

# THE COMMONWEAL

## The Official Journal of the SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

### NOTES ON NEWS.

So the great battle has begun! Even the dock strike will pale into insignificance compared to that of the coal-miners, if only these latter will hold together, and show anything like the courage, self-sacrifice, and solidarity of the dockers. Their demand is a moderate one—5 per cent. advance now and 5 per cent. more in July. This a few mine-owners have granted, but the very large majority have absolutely refused; a good many have asked for arbitration, but for the most part there is a determination to fight the matter through and come to death-grips with organised labour. The fight began Wednesday last week in Nottingham, and it has been spreading over the country since as the notices expired, until there are over a quarter of a million workers out.

Coal experts, who are not colliery-owners, admit that the men are not only entitled, even as things go, to the rise, but that the owners can well afford to give it. However, the latter know that sooner or later they will be compelled to try a fall with the men if they would retain their power of exploitation, and as the present time is a good time they may as well force it on and have it over. A good time for them that is; and so, whatever be the misery or mischief they may inflict on the community, the mandate has been given and the fight begun.

As the *Pall Mall's* correspondent says:

"The coalowners feel that they must try their strength with the men, and that there cannot possibly be a better time than the present. The spring is coming on apace, and the demand for gas coals and house coals lessens every day. The Baltic does not open fully for six weeks. The demand for iron is not so brisk. Under these circumstances, the colliery-owners see that if they give way now, prices will immediately relapse. It must also be borne in mind that years have now elapsed since any serious strike took place, and that a new generation of young miners has arisen who do not know the privations and miseries which a strike entails, and these young miners are the energetic and bellicose and determined element. And the owners feel that if the fight does not come off now 20 per cent. may be demanded in September, and could not well be resisted then; whereas, if the fight is forced on now, and the men's funds are exhausted and their union weakened or broken up, they won't have the stomach for a further battle in the autumn."

However, the men say that in spite of the time of the year they can hold out, and it is quite certain that if they can do so and hang well together they must win. They have announced that they can go three weeks or more without strike pay, and if this be true, and their reserve funds be what they are said to be, there is no reason to fear the collapse of the strike for a couple of months to come. If it does break down before, or even then, it will be because they are not united. There are large districts which are standing aloof altogether, and there are other doubtful ones which may rat if the thing looks at all like going against them; so that the result is far from certain. Meanwhile, so long as the struggle does last, the miners should have the enthusiastic support of every workman in every trade, and should be helped and encouraged in every possible way.

One thing which they will have to face is, that in spite of Mr. Gladstone's expressed approval of the strike as a weapon, the governing classes as a whole are exasperated by the frequency and effect with which it has been used of late. As may be plainly seen in Liverpool just now, where an ostentatious display of military force is being made, they would only be too pleased to have a fairly good excuse for "quieting" discontent. A little blood-letting would cow the mob, they think; and they will go in for it, too, if they can only manage to work up a case for it, a case which would secure public opinion on their side, the "public opinion" they care about.

But if they do this, they could do nothing better for the progress of revolutionary ideas. To repeat Peterloo would be to bring out in a condensed and dramatic fashion the facts of the commercial system, to sear them into the popular soul as twenty years of our talking would

not do. Even with "Bloody Sunday" and a hundred other examples of class-hatred before their eyes, English workmen do not realise what sorry slaves they are. They are so used, in towns, anyhow, to being bullied and beaten by the police, that a little extra tyranny has no effect if only it is manifested in the familiar form. Let the bullet and the sabre supplant the baton, the red coat replace the blue, and the rattle of the musketry will roll from one end of the land to the other and the swish of the sword be heard in every wind that blows.

It would mean despair—and the politics of despair! One can but marvel at the insensate folly which would provoke of set purpose the spirit which spoke in the Chartist motto, "If you Peterloo us, we will Moscow you!" or that of the men who made the "Man with a Match-box" a byword of terror. You are not likely to pay much heed to what *Commonweal* says, Messieurs our masters! If you were, enemies though you be, one might ask you to reflect on the one-sided battle you would be waging, if once the masses of the people were really driven to despair. You might recall, with advantage, the fact that the havenot has nothing but his miserable life to lose; that there is a good many of him, so many, you can't kill all, and the more you kill the more embittered will be those that remain; that if he can do nothing else, every insignificant unit in the mass can manage to *destroy*—there is none too feeble for *that*. And everything is yours, and thus he can destroy nothing without injuring you; and then you are not, like him, lost in the immensity of the mob, you are set on high for a mark, and can be readily hit at.

Just call a halt, O sapient rulers! and keep your soldiers from firing on us; go on fooling us and don't try forcing us; or, you will find that even we English workmen, degraded as we are, down-trodden as we are, willing and cowardly slaves as we are, have still the capability of the proverbial worm for turning, and when we do so can make things so warm for you that you will be "sorry you spoke." S.

It seems that Bismark really has resigned, and yet the world hangs together and has not been dispersed into space. Exultation at the disappearance from active life of this most prosaic of all tyrants, this tyrant of a commercial age, is checked by the doubt as to whether it is not merely a theatrical stroke; as to whether he may not, after all, govern safely and irresponsibly under the veil of resignation. On the other hand, if circumstances have driven him to resign, it is once more a clear enough token of the advance which Socialism is making. Let us hope that it is so. W. M.

### NEWS FROM NOWHERE:

OR,

### AN EPOCH OF REST.

BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

CHAP. IX. (continued).—CONCERNING LOVE.

THE old man grew quite serious again. Said he: "I do remember about that strange piece of baseless folly, the result, like all other follies of the period, of the hideous class tyranny which then obtained. What do we think of it now? you would say. My friend, that is a question easy to answer. How could it possibly be but that maternity should be highly honoured amongst us? Surely it is a matter of course that the natural and necessary pains which the mother must go through, form a bond of union between man and woman, an extra stimulus to love and affection between them, and that this is universally recognised. For the rest, remember that all the *artificial* burdens of motherhood are now done away with. A mother has no longer any mere sordid anxieties for the future of her children. They may indeed turn out better or worse; they may disappoint her highest hopes; such anxieties as these are a part of the mingled pleasure and pain which goes to make up the life of mankind. But at least she is spared the fear (it was most commonly the certainty) that artificial disabilities would make her children something less than men and women: she knows

that they will live and act according to the measure of their own faculties. In times past, it is clear that the 'Society' of the day helped its Judaic god, and the 'Man of Science' of the time, in visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children. How to reverse this process, how to take the sting out of heredity, has been one of the most constant cares of the thoughtful men amongst us. So that, you see, the ordinarily healthy woman (and almost all our women are both healthy and at least comely), respected as a child-bearer and rearer of children, desired as a woman, loved as a companion, unanxious for the future of her children, has far more instinct for maternity than the poor drudge and mother of drudges of past days could ever have had; or than her sister of the upper classes, brought up in affected ignorance of natural facts, reared in an atmosphere of mingled prudery and prurience."

"You speak warmly," I said, "but I can see you are right."

"Yes," he said, "and I will point out to you a token of all the benefits which we have gained by our freedom. What did you think of the looks of the people whom you have come across to-day?"

"Said I: 'I could hardly have believed that there could be so many good-looking people in any civilised country.'"

