

THE COMMONWEAL

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

WORDS OF FORECAST FOR 1887.

THE war-rumours are solidifying and it cannot be denied that there is great probability of this year seeing the long-threatened war which will embrace all the nations of Europe. There have within the last few days been stories of alliance between Germany and Russia. This seems at first sight highly improbable, considering the strong race animosity between the Slav and the Teuton, and also the difficulties which dealing with Austria would offer to both the great reactionary states; because Austria, if not used as the tool of Germany against Russia, would probably in the case of a successful expedition of the two great robbers, have to submit to the doom of partition.

One thing may be noted in reference to this rumour about Russia, that it points the fact that there are two developments of the European struggle possible—the one springing from the forward impulse of Russian aggression in the East, the other from Bismarkian or German bourgeois aggression in the West.

As regards the effects of such an alliance on the popular movement. At first sight it would seem to be the most disastrous event that could cross the path of progress, meaning little less than crushing the various and often-disappointed aspirations of the nineteenth century with the weight of a new influx of the post-feudal absolutism which has survived into our epoch; but on the other hand it may be hoped that it would stir up a fresh force of resistance from all the elements which tend towards liberty, and that the struggle would develop in the proletariat a more definite consciousness of what real liberty means, so that the onrush of a mere reactionary current might be met with the rising flood of revolution, and the attempt, even if partially and temporarily successful, might inflict a mortal wound on the Bourgeois World.

In the other contingency of war beginning in the West, it is a matter of course that Germany, with what allies she can muster, would fall upon France. As was said in last week's issue, in that case Germany would probably hope for England as an ally; but obviously the best method for Germany to gain that advantage by would be to involve this country in a quarrel with Russia, which might possibly, although not necessarily, develop into direct hostility with France. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, for Socialists to watch the situation carefully and closely so as to avoid any possibility of their being dragged into a false position by the recrudescence of jingoism which is quite certain to be one result of even the advancing shadow of a European war.

It ought not be forgotten that for some time past there has been a steady attempt on the part of the bourgeois press to embitter public feeling in this country against France. If Germany attacks France, she will attack her not as the enemy who is plotting a war for the re-gaining of Alsace and Lorraine, but as the dangerous home of revolution—a country whose proletariat may at any moment unite actively with their brethren the German proletariat—which is the real danger to the monstrous absolutism bound together in slavery (for the time so successfully) by the ceaseless care and energy of the Prince of blood and iron.

Our readers must not think that in mentioning these matters we are merely smiting the air. It is true that a rumour published one day in the papers is discredited the next; but then as often as not it is reasserted on the day after that, and certainly the general tone of the news everywhere, joined to what Socialists must know of the economical necessities of the European states, betokens the coming of the great war, in spite of the fact that our English press has little time for the consideration of European affairs in face of the eagerness with which the public fall on tidings of the wretched intrigues and petty squabbles, party and personal, of the Tory, Unionist, and Gladstonian factions.

E. BELFORT BAX.
WILLIAM MORRIS.

PUBLIC WORKS UNDER SOCIALISM.

FOLK who do not understand Socialism, and who are therefore unable to recognise in its fulness the real significance of the economic and social revolution, sometimes imagine, and urge against the acceptance of our beliefs, that large works of public utility, such as railroads, canals, and so on, will have small or no chance of being constructed after the direct stimulus of personal and private profit has been removed. Still more impossible do they think it will be for such an enterprise to be undertaken as the embankment of a river or the building of a harbour where the immediate necessities of the men then living do not dictate it. Under Socialism all things necessary to the production of wealth will be held and possessed in common; there will be no special prerogative to one or to the other whereby he may take or claim for himself the benefit accruing from any work done for the community; private property will have perished, and with it the power of extorting a revenue from those desiring access to any of the means of life. Thus to those who are unable to project themselves in thought beyond the present system, or who, in other words, when thinking out the details of society in the future are unwittingly warped by considerations drawn wholly from that of to-day, it seems as though nothing beyond men's immediate daily, or at most monthly and yearly, necessities will be attended to when the work that should supply a want, to be pressingly felt only at some further future time, cannot be undertaken by men who may reckon upon exclusive and large profits arising from it to themselves. And again, they say, when no man possesses a large accumulated "capital" there will be none capable of entering upon any great work, even were the public conscience so fully developed that men undertook a work because it was good, and waited for no other reason. Further, it is claimed that when competition is abolished and rival contractors no longer bid in a devil's dutch-auction for the privilege of exploiting the construction of a public work, it must of a necessity be done in an expensive, wasteful way, and the gain to the labourers engaged upon a work be a loss to the community at large.

These be objections worth considering, for that their putting forward shows at least that the objector has tried to think on the subject, sees nought repulsive in Socialism itself, and is endeavouring to reason out its ultimate effects.

To-day, when a tunnel, railroad, or canal is found to be required, a number of capitalists, large or small, are banded together to form a company—that is to say, to combine their resources and command enough money to pay for its construction. These men receive tenders from sundry contractors, each promising more work or a lesser price than his fellow. Then that one is selected who unites these two desiderata in the greatest degree, and the work is handed over to him. He, again, subdivides and contracts with other men for this and that portion of it. When it is completed and has been handed over to its "owners" they appoint a manager or superintendent, who, with a staff of employés of all kinds, does the real work of the concern, while the shareholders simply perform the helpful function of consuming its profits among them. The charges for the use of the railroad or what-not are regulated solely by what can be got out of the public without making the demand so exorbitant as to provoke competition by making it worth while for a rival shoal of sharks to struggle for the spoils.

When some part of the sea-coast is being eaten away, or a river overflows its banks frequently, causing a constant loss or inconvenience to the community, recourse is again had to the capitalist. Whatever public body it is that must see to the construction of the sea-wall or river-embankment, borrows money from whoso will lend it at interest, and therewith sets to work in the same way as above described. This money, with the interest agreed upon, is afterwards repaid to the lenders from the labour of the community.

Now what is done in all these cases is this: A certain thing, be it a building, railroad, canal, or sea-wall, is seen to be required by the community. It is estimated that so much labour will be required for its construction, such and such tools and plant to render the labour effective, and an ascertainable amount of food, clothing, housing, and so on for the labourers. The tools and plant are simply the embodiment of stored-up labour, and the food and so on produced while the work is proceeding, and furnished to those employed upon it, must be paid for from some other store of past labour. The "capital" then that is expended upon any public work or improvement is the past labour of the community, which has not been needed for present consumption, and has been stored in enduring form for future requirements. It is a mere accident, and belongs only to the present system,

that this stored-up labour should rest in private hands, and be under individual control as to the direction in which it may be utilised. Accumulation of labour-products will not cease with commercialism. ~~That each man upon the average, working in association, and with the improved means of labour, produces far more than he consumes is quite certain.~~ So much more does he produce that even with the enormous number of non-producers who consume without replacing, there is a greater and greater accumulation of the stored-up labour ready to be diverted in any direction where it is needed. Under Socialism, where each would produce as well as consume, the accumulation would be enormously magnified, but the resultant mass of wealth would be held socially for common objects, and no longer individually for personal profit.

It is true that the capitalist is always on the alert to supply a need of the community as it arises, and this because it is his control over the supplying of social needs that gives him his power of profit-making, but it is hardly likely that the community, in the days when the interest of all is the interest of each, will be less alive to its own interests, rather more so, one would think, after it has been so aroused to them as to shake itself free from the incubus of class-rule and monopoly-restriction.

When it is the community itself which looks after its own service, it will most surely be better served than it is now. If our objecting friends will take the trouble to consider that what the capitalist cares for is not the satisfaction of a need, but the doing it so that he can make profit out of the transaction, they will readily see that the energy employed will be utilised more effectively toward the real end of work—the benefit of the community. Again, when a large work has been completed, the effect is a saving of labour or time. Whether it be an improvement in the means of production or distribution, it saves something to the community; under the present system this goes as increased revenue to the monopoly-class, and in no way helps the proletariat. Under Socialism the economised labour would go to the community's coffers, and be available to still further swell the resources always accumulating from its surplus production. When any special work was seen to be needed, Society would set aside an adequate amount of "capital" for the purpose of its completion. For its expenditure it would have an equivalent in the finished work, and all the "profit" from it, nor would it be compelled to pay tribute to any man for its use.

It is notorious that contract-performance does not mean any guarantee as to efficiency for the intended purpose of a work. It means only that enough efficiency for use is given it to ensure its profit-bearing capacities, and this at as small a cost as possible. It means that the proletariat is exploited in all directions, that everywhere the screw is given one more remorseless turn, in order to secure to the capitalists their pound of flesh. Society, managing its own affairs, recognising its own needs, will satisfy them with just the requisite expenditure of labour. It will be to the interest of every individual to try for the greatest return for least exertion; in order to do this it is not the mere economy of labour in the construction of a work that will be looked after, but also its most effective embodiment. In those days the pressure of circumstances will be against all bad or transitory work, because the people will quickly see that work well done is once done, but badly done is never finished, needing constant care and much waste of labour in mending and keeping up.

