

THE COMMONWEAL

The Official Journal of the SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

VOL. 6.—No. 215.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1890.

WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

NOTES ON NEWS.

THE labouring mountain of the Parnell Commission has at last produced its mouse; which is in fact the final acceptance of Mr. Parnell into decent political society. If this was the aim of the *Times* in its "Parnellism and Crime," that renowned paper has been eminently successful. But in view of its own comments on the Report we can hardly accept that theory. We must admit that the *Times* has been heavily thrown; and the *Times* was, or perhaps is, one of the chief bulwarks of respectability.

Yes, it is breaking up, this respectable "Society" of oppression, which it is the business of Socialists to attack. It is shaken in its policy of bluster, and the carrying of everything by means of the high hand. The mere political business of Home Rule will not last much longer as a pretext for our political tricksters. They will be face to face presently with the necessities of the working people, not only of Ireland, but of England and Scotland also; and in that position they will be absolutely helpless. W. M.

A recent number of the *Paris Bulletin Municipal Officiel* contains a comparative table of the number of vacancies in the different departments of primary education, and also of the number of candidates entered for these vacancies. It can be seen from this table that for 43 vacancies for male teachers there are 2,021 applicants; also that 6,441 certificated girls have to divide among them 54 nominations.

It is not in England alone that the intellectual proletariat have to fight among themselves for a bare living. Figures like these speak for themselves; and when one thinks that each year so many thousand young girls and men have to be rejected, and have to wait till next time for another faint chance of being nominated, or grow tired of waiting and sink into misery and degradation, one cannot but think that their struggle for life is as bitter as that of the labour proletariat, though the hardships of it are not so apparent at first sight. M. M.

Another police plot has come to light in Chicago, and our comrades are naturally a little excited. From the story as told in the *Chicago Mail* and elsewhere, it seems likely that not only have the promoters been found of the plot which put Hronek into prison (for which see *Commonweal* of a few months ago), but that much valuable information has been gained as to the inside working of the conspiracy which ended in the murder of our four comrades. We hope to be able to lay full particulars before our readers in a week or so.

"Mrs. Hetty Greene, the eccentric millionaire, who personally conducts her business in Wall Street, has been interviewed at Chicago. She admitted being worth nearly 50,000,000 dollars (£10,000,000). She owns land in nearly every city in the United States, and says there is nothing like land as an investment. She added: 'I am a very happy woman, and the Lord has blessed me above others. I think I make good use of my opportunities, for I have endowed over a hundred churches and founded fifty schools. I give away my substance without ostentation. I belong to a Quaker family, which has been wealthy for the last five generations.'"

It is perhaps too much to expect from any preachers of the "Gospel of Wealth" that they should do any reckoning or reasoning: if they were capable of it, one might ask them to state approximately the relation between those churches and schools, etc., and the misery caused by the abstraction of so much wealth from its producers.

"Whatever else may be thought of Mr. Carnegie's 'Gospel of Wealth,'" says the *Pall Mall*, which is the most blatant Wealth-Gospeller in this country, "he is at any rate entitled to the respectful hearing due to any man who practises what he preaches. Our readers will remember that the foundation of Free Libraries was the first and almost the last word of Mr. Carnegie's gospel, and now this morning we learn from Allegheny that—

Mr. Andrew Carnegie has presented this city with a library worth £60,000. It was formally presented to-day in the presence of President

Harrison and a distinguished assemblage. Allegheny was the first American city that gave Mr. Carnegie shelter. He has offered Pittsburg £200,000 for public libraries, and the offer has been formally accepted."

"Mr. Carnegie," the *Pall Mall* goes on to say, "is like Chaucer's good monk: he teaches the law and commandments as he has received them; but 'first he followed them himself.'"

One would think that anyone who analysed the process of robbery and sweating which inevitably goes to the formation of a millionaire, with only a remote chance of his turning out even such a comparatively favourable specimen as Mr. Andrew Carnegie, would be unable to defend the system under which it is an ordinary and recognised thing. Can it be worth while to let one man plunder a million for years in order to take the chance of his benefiting a hundred or two before he dies?

"Potters' rot" is a kind of asthma brought on by the unhealthy conditions under which potters work. A man died of it last week in London, and that kind of unnecessary death is such an ordinary thing that the inquest seemed to be held as a mere matter of form. It is one of the many sacrifices that workmen must make in order to have millionaires and "gifts" of free libraries, or less desirable institutions—"Pelican Clubs," and so on.

Would it not be better for workmen to free their work from the mastership of the money-bag; to work in association for the common benefit, looking after their collective health, comfort, and happiness; and then, when they had satisfied the more immediate and pressing needs of food, clothing, and shelter, turning to the provision of libraries, concert-halls, and common-rooms for the satisfaction of other "higher" cravings?

As it is now, they are degraded at work by undue toil, in unhealthy conditions, and with scant reward; and are further degraded when work is done by accepting the "charitable" doles of their plunderers carelessly flung back to them.

I see that a "Stanley Exhibition" is to be held, and that a great German publishing firm will issue a translation of his book. If the managing committee will send their address to this office, we will furnish them with a few suggestions as to exhibits; and the publishers are welcome to a few annotations on the "great" man's book. No fees.

Mr. Stanley has found his poet; a Mr. Deane Brand is singing a song in his praise, of which a copy has been sent to us, presumably for review. Here is the chorus:

"So raise all praise through our Island home,
Till it spreads like stars on Heaven's dome;
A cheer for the right, a sword for the wrong,
Till we girdle the earth with glory and song."

After which there is nothing to be said, but that the bard is worthy of the hero, and both of their worshippers.

Exhibits and notes may both be suggested by, and the poet receive inspiration from, the following story of an "execution" told at the Savage Club on Saturday night by Mr. T. Stevens, the American "special" who was sent to meet Stanley:

"At the time, Stanley was so weak that he could not turn in his bed without help; but so strong was his iron will that he insisted upon being taken out of bed and propped up in a chair. He took a strong stimulant, and had himself carried outside of his tent, where the people were all drawn up, and where the mutineer, who had been tried and found guilty, awaited his sentence. The chair was put down, and Stanley faced the miscreant, the fever in his eye, and his thin hand outstretched. 'We have come through a thousand difficulties and dangers to save you,' he said, 'and this is our reward! Depart to God!' The people thereupon rushed upon the man, shouting 'What shall we do with him?' 'Send him to God, I say!' shouted Stanley, pointing to the overhanging limb of a tree. A rope was thrown over, noosed round the miscreant's neck, and he was swiftly run up, and soon dangled a corpse in the air." S.