He crowed a little, like the old bird he was. "What! are we still civilised?" said he. Well, as to our looks, the English and Jutish blood, which on the whole is predominant here, used not to produce much beauty. But I think we have improved it. I know a man who has a large collection of portraits printed from photographs of the nineteenth century, and going over those and comparing them with the everyday faces in these times, puts the improvement in our good looks beyond a doubt. Now, there are some people who think it not too fantastic to connect this increase of beauty directly with our freedom and good sense in the matters we have been speaking of: they believe that a child born from the natural and healthy love between a man and a woman, even if that be transient, is likely to turn out better in all ways, and especially in bodily beauty, than the birth of the respectable commercial marriage bed, or of the dull despair of the drudge of that system. They say, Pleasure begets pleasure. What do you think?"

"I am much of that mind," said I.

#### CHAP. X.—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

"WELL," said the old man, shifting in his chair, "you must get on with your questions, Guest; I have been some time answering this first one."

Said I: "I want an extra word or two about your ideas of education; although I gathered from Dick that you let your children run wild and didn't teach them anything; and in short, that your education is like the 'snakes in Iceland'—non-existent."

"Then you gathered left-handed," quoth he. "But of course I understand your point of view about education, which is that of times past, when 'the struggle for life,' as men used to phrase it (*i.e.*, the struggle for a slave's rations on one side, and for a bouncing share of the slaveholders' privilege on the other), pinched 'education' for most people into a niggardly dole of not very accurate information; something to be swallowed by the beginner in the art of living whether he liked it or not, and was hungry for it or not: and which had been chewed and digested over and over again by people who didn't care about it in order to serve it out to other people who didn't care about it."

I stopped the old man's rising wrath by a laugh, and said: "Well, you were not taught that way, at any rate, so you may let your anger run off you a little."

"True, true," said he, smiling. "I thank you for correcting my ill-temper: I always fancy myself as living in any period of which we may be speaking. But however, to put it in a cooler way: you expected to see children thrust into schools when they have reached an age conventionally supposed to be the due age, whatever their varying faculties and dispositions may be, and when there, with like disregard to be subjected to a certain conventional course of 'learning.' My friend, can't you see that such a proceeding means ignoring the fact of *growth*, bodily and mental? No one could come out of such a mill uninjured; and those only would avoid being crushed by it who would have the spirit of rebellion strong in them. Fortunately most children have had that at all times. Now you see what it all comes to. In the old times all this was the result of *poverty*. In the nineteenth century, society was so miserably poor, owing to the systematised robbery on which it was founded, that real education was impossible for anybody. The whole theory of their so-called education was that it was necessary to shove a little information into a child, even if it were by means of torture, and accompanied by twaddle which it was well known was of no use, or else he would lack information life-long: the hurry of poverty forbade anything else. All that is past; we are no longer hurried, and the information lies ready to each one's hand when his own inclinations impel him to seek it. In this as in other matters we have become wealthy: we can afford to give ourselves time to grow."

"Yes," said I, "but suppose the child, youth, man, never wants the information, never grows in the direction you might hope him to do: suppose, for instance, he objects to learning arithmetic or mathematics; you can't force him when he is grown; can't you force him while he is growing, and oughtn't you to do so?"

"Well," said he, "were you forced to learn arithmetic and mathematics?"

"A little," said I.

"And how old are you now?"

"Say fifty-six," said I.

"And how much arithmetic and mathematics do you know now?" quoth the old man, smiling rather mockingly.

Said I: "None whatever, I am sorry to say."

Hammond laughed quietly, but made no other comment on my admission, and I dropped the subject of education, perceiving him to be hopeless on that side.

I thought a little, and said: "You were speaking just now of households: that sounded to me a little like the customs of past times; I should have thought you would have lived more in public."

"Phalangsteries, eh?" said he. "Well, we live as we like, and we like to live as a rule with certain house-mates that we have got used to. Remember, again, that poverty is extinct, and that the Fourierist phalangsteries and all their kind, as was but natural at the time, implied nothing but a refuge from mere destitution. Such a way of life as that, could only have been conceived of by people surrounded by the worst form of poverty. But you must understand therewith, that though separate households are the rule amongst us, and though they differ in their habits more or less, yet no door is shut to any good-tempered person who is content to live as the other house-mates do: only of course it would be unreasonable for one man to drop into a household and bid the folk of it to alter their habits to please him, since he can go elsewhere and live as he pleases. However, I need not say much about all this, as you are going up the river with Dick, and will find out for yourself by experience how these matters are managed."

After a pause, I said: "Your big towns, now; how about them? London, which—which I have read about as the modern Babylon of civilisation, seems to have disappeared."

"Well, well," said old Hammond, "perhaps after all it is more like ancient Babylon now than the 'modern Babylon' of the nineteenth century was. But let that pass. After all, there is a good deal of population in places between here and Hammersmith; nor have you seen the most populous part of the town yet."

"Tell me, then," said I, "how is it towards the east?"

Said he: "Time was when if you mounted a good horse and rode straight away from my door here at a round trot for an hour and a half, you would still be in the thick of London, and the greater part of that would be 'slums,' as they were called; that is to say, places of torture for innocent men and women; or worse, stews for rearing and breeding men and women in such degradation that that torture should seem to them mere ordinary and natural life."

"I know, I know," I said, rather impatiently. "That was what was; tell me something of what is. Is any of that left?"

"Not an inch," said he; "but some memory of it abides with us, and I am glad of it. Once a year, on May-day, we hold a solemn feast in those easterly communes of London to commemorate The Clearing of Misery, as it is called. On that day we have music and dancing, and merry games and happy feasting on the site of some of the worst of the old slums, the traditional memory of which we have kept. On that occasion the custom is for the prettiest girls to sing some of the old revolutionary songs, and those which were the groans of the discontent, once so hopeless, on the very spots where those terrible crimes of class-murder were committed day by day for so many years. To a man like me, who have studied the past so diligently, it is a curious and touching sight to see some beautiful girl, daintily clad, and crowned with flowers from the neighbouring meadows, standing amongst the happy people, on some mound where of old time stood the wretched apology for a house, a den in which men and women lived packed amongst the filth like pilchards in a cask; lived in such a way that they could only have endured it, as I said just now, by being degraded out of humanity—to hear the terrible words of threatening and lamentation coming from her sweet and beautiful lips, and she unconscious of their real meaning: to hear her, say, singing Hood's Song of the Shirt, and to think that all the time she does not understand what it is all about—a tragedy grown inconceivable to her and her listeners. Think of that, if you can, and of how glorious life is grown!"

"Indeed," said I, "it is difficult for me to think of it."

And I sat watching how his eyes glittered, and how the fresh life seemed to glow in his face, and I wondered how at his age he should think of the happiness of the world, or indeed anything but his coming dinner.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

#### AN INTERNATIONAL APPEAL.

For eight months past the blanket-weavers and workers associated with them have been on strike at Cours (Rhône). Counting their families, more than 4,000 have been affected—practically the entire population of the place. Their wages had been lowered again and again, until they were face to face with starvation. Banding themselves together in a union, they resolved to resist further encroachment. But the millowners had enjoyed unquestioned supremacy so long that they refused to recognise the union, and gave notice of their intention to crush it. Seven have since acceded to the men's demand, but the others are determined to destroy the trade of the district rather than give in. For eight months the men have held out, in spite of privation, but they are now compelled to ask for help from their fellow-countrymen and from all sympathisers throughout the world. They feel that although everywhere the workers have their own troubles to attend to, there must be some able and willing to help them. As they suffer in the cause of labour, so they appeal to all friends of labour to aid them in the fight. In better times they will gratefully reciprocate the proofs of international solidarity. Address, *au Secrétaire du Syndicat de Cours, Rhône, France.*

An adjourned meeting and conference of anti-Parliamentary Socialists will take place on Sunday, March 23rd, at 7.30 p.m., to consider propaganda for ensuing year and other important business. All comrades are asked to attend.

