

Workers' Herald.

A SOCIALIST WEEKLY.

No. 1.

DECEMBER 12, 1891.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Live your own life: you are not your grandmother.

MEN WHO ARE NOT SOCIALISTS.

I.

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF HAMILTON.

I HAVE never had the pleasure of meeting His Grace—one of the reasons being that he is seldom in this part of the country—but if I should ever have that pleasure, I will cordially grasp his hand. It is true he is a duke, and that he steals £120,000 a-year from his poor neighbours; but there is no need of our affecting to be fastidiously virtuous, so long as things are as they are. We are all thieves, if it comes to that; and if we don't steal as much as the Duke of Hamilton, it is chiefly because we have not got the chance. If we could all be dukes the thing would be right enough. After all, there is not so much harm in stealing; it is the monopoly of stealing—the preventing others having an equal opportunity—that does the mischief. If stealing were universalized (Kant says that true morality is to act so that your actions may be universalized), it would be Socialism. (The editors of some capitalist advertising prints will no doubt drag this little sentence from its home, and stick it in the pilory of their leader columns as a mark for the brick-bats of ignorant slander and abuse; it is foredoomed, I know, to become a martyr in the cause, nevertheless let it go bravely forth to do its duty.) The Duke of Hamilton is not a Socialist, so far as I am aware; but he is better than being a Socialist—he makes other people become Socialists. He is one of the biggest propaganda forces in the country. I know many people who call themselves Socialists who might as well call themselves cabbages for all the good they do. It doesn't matter a rap what a man is, it is what a man does that tells on the progress of the cause. There are some Socialists who have so little energy, generosity, and courage, that

they could better serve Socialism by dying right off, and having the words, "Here lies a Socialist," inscribed on their tombstones, than by living to the age of Methuselah; (and here let me suggest that every Socialist should stipulate on his death-bed that a text from the *Socialist Catechism*, or a verse from one of Morris' songs, should be engraved on the slab that decorates the sward above his mortal clay. I especially commend this idea to timid Socialists, who are afraid to avow their principles when alive. A man can say what he likes after he is dead—they don't hang corpses now-a-days.)

The Duke of Hamilton filches £120,000 from the labourers and miners of Lanarkshire. He has a magnificent palace at Hamilton, in which he has not resided for many years. He has a castle on one side of the Island of Arran, and a grand shooting lodge on the other; neither of which he inhabits for more than a couple of weeks in the year. He cruises on the Mediterranean; gambles at Baden-Baden and Monte-Carlo; shoots buffaloes on the Rocky Mountains; attends race-meetings, and does anything "he damn'd well pleases," to use a favourite phrase of an Anarchist friend of mine. He is thus a living monument of the iniquity of the existing state of society; and his career speaks more eloquently than a hundred unemployed Socialist agitators in behalf of the subversion of landlordism and capitalism, and the institution of a "general divide."

A Lanarkshire miner gets on the average 1s for hewing a ton of coal; and his work is hard, unhealthy, and dangerous. For every ton of coal the miner hews, the Duke gets 1s in the form of royalty; yet the Duke does not move a muscle or do anything in the least to produce the coal. The Duke has never worked, and never intends to work, with the help of Providence, the political parties, and the stupidity of the people! Of course, this 1s per ton royalty, is downright, flagrant, clamorously crying-out robbery, and the Duke himself would, I suppose, be the first to admit the fact. But the Duke has to do this robbery business—people would laugh at him if he refused, and someone else

would be got to do it in his stead. Even the miners who are at present being plundered, would only be too glad to step into his shoes if they could. Supposing the Duke wanted to stop the thing, he couldn't; he would just require to wait till the Social Revolution came, like the rest of us.

Whenever, therefore, I feel the interest of my audience flagging, I trot out the Duke, as it were, and show him round, metaphorically. I make him take off his hat, and show his carrotty hair and low forehead. I unbutton his great-coat, to exhibit the grand dimensions of his neck and waist. I then turn his trousers-pockets inside out, and count his £120,000 in gold and bank-notes, and ask him to tell the audience where he got it all, and how he intends spending it. I ask him a few questions in elementary arithmetic, geography, history, and mineralogy, to show that as a clerk or a check-weight man at a pit-head, he would not be tolerated for ten minutes. I give him a spade to dig the ground; a pick to hew coal; a saw to cut wood, to show that he could not make twopence a-day at any manual craft. Of course the audience gets mad at the Duke; and if I had the real Duke, and not merely the theosophical part of him, beside me, I have little doubt but that he would "fare rather roughly" at its hands—to use a happy phrase of the capitalist press when describing how a Socialist speaker got dipped in a horse-pond, stripped of nine-tenths of his clothes, robbed of ten-tenths of his railway fare money, and afterwards pitched over an embankment on to a dung-heap.

But I would not allow the mob to harm a hair of the Duke's head if I could help it, so long, at least, as they are fools enough to tolerate dukes and lords and capitalists at all. He is very useful to us, as I have already said, so handy for being shown round the ring; and, besides, he is quite free from the usual cant and hypocrisy of his class. He does not build churches or preside at political meetings. If he steals he does it because he has the power, and he makes no justification or apology. He doesn't attempt to prove that stealing is a virtue, and that those who allow him to pick their pockets are