

# THE COMMONWEAL

## The Official Journal of the SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

### NOTES ON NEWS.

THERE is an exhibition on show, it seems, for "Garments for the Poor." It is a difficult thing to see how such an exhibition can be made a novelty, considering the many exhibitions in which the triumphs of cheap labour and shoddy are set forth, and which are open to all and several (who have any money in their pockets) under various glowing titles, which, however, do not conceal the fact that they are the markets of the miserable; shops where wares are sold which no one would buy if he had not been forced to labour for nothing by a robber. Really, I don't see how this new exhibition can compete with Petticoat Lane, as a remarkable object—as a sign of our civilisation.

But if I might give a hint to the promoters of this exhibition, here it is. I suppose that those to whom they give the new garments adapted to their condition of life, when they take the new will strip off the old. Well, suppose these were collected and an exhibition made of them, the garments of the poor, instead of for them. If the gift of garments were done on a large enough scale, the cast-off clothes might make an exhibition of some interest for us of the well-to-do class, and might prepare us for that Exhibition of the Poor themselves, which will take place one day, and will be an imposing ceremony for those of the rich who may chance to survive it.

In fact, if I had dropped down from the moon into a London reading-room and had got hold of a newspaper, I should have said to myself, "The Poor, who are they? They seem to be a very lucky set of people; here are folk always doing something for them, which they wouldn't do for anybody else! Why, amongst other things, here's a man given them £250,000, whatever that means!"

However, not having come into England by way of the moon, I am rather puzzled about this "magnificent gift to the London Poor," and am principally sure of one thing, that if I were a member of that much-cared-for body, I would willingly speculate on my share of the said £250,000, and take, say, a pound of sausages in exchange for my chance; and meantime, I should like to ask a question or two.

1. How is the donor going to get at the poor so that they may receive the "gift"?
2. He will build houses with it, will he? Well, when built, who is to inhabit them? and on what terms?
  - (a) Are the "poor" to live rent free in them?
  - (b) Or to pay rent below the market value of them?
  - (c) If so, who amongst the poor are to be thus favoured?
  - (d) And where are the rest going to live?
3. Or is this, after all, another building company to whom the Guinness is going to lend his money?

When all these questions are answered quite satisfactorily, and I am so far assured that a gift has been given, I have still another question to ask, namely, *Where did the money come from?*

The Brazilian revolution would appear to be, as Mr. Cunninghame Graham hints, a revolution of the ordinary political type which does not touch the workers at all, but it may turn out otherwise. If so we shall soon see. It will not be a matter of "freeing" the slaves in the bourgeois sense of the word; that may be done, as we in England know too well, without making one stroke at the slavery of poverty. If the Brazilian revolution is to be a real one, Capitalism, the root of all evil, must be attacked definitely; then we shall believe in it. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

We have lost by death an energetic worker in the Cause, William Sharman, who, although he was addressed by the title of "reverend," had long shaken off any priestly assumption of dogmatism or special holiness. William Sharman was one of those Unitarian preachers who have become entirely convinced of the truth of Socialism, and see no reason for keeping their light under a bushel; he was a centre

of Socialism in a very unsocialistic neighbourhood, and quietly and steadily did much good; a genial, unselfish man, his personal friends will miss him sorely. W. M.

Lord Melbourne's journals and papers, recently published, include some valuable contributions to the history of an interesting period (1790-1848) and many characteristic sketches of the men who made that history. One of his caustic touches is: "Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ is one of those men whom the Whigs call a Tory; whom the Tories call a fair man inclined to Whig opinions; and who calls himself a man of no politics. Such men are for the most part, if not always, really Tories."

Then, as now, Whigs were no better than Tories when the people were concerned. Here is one of the reasons urged by Melbourne himself against removing the Houses of Parliament from Westminster (italics ours):

"If a total removal takes place, and that to a situation where space is unlimited, it will be very difficult to avoid providing much larger accommodation for spectators as well as for members; and Viscount Melbourne need not recall to your Majesty's mind the fatal effects which large galleries filled with the multitude have had upon the deliberation of public assemblies, and consequently upon the laws and institutions of nations."

May not the "munificent gifts" of Messrs. Guinness and Waterlow, over which the papers have been gushing so, be merely "ransom" such as Mr. Chamberlain used to talk about when he was playing to the gallery and had not turned his face downwards to the stalls? Anyway, it is only giving back a feather from a stolen goose.

The Bishop of Manchester feels that he must move with the times. This is how he does it:

"Dr. Moorhouse, speaking at a meeting of the governors of the Manchester Hospital for Incurables, said one suggestion in the report was that they had lost a considerable number of subscribers during the year, and he must tell them that they were destined to lose more and more, not only by death, but in virtue of the great social movement which most of them regarded with the utmost satisfaction, that social movement whereby the wealth of this country was being very much more extensively distributed among the people. Only the other day a very eminent statesman, who had just received a number of returns making it perfectly plain, told him that whereas the number of smaller fortunes was largely increasing in Great Britain, the number of larger fortunes was steadily diminishing. He (the Bishop) was glad of that, because no community was in a healthy state which had nothing but a small knot of millionaires on one hand, and mostly all paupers on the other. Call this social movement what they might, there was no disguising from themselves the fact that it would make the collection of funds for institutions like that more and more difficult."

The *Omaha Daily Democrat* of the 8th prints a report on the Paris Congress—the progressive one—by the Hon. John E. Ahles, delegate of the Brotherhood of United Labour. In the course of it he complains that the *Commonweal* did not correctly describe the American contingent at the Congress. Well! the *Commonweal* deeply regrets the mistake, though from his own statement it seems to have been a natural as well as a very slight one. But he forgets to say that although the Editor and Secretary of the *Commonweal* were both there, as well as many other representatives of European labour papers, he neglected to explain to any of them the position he took up, which seems to have been generally misunderstood by the Congress.

What led to his withdrawal from the Congress was that he had been selected to report for the *United States*, but that through what he claims to have been "ignorance or dishonesty" on the part of Liebknecht, Mr. Busche, then of the *Workmen's Advocate*, supplanted him, and proceeded to misrepresent American labour. He need not now be sore, however, for the revenge of time has overtaken Mr. Busche, who has since then been cast out and discredited by the Socialist Labour Party of the U. S., by which he was sent to Paris, and in consequence is no longer in the editorial chair of the *Workmen's Advocate*, to that paper's manifest improvement. Among other things, we notice that it now acknowledges in a proper manner the source of its clippings. S.

## THE MEN OF THE REVOLUTION.

II

## MIRABEAU AND ROBESPIERRE.

We have seen revolutionary Paris in its first outburst of fury against the tyranny of the king and the nobles. We have seen the storm as it spread from Paris over the whole of France, its course marked by the blazing chateaux of the aristocrats. It now remains to take a glimpse at the man who, up to the fall of the Bastille, was the head of the revolt; but who now, like many revolutionary leaders of the "moderate" type, sees that the people are getting in advance of him, and is beginning to fall back into the rear.

Foremost among the men who sit upon the benches of the Assembly, which is now looked upon with superstitious awe by the French people as the sole means of bringing "Peace and the Constitution" to distracted France, is Gabriel Honoré Riquette de Mirabeau, born of a wild Southern race, noted for their contempt of law and authority. A race gallant in battle, but usually too rough and blunt for the scented atmosphere of Courts, where a rough word to a king's favourite would often outweigh the memory of services rendered in the field of battle. Mirabeau was not an unworthy representative of his family. He had the good or bad fortune to be the son of "a friend of man," the Marquis de Mirabeau, a deep student of political economy, who displayed his love of mankind by locking his family up, all but one, in prison, because they were impudent enough not to regulate their conduct by rules he had laid down for their guidance. In those good old days, when "parents were what parents ought to be," and "law'n'-order" supported them to the fullest in exercising their authority, an irascible father could not only cut off a rebellious son with a shilling, but put him in the Bastille as well by means of a *lettre de cachet*. The Marquis de Mirabeau made the fullest use of his privileges as a noble, and only required three score *lettres de cachet* for his own use.

