

THE COMMONWEAL

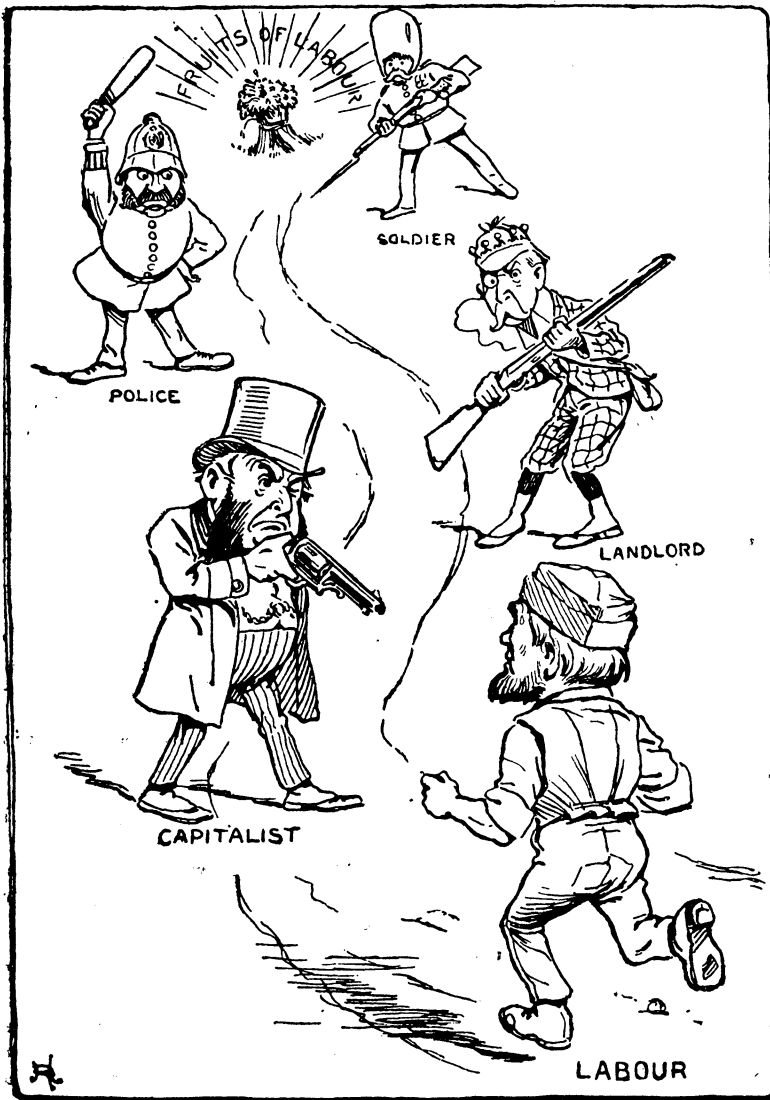
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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

WHEN WILL HE GET THERE?



NOTES ON NEWS.

THE *Labour Elector* appeals to the mass of the trades' union workmen, and is supposed to do something toward teaching them; but one of its last efforts in this direction is not a happy one. English people are fond of boasting that they do not hit a man when he is down; but here is the *Labour Elector* attacking Mr. Parke in a way that it is difficult to characterise, although he is in prison for doing what most people believe he thought to be his duty.

Mr. Parke has made a mistake, and is paying a frightful penalty for it. Twelve month's persistent and intentional torture, administered by a pedantic system that does not recognise humanity except as an inconvenient something to be repressed, one would think sufficient "punishment" for any "crime" in the calendar, let alone the crime of a mere mistake, which any generous-minded man would at once forgive. But this is not enough for the "*Newest Journalism*"; which out-herods Herod, out-Saturdays the *Saturday*, in calling for pit, gallows and rack in defence of an injured society. Really, the *Labour Elector* has learned its lesson from its coercionist friends only too well. It seems bent on reducing political persecution to an absurdity.

The bourgeois papers are congratulating the German Socialists on their victory over Bismark, but to a Socialist onlooker it does not seem so tremendous, or at least must be read by the light of the

extra-coercionist state of things in Germany. For the only doubts that the respectable parties had was as to the best method of damaging Socialism; and all the Liberals wanted to do apparently was to get a coercionist bill which should have a certain amount of respectability about it, so that it might last the longer and be put in force the more rigorously.

The Tory gentleman, Prince Zu Carolath, who spoke against the Bill and so astonished his colleagues, appears to be rather a Simple Simon. To us, at any rate, the crushing of Socialism by intellectual argument seems rather like a joke; since by this time nobody but Professor Huxley or the regular debating-club bore ventures to argue against Socialism in front; let alone that it seems rather late in the day for the countrymen of Karl Marx and Lassalle to *begin* to talk of intellectual opposition. But no doubt there is something in the argument that brutal coercion consolidates a forward movement.

An article in the *Star* the other day carried the "We are all Socialists now" about as far as that stale piece of cant could be carried. "We have had municipal Socialism for fifty years," said its writer. Have we indeed? It must be a valuable article, then, considering how it has abolished all the evils of which Labour has to complain! Let alone the London slums, I could show our *Star* friends a biggish population in the fields of merry (?) England to whom Socialism of any kind would be of some advantage if it were real. Whereabouts is this municipal Socialism? I should like to find out. I think it must be Socialism for the rich; that is the reason why we cannot find it out; they keep it to themselves, I suppose, like they do all the rest of their stealings.

W. M.

Mr. John P. Brown, "of Birmingham," is an admirer of Mr. Stanley and an upholder of the system which he represents. To him, this God-appointed (which is to say, self-appointed) apostle of rum, rifles, and religion, who forces his way across Africa with a wallet of bullets and bibles, appears to be not only a semi-divine hero, but "furthermore a gentleman" (!). Imagine, then, the horror of Mr. John P. Brown when he picks up a stray number of the *Commonweal* in a Liverpool café, and reads the "infernal rubbish" which is written therein about his idol, by "miserable hounds" who "have not the pluck to undertake one-half, nay, one-quarter of what he has successfully accomplished"! Then for the first time it dawns upon him that there are men alive who do not prostrate themselves before the feet of the vulgar freebooter whom he so adores.

What his first impulse was, who shall say? Something of its nature may be gathered from the fact, that on reflection he wrote a letter in reply to our "article on Mr. H. M. Stanley, whom you call a filibuster," in which he says:

"Your reason for so doing I cannot imagine, unless it is that his object is to open up fresh provinces for the furtherance of the gospel, and to try and enlighten the poor niggers (!) on the glorious truths contained therein. Pray is he not opening up fresh fields for commercial enterprise, and thus furthering the interests of the community at large?"—

making, of course the familiar confusion between the interests of the capitalist and those of the "community at large."

But Mr. Brown proceeds in a loftier strain:

"These glorious principles are of course quite antagonistic to your own, which can be defined in one short word, and that is HELLISH. This definition may perhaps be rather strong, but in this case it is the only one adapted for the purpose of which it is used. Your other remarks are without doubt cowardly in the extreme. Because a *man*, and furthermore a *gentleman*, has the pluck to take in hand an expedition the object of which was the advancement of civilisation, knowing the privations and fatigues he would have to undergo, and having successfully accomplished his object, your miserable crew raise objections to a grateful and admiring populace giving him his just and due reward. I should like to have the task, or rather the pleasure, of stringing up every man jack of you."

There speaks the good Christian!

Having relieved himself of all that, one may now fairly ask Mr.