Nor need it be feared that the "enterprising capitalist," or rather he who would be that now, will be less enterprising although not a capitalist. To every one the outcome of moderate exertion will be a comfortable livelihood: everything that saves labour or time anywhere will benefit all. Each man finds it easier to work in the direction his special powers impel, and the good organiser will have a far more enjoyable berth when he is organising labour, and no longer only plunder or chicanery. Each man's energy devoted to his own welfare in that of Society; every precaution against waste and for utility; these things will follow the Revolution, and render life and work alike wholly pleasant and to be desired.

H. HALLIDAY SPARLING.

THE WORKHOUSE; OR, JOHN POORMAN'S REST.

(Continued from page 2.)

In reading the sad annals of the poor you must always bear in mind the cardinal fact that the bread of life of the profit-making classes is an abundant supply of cheap labour. This explains the successful attempt made in 1662—only 61 years after the passage of the original Act—to reduce the workers to virtual slavery. The original Act made persons who became paupers chargeable on the parish in which they were born, the second required that persons removing to a new parish might be sent back to their own place of settlement unless they gave security against becoming chargeable. Mr. Fowle, in his hand-book on the Poor Law, says: "By this Act, it may with truth be said, that the iron of slavery entered into the soul of the English labourer and made him cling to his parish as a shipwrecked sailor to his raft. From the very first it was the fruitful parent of fraud, injustice, expenditure, ill-will, and endless litigation."

Having thus tied the labourer to their acres as securely as a Russian serf or a Virginian slave, the Solons of the State next hit on the device of making the ratepayers at large contribute his maintenance. "The public funds were regarded as a regular part of the maintenance of the labouring people engaged in agriculture." "The able bodied pauper was obliged to live where the law of settlement placed him, to receive

the income which the neighbouring magistrate thought sufficient, to work for the master and in the way which the parish authorities prescribed, and very often to marry the wife they found for him."

The following figures exhibit the progress of the cost of pauper relief in England and Wales to the close of this period: In 1688, 2s. 6d. per head on the population; 1784, after end of American war, 5s.; 1803, 8s. 10d.; 1818, after Waterloo, 13s. 3d.; 1832, Reform Bill, 10s. The Reform Bill of 1832 was followed by the Reform of the Poor Law in 1834 when the scheme under which we live, pay, and die was adopted. There has been much fine writing about the willingness of the new Parliament to be guided by economic science. Much more light on the subject may be attained by careful consideration of the fact that the balance of power had passed from the agricultural to the manufacturing exploiters of labour, and that cheap workers were required in the towns rather than in the fields. Hence, for instance, the freedom to the migration of labourers given in the new law.

The effects and defects of the old system and the principles and objects of the new are set forth in the Poor Law Commissioners First Report of 1834, a document altogether the most valuable of all the many publications connected with Poor Law controversy, when the reader has independence enough to remember that what is written is not Scripture.

The new proposals were fiercely denounced by Fielden, Richard Oastler, the Rev. J. Stephens, and the Chartist leaders generally, but they were adopted by large majorities in both Houses of Parliament. What the law is, what it seeks to accomplish, and what are its effects upon the worker I can best tell you by relating the several stages that mark the life of the applicant for relief from the time of his first application to the relieving officer to the end when the workhouse hearse "rattles his bones over the stones," and he is laid in an unmarked grave in "sure and certain hope of a resurrection to eternal life."

Before doing so, however, I will first, in order to get them out of the way, give the statistics of pauperism and its cost in the last year. The total number of paupers in receipt of relief on January 1, 1886, in the 647 unions and parishes under separate boards of guardians in England and Wales, was 813,173; of this number 199,641 were indoor and 613,532 outdoor paupers. The population of England and Wales, as estimated by the Registrar General, was 27,499,041 in the middle of the year 1885. Taking this as the basis of the calculation, the paupers relieved on January 1, 1886, amounted to one out of every 34 persons, or 3.0 per cent. of the population. The various tables given in the returns show that there was an increase in the number of paupers relieved on January 1, 1886, as compared with the same day in 1885, in every division of England and Wales except the northern. The largest increase took place in the north-western division, comprising Cheshire and Lancashire, where it amounted to 11.2 per cent.

The following figures show the economic results of the new law and complete the statistics already given on the same subject. In 1835—first complete year of the new law—the cost of poor relief per head of the population was 7s. 7d.; in 1837 it fell to 5s. 5d.; in 1848 it rose to 7s. 2d.; in 1852 it fell to 5s. 5½d.; this year it is about 6s. 4d.

In considering these figures it should be born in mind that the high rates previously quoted refer to years when the price of all the necessaries of life was very high, and when the allowance to the poor was very liberal; while to-day the necessaries of life are very low, and the allowance given is very niggardly.

And now to my story. John Poorman, finding himself unable to get work, applies for relief. If he lives in East London he is promptly told that the economists and the philanthropic clergy have come to the conclusion that out-door relief is demoralising, and that he must come into the house. In that case it is possible that he may refuse to do so, and become the hero of a story like this—a story told a hundred times a-year of men and women in whom the sturdy spirit of England's golden age still lives:

"Mr. William Carter held an inquest yesterday at Bermondsey as to the death of Maria Osborne, aged 57, the wife of a labourer, and lately residing at 24 Maltby Street, Bermondsey, who died on Sunday last. John Osborne stated that deceased was his wife. He had been out of work for a long time, but had had occasional employment in the parish yard breaking stones, but he had been shut out of the yard for the past fortnight. He and his wife became in a starving condition, and on Monday last the deceased obtained employment at a pickle factory, for which she was paid 6d. or 7d. per day. She continued to work until the following Thursday, when she was taken ill, and came home, unable to work any longer. On Friday she kept to her bed, and appeared worse, and declined to have medical assistance. On that day they only had a small piece of fried fish and a piece of bread, and his wife could not eat hers. The next day she appeared weaker. There was not a particle of food in the room which they occupied, and witness, having purchased a halfpenny's worth of milk with his last coin, went for a doctor, and Mr. Wightwick came about two o'clock in the afternoon, and prescribed medicine for her, and gave an order for parish relief. It was too late to go to the relieving officer that day, and his wife died about eight o'clock on Sunday morning. In further reply to questions by the coroner and jury, the witness said that he and his wife had been in want of food for two years. He had tried lately to get work by breaking stones to get a loaf, but could not. He was 58 years old. He had not applied for relief, as, if he had, he would not have got it, for they (meaning the officials) would want them to go into the 'House,' and he and his wife had an objection to it. Mr. F. P. Wightwick, a surgeon in practice at Horselydown, gave evidence showing that the woman had died from actual starvation, that the immediate cause was exhaustion arising from the diseased condition of the kidneys and the continual want of sufficient and proper food. The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical gentleman's opinion."—*Standard*, Wednesday September 15, 1886.

If John Poorman lives in a district where some out-door relief is given, he is questioned minutely as to his circumstances. Unless he is really destitute—that is, has sold or pawned every article of furniture and apparel not absolutely necessary to existence—relief will be refused. Possibly John Poorman resolves to stay out a little longer, and goes on tramp to see if anything will turn up. Any day you may see two long processions on the road between Preston and Blackburn moving on in that Micawber hope—one going to Preston from Blackburn, the other from Preston to Blackburn, to seek work where no work is, because it would profit the worker only. The inevitable result of such a pilgrimage is that sooner or later the tramp and vagrant finds himself without the pence needed to pay for a night's lodging. If he knows the law—and the law supposes every Englishman to enjoy its acquaintance—he knows that the penalty of sleeping in any barn or outbuilding, under a haystack or hedgerow, or in a field or on a common—in which he might be thought to have some common-right—is imprisonment as a vagabond. He is thus driven to go to the tramp-ward of the nearest workhouse. On arrival there he finds that the old notion that an English worker sins when he moves out of his parish is still lively. The tramp is the black sheep the Poor Law especially detests and the Local Government Board seeks to exterminate. In 1881 the average number of this class was 6979, and Parliament passed the following brief Bill in the hope of extinguishing him :

"4. Section five of the Pauper Inmates Discharge and Regulation Act, 1871, is hereby repealed, and in lieu thereof it is hereby enacted as follows : A casual pauper shall not be entitled to discharge himself from a casual ward before nine o'clock in the morning of the second day following his admission, nor before he has performed the work prescribed for him as in the said Act mentioned ; and where a casual pauper has been admitted on more than one occasion during one month into any casual ward of the same union, he shall not be entitled to discharge himself before nine o'clock in the morning of the fourth day after his admission, and he may at any time during that interval be removed by any officer of the guardians, or by a police constable, to the workhouse of the union, and be required to remain in such workhouse for the remainder of the period of his detention. Provided that in computing the number of days during which a casual pauper may be detained under this section Sunday shall not be included."

The effect of this Act has been to reduce the number of vagrants in 1884 to 4,096. Thus, if John Poorman goes in on Saturday night he is a prisoner until nine o'clock on Tuesday morning. His dietary is worse than that given to the vilest convicted criminal, and often he is required to do his work in solitary confinement.