## SCOTTISH NOTES.

The labour vote did not make much of a show at the recent (and first) County Council election in Scotland. Every one of the labour candidates was defeated—some of them very badly indeed. It is satisfactory, however, to note that those who were most advanced or Socialistic in their utterances fared rather better than the mere trades-union apostles. Small, of the Lanarkshire Miners, who is an avowed Socialist, ran his landlord opponent very close; and Keir Hardie, who has also the bad fame of being a Socialist (of the Parliamentary school), was well up in the list.

The crofter candidates in the Highlands were very successful, however. In Sutherlandshire the Duke's factors and agents were all defeated, and crofters returned.

The Free Church is being shaken to its base by the heretical utterances of two professors—Dr. Marcus Dods of Edinburgh and Dr. Bruce of Glasgow. As at least one-half of the ministers and laymen of the Church have little or no belief in the Bible or the "standards of the Church" (*i.e.*, the Confession of Faith and the Shorter Catechism), the orthodox party will have some difficulty in bringing the culprit professors to a sense of the error of their ways.

I used to consider myself a pagan, but since I have read Dr. Dods' definition of Christian belief I consider myself a tolerably good Christian; indeed, quite up to the mark at least of standing at the church door on Sundays and watching that none of the members of the congregation takes shillings out of the offertory plate instead of putting halfpennies into it.

One has not, however, much sympathy with professors or any other folk who accept salaries to preach or teach doctrines which they do not believe. Of course the world's all wrong; and while workers have to slave and employers oppress, and while all sorts of men have in some degree or other to lie, cheat and injure their neighbours for a livelihood, we must not be uncharitable in our judgments upon professors or preachers, especially if in other matters they are "straight," and are endeavouring to the best of their powers to do away with the conditions that make hypocrisy and all other social crimes necessary. But Dr. Dods is not of this stamp. He wallows about in his hypocrisy as a swine wallows in its filth, and he is mightily indignant when some people venture to suggest that he is not perfectly pure and undefiled. Worse than that, he is a traducer of the poor, and a bearer of false witness against the unemployed. As a patron of the Charity Organisation Society, he has on several occasions publicly assailed the hapless victims of our industrial despotism as loafers and knaves, and warned the well-to-do plunderers of our cities and towns against yielding to the temptation of sheltering them from the winter's cold or allaying the pangs of their hunger.

Had the Professor confined his misdeeds to mildly extracting money from the churches under false pretences, he might have continued his time-honoured occupation without protest from me—the more the churches are swindled the merrier am I; but since he has set himself up as an apologist of the priggishness of the rich who rob the poor and kick them afterwards, I fervently trust he may lose his comfortable crib and have to do a month or two's penal servitude tramping the country in search of manual employment at fifteen bob a-week—the experience would modify his conceit a bit.

Professors as a rule are just about as much loafers as need be, and divinity professors are the most lazy and least amiable loafers of the lot; and a divinity professor who goes out of his way to denounce tramps and beggars is much in need of a sound lesson in good manners and Christian sociology lumped into one.

Sir William Arrol, the Forth Bridge contractor, whatever ability he may possess as a practical engineer and as an architect of his own fortune, does not appear to hold views one whit above the selfish mediocrity of his class upon the labour question. In a speech which he gave at Ayr, on being presented with the freedom of the burgh, he warned working-men against demanding high wages lest they make it impossible for employers to compete successfully for contracts. He affirmed that he himself had refused contracts amounting to over a million and a quarter pounds because of his uncertainty as to the probable rise in the wages of labour.

I do not say that this statement is untrue; but I do say that Sir William Arrol, despite his hypothetical loss of contracts to the value of a million and a quarter, has on hand about as much work as he can possibly undertake, and that during the last year he has increased his works at Bridgeton to the utmost extent of the available space.

Sir William complained that certain working-men could actually commence work on Thursday mornings and lift £5 and £6 on Saturdays. Presumably he referred to certain classes of rivetters and steel-workers. It may be true that in some instances that may be done; but is it not grossly unfair to refer to such exceptional cases as typical of the privileged position of workmen generally? I venture to assert that Sir William has more men in his employment working for 15s. or less per week than for £5 or £6 per week, not to speak of

£5 or £6 for two and a-half days. The great mass of his labourers receive 17s. per week, and his skilled workmen from 23s. to 30s. per week. His firm is notorious for its system of supplanting skilled with unskilled labour.

Sir William told his hearers that thirty years ago he had sought employment as a working blacksmith in the town of Ayr without success. We are informed, however, that he has now an estate at Ayr worth some £20,000 or more. Sir William's wages must have been a deal more than £5 or £6 per week in the interval to have enabled him to accumulate even that portion of his present fortune! How much of that sum he honestly wrought for, and how much of it was gained by filching the labour of others, might be approximately guessed by learning what he considers a fair wage for a working blacksmith to-day.

J. BRUCE GLASIER.

## THE GREAT COAL STRIKE.

THE great coal strike is ominous of coming changes, and cannot be looked on as even a great strike might have been a few years ago. The demands of the miners are so moderate, and so uncomplicated with any difficulties as to method of employment and the like, and moreover, the business facts on which the strike is based are so clear and so much in favour of the men, that it was expected in many quarters that the masters would give in at once, and in ordinary times they would have done so. The fact that they are preparing for an obstinate resistance shows that they are not so much thinking of the present strike as of their general position in face of the awakening of Labour. The red spectre of Revolution looms threateningly in the distance before them, and instinctively they are prepared to fight.

Let us look at it from the same point of view, and understand that it is a battle, not a mere business dispute. If the miners act well together, and if they are supported by the sympathy of their brother workers, even those who will suffer by the strike, they will now for the first time understand their power, and a weapon for the hand of revolution will be fashioned, which will be irresistible; which can only be resisted by the brute-force in the hands of the upper classes—*i.e.*, the army and police. This instrument, the striking-power of the coal miners backed by the assent of their fellow workers, being once ready, there will be nothing between us and revolution but a knowledge on the part of the workers of what to claim, which can be nothing short of an abolition of the monopoly of the resources of nature—*i.e.*, the land and all that is on it, which is used for the reproduction of wealth.

This, and not a pitiful rise in wages, is what in the long run lies before the strike of the coal miners: let us hope that the events of this strike will show them how necessary it is for them to make this claim, how feasible to get what they demand.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

## INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

## GERMANY.

When on the 24th of February the Boulangists met in the Salle Cognat at Paris, they decided to send a congratulatory address to Bebel on the result of the German elections. Before even the address was gone, Léo Frankel, formerly Minister of Public Works under the Commune, published Bebel's reply, which ran as follows:

"Dresden, Plauen, March 2nd, 1890.

"My dear Frankel.—I have not yet received the announced address of the Boulangists. Probably they have thought the matter over again. If, however, they took a fancy to their idea and would carry it out, I am quite prepared to ignore their factum, as I will have nothing at all to do with them.—Yours ever faithfully,

"A. BEBEL."

At Lückenwalde, near Berlin, the general association of female workers has been closed by the police, and besides, the whole committee, consisting of Marie Tinius, Johnne, Weiss, Fallner, Anna Schultz, and Jölke, will be prosecuted for having made an energetic propaganda on behalf of the Socialist candidates to the Reichstag. The trial will begin on April 10th.

