

THE COMMONWEAL

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

POLITICAL NOTES.

THERE is naturally great commotion in political circles about the resignation of Lord Randolph Churchill, and speculations about the result; as far as we Socialists are concerned we need not trouble ourselves much about it. It emphasises the idiocy of our Parliamentary struggle, that the resignation of a man who is looked upon by every one as a mere trickster, who openly repudiates the folly of having principles to trouble himself with, should be a matter of such mighty importance. Further, it is an indication of the disintegration of parties which is caused by the shadow of advancing Socialism, and which has been going on at such a great rate recently.

But although it is really a sign of this decay of party government, it is probable enough that its first results will be the uniting of the Liberal party on the basis of the surrender of the Gladstonian Liberals. Mr. Chamberlain's speech at Birmingham had a tone of confident triumph about it which is somewhat justified by the situation. The Liberals are quite prepared for this act of ratting; indeed, Mr. Gladstone himself has given the signal for it by letting it be known that he too condemns the "Plan of Campaign." The Jonah of Home Rule once thrown over, nothing prevents the Union of the two sections of the Liberal Party, who can then set to work about the business which the more enlightened of them see to be their true function, of widening the basis of exploitation in these islands in various ways. The attempt at the creation of a new lower middle-class to stem the torrent of Socialism will be the serious business of this new party (for in spite of names it will really be new), of which the two brothers-in-arms, Churchill and Chamberlain, are such distinguished leaders.

Mr. Chamberlain's very clear statement on the necessity of turning the Irish tenants into owners of their holdings was very significant of this aim. As far as Ireland is concerned it must be said that dismal as is the prospect which the realisation of his views would put before that luckless country, the turning of the Irish tenants into peasant proprietors is only too likely to take place, whatever political party may get the upper hand. It is the new misery which Ireland is bound to go through, unless the new social order is realised in civilisation generally in time to prevent it. Nor is it by any means unlikely that the promise of such a change may break up the Irish Parliamentary Party, and leave the New Liberal Party free to do its work in Parliament. That party will be the then Intelligent Reactionary Party, the great enemy of progress expressed by Socialism. But so fast are things moving that its great men will not be the Hartingtons and Goschens, who were once called Liberals and are now mere Tories, but the Radicals old and new, among whom, I suppose, we must now rank Lord Randolph Churchill.

But meantime what is this ominous sound in the air? War is threatened again, and this time more determinedly and clearly than ever. On all sides one hears that this time it is certain, and that spring will see murder afield on the monstrous scale of modern times. How will our English parties deal with this horror if it comes? Will it afford a last chance to the old Tory party to do one more injury to the world before it departs for ever? Or will the Tories unite with the Intelligent Reactionary Party in one great flood of Jingoism?

At first sight, indeed, it would seem a mere act of madness for Bismark and Co. to provoke a hurly-burly which may very well make an end of his firm and its aspirations. But one must remember that they are hardly their own masters in the matter. The monster of

Commercial Militarism which they have created must be found work for or it will destroy its creators; and there comes a time when all must be risked—even revolution *behind* the invading armies.

Meantime, if war really becomes imminent our duties as Socialists are clear enough, and do not differ from those we have to act on ordinarily. To further the spread of international feeling between the workers by all means possible; to point out to our own workmen that foreign competition and rivalry, or commercial war, culminating at last in open war, are necessities of the plundering classes, and that the race and commercial quarrels of these classes only concern us so far as we can use them as opportunities for fostering discontent and revolution; that the interests of the workmen are the same in all countries and they can never be really enemies of each other; that the men of our labouring classes, therefore, should turn a deaf ear to the recruiting sergeant, and refuse to allow themselves to be dressed up in red and be taught to form a part of the modern killing machine for the honour and glory of a country in which they have only the dog's share of many kicks and few halfpence,—all this we have to preach always, though in the event of imminent war we may have to preach it more emphatically. Also, since if any English government allows itself to be dragged into war it will as a matter of course be on that side the triumph of which would mean reaction—*i.e.*, Bismark and Co. we may have to protest specially and definitely against such a proceeding, and probably we should have to put ourselves forward somewhat prominently in such a protest, from which respectability of all kinds would be very apt to hang back.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

THE WORKHOUSE; OR, JOHN POORMAN'S REST.

THE Science, industrialism, economic doctrine, and philanthropy of the 19th century find their architectural expression in the railway station, the gasometer, the factory, and the workhouse. The two latter as distinctly characteristic of our civilisation as the Pyramids of Egypt, the Parthenon of Greece, or the Cathedrals of mediæval times were of theirs. One tells the story of the marvellous increase of productive power which our age has received, the other shows the share of that increase the worker has obtained. The one is the place where the worker pays the master two-thirds of his hours of toil for permission to possess the results of the remaining third, the other is the refuge appointed for the close of life when there is no longer left to him strength from which "profit" can be wrung.

At present it is only of the workhouse, known in Chartist speech and Corn Law Rhymes as "the Bastille" (sic) that I can speak. To the close connection with the place of labour of this place of rest, I can only incidentally refer. Inside and out the place is wholly unlovely, and there is nothing of romance in its story to bewile your ears, and yet, for the sake of its many inmates, fellow countrymen and women of ours, I dare to ask you to give me all your attention as I try to explain what English State charity really is.

The workhouse and the Poor Law System, of which it is the expression, are quite modern things. They belong wholly to our country and are the outcome of its industrial conditions. Long ago there was a time in this England of ours when poverty, as we now understand the word, was unknown, when toil was wholesome, and life was glad and fair. So much ignorance prevails on this matter that I must ask leave to dwell a little on it so as to remove all doubt about the fact. If some Bible-wise man should quote against me the text ascribed to Solomon (Ecc. 7, 10): "Say not thou, What is the cause that former times were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this," I must remind him that the words are those of a voluptuous scoundrel who squandered in shameless debauchery the hard earnings of the Judean poor. The advice of such a counselor is to be followed by the rule of contrary.

In his just-published admirable 'Introduction to the History of the Factory System,' Mr. Cooke-Taylor says, speaking of the 15th century: "Paradoxical and almost unaccountable as it may at first sight appear,

it is nevertheless just this period of English History that some recent and most competent writers have fixed upon as opening the brightest era throughout the whole of our country's annals; as being in fact 'the golden age' of England. The paradox is only an apparent one, and that view of things not so unaccountable as it seems, though the difficulty of reconciling such apparently contradictory facts is not to be denied. The seeming contradiction is in the aspect in which we choose to regard the political-economical conditions of these times; that is, whether from above or from below; whether in the interests of the ruling or of the working classes. Regarded purely in the former light, England was indeed in a bad way just then; the succession to the throne unsettled, the country involved in a cruel civil war, commerce nearly non-existent, population falling, wages high, profit small, and the lower orders ever trenching upon the traditional privileges of the higher. Regarded from the other point of view, that of these lower orders themselves, those very elements of political dissatisfaction wore the aspect of bright promise, and were the just foundations of their rising hope. The very lowness of profits and sparsity of population—political-economical evils to the employing and trading classes—were sources of wealth and therefore of unaccustomed comfort to labourers whose general condition was greatly raised in consequence. But further, when the political turmoils ceased at length, the popular advancement thus fostered began to tell with redoubled effect in face of the more happy position of things attained, and the impetus spread to higher strata of society. All classes began then to feel it, . . . Even the destruction of property caused by the Wars of the Roses was not able, it would seem, to prevent the English people at their close from being in the enjoyment of a condition of well-being which made them the envy of their neighbours, and to which the working classes long looked back with affectionate regret. Our country was then 'Merrie England,' a title conferred upon her by rival nations which she accepted and felt she deserved. It is only necessary to compare this estimate of us with that of any foreigner of to-day to add to the astonishment with which we must regard this fact. If there is one thing that invariably strikes every intelligent visitor here now, it is the exceeding gloom of our national life, the absolute incapacity for joyousness which the national character displays. Merriment is the very quality of which the modern Englishman seems to know least. Wealth has vastly increased since then; the standard of comfort has been immensely raised, political freedom is general, and yet at the end of a century of enormous prosperity the country which once was 'Merrie England' is now the gloomiest, weariest, least enjoying on the face of the earth."