It was only to be expected that young Mirabeau would reap the full benefit of his father's paternal care. At both school and college he showed remarkable abilities, and with these abilities a strong individuality which would brook no control. In consequence, as he grew up, he was repeatedly consigned to jail by his philanthropic parent. While at Pontarlier he met Madame de Monier, the young wife of an old husband. The two fell in love, and escaping from the prison fled together to Holland. Here they lived by literary work, but were shamefully betrayed and handed over to the French Government, when Madame de Monier was sent to a convent and Mirabeau to the prison of Vincennes. Here he passed forty-two months in a dark dungeon, with hardly any clothing to his back. Released he wandered through Europe, writing on every subject of topical interest, and continually attacking the system under which he had suffered. The sound of the gathering storm of the revolution brought him to France. He was elected to the National Assembly as deputy for Aix, and from his election the time of his public history begins. He attended with other deputies the opening of the States-General, and marched in the procession with other deputies from the Church de Notre Dame to the Church of St. Louis. Here all eyes were fixed upon him, attracted by the fame of his intellect and also of his vices. "His immense mane of hair, his leonine head, stamped with a mighty ugliness, were astounding; no one could take their eyes from him. He was a man, and the others were but shadows."<sup>1</sup> Thus 'mid the throng, the giant, vicious it is true, but great and courageous, strides along, frowned on by the mediocre respectabilities that surround him. He marches on contemptuous and undaunted, "shaking his lion's mane as if prophetic of great deeds."

For a time Mirabeau spoke but little in the Assembly, but his opportunity came at last. In the early days of the struggle between the King and the Commons, being egged on by the Court, his majesty determined to put an end to this sort of thing, and backed up by a strong display of military force, he read out a list of concessions he had resolved to make to popular demands, and wound up by informing his faithful Commons "that if they would not carry them out he would do it without them." Already the Commons, dumb with apprehension, saw before them the gleaming bayonets of an impending *coup d'état*, when Mirabeau, springing to the tribune, said to the king's messenger, who bade the Assembly obey the king's orders and disperse, "We have heard the intentions suggested by the king; and you, sir, who can never be his organ to the National Assembly, you, who have neither place, right, nor voice to speak, you are not the man to remind us of it. Go and tell them who sent you, that we are here by the will of the people, and nothing but the force of bayonets shall drive us hence." These stirring words put new courage into the hearts of the Assembly; they stood to their guns amid roars of popular approval. The Court was defeated, and Mirabeau became from that day the most popular man in France.

But now mark what followed. Mirabeau was an aristocrat; and though persecuted in his younger days by his own class, it was impossible for him to forget his birth and his blood. He was alarmed by the spread of the revolution. The fall of the Bastille, the burning of the chateaux, the sweeping away of feudal rights and privileges frightened him; the revolution was going too far. Besides, his vices, his love of wine and women, luxurious feasting, splendid establishments, needed a full purse to support his extravagance; but riches are not found in the ranks of the revolutionary party, while the reaction had

gold and to spare. Soon after the fall of the Bastille, Mirabeau received gold from the Court, and made use of his immense popularity to delay and obstruct the progress of the revolution. After a time he did worse, he plotted with the Court for the overthrow of the revolution and butchery of the people. His death on April 2nd, 1791, brought on by his wild life, only saved him from the inevitable doom, which in those days overtook treason. For it is absurd to suppose that even Mirabeau, great as his abilities were, could have stayed the progress of the torrent of revolt; he would only have been swept away in the desperate endeavour. It was not until the revolution had exhausted itself by years of storm and stress, that a mightier than Mirabeau—Napoleon Bonaparte—could overthrow the stockjobbers and usurers who usurped the post once occupied by men, who, whatever were their faults, were sincere in their desire to make life happier and better for the masses of the people. In such an attempt Mirabeau would have died like Danton, upon the scaffold. There are times when events are stronger than men, no matter how strong those men may be.

But in the same Assembly, within whose walls as Farmer Gerard remarked "there were a good many scoundrels," was another man, whom middle-class historians have not hard words enough to shower upon—his name is Maximilian Robespierre. In every way a complete contrast to Mirabeau, the "anxious, slight, ineffectual looking man under thirty in spectacles," would have looked poor and mean beside the huge revolutionary giant that towered above him, yet he had a quality which Mirabeau lacked, and without which all Mirabeau's great qualities were as dust in the balance. Robespierre was honest; even his bitterest foes are forced to admit it; and it was that one quality that enabled him to triumph over foes who were his superiors in both courage and ability. Mirabeau even saw this, and in one of the earlier Sessions of the Assembly remarked to some friends, "This man will do somewhat, he believes every word he says." Not only was Robespierre sincere, but he was entirely disinterested. The son of an advocate, he was sent to the college of Louis le Grand at Paris by the influence of Cardinal Rohan, noted for his share in the scandalous affair of the diamond necklace. There he had Camille Desmoulins as schoolmate; but Robespierre did not stay there long, for he begged his patron to let him resign in favour of a younger brother. He returned home to his own province of Arras, and there practised in his profession of advocate so successfully that his abilities attracted the attention of the bishop, who used his influence to appoint him judge of his diocese. Robespierre's decisions, unlike those of most judges in those days, were never swayed by bribery of self-interest. One day a culprit is brought before him, for whose offence the law prescribes the penalty of death, and Robespierre resigns his post with all its emoluments rather than pronounce that sentence upon this unfortunate wretch. These simple facts hardly bear out the epithets that are usually levied at Robespierre by middle-class historians; certainly you could hardly expect these deeds from a man that was either "self-seeking," "bloodthirsty," or "cruel." If Robespierre sent intriguing royalists to the guillotine it could only have been in obedience to what he imagined was a cruel necessity, and the respectable persons who exclaim against him and the people of Paris for the abrupt methods of disposing of their enemies, should remember that these traitors to their country and the people were in league with foreign despots to bring arson, massacre, and slaughter upon the French people, who had been brave enough to rebel against the tyranny of centuries. Mercy with people of this kind would have been a mistake; only it would have been better to have stripped them of the wealth which made them dangerous, and thus rendered them powerless to injure the people, reserving the guillotine only for very extreme cases. Still, it is easy to criticise from an arm-chair standpoint, and yet probably under the same circumstances the critic would have done the same. As we advance further into the history of these exciting years, we may often have cause to wonder at the self-restraint exercised by the people under circumstances of extreme provocation on the part of their enemies.

My purpose in writing this article was to draw a contrast between two men who are in their way revolutionary types. On one side the man of gigantic genius, of startling talent, yet depraved by a vicious life, selling himself and the cause of the people for gold—Mirabeau; this "splendid leper," a giant whom cold steel could not frighten, but yet gold could buy. On the other hand, Robespierre, the man whose abilities are scarcely above the average, but whose honesty, sincerity, and disinterestedness are so apparent that he wins the confidence of the people, who are wearied of tricksters of every kind, and stands even to-day a figure at which all their foeman shudder.

I am quite aware that Robespierre's principles are not ours, that his care for the people took the form of the benevolent despotism of modern State Socialism; but still no one can doubt his love for the poor, and what is more he met his fate at the hands of a pitiless reaction, whose leaders were the men who could boast of all of Mirabeau's vices but none of his virtues. Cold-blooded scoundrels who restored once again the rule of the money-bag, and the slavery of the masses to the tyranny of the rich. It is because Robespierre died for the people and by their foes that his name should be remembered among the other martyrs of the popular cause.

D. J. NICOLL.

<sup>1</sup> Michelet's "French Revolution."

There are about 80,000 able-bodied convicts in our jails and penitentiaries. The crime and vice represented by this immense prison population is the outgrowth of a vicious social system which enforces poverty on the many to enable the few to revel in luxury. The best antidote for crime is occupation and comfort.—Washington (D. C.) *National Economist*.