## DENMARK.

The revolutionary Socialists of Denmark have just issued a manifesto to all kindred associations of Europe and America, setting forth the reasons why they have come to the constitution of a new revolutionary Socialist party in their country. They also tell us that it has been resolved to transform as soon as possible their weekly organ *Arbejderen* (The Worker) into a daily paper, and therefore ask the moral and material support of all their friends abroad, especially of all the Scandinavians.

## ITALY.

Comrade Amilcare Cipriani has left Paris *en route* for Forli, where he is going to face the new prosecution got up against him by the Italian government. He is to be tried for exciting to revolt, whatever that may be.

## HOLLAND.

Comrade L. Schotting, who has been prosecuted by the Dutch government for having written a pamphlet on "Military Conscription," denouncing the various atrocities of that system, has now at last been acquitted by the superior tribunal of the Hague.

## AUSTRIA-HUNGARY.

A new monthly review is to be published at Reichenberg on April 1st, under the title of "Zeitschwingen" (Time Wings). Comrade Joseph Versneck is the editor of the new Socialist organ, whose offices are situated at Reichenberg, Ladegasse, No. 23.

NOTICE.—Next week there will be an article and an allegorical sketch dealing with Mr. Stanley's "heroic efforts in the cause of civilisation."



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. Scale 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.

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Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday March 19.

Table listing periodicals received from various countries including ENGLAND, UNITED STATES, FRANCE, HOLLAND, BELGIUM, SWITZERLAND, ITALY, SPAIN, PORTUGAL, GERMANY, AUSTRIA, HUNGARY, DENMARK, SWEDEN, NORWAY, WEST INDIES, and ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

REFORM OR REVOLUTION.

(Continued from p. 77.)

ONE of the chief reasons for discord is the growth of poverty, discontent, misery, and crime, the existence of a numerous class unpossessed of property. These are, according to our rulers, supposed to have no interest in the State (which they really have not when the truth is told), for which reason, though allowed to exist in its territory, they are treated rather as slaves, and watched and guarded against with the most jealous apprehension; and there is no reason to wonder at this when we consider the distress and degradation on the one hand, with the affluence born of robbery on the other. Statesmen may as long as possible postpone what they are pleased to call the evil day, but come it will, however pertinaciously they may withstand its advent. At present they maintain the doctrine that property is superior to humanity, because it is property that rules empires,

property that has rights, property that possesses a monopoly of knowledge and (sic) honour, with whatever else is valued by man. But a time is coming when the teaching of Proudhon, that "Property is robbery!" will be believed by all men, and then will cease this hideous nightmare of property which obtains to-day.

The ruling classes, who in the season of calm make no account of the coming tempest, would think the honours of office and power not worth possessing if compelled to govern solely for the benefit of the people. The patricians of Rome, inflated by rank and distinction, and elevated by education above all around them, treated with scorn the claims of the plebeians to exercise some influence over the management of their own affairs; and the rulers of modern Europe, their equals in pride, however inferior in merit, aim in every State at the same exclusive domination. In tranquil times they oppose reforms because, according to them, they are needless; in troubled times, because they are dangerous. Perhaps 'tis better so, for the great change will come, to my mind, all the quicker for their obstinacy and greed. "The gods," says the Pagan proverb, "help those who help themselves." It is high time the workers began to practice the philosophy contained in this maxim. At present they are aliens and strangers in the land, compelled to obey laws which others make for them. But their obedience is sullen and reluctant, because accompanied by the consciousness that it implies the sacrifice of their best interests. It is a fundamental fact that when some have too much others there must be who have too little, and though there may be a system of political economy which denies this truth, mankind will not always adopt that system or suffer themselves to be deluded by it. Our rulers cannot disprove the existence of a portentous amount of misery, ignorance, and crime simultaneously with the established order of things. Whence comes that misery, which cannot be removed by Annual Parliaments, the Ballot, or Universal Suffrage? Whence comes this misery which is eating itself into the very vitals of society? We Socialists say it is brought about by various causes, chief of which is the monopoly of the means of life by a few, whose opposition to our teachings is born of the plunderer's fear lest he lose what he has been at so much trouble to gain, his property, the words "Property is robbery" always striking terror into his heart, just as the policeman's lantern and whistle strikes terror into the heart of the burglar.

One good sign of the times is the desire for reform, which to my thinking will not have the effect the reformers desire, i.e., to stay the revolution; any reform given now will only aid us, and accelerate the change which is bound to come. The worker has been excluded from the communion of intelligence; labour has been ranked in the same category as vice and crime, hunted about and trampled upon, and in many instances denied the protection of the laws. This has made him feel like a slave in spite of the noble yearnings of his nature. To nations placed in such a category, revolution speaks as with a voice from heaven proffering them deliverance from thralldom, intellectual and economical, and they become imbued with the belief that for the regeneration of the human race all things become lawful. The existence of large masses of the people inimical to the State, whose numbers are perpetually augmenting, whose misery is incessantly on the increase, whose morals are for the most part deteriorating, whose minds are cankered, whose hearts are gradually estranged from virtue, contentment, or hope of happiness—the existence of such a mass, I say, is a fact which we must recognise whether it terrifies us or not. For several ages this supposed surplus of humanity was consumed by foreign wars. Kings got rid of their domestic foes on the field of battle, and history bestows on the sacrifice the name of "Glory." All kinds of dazzling fictions have been invented to reconcile mankind to this horrid game which is at variance with the principles of humanity.

Chroniclers, poets (with few exceptions), and servile flatterers of power, have sought and still seek to disguise the brutality of the process by which instinctively, or through the system, the governors of the earth endeavour to confine the population within their artificial limits of subsistence. But civilisation in its progress gives birth to arts, which by their development completely counteract the designs of ambition. Addicting themselves to the operations of peace and industry, the people increase and multiply faster than war can destroy them; hence the cardinal difficulties of governments. There are found in every modern state multitudes of people who have no assured future. The labour of the day provides for the day only, and any interruption in their toil brings them within measurable distance of starvation. This is the case in every great city and town, where there always exists a wandering population, living, as we say, from hand to mouth, performing the rudest operations of society—a race as it were between beggars and thieves, who labour when they can get work and who steal when they cannot. This class of persons is on the increase, and though denominated the dangerous classes they are probably the least dangerous (at present), but when insurrections are actually in progress they have in the past, and will again, throw themselves into the struggle against the oppressors. It is a fearful sight to behold millions of people possessing no provision for the morrow, people born to be mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, of whom it is expected they will never look up or presume to hope for a better life. People who possess minds which society condemns to stagnation; people who possess labour force which is not required by the present system, and is thus condemned and denominated dangerous. Thousands, rather than submit to this, make open war upon society which cast them forth to perish in the struggle. Others envelope themselves in sullen pride and retreat to the noisome dens still open to them, where they expire in silence or by their own hands. Others again there are who, rising to the occasion, and seeing the misery, of which they perhaps are

co-heirs, go forth to raise hope in their downtrodden and degraded fellows by voice and pen, and these are dragged by the rulers to perish in dungeon, mine, or scaffold.

Let us take a review in our own minds of the dungeons, stripes, chains, etc., with which every society is abundantly stored, by which hundreds of victims are annually offered up to support a few in pride and madness, and millions in abject servitude and dependence. Whoever, therefore, whether in the name of a deity or not, labours to perpetuate ignorance, labours to perpetuate crime and misery.

