers for the social revolution. In the afternoon we had a quiet meeting. Thanks to our Christian opponents, we sold 11s. 5d. worth of literature, and collected 3s.

**CHESTERFIELD.**—A good meeting was held last Sunday morning on Brimington Common; Andrew Hall spoke. In the evening a large audience assembled in the Market Place, and in spite of the rain, kept together and listened attentively to the addresses given by comrades Hall and Edward Carpenter. Shortland, of Sheffield, sang two songs. Three quires of *Commonweal* sold, and some pamphlets. The collection amounted to 5s. 8½d.

**ROCHDALE SOCIALISTS.**—Meetings held every evening at 28 Blackwater Street, Rochdale.

## LECTURE DIARY.

### LONDON.

**Battersea.**—All communications to E. Buteux, 45, Inwith Street, Battersea Park Road.  
**Commonweal Branch.**—24 Great Queen Street, Holborn, W.C. Tuesdays, Singing Practice. Thursdays, Business meeting. Saturdays, Social Gathering. On Sunday June 8, at 8 p.m., A. Brookes, "Order without Law."  
**East London.**—A meeting of members will take place at 12 Basing Place, Kingsland Road, at 7.30. Comrades of St. George's-in-the-East are requested to attend.  
**Hammersmith.**—Kelmscott House, Upper Mall, W. Sunday June 8, at 8 p.m., a Lecture. French Class conducted by Mde. Desroches on Friday evenings at 7.30.  
**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. The branch Band meets every Friday at 8 p.m. for practice. Comrades wishing to join to give in their names to the Instructor at the above address.  
**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 Hall, 9 Harriet Street, on Sunday evenings at 6.30. Singing practice, etc., in Oddfellows' Small Hall, Crooked Lane, Mondays at 8 p.m.  
**Glasgow.**—Members are invited to meet on Thursday and Sunday evenings, at 8 o'clock, in the Secretary's house, 250 Crown Street, S.S. All communications to be sent to that address.  
**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, Thursday, and Saturday at 8 p.m.  
**Manchester.**—Socialist League Club, 60 Grovesnor Street, All Saints. Open every evening. Branch weekly meeting on Tuesdays at 8.  
**Norwich.**—Members meet at 23 Rose Yard, St. Augustines, Tuesday at 8.30.  
**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.**—Socialist League Club, 56 Row, Market Place. Open every evening. Business Meeting Tuesdays at 8 p.m. Elocution Class Friday at 8.30 p.m. Discussion Class Sunday 3 p.m.

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

### SATURDAY 7.

7 ..... Hyde Park ..... Nicoll and Cantwell  
 7 ..... Stratford—back of Church ..... Cores and Mrs. Lahr

### SUNDAY 8.

11 ..... Commercial Road—Union Street ..... Davis and Brookes  
 11 ..... Latimer Road Station ..... North Kensington Branch  
 11.30 ..... Hammersmith Bridge ..... Hammersmith Branch  
 11.30 ..... Kilburn—"Old Plough," Kilburn Lane ..... Mrs. Lahr  
 11.30 ..... Mitcham—Fair Green ..... The Branch  
 11.30 ..... Regent's Park ..... Nicoll and Marsh  
 3.30 ..... Hyde Park—Marble Arch ..... Branch  
 3.30 ..... Streatham Common ..... Mowbray  
 3.30 ..... Victoria Park ..... Davis and Mrs. Lahr  
 7 ..... Hammersmith Bridge ..... Hammersmith Branch  
 7 ..... Wormwood Scrubs ..... North Kensington Branch  
 7.30 ..... Mitcham Fair Green ..... The Branch  
 8 ..... Walham Green—back of Church ..... Hammersmith Branch

### THURSDAY 12.

8.15 ..... Hoxton Church ..... Kitz and Davis

### PROVINCES.

**Glasgow.**—Sunday: Jail Square at 2 o'clock; Paisley Road at 5 o'clock.  
**Leeds.**—Sunday: Hunslet Moor, at 11 a.m.; Vicar's Croft, at 7 p.m.  
**Leicester.**—Sunday: Russell Square at 11 a.m.; Humberstone Gate, at 8 p.m.  
**Liverpool.**—Landing Stage, Sundays at 11.30 a.m. and 3 p.m.  
**Manchester.**—Saturday: Middleton market ground, at 7 p.m. Sunday: Philips Park Gates, at 11; Stevenson Square, at 3.  
**Norwich.**—Sunday: Market Place at 3 and 7.30.  
**Sheffield.**—Sunday: Monolith, Fargate, at 11.30 a.m.; Pump, West Bar, 8 p.m. Monday: Lady's Bridge Wicker, at 7 p.m. **Rotherham.**—Sunday: College Yard, at 3 p.m.  
**Yarmouth.**—Sunday: Priory Plain, at 11; Bradwell, 11.30; Colman's Granary Quay, at 7.

**LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST SOCIETY.**—1 Stanley Street, Dale Street.—Meets every Tuesday at 8 p.m.

**NORWICH.**—A great Socialist Demonstration will be held in July, when speakers are invited to take part. Communicate with A. Sutton, 23 Rose Yard, St. Augustines.

**NEW MANHOOD SUFFRAGE LEAGUE,** "Three Doves," Berwick St., Soho, W.—Sunday June 8, at 8.30 p.m., George R. Cox, "Other Lips and Other Hearts"; or Fifty Years After."

**EDINBURGH—SCOTTISH SOCIALIST FEDERATION.**—Labour Hall, 50 South Bridge. Business meeting every Friday at 8 o'clock. Communications, etc., to be addressed there. Meeting on Meadows, Sunday at 6 p.m.

**SHEFFIELD SOCIALIST CLUB.**—We have now opened some fine and centrally situated premises at 63 Blonk Street, containing meeting room, reading room and library, smoke room for games, etc. Open every evening, and on Sunday all day. Membership, 1d. weekly. French Class, conducted by Ed. Carpenter, every Tuesday at 8.30 p.m.; terms, 3d. weekly, which goes towards club funds. Discussion every Wednesday at 8 p.m. We have a good assortment of Labour and Socialist papers from various parts of the world on our reading tables, but should be glad of any books for library. We are very sanguine of being able to accomplish grand propaganda in Sheffield and district during the coming summer, and ask the earnest co-operation of all Socialists in this neighbourhood.

**SOCIALIST LEAGUE PUBLICATIONS.**

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Labour the source of all Wealth	3	0
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Socialism and "Public Opinion"	2	0
Songs for the Workers (2 leaflets)—each	2	0
The Skeleton or Starvation Army	2	0

**American Literature.**

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Speeches of the Chicago Anarchists	1	0
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What is Freedom? When am I Free?	0	4
The Railway Kings and an American Empire	0	2
Object of the Labour Movement	0	2

**MISCELLANEOUS.**

Spaziergänge eines Atheisten. Bei Ferdinand Heigl	0	8
The Reciter for Clubs and Social Gatherings	0	1

The above Leaflets, at prices given, can be had from the *Commonweal* manager in any quantities by Branches, members, or sympathisers, for distribution, 24, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London.

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**STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES.**

THE Socialist League advocates International Revolutionary Socialism. That is to say the destruction of the present class society, which consists of one class who live by owning property and therefore need not work, and of another that has no property and therefore must work in order that they may live to keep the idlers by their labour. Revolutionary Socialism insists that this system of society, which is the modern form of slavery, should be changed to a system of Society which would give every man an opportunity of doing useful work, and not allow any man to live without so doing, which work could not be useful unless it were done for the whole body of workers instead of for do-nothing individuals. The result of this would be that livelihood would not be precarious nor labour burdensome. Labour would be employed in co-operation, and the struggle of man with man for bare subsistence would be supplanted by harmonious combination for the production of common wealth and the exchange of mutual services without the waste of labour or material.

Every man's needs would be satisfied from this common stock, but no man would be allowed to own anything which he could not use, and which consequently he must abuse by employing it as an instrument for forcing others to labour for him unpaid. Thus the land, the capital, machinery, and means of transit would cease to be private property, since they can only be used by the combination of labour to produce wealth.

Thus men would be free because they would no longer be dependent on idle property-owners for subsistence; thus they would be brothers, for the cause of strife, the struggle for subsistence at other people's expense, would have come to an end. Thus they would be equal, for if all men were doing useful work no man's labour could be dispensed with. Thus the motto of Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality, which is but an empty boast in a society that upholds the monopoly of the means of production, would at last be realised.

This Revolutionary Socialism must be International. The change which would put an end to the struggle between man and man, would destroy it also between nation and nation. One harmonious system of federation throughout the whole of civilisation would take the place of the old destructive rivalries. There would be no great centres breeding race hatred and commercial jealousy, but people would manage their own affairs in communities not too large to prevent all citizens from taking a part in the administration necessary for the conduct of life, so that party politics would come to an end.

Thus, while we abide by the old motto

**Liberty, Fraternity, Equality,**

we say that the existence of private property destroys Equality, and therefore under it there can be neither Liberty nor Fraternity.

We add to the first motto then this other one—

**FROM EACH ACCORDING TO HIS CAPACITY, TO EACH ACCORDING TO HIS NEEDS.**

When this is realised there will be a genuine Society; until it is realised, Society is nothing but a band of robbers. We must add that this change can only be brought about by combination amongst the workers themselves, and must embrace the whole of Society. The new life cannot be given to the workers by a class higher than they, but must be taken by them by means of the abolition of classes and the reorganisation of Society.

COUNCIL OF THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

**NOTICE.**

Subscribers who find a red wrapper round paper are thereby reminded that their subscriptions have expired and must be renewed immediately if they wish to continue to receive *Commonweal*.

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