The COMMONWEAL

March 10, 1888.

M. Wilson over the "decoration scandal." When we may hope to see the same kind of jobbery exposed here? And, when it is exposed, to hear it thrown in the face of this judge or this jury or this kind of judge, that his offense was aggravated by his high position, and that therefore he must undergo a heavy punishment, where a less illustrious person might have got off with much less.

"They do those things better in Germany," might well be the cry of any ordinary patriotic Briton on reading that the Duke of Cambridge has smashed up the Wall Street exchange, in meeting, in order to heighten the rent on some of his "land" that lies behind the buttas. The Star well contrasts this kind of jew-broker business with the behoiour of German generals, men of the same blood as the Umbrella Duke. "In both cases," says the German writer, "his beloved Lebensraum merely for the sake of obtaining a large rent for his estates!"

Can there be a plainer example of the spirit of our present system than this weakening of a national defence for the profit of an individual? The Earl of Wemyss is not only a prominent Individualist, but also one of the chief originators, if not the chief, of the National Rifle Association. What has he to say in the matter?

Of course the "beauty flunkies" re-elected the Royal Grabber as their president, even after the kicking he had bestowed upon them!

A few numbers back in this column I spoke of King Ja Ja and his appeal to English justice. The whole affair has duly taken the course that was promised and predicted, and has been graced with a fair trial on the spot, and hurried hundreds of miles away from it; allowed to call no witnesses, and sentenced on the bare word of his accusers. He is only another poor "protege" of England who has been taught to be the honour to that of a gambling hell, and her tender mercy that of a tiger. S.

THE RICH FOOL.

"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully.—And he said: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and I will lay up all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

"But God said unto him, Thou fool."

In these ungodly days, when the hooch of Radical "Reformers" against the Church and her ministers seems growing louder, all manner of Socialists, not to mention well-meaning but misguided men like John Rutland, are urging the political economists that the Christian sects of to-day practice is wholly at variance with the precepts of the religion which they profess; when the poor seem to be forsaking their divinely appointed shepherds, and joining the angry throng of agitators whose siren voice is leading them astray,—in such depressing times surely a word of encouragement to those despised sects of Ministers of Religion and Professors of Political Economy will not be thrown away.

Let them, then, take heart of grace; for, after all, the centuries have not been wholly wasted,—something has been achieved; and thanks mainly to their energy, no man now is in danger (wherever else he may be) of starving as a result of his hard labour. They have contempest of the Most High, and being called "Thou Fool" by Him, who is so jealous of the use of those dreadful words as to threaten any mortal who ventures to speak them with being "in danger of Hell fire."

For what rich man to-day, whose ground (note in passing how by these words divine sanction is given to private property in land) brings forth plentifully, would be so foolish as to think to store his crops, and to rejoice his soul, like any common labourer, on the mere bread and potatoes which would most likely form the product of his estates? And who, to gain this foolish end, would be so entirely devoid of common sense as to actually waste what ready money he had by pulling down his barns to build greater, in order that he might (ah, wretched folly!) live on his principal! No! thank Heaven, our Land-owners, and wealthy people generally, have learnt the lesson, and are become wise enough to retain with their enjoyments their tenants, and, after purchasing machinery for the future cultivation of their ground, invest the remainder of their money in some Limited Liability Co., or let it be invested in the public debt. They have got at the same time yields them a good interest and be quite secure from thieves breaking in to steal. And for purposes of making money, have they not rich and dainty viands, and champagne, and every conceivable luxury? which indulgence (as Sir Henry Knight knows well) is entitled to their credit as "charity," since it all makes work for the unemployed. Trouble me not with suggestions that perhaps there were no unemployed for this reason. Suppose that when we have large farming machinery, we must and always will be poor who desire employment, and it is in dispensing charity to them that modern wealthy men find that ease for their souls which the rich fool of old vainly expected to find in eating and drinking. Therefore our Parliamentarians have thrown treasure in heaven by nobly sacrificing all that they do not require themselves to charitable purposes.—National Vigilance Societies, Hospitals, Missions, Soup Kitchens, and what not; and in confirmation of the divine saying "Give and it shall be given unto you," we see that for every pound they give away in charity, they receive an hundredfold from the proper investment of that wealth which the rich fool of the parable stupidly thought to store up till he had consumed it.