The worst effect, perhaps, of our present system, is the divorce it produces between man and virtue. First, even while employed in what is called honest toil, it cuts him off from the source of knowledge and condemns the mind to inactivity. Hence the paralysis of the faculties, intellectual and moral, narrow and sordid views of nature and society, false theories of virtue and vice, proneness to coarse pleasures, and almost total perversion of ideas. Man in this state is as far removed as he can be from his proper state in nature. His nobler aspirations have been crushed out of him one after the other, and the intercourse of misery with misery, and vice with vice, is not calculated to generate virtue. Yet, despite all this, the light of the future breaks forth from alley and slum, which can only be quenched by a force which will have to be superior to any which has yet been tried. This class of which I have been speaking, begin at last to feel that they are exiles living in a state of social banishment, and are at length, like the servile classes of Rome, discovering each other by their rags—the badge of their order—the result of which will be the counting of their numbers and organisation for resistance or revenge.

C. W. MOWBRAY.

(To be concluded).

### THE COMMUNE OF PARIS.

WHY do we celebrate the Commune? Is it because it was a success or a defeat? To us it is both. It was successful, because it has inspired thousands with those principles for which its martyrs bled and suffered. It was successful, because it was the birth of a new world, the first faint gleam of a dawn that will soon bring the brightness of day to the toiling millions for whom the men of Paris fought and died; because the memory of those dead heroes should encourage us in the work which has still to be done. It was a defeat, for the triumph of the people was short and brief; the memory of the joyous days of March is eclipsed by that of the Bloody Week of May; and our hearts still mourn for the dead that have perished, trampled beneath the feet of a base, cowardly, and bloody class, who cowered into cellars at the victory of the people, but who could rise in an ignoble triumph and insult the dead whom they feared when living.

Even now, the middle class continue their insults through the pens of their hired scribes in the venal and lying press. Through these means they still slander the memory of those they murdered; but the hatred of these people is the best homage to the dead. Had they been swindlers and murderers on a large scale, the rich would have worshipped them, as they do the great stockjobber who has plundered thousands, or the adventurer who has massacred hapless savages with breechloaders and explosive bullets in the interests of commercial civilisation. No; it is because the martyrs were men of whom this world was not worthy that the middle class shower abuse upon them. Students of history will remember that the ruling classes have done the same to all preachers of new ideas that threatened their privileges. The early Christians were monsters and cannibals, according to the priests of gods in ancient Rome. No accusation was too vile for the Protestant reformers in the mouths of pope and prelate; and to slay your foes and slander them after death is always the policy of reaction; a policy that up till now has ended in deserved failure. And even at the present time the truth is beginning to gleam through the mists and clouds of lies and prejudices with which our rulers have surrounded it. The people are learning to admire the men and women who died upon the barricades and before the firing platoons for the cause of humanity. What creed, what cause, can boast such glorious martyrs as can the Commune? Think upon the leaders who died with a calm courage that has never been excelled. Old Desoluz, whose life had been one long martyrdom for the cause of the people in the prisons of France and the swamps of New Caledonia, dragging his steps wearily to a deserted barricade, to stand upright for an instant, and then fall a willing victim to the shot of the enemy. He had vowed not to survive the failure of the revolution, and he kept his word. See, again, Milliere standing on the steps of the Pantheon before the levelled muskets of his murderers. In this his death hour he thinks little of himself. "Live the Commune!" "Live Humanity!" are the cries that greet the volley from the rifles of his foes. Think of Varlin, the young and enthusiastic lover of humanity, dragged along the streets in a long agonising march, his face slashed with sabres, a mass of blood, his eye hanging from its socket, but he does not moan or complain, but bears heroically his agony till welcome death at the hands of the brutal soldiers comes at last. But do not forget the people, men and women, shot down in crowds, 20,000 massacred, but dying, as their enemies admit, calmly and proudly, their hands clasped together, shouting, in defiance of the butchers of Versailles, "Live the Commune!" Triumph! we have cause for triumph. Though the defenders of law and order made the most beautiful city in Europe one vast slaughter-house, yet they could not crush Socialism; for to-day it is more powerful than ever in every civilised country. And the workers of all nations shall yet march hand in hand to victory to the cry of "Live the Commune!"

D. J. NICOLL.

### IN THE UNITED STATES.

LAURENCE GRONLUND'S latest work is now about to go to press, under the title 'Our Destiny; or, the Influence of Nationalism on Morals and Religion.' In this book the author claims that "our economic individualism, with its passion for money-getting and trampling struggle for redundant affluence, must necessarily be accompanied by such low morals and weak religious beliefs as we now witness; while a nation trained under a social régime will be distinguished by the opposite qualities; for Socialism is eminently religious—i.e., will incline men more than any other system to postulate a purpose behind evolution, in order to answer the question, what are we in this world for?" He goes on to urge that Socialism will offer the true ideal of human progress—"an ennobling religion, not limited to caring for the individual soul, but identified with efforts to realise heaven on earth, with a great sweep of social action, in which individual lives will be caught up, as it were, to meet ideal passions from on high. Such an ideal we may hope will bring to the front men filled and fired with the enthusiasm of humanity, imbued with the true conception of progress, prophets of a grand and realisable aim, and inaugurating a generation of sustained and rightly guided effort which will revolutionise for good and for all time our entire social and moral surroundings." The author of 'Our Destiny' points to various signs in support of his contention that the time is ripe for such an effort. "First of all," he says, "it is notorious that a constructive form of Socialism has for some years been evolving among American organised working-men; next, and this may prove the most important phenomenon of all, the conscience of the country has during the present year clearly been aroused as it has not been since the anti-slavery agitation. I refer to the Christian Socialist and the Nationalist movements—so much so that we may in the near future—within the coming months—indeed, expect a peculiarly profound agitation of the public mind on these subjects. A blessed change has occurred; our religious people are at length becoming conscious of really being part of a living organism which suffers. A more blessed change is evidently coming, and it is not so much the change itself as the method of bringing it about that is in issue."

After this, I think, it will hardly be possible that even the most enthusiastic admirer of Mr. Gronlund will claim that he is a scientific exponent of Socialism. It is, however, a matter of extreme satisfaction for the adherents of Socialism—using the word in its broadest sense—that one of their number is on such excellent terms with the "power behind evolution." Yet on the other hand it cannot be denied that this mysterious and well-meaning "power behind evolution" might be a more "brainy" creature. In that case, things would unquestionably move smoother in this world. As the case stands now, this "power behind evolution" can give to itself a neat *testimonium paupertatis*, for it has accomplished as yet nothing, and in fact can never accomplish anything. If any "good" will be done, it must and can only be done through reason. Reason, of course, cannot compromise with silly—silly in our days—metaphysical speculation. I am afraid dear Gronlund will never solve the social problem, nor will he ever contribute much toward its solution. For to be able to do so he would have to fling overboard first all religious twaddle, which he never will do, because "neither can the leopard change its skin." As for the "peculiarly profound agitation of the public mind," true, Nationalism has gone up like a rocket, but it is not less true that the signs are not missing that it will come down like a sick.

P. M. Arthur, chief of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, has spoken some wise words. He was asked his opinion concerning the eight-hour movement, and replied: "If the working-men propose to make eight hours a day's labour, and ask for eight hours' pay in proportion to the standard wages, I think nothing could be better than to adopt the plan, because it would furnish work for 20 per cent. more men, as ten hours now constitutes a day's work; but if they demand ten hours' pay for eight hours' work, then the step would not be such a beneficial one." Of course, Arthur, who has long ceased to be a worker, does not like that the capitalists should pay ten hours' for eight hours' work. And yet the workers pay this thief a large sum of money to look after their interests. By the way, I wonder if Arthur is not meant for the "purpose of evolution."