## CAPITAL AND LABOUR.

THE ordinary conception among the so-called educated classes of the relations between labour and capitalism is a striking instance of the power of a phrase. Nothing has done more to confuse the public mind as to the rights and wrongs of the social question, and so lead to the perpetuation of the worst evils of wage-slavery, than the systematic misuse of the term "capital." The true and original meaning of the word is, of course, wealth, either in the form of money or materials, employed for the production of more wealth; and were it always used in this sense a great deal of misconception would have been avoided and the utter shallowness and absurdity of much of the teaching of the hired apologist for plutocracy would have been apparent at the first glance. But because the growth of language has not kept pace with new conditions arising from social evolution it has become customary to use the word "capital" in a double sense. In addition to its primary and correct meaning of wealth employed in production, it has come by general usage to signify also the interests and powers of those who own or control capital. In speaking of "the rights of capital," "the conflict between capital and labour," and similar every-day phrases, reference is made not to material capital, the product and at the same time the instrument of industry, but to the position of the capitalist as a social factor. Using the word sometimes in one sense and sometimes in the other, it is no wonder that those whose interest it is to befog the popular understanding on the subject should have found in this confusion, under the one term of two ideas of such widely different import, a splendid opportunity for the exercise of controversial disingenuousness. How easy, for instance, is it to argue that as capital—i.e., the product of labour used to create more wealth—is a necessary instrument and auxiliary of labour, that therefore the interests of labour and capital are identical, and all who would attempt to stir up strife between them are either fools or knaves.

"Capital," says the hireling journalist, or the sleek and well-paid popular lecturer, "what is it but the tools with which industry works—machinery and raw material, axes and hammers, spades and wheelbarrows, corn and cotton? Capital is but stored labour, increasing and multiplying infinitely the productiveness of the labour of the future. Why, without capital we could do nothing. We should all be naked, half-starved savages. So you see that there can be no possible antagonism between capital and labour. They are mutually necessary and ought to be the best friends." And there are any number of otherwise intelligent, fairly-educated people who have been convinced by this kind of intellectual jugglery that labour reformers are a set of mischievous destructives and that the complaints of the toilers of the oppression of capitalism are unfounded. They have not the wit to see that the "capital" whose advantages are universally acknowledged is an entirely different thing from the "capital" whose rule is complained of as arbitrary and tyrannous, although comprised under the same term—that the inert material, the use of which renders labour profitable—has been confounded with the individuals, whose possession or control of it puts them in a position to tax industry.

No labour reformer has any quarrel with "capital." We all recognise its utility—nay, its absolute necessity—to effective production. But "capitalism" is another affair altogether. It is the assumption of the few who possess capital to control labour by virtue of such possession. When once the distinction is clearly understood, the whole superstructure of false logic and politico-economical platitudes, reared upon the puerile play upon words, in which writers who pass for cultured and profound have not been ashamed to indulge, falls to the ground. And to this end all labour-reform writers and speakers ought to be careful to make the distinction, and never say "capital" when they mean "capitalism." It may seem a small matter in the eyes of some, but we cannot ignore the extent to which the convictions of mankind are shaped by words and phrases. Men will fight to the death for a catchword or a party shibboleth, which by the change of conditions has lost any real meaning it may at one time have possessed.

In admitting the usefulness of "capital" we do not admit the necessity for the capitalist or the system of capitalism which implies the absolute control of the forces of labour by the money power. On the contrary, as all wealth is the creation of labour, it should be the servant, not the master—the instrument, and not the directing power. The interests of capitalism and labour are diametrically and eternally opposed to each other in the very nature of things. They never can be harmonised, and they never ought to be. Labour has not and cannot have any quarrel with "capital" any more than with land or air or water. But with those who seek to monopolise all or any of these essentials to life and industry we have an unceasing struggle to wage to regain possession of our natural rights, and establish a just system of distribution under which capitalism will cease to exist, while capital will be owned by those whose labour alone gives it value.—*Journal of United Labour.*

## CORRESPONDENCE.

HENRY GEORGE AND P. E. DOVE.

I desire to state that to my knowledge Henry George had never seen or heard of Patrick Edward Dove as late as the autumn of 1882—that is to say, three years after the publication of 'Progress and Poverty,' and eleven years after Henry George's 'Our Land and Land Policy,' which I have now before me, and from which 'Progress and Poverty' obviously evolved. But independently of this, any unbiased literary man who takes the trouble to read Dove's two works, 'The Theory of Human Progression' (London, 1850) and 'The Elements of Political Science' (Edinburgh, 1854), will see that the idea of plagiarism is supremely untenable. Further, in the New York *Standard* of October 16th, Henry George meets the original suggestion with a straightforward openness which probably no English editor would have exhibited, seeing that he publishes in his own journal the full text of the accusatory article in the *Twentieth Century*, at the same time distinctly stating, what I knew seven years ago—i.e., that he had not heard of P. E. Dove's works when he published 'Progress and Poverty.'

With this information before you I feel sure that you will take the necessary steps to stamp out the misstatement alluded to.

58 Oxford Street, Birmingham, Nov. 16.

THOS. F. WALKER.

GLASGOW.—Stepniak (author of 'Underground Russia,' etc.) will lecture on "Socialism amongst the Russian Peasantry" in the Waterloo Grand Hall, on Sunday evening first, at 7 o'clock. Stepniak will meet members in Rooms, 122 Ingram Street, at 2 p.m.

## HOLY THURSDAY.

Is this a holy thing to see  
In a rich and fertile land,  
Babes reduced to misery,  
Fed with cold and usurious haud?

Is that trembling cry a song?  
Can it be a song of joy?  
And so many children poor?  
It is a land of poverty!

And their sun does never shine,  
And their fields are bleak and bare,  
And their ways are filled with thorns:  
It is eternal winter there.

For where'er the sun does shine,  
And where'er the rain does fall,  
Babe can never hunger there,  
Nor poverty the mind appal.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

## REVOLUTIONARY CALENDAR.

WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 7, 1889.

|   |       |  |
|---|-------|--|
| 1 | Sun.  | 1849. Ebenezer Elliott, the "Corn Law Rhymer," died. 1865. Thomas Clarke Luby sentenced to twenty years' penal servitude as a Fenian. 1867. Funeral processions throughout Ireland in honour of the Manchester martyrs. 1879. Explosion on the St. Petersburg Moscow Railway; same train as day before. 1883. Patrick O'Donnell sentenced to death at the Old Bailey for executing the informer Carey.   |
| 2 | Mon.  | 1816. "Spa-fields Riot," arising out of a meeting held at Spa-fields to receive the answer to the petition presented to the Regent from a meeting at the same place on Nov. 15; desultory fighting between troops and people throughout afternoon and evening. 1851. <i>Coup d'etat</i> in Paris. 1852. Frances Wright died. 1859. John Brown hung. 1872. Strike of 2,400 gasmen in London. 1879. Alexander II. appeals to all classes of the Russian nation for support against the revolutionists. 1887. Alfred Linnell, first victim of Bloody Sunday, died. 1888. Baudin manifestation at Paris, including a procession from the Hotel de Ville to Montmartre. |
| 3 | Tues. | 1882. Arabi Pasha banished to Ceylon.  |
| 4 | Wed.  | 1795. Thomas Carlyle born. 1797. Thomas Muir entertained at a fraternal banquet by the citizens of Bordeaux. 1838. Fight between patriots and loyalists at Windsor, Canada. 1871. Trial of Maxime Lisbonne for his part in the Commune.  |
| 5 | Thur. | 1806. Trial of John McDonough and Wm. Kearney, "Thrashers," at Sligo, for house-breaking and belonging to an "unlawful confederacy"; acquitted. 1816. Serious food-riot in Dundee, caused by large shipments of grain and a sudden rise in the price of meal; over 100 shops plundered, and a corn-dealer's set fire to.   |
| 6 | Fri.  | 1793. Trial of Thomas Briellat, pumpmaker, of Shoreditch, for seditious words, as to the need for an English republic, etc. 1806. Trial of Thomas Brennan, "Thrasher," at Sligo; death. 1865. John O'Leary sentenced to penal servitude for twenty years, and O'Donovan Rossa for life, as Fenians. 1882. Louis Blanc died.  |
| 7 | Sat.  | 1683. Algernon Sydney beheaded. 1795. Meeting of London Corresponding Society at Jews' Harp House. 1879. Jón Sigurdsson died.  |

The nation which can show the most enormous massing of wealth can also show the most abject poverty. The one is the usual accompaniment of the other. Great wealth cannot be massed except it be taken from the thousands who created it to be centred in the hands of the few who hold it. Every unusual luxury enjoyed by one represents its equivalent in destitution and suffering by many.—Washington (D. C.) *National Economist*.