Will the vile agitators, who trade on the necessities of the poor, remind me of that other Rich Man, who, although he allowed Lazarus to eat bread by his gate, and he who was covered with sores from his suffering and sores from his suffering, and he who was covered with sores while he was covered with sores, and who was covered with sores while he was covered with sores and sent his servant to Hell and eternal torments; or of him who was advised to "sell all that he had and give to the poor"? Do they tell me that "ye cannot serve God and Mammon," the present buying interest for money the command to "lend to him of whom ye hope to receive nothing again," with all the passages pretending to be commendatory of Interest in the Old Testament? Or will they ask what right the slave-owners have to sell their slaves in the slave markets, and sold it and laid the money at the feet of the apostles (the predecessors of our present spiritual Lords) and they had all things in common? and when the Latin Negro preachers in America were driven out by God made Adam and Eve of clay, and leaned them up against a fence to dry, when interrupted by some seditious with the question "Who made that fence?" replied with crushing force, "Bredren, such questions are too difficult to answer!"

To these my carping critics I confound no other answer than that of the negro minister. Inconsistencies and human fallings of course are found in the proceedings of the economists who have been extending the theory of slavery, and who has found a better method of slave-owning than this: it borrows the public opinion for nothing, it can make money, and the whole loan unprofitable it discharges them and sends them back to the public or to Old Scratch, which is about the same thing. The system is beautifully honest, and infinitely superior to the system of the Roman Empire all government and all social life was founded on slavery, and it is only within very recent periods that the old plan of chattel slavery has been superseded by wage slavery. Let us give it one or two to the subject. A chattel slave in Brazil is worth from 400 dols. to 700 dols., and he must be fed, clothed, and cared for whether or not he is at work. A wage slave in the States gets 365 dols. a-year, in England 300 dols., in Ireland 125 dols., and in India 20 dols. Those are the ascertained average earnings according to the life tables of a man of twenty will on the average live about forty years. His average wage is, as we have seen, in the States 305 dols. a-year; this latter sum multiplied by the number of years, therefore gives the market price of a man's life, 20,000 dols. There is nothing fanciful about this. It is plain matter-of-fact. For less than 15,000 dols., one may have the products of a life of labour for one's use or want,—one can go into the market and buy just as many lives as one pleases at that price. When the clever arrangement of Protection en- dued with sugar refiner to make a slave to the noblest of the noblest bids the power of eating up the entire lives of 140 wage slaves each year. Is not the system an admirable one? Is not wage slavery, except to the wage- slave, a vast improvement on chattel slavery, and is it not easy to understand why the slave owners of Brazil are anxious to abolish chattel slavery and replace it with the wage-salvery of modern industrialism? There is only one disturbing circumstance in the arrangement,—there is such a thing as a love of justice in the hearts of many people, and these demand a day of reckoning. About a hundred years ago one of those days of reckoning came in France. It was unjustice in the hearts of the people, and these demand a day of reckoning. Another such day is very near in America, where the wages-slaves will rise up, with their hands white with their tyrants to a protest against the idea into their heads that they are entitled to what they earn, and that they will not do not work about it. If we do not reverse the present position, and become themselves the masters, they don't know how to set about the business, but they will eventually try it, and the result will be a coarse and plain, which will be a fine thing. They may not. There is a 1000 sullen roar which can already distinctly be heard in this the office of Advanced Thought, and that roar increases in volume from day to day. What will it one day turn to? The future will demand something more than mere subsistence, and if he doesn't get it he will be just the most tremendous abomination the world has witnessed. We have warned the world in good time. If the world does not take the warning and act upon it, so much the worse for the world. If the world does take the warning and act upon it, we wish it will accede to the request of us specially, our representative can find any evening at the risk.—The Bobcaygeon Independent.

A FELLOW EXILE of LEBBO-Rollie,—M. Octave Dupont, the friend and fellow exile of Lebbo Rollie, died last week in a hospital at a Paris club. He was seventy-seven years of age. He took part in the siege of Paris in 1870, fled to the States and lived for a hard life for. He was for nearly twenty years professor of French in a military college in England. He retired on a pension, and on the fall of the Empire returned to Paris, and was for a time a municipal councillor.
INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

FRANCE.

The Marxist organ of our French Socialist comrades, Le Socialiste, has been obliged to stop its publication, owing to lack of financial support. Comrades Jules Guesté, Paul Lafargue, and Gabriel Deville, who have been very active in the Communist doctrines of Marx and will no doubt find here long the means of continuing their new work in a private capacity.

Our French colleagues, La Révolte, has commenced in this week's literary supplement of its valuable organ the translation of comrades William Morris's and Socialist Brotherhood's Tableaux Turnes! It will certainly incense some of our French comrades to make use of the theatre as a means of Socialist propaganda. We may add that the first installment of this French translation is in every way an admirable one.

ITALY.

During the first week of April a new paper will be started at Mantua, entitled L'amico del Popolo (The People's Friend). It is to be a weekly Socialist organ for the defence and propagation of the ideas and doctrines held by our Italian working-men's party. The unemployed of Rome are at the present time in a great state of excitement. They have been asked to work instead of work Signor Crippa has sent the military to the spot, in order to set to, and at the usual shameful way. Several people have been seriously injured and a great number of arrests have been made.