Satisfied with three days' imprisonment, John Poorman returns to his own parish, again visits the relieving officer, and accepts an invitation to see the Guardians. As soon as he enjoys this high honour he discovers that they are mis-named Guardians of the Poor, and that their proper title is Custodians of the Rates. Various Boards adopt various rules as to outdoor relief. When given it amounts to from 2s. to 3s. per week mostly given in kind, that is, in bread—often of poor quality and short weight—and groceries open to the same suspicion (I am now referring to no union or person in particular, but have in mind the complaints often reported in various newspapers. I have collected some of these, but have no space to quote them). The whole tendency of the system constantly fostered by the Local Government Board is towards the abolition of outdoor relief, the ideal of Sydney Smith and other promoters of the new poor law. This is fully shown by the fact that in 1874 the number of outdoor paupers was 683,739, falling in 1884 to 585,068, while the number of indoor paupers, which in 1874 was 143,707, rose in 1884 to 180,846. These figures show the real cause of the alleged diminution of pauperism to be the increased severity of the house test. On this point Mr. Hoyle's testimony given on page 151 of 'Our National Drink Bill,' deserves attention : "In 1871, a change took place in the system of giving relief. Orders were sent from the Central Board in London to apply more rigorously the workhouse test ; and in regard to able-bodied paupers, both in the house and out of it, to apply the stone-breaking and other tests. The Poor Law inspectors visited Boards of Guardians to press these points upon them. County Conferences were held to ensure united action. I am not here writing off the book, for I was myself a Poor-law Guardian in Bury for the ten years from 1870 to 1880, and witnessed the whole of the proceedings, and on more than one occasion I felt compelled to raise my voice against the harshness of some of the proceedings." The Local Government Board, in its Annual Report for 1884-5, at page 17 says : "This decrease is wholly due to a falling off in the number of adult able-bodied persons receiving outdoor relief, the mean number of indoor paupers who were adult and able-bodied being larger in 1884 than in 1874."

WM. SHARMAN.

(To be continued.)

The *Pall Mall Gazette* has been sending to Madame de Novikoff to ask whether it is true, as is generally supposed, that the Czar of all the Russias has been driven out of his senses by that very human but not very dignified passion, terror. Everybody outside the *Pall Mall* supposes Madame de Novikoff to be a Russian political agent. The *Pall Mall's* proceeding, therefore, is, to say the least of it, grotesque. It is much as if he had sent to the devil's varlet to ask the truth about those awkward rumours of hoofs and horns, and those rumoured strange views of his majesty's about the welfare of the human race. The varlet, as in duty bound, replies that it is all a foul lie ; that his Satanic Majesty has ten toes like other people, and is a prince of well-known benevolence. Of course the public is satisfied with this answer !—W. M.

SELF-HELP.

(ANON. Translated by J. L. JOYNES.)

"HERE, Common Folk, a bone ! Catch ! Hold it tight,
And gnaw and worry it with all your might,
'Self-help' the thing is called ; and, credit me,
'Tis that alone will your salvation be."

So cries a certain rascal knave to you ;
Then straight make answer, "This thing I will do :
I'll gnaw—for your plan tallies with my own—
But you yourself, you hound, shall be the bone."

"I'll 'help myself' from you ; but first I'll tear
From off your face the mask of lies you wear,
And keep the thing for ever for a show,
With whips and screws and instruments of woe."

"And next I'll hurl upon the rubbish-heap
The cradle that has lulled me long to sleep ;
And warning to my work when I've begun,
I'll help myself in far more ways than one."

"For when I've set your tyranny aside,
I'll seek that monstrous monument of pride,
That makes the soul of free-born man its slave,
The high-throned Church, thought's thousand-year-old grave"

"One word is strong to lay its ramparts low,
Like trump that cracked the walls of Jericho :
Yea, Knowledge all its wonders shall contain,
And work new wonders by o'erthrowing them."

"In righteous wrath with my resistless hand,
I grasp the pillars that to prop it stand ;
And shake and snap them with a giant's strength,
Whose thousand-year-old bonds are loosed at length."

"And 'Hallelujah !' with a deafening din
I shout, as idols and their shrines crash in :
While through the crash a voice of jubilee
Cries, 'Reason, prisoned ages long, is free.'"

"The cross is made my weapon ; from the shrine
I hunt the Priests with their own sacred sign :
Now since nigh nineteen centuries of pain
Is he that hangs there first made glad again."

"A surer sign of victory I bear,
A banner red—but 'Peace' is written there :
Peace is the sign that tyranny shall cease ;
Yea, Revolution's self is nought but peace."

"The earth is rocked and shaken ; marching come
Freedom's battalions to the tuck of drum,
And burst the barriers in her path that stood,
Break down all evil, and build up all good."

"The plough, that chain that bound me to my lord,
I'll forge afresh into a two-edged sword :
The means men's cruel craft has used so long
To crush me down shall yet avenge my wrong."

"On march the hosts with Freedom's flag unfurled,
Like storm, from pest that purifies the world ;
Break Pride's defences ; tread the traitors down ;
Pluck off and trample on the tyrant's crown."

"The earth rejoices in the rising sun ;
A gladdened world gives thanks for freedom won ;
Oppression's yoke lies broken at our feet—
'Self-help' with ringing cheers we all will greet."

The party of Labour is not an outburst of passion ; it is the result deep causes, working by and through social evolution.

Edward Atkinson, the economist of slops and scraps, is very much afflicted by the waste of food in cooking. We are a great deal more affected by the waste of life in production and want of justice in distribution.

England is vigorously prosecuting the work of building railroads in India. As usual, her enterprise is inspired by the highest considerations of philanthropy, and exclusively designed to prevent the recurrence of famine among the Hindoos. But it may, incidentally, enable Great Britain to obtain from the East all the wheat she needs at lower prices than she is paying to our farmers ; in which case India may yet starve, notwithstanding the railways, as Ireland is occasionally doing, while philanthropic John Bull eats her potatoes.—*The (N. Y.) Leader.*

STRANGE INDEED !—The following extract is from an Essay of Montaigne (b. 1533), translated by Florio, chap. 30. Montaigne is writing about the North-American Indians :—"Three of that nation, ignorant how deare the knowledge of our corruptions will one day cost their repose, securitie, and happiness, and how their ruine shall proceed from this commerce, were at Rouen in the time of our late king, Charles IX., who talked with them a great while. They were shewed our fashions, our pompe, and the forme of a faire citie ; afterwards, some demanded their advice, and would needs know of them what things of note and admirable they had observed amongst us : they answered three things, the last of which I have forgotten, and am very sorie for it ; the other two I yet remember. They said : 'First, they found it very strange that so many tall men, with long beards, strong and well armed as it were about the king's person, would submit themselves to obey a beardless child, and that we did not rather chuse one amongst them to command the rest. Secondly, they had perceived there were men amongst us full-gorged with all sortes of commodities, and others which, hunger-starved and bare with neede and poverie, begged at their gates ; and found it strange these men so needie could endure such an injustice, and that they took not the others by the throate, or set fire on their houses.'"



"HAVE YOU NOT HEARD HOW IT HAS GONE WITH MANY A CAUSE BEFORE NOW? FIRST, FEW MEN HEED IT; NEXT, MOST MEN CONTEMN IT; LASTLY, ALL MEN ACCEPT IT—AND THE CAUSE IS WON!"

Communications invited on Social Questions. They should be written on one side of the paper, addressed to the Editors, 13 Farringdon Rd., E. C., and accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication.

As all articles are signed, no special significance attaches to them because of their position in these pages. None to be taken as more than in a general manner expressing the views of the League as a body, except it be so explicitly declared by the Editors.

Rejected MSS. can only be returned if a stamped directed envelope is forwarded with them.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

NOTICE TO ALL SOCIALISTIC NEWSPAPERS.—The *Commonweal* will be regularly sent to all Socialistic Contemporaries throughout the world, and it is hoped that they on their side will regularly provide the Socialist League with their papers as they may appear.

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday January 5.