INTEREST.—These pleasant illustrations to show the poetic justice of interest, like that of the poor fellow digging potatoes with his fingers till the benevolent capitalist kindly loans him a spade to be returned with a goodly share of potatoes, only serve to show that men could never have been cheated or driven into the adoption of any such practice, if its advocates had not given it the outward semblance of justice. Anybody who has read "Ivanhoe," if not history, knows that the Jews of the dark times of Catholic supremacy were hated by professed Christians less for having crucified Jesus than for the usury which their somewhat unique position as the only really successful financiers of the time enabled them to extort. It was not until Christians learned from their Jewish taskmasters that to let men live to produce for them and to absorb their products in the shape of usury was really easier than killing them outright, that they concluded to tame the monster usury—convert and Christianise him for their own special accommodation. He was duly baptized "Interest," fettered a little by something known as "legal enactment," and put to work in Christian harness. The petty examples brought forward by the advocates of this infamy give no more idea of its real dimensions than one gets of an elephant by merely seeing the eye. The truth is, the heaviest interests under which the masses struggle to-day, are those for which the "for value received" is a rascally pretext on the part of the interest takers; the indebtedness is purely fiat in the large majority of cases, created by the scratch of a pen. Let anyone who doubts this, examine the real character of our town, city, state, and national debts to be convinced. The smaller interests which are taken or paid among private individuals, although wrong in principle, are a drop in the bucket as compared with these monster absorbers of the people's wealth, which do their work so stealthily and so evenly as to escape the notice of their victims. There is no end to the things that can truthfully be said on this line.—Eleanor F. Baldwin, in *Twentieth Century*.

CHELSEA S.D.F., Co-operative Lecture Hall, 312 Kings Road, Chelsea.—Sunday December 1, at 8 p.m., Jas. Blackwell, "Trade-Unionism, Social Democracy, and Anarchism."



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.

Subscriptions, including postage—For British Islands, Europe, United States, and Canada, a year, 6s.; six months, 3s.; three months, 1s. 6d.

Remittances should be made in postal orders or halfpenny stamps.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. M. (Manchester)—Shall have attention in a day or two; delay unavoidable through removal.  
W. B. T. (Edinburgh)—Kindly address your report in accordance with notice underneath.

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THE  
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"COMMONWEAL"

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IMPORTANT NOTICE.

To those who have obtained copies of the *Commonweal* through the propagandist work of our comrades, by free distribution in the streets and public conveyances, or by purchase at our outdoor stations, we ask if in agreement with our principles to help the sale of the *Commonweal* by ordering it of their newsagents, and sending on to us the names of newsagents willing to sell it; and still better, as our outdoor work must shortly be reduced, by joining the local branches and helping on the work.

JOHN MORLEY.

THE political career of John Morley is an "awful example" of the demoralising influence of politics. It is a warning to us all. Could his old intellectual wet nurse, Philosophic Radicalism, behold him now, what would she think? Rest her good soul, it is well that she is dead! Maybe her spirit still haunts for a season the shelves whereon Mill's "Representative Government" and his own "On Compromise" lie dust covered. If so, how it must anguish her to read the reports of his speeches in the daily newspapers which are laid on the library table! The once promising apostle of high and mighty political ethics and intellectual integrity, become a hack politician! The student who walked the solemn portals of uncompromising principles, wallowing in the filth and mire of electioneering and party chicanery!

Probably some Socialists will say, that Mr. Morley's decline and fall into Parliamentary pusillanimity was just what one would have anticipated from the vague preceptorial attitude of his earlier writings; and some may even affirm that he has not declined or fallen at all; that his philosophical platform was always a shabby one, and that he never was more than a backboneless poser in political criticism. Such opinions are, I think, not quite fair. It appears to me that there was much in his earlier writings to justify the hope that Mr. Morley would have acted a useful and not ignoble part in the conflict of modern social speculations, and that instead of descending into the wretched arena of party disputation and office hunting, he would at least have borne steadily, if not very brilliantly, the little light of social idealism which Mr. Mill committed from his dying grasp to his disciples.

As it is, instead of entering practical politics (which he never should have entered) as a fearless and uncompromising champion of sheer political and social principles, prepared to struggle with the minority through good and ill report, Mr. Morley has at once amalgamated himself with the ignorant, brutish, and selfish majority, and has endeavoured to beat the record as a place-seeker and manoeuvrer of party marionettes. No politician of recent times has more explicitly disavowed principle in favour of expediency and party and personal success. Men must be judged "according to their lights," and while Mr. Gladstone, Sir William Harcourt, and Lord Randolph Churchill may be excused as never having known any better, Mr. Morley must be condemned as having aljured his faith for a mess of pottage, and having "wilfully sought his own salvation."

Could the career of John Morley of to-day be written by the John Morley of ten or fifteen years ago, what a poor spectacle he would make of him! What fine dissertations on pure morals he would give us, when relating how the author of "On Compromise" and the apologist of Robespierre and the French Revolution declared at Newcastle a few days ago to the labour delegates, "If you ask me if I am in favour of abolishing the Monarchy, I answer emphatically, 'No!'" With what solemn antithesis he would set Mr. Morley's political critiques in the *Fortnightly Review* of ten years ago against the political harangues of Mr. Morley of the last two years! In the *Fortnightly Review* days, Mr. Morley criticised the doings of Liberals and Tories with some measure of impartiality. He frequently blamed the Liberals for speaking and acting wrongly, and not infrequently commended the attitude and utterances of the Tories. Mr. Morley was not a politician then, and probably had no thought of becoming one, or of tasting the "sweets" of office. Now Mr. Morley is a politician, and has tasted, and wants to taste more, of official privilege and power. So you never find him saying one good word of the Tories, or one bad word of the Liberals. Has the Liberal party become so much wiser and better since then, and the Tory party so much more foolish and wicked? Or has not rather Mr. Morley become a changed man, changed from an impartial and thoughtful observer to a bribed and prejudiced partisan?

Yes! according to Mr. Morley, everything the Liberals and Home Rulers do or want to do is right; everything the Tories and wicked Liberal Unionists do or want to do is wrong. Some politicians who are in favour of a more extreme measure of Home Rule than the Liberals are ever likely to give Ireland, and who never pretended to be very philosophical or exacting in their critical estimates, do not just approve of everything said and done by the Irish party; but philosophical Mr. Morley has no reservation in his approval of their tactics. He is prepared to back up and justify with a thousand historical and ethical references, every syllable uttered and every act done in the name of the Home Rule agitation. Even the most insensitive of the Irish members must blush sometimes, when they behold the halo of wisdom and absolute justice which Mr. Morley radiates round their most inconsequent sayings and doings—from Mr. O'Brien's fight for his breeches to Mr. Redmond's epistolary remonstrances to the editor of the *Times*.

In his recent utterances on social and labour questions, Mr. Morley shows that he is not one whit more governed by principle in his "opinions" than Lord Randolph Churchill or the worst political time-servers of the day. Nor can we say that he is any degree more advanced or democratic. Some of our friends are apt to look upon his declaration in favour of what is termed the "London programme" as an evidence of his progressiveness. Of course he is progressive—so also is Churchill. Politicians must be progressive. But let us not credit Churchill, Morley or any other politicians with what we, not they, have done. Undoubtedly, Socialists and Land Nationalisers have brought a number of measures within the region of practical politics, which politicians previously rejected as unpractical. And now that we have made them practical, why praise men like John Morley because they cannot fail to see what is evident to the veriest political

nincompoop? Let us judge John Morley's opinions, not by what he cannot avoid approving if he intends to exist as a politician, but by the measures or principles he advocates because he thinks them right, whether immediately expedient or not. Judged in this way, Mr. Morley will, I think, be found not on the side of progress really, but on the side of reaction. In his speech at the Eighty Club he declared himself against Socialism if it meant the abolition of private property. That is a definite declaration of principle. The abolition of private property is not within the region of practical politics, and in Mr. Morley's estimation is not likely to be for a long time. He was safe, therefore, in making that declaration as a politician. But free education, free meals to school children, the taxation of ground values, etc., these are measures which are distinctly within the range of practical politics, and although they are definitely Socialistic measures (for they sap the very foundations of the principle of individualism and private property) yet Mr. Morley supports them. Mr. Morley might as well tell us that he is a strict teetotaler, but that he is prepared to take a little wine—or even whiskey if much pressed—just for his stomach's sake, as it were!