Students of that golden age will find valuable information in 'Cobbett's History of the Reformation'—a book all Protestants ought to read—in 'Froude's History of England,' and in Professor Rogers' great work—'Six Centuries of Work and Wages.' Professor Rogers says:

"The 15th century and the first quarter of the 16th were the golden age of the English labourer, if we are to interpret the wages which he earned by the cost of the necessaries of life. At no time were wages, relatively speaking, so high, and at no time was food so cheap."

The wages of ordinary labourers and artizans were 6s. a day the year through; agricultural labourers received 24s. a week. The working day was 8 hours. Day work was paid for at full rates, and at times even Sundays and festivals were paid for also. Women received the same wages as men. Wages were equal to twice or three times the cost of maintenance under contract. The common people were fed with great abundance of all sorts of fish and flesh, were clothed throughout in good woollens and were well provided with all sorts of household goods. On all things were the marks of beauty that tell of the workman's pleasure in his craft. Serious crime was almost unknown, the judges at the county assizes tried scarcely three prisoners in the year (Cobbett, 56) though at that time water was only drunk in England when men did penance!

Such cases of need as arose from old age, accident, and sickness, were relieved by those inns, hospitals, and schools of learning, called monasteries. The average number of these in each county was 50, or 2500 for the Kingdom. The medical service given was the best known to the time, and the dole received by the applicant was not dry bread and skimmed skilly, but a generous gift that made the heart stout and glad.

The decline in the prosperity of the English worker dates approximately from the suppression of the monasteries, and the distribution of their lands among his followers by the royal polygamist Henry VIII. Into the causes of that decline I cannot now enter, and must content myself in passing with quoting this suggestive sentence from William Cobbett:

"From the land all good things come. Somebody must own the land. Those who own it must have the distribution of its revenues. If these revenues be chiefly distributed among the people from whose labour they arise, and in such a way as to afford them a good maintenance on easy terms, the community must be happy. If the revenues be alienated in very great part; if they be carried away to a great distance and expended among those from whose labour no part of them arise the main body of the community must be miserable poor-houses, jails, and barracks must arise."

Having made men beggars the State proceeded to make them slaves. Severe laws enforced by terrible punishments were enacted. The reign of Henry VIII. is specially disgraced by such legislation. Some feeble attempts to provide alms for aged and sick people began to be made in 1536.

In the reign of Elizabeth a Poor Law System came into existence in 1601. The Act ordered the nomination yearly in every parish of overseers, who were empowered to raise money by taxation of the inhabitants for the relief of the poor. Children were to be apprenticed, persons able to work were to be set to work, and the impotent were to receive alms. Relief was to be given only in the birthplace of the recipient, and parents and grandparents were held liable for the support of their children. Vagrants were left to the harsh provisions of the criminal law. Ninety-six years later a workhouse was built in Bristol, and by an Act passed in the reign of George I. power was given to parishes, or unions of parishes, to provide houses for the poor, and it was ordered that "No poor who refused to be lodged and kept in such houses should be entitled to ask or receive parochial relief." These houses, says Sir Geo. Nichols, were established and mainly conducted with a view to deriving profit from the labour of the inmates, and not as a means of testing the reality of their destitution. The workhouse was, in truth, a kind of manufactory, carried on at the risk and the cost of the poor-rate, employing the worst description of the people, and helping to discourage and pauperise the best. The ultimate tendency of establishments so founded and so constructed was, in fact, to increase the burden of relief, to lead the entire labouring population to a dependence upon the rates, and to bring them down to the lowest level both individually and socially." The same author declares that in the reign of Geo. III. these places were misnamed workhouses, and had become "seats and sources of contagion, and a sort of pest-houses where diseases social, moral, and physical were generated and nurtured." Some curious experiments in the three acres and a cow direction mark this period. They throw instructive and discouraging light on Mr. Jesse Collings philanthropic scheme.

WM. SHARMAN.

(To be continued.)

LITERARY NOTICES.

We have before us the prospectus of a projected reactionary journal, which is as refreshing in its frankness as (to make use of an inspired and original simile) an oasis in the desert to the thirsty traveller. "*Le Cosmopolitain*, anti-Socialist and anti-republican journal," to be published in London but written in French, will appear as soon as 1040 subscribers for a year of £1 each can be found to support it; and, if the fruit be as fair as its promise set forth in the prospectus, we recommend our Socialist friends who have gold to spare to pour the same before the feet of the journal's managers, for its existence will be a weekly boon and source of joy to Socialist editors. The authors of these edifying pages represent society as in a state of gibbering fear before the rapid and steady growth of Socialist feeling throughout the world, and cry that it is high time that "something" should be done to prevent a denouement. "Socialism has become everywhere a social danger, and it is to be feared that under its hurtful influence Europe will soon become prey to a formidable *Jaquerie* of international extent." This is a frank and encouraging admission. We quote the next piece of impudence, as interesting to the Strike Committee of the Socialist League, and we have done: "The Socialists cry aloud that above all, those on strike whose anger is not yet cooled must not be abandoned to the generous and beneficent influence of those who are even now trying to lead them back to the path of duty by showing them the 'dangerous trap which is opened before them in their confiding good faith.' It is absolutely necessary to "defend by all legal means the existence of Conservative European governments." We congratulate our projected contemporary on the frankness of its sentiments, if not on the purity of their expression, and wish it a speedy appearance in this wicked and hypocritical world.—M. M.

FOR BOB INGERSOLL'S EYE.—"Understand me," said Col. Robert Ingersoll in a recent speech, "I am not an Anarchist, nor a Socialist, nor a Communist. I am an Individualist. I believe in the justice of man to man." Now, if the Colonel is not an Anarchistic individual, nor a Socialistic individual, nor a Communistic individual, what other flag is there left for him to sail under? *Answer*: Pirates on the sea of Industry!—CLEGG, in *John Swinton's Paper*.

A lot of human beings pushing, crushing, gouging, cheating, and playing at a brutal game of cut-and-slash—that is what we are told is peace, law-and-order government and civilisation. A lot of human beings organised on a basis of unity of purpose and recognising that each and all are possessed of the same rights to a chance to develop their best inclinations, morally, physically, and intellectually—that, we are told, is war, destruction, chaos, anarchy and socialism.—*Labor Enquirer*.

"BLOODY-MINDED COMMUNISTS!"—Louis Blanc one day was discussing with Pierre Leroux, in the presence of several friends, the question of the moral lawfulness of war and physical resistance to oppression, and expressed the opinion that these were undoubtedly most deplorable evils, which it should be the greatest task of humanity to suppress, but to which it would be necessary to have recourse in extreme cases, so long as the causes of oppression and war are not removed. Whereupon Pierre Leroux contended that there were only two doctrines between which thoughtful men, friends of humanity, had to choose: that of Mahomet, which opposes evil by means derived, as the use of the sword, from evil itself; and that of Zoroaster, which opposes evil by good. Of these, he said, the latter was his doctrine, and the only effective one in the way of real progress. Blanc then put this case to him: "You think yourself, surely, useful to your fellow men by your writings, your ideas, your examples. Well, suppose you are in a position in which you must lose your life, or defend it against a murderous attack from some one you believe to be a monster, and whose very existence you are conscious is a curse to humanity; what would you do?" He unhesitatingly replied: "It being known that I die for my principles, I should suffer myself to be killed, thoroughly convinced that I should thus serve my cause better than in any other way." "Then your only means of opposing evil in such a case would be—" He interrupted: "Martyrdom!" Again and again these men gave earnest of their pacific nature, and yet there are no two men more vilified by the bourgeois press.—S.

A DREAM OF JOHN BALL.

(Continued from p. 307.)

"BROTHER," said John Ball, "how deemest thou of our adventure? I do not ask thee if you thinkest we are right to play the play like men, but whether playing like men we shall fail like men."