Another dam is burst somewhere up in Arizona territory. Some seventy lives were lost in the flood. And yet ample evidence already shows that this disaster, like that at Johnstown, Pa., was due to the carelessness and meanness of the New York Corporation that built it. Wonder if the finger of that "power behind evolution" could not be traced in this "accident"—beg pardon, purpose of evolution.

A conference of the Union Labour party occurred in Kansas City some days ago. The following resolutions were adopted:

"We congratulate the Union Labour party upon the brave and gallant fight which it made in the presidential campaign of 1888—a campaign characterised by the most extravagant, corrupt, and shameless use of money by the managers of the Democratic and Republican parties ever witnessed in the history of the United States. Although there has been a change of administration, there has been no change of policy calculated to relieve the agricultural and industrial classes."

"Resolved, that we reaffirm and declare our allegiance to the Union Labour party and its organisation, and that we advise our candidates, canvassers, and press in the political contest of this year to concentrate their efforts upon the reforms advocated in our platform of 1888, relating to finance, transportation, land, and the suppression of trusts. All evils which now afflict and oppress the agricultural and industrial classes have their origin and remedy in one or other of these questions. As long as these conditions exist there is a necessity for the existence of the Union Labour party. The principles of the Union Labour party being substantially in harmony with the demands and purposes advocated by the alliance, the Wheel, the Knights of Labour, the Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association, the Patrons of Husbandry, we cordially invite members of such organisations to co-operate with us politically in the campaign of 1890."

As the Union Labour party had little money it is cheap glory to boast that it used none during the presidential election. But let this party really become a real power in politics, then money will come in its hands pretty freely, and then it will burst, like so many others belonging to the same category in the past. Politics—boodle; boodle—politics; politics and boodle—the purpose of evolution!

The eight-hour bubble has practically ceased to bubble, anyhow, as regards the United States. Gompers in his last speech claimed this movement to be scientific, but if we look at his arguments we find very little science but a good deal of bunkum. He promised the worker that the realisation of the eight hours would reduce the hours and increase the wages; the capitalists were told, in order to gain their support, that as the increase of the workers' wages would undoubtedly benefit trade and industry, profits, rent, and interest would in consequence also increase. But who would have

to pay for this "treat all round"? Unquestionably the "power behind evolution."

Two meetings were held in the United States on February 22nd, Washington's birthday, for the purpose of agitating for the eight-hour day. The most successful of these meetings gathered in Tremont Temple in Boston; about 3,000 persons attended. Samuel Gompers as well as P. J. Maguire, Secretary of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, made speeches. As it is as yet doubtful which trade will open the firing on May the 1st, Maguire's words have some significance. He said:

"This meeting is not to present an argument in support of the eight-hour demand. It is to prepare the building trades for the effort they will make on May 1 to establish the eight-hour day. The question has got beyond the necessity of argument, for all men grant the necessity of shorter hours. . . . The eight-hour agitation of the past year has made a decided impression upon the entire civilised world, and Gladstone and Randolph Churchill have stated their determination to fight for the reduction of the hours of labour. The short-hour movement in Australia resulted in the Australian ballot, and gave to the people of that country a tax law which taxed unimproved lands for their full value, and did not tax the home of the worker."

The meeting in New York was a miserable failure. Only about 1,000 people, mostly Socialists, met in the large hall of Cooper Union, the same hall which was filled to overflowing on November 11th at the commemoration meeting in honour of the despised Chicago Anarchists.

Boston, Mass., Feb. 28, 1890.

HENRY F. CHARLES.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIALISM.

SIR,—May I be permitted to refer in your columns to the important notice from the pen of Mr. Morris which appears under the head of "Correspondence" in your last number?

Even for argument's sake, granting that Socialistic principles, universally accepted—as they are not yet—would supersede, by including, all the social benefits alluded to hypothetically or otherwise as conferrable by Christianity,—how about the devilry that is in men, rooted and developed in selfishness, which is answerable hitherto for all the greatest evils of our social condition or system, and may just as much be expected to continue to defy the teachings of enlightened Socialism as it is found to resist and pervert those of religion? Nay, a deal more so, *we* who own the reign of the Nazarene believe. Here, indeed, is a supreme difficulty in the case, which, I respectfully venture to submit, the remarks of Mr. Morris do not seem to touch.

In other words, we are presented, it seems to me, with what as conceived by so excellent an authority, whether as designer or coadjutor of other mechanicians of genius, may be a piece of machinery most admirably adapted to social needs, yept Socialism, but without provision made for the motive power. That motive power has in spite of many drawbacks proved itself over and over again, *we* say, to exist in Christianity as it exists nowhere else. We have seen moral transformations effected by it in individuals and in communities, which I believe, even writing in your pages, it would be folly to pretend have any parallel in the results of any other philosophy or system, if not in extent, at least in depth and social value; and if the propaganda of Socialism are *true*, there is no reason in the genius of Christianity why that power should not be exerted to give them tenfold more effect than they are likely to attain by any other means. But why does not Christianity originate instead of merely assimilating? Did it *not* originate? Where are we to find in history more genuine or earlier, or, indeed, other examples of Socialism or Communism practically carried out than in primitive Christianity or its prototype Judaism? So that we may in fact say, if Socialism is salvation, that like the "salvation" of which Jesus of Nazarus spoke to the woman of Samaria, it also "is of the Jews." Acts, chap. iv.; Josephus, Wars, Book II., chap. viii., etc. A quotation from Josephus I may give: "Among all [the Essens] there is no appearance of poverty or excess of riches, but every one's possessions are intermingled with every other's possessions; and so there is as it were one patrimony among them."

An interesting modern instance, probably unique, except in a certain reflection of monasticism, for successive ages, one also strictly in point of our contention for the benevolent genius of Christianity even in the direction of Socialistic methods, is that of the promotion of Communistic living amongst men of working trades by M. de Renty, a French nobleman of the seventeenth century, to which I can only briefly refer in closing. Over a hundred years after, as I suppose from the account to which I am indebted, there were, as the fruit of his endeavours, "two companies in Paris, one of tailors, the other of shoemakers, and of these in several quarters of the city" (and the same there were at Toulouse), who lived in community; bringing the history to within a measurable distance of the French Revolution, which may not have been entirely unaffected by the fact. M. de Renty, be it remarked, was no political type of a social reformer, but a man drawing the inspiration of all he did from Christianity, as its disciple first and everything else a very long way afterwards, so for my present purpose making the case particularly apposite.—Yours respectfully,

N. W.

Manchester, March 10th, 1890.

**SIBERIAN HORRORS.**—An account from Tomsk describes (says the Berlin correspondent of the *Daily News*) the state of the Siberian prisons as something fearful, and gives the following figures, which speak for themselves. Tomsk, the seat of the only university in Siberia, is at the same time the central depot of exiles. It possesses a prison which can accommodate 765 men, reckoning for each one 4.8 cubic feet of air. There is space for 490 healthy persons and 275 sick ones, but the number of exiles who arrived in Tomsk in 1886 was 16,184, of whom only 14,866 were transported further. In 1887 there arrived 14,277; and in 1888, 15,014; and in 1889, up to September, over 12,000—of whom 13,522, 14,239, and 11,000 respectively were taken to the interior. In 1886 the average daily number of prisoners was at least 1,313; in 1887, 1,120; and in 1888, 1,380. In some weeks these numbers increased in 1886 to 2,955, in 1887 to 2,755, and in 1888 even to 3,020 men. Among these the daily average on the sick list was, in 1886, 394; in 1887, 512 (not less than 45.7 per cent.); and in 1888, 396, the majority suffering from typhoid fever. The official report says in a few words that for want of room hundreds of beds with patients suffering from serious maladies were placed in the open air, whilst the temperature was only six degrees Réaumur (45 Fahrenheit). The mortality was, of course, enormous. Between 360 and 400 exiles are buried yearly from the Tomsk prison.