ENGLAND	Cincinnati (O.) Unionist	ITALY
Justice	Toledo (O.)—Industrial News	Milan—Il Fascio Operario
Norwich—Daylight	Cleveland (O.)—Carpenter	Turin—Il Muratore
Club and Institute Journal	New Haven (Conn.)—Workmen's Advocate	Rome—L'Emancipazione
Londoner Arbeiter-Zeitung	Paterson (N. J.)—Labor Standard	SWITZERLAND
Die Autonomie	Springfield (Ill.)—Voice of Labor	Zurich—Sozial Demokrat
Personal Rights Journal	Chicago (Ill.)—Vorbote	Geneva—Bulletin Continental
Christian Socialist	Knights of Labor	SPAIN
Freedom	Milwaukee (Wis.)—Volksblatt	Madrid—El Socialista
Worker's Friend	Detroit (Mich.)—Labor Leaf	Cadiz—El Socialismo
The Revolutionist	Portland (Oreg.)—Avant-Courier	PORTUGAL
Freethinker	Salem (Oreg.)—Advance-Thought	Lisbon—O Protesto Operario
INDIA	FRANCE	Voz do Operario
Madras—People's Friend	Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily)	AUSTRIA
Allahabad—People's Budget	Le Socialiste	Vienna—Gleichheit
Ahmedabad—Praja Mata	Le Revolte	Arbeiterstimme
CANADA	Journal du Peuple	Brunn—Volksfreund
Toronto—Labor Reformer	Guise—Le Devoir	HUNGARY
Montreal—L'Union Ouvriere	Lille—Le Travailleur	Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik
UNITED STATES	HOLLAND	ROMANIA
New York—Volkszeitung	Hague—Recht voor Allen	Jassy—Lupta
Freiheit	BRUSSELS	DENMARK
Truthseeker	Brussels—Le Chante-Clair	Social-Demokraten
Der Sozialist	En Avant	SWEDEN
John Swinton's Paper	Liege—L'Avenir	Stockholm—Social-Demokraten
Leader	Antwerp—De Werker	NORWAY
Boston—Woman's Journal		Kristiania—Social-Democraten
Denver (Col.) Labor Inquirer		

PROF. SIDGWICK AND POLITICAL ECONOMY.

An article entitled "Economic Socialism" contributed by Professor Sidgwick to the *Contemporary Review* some time ago should not be allowed to pass without a little Socialistic criticism. It is satisfactory that in its orthodox "political economy" has been dealt a very severe blow. This portentous science has, in fact, been condemned out of its own mouth. If Professor Sidgwick's account of its aims is a trustworthy one, it appears to have no *raison d'être* as a science. Indeed, as far as the workers are concerned, it seems to be "good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men." The professor states explicitly that political economy is primarily concerned with the production of wealth; that it seeks to show that wealth tends to be produced most amply and economically in a society where government leaves industry alone; and that it subordinates conditions of physical or moral wellbeing to considerations of wealth. He says that political economy is only indirectly concerned with the distribution of wealth, and does not aim at showing that wealth tends to be distributed among the different individuals who have co-operated in producing it in strict accordance with their respective merits. He adds also that when Ricardo talked of "natural wages" he had no intention of stamping the share of produce so designated as divinely ordered and therefore just.

Now the question which naturally arises after reading this exposition is: Of what good to the people can a science be which treats only of the production of wealth and advocates that system in which wealth can be produced most amply and economically, no matter how wretched morally or physically the people, the wealth-producers, may be in consequence of it? A science like this, openly professing disregard of all moral considerations, can surely be of no earthly interest or benefit to any save the comparative few who control both the wealth and the wealth-producers, and who wield it as a merciless weapon against the disinherited. That it is antagonistic to the good of the people is borne out by the damaging statement made by the same writer that it is beyond the scope of political economy to protest against a needle-grinder being worked to death in a dozen years, *if it paid*, and that this science (to disobey whose "laws" it is, forsooth, regarded as in the highest degree impious by the "educated" classes) must necessarily have

justified the action of those sugar-planters who worked their slaves to death in six or eight years, *because it paid*. What are we to think of the morality of those who walk by the light of "laws" which sanction such revolting brutalities as these?

But let us glance at "the vast fabric of modern industry" which charms the professor by its "very impressive approximation to the economic ideal," and see if its wealth is produced as amply and economically as might reasonably be expected from the transports of the students of the dismal science. In the *Century Magazine* a month or two ago Professor Ely wrote that "the needless waste of railway competition [in America] has been sufficient to provide good, comfortable houses—a whole house to a family—for that part of the entire population of the United States not already provided with such houses. The first item in the count is needless expenditure in railway construction. This has been estimated at one thousand million of dollars, and it is certainly a low estimate, for two needless railways, the West Shore and the Nickel Plate, alone count for one-fifth of this sum. It must be borne in mind that needless expenditure is waste of national resources which ought to have benefited the people. This is very simple, yet it is often necessary to repeat it. Now one thousand million of dollars is a sum sufficient to build houses for one million families or five million people." It is undeniable that, as Ely seems to maintain, this sum of one thousand million of dollars needlessly expended cannot be termed wealth in the true sense of the word, since every want of the American people which railways supply would have been met with no further expenditure of labour had this enormous sum been consigned to the depths of the sea. Consequently it seems reasonable to require that all waste, of which the above is an illustration, should be computed and deducted from the total wealth of a country as estimated by political economists, in order that the amount of its *real* wealth may be arrived at. Without doubt the result would show that in the existing order of things wealth proper is much less amply produced than a superficial observer would suppose and political economists would have us believe.

Moreover, we find on close examination that the vaunted economy in the production of wealth in the present system is also at variance with hard facts. We shall quote Professor Ely again, keeping in mind that railways are factors in the production of wealth just as much as workshops and factories: "Every needless train is a waste, and parallel and competing roads necessitate a vast number of them daily. Our railways have not been planned according to any intelligent scheme, so that they should become part of one grand system of means of communication and transportation, supplementing our natural and artificial water-ways and other highways. On the contrary they were often designed to injure other public highways and are still managed with that view. Railways run along by the side of canals and drive them out of existence. At times they buy the canal, and stop using it lest it should longer render service to anybody. The Richmond and Alleghany Railroad is an example. Here is a great waste of resources expended in canals. Railways prevent the use of natural water-ways. Thus the Pennsylvania railroad and the Pacific railways discriminate against those who use the Ohio River and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans respectively. These are examples of a waste of Nature's bounty. Freight rates are often so much cheaper between competing points than from an intermediate point, that freight frequently passes twice over the same track—a waste of labour and capital. Freight is thus sent from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia, New York, and then right back through Pittsburgh to a western point, so as to get the competition rate from one of the large cities. Freight has likewise been sent from Rochester, New York, to New York City, then back again over the same tracks through Rochester to the West. Last winter, freight was sent from Baltimore to New York, then back through Baltimore to the West. These examples might be multiplied indefinitely." But this long story of waste of wealth and want of economy in the production of it is devoted to one industry only, the carrying trade. Any person of average experience can point out numerous cases of shameful extravagance of a similar kind in nearly every branch of industry. No small item, too, is the waste of labour implied in the enforced idleness of the great army of unemployed and half-timers.

Political economists will, of course, retort that Government interference would only aggravate the evil. But this is sufficiently disproved by the striking fact that the control of the German railways lately acquired by the State has been entirely satisfactory. So much so, that according to Ely the Frankfort "Gazette" was able to state in 1885 that there was not one of the Manchester School to be found in Germany who desired a return to private railways, while business men were gratified by the stability, impartiality, and publicity of railway charges. To do Professor Sidgwick justice, however, the Government interference he refers to seems to partake only of the nature of paternal legislation or piece-meal Socialism, which is of course as far removed from Socialism proper as darkness is from light. If those of our opponents who give evidence of their inability to distinguish true modern Socialism from the quack remedies commonly called Socialistic, were to study the question, and if political economists were to take as much trouble to think themselves into the Socialistic ideal as into the "economic ideal," they would find that under Socialism the motives to "energetic self-help" would be less impaired than in existing Society, that private initiative would have even greater scope than at present, and that above all the production and distribution of wealth would be managed in the most efficient and economical manner with due regard to the moral and physical welfare of the people.

J. H. SMITH.

A DREAM OF JOHN BALL.

(Continued from p. 8.)

HE held his peace awhile, and then he said: "But no man selleth himself and his children into thralldom uncompelled; nor is any fool so great a fool as willingly to take the name of freeman and the life of a thrall as payment for the very life of a freeman. Now would I ask thee somewhat else; and I am the readier to do so since I perceive that thou art a wondrous seer; for surely no man could of his own wit have imagined a tale of such follies as thou hast told me. Now well I wot that men having once shaken themselves clear of the burden of villeinage, as thou sayest we shall do (and I bless thee for the word), shall never bow down to this worsen tyranny without sore strife in the world; and surely so sore shall it be, before our valiant sons give way, that maids and little lads shall take the sword and the spear, and in many a field men's blood and not water shall turn the grist mills of England. But when all this is over, and the tyranny is established, because there are but few men in the land after the great war, how shall it be with you then? Will there not be many soldiers and sergeants and few workers? Surely in every parish ye shall have the constables to see that the men work; and they shall be saying every day, 'Such an one, hast thou yet sold thyself for this day or this week or this year? Go to now, and get thy bargain done, or it shall be the worse for thee.' And wheresoever work is going on there shall be constables again, and those that labour shall labour under the whip like the Hebrews in the land of Egypt. And every man that may, will steal as a dog snatches at a bone; and there again shall ye need more soldiers and more constables till the land is eaten up by them; nor shall the lords and the masters even be able to bear the burden of it; nor will their gains be so great, since that which each man may do in a day is not right great when all is said."