"Why dost thou ask me?" said I, "how much further than beyond this church can I see?"

"Far further," quoth he, "for I see that thou art a scholar and hast read books; and withal, in some way that I cannot name, thou knowest more than we; as though with thee the world had lived longer than with us. Hide not, therefore, what thou hast in thine heart, for I think after this night I shall see thee no more, until we meet in the heavenly fellowship."

"Friend," I said, "ask me what thou wilt; or rather ask thou the years to come to tell thee some little of their tale; and yet methinks thou thyself mayst have some deeming thereof."

He raised himself on the elbow of the stall and looked me full in the face, and said to me: "Is it so after all that thou art no man in the flesh, but art sent to me by the Master of the fellowship, and the king's son of heaven to tell me what shall be? If that be so tell me straight out, since I had some deeming hereof before, whereas thy speech is like ours and yet unlike; and thy face hath something in it which is not after the fashion of our day. And yet take heed if thou art such an one, I fear thee not, nay, nor him that sent thee; nor for thy bidding, nor for his, will I turn back from London Bridge but will press on, for I do what is meet and right."

"Nay," said I, "did I not tell thee e'en now that I knew life but not death? I am not dead; and as to who hath sent me, I say not that I am come by my own will; for I know not; yet also I know not the will that hath sent me hither; and this I say to thee, moreover, that if I know more than thou, I do far less; therefore, art thou my captain and I thy minstrel."

He sighed as one from whom a weight had been lifted, and said: "Well, then, since thou art alive on the earth and a man like myself, tell me how deemest thou of our adventure: shall we come to London and how shall we fare there?"

Said I, "What shall hinder you to come to London, and to fare there as ye will? For be sure that the fellowship in Essex shall not fail you; nor shall the Londoners who hate the king's uncles withstand you, nor hath the Court any great force to meet you in the field; ye shall cast fear and trembling into their hearts."

"Even so I thought," said he, "but afterwards what shall betide?"

Said I, "It grieves my heart to say that which I think. Yet hearken; many a man's son shall die who is now alive and happy, and if the soldiers be slain, and of them most not on the field, but by the lawyer, how shall the captains escape? Surely thou goest to thy death."

He smiled very sweetly, yet proudly, as he said: "Yea, the road is long, but the end cometh at last. Friend, many a day have I been dying; for my sister, with whom I have played and been merry in the autumn tide about the edges of the stubble fields; and we gathered the nuts and bramble-berries there, and started thence the missel-thrush, and wondered at his voice and thought him big; and the sparrow-hawk wheeled and turned over the hedges and the weasel ran across the path, and the sound of the sheep-bells came to us from the downs as we sat happy on the grass; and she is dead and gone from the earth, for she pined from famine after the years of the great sickness; and my brother was slain in the French wars, and none thanked him for dying save he that stripped him of his gear; and my unwedded wife with whom I dwelt in love after I had taken the tonsure, and all men said that she was good and fair, and true she was and lovely; she also is dead and gone from the earth, and why should I abide save for the deeds of the flesh which must be done? Truly, friend, this is but an old tale that men must die; and I will tell thee another, to wit, that they live; and I live now and shall live. Tell me then what shall befall."

I took less heed of him than I had done, and the voice that came from me was less of me as I answered: "These men are strong and valiant as any that have been or shall be, and good fellows also and kindly; but they are simple and see no great way before their own noses. The victory shall they have and shall not know what to do with it; they shall fight and overcome, because of their lack of knowledge; and because of their lack of knowledge shall they be cozened and betrayed when their captains are slain, and all shall come to nought by seeming; and the king's uncles shall prevail, that both they and the king may come to the shame that is appointed for them. And yet when the lords have vanquished, and all England lieth under them again, yet shall their victory be but fruitless; for the free men that hold unfree lands shall they not bring under the collar again, and villeinage shall slip from their hands, till there be, and not long after you are dead, but few unfree men in England; so that your lives and your deaths both shall bear fruit."

"Said I not," quoth John Ball, "that thou wert a sending from other times? Good is thy message, for the land shall be free. Tell on now."

He spoke eagerly, and I went on somewhat sadly: "The times shall better, though the king and lords shall worsen, the Gilds of Craft shall wax and become mightier; more recourse shall there be of foreign merchants. There shall be plenty in the land and not famine. Where a man now earneth two pennies he shall earn three."

"Yea," said he, "then shall those that labour become strong and stronger, and so soon shall it come about that all men shall work and none make to work, and so shall none be robbed, and at last shall men labour and live and be happy, and have the goods of the earth without money and without price."

"Yea," said I, "that shall indeed come to pass, but not yet for a while." And I sat for long without speaking, and the church grew darker as the moon waned yet more. Then I said: "Bethink thee that these men shall yet have masters over them, who have at hand many a law and custom for the behoof of masters, and being masters can make yet more laws in the same behoof; and they shall suffer poor people to thrive just so long as their thriving shall profit the mastership and no longer; and so shall it be in those days I tell of; for there shall be king and lords and knights and squires still, with servants to do their bidding, and make honest men afraid; and all these will make nothing and eat much as aforetime, and the more that is made in the land the more shall they crave."

"Yea," said he, "that wot I well, that these are of the kin of the daughters of the horse-leech; but how shall they slake their greed, seeing that as thou sayest villeinage shall be gone; belike their men shall pay them quit rents and do them service, as free men may, but all this according to law and not beyond it; so that though the workers shall be richer than they now be, the lords shall be no richer, and so all shall be on the road to being free and equal."

Said I, "Look you, friend, aforetime the lords, for the most part, held the land and all that was on it, and the men that were on it worked for them as their horses worked, and after they were fed and housed all was the lords; but in the time to come the lords shall see their men thriving on the land, and shall say once more, 'These men have more than they need, why have we not the surplus since we are their lords?' Moreover, in those days shall betide much chaffering for wares between man and man and country and country; and the lords shall note that if there were less corn and less men on their lands there would be more sheep, that is to say more wool for chaffer, and that thereof they should have abundantly more than aforetime, since all the land they own and it pays them quit-rent or service, save here and there a croft or a close of a yeoman; and all this might grow wool for them to sell to the Easterlings. Then shall England see a new thing, for whereas hitherto men have lived on the land and by it, the land shall no longer need them, but many sheep and a few shepherds shall make wool grow to be sold for money to the Easterlings, and that money shall the lords pouch; for, look you, they shall set the lawyers a-work and the strong hand moreover, and the land they shall take to themselves and their sheep, and except for these lords of land few shall be the free men that shall hold a rood of land when the word of their lord may not turn them adrift straightway."

"How mean you?" said John Ball, "shall all men be villeins again?"

"Nay," said I, "there shall be no villeins in England."

"Surely then," said he, "it shall be worse, and all men save a few shall be thralls to be bought and sold at the cross."

"Good friend," said I, "it shall not be so; all men shall be free even as ye would have it; yet, as I say, few indeed shall have so much land as they can stand upon save by buying such a grace of their masters."

"And now," said he, "I wot not what thou sayest. I know a thrall, and he is his master's every hour and never his own; and a villein I know, and whiles he is his own and whiles his lords; and I know a free man, and he is his own always; but how shall he be his own if he have nought whereby to make his livelihood? Or shall he be a thief and take from others? Then is he an outlaw. Wonderful is this thou tellest of a free man with nought whereby to live!"

"Yet so shall it be," said I, "and by such free men shall wares be made."

"Nay, that cannot be; thou art talking riddles," said he, "for how shall a wood-wright make a chest without the wood and the tools?"

Said I, "He must needs buy leave to labour of them that own all things except himself and such as himself."

"Yea, but wherewith shall he buy it?" said John Ball. "What hath he except himself?"

"With himself then shall he buy it," quoth I, "with his body and the power of labour that lieth therein; with the price of his labour shall he buy leave to labour."

"Riddles again!" said he, "how can he sell his labour for aught else but his daily bread? He must win by his labour meat and drink and clothing and housing! Can he sell his labour twice over?"