## THE LABOUR STRUGGLE.

### Great Strike of Miners.

On Thursday March 13th the delegates of the men gave another proof of their extraordinary moderation. They made a last offer to the coalowners that if they would agree to grant a 5 per cent. advance now and another 5 per cent. on 1st July, the present wages question would be settled. This moderate proposal of the delegates was sent to the Coalowners' Federation and they received a reply from the secretary of that body, that the owners had adjourned till Monday, and no reply to the proposal of the men could be given till then. At this shuffling reply the delegates resolved to begin the strike, and on Saturday the men came out. The strike, however, really began on Wednesday and Thursday, when the Nottingham men led the way, and they were joined by the West Yorkshire men on Thursday. In Lancashire 40,000 men are out; in Yorkshire, 60,000; in Derbyshire, 12,000. In Staffordshire, East Worcestershire, and Warwickshire the men have also struck. On the whole, it is estimated that nearly two hundred thousand men are out. The consequences are already serious. Coal has gone up to famine prices; the merest rubbish, composed of shale, stone, and slack, which a few months ago no one would have taken away, is being sold at 10s. to 20s. in East Lancashire. Ordinary coal has in some cases more than doubled in price at the pit mouths. At Sheffield, several large ironworks have already closed for lack of fuel, and at Burnley in Lancashire not only are the cotton factories closing, but the supply of coal is running short at the gas-works. The streets are crowded with men on strike, and an extra force of police has been drafted into the town. If the strike lasts a week, the iron and cotton factories will be closed. Thousands of people are thrown out of work already. The Coalowners' Federation met on Monday, and decided to refuse the compromise offered by the men; they offer to meet the delegates in conference on Thursday to see if they could come to some arrangement. As many owners are already giving in all over the country, I do not think the strike will be of long duration, whatever the Coalowners' Federation may do; the famine prices will be too much of a temptation to many coalowners.

### The Dock Strike at Liverpool.

An amusing incident occurred last week. A blackleg collector went down to the neighbourhood of the wharves to see if he could pick up some blacklegs. He did not find any, but he was followed by a very unfriendly crowd to Cannon Street station. Here he took refuge, but the people still following he hailed a cab, but the cabman being informed by the crowd who he was, exclaimed, "What, a blackleg! Here, get out, I don't want any blacklegs in my cab!" And he had to get out, and was only rescued from his unpleasant position by the police. We don't know whether this is the gentleman who lost his watch. If so, he was doubly unfortunate, and might be recommended to give up recruiting blacklegs as a bad business.

The men fight on with firm determination. They have refused all arbitration, and have resolved to fight to the bitter end. One of their leaders, Mr. McHugh, warned the masters last week that the consequence of their continuing the struggle might be most serious, and that if the line of docks became a slaughterhouse the responsibility must rest upon them. The authorities became so alarmed at this speech, and the threatening attitude of the men—several of whom had penetrated into the docks and given some of the blacklegs a good thrashing with belaying pins—that they sent for a regiment of soldiers, quartering them in Bootle, and giving orders at the same time that all the public-houses should be closed from 5 o'clock on Saturday afternoon to 12 o'clock on Sunday. In order to further embarrass the masters, the union has called out 2,000 men who were working for those who had accepted the terms of the men.

On Monday, the carmen turned out and joined the strikers. The attitude of the men is becoming very threatening. The avenues to the docks are being watched by large crowds of unionists, who go for the blacklegs. The blacklegs are getting frightened and are leaving the docks, though the police do their utmost to stop them. The magistrates are in a fearful funk, and are demanding more troops; precautions are also being taken to prevent incendiary fires in the docks. In the dockers' procession on Monday the red flag was carried. The shipowners have resolved "to starve the men out," so there will be probably rough work before the strike is over.

### Demonstration of Shop Assistants.

A big demonstration of shop assistants and trade unionists was held on Turnham Green on Sunday to help the shop assistants to reduce their shameful hours of labour, and also to denounce the persecution of comrade Turner, who is one of the union secretaries, for issuing a notice recommending the boycotting of those shopkeepers who made slaves of their employés. Cunningham Graham was the principal speaker at the demonstration, and he advised the shop assistants not to petition Parliament, which was useless, but to boycott the masters who refused to give them their moderate demands. Very good advice, which we hope not only the shop assistants but every workman will act upon.

### Women's Work in Staffordshire Brickfields.

A correspondent has sent me a cutting from a Staffordshire paper, which gives some interesting details of the white slavery in Staffordshire brickfields. It appears that the brickmakers, male and female, have been on strike since the 2nd December for an increase of a penny to twopence a-day, so the writer in the paper got most of his information from watching the blacklegs at work. The best skilled women workers, the moulders, labour "from six in the morning to six at night for a top price of 2s. 6d. for a thousand bricks. It is piece work, and the thousand is really one thousand and fifty, the fifty being thrown in for 'spoils.' The bricks she is making weigh about seven pounds each, and as every one has to be handled three times, the amount of labour necessary to earn the half-crown can easily be calculated. Out of this lucrative payment, moreover, she has to pay a page—a courtly title given to another girl whose age may vary between sixteen and forty years. The function of this latter is to carry the moulded bricks to the kiln, and otherwise make herself generally useful. She gets 1s. 2d. for every 1,050 bricks made, which leaves our communicative lady friend with 1s. 4d. for herself! The weekly wage of these workers is 6s. 8d. for the moulder and 5s. 10d. for the page. The writer describes at another yard "the cruellest form of women labour even in Christian England." This is the carrying by women of large fire-bricks. He says: "The bricks are really slabs made in wooden

moulding frames. They measure a foot or so across, and weigh sometimes as much as a hundredweight and a quarter. The women carry these on their backs to and from the kilns; and we are assured by local experts that the men are not strong enough to do the same work. It not unfrequently happens that a woman is forced on to her knees by the weight of the mass of clay; and the wages for trotting round the miry brickyard for 104 hours a-day in all weathers like beasts of burden as they are made, is from 6s. to 8s. a-week. If the strike succeeds, they will get an advance of another shilling a-week." I wonder if there is any savage country, to which missionaries and other pioneers of the gospel-like H. M. Stanley are so anxious to extend the benefits of civilisation, where the women are in a worse condition of slavery? It is quite certain that they cannot be in a worse condition morally, for brutalised and debased by this heavy toil, the women use language which the reporter declares to be "quite unprintable." In fact, their moral condition is only what might be expected. Emile Zola is the only man who could do it justice. We are glad to hear that there is some chance of these poor wretches winning the strike. Many of the employers have given in, and it is expected that the others will soon follow them.

### 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. Mitcham, to end of November. St. Georges East, to end of December. 1890:—North Kensington and Manchester, to end of January. 'Commonweal' Branch, Leicester, and North London, to end of February. Streatham, to end of December.

**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.

'COMMONWEAL.'—The members of this branch went to Mitcham on Sunday to help Kitz to start the meetings there. Kitz and Mowbray addressed a good audience on the Green; fair sale of 'Weals and Is. collected.

NORTH LONDON.—On Sunday morning at Regent's Park, Barker (of Brighton), Nicoll, and Cantwell addressed a good audience; 55 'Weals sold and 3s. 7d. collected. At Hyde Park in the afternoon Barker gave another address; 'Weals sold out; 20 pamphlets sold, and 1s. 9d. collected.—T. C.