"Friend," said I, "from thine own valiancy and high heart thou speakest, when thou sayest that they who fall under this tyranny shall fight to the death against it. Wars indeed there shall be in the world great and grievous, and yet few on this score; rather shall men fight as they have been fighting in France at the bidding of some lord of the manor, or some king, or at last at the bidding of some usurer and forestaller of the market. Valiant men, forsooth, shall arise in the beginning of these evil times, but though they shall die as ye shall, yet shall not their deaths be fruitful as yours shall be; because ye, forsooth, are fighting against villeinage which is waning, but they shall fight against usury which is waxing. And, moreover, I have been telling thee how it shall be when the measure of the time is full; and we, looking at these things from afar, can see them as they are indeed; but they who live at the beginning of those times and amidst them, shall not know what is doing around them; they shall indeed feel the plague and yet know not the remedy; by little and by little they shall fall from their better livelihood, and weak and helpless shall they grow, and have no might to withstand the evil of this tyranny; and then again when the times mend somewhat and they have but a little more ease, then shall it be to them like the kingdom of heaven, and they shall have no will to withstand any tyranny, but shall think themselves happy that they be pinched somewhat less. Also whereas thou sayest that there shall be for ever constables and sergeants going to and fro to drive men to work, and that they will not work save under the lash, thou art wrong and it shall not be so; for there shall ever be more workers than the masters may set to work, so that men shall strive eagerly for leave to work, and when one says I will sell my hours at such and such a price, then another will say, and I for so much less; so that never shall the lords lack slaves willing to work, but often the slaves shall lack lords to buy them."

"Thou tellest marvels indeed," said he; "but how then if all the churls work not, shall there not be famine and lack of wares?"

"Famine enough," said I, "yet not from lack of wares; it shall be clean contrary. What wilt thou say when I tell thee that in the latter days there shall be such traffic and such speedy travel across the seas that most wares shall be good cheap, and bread of all things the cheapest."

Quoth he: "I should say that then there would be better livelihood for men, for in times of plenty it is well; for then men eat that which their own hands have harvested, and need not to spend of their substance in buying of others. Truly, it is well for honest men, but not so well for forestallers and regraters¹; but who heeds what befalls such foul swine, who filch the money from people's purses, and do not one hair's turn of work to help them?"

"Yea, friend," I said, "but in those latter days all power shall be in the hands of these foul swine, and they shall be the rulers of all; therefore, hearken, for I tell thee that times of plenty shall in those days be the times of famine, and all shall pray for the prices of wares to rise, so that the forestallers and regraters may thrive, and that some of their well-doing may overflow on to those on whom they live."

"I am weary of thy riddles," he said. "Yet at least I hope that there may be fewer and fewer folk in the land; as may well be, if life is then so foul and wretched."

"Alas, poor man!" I said; "nor mayst thou imagine how foul and wretched it may be for many of the folk: and yet I tell thee that men

shall increase and multiply, till where there is one man in the land now there shall be twenty in those days—yea, in some places ten times twenty."

"I have but little heart to ask thee more questions," said he; "and when thou answerest, thy words are plain, but the things they tell of I may scarce understand. But tell me this: in those days will men deem that so it must be for ever, as great men even now tell us of our ills, or will they think of some remedy?"

I looked about me. There was but a glimmer of light in the church now but what there was, was no longer the strange light of the moon, but the first coming of the kindly day.

"Yea," said John Ball, "'tis the twilight of the dawn. God and St. Christopher send us a good day!"

"John Ball," said I, "I have told thee that thy death will bring about that which thy life has striven for: thinkest thou that the thing which thou strivest for is worth the labour? or dost thou believe in the tale I have told thee in the days to come?"

He said: "I tell thee once again that I trust thee for a seer; because no man could make up such a tale as thou; the things which thou tellest are too wonderful for a minstrel, the tale too grievous. And whereas thou askest as to whether I count my labour lost, I say nay, if so be in those latter times (and worsen than ours they will be) men yet seek a remedy: therefore again I ask thee is it so that they shall?"

"Yea," said I, "and their remedy shall be the same as thine, although the days be different: for if the folk be enthralled, what remedy save that they be set free? and if they have tried many roads towards freedom, and found that they led nowhither, then shall they try yet another. Yet in the days to come they shall be slothful to try it, because their masters shall be so much mightier than thine, that they shall not need to show the high hand, and until the days get to their vilest, men shall be cozened into thinking that it is of their own free will that they must needs buy leave to labour by pawning their labour that is to be. Moreover your lords and masters seem very mighty to you, each one of them, and so they are, but they are few; and the masters of the days to come shall not each one of them seem very mighty to the men of those days, but they shall be very many, and they shall be of one intent in these matters without knowing it; like as one sees the oars of a galley when the rowers are hidden, that rise and fall as it were with one will."

"And yet," he said, "shall it not be the same with those that these men devour; shall not they also have one will?"

"Friend," I said, "they shall have the will to live, as the wretchedest thing living has: therefore shall they sell themselves that they may live, as I told thee; and their hard need shall be their lord's easy livelihood, and because of it he shall sleep without fear, since their need compelleth them not to loiter by the way to lament with friend or brother that they are pinched in their servitude or to devise means for ending it. And yet indeed thou sayest it: they also shall have one will if they but knew it; and for a long while they shall have but a glimmer of knowledge of it: yet doubt it not that in the end they shall come to know it clearly, and then shall they bring about the remedy; and in those days shall it be seen that thou hast not wrought for nothing, because thou hast seen beforehand what the remedy should be, even as those of later days have seen it."

We both sat silent a little while. The twilight was gaining on the night, though slowly. I looked at the poppy which I still held in my hand, and bethought me of Will Green, and said: "Lo, how the light is spreading: now must I get back to Will Green's house as I promised."

"Go, then," said he, "if thou wilt. Yet meseems before long he shall come to us; and then mayst thou sleep among the trees on the green grass till the sun is high, for the host shall not be on foot very early; and sweet it is to sleep in shadow by the sun in the full morning when one has been awake and troubled through the night-tide."

"Yet I will go now," said I; "I bid thee good-night."

Therewith I half rose up; but as I did so the will to depart left me, as though I had never had it, and I sat down again, and heard the voice of John Ball, at first as one speaking from far away, but little by little growing nearer, more familiar to me, and as if once more it were coming from the man himself whom I had got to know.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

(To be continued.)

The animus of the "class" press is plainly shown by the head lines they place over labour news, dispatches, and reports. They exhibit in this way also the real bent of their thinking, for they never fail to treat a labour item in any other way than as a thing apart from that which concerns them. The "class" newspapers have an attitude of their own, and it is always actively or negatively hostile to the interests of Labour.—*The Leader*.

In a fatuously futile editorial, the *Artist*, a "journal of home culture," reviews the past year, and gives gratuitous advice to all and sundry as to the good or evil they have done or may do to "Art" by this or that course of action. The advice is conveyed in platitudinous periods of studied ambiguity, and may mean or not mean all or anything as one's fancy dictates, but any hint of the real condition of art, or its true reason, is carefully avoided. Art is simply the expression of man's delight of life and pleasure in his labour embodied in the work of his hand. So long as the present system of wrong and misery endures there is no hope for a healthy art. Those folk who now repine bitterly over the decadence of Art should work toward the building of the only abode in which it may abide—a Society founded on justice and right, where all have enough and none over-much. For those who are stupidly content there is no word that will reach them; they, like the stolid pharisaic bourgeois, must wait for the rude awakening time holds in store for them.—S.

¹ Forestaller, one who buys up goods when they are cheap, and so raises the price for his own benefit; forestalls the due and real demand and supply; regrater, one who both buys and sells in the same market, or within five miles thereof, buys, say a ton of cheese at 10 a.m. and sells it at 5 p.m. a penny a pound dearer without moving from his chair. For us Socialists the word monopolist will cover both species of thief.—E.D.

THE LABOUR STRUGGLE.

This department is under the direction of the Strike Committee. Labour News and Contributions to the Fund should be sent to T. BINNING, at the Offices.

SHORT TIME AT RAILWAY WORKS.

The Metropolitan District Railway Company have posted notices up in their works at West Brompton, to the effect that on and after Saturday, January 8th, their employes will have to work short time, to the extent of nine hours per week, which amounts to one full working day. This will affect between two hundred and fifty and three hundred men.

NORTHUMBERLAND MINERS.

A protracted meeting of delegates from all the Northumberland collieries was held at Newcastle Dec. 30, in reference to the demand of the colliery owners for a reduction of 15 per cent in wages, to take effect on 1st Jan. It was decided to ask the employers to suspend their notices for a week or two, with a view to arranging a compromise. This request will be considered by the employers at once, and it is now hoped a settlement will be effected.

NORTH OF ENGLAND SEAMEN.

A conference of delegates from branches of the North of England Seamen and Sea-going Firemen Society was held at South Shields Dec. 29, to consider the adoption of a uniform rate of wages for ports on the north-east coast. There were present representatives from various ports. It was resolved that wages be 30s. per week for weekly boats, £4 per month on deck and below for the Black Sea and Mediterranean, and £4 5s. monthly for the Baltic and Atlantic during the winter months.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF FEMALES AS COTTON SPINNERS.