"Not so," said I, "but this shall he do belike; he shall sell himself, that is the labour that is in him, to the master that suffers him to work, and that master shall give to him from out of the wares he maketh enough to keep him alive, and to beget children and nourish them till they be old enough to be sold like himself, and the residue shall the rich man keep to himself."

John Ball laughed aloud, and said: "Well, I perceive we are not yet out of the land of riddles. The man may well do what thou sayest and live, but he may not do it and live a free man."

"Thou sayest sooth," said I.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

(To be continued.)

The man who is not doing work, day by day, that will earn his dinner must be stealing his dinner.—John Ruskin.



"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 December 29.

ENGLAND		
Justice	New Haven (Conn.)—Workmen's Advocate	Turin—Il Muratore
Norwich—Daylight Club and Institute Journal	Paterson (N. Y.) Labor Standard	Rome—L'Emancipazione
London Arbeiter-Zeitung	Springfield (Ill.)—Voice of Labor	SWITZERLAND
Die Autonomie	Chicago (Ill.)—Vorbote	Zurich—Sozial Demokrat
Freethinker	Knights of Labor	SPAIN
INDIA	Milwaukee (Wis.)—Volksblatt	Madrid—El Socialista
Madras—People's Friend	FRANCE	Cadiz—El Socialismo
Allahabad—People's Budget	Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily)	PORTUGAL
Bombay—Times of India	Le Socialiste	Lisbon—O Protesto Operario
Voice of India	Le Revolte	Voz do Operario
Ahmedabad—Praja Mata	La Revue Socialiste	AUSTRIA
CANADA	L'Action	Arbeiterstimme
Toronto—Labor Reformer	La Lanterne	Brunn—Volksfreund
Montreal—L'Union Ouvriere	L'Intransigeant	HUNGARY
UNITED STATES	Guise—Le Devoir	Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik
New York—Volkszeitung	Lille—Le Travailleur	ROMANIA
Freiheit	HOLLAND	Bucharest—Pruncul Roman
Truthseeker	Hague—Recht voor Allen	Jassy—Lupta
Der Sozialist	BELGIUM	DENMARK
John Swinton's Paper	Brussels—Le Chante-Clair	Social-Demokraten
Boston—Woman's Journal	En Avant	SWEDEN
Liberty	Liege—L'Avenir	Stockholm—Social-Demokraten
Denver (Col.) Labor Inquirer	Antwerp—De Werker	NORWAY
Cincinnati (O.) Unionist	MILAN	Kristiania—Social-Democraten
	Milan—Il Fascio Operaio	

EDITORIAL.

WITH this number there is begun a new volume of the *Commonweal*. For two years it has managed to appear regularly and keep before the public a consistent, unflinching exponent of International Revolutionary Socialism. Difficulties of many kinds have had to be surmounted, and in the future we may confidently look for a hardly less arduous endeavour as the price of a continued and useful existence.

During the two years that have elapsed since the *Commonweal* was founded the cause of Socialism has made great strides. In every country of the civilised world there is a definite, strong, and increasing Socialist party; while the influence of the untiring propaganda of its advocates is markedly shown in every popular political and social movement. From all directions come tidings of good cheer; everywhere and all the time commercialism, making desperate but futile efforts to regain its ground, contesting vainly every vantage point, is being beaten backward toward the precipice of final destruction.

In the warfare against class-rule and social wrong the *Commonweal* has borne and will bear its full part. Though there are signs of victory on all hands, and the end of the struggle approaches, yet no strain must be relaxed, no effort cease. Again and again have popular movements been wrecked, because at some period of promise their supporters failed in their vigilance or neglected their labour.

We call upon all men who desire to see the solution of the great problems that befront the labouring people to help us in our task. What we can do shall untiringly be done, but there exist a thousand places into which the light of Socialism has not penetrated, millions of men whom it has not reached. Everyone can help in some way to

spread the light. Let each one do his best. Circulate the *Commonweal*, push Socialistic literature, speak a word in season and out of season for Socialism. Let pass no opportunity of helping on the overthrow of capitalism and the substitution for it of a system of united free labour and fraternal enjoyment.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

H. HALLIDAY SPARLING.

COMMERCIAL COLONISATION.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE "CIVILISATION" OF JAMAICA.

(Concluded from p. 308.)

WE frequently hear that emancipation, free trade, and sugar bounties have ruined Jamaica. It is affirmed, by the wolf against the lamb, that since emancipation labour is so uncertain that the estates cannot be worked to pay. To pay whom and what? An answer to that will explain matters. The estates, it is true, do not at present pay, but it is no fault of the labourers. They do not get the surplus; when they are honestly dealt with they can be depended on to work. Jamaica negroes make good navvies at Panama. The Jamaica Government experienced no difficulty in getting all the labour required for the railway and other public works, yet the planters have to get coolies imported for them from the East Indies. This pauper labour is a downright injustice to the blacks of Jamaica, and the more so because the Government levies a tax to carry on the immigration. If it were not for the labour conditions of the island would soon undergo a change at the expense of some English capitalists. The estates are nearly all mortgaged to English capitalists and there are few resident proprietors. The management of the estates is, therefore, not what it should, or could be. It is neither vigorous nor prospective; it is always extravagant in details, and future crops are often sacrificed to a quick return policy in order to be up to time with payment to the mortgagees. The truck system in freights and estates' supplies prevails. The planters are forced to ship only in mortgagees' ships at excessive rates, and the estates' supplies purchased and shipped by the mortgagees are equally extravagant and expensive. The estates of Jamaica are like "a headless trunk bleeding at every pore." Strange, is it not, that in every country the labourer has to suffer for sins not his own? Those capitalists in England who endeavour to develop the industry of Jamaica to their own undue enrichment are doing so to the impoverishment of Jamaica and its people. These plunderers wanted the Jamaican to labour for starvation wages, and the latter was too much of a man to return to slavery; he preferred to starve or go to Colon even though he met a premature death in going. When the planters or plunderers failed to bring the Jamaican to his knees they called upon the Government to secure pauper labour and it was done. But danger again looms ahead. Twenty thousand labourers are shipped every year from Jamaica to Colon. Of this amount one-half must be deducted for those who return on friendly visits, but this stream will stop with the wind up of the Panama Canal works. These works were a God-send to the Administrators of Jamaica. But for it the labour revolution would have developed ere now into something which would have surpassed any rebellion of the past for far-reaching consequences.

The present Governor—Sir Henry Norman—recognises this, for he has had a Bill passed this year giving powers to suspend Coolie immigration at the expense of the Government. How does labour stand at present in Jamaica when so many thousands are drafted each year to Panama? At present the rate of wages, for skilled labour, per day is: bricklayers, 2s. 6d. to 3s.; blacksmiths, 3s.; joiners, 2s. to 2s. 9d.; painters, 2s.; and for unskilled labour: men, 1s. to 1s. 6d. per day; women, 9d. to 1s. per day. These figures sink much lower in value than the figures indicate, when we consider the cost of food and shoddy clothes. The price of bread is 3d. per lb.; sugar, 2d. per lb.; coffee, 5d. per quart; Indian meal, 2½d. per quart; oat meal, 6d. per lb.; butter, 1s. 6d. and 2s. per lb.; English cheese, 2s. per lb.; American cheese, 1s. 3d. per lb.; rice, 4½d. per quart; salt and fresh fish, 6d. per lb.; potatoes, 2½d. per lb.; yam, 1d. per lb. The Jamaica labourer gets two meals proper per day besides the mangos he picks up. For the first he takes yam and salt fish, and for the second for a change he takes salt fish and yam. This is an alarming fact if it be true what Mr. Espeut said in their legislative council last month. He declared, "I have noticed that people who live on roots are always lowest down in the mental and physical scale. Cereal food is what the people should produce and eat." Mr. Espeut would be a better legislator were he to inquire into the cause why the people eat roots, instead of trying to cure the effects. He is like our temperance reformers who mistake an effect for a cause. There is a more degrading thing than yams operating on the people of Jamaica, and that is the enslavement of its women. They are made to carry stones on their heads for ten or twelve hours under a tropical sun for a miserable pittance of 9d. They have to do it frequently when they are in a condition not favourable to the development of the coming race. The character of a race is the true reflex of the condition of its women. If they are degraded the result is branded on their offspring, and it is a well known fact that the poorest and most wretched countries are those in which women are made to labour most. The "ladies" and clergymen of England who advocate pit labour for women should

study this phase of the question, and try to ascertain whether women's labour does not reduce men's pay so low that it compels the former to work unsuited to their strength and sex. The negroes of Jamaica are naturally not prone to discontent, and their whole disposition tends to fulfill the Scriptural injunction: "take no heed of to-morrow." The injustice and tyranny must, therefore, be great which goads them to rebellion. Even the destructive cyclone cannot for long subdue or keep them in a pessimistic vein, for they, like the Irishman, wish to "live all the days of their life," and they do not load one day with the sorrows of another.

