

THE COMMONWEAL

The Official Journal of the Socialist League.

VOL 3.—No. 91.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1887.

WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

NOTES.

Mr. Chamberlain's meeting at Birmingham went off as well as might be expected; the malcontents were few, although the meeting was a free open one (according to Mr. Chamberlain, although admission was by ticket) and it was scarcely to be expected there would be no malcontents. As to Mr. Chamberlain himself he chiefly dwelt on the blocking the way by the Irish question, though he gave no sign of recurring to his demi-semi Socialism of two years ago.

The truth is, all that is a mere pretence for carrying on a private and personal war, and it must be once more said of the Chamberlain section as of their allies, the Tories and Whigs, and of a great part of their enemies, the Gladstonians, for the matter of that, that the Irish Question is a godsend to them simply *because* it blocks the way to the consideration of English matters.

If English matters are at some future time to be dealt with, to judge by one part of Mr. Chamberlain's speech, he is anxious that they should be dealt with "sweetly as to manner" at least, however strongly as to matter. Since, perhaps somewhat stimulated by the frankness of the wording of the interruptions, he expressed himself anxious for fresh and thorough gagging arrangements in the House itself.

He did not suggest any improvement in the office of Speaker in that august assembly, no doubt because he felt that from *his* point of view an improvement was scarcely possible. After all in this matter Mr. Chamberlain is logical; if coercion is good for those who differ from Mr. Chamberlain in Ireland, it must also be good for those who differ from Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons. His weak point is that to insist on good manners in the House will hardly suit his Tory friends.

Michael Lane and his brother-in-law O'Grady, not forgetting his wife, are champions after the heart of the old Norse story-tellers, whose matchless talent in that line is much needed in the tale of these Irish matters; and the kind of fighting courage of the opened door and the charge on the police explains the story of many a desperately won victory of the *English* army in which *Irishmen* were the main actors; but doubtless strong faith in the goodness of the cause must have been at the back of such courage, which could drive a man on to have at least one blow at his oppressors, even when he knew that if he escaped alive from the mauling he was sure to get, the prison was to follow.

How *very* queer our English has come to be in the penny-a-liner's hand by the way; the newspaper report of the affair told us that Lane beat the police *mercilessly* about the head. Spirit of Defoe, teach us some other word for the charge of two men on two hundred!

The Lord Mayor of Dublin and Mr. O'Brien are to be prosecuted for publishing reports of suppressed branches of the Land League in their respective papers, 'United Ireland' and the 'Nation.' This is as it should be; this is to understand coercion as far as it goes. When shall we see a Lord Mayor of London in the dock for resistance to arbitrary authority?

In our debate on Socialism, Mr. Bradlaugh took exception to Bax's statement of the tendency of manufacturing capital to aggregation; and our friend Bax, when challenged to produce examples of this process, did not go much out of his way to do so; probably because he did not think it worth while to defend a statement which he might well think that nobody but the Pope (or Mr. Bradlaugh) would be bold enough to attempt to controvert. But since some persons are staggered by the use of a distinguished name, however reckless or foolish the bearer of the said name may be, I venture (once more) to supplement my friend Bax in this matter, and quote again from Mr. David A Wells' article in the *Contemporary Review*.

Says he: "The now well ascertained and accepted fact (not accepted by Mr. Bradlaugh it seems) that power is most economically applied when applied on the largest possible scale, is rapidly and inevitably leading to the concentration of manufacturing in the largest establishments and the gradual extinction of those which are small. A cotton mill which with a profit (formerly not unusual) of a half-penny a yard could easily pay 10 per cent. per annum on a given

capital, with a reduction of profit to a quarter of a cent. per yard would have to make and sell four times the number of yards to earn the same gross profits; which even then would fall very far short of paying the former rate of per-centage on the increased capital, machinery, buildings, etc., necessary to effect the increased production."

He goes on to show that this concentration is *forced* on the manufacturers, and takes sugar as an example, pointing out that the turnover which some time ago would have made a decent business would not now enable it to live. "The successful refiner of sugar to-day in place of being, as formerly, a manufacturer exclusively, must now as a condition of full success, be his own importer, do his own lighterage, own his own wharfs and warehouses, make his own barrels and boxes, prepare his own bone-block, etc. etc. . . . It is not therefore to be wondered at that under the advent of these new conditions, one half of the sugar refineries that were in operation in the sea-board cities of the United States in 1875 have since failed or discontinued operations."

He quotes the *Statist*: "It is a characteristic and noteworthy feature of banking in Germany, that the bulk of the business is gradually shifting from the small bankers, who used to do a thriving business, to the great banking companies, leaving quite a number of small customer almost without any chance to prosper in legitimate operations—concentration of capital and business in the hands of a limited number of powerful customers being the rule of the day."

Small ships, he tells, are no longer built, owing, amongst other things, to the economy in *manning*, brought about by the use of large ones. "The Directory of American Millers for 1886 shows a decrease in the number of flour mills in the United States for that year as compared with 1884 of 6,812 out of a total in the latter year of 25,079, but an increase at the same time in capacity for flour production. The legitimate inference from these statistics therefore is that the small flour-mills of the United States are being crushed, or forced into consolidation with larger companies."

He says that it was hoped and thought that one result of the war that ended in 1865 would be the substitution of small yeoman farmers for big plantations in cotton cultivation; but that it has been found by experience that the small cultivator cannot live at all. I could go on multiplying these examples, but I have perhaps said enough to prove that water does not naturally run up hill, even though it may be necessary for the theories of Mr. Bradlaugh that it should. Both these two articles by Mr. David A. Wells are well worth studying by a Socialist.

W. M.

PHILANTHROPIC MANIA: ITS DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT.

(ACCORDING TO THE SYSTEM OF DR. WORLDLY WISEMAN).

IN spite of the great progress recently made in the pathology of madness, there is one class of mania which has not received the attention it deserves at the hands of medical men in particular and the public in general. Philanthropic mania (for so, in the absence of any specific title, I will venture to designate it) is not only much more common than is usually supposed, but is largely on the increase in the present age; and as the malady is the cause of much suffering and discomfort both to the individuals affected and to the families and societies in which they reside, it is obvious that a determined effort ought to be made to remedy and counteract it.

The symptoms of this deplorable and, as there is reason to fear, contagious malady, are fortunately not difficult to detect. The patient betrays a meddling restlessness, and discontent with the existing order of society; he is haunted by an insane idea that this or that person, or class of persons, is the victim of some old-established grievance which needs abatement or redress; and acting under this hallucination he declares himself the enemy of all kinds of privilege and monopoly, recklessly espousing the cause of the masses against that of the classes, and calling for a system of strict and impartial justice without the slightest consideration for the higher interests and more delicate susceptibilities at stake. When a man or woman is observed to be affected in the manner described, a careful watch should be kept by the relatives of the patient; and if the symptoms do not presently