NORTH KENSINGTON.—Good meeting held at Latimer Road; speakers were Grierson, Crouch, R. J. Lyne, and a comrade from the S.D.F.; fair sale of *Commonweal*; 3s. collected. In the afternoon our branch took part in the demonstration at Hammersmith for the Shop Assistants' Union, and marched from Kensal Green with band and banners. In the evening, A. Tarn lectured to a good audience on "The Abolition of the State"; many questions and warm debate; several 'Weals sold and 1s. 6d. collected.

ABERDEEN.—At weekly meeting on 10th the series of articles on the Hat Controversy which appeared in *To-Day* long ago were read and warmly discussed.—L.

GLASGOW.—On Sunday at 1 o'clock good meeting on Jail Square, when Joe and Tim Burgoyne and Glasier spoke. At 5 o'clock, Glasier and Tim Burgoyne addressed Paisley Road Toll meeting. At 7.30, Glasier lectured on "Professor Huxley and Natural Rights" in the Secular Hall; good discussion.

LEEDS.—On Saturday afternoon, in the Gower Street Schoolroom, a splendid meeting held of Jewish workmen; speakers—Paylor, Maguire, and Figenbaum of London. Room was packed to overflowing. There was great enthusiasm when any revolutionary sentiments were expressed. At the conclusion, three hearty cheers were given for the Jewish Workers' Society, the *Workers' Friend*, and the Social Revolution. On Sunday morning, at Vicar's Croft, a good meeting held; speakers were Paylor, Corkwell, Maguire, and Samuels, who dwelt on the prosecution of comrade Bingham of Sheffield. Very sympathetic and enthusiastic audience, who subscribed 13s. 3d. towards the Defence Fund. In the afternoon, same place, a splendid meeting was held for the clay-workers on strike; speakers were Braithwaite, Paylor, Sweeney, Cockayne, Maguire, and Samuels. At the Socialist League, in the evening, discussion opened by Corkwell on "Socialism"; brisk discussion, and literature sold well.

NORWICH.—Sunday last we began the open-air propaganda here, when three meetings were held to celebrate the anniversary of the Paris Commune, good audiences being present. Comrade J. Turner (London) delivered some stirring addresses on the Commune, and met with a very favourable reception. He was assisted during the day by comrades W. Moore, Swash, and Leneying. *Commonweal* sold out; good collection. Turner gave a short address to the members in the Hall in the evening after the close of open-air meeting. A comrade from Berner Street was also present.

YARMOUTH.—On Sunday the Branch celebrated the nineteenth anniversary of the proclamation of the Commune of Paris. In the morning, on Priory Plain, Darley, Mrs. Schack, and Poyntz addressed a large and interested audience for over two hours. In the afternoon, the same speakers held another good meeting at Colman's Granary. In the evening, at Colman's Granary, a good impression was made by Mrs. Schack, Darley, and Poyntz. Mrs. Tochatti sang revolutionary songs at all these meetings, which were all concluded by the "Marseillaise." All the *Commonweal* sold out; 4s. collected; fair sale of literature.—J. H.

DUBLIN.—At Progressist Club, 87 Marlboro' Street, March 15th, J. O'Gorman lectured on "The Commune of Paris—What it Meant, and Why it Failed." Kavanagh, Fitzpatrick, and Russel also spoke.

SCOTTISH SOCIALIST FEDERATION.—Gilray lectured in Moulders' Hall on "The Commune of Paris." A few questions were asked; good discussion; the Commune was ably defended by comrade Melliet.

LIVERPOOL.—Good meeting held on Landing-stage, addressed by Balfour, Reeves, J. C. Kenworthy, and W. Chapman. *Commonweal* sold out, and one quire of *Justice* sold. Next Sunday we unfurl our new flag at the Landing-stage.

SHEFFIELD.—Hallamshire Hall, West Bar.—On Sunday last, March 16th, J. Sketchley lectured in the morning to a fair audience on "The Crisis in the Labour Movement." Also in the evening, on "The Irish Question from a Rational Standpoint." Good discussion; literature sold well.

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.

MANHOOD SUFFRAGE LEAGUE, "Three Doves," Berwick St., Oxford St., W.—Sunday March 23, at 8.30 p.m., W. Townshend, "Gold-Grabbing Sharks," or a *Star* man on the London fish supply. Business meeting at 7.30.

## 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.

East London.—Members are requested to attend a meeting of the Branch at comrade Schack's after the open-air meeting in the Park (to be held on 23rd).

Hammersmith.—Kelmescott House, Upper Mall, W. Sunday March 23, at 8 p.m., G. Bernard Shaw (Fabian), "The Evolution of Socialism." March 28th, Meeting to consider the best means of organising out-door propaganda in the West-end of London during summer months. All Socialists interested invited to attend—8.30 p.m. Sunday March 30, E. A. Pease (Fabian), "The Newcastle Labour Movement." French Class conducted by Mlle. 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. On Sunday March 23, at 8 p.m., W. L. Phillips (Fabian), "Labour and 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. William Morris will lecture at the Grand Assembly Rooms on Tuesday March 25, on "The Class Struggle." Chair will be taken at 7.30 by the Rev. G. G. Bymer.

Leicester.—Exchange Buildings, Rutland Street. Branch meets on Monday and Thursday, at 8 p.m.

Manchester.—Socialist League Club, 60 Grovesnor 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, 25 1/2 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. Eloquence Class Friday at 8 p.m.

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 22.		
8.30.....	Mile-end Waste.....	The Branch
SUNDAY 23.		
11.....	Latimer Road Station.....	R. J. Lyne, Maughan, and Crouse
11.30.....	Kilburn—"Old Plough," Kilburn Lane.....	The Branch
11.30.....	Mitcham—Fair Green.....	Mowbray and Kitz
11.30.....	Regent's Park.....	Nicoll and Parker
3.30.....	Hyde Park—Marble Arch.....	Parker
3.30.....	Victoria Park.....	Davis and Turner
7.....	Weltje Road, Ravenscourt Park.....	Hammersmith Branch
7.30.....	Walham Green—back of Church.....	Hammersmith Branch
8.....	Streatham Fountain.....	Kitz
TUESDAY 25.		
8.....	Walham Green—back of Church.....	Hammersmith Branch
FRIDAY 28.		
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.

Liverpool.—Landing-stage, Sundays at 11.30.

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.

DUBLIN.—At Progressist Club, 87 Marlboro' Street, Saturday Mar. 22, at 8 p.m., T. Hamilton, "Looking Backward."

CLUB AUTONOME, 6 Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.—Sunday March 23, at 8.30, James Harragan, "Federalism."

THE NEW FELLOWSHIP, 267 Strand (rooms of the National Vigilance Association).—Tuesday March 25, Miss E. Lees, "Looking Backward." Woman.

SHEFFIELD.—At Hallamshire Hall, Westbar, on Sunday Mar. 23, J. Sketchley, 11 a.m., "Labour Struggles"; at 6.30, "The Paris Commune of 1871."

EDINBURGH.—SCOTTISH SOCIALIST FEDERATION.—In Moulders' Hall, High Street, on Sunday March 23, at 6.30, Comrade Bell on "Socialism and Medicine."

CHELSEA S.D.F., Co-operative Lecture Hall, 312 Kings Road, Chelsea.—Sunday March 23, at 8 p.m., T. Walker, "Trade Unionism and Social Democracy."

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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.

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