Their climate helps to sustain this disposition, for they fear not the pinch of cold or the want of house-shelter. In fact it is very hard to get a black servant to stay in the house over night. They prefer to stay in large numbers in courts and yards where they enjoy their peculiar dances to the music of the "bashura." Quashie does not envy Buckra his wealth, but Quashie can distinguish between things that differ. He can spell Justice and Right, and he recognises that the administrators' actions do not spell the one nor the life and teachings of their clergy the other. The clergy of the English Church are, some of them, usurers and merchants besides being preachers. They trade on the poverty and ignorance of their flocks, and there are some of them who do not shrink from robbing their Lord. When the Church was disestablished the clergy had a clause inserted in the Bill to secure their salaries to the existing curates so long as they were engaged in the same occupation. This clause soon enabled many to draw double salaries, by leaving country charges—for which they continue to draw the salary although they fail to perform any service—and accepting town churches with salaries from the general fund raised in England. These go to the Treasury and sign receipts as curates of parishes which, so far as they are concerned, are spiritually destitute. But, with all the corruptions in the Church, the negroes have a tendency to be religious. I shall never forget the unselfishness and sympathy they infused into their hymns as they marched in hundreds on Sundays, at sunrise, singing "Ten thousand thousand are their tongues, but all their joys are one," on their way to immerse in the harbour the new members of their Church. But among these same people are the elements of a near revolution which will ere long be heard of, and whether it be a violent or peaceful one depends on the leader who may arise. The negroes of Jamaica recognise that they are really still slaves so long as the means of production are withheld from them, and although we may look upon them as benighted blacks, it is just possible we may get a lesson from them, in the immediate future when the Panama works stop, that will help to remove the chains which have so cunningly fallen on us. The coming labour dilemma in Jamaica will draw attention to an industrial system which, when the people comprehend it, they will abolish, and substitute for the reign of Imperialism and plunder the reign of justice and fraternity.

GEORGE M'LEAN.

MACHINERY AND THE WORKER.

(From a Lay Sermon by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.)

Myriads of machines have been invented—every one of them to save labour. If these machines helped the labourer, what a blessing they would be! But the labourer does not own the machine; the machine owns him. That is the trouble. In the olden time, when I was a boy, even, you know how it was in the little towns. There was a shoemaker—two of them—a tailor or two, a blacksmith, a wheelwright. I remember just how the shops used to look. I used to go to the blacksmith shop at night, get up on the forge, and hear them talk about turning horse-shoes. Many a night have I seen the sparks fly and heard the stories that were told. There was a great deal of human nature in those days! Everybody was known. If times got hard, the poor little shoemakers made a living mending, half-soleing, straightening up the heels. The same with the blacksmith; the same with the tailor. They could get credit—they did not have to pay till the next January, and if they could not pay then they took another year, and they were happy enough. Now, one man is not a shoemaker. There is a great building—several hundred thousand dollars' worth of machinery, three or four thousand people—not a single mechanic in the whole building. One sews on straps, another greases the machines, cuts out soles, waxes threads. And what is the result? When the machines stop, three thousand men are out of employment. Credit goes. Then come want and famine, and if they happen to have a little child die, it would take them years to save enough of their earnings to pay the expense of putting away that little sacred piece of flesh. And yet, by this machinery we can produce enough to flood the world. By the inventions in agricultural machinery the United States can feed all the mouths upon the earth. There is not a thing that man uses that can not instantly be over-produced to such an extent as to become almost worthless; and yet, with all this production, with all this power to create, there are millions and millions in abject want. Granaries bursting, and famine looking into the doors of the poor! Millions of everything, and yet millions wanting everything and having substantially nothing!

Socialism welcomes all inventions, all machinery which properly tends to save labour in the production of the means of life; but they must save labour, and not merely increase competition, or give the exclusive right of wealth to profit by them.—Walter Crane.

SOME ADVICE TO BISHOPS.—Why do bishops, who won't go to theatres, accept invitations to public dinners? They had much better be seen at the representation of *Lear* or *Macbeth* than at a Lord Mayor's feast. It has an unseemly look at any time, especially in your fat bishop, and most especially when the reports of the feast in the newspapers are followed by accounts of the starving poor. If such tremendous inequalities in the social condition are not to be remedied, why mortify the sufferers? And if they are, why exasperate them? When bishops and their families grow rich, while the poor grow poorer, and when it is the rarest thing in the world to find them attending a public meeting but for selfish or corporate purposes, people naturally dislike to see them fat and feeding, especially when they come in a lump together, as at these Lord Mayor's feasts. Bishops should never appear in flocks, like vultures.—Leigh Hunt's *Table-Talk*.

"LAZARUS, COME FORTH!"

"LAZARUS, come forth!" Out from the gloom,
Haggard and gaunt and dazed, there came
He who had lain within the tomb
Until the Blessed One called his name;
But, in death's night, he heard the sound;
Forth to the shuddering gazers' sight
He staggered, in foul grave-clothes bound,
And breathed at last in life and light.

"Lazarus, come forth!" The people lies
With mind in bonds, with soul all dead;
Shall not Christ, through us, bid it rise?
Through us shall not His words be said?
Strong in His love—strong with the strength
He gives, shall we not, in His might,
Call forth our Lazarus at length
From its dark gloom to life and light?

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

BEHOLD, four thousand years ago,
Beneath swart Egypt's sun,
Her Hebrew serfs, with want and woe,
Their bread of slavery won;
With days of scorn and scoffs and moans,
They toiled beside the Nile,
While vengeance marked their tears and groans,
Yet paused to strike awhile;
What reaped their lords what Moses said?
Their wisdom would not know,
Nor, till their homes were filled with dead,
Would let their bondsmen go.

Lord! Lord! to-day the millions live,
But lives as filled with pain,
And ask the rich relief to give,
And cry for help in vain;
They toil and die, for anguish born;
No help, no hope they know;
And will the high their misery scorn,
Nor sign of justice show?
How long, ye wealthy, will this last?
Wait ye, until ye know
God's time to smite comes, slow or fast,
To right the wronged and low!

W. C. BENNETT.

THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR SQUARE—CLASSES V. MASSES.

The shopkeepers of the West End are getting up a petition to Parliament praying for the stoppage of public meetings in Trafalgar Square. They protest that they have no designs on the right of free speech; but they protest too much. Trafalgar Square doesn't belong to the small-souled hucksters who keep shops in its neighbourhood. To this the *Echo* replies that all the West End shopkeepers are in favour of the petition, and that they have rights in the matter, whereas the ruffians and pickpockets have no rights. Why should ruffians and pickpockets be distinguished from shopkeepers in this fashion? It is a mere quibble; there is no distinction except the quality of their coats. And if the ill-dressed pickpockets have no right, all the more reason for their getting some. Anyhow the people of London can be trusted to insist on the right of meeting and free speech for all sorts of people and classes. Let the shopkeepers look out, however. This too-diplomatic move of theirs can be easily seen through as a first move. If meetings in Trafalgar Square can be stopped because they inconvenience the neighbouring middle-class, they will be put down elsewhere for the same bad reason. It is interesting to see how such "Radical" papers as the *Echo* go with the shopkeepers. The press of all shades of opinion are sure to turn against the people in these matters. The clique of toadies who have the London press under their thumb can be reckoned against the people in any struggle which involves a right worth getting or keeping. It is noteworthy also that the shopocracy have lost faith in the effectiveness of police protection. Evidently the employers of the blue-coats cannot entrust the guardians of law and order with any more arduous task than hunting poodles in Piccadilly.—J. L. M.