GERMANY.

The trial of the so-called Central Committee of the Socialist Party at Berlin has come to an end. Comrades Forkel, Apoll, Jahn, Schmeichel, Willershöhe, and Seelig have got three months, Scholz and Neumann two months' imprisonment, and several others have been sentenced to three weeks' imprisonment for their part in the whole dreadful secret conspiracy there remains nothing; it was all police hanging, and the magistrates, for once, did not dare take on account the rather curious men's and women's way of using the interesting employment of his Excellency M. von Puttkammer.

Our readers are aware that at the St. Gallen Conference of the German Social-Democratic party it was decided to convene an International Socialist Congress to be held at London during the present year. But it so happened that at the same time the English Trades' Union Congress at Swansea was also resolved to summon an international conference. The committee appointed by the St. Gallen Conference and the Parliamentary Committee of the London unionists corresponded in order to make it possible that only one general international congress should be organised. These negotiations have completely failed, and the St. Gallen committee, composed of all the deputies and the German Reichstag, have decided to convene an international congress for the year 1889. In the next issue of this paper I shall give a complete translation of the circular issued by that committee, stating at some length the reasons for the failure of the last negotiations.

BELGIUM.

After the pardon which has been granted a fortnight ago to the ex-clerical M.P. of Brussels, Vandersmissen, sentenced to fifteen years' hard labour for the murder of his wife, it would have been an overwhelming shock for the reactionary Belgian government to retain any longer in prison the victims of the strikes of March 1886. Last week Xavier Schmidt, sentenced to twenty years' hard labour for a crime which not he, but society, had committed, was released from jail. However, it is not a full amnesty which has been granted, but only a provisory release for illness's sake. Nevertheless it is certain that our Belgium comrades won't be able to follow the lead of the Fédération Internationale, which has been given a definite one. It is said that in a few days, Oscar Faller, who was sentenced to twenty years' hard labour, has been released. We earnestly hope and believe that all the other victims of the capitalist exploitation, and the Belgian prisons are full of them, will no longer be detained, but one and all will be equally innocent of the "crimes" for which they have been unjustly condemned. And our young and courageous comrades Jahn, is he not to be released too? Our Belgian friends would only be more than satisfied if they had been set free for the victims of the March strikes.

The ironworkers of Souze-le-Bois (Avenues district) have struck, asking 5 per cent. augmentation on their wages. The strikers are now 600 in number, but it is said that a general strike is imminent, and then there will be about 4000 men out of work. At the Providence works, at Hamont, 1100 workers are also on strike, and it is rumoured that several other thousands are likely to join in the struggle. The outlook in the whole district seems a very dark one.

Our readers will remember the quarrel which some time ago arose between the Belgian and the English fishermen at Ostend. The question was one of lawful exploitation of the poor fishermen by the rich boat-owners, and it was at once settled by the intervention of the military, who shot dead five work is, we have a couple of dozen others, and five imprisoned a good many of the hungry men. Sixty-nine of these have now been sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, amounting to fifty months, and fines to three thousand francs! The brutal force and the brutal justice are the two regulators and settlers of all social questions in our well-organised society! Predominant of all countries, unlike, and then, but then, only victory will become yours.

Y. D.

EDINBURGH PLEBEYANS.—At a meeting held in Edinburgh a local council was formed of seventy men, by the Edinburgh Plebeyans, with the view of bringing about a national system of registration of plumbers.

On the whole, therefore, we honestly think that a committee of the thieves demanded the House of Commons was devolved on Mr. Morrin's "Silver Wedding Ode" in Murray's Magazine, and Mr. Morris was referred to as "the first laureate of the Laurenstahs," not of course of de jure, but de facto, this is the second case in which Lord Tennyson's genius has been devolved upon Mr. Morris. The St. Stephen's Review makes this delicious reference to the master of the laureate verse in the saying that a Socialist poet will be received at Marble House and Windsor I have yet to learn." Such is fame! But perhaps the St. Stephen's Review thought that two blunders make a right, and thus tried to make amends to Mr. William Morris for the reference to him the other day in another Tory journal—"the St. James's Gazette—"as Mr. Morris, the author of the 'Earth's Paradox.'"

Inatul Eqtblntats.—A parliamentary paper was issued on the 27th Feb., showing the number of tenants and sub-tenants evicted in Ireland during the quarter ending 31st Jan., 1897, and the number readmitted as tenants or caretakers as the case may be. The total number evicted was 4,033; readmitted as tenants or sub-tenants, 58; as caretakers 8; as servants, 8. The total number of those who Lord Tennyson's genius has been devolved upon Mr. Morris. The St. Stephen's Review makes this delicious reference to the master of the laureate verse in the saying that a Socialist poet will be received at Marble House and Windsor I have yet to learn."

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