INTRODUCTORY.

As our readers' leave for a few words in which to introduce to them the Socialist journal, THE COMMONWEAL. In the first place we ask them to understand that the Editor and Sub-Editor of THE COMMONWEAL are acting as delegates of the Socialist League, and under a direct control; any slip in principles, therefore, any mis-statement of the aims or tactics of the League, are liable to correction from the representatives of that body.

As the conduct of THE COMMONWEAL, it must be remembered that it is one aim—the propaganda of Socialism. We shall not, therefore, take any excuses for what may be thought journalistic shortcoming, if we can but manage to attract attention to the study of our principles, and to those who have not yet thought of Socialism, or who, as it so often happens, bitterly hostile to them through ignorance; or if we can help those whose feelings are drawing them towards the cause of the workers, but who need definite instruction as to its aims and methods. To awaken the sluggish, to strengthen the waverers, to correct the seekers after truth; these are high aims, yet not too high a journal that claims to be Socialist, and we hope by patience and real to accomplish them.

It is our duty to attack unspiringly the miserable system which would make all citizens as in a sort of rich and poor, of slave and slave-owners. In all its details we must attack it; but in doing so we shall avoid mere personalities, not for the sake of escaping the insinuations of bad taste and bitterness, which doubtless will in any case be flung at us, but because it is illogical to attack those men, masters in position as they are, who are themselves more helpless, in the terrible machine of modern commerce. To attack such men unless they put themselves forward as the representatives of system, the employers of the workers, their own decay or beneficence of their own would usefully palliate the evils of that system; an implication which we protest from the outset.

THE COMMONWEAL will only deal with political matters when they directly affect the progress of the Cause. We assume as a matter of course that a government of privileged persons, hereditary and commercial, cannot act usefully or rightly towards the community; that position forbids it; their arrangements for the distribution of the wealth of the workers, their struggles for the national share of the exploitation of barbarous peoples are nothing to us except so far as they may give us an opportunity of instilling Socialism into men's minds, or of organizing discontent into Socialism.

We invite from all, Socialists or others, free discussion of anything we put forward, in the belief that even an un instructed attack of useful information which might otherwise have lain hidden.

Our articles will, for the most part, be of an educational nature: there will be a series on historical revolutions, expositions of the definite basis of Socialism, and contributions from men of various nationalities.

Lastly, a word of appeal, to the workers chiefly. It is not only that we say is procedurally directly in their interest: much more it through them alone, through the slaves of society, we look for generation, for its elevation from its present corruption and slavery.

We cannot pretend to think that they, the workers, as yet much of the principles of the cause that rests upon them, of their cause, in fact. We beseech them to help us in spreading the light of those principles, and accept their fellow, that as we believe they now find us honest, so their support may make us resolute, reasonable, and hopeful—in a word, successful in our efforts for the advancement of the cause we have at heart.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

THE MANIFESTO OF THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE

FELLOW CITIZENS,

We come before you as a body advocating the principles of Revolutionary International Socialism; that is, we seek a change in the basis of society—a change which would destroy the distinction of classes and nationalities.

As the civilised world is at present constituted, there are two classes of society—the one possessing wealth and the instruments of production, the other producing wealth by means of those instruments but only by the leave and for the use of the possessing classes.

These two classes are necessarily in antagonism to one another. The possessing class, or non-producers, can only live as a class on the unpaid labour of the producers—the more unpaid labour they wring out of them, the richer they will be; therefore the producing class—the workers—are driven to strive to better themselves at the expense of the possessing class, and the conflict between the two classes is ceaseless. Sometimes it takes the form of open rebellion, sometimes of strikes, sometimes of mere widespread mendacity and falsehood; but it is always going on in one form or other, though it may not always be obvious to the thoughtless looker-on.

We have spoken of unpaid labour; it is necessary to explain what that means. The sole possession of the producing class is the power of labour inherent in their bodies; but since we have already said that rich classes possess all the instruments of labour, that is, the land, capital, and machinery, the producers of labour are forced to their sole possession, the power of labour, on such terms as possessing class will grant them.

These terms are, that after they have produced enough to keep themselves in woking order, and enable them to bring children to take the places they have vacated, the surplus of their products shall belong to the possessors of property, which bargain is based on the fact that every man working in a civilised community can produce more than he needs for his own sustenance.

The relation of the possessing class to the working class is the essential basis of the system of producing for a profit, on which modern Society is founded. The way in which it works is as follows: The manufacturer produces to sell at a profit to the worker—a man who again sells for a profit out of his dealings with the merchant, who again sells for a profit to the retailer, who must make his profit out of the general public, aided by various degrees of fraud and adulteration and the ignorance of the value and quality of goods to which this system has reduced the consumer.