It would serve little purpose to enter into a detailed criticism of Mr. Morley's objections to the eight hours movement and other of the more extreme labour proposals. One gets quite sick of replying to the statements of men, who by their position and professions dare not, even if they had any honest convictions, speak them out. Of course, if it were necessary it would be the duty of Socialists at all times to dispute point by point even the most barefaced misstatements of politicians. Luckily for us, however, it is not so. Everywhere around us we see the true principles of Socialism spreading amongst the people with extraordinary swiftness; and by the time we could succeed in dispersing half the crudities and calumnies which men like Mr. Morley thrust in our pathway, the social revolution would be upon us.

Mr. Morley says that he is sometimes regarded as a sluggish Whig and sometimes as a Nihilist—sometimes as a Marlborough House man and sometimes as a St. Just. This he appeared to regard as rather complimentary to the breadth and variety of his sympathies. Perhaps it is. Blowing hot and cold and mixing bitter with sweet has long been a favourite and successful accomplishment of politicians. There has always been a close resemblance between the professions of the conjurer and the political adventurer. It is scarcely necessary, however, to remark that no honest and earnest advocate of truth is ever likely to be so misapprehended. St. Just could never be mistaken for a Marlborough House man, or a Marlborough House man for a St. Just; and if Mr. Morley were burning with a desire to serve suffering humanity and prepared to fight all principalities and powers in behalf of truth and justice, he would not be regarded as a Whig or anything but what he really was—and never would have had the opportunity of delivering his shallow and specious address at the Eighty Club.

J. BRUCE GLASIER.

### THE WAGE SYSTEM AND CHATTEL SLAVERY.

AN attempt was made on the life of Dom Pedro, Emperor of Brazil, since deposed, and it is said the would-be regicide was actuated by a desire to be revenged for the emancipation of the slaves. If this be true, says the *Journal of United Labour*, it will be interesting to discover to what class of society the man belongs, and how the emancipation of the slaves affected him. He is said to have been crazy: if so he may belong to the ex-slaveholding class; a sane member of this class would hardly feel resentful for the emancipation, they have benefited too greatly, in the way of cheaper labour and lessened anxiety, from it. It was the wealthy land-holders and slave-owners who led the movement for the emancipation of the slaves in Brazil, a fact that may seem strange to those who remember how desperately Southern slave-owners fought against abolition. Yet with the experience of the Southern planters before them it was the most natural thing in the world that the Brazilian land-owners should favour emancipation. It was because they believed that slave labour was cheap that the planters of the South favoured slavery, but their experience since the war has shown them that the wage system gives them cheaper labour than slavery did. It costs less to hire black men now than it did to support them and pay interest on their purchase money before the war; and, instead of the injury they dreaded, abolition has absolutely benefited them financially. The fear of want and anxiety for his children is a sharper goad to force the negro wage slave to work than ever was the driver's lash; and if he is no longer the "property" of his employer, his master is relieved of all anxiety regarding his "property's" health and welfare. In slavery, the condition of the slaves varied; some worked on cotton lands, some in sugar plantations, and some in rice swamps, some slave-owners were more just and humane than were others. Not every one was a Legree. So under the wage system there is difference of condition: the lot of the bricklayer and carpenter is better than that of the Pennsylvanian miner and cokeworker; the employés in one factory have advantages over those in another. Some employers are more just and humane than others. The essence of slavery is that men are compelled to work for the benefit of others, and that the result of their labour does not inure to themselves. They may be forced into slavery by the guns of the Arab slave-hunters, or by monopoly of natural opportunities; they may become the property of a master by virtue of a sale in the slave-market, or the employé of one through the operation of competitive commercialism; but whether kidnapped into chattel slaves or monopolised into the wage system, it is a mockery to call them free when the fruit of their labour is not theirs to enjoy. The modern wage-worker does not wear a collar like the Saxon serf; he need not fear the driver's lash like the chattel slave; but the law of supply and demand binds him as firmly to his task as the one, and the sharp sting of competition goads him to his work as effectively as the other; while the iron law of wages fixes the amount he is to receive for his support as near the minimum where he can exist and continue to produce as ever did the pinching economy of the most careful feeder of slaves. At best the wage system is but an improved system of slavery—this is the most that can be said of it—and all the improvements have not been in the interest of workers.

### A SOCIALIST HYMN.

By the bodies and minds and souls that rot in a common styne  
In the city's offal-holes, where the dregs of its horrors lie—  
By the prayers that bubble out, and never ascend to God,  
We swear the tyrants of earth to rout, with tongue and with pen and sword!

By the child that sees the light, where the pestilent air stagnates,  
By the woman, worn and white, who under the street-lamp waits,  
By the horror of vice that thrives in the dens of the wretched poor,  
We swear to strike when the time arrives, for all that is good and pure!

By the rights that were always ours—the rights that we ne'er enjoyed,  
By the gloomy cloud that lowers on the brow of the unemployed,  
By the struggling mothers and wives—by the girls in the streets of sin—  
We swear to strike when the time arrives, for our kind, and our kith and kin!

By our burning hate for men who rob us of ours by might,  
And drive to the slum and den, the poor from the sun and light,  
By the hell-born greed that drives our sons o'er the world to roam,  
We swear to strike when the time arrives, and strike for our friends and home!

By the little of manhood left in a world of want and sin,  
By the rift in the dark cloud's brow where the light still struggles in,  
By the love that scarce survives in a stream that is sluggish and thin,  
We swear to work till the time arrives for ourselves and our kind and kin!

The little of love may dry in its stream that scarcely flows,  
The little of manhood die and the rift in the dark clouds close,  
And hope may vanish from earth and all that is pure and bright,  
But we swear to strike e'er that time has birth with the whole of our gathered might!

Sydney Bulletin.

HENRY LAWSON.

### INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

#### DENMARK.

The controversy between the Danish Socialistic papers, *Social Demokrat* and *Arbejderen*, has now degenerated into a scandal and a shame, which must be felt as an humiliation by all Socialists. On November 8th, the leaders of the Danish Social-democratic party and editors of the *Social Demokrat* (that is the "party government") dismissed Miss Signe Andersen from her membership of the said "party government," because she had censured it in *Arbejderen* for partly concealing the true kernel of Socialism, and compromising with Liberals and Radicals in order to get a big political party (of a very mixed quality though), and in order to make safe their own comfortable position as leaders or "government." On November 10th, this same socialistic government sent out a circular to all the Socialists of Denmark, requesting them to vote for or against the expulsion from the party of the seven editors of *Arbejderen*, namely, comrades Gerson Trier, P. Petersen, Nicolai L. Petersen, F. Möller, Nielsen-Kolding, P. Christensen, and Chr. Bildsøe. Their "crime" consisted simply of "violating party discipline"! They have dared to speak out in earnest their opinion upon the party government, and to criticise the quality of the Socialistic party itself; and that is reason enough for the Danish party government to make themselves into Bismarcks, dictating expulsion!

Such is the liberty of the press and of free thought and speech in the Danish *Social-Democratic* party, which identifies itself with Socialism in Denmark! But this, bad as it is, is hardly the worst of the affair. *Arbejderen* has always exercised its, as it seems to me, very necessary criticism in a fair and moderate way; but *Social-Demokraten* uses against its adversaries the dirtiest and vilest denunciations, mostly of a quite private character. It simply declares our seven comrades of *Arbejderen* to be "spies," "masked Conservatives," etc., etc. Since the publication of the expulsion resolution in *Social-Demokraten*, this paper has every day been full of foul personal attacks upon the seven "miscreants." It is very seldom that I have observed more corrupt practices on the side of the bourgeois press against Socialists than the tactics of this "Social-Democratic" paper against its Socialistic adversaries. And the shame is the greater, as fellow-Socialists ought to stand nigher than our enemies the bourgeois.