"Three copper-plate engravers" were regarded by Mr. George Sampson in Dickens's immortal work as "a large number." Two hundred and fifty "bankers and West-end tradesmen of influence" may also be looked upon as "a large number" of such cattle; but an ordinary citizen of no special influence may doubt whether the number is large enough to dictate to the whole of London terms on which it may express its political and social opinions, and whether or no it is preposterous impudence in them to meet for the purpose of egging on Government to attempt to close Trafalgar Square to public meetings; and an attempt in which they will undoubtedly fail.—W. M.

All men are equal: it is not birth, but virtue alone, that makes the difference. *Voltaire*.

The rich have no means of living but by the labour of others, as the landlord by the labour of his tenants (agricultural labourers) and the merchants and traders by the labour of the mechanics.—*John Bullers*.

The greatest question in the world is, how to give every man a man's share in what goes on in life. Not a pig's share, not a horse's share, not the share of a machine fed with oil, only to make it work and nothing else. It isn't a man's share just to mind your pin-making or your glass-blowing, and higgie about your own wages, and bring up your family to be ignorant sons of ignorant fathers, and no better prospect: that is a slave's share.—*George Eliot*.

THE LABOUR STRUGGLE.

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF GLASS-BOTTLE MAKERS.

In connection with the strike at St. Helens, to put an end to which the employer was trying to get workmen from the Continent to replace those on strike, a deputation from the English workers has been to Denmark, Sweden, and Germany, and has succeeded in fraternally arranging matters with their Continental comrades, and the employer has been compelled to return in dudgeon from a bootless journey. As foreshadowed in the letter from there published last week, Mr. Lyon (the employer) failed completely to get any men from Gerresheim. Let those who still fail to see that it is the home competition and not the foreign workmen that is their enemy ponder well over the inducements held out by this employer to the German workers. Each of them, he said, upon arrival in Lancashire could have "anything he liked" up to £25, and be paid £2, 6s. per week for 400 bottles per day. Provisions, clothing, coals, and everything requisite for a working man's comfortable livelihood, were remarkably cheap. Best beef, mutton, etc., could be got at 6d. per pound! All they had to do was to come to England and be happy ever after! The delegates report that they met with a good reception wherever they went; that although there were a few individuals here and there who retained a tinge of national prejudice, the general impression upon their minds was that the international solidarity of the workers grows apace.

CLEVELAND IRONWORKERS.

Mr. W. Snow, secretary of the Cleveland Blast Furnacemen's Association has handed in, on behalf of the members of the association, notices signed by the men of a strike for an increase of wages. Some of the employers receiving these notices, including Messrs. Bolckow, Vaughan, & Co., refused to accept the notices, on the ground that they were illegal, inasmuch as they were handed in by Mr. Snow instead of by the workmen individually.

COLLIERS' FEDERATION IN THE MIDLANDS.

On Monday a meeting of the new Colliers' Federation for the Midlands was held in Wolverhampton. Delegates attended representing ten thousand members in North and South Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and Shropshire. It was announced that the Federation was making good progress, particularly in Warwickshire and Shropshire, and confidence was expressed that it would prove of great advantage in the event of a wages agitation. Deputations were appointed to assist in settling disputes at the Pelsall Wood and Brereton collieries. It was resolved to take part in the National Conference of Miners in Birmingham on January 11.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT.

Amongst many cheering signs of a forward movement of the forces of organised labour, not the least significant is an item in the December monthly report of the Leicester Amalgamated Hosiery Union on the subject of self-employment. We commend the following words to the serious consideration of other unions:—"In conclusion, let us call your attention to an important subject, namely, self-employment. As a trade Society we ought to give this subject our best consideration; our temporary object is to keep up wages, and to make that object permanent we should endeavour to employ and work for ourselves instead of always allowing others to live out of our labour. The subject will be considered both by Executive and Council before it is brought before the Annual Meeting." If generally adopted and acted upon, such a policy would do much towards limiting the power of the capitalist, and to prepare the way for the abolition of the wage-system. It is lamentable to see the funds of the unions being doled out to the unemployed, or left in the hands of bankers to be used against the workers, instead of being utilised by the workers to enable them to become their own employers.

THE HOURS OF LABOUR IN TEXTILE FACTORIES.

On Tuesday evening, a meeting convened by the Hosiery Union was held at the Temperance Hall, Leicester, to protest against extending the hours of labour for women and children. Mr. Holmes, Secretary of Amalgamated Hosiery Union, moved the following resolution:—"That overtime for women and children is unnecessary, because the means of production and the surplus labour through the introduction of labour-saving machinery is sufficient to supply any growing demand if work is anything like fairly distributed. Secondly, the overtime asked for will not meet the objects the manufacturers have in view, because if orders are placed so late with men working overtime, they would be placed later still if women and children could work overtime too. Thirdly, it would be dangerous, because it would supersede male labour, lower wages, and bring down the standard of life. Therefore, in the opinion of the workpeople, it is unnecessary, useless, and dangerous for women and children to work overtime, and we earnestly raise our protest against the resolution passed by the Scotch and Leicester Chambers of Commerce and the Leicester Hosiery Manufacturers' Association asking for power for women and children to work overtime on any days in the year." Miss Ruth Wills seconded the resolution, which was supported by Miss Brown, from the Women's League, London, the delegate appointed in place of the late Mrs. Paterson. She spoke strongly against the proposal of the employers, and appealed earnestly to men and women to stand together in the matter, as their rights, duties, and claims were identical. The resolution was carried unanimously. A member of the Socialist League treated the question from the Socialist point of view, but his speech and presence was entirely ignored by the local press, which gave a very poor report of the meeting. The workers should refuse to support unfair and hostile papers.

FIFE MINERS.

The *Glasgow Herald* reports that the Fife and Clackmannan miners are pushing on a movement for the restriction of the output of coal. A delegate from them will attend the Birmingham Conference of Miners to support the movement for a seven hours' working-day or a week's holiday every quarter. This restriction of the working-day seems prompted, also, by a desire to decrease the supply of produce as much as to secure more leisure. It seems a pity that in revolutionary times a class of workers like the miners should still be shilly-shallying about terms with the capitalist. If the miners would take up the revolutionary movement they would find themselves at once on the road to a real change in their condition, and in a position to wrest better terms from the masters with less trouble. However, if the miners will thoroughly reason out their seven hour's movement they will find themselves thrust into the revolutionary path. Meanwhile, this Birmingham Conference should not be allowed to pass without getting a taste of thorough Socialist opinions.—J. L. M.

THE LONDON TRADES' COUNCIL AND GOVERNMENT RELIEF WORKS.

Now is the time for the Government and vestries to start temporary relief works if they really wish to do so or can do so. But just at the critical moment the impotence of the authorities is most glaringly shown. George Shipton, of the London Trades' Council, publishes a batch of letters in the *Daily News*. His own letter, a meek, mild, and roundabout effusion, laments that the Government officials have been delaying answers, answering indefinitely, and bringing all the powers of the slow torture of red-tape to shirk the question. The Government officials have, in fact, elaborately humbugged Mr. Shipton, and no one but a fool would have expected any other treatment from them. Mr. Plunkett, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Lord Rosebery ingeniously aided the humbugging process. Mr. Shipton puts forth a vague threat that the London Trades' Council is going to make it hot for the Members of Parliament who neglect the interests of the worker, and that they will no longer be ignored. But the stage thunders of the London Trades' Council is getting stale, and their valiant promises no more heeded. If they have any intention of "making it hot" for the authorities they had better sing dumb and do something.—J. L. M.

AMERICA.