There appears no signs whatever of the strike of mule spinners at Lostock Mill, near Bolton, coming to a close. The mule spinners, at the instigation of the operatives' union, struck work against Messrs. Heaton employing women as spinners on some short mules, and running very slow speeds. The objection raised against females being so employed, is upon moral grounds, and no one who knows what duties have to be performed by mule spinners will say that the grounds of objection are unreasonable. There is a wide difference between being employed in the spinning room and being employed in the weaving, winding, reeling, and card-room, as they have to dress so much different, and the nature of the work to be done is such that no woman should be asked to do the work. Thirty years ago, it was quite common for females to work as cotton piecers, but rarely as minders or spinners, but with the advance of education amongst the middle and lower classes, it has almost died out, owing to the growth of public opinion being against the system. It is very rare where a spinner takes his daughter in a spinning room with a view to teaching her to piece, and to follow the trade for a living. Those of the female sex who follow such employment are generally the daughters of careless and indifferent men, who have no thought or consideration for the future welfare of their offspring. In Oldham and districts no female is employed in a spinning room either as a piecer or spinner, and were there no strong objections from a moral point of view, we think females would find employment in that direction. We are surprised that an intelligent body of gentlemen like the committee of the Bolton Masters' Association should, through their secretary, Mr. A. Bailey, make it known to the public at large that they are in favour of females being employed as piecers and spinners in cotton mills. Such an admission speaks very little for their desire to improve the tone of society as at present existing in the cotton mills; but we understand their motives by their conclusions, and are not far wide of the mark when we say it is to keep down wages regardless of the characters of the females being injured by the nature of their employment. If employers won't dispense with the obnoxious system, spinners must in all cases refuse to teach any female to piece, and by so doing the evil will be sure to die out.—*Cotton Factory Times*.

THE NOTTINGHAM LACE TRADE.—The Board of Conciliation which for some time has had under consideration a proposal of the manufacturers for a 33 1-3 per cent. reduction of wages, have agreed upon a revision of the card prices which practically amounts to a reduction of 12 per cent all round.

STRIKE OF WEAVERS.—At a mass meeting of two thousand weavers, now on strike at Ashton-under-Lyne, it was resolved to abstain from work until their employers conceded the terms asked for—namely, to be paid the same rate of wages that is paid in Chorley, Preston, and other towns for similar work. This is the sixth week of the strike.

The strike of weavers at Ashton still goes on, but a few days ago some of the firms showed a tendency towards developing what we had thought to be a worn out system of getting hands. Some of the spinners were told that their own shops depended on their relatives returning to their looms. This method of doing business is, however, so un-English on the face of it that we are not surprised to find that those who resorted to it don't care to have it known.—*Cotton Factory Times*.

AMERICA.

SOCIALIST VICTORY.—CHICAGO, Jan. 3.—The election of officers to the Trades' Assembly in this city has resulted in a victory for the Socialist Party.

The men who took the places of the Chicago packing-house strikers have been turned out of their boarding houses and must seek other quarters.

The miners of Salisbury, Ala., have organised a co-operative coal company and are taking steps to open a mine on the property of the Keystone Coal Company.

Several new co-operative enterprises have been established in New York during the past few weeks. The United Tailors have established a shop, and the Shirt Ironers will start a co-operative laundry.

The Painters' and Decorators' Co-operative Association, organised recently at Minneapolis, Minn., has 5000 dols. capital in shares of 50 dols. each. Each member holds the same number of shares, and all share alike in the results.

"Ten dollars reward for a Knight of Labor found on the premises," is a placard pasted all over Whitely's works in Springfield, O. The time is coming when an equal reward can safely be offered for any American farmer who buys one of the Champion machines.—*Industrial News*.

GREENVILLE, PA.—A union has been formed here by domestic servants for the purpose of advancing their wages fifty cents a week. The girls are united in the movement, and so far have gained their point. The movement is looked upon with considerable amusement, but no one seems inclined to object to the action of the girls.

FRANCE.

NANTES.—"The distress in our town is very great, but something different from a 'fine-art lottery' is needed to come in aid of the working class this winter weather." Certainly, philanthropy on a so-called business-like footing is bad enough, also the good-dinner-once-a-year style of charity so rampant at Christmas is bad enough, but playing at philanthropy and playing at art "for the benefit of the unemployed" is a double-barrelled insult, and should stir the blood of the greatest dullard to clamor and revolt.

VIERZON.—Last Wednesday the strikers held a general meeting, at which it was unanimously resolved to hold out and struggle to the end in spite of all tentatives on the part of the Société Française. The strikers are resolved to maintain this course, sure of the fraternal help and encouragement of the whole of the proletariat of France.

HAVRE.—A general strike of tilers and slaters is announced here. The workers demand 75 c. the hour; the masters refuse, and are calling in workmen from elsewhere.

ITALY.

FINALE-EMILIA.—A strike of 500 labourers is announced at Finale Emilia. They were making 80 c. a-day. The employers refuse every demand, and threaten to call in foreign labour.

COMO.—The servility and submission of some of the workers in Italy (as elsewhere) is shown up in the following letter from a correspondent of the *Fascio*. "Scarcely a week passes without my receiving threats and abuse from manufacturers or from the workmen. These latter either cannot understand my writings or else desire to maintain themselves in the good graces of the former." This, we venture to think, is a situation not at all difficult to understand, nor, if it comes to that, to be blamed at all heavily, being a natural development of to-day's system, which bears for its legend, "Grind, or be ground." As the writer adds, exploitation by the capitalists is not enough, but we must also be exploited by ourselves, every man against his brother.

MONZA.—Again, here we see the fear of outspokenness and of Socialist writings. In some of the factories the seller of the *Fascio Operaio* is sent about his business, with, "We don't want you here; the *Fascio* has been the ruin of us." Some of the firms here have been overproducing largely, which, especially considering the season, is a serious matter.

ASTI.—The journeyman-bakers of Asti, who some days back were all dismissed by the masters by reason of some dispute, have opened a bakehouse among themselves, thus forming the nucleus of a very useful co-operative society. The town authorities, finding the matter of importance, interfered and tried to bring the two parties to terms, but the bakers held out and would not be persuaded. Meantime the masters have called in a supply of "hands" to keep on business, which move has not proved successful, as the townfolk prefer to patronise the co-operators.

For the third time the electors of Ravenna and Forlì have given their votes to Amilcare Cipriani, having been summoned to elect a deputy in his place, as his two previous elections were annulled. At Ravenna he had 2680 out of 2764 votes; and at Forlì, 3256 out of 3609 votes.

The beginning of the year is fertile in legal proceedings against Socialists. Early in January, at the session of the Court of Assize at Milano, six well-known members of the Labour Party will go up for trial. In February a process is being prepared in Alessandria against several "comrades" for the publication of the pamphlet 'Fra Contadini' and for that of the 'Chant of the Italian Labour Party.' By the by, we are rather curious to see this 'Inno del Partito Operaio Italiano.' Will any Italian comrade kindly take the hint and send us a copy?

AUSTRIA.

VIENNA, December 28, 1886.—Just now, in all workers' assemblies the projected labour-chambers are being discussed carefully. The project has been subjected to the Reichsrath by the Opposition, and the discussion is therefore not perilous to the State, and is consequently allowed by the Government. The workers have therefore the duty to profit by this opportunity, so seldom offered to them, especially as there is a very important matter influencing strongly the condition of our movement. You may imagine what parts the capitalists play when they wish to appear friends of the worker. Our comrade Dr. Victor Adler has shown us in his leaflet "Die Arbeiter-Kammern und die Arbeiter" (The Labour-Chambers and the Labourer) the motives of this party by citing Engels, who says that in the struggle between capital and landlordism there comes a moment when both parties apply to the proletariat for aid. The feudal lords tell the workers that they have the same interests against capitalists, and these latter assert that the capitalists and the labourers represent the new world against feudalism. Two bourgeois parties are inclined to concessions: the reactionary to economical, the liberal to political ones. In this moment the proletariat grows conscious that they form a special class with special interests. The same farce is being attempted in Austria now. The feudals have introduced some economic "reforms," although very platonic ones—as eleven-hour normal working day, insurance against sickness, restored guilds, and so on—and the liberals, nothing but liberal compulsory dissolution of associations and public assemblies, liberal suppression of the labour press, the liberal exception laws. Now on a sudden they are trying to become popular; as they are in the minority they will create labour-chambers, which they refused to create when in a majority of the Reichsrath; they will create them after the model of the chambers of commerce and trade; and it is very characteristic how they deviate even from this model. The labour-chambers are not to enter into mutual correspondence, allowed to commercial chambers; the labour-chambers can elect only their members, while the commercial ones may elect every Austrian who has the franchise, into the Reichsrath. This restriction is intended to prevent the election of an editor or other well-educated comrade. For the suffrage is restricted to such industrial workers who subscribe to a friendly society, who are 24 years of age (for the passive electoral right, 30 years), who are not under arrest or imprisonment. Now imagine: a labour-chamber chooses a Social-Democrat; on the morning of the electoral day he is arrested, charged, for instance, with high treason; by this arrest he cannot be elected. I do not speak of the determination that voting is to be public; I mention only the paragraph that only those workers can vote or be elected who have complied with the above regulations and who have lived two years before the election in the electoral place, by which the workers in many industries, as the building and metal trades, are excluded almost totally from the suffrage.