The result of the vote upon the expulsion of the seven comrades of *Arbejderen* was going to be published on the 20th of November. It will probably be affirmative to the proposal of the "government" by a large majority. If so, we have from this month to date a thorough split in the so-called Socialistic party of Denmark; and it will be the lasting honour of comrade Trier to have provoked this split, because, under such circumstances as this a split means nothing less than the unveiling of a miserable lump. We who mean by our Socialism something broader, and keener, and purer than the detestable political juggle of the "party government" in Denmark will hail this split as a new birth of Socialism in that country.

*Sens moral*: Dear friend, consider once more the "value" of a Socialistic party, of Socialistic political action. CAN there come anything good out of it?

STN.

COMMUNISM AND QUARRELLING.—Writing in 1592 of the true state of Iceland in reply to the "lying slanders" of Krantz and Munster, German cosmographers, "Arngrimus Jonas of Hølen Hjaltdale" is very much exercised by the statement as to the Icelanders that "all things are common among them except their wives." Commenting upon this he says (*Hakluyt*, 1599 ed., p. 581): "But whether the aforesaid things be true or no, we call the laws of our country to witness, which the Icelanders from the beginning have used all one with the Norways; . . . of inheritances, . . . theft, extortions, lending, bargains, and the rest: all which, to what purpose should they be enjoined unto them with whom all things are common? We call to witness so many broils and contentions in our courts and places of judgment . . . concerning goods moveable and immoveable. We call to witness our kings, . . . who by so many bills of supplication . . . hath been often interrupted, for the setting through of controversies concerning possessions." And he thus quite triumphantly refutes the reproach, as he takes it, cast upon his countrymen of taking away distinctions of properties, like the Anabaptists. For indeed how should laws and quarrellings pertain "unto those with whom all things are common"?

## THE LABOUR STRUGGLE.

### John Morley and Eight Hours.

The jubilation of the workmen Radicals when the Liberal and Radical Union accepted their proposal for an eight hours day in all Government establishments has been considerably checked by the stern *non possumus* of Mr. John Morley. The *Star*, which has advocated an eight hours law for some time, and at no time so strongly at the present, when it seems to fear that the spread of the labour revolt may lead to some breach of the peace, professes itself quite delighted with the stern honesty of Mr. Morley. It is a great pity that the *Star* has such a weakness for humbug, but then I suppose a mild infusion of that inestimable quality is one of the means by which the *Star* has attained its present great popularity. At the same time, as it falls down and worships the Roman virtue of Mr. Morley, it is good enough to hint to a working-class public that that rigid honesty might be softened on a future occasion, and, like the solid rock, wear away beneath the rushing torrent of modern democracy. Now, despite the *Star's* cant about Mr. Morley's "honesty"—a thing the editor knows very well that a successful politician has no business with, for he would find it a terrible obstacle to future greatness—I maintain that "honesty" does not enter into the business at all. To put the matter in the brutal language of the market, Mr. Morley's refusal simply means that for the Liberal party to pledge itself to such an "advanced" measure would not pay. Already the *Daily News*, the organ of the moderate Liberals—who are not only "moderate," but rich as well—had expressed alarm at the rate the Liberal and Radical Union were going. Therefore for the chiefs of the party to pledge themselves to anything of the kind would mean the driving of these gentlemen into the ranks of Tories, and what is of more consequence, the loss of their money and influence—very valuable in a general election. The situation is as follows: The Liberals daren't go in for even mild measures of social reform, although, of course, it may suit very well to get their Radical organs to talk a mild kind of Socialism, which means nothing in particular. The Tories will not, whatever Tory Democrats of the Randolph Churchill school may think or say. We have only to read the utterances of their leaders to see that they are as blind and bigoted as ever. Their only remedies for popular discontent are handcuffs, bludgeons, bullets, and bayonets. Therefore the people must trust in themselves. Let them take Mr. Morley's advice, and go in for combination. Only combination of a kind that Mr. Morley would scarcely relish. If those who advocate the eight hour labour day were resolved, they could bring with their great influence and popularity every workman in London out on strike for it in a year or so; and it strikes me that Mr. Morley and his friends might even prefer passing laws to that kind of combination. One thing is quite certain—the workmen can have eight hours when they like, as they can have anything, if they have courage to take it; but if they wait for one of the great political parties to give it to them they may wait till all eternity.

### The Bakers' Strike.

The men have practically won all along the line, though a few sweaters still hold out in the neighbourhood of Whitechapel. The union officials are now endeavouring to check the undue extension of overtime. In some cases 20 hours of overtime have been made in a week, and the union officials feel that this is not what the agitation was meant to bring about, as it is not diminishing the amount of unemployed labour. The British workman certainly doesn't deserve the taunt of being lazy which is so frequently thrown at him by middle-class critics. He seems to be too fond of work. Still it is to be feared that however desirable the abolition of overtime may be, it will be impossible to do away with it while ordinary wages are barely sufficient for the most elementary needs of life.

Later.—The Jewish bakers have now granted the men's demands, pressure having been brought to bear upon them by the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Adler. Several have been heavily fined at Clerkenwell Police-court for intimidation. The "intimidation" mainly consisted in distributing bills advising people not to buy their bread at a sweating shop.

### The Silvertown Strike.

Last Tuesday, the police diversified the monotony of the strike by a savage assault upon the strikers; these gallant heroes suddenly drawing the bludgeons and falling upon a helpless and unoffending crowd, breaking the heads of old men and young women with all that heroism which distinguishes our noble civic force. Several men were afterwards arrested, convicted, and imprisoned for "assaulting" the police.

### The Railwaymen.

The new Railway Worker's Union is going on swimmingly, to the intense disgust of the officials in the older society. Though only formed a few weeks the new society now numbers over 24,000 members. The officials of the old society have now given up relying upon articles from the *Times*, and are depending now upon their own unaided efforts. In an article in the *Railway Review*, there are some bitter complaints concerning "a great deal of loose talk about the new and old trade unionism," which the *Railway Review* sorrowfully admits "is generally to the detriment of the latter." It then goes on to say "that if it was necessary it would be easy to defend the greater portion of those who are at the head of our old societies," but the *Railway Review* appears to be of an opinion that it is not necessary, for it does not do it, perhaps because the task is not so easy as it at first appears. It then complains that "unless care is exercised that the new trade unions, the new labour organisations, will not be trade unions at all, but mere fighting bodies dependent upon the public for the sinews of war." The description of them as "fighting bodies" is perfectly accurate, and it is quite true they are not "trade unions" in the sense that A.S.R.S. is a trade union, that is they are not "benefit societies." That they are "fighting bodies" is perhaps owing to the fact that they are young, and not decrepit and helpless with old age, overfeeding, and that general debility produced by a superabundance of riches. It is not fair, however, to state that new trade unions are "dependent on the public for sinews of war." It is quite true that the dockers were dependent upon the public for assistance during the great dock strike, when the mass of them had no trade union, but now the dockers have their own trade union and will not need it in the future, and therefore it is not fair to make such a statement merely because the new unions do not demand large contributions from the members in order to turn "fighting bodies" into dead and alive benefit societies. The

old reactionary trade unionism may wail as much as it pleases, its hour has come! "The old order changeth," and the Rip Van Winkle of old-fashioned trade unionism has awoke from his twenty year's sleep, and has found the world very much changed indeed, to his intense disgust and astonishment. Poor fellow, he will soon go to sleep again, but it will be a sleep that will have no awakening.

### Waterproof Garment Makers.

A meeting was held on Saturday, Nov. 23rd, of workers in this trade for the purpose of forming a trade union; H. Davis occupied the chair. Speeches were delivered in English and German, urging those present to combine to destroy the two capital grievances, viz., the "improver" system and sub-contract work. The following resolution was unanimously adopted: "That in the opinion of this meeting of men and women employed in the waterproof garment trade, the time has arrived to take the necessary steps to protect ourselves from the ever-growing sweating which is being rapidly introduced into this trade; we, therefore, pledge ourselves to form a union for our mutual benefit and protection." M. J. Silverstone was elected secretary *pro tem.*, and a committee of seven appointed and instructed to call the next meeting in some large hall in the district. W. Wess, of the Berner Street Club, who had rendered useful assistance in organising the meeting, was present, and took a large number of names as members of the new organisation. All communications to be addressed to the organising secretary, M. J. Silverstone, "Waterproofs," 2, Fort Street, Spitalfields, E.