NEW YORK, Dec. 23.—The employés on eleven tramway lines in Brooklyn struck to-day because the company controlling them refused to recognise the authority of the Knights of Labour in the settlement of their difficulties. Nearly 2000 men have left work. Thirty-five cars were running during the day with some old hands who refused to strike and some new men. All buildings of the company are protected by the police. There was no serious opposition by the strikers till the middle of the afternoon, when slight rioting occurred at several places. One man is reported to have been shot.

The Cooks and Pastrycooks (Acorn Association) are going to establish a free labour bureau in Sixth Avenue. It will be supported by the association, and the members will save money. The bureau will supply help of all kinds to hotels and restaurants free of charge. Only Union help will be supplied.

The question of the Ehret boycott has again been brought prominently before the working-men of this city, by the communication of Messrs. Redpath, Dr. McGlynn, and others, asking the Central Labour Union to remove it. The matter has been referred to the sections. It is doubtful whether the sections will vote to remove the boycott, and, if they did, it is a question whether any benefit would result to George Ehret. If the boycott is unjust, the working-men will see it in time; but it will be a slow process to recover what he has already lost. George Ehret is rich, and he is not suffering from hunger, nor is he going around barefooted this Christmas, nor does he see his children crying for bread,—like many a man who has been boycotted by such as him.—*John Swinton's Paper*.

A NATIONAL ORGANISATION OF CLOTHING CUTTERS.

The clothing cutters who have been in session in Cincinnati have completed a national organisation. Joseph H. Geis, of this city, has been elected National Secretary and Treasurer. The members of the Executive Board are: James L. Wright, Philadelphia; James Hughes, Chicago; R. M. Lovell, Cincinnati; John Lutz, Newark, N.J.; William Schroeder, Milwaukee.

THE NEW FEDERATION OF TRADES' UNIONS.

As a result of the Congress held at Columbus, Ohio, from the 7th to 10th December, twenty-five National and International Trades' Unions, with a membership of 316,782 well disciplined men, have solidified into one homogeneous body. One of the most active men in bringing about this movement was P. J. McGuire, Secretary of the Brotherhood of Carpenters. From an interesting interview with a reporter of *John Swinton's Paper*, we extract the following:—

Q. What is the necessity for any such organisation in view of the existence of the Order of the Knights of Labour?

McGuire. We are founded on a democratic basis, and are opposed to the centralisation of the labour movement, and its power in a few hands. We deem it safer, in view of the tremendous growth of the labour movement, to have large liberty of action for the multitudes engaged in it. No seven men, or seventy, however able, honest or experienced, are capable of directing these immense forces, in all details.

Q. What is the recognised title of the new organisation formed at Columbus?

McGuire. The American Federation of Labour.

Q. But surely you do not desire to antagonise the K. of L.?

McGuire. By no means. There is undoubtedly a necessity for the existence of that Order, inasmuch as it appeals to a large mass of men whom the Trades' Unions cannot reach. The feeling of the Convention at Columbus was that there is room for both the Knights of Labour and the Trades' Unions, as well as for a Federation of the latter; and instead of raising their hands in internecine war, they should co-operate in making united war upon their common enemies, the monopolists, the politicians, the usurers, and the legal sponges of society. There is nothing to be obtained by antagonism but damage for both parties, to the advantage of our mutual opponents.

Q. Are only Trades' Unions expected to join the Federation?

McGuire. We have made provisions for the organisation of mixed bodies of skilled and unskilled labour in localities where there are not sufficient men to form a district trade union. In the large centres, unskilled labour can also affiliate with us, and such organisations are to be known as "Federal Labour Unions," without having the forms or ceremonies of secret bodies.

In answer to other questions, McGuire stated that so far from their being any animosity towards the K. of L., most of the delegates were members of the Order, and the Committee of the K. of L. appointed to confer with the Federation parted on the most friendly terms. In conclusion, McGuire expressed his conviction that the Federation was destined to be a very powerful aggressive organisation which would put new life into the heretofore scattered unions, and furnish for them a general head through which to act in concert.

The clerks and book-keepers of Cincinnati propose forming themselves into an assembly of the Knights of Labour.

The Philadelphia cigar-makers have started a co-operative factory.

REVOLUTIONARY RUMBLINGS.

IRELAND.—Even in staid conservative Ulster the leaven works. Orange leaders are finding it necessary to disclaim any desire to take part against the tenants' movement. On the Marquis of Londonderry's Down estates, known as "the garden of Ireland," the tenants are demanding 30 per cent reduction and announce their intention of getting it. At Draperstown the tenants of the Drapers' and Skinners' companies have been discussing the Plan of Campaign and to some extent acting on it. In the other districts of Ireland the fight goes on apace, among others, it was stated by Mr. John O'Connor, M.P., that all the rents on the Kingston estate, less 20 per cent, have been paid in to trustees. The prosecution against Dillon was withdrawn on Thursday, but the money stolen by the police has not reappeared. In spite of the Government's stage thunder, the Irish party and people are undeterred in their work—rather has it stimulated them to fresh exertion. Every Socialist should watch the development in Ireland carefully.

THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE—PROPOSED PEOPLE'S MEMORIAL.

It seems certain that during the next twelve months large amounts of the wealth extracted from the brain and muscle of the useful classes of this nation will be wasted in various schemes for putting on record the gratitude of the servile classes of the community for the fifty years, culminating in widespread penury and starvation, during which Victoria Guelph has been the monarchical figure-head of the State. It has forcibly struck some of those who despise and abhor the loyalty which means servility to a costly and avaricious puppet, and the patriotism which consists in filling the pockets of the adulterating and exploiting traders of Great Britain at the expense of weaker "peoples rightly struggling to be free," that this opportunity ought not to be allowed to slip without a protest being made by the plundered head and hand workers throughout the empire. They have consequently requested John Morrison Davidson and Henry Hyde Champion to act as trustees for a fund to be raised for the purpose of establishing a permanent memorial of the opinion held by the subscribers regarding the present reign, its leading incidents and crimes, and the institution of royalty generally. Any person on forwarding two penny stamps with his or her name and address legibly written, to H. H. Champion, 13 Paternoster Row, London, E.C., will receive by return of post collecting cards and a printed envelope.

THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE AND THE "DANGEROUS CLASSES."

We are about to witness a grand rally of all the dangerous classes of the community on the occasion of the Queen's Jubilee. Robber landlords, ravenous capitalists, knavish lawyers, slimy parsons, unprincipled journalists, title-hunting mayors, and working-men "leaders" (saving the mark!) of the royalty-worshipping Broadhurst-Howell-Arch-Potter-Shipton stamp, may all be expected to figure prominently in the approaching royal carnival.—*Reynolds.*

SOUTHPORT.—THE LATE LIFEBOAT DISASTER.

One of our Southport comrades has an eloquent letter in the *Liverpool Evening Times* of 21st, directed against the attempt now being made by the committee appointed to administer the fund subscribed for the families of the lifeboat men who perished lately in a heroic endeavour to do their duty. This most noble committee considers that the fund is too large to be all spent on working folk, so they mean to give only part to the rightful recipients and apply the rest to some public or charitable object. With scathing sarcasm our comrade lashes this wretched attempted job, pointing out in strong terms the injustice of it as well as the greater injustice under which these men and all their class have laboured all their lives. He incidentally quotes reliable authority to the effect that for the past twelve or eighteen months some of the toilers of the sea, who have given their lives for others, have eked out a miserable existence on 8s. or 9s. a-week, gained through very cold, laborious, and hard toil. It is stated that some of the crew in the St. Anne's boat were in such a state from privation as not to be fit to take their places in the lifeboat, and that one of them had for his food all day a basin of gruel! Yet it was these men, the hardly used and oppressed, who went out to almost certain death and met it bravely for others' sake; while the wealthy, who now grudge bread to these men's children, were covering by their comfortable fires!—S.

"FREE" TRADE AND ADULTERATION.