However oppressive these ridiculous regulations and restrictions may be, we will profit by them, in showing to our brethren who are not yet with us

how impotent this system is to comply with the most modest wishes of the workers, by nourishing in everywise the consciousness of the class warfare. When our representatives will be admitted to the Reichsrath, their speeches (where they will have the liberty of speaking not allowed to us otherwise) will be good means of agitation and will furnish leaflets to be spread among the disinherited. This part of that project of law is therefore the most important, that the chambers have the right to return nine deputies. Abroad, men who do not know Austria will wonder and question: if the ruling classes will admit representatives of the workers to the legislation, why do they not grant universal suffrage? To these we answer, Austria is not yet developed enough. Besides the evils caused by the capitalistic mode of production we suffer from remainders of obsolete feudal institutions. In many parts of Austria there is no great industry; only agriculture based on corvée—legally abolished, indeed, but existing yet, only small, mediæval industry. In Austria there are districts modernly quite proletarian, but yet more districts where not even one capitalist can be found. And imagine now: these institutions, based on different systems of production and society, enter into mutual communication! Must there not arise strange situations, so that Austria may be truly be called the country of incongruities?—F. S.

INTERESTING ITEMS.

The party of Organised Labour is not a party of despair, but of hope and ideas.—*The Leader*.

Commercial enterprise allows no bar to its far-reaching developments. An artist's model in Paris, tired of doing all the work that earned his living, has opened an establishment for the letting out of his kind to artists at so much a head. Albums containing photographs of the "stock-on-hand" are kept at the disposition of his customers, and he has also a room where his "goods" may be examined before hiring. Like all capitalists he is, perforce, an exploiter, and makes profit from the labour of his employes in the natural course of events.—S.

France is arming. Germany is arming. Eight millions of men, brothers in toil and suffering, may suddenly, at the word "Go," rush upon each other on murder bent. Was ever such a conflict seen in Titanic days? And what for, please? Surely, men brave enough to face death in such a *melee* should deem it easy to rid the earth of a few oppressors. And what a grand sight they would be when they meet on the Rhine, should they drop their leaders into the noble stream, and with one mighty shout proclaim the brotherhood of man!—*The Leader*.

Mr. John Dillon, M.P., speaking at Arklow in support of the Plan of Campaign, said he gave bail to be of good behaviour, and the best behaviour he knew was to carry out the Plan of Campaign. He intended to continue the behaviour which he had observed for the last two months; and if he could not carry out the good work by sunlight, he was perfectly prepared to carry it on by moonlight. Rent money gathered in the dark was just as good money as that collected in the day. The Plan of Campaign was legal, and, as one of the makers of the law, he refused to take his law from a policeman.

Mr. Hubert Herkomer has been speaking recently upon the advantages of a long careful training in any craft, and advocating the revival of the schools and apprenticeships of a bygone time. As to the benefits, let alone the absolute need, of apprenticeship and long training in steady careful craftsmanship, all Socialists would agree with Mr. Herkomer. They would, however, point out that, in these days of the *grande industrie*, of machine-production on a large scale, when men are rather the functional portions of machines than aught else, when it is dexterity in doing some one monotonous thing instead of true skill that is required of the workmen, that it would be waste of labour to make a man, and afterward break him down into a factory-slave. When we have kicked out commercialism men will have room to grow, but not before.—S.

It is curious to note how the stand-point of the present system vitiates the view men take of human nature and life generally. In an otherwise by no means unintelligent review of the life of Henri Regnault, just published in Paris, for instance, it is said: "He possessed the revolutionary temperament, the rebellious spirit which is often a virtue in art and literature, but which is always a vice in a soldier—perhaps proof positive that highly-civilised beings are not fit to inhabit this nether world, where brute force and diplomacy, otherwise dishonesty, alone succeed and reign supreme." What more natural, one would think, when the case is thus presented, than for a man to conclude that there was something wrong either with civilisation or with this "nether" world—or, it mayhap, both? But most men have fixed in their minds the immutable stability of the present system, and if human nature cannot square with it so much the worse for man.—S.

We wish to give notice to persons who are occupying themselves with the "labour problem," that what we have asked them for is not more general discussion, but a definite description of those wrongs of the labourer which are capable of being remedied by legislation, and a sketch of the remedy in the shape of the draft of a statute bill. We say this because we are being deluged with letters of the old sort about the designs of the Creator in making the earth, and the "natural rights" of the inhabitants thereof. Among other answers to our demand for a bill of particulars, we have received a letter from Mr. Charles F. Wingate, the sanitary engineer, who figured prominently in the George movement, calling attention to the condition of the New York tenement houses, and enclosing the draft of a bill which certainly ought to be enacted, providing for their improvement as regards healthfulness. But a moment's reflection ought to show Mr. Wingate that the New York tenement houses might all be converted to abodes as wholesome and cheerful as the Navarro flats, without contributing anything to the solution of the labour problem. The wages of the labourer would still be what they are now, the rent of his dwelling as high or higher, his share in the amusements and luxuries of life just as small, and his dependence on his employer, the capitalist, just as great. Moreover, the condition of the New York tenement houses only affects a very small body of labourers in this city. What we are waiting for is some grand piece or pieces of legislation which will ameliorate the lot of labourers in general. Mr. Wingate offers nothing of this sort.—*N. Y. Nation*, capitalist organ.

England is inhabited by two nations, between whom there is no interest and no sympathy—the rich and the poor.—*Lord Beaconsfield*.
Why wilt thou defer thy good purpose from day to day? Arise and begin in this very instant and say, "Now is the time for doing, now is the time for striving."—*Thomas a Kempis*.

"DEFRAUDING A RAILWAY COMPANY."

In a case recently brought before him of the above nature, Mr. Chance, the luminous stipendiary at Lambeth, gave utterance to the sapient conventionalism that "it was shocking to see people, in the position of the prisoner particularly, acting in such a disgraceful manner." He further stated that "the offence in his opinion was equal to picking pockets." If the latter is Mr. Chance's opinion, Mr. Chance is evidently capable of forming opinions without due consideration. Public sentiment may be muddled enough on the subject of ethics, but it has a sufficient glimmer of enlightenment left in it to discern instinctively the difference between depriving a concrete human being of money intended for his personal use and failing to surrender to an abstract "company" with neither "heart to feel, soul to save, or anything to kick" the tax it lays upon those who make use of the social function it performs in pursuit of the one end of its existence—profit-making, which means the plunder of its servants and the public. We do not consider Mr. Lomax acted in any way disgracefully, since no moral obligation, as we have already shown, can obtain between a living human being and an abstraction such as this. Were it possible, we could wish that a practice by which the heartless, bloodless vampires of latter-day civilisation called joint-stock companies were deprived of at least a portion of their ill-gotten gains, might become much more common. The "company," under the cover of law, though without even a pretence of the moral responsibility which binds man to man, attaching to it, can practically do what it pleases, the individual man having no redress at law, "fighting" a "company" being about as possible for the ordinary man as fighting a sea-serpent. What Mr. Lomax did may have been illegal, and contrary to the rules of the commercial game, but it was certainly not immoral—it was no wrong to his neighbour.
E. B. B.

LITERARY NOTICES.

"*Jus* ; an organ of Individualism," is the name of a penny weekly paper which is to make its first appearance on Friday, Jan. 7th. To advocate the principle of *laissez faire*, to criticise over-legislation of a socialistic tendency, and to provide a register and compendium of strictly political information, are the chief objects of the journal. The publishers are Messrs. Foulger and Co., 13 Paternoster Row.

Time, is this month, as usual, full of sound readable matter, notably the articles by W. B. Robertson and Armine S. Kent, on the New Coinage, and Matthew Arnold's poetry respectively. The story of Amilcare Cipriani's life is written from an inimical standpoint by E. Strachan Morgan, who, however, fails utterly to shew our comrade as aught but the hero he is. The list of "best books" given at the end of each number of this magazine is a most valuable and important feature.

The *Leader* is an afternoon daily published under the auspices of the Central Labour Union of New York. It is a well-conducted, smart, readable paper and should make a hit. Our American comrades are go-ahead fellows who seem to beat us on this side hands down and not half try! The *Leader* is the only paper in New York that has kept its columns clean, while its cotemporaries vied with one another as to which could cram most Campbell filth into its columns, and in other ways it has proved its superiority to the monopoly press. American workers should rally in thousands to its support. We most cordially welcome it as an exchange.