### A Benevolent Gas Company.

The South Metropolitan Gas Company has become suddenly anxious about the welfare of its men. Quite recently it issued a scheme of profit-sharing by which a certain portion of profits would accumulate yearly to each man's credit in the hands of the company, and which would be forfeited *in case of a strike*. This is simply an attempt on the part of the company to lull the men over to keep the peace. And we are glad to see that the men look upon it in this light, and at a large meeting of South Metropolitan gas-workers held on Deptford Broadway on Sunday a resolution was carried declaring that this "benevolent" scheme was only a plan to break up the union, and calling upon the men not to sign the agreement. It must, moreover, be quite evident that if the company can afford to be so generous with its profits it can also afford to pay better wages, and the gas-workers must take care that they must get a better share of the profits without signing an agreement that will in any way limit their freedom of action.

### Sheffield Labourers.

Our comrades at Sheffield are busy forming a labourers' union. The masters are greatly alarmed, and comrade Sketchley stated at a recent meeting that the federated employers of Sheffield had passed a resolution that any man taking an active part in that union should be dismissed, and that no other member of the federated employers should employ him. I wonder if this kind of boycotting is illegal? The labourers, however, are not frightened, for according to Sheffield newspapers the room was crowded with men anxious to join the union. Employers may pass what resolutions they like, they cannot stop the great movement which is now sweeping over the country.

### Dublin Bakers.

The Dublin bakers, encouraged by the success of the Londoners, are threatening to come out on strike for an advance of 6s. a-week for foremen and ordinary hands. They might also demand a reduction of hours, for 84 hours a-week is decidedly too long to work.

### The Dockers' Balance-Sheet.

The audit of accounts promised by John Burn and the "Wade Arms" Strike Committee has been completed. The audit shows that from the beginning to the end of the struggle the total amount of money received from all sources was, in round numbers, £48,000, of which £30,800, or nearly two-thirds, was received from Australia. The various English trades unions subscribed £4,000. There is a surplus of about £5,000, in the disposal of which the committee will be guided by the general opinion of the subscribers. The only assistance given to strikers other than the dock and river men were several subscriptions to the Silvertown men, who struck at the same time as the dockers, and who might almost be considered as riverside workers, and a donation of £100 to the tailors' strike fund.

It is evident that if it had not been for the help of the workmen of Australia—who doubtless in many instances had known what poverty was in London—the strike would have fallen through. Their generous behaviour and the chivalry of the gallant stevedores, who fought so well in a quarrel in which they personally had nothing to gain, is a bright contrast beside the help given by the leaders of the older school of trade unionism, who evidently saw in this great labour revolt the beginning of the end as far as they were concerned. N.

DEATH'S HEAD AND CROSSBONES.—My journeyings have brought me into close proximity with a broad field of distress. Here in the richest and fattest land on earth, the great fertile State of Illinois, are ten thousand people appealing to the world for food to keep them from starvation! Yes, the almighty truth is rising up before the rich land-grabbers and money-grabbers that "something is rotten in Denmark." Death's head and crossbones are abroad in the land, teaching the bitter lesson of the past over again. Here in the midst of a "land that flows with milk and honey," a land that groans under its load of luxuries, here in the midst of a vast population of wealthy, civilised, Christianised, and educated land lords and money lords, are ten thousand hard-working, honest, sober men, women, and children actually starving to death. Within fifty miles of these unfortunate sons and daughters of our universal Creator, there are fifty thousand acres of idle land, which that same Creator intended for the equal use and benefit of these or any other ten thousand food-wanting creatures he should see fit to send here. But have those hungry sons and daughters of a common God the right to use these idle acres of our common God's good land, and in the sweat of their brows produce their food? Not a bit of it! God made those broad acres for speculative merchandise, to be gobbled up by the rich and held, as by divine right, to make themselves richer. No matter if ten or fifteen thousand do perish. That's all right. Cæsar says it is.—C. W. AYERS, in *Twentieth Century*.

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

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Branch Subscriptions Paid.—1888.—Oxford, to end of September.

1889.—Bradford and Hammersmith, to end of April. Norwich, Glasgow, Yarmouth, and Mitcham, to end of May. East London, to end of June. Leicester, North Kensington, and Manchester, to end of September. Clerkenwell, to end of October. North London, to end of November. St. Georges East, to end of December.

Notice to Branch Secretaries.—Please remit to Central Office your Branch Capitation fees as soon as possible.

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.

"COMMONWEAL" GUARANTEE FUND.

The following further sums have been received towards this fund:—F.C.S.S., 2s. 6d.; Webb, 1s.; Kitz, 6d.; Nicoll, 6d.; Rose, 1s.; R. J., 1s.; B. W., 6d.; Mrs. Schack, 8d.; and C. Saunders, 1s.

REPORTS.

EAST LONDON.—On Sunday, D. J. Nicoll lectured to a good audience on "The French Revolution"; some very interesting points were raised in the discussion which followed the lecture.

NORTH KENSINGTON.—We held a good meeting at Latimer Road; speakers were Maughan, R. J. Lyne, J. F. Lyne, and Crouch; 2s. 1 1/2d. collected and 50 Commonweal sold. No meeting at St. Ann's Road. Rev. F. L. Donaldson lectured at the Clarendon Coffee Tavern to a splendid audience on "Christian Socialism"; a great many questions were asked and good discussion; several Weals and pamphlets sold and 3s. 9d. collected.

NORTH LONDON.—At Hyde Park on Sunday afternoon, good meeting addressed by Cantwell and Mowbray; good sale of Weals and collected 1s. 3d.

STREATHAM.—Interesting discussion at branch meeting on "Land and Machinery." Good meeting at Fountain on Sunday, in spite of bad weather, addressed by Weir, Howard, and Smith. Good discussion on "Socialism and Trade Unions" at the Manor Arms after the meeting.

ABERDEEN.—At indoor meeting on 18th we had a "hat night," the topics discussed being all Socialist; speakers were Slater, Duncan, A. Smith, Stewart, and Leatham. In the Unitarian Church on the 20th, Rev. W. L. Walker (Glasgow) delivered a very honest lecture on "Practicable Steps towards the Social Ideal," which, though the lecturer didn't mean it, was quite Socialist. Leatham put a number of "leading" questions, the audience seeming to find these rather more satisfactory than some of the answers to them. At Castle Street on 23rd, Aiken and Leatham addressed the last regular open-air meeting of the season. Health necessitates that Duncan and Leatham should give up open-air work during the winter and spring months.

GLASGOW.—No meeting held on Cathedral Square on Tuesday evening. On Thursday evening, J. P. Gilmour, a local Secularist, gave a lecture to the Govan Liberal and Radical Association on "Socialism, a Vision of Sin." Comrades Gilbert, McCulloch, and Joe Burgoyne who were present, ably defended Socialism, and quite neutralised the effect of the lecturer's extravagant diatribes. No meetings were held on Sunday owing to the very stormy weather. A number of our comrades were present in the evening in Maxwell parish church, where comrade Rev. John Glasse (of Edinburgh) delivered a thoroughly outspoken and effective Socialist discourse. The church was crammed although the evening was wet, and so deeply were the hearers affected by the eloquence and earnestness of the preacher that they several times applauded.

LEICESTER.—Friday, the 22nd, Barclay addressed about 250 workmen at the Barrow-on-Soar Liberal Club, on "The Meaning of Socialism." The address was repeated at the Irish National Club, Silver Street, on Sunday night. Sunday morning we occupied the Square again; and Mrs. Schack (of London) gave two earnest addresses at the Radical Club. In the morning she addressed a good meeting on "Radicalism and Socialism"; in the evening the club was full, and a great many women present to hear Mrs. Schack on "Why Should not Women Join the Workman's Movement?" The women were very attentive, and evidently much interested. Monday 25th, at our society, Miss C. Warner read a paper on "The Position of Women"; discussion followed; collected 14s. 8d., and 2 1/2 quires of Commonweal sold.

MANCHESTER.—In Stevenson Square on Sunday afternoon we held a meeting—the audience very large and enthusiastic; Raymond Unwin (from Chesterfield), Barton, and Bailie were the speakers; 40 Commonweal sold. Cur hall was well filled at night to hear a lecture on "The Wane of Civilisation" by Raymond Unwin; some discussion followed; 5s. 9d. collected for local propaganda.