The frequent accidents on scaffoldings and consequent loss of life are often due to the breaking or stretching of the tying cords of the erection. It is a fatal and reprehensible economy on the part of the contractors, who buy cheap machine-made rope of inferior hemp or jute, instead of good hemp woven by hand. Ropes are "adulterated" in many ways; to make a cheap rope of Indian or Russian hemp look like "the real thing," they are soaked in water and thus weighted to 20 per cent. When exposed to the air they heat and rot and snap. Thus are the lives of workers constantly exposed to quite unnecessary dangers.—*Cri du Peuple.*

SOCIALISTS IN BRUSSELS.

Dec. 27.—The Brussels Socialists, following the example of those of Ghent, have inaugurated a building for future meetings, which has been purchased by the Co-operative Bakers' Society. More than a thousand workmen marched with red flags to the building, which is styled the "People's House." It is in the Rue de Bavière, in the centre of the town, and was formerly a synagogue. The police were present in force, but there was no disturbance.

EXPULSION OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATS FROM FRANKFORT.

Dec. 26.—The *Frankfurter Zeitung* states that a number of Social Democrats, including Herr Sabor, a member of the Reichstag, were served with notices to-day expelling them from the district over which the minor state of siege was recently proclaimed. They are required to leave by Tuesday next.

DISCOVERY OF FRESH NIHILIST PLOTS IN RUSSIA.

The police have succeeded in discovering a largely ramified confederation of a Nihilist character amongst the workmen in the provinces of St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Vladimir, where the greatest Russian manufactories are to be found. The serious troubles which have occurred in three manufactories near St. Petersburg, and which made the intervention of considerable military forces necessary, were the first essay of that confederation. Fresh disturbances are expected in other manufactories. Numerous workmen have been arrested, but no leaders, the principal of whom seem to dwell abroad.

There have been thirteen deaths from destitution in and about London during the last few days according to the official returns. The actual number doubtless is considerably more, whilst the amount of misery which the children, the aged, and the sick poor must have suffered during such weather as there has been during the last fortnight is appalling to think of. How long will the people starve and perish miserably in the richest city of the greatest empire in the world?

Mr. Grant Allen in his "American Jottings" in the current *Fortnightly*, has incidentally the following direful forecast of what the tendencies of the present system will result in if left to themselves: "The whole earth will be one big dead level America, as like as two peas from end to end, dressed in the same stereotyped black coat and round felt hat, enjoying a single uniform civilisation, and looking out upon a single uniform landscape of assorted European, Asiatic, American, African, and Australian weeds, diversified here and there by the congenial architecture of railway arches, crematoriums, gasometers, Board schools, Salvation Army barracks, and main drainage works."—S.

Europe is now in a din with the rumblings of war preparations. In England the flunkey curs of the capitalist press bellow not quite so loudly as in their wont when a petty savage tribe is the enemy. Although we rule the waves, and know that one Briton is equal to so many dozen Frenchmen, or any other foreigners, we get somewhat awe-stricken at the tremendous forces being marshalled by the Continentals. Workmen should watch more closely the conduct of the middle-class. They are always furiously Jingoistic when some poor helpless barbarians object to our civilising process, but they become virtuously peaceful and diplomatically discreet when a big State like Russia crosses our path. All the time it is the hope of commercial gain or fear of similar loss that actuates them. They are never afraid of losing their skins because they never risk them. They are aware that no part of the fighting will fall to their lot. Fighting, like all other ill-paid hard work, is done by the working-men. We shall soon have a renewal of the Jingo fever, and no party to fight against it but the Socialists. The namby-pamby Peace Society will hide its meek little head, or only now and again gently urge some biblico-ethical reasons for peace and goodwill among nations. Perhaps the real antidote to the commercial war fever may turn out to be the revolutionary war-fever.—J. L. M.

"THE POSITION OF THE WORKING CLASSES."

(ERRATA.)

In my article on "The Position of the Working-classes," paragraph 5, on the commercial classes, should have read as follows:—"The commercial classes numbered 980,128, from which the following will suffice. Merchants numbered in 1881, 15,936. Commercial clerks numbered 181,457, being an increase of 90 per cent. over 1871. Commercial travellers 35,478, an increase in the two years of 100 per cent. Bankers, bank clerks, etc., 16,055, increase 35 per cent. Brokers, etc., 31,208, and agents 15,068, an increase of 180 per cent. Accountants, 11,606, increase of 60 per cent. Musicians and actors, 43,896, increase of 37 per cent. Grocers, 134,397, increase 18.8 per cent. Tobacconists, 22,175, increase 34 per cent. Taking the above classes, the average increase is over 69 per cent. Here is work for the Malthusians. The increase of the whole population was only 14.5 per cent. in the ten years. Yet see the increase of the above classes, while the increase of the working-classes was only 7.3 per cent. The general increase of the population being 14.5, and the increase of the working-classes only 7.3 per cent., of itself shows an enormous increase of the non-producing classes." J. SKETCHLEY.

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

OFFICES: 13 FARRINGTON ROAD, E.C.

Notices to Members.

General Meeting.—The next General Meeting of London Members will be held on Tuesday January 4, 1887, at 8 p.m.

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.

Notice to Branches.

In future, publications not printed at the Socialist League Office will not be supplied on credit or entered in the Branch accounts with the Central Office. If such publications are ordered direct from and paid for direct to the firms which publish them, the parcels may be sent as an enclosure with the weekly parcel from the League Office, and thus save carriage.

Branch Subscriptions Paid.

Mile-end, to June 30. Birmingham, Clerkenwell, Hackney, Hull, Leeds, North London, to August 31. Croydon, Dublin, Marylebone, to September 30. Manchester, Merton, Norwich, to October 31. Bradford, to November 30. Bloomsbury, Hammersmith, Hoxton (Labour Emancipation League), Oxford, to December 31.

Children's Party and Social Gathering of Members and Friends.

A meeting as above was held at 13 Farringdon Road, on Monday 27th Dec. The children assembled at 3.30 and were entertained with tea, cake, etc. A distribution of toys from the hand of a "real live Father Christmas," magic lantern, singing of nursery rhymes, and other amusements, kept the budding Socialists merry until about 7 o'clock. After they had been safely dispatched homewards, an informal gathering of members and friends took place. Songs and readings were given by several comrades, and speeches reviewing the past and forecasting the future were made by Kropotkin and Morris. Great use was made of the opportunity for talking over matters connected with the movement by comrades whom on ordinary occasions the accursed system keeps asunder. An enjoyable evening was brought to a close by the singing of the "March of the Workers," and the "Marseillaise."

LECTURE DIARY.

London Branches.

Bloomsbury.—Communist Club, 49 Tottenham Street. Friday Dec. 31 at 8.30. Edward Carpenter will lecture on "Ethics and Socialism." Music, songs, and coffee to follow.
Clerkenwell.—Hall of the Socialist League, 13 Farringdon Road, E.C. Lectures on Sunday and Wednesday at 8.30. Business Meeting Sunday at 7 p.m.
Croydon.—Royal County House, West Croydon Station Yard. Sunday Jan. 2, 1887. C. J. Faulkner, "Propherty, or the New Bigotry."

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 Jan. 1. A concert of vocal and instrumental music will be given in our rooms at 7.30. Members and friends invited. On Sunday open-air meetings will be held at the Green (Jail Square) at 12 and 4; and on George's Square at 5 o'clock. At 6.30 in Hall No. 1 Carlton Place, Clyde Side (adjoining Gorbals Parish Church), Dr. Cecil Reddie will deliver the first of a course of lectures on Socialism, subject, "The Anatomy and Physiology of Society."

Open-air Propaganda—Sunday 2.

11.30.. Hackney—"Salmon and Ball" H. Graham
11.30.. Hammersmith—Beadon Rd. The Branch
11.30.. London Fields—Broadway Flockton
11.30.. Regent's Park D. J. Nicoll
11.30.. St. Pancras Arches The Branch
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.

BIRKBECK DEBATING SOCIETY, Breams Buildings, Chancery Lane.—Monday Jan. 3, at 8 p.m., H. Halliday Sparring on "Socialism, the only possible remedy for existing social evils."

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