The profit-grinding system is sustained by competition, or, were there any, not only between the contending classes, but also within the classes themselves; there is always war among the workers for bare subsistence, and among their masters, the employers and middle-men, for the share of the profit wrung out of the workers; lastly, there is competition amongst, and sometimes open war, amongst the nations of the civilised world for their share of the world's market. Indeed, all the rivalries of nations have been reduced to the common struggle for the share of the spoils of barbarism. We see at home the purpose of increasing the riches of one, and the poverty of the other.

For, owing to the fact that goods are made primarily to sell, and only secondarily for use, labour is wasted on all hands; since the pursuit of profit compels the manufacturer competing with his fellows to force his wares on the markets by means of their cheapness, whether there is any real demand for them or not. In the words of the Communist Manifesto of 1847—"Cheaper, by hook or by crook; more artistry for battering down Chinese war and by forgiving the obstinate hatred entertained against foreign powers, we reduce nations under penalty of ruin the British
the workers are in possession of all political power, would make a realistic approach to Socialism. The Socialist League therefore aims at the realization of conscious Revolutionary Socialism, and well knows that this can only be reached by any one country without the help of the workers of all countries. For we neither geographical boundaries, political history, nor creed makes rivals or enemies for us; there are no national but varied masses of workers and none, whose mutual sympathies are checked by the perpetuation of the degrading classes and hatreds which are a brake upon the progress of all human beings.

It is clear that for all these oppressed and cheated masses of workers and their masters a great change is preparing: the dominant classes are uneasy, anxious, touched in conscience even, as to the condition of those they govern; the markets of the world are being reconstructed, with an eagerness never before known; everything points to the fact that the great commercial system is becoming unmanageable, and slipping from the grasp of its present rulers.

The one change possible out of all this is Socialism. At least slavery passed into serfdom, and serfdom into the so-called free-labor system, so most surely will this latter pass into social order.

To the realization of this change the Socialist League addresses itself with all earnestness. As a means thereto it will do all in its power towards the education of the people in the principles of this great cause, and will strive to organize those who will accept this education so that when the crisis comes, which the march of events is preordaining, there may be a body of men ready to step into their due places and deal with and direct the irresistible movement.

Close fellowship with each other, and steady purpose for the advancement of the Cause, will naturally bring about the organisation and discipline among ourselves absolutely necessary to success: we shall look to it that there shall be no distinctions of rank or dignity amongst us to give occasion to the selfish ambition of individuals which has so often injured the cause of the workers. We are working for equality and brotherhood for all the world, and it is only through this cause that we can secure our own emancipation.

Let us all arise, then, towards this end of realising the cause, towards social order, the only cause worthy the attention of workers of all that are proffered to us: let us work in that cause patiently, yet hopefully, and not shrink from making sacrifices to its cause.

Industry in learning its principles, industry in teaching them, are necessary to our progress; but to these we must add, if we wish to avoid speedy failure, frankness and fraternal trust in each other, and single-hearted devotion to the religion of Socialism, the only religion which the Socialist League professes.

Signatures of the Provisional Council of the Socialist League.

W. E. ADAM.
EDWARD ARTY.
ELIJAH ASHLEY.
ROBERT BAND.
E. BERKLEY.
THOMAS BERNHARD.
F. CHARLES.
WILLIAM J. CLARK.
J. COOPER.
J. T. CRAW.
CHARLES J. FAULKNER.
W. HUDDSON.
F. FRANK KITZ.
J. L. MAITSON.
S. MAINWARING.
JAMES MAYOR (Glasgow).
THOMAS MAGUIRE (Leeds).
J. C. MASON.
A. MOWBRAY.
ANDREW SCHIU (Edinburgh).
EDWARD WATSON.

IMPERIALISM & SOCIALISM.

We seem at the present time to have reached at the acute stage of colonial fever which during the past three or four years has affected the various powers of Europe. Germany is already fighting in the West with the desire to annex her the hitherto so-called "protectorates" — the cant diplomatic for incident of annexation over uncivilized peoples. "The rivalry among the great powers for their share of the world market" (to quote the words of our own Channel) would this discovery itself to the casual reader as the means of "diplomacy" and "foreign policy" any longer possess jealousy between the nations. Europe, once the sole arena of the war, has in it has been superseded by the jealousy between the great capitalist various nationalities. The Flunkery-patrician, one of the of capitalism did before to that of royal intrigue, let but sound the hatred. In both cases he makes the running for the