The *Christian Socialist* this month takes a long step upward, and will now rank, if it fulfils the promise of its present number, with the most useful of the Socialist monthlies. The Christian Socialist Society has now assumed its entire control, and it will no longer be the vehicle of the whims and fads of one man. The existence of bodies and organs of Socialist opinion that are dubbed with a prefix or suffix of some modificatory kind seems to assert a demand for such modification, and while not agreeing with the policy we can hardly blame those who consider their weaker brethren in that wise. Despite its temporising title, the *Christian Socialist* speaks the truth straitly, and under its new editor's is not likely to falter or fail from its duty. S.

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

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Library.—The librarians, May Morris and W. Chambers, attend on Mondays and Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m. A Catalogue has been printed and is now ready, price 2d. Country Branches can have parcels of books sent by paying cost of carriage.

Branch Subscriptions Paid.

Birmingham, Hackney, Hull, Leeds, North London, to August 31. Croydon, to September 30. Manchester, Merton, Norwich, to October 31. Bradford, to Nov. 30. Bloomsbury, Clerkenwell, Hammersmith, Hoxton (Labour Emancipation League), Oxford, to December 31.

General Meeting.

A General Meeting of members was held on Tuesday evening, January 4, at 13 Farringdon Road, and reports read—by Mahon as to the condition of the Branches; by *Commonweal* manager, who impressed upon the members the need of earnestly pushing the paper during winter months; and Secretary of Strike Committee, who requested friends in the different offices, shops, and factories to send for insertion in the *Commonweal* items of interest to their trades.

STRIKE COMMITTEE.

W. M. (two weeks), 2s.; T. B., 6d. T. BINNING, Treasurer.

FREE SPEECH DEFENCE FUND.

Deficit, £2, 8s. 6d. PH. W., Treasurer, Jan. 4.

"COMMONWEAL" PRINTING FUND.

Anonymous (donation), £20; H. Ch. (three weeks), 3s.; E. B. B. (two weeks), 2s.; T. B. (two weeks), 1s.; M. M. (two weeks), 2s.; Bloomsbury Branch (two weeks), 10s.; Hammersmith Branch (two weeks), £1.
PH. W. Treasurer, Jan. 4.

BRANCH REPORTS.

BLOOMSBURY.—On Friday, Dec. 31st, Edward Carpenter lectured on "The Morality of Interest" to a large audience. Afterwards the Branch had a successful social evening.—L. W.

CLERKENWELL.—On Wednesday, December 29th, A. K. Donald gave a reading from E. B. Bax's 'Religion of Socialism' to good audience. Good discussion followed. On Sunday, January 2, W. Utley spoke on "The Woman Question." Members of this Branch are particularly requested to read the lecture notice for ensuing week, and especially to come and help in the good Cause.—W. B.

CROYDON.—On Sunday last, C. J. Faulkner gave an exceedingly diverting lecture on "Property, or the New Bigotry." The unsettled state of the weather interfered with the number of our audience, but those who were present were much interested. Good collection.—A. T., ast.-sec.

HACKNEY.—On Sunday afternoon, H. Davis spoke on "Scientific Socialism." In the evening, H. H. Sparling lectured on "What we want, and how to get it," contending for a full and happy life for each and all, which could only be obtained through the realisation of Socialism. Good discussion followed. Fair sale of literature.—H. MATTHEWS, sec.

GLASGOW.—We opened our course of lectures in the Carlton Hall on Sunday evening. Owing to a misunderstanding as to date, Dr. Reddie could not give his promised lecture, so comrade Glasier delivered the first lecture, his subject being "Equality." The weather and the holidays have somewhat interrupted our propaganda, especially outdoors, but we hope next week to settle down steadily to our work.

LANCASTER.—Small meeting on Friday night. Comrade McVay addressed us on specific views and points, and E. P. Hall followed with some pertinent reflections. W. Wyatt was in the chair. On Saturday, Leonard Hall addressed a crowd of labourers at Galgate, in the square. Bitterly cold weather, but extremely attentive audience, who appeared to be wholly with the speaker.—L. H., sec.

NORWICH.—Good meetings were held at St. Mary's Plain, Long Row, Catton, Mill Hill, Catton, Sun Lane, Catton, Market Place at 3, and Agricultural Hall Place at 7. Henderson lectured at Branch meeting-place at 8, on "The Duty of Socialists."

LECTURE DIARY,

London Branches.

Bloomsbury.—Communist Club, 49 Tottenham Street. Friday Jan. 7, at 8.30. A. K. Donald on Chap. IV. 'Socialist Catechism.'

Clerkenwell.—Hall of the Socialist League, 13 Farringdon Road, E.C. Sunday Jan. 9, at 8.30. Charles Faulkner, "Inhuman Arithmetic." Wednesday 12, at 8.30. Mrs. C. M. Wilson, "The Revolt of the English Workers in the Nineteenth Century."—Members please note that post-cards cost money; therefore turn up at the Business Meeting, at 13 Farringdon Rd., Sunday at 7 sharp.—W. B., T. E. W.

Croydon.—Royal County House, West Croydon Station Yard. Sunday Jan. 9. D. J. Nicoll, "Charms of Civilisation."

Fulham.—338 North End Road (corner of Shorolds Road, opposite Liberal Club). Sunday at 8 p.m.

Hackney.—23 Audrey Street, Goldsmith Row. Club Room open every evening from 7.30 till 11. Discussions held every Sunday morning at 11.30. Members are earnestly requested to attend.

Hammersmith.—Kelmiscott House, Upper Mall, W. Sunday Jan. 9, at 8. E. B. Bax, "The New Ethic."

Hoxton (L. E. L.).—Exchange Coffee House, Pitfield Street, opposite Hoxton Church, N. Sunday Jan. 9, Committee at 7, important business. At 8, Lecture by C. Wade.

Merton.—11 Merton Terrace, High Street. Club Room open every evening. Committee every Thursday. Discussions will be held every Sunday morning. Jan. 9, at 8 p.m. Mahon, "Working-Class Orthodox Movements."

Milham.—Corner of Merton Lane and Fountain Place. Club Room open every evening from 7.30 till 11.

North London.—32 Camden Road. Fridays at 8.

Country Branches.

Bingley.—Coffee Tavern. Every Monday at 7.30 p.m.

Birmingham.—Carr's Lane Coffee House. Every Monday evening, at 8.

Bradford.—Scott's Temperance Hotel, East Parade, Leeds Road Wednesdays, at 8.

Edinburgh (Scottish Section).—4 Park Street. Meets every Thursday at 8 p.m. Reading Room and Library open every Wednesday evening, 8 till 10. The Treasurer attends for members' subscriptions first Wednesday of every month.

Glasgow.—Reading-room of the Branch, 84 John St., open from 10 a.m. till 10 p.m. daily. Saturday, open-air meeting on Jails Square (Green) at 6 p.m. Sunday, open-air meetings on George's Square at 2 o'clock, and at Jails Square at 4.30 p.m. In the evening at 6.30 in Hall No. 1 Carlton Place, Clyde Side (adjoining Gorbals Parish Church), Dr. Cecil Reddie will deliver his lecture (postponed from last Sunday) on "The Anatomy and Physiology of Society."

Hamilton.—Branch meets every Thursday at 7.30 in Paton's Hall, Chapel Street, until further notice. Lectures and Discussions.

Hull.—11 Princess Street, off Mason Street and Sykes Street. Club Room open 7 to 10 every evening; Sundays 10 am. to 10 p.m.

Ipswich.—The Branch has left the George Inn, and have not yet procured fit premises for the club about to be formed.

Leeds.—New Fleece Inn, Pemberton St., Dewsbury Rd. **Lancaster.**—Market Hall Coffee Tavern Lecture Room. Friday evenings at 8.

Leicester.—Silver Street. Wednesdays at 8 p.m. **Manchester.**—145 Grey Mare Lane, Bradford, Manchester. Club and Reading Room open every evening 6 to 10 p.m. Lecture and discussion every Wednesday at 8 p.m.

Norwich.—No. 6 St. Benedict St. Lecture and discussion every Sunday and Monday at 8 p.m. Reading-room open every day from 8.30 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Oxford.—Temperance Hall, 25½ Pembroke Street. Thursdays, at 8.30 p.m.

Open-air Propaganda—Sunday 9.

11.30...Hackney—"Salmon and Ball" Davis
11.30...Hammersmith—Beadon Rd. The Branch
11.30...Regent's Park D. J. Nicoll
11.30...St. Pancras Arches T. E. Wardle
11.30...Walham Green—Station The Branch
3.30...Hyde Park (near Marble Arch)..... Mainwaring

PROVINCES.—SUNDAY.

Ipswich.—Old Cattle Market, 11; Ship Launch, 3 p.m.
Norwich.—St. Mary's Plain, 11; Market Place, 3.
Leeds.—Hunslet Moor, 11 a.m.; Vicar's Croft, 7 p.m.

CLEVELAND HALL, N.W.—Sunday Jan. 9, at 11 o'clock, H. H. Sparling, "Cannibalism."

Debate on Socialism.

Will you allow me to inform your readers that a Debate will take place at the Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, City Road, E.C., on February 2, 9, 16, and 23, at 8 p.m., between Mr. G. W. Foote and myself, on the question, "Is Socialism sound?"—ANNIE BESANT

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