NORWICH.—On Tuesday last the Branch passed a vote of condolence with Mrs. Parsons on the loss of her daughter, and also with the relatives of our other murdered comrades. On Sunday afternoon open-air meeting held in the Market Place, comrades Swash and Moore addressing the audience. In the evening, at the Gordon Hall, a meeting was held; a general discussion took place, one of the questions raised being, Is force necessary? Comrades A. Moore, Poynts, and others took part.

YARMOUTH.—On Tuesday, after our business meeting, comrade Brightwell opened a discussion on the "Principles of Socialism," supported by Edwards, Headley, and Harvey. On Sunday we were unable to hold out-door meetings, owing to bad weather. In the afternoon, at comrade Headley's, a well-attended meeting was held to consider the resignation of our late secretary, C. Reynolds. 11 Commonweal sold.—J. H.

DUBLIN.—At Progressist Club, November 23, J. O'Donovan lectured on "Land Nationalisation." An interesting discussion followed—the Single-Tax theory receiving rather rough handling—King, Shields, Wilson, Fitzpatrick, and others speaking.

EDINBURGH (SCOTTISH SOCIALIST FEDERATION)—At a meeting held in the Moulders' Hall, comrade Howie delivered a rattling lecture on "Socialism and Evolution" to a large and appreciative audience. Several new members added to the roll.—W. D. T.

NOTTINGHAM SOCIALIST CLUB.—At the School Board election on Thursday Peacock (socialist) received 14,176 votes and Proctor (Socialist) 10,276. Neither was elected, but while we lose a seat, we have increased the Socialist vote by 2,000 since 1886. On Sunday, good open-air meetings were held morning and evening; Peacock, Proctor, and Rooke spoke; 9s. collected for election fund.

NOTICE.—Subscribers, Branches, and Members whose orders are not promptly executed, or who have not received receipts for sums paid, are asked to excuse delays, which are unavoidable while transference of business is taking place.

LECTURE DIARY.

LONDON.

Battersea.—All communications to E. Buteux, 20 Abercrombie Street, Battersea Park Road.
Clerkenwell.—Socialist League Hall, 24 Great Queen Street, Holborn, W.C.—On Sunday December 1, at 8 p.m., Mrs. Schack, "Parliamentarism."
East London.—Crown Coffee Tavern, 2 Columbia Road, Hackney Road. Sunday December 1, at 7.30, Members' meeting. At 8, meeting on Triangle. At 8.30, C. W. Mowbray, "Politics and Socialism."
Hammersmith.—Kelmescott House, Upper Mall, W. A Lecture, Reading or Discussion every Sunday at 8 p.m. Wednesday Dec. 4, at 8 p.m., Wm. Clarke will lecture on "From Radical to Socialist." French Class, Friday, 8 to 9.
Merton.—3 Clare Villas, Merton Road.
Mitcham.—"Lord Napier," Fair Green. Meets every Sunday at 12.30, to enroll members, etc.
North Kensington.—Clarendon Coffee Tavern. Meets every Wednesday at 8 p.m. On Sunday December 1, at 8 p.m., J. Tohatti will lecture on "Evolution and Revolution."
North London.—6 Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Rd. Meets every Friday evening at 8 o'clock. On Wednesday Dec. 4, at 8 p.m., C. W. Mowbray will lecture on "Anarchism." Members please attend and help.
Southwark.—Secretary, George Evans, 56 Lucy Road, Bermondsey, S.E. Hill's Coffee Tavern, Great Charlotte Street, Blackfriars Road, S.E.
Streatham.—Meets every Thursday at the "Leigham Arms," Wellfield Road, at 8.30 p.m.
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.
Dundee.—Address to W. Cameron, 17 Laurence Street, Dundee.
Glasgow.—Ram's Horn Hall, 122 Ingram Street. Branch meets on Thursday evenings at 8 o'clock and Sundays at 7 o'clock. (See below.)
Hull.—Socialists meet every Sunday at 6.30 p.m. at Helliwell's Temperance Hotel, Northgate.
Leeds.—Clarendon Buildings, Victoria Road and Front Row. Open every evening. Business meeting Saturdays at 8 p.m.
Leicester.—Exchange Buildings, Rutland Street. Branch meets on Monday and Thursday, at 8 p.m.
Manchester.—Working Men's Educational Club, 122 Corporation Street, corner of Hanover Street. Weekly meeting of members every Tuesday at 8 p.m. At the Secular Hall, Rusholm Road, on Saturday Nov. 30, at 7.30, William Morris will lecture on "The Class Struggle."
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. Elocution Class Friday at 8 p.m. On Sunday afternoons during winter a Discussion Class will be held at 3 o'clock.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

SATURDAY 30.

8.30..... Mile-end Waste .....The Branch
SUNDAY 1.
11..... Latimer Road Station .....J. F. Lyne, Crouch, and Emmerson
11.30..... Chelsea Embankment .....Samuela
11.30..... Kilburn—"Old Plough," Kilburn Lane .....Mainwaring
11.30..... North Kensington—St. Ann's Road.....Dean and J. F. Lyne
11.30..... Commercial Road—Union Street .....Cores
11.30..... Mitcham—Fair Green .....The Branch
11.30..... Regent's Park .....Nicoll
11.30..... Southwark—Flat Iron Square .....The Branch
11.30..... Starch Green .....The Branch
3.30..... Hyde Park—Marble Arch .....Cantwell and Nicoll
3.30..... Victoria Park .....The Branch
7..... Weljje Road, Ravenscourt Park .....Hammersmith Branch
7.30..... Mitcham—Fair Green .....The Branch
8..... Streatham—Fountain, High Street .....Wier and Howard
7.30..... Walham Green—back of Church .....Hammersmith Branch
8..... Clerkenwell Green.....The Branch

TUESDAY 3.

8..... Walham Green—back of Church .....Hammersmith Branch

THURSDAY 5.

8.15..... Hoxton Church.....Cores

PROVINCES.

Aberdeen.—Saturday: Castle Street, 7 p.m.
Glasgow.—Sunday: Jail Square at 2 o'clock; Paisley Road at 5 o'clock. Tuesday: Cathedral Square, at 8 p.m.
Leeds.—Sunday: Hunslet Moor, at 11 a.m.; Vicar's Croft, at 7 p.m.
Manchester.—Sunday: Philips Park Gates, at 11; Stevenson Square, at 3.
Norwich.—Sunday: St. Faiths, at 11; Market Place, at 3.
Yarmouth.—Sunday: Priory Plain, at 11; Colman's Granary Quay, at 7.

DUBLIN.—At Progressist Club, 87 Marlboro' Street, Saturday November 30th, R. F. Wilson, "The Goal of Modern Civilisation."
EAST FINSBURY RADICAL CLUB, 134 City Road, E.C.—Sunday December 1, at 11.30 a.m., L. E. Fraser, "The Political Duties of a Working Men's Club."
ENTERPRISE CLUB AND INSTITUTE, Manchee House, High Road, South Tottenham, N.—Sunday December 1, at 11.30 a.m., George Bernard Shaw, "Radicalism and Social Democracy."
ARBEITER-BUND GLEICHHEIT.—This Club has now removed from the "Baldfaced Stag," Clifton Street, to its new premises, 217 Old Street, St. Lukes, E.C. It has no connection with the club of the same name at 38 Charles Square, Hoxton.—H. SCHWARZENBERG, Sec.
FABIAN SOCIETY.—Willis's Rooms, King Street, S.W.—On Friday Dec. 6, at 8 o'clock, Annie Besant, "The Trades Union Movement." 20th. G. Bernard Shaw, "The New Politics." Tickets of admission may be obtained from the Secretary, 180 Portadown Road, W.
EDINBURGH—SCOTTISH SOCIALIST FEDERATION.—In Moulders' Hall, High St., on Sunday Dec. 1, at 6.30, R. B. Kerr, "Fundamental Principles of Socialism." Stepniak lectures in Waverley Hall, Waterloo Place, on Monday 2nd—"Relations of Religious Reformers in Russia to its Social Problems."

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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.

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COUNCIL OF THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

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