

THE COMMONWEAL.

MARCH, 1885.

All literary communications should be addressed to the Editor of THE COMMONWEAL, 27 Farringdon Street, E.C. They must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication.

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

All business communications to be addressed to the Secretary of the Socialist League, 27 Farringdon Street, E.C.

Subscriptions for THE COMMONWEAL, free by post: For 12 numbers, 1 copy, 1s. 6d.; 3 copies, 4s.; 4 copies, 5s. Parcels of a dozen or a quire, if for distribution, will be sent on special terms.

This journal can be obtained at 27 Farringdon Street, E.C. (offices of the Socialist League); Progressive Publishing Company, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C.; Edward Truelove, 256 High Holborn, W.C.; Freethought Publishing Company, 63 Fleet Street, E.C.; Cattell and Co., Bouverie Street, E.C.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THE attention of Branches, Members, and Foreign Socialist Bodies is directed to the report from the Central Office of the Socialist League. Exchanges are asked to copy the resolution on the Soudan War.

A MANIFESTO by the Socialist League on the Soudan War will be issued on March 1. Copies will be sent to anyone on receipt of stamp for postage.

M.A. (Cantab).—We never notice anonymous letters. Forgive us for saying that the tone of yours makes it difficult to believe that your *nom de plume* is genuine.

F. C. SLAUGHTER.—Your letter is not of sufficient interest for publication. We by no means admit "that the English-speaking people are by far the most advanced in both political and social forms." And even if they were, "leadership" of nations is as objectionable to the Socialist as leadership of individuals. This however does not prevent us from saying with you "any changes effected here will doubtless have a very powerful effect upon all the other nations of the civilised world."

ERNEST TIPPING.—Whoever stated that any one of the members of the Socialist League had offered to give lessons in dynamite was either unwittingly or wilfully telling an untruth.

RECEIVED.—Christian Globe—Defense des Travailleurs (organ of the Socialist and Revolutionary Workers of the north-east of France)—Co-operative News—Liberty (Boston)—Cri du Peuple (daily)—La Revue Socialiste (Paris).

THE following resolution has been unanimously passed: "That the Provisional Council of the Socialist League is convinced that the invasion of the Soudan was undertaken with the covert intention of exploiting that country for commercial greed, and that therefore the check inflicted on the British invaders should be hailed by all supporters of the Cause of the People as a triumph of right over wrong, of righteous self-defence over ruffianly brigandage."

COMRADES,—The Socialist League has heavy expenses—rent of offices, halls for meetings and lectures, printing of hand-bills, and so forth; it is necessary also that it should at once set about publishing pamphlets and leaflets setting forth the principles of Socialism, and that it should engage in organising Socialism in the provinces. Many of those who are giving the most valuable personal help to the propaganda are not in a position to give money-help to it; we therefore ask those who can afford to give money to do their best in that way also. It is most desirable that the League should have a steady income, and we ask therefore that where possible the subscriptions should be regular, weekly or otherwise. Names and subscriptions should be sent to the Treasurer, William Morris, Kelmescott House, 26 Upper Mall, Hammersmith; they will be acknowledged through the post.—WILLIAM MORRIS, *Treasurer*.

THE MESSAGE OF THE MARCH WIND.

FAIR now is the springtide, now earth lies beholding
With the eyes of a lover the face of the sun;
Long lasteth the daylight, and hope is enfolding
The green-growing acres with increase begun.

Now sweet, sweet it is through the land to be straying
'Mid the birds and the blossoms and the beasts of the fields;
Love mingles with love, and no evil is weighing
On thy heart or mine, where all sorrow is healed.

From township to township, o'er down and by tillage
Fair, far, have we wandered and long was the day,
But now cometh eve at the end of the village,
Where over the grey wall the church riseth grey.

There is wind in the twilight; in the white road before us
The straw from the ox-yard is blowing about;
The moon's rim is rising, a star glitters o'er us,
And the vane on the spire-top is swinging in doubt.

Down there dips the highway, toward the bridge crossing over
The brook that runs on to the Thames and the sea.
Draw closer, my sweet, we are lover and lover;
This eve art thou given to gladness and me.

Shall we be glad always? Come closer and hearken:
Three fields further on, as they told me down there,
When the young moon has set, if the March sky should darken,
We might see from the hill-top the great city's glare.

Hark, the wind in the elm-boughs! From London it bloweth,
And telling of gold, and of hope and unrest;
Of power that helps not; of wisdom that knoweth,
But teacheth not aught of the worst and the best.

Of the rich men it telleth, and strange is the story
How they have, and they hanker, and grip far and wide;
And they live and they die, and the earth and its glory
Has been but a burden they scarce might abide.

Hark! the March wind again of a people is telling;
Of the life that they live there, so haggard and grim,
That if we and our love amidst them had been dwelling
My fondness had faltered, thy beauty grown dim.

This land we have loved in our love and our leisure
For them hangs in heaven, high out of their reach;
The wide hills o'er the sea-plain for them have no pleasure,
The grey homes of their fathers no story to teach.

The singers have sung and the builders have builded,
The painters have fashioned their tales of delight;
For what and for whom hath the world's book been gilded,
When all is for these but the blackness of night?

How long and for what is their patience abiding?
How oft and how oft shall their story be told,
While the hope that none seeketh in darkness is hiding
And in grief and in sorrow the world groweth old?

* * * * *

Come back to the inn, love, and the lights and the fire,
And the fiddler's old tune and the shuffling of feet;
For there in a while shall be rest and desire,
And there shall the morrow's uprising be sweet.

Yet, love, as we wend the wind bloweth behind us
And beareth the last tale it telleth to-night,
How here in the spring-tide the message shall find us;
For the hope that none seeketh is coming to light.

Like the seed of midwinter, unheeded, unperished,
Like the autumn-sown wheat 'neath the snow lying green,
Like the love that o'ertook us, unawares and uncherished,
Like the babe 'neath thy girdle that groweth unseen,

So the hope of the people now buddeth and groweth—
Rest fadeth before it, and blindness and fear;
It biddeth us learn all the wisdom it knoweth;
It hath found us and held us, and biddeth us hear:

For it beareth the message: "Rise up on the morrow
And go on your ways toward the doubt and the strife;
Join hope to our hope and blend sorrow with sorrow,
And seek for men's love in the short days of life."

But lo, the old inn, and the lights and the fire,
And the fiddler's old tune and the shuffling of feet;
Soon for us shall be quiet and rest and desire,
And to-morrow's uprising to deeds shall be sweet.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

ENGLAND IN 1845 AND IN 1885.

FORTY years ago England stood face to face with a crisis, solvable to all appearances by force only. The immense and rapid development of manufactures had outstripped the extension of foreign markets and the increase of demand. Every ten years the march of industry was violently interrupted by a general commercial crash, followed, after a long period of chronic depression, by a few short years of prosperity, and always ending in feverish over-production and consequent renewed collapse. The capitalist class clamored for Free Trade in corn, and threatened to enforce it by sending the starving population of the towns back to the country districts, whence they came: to invade them, as John Bright said, not as paupers begging for bread, but as an army quartered upon the enemy. The working masses of the towns demanded their share of political power—the People's Charter; they were supported by the majority of the small trading class, and the only difference between the two was whether the Charter should be carried by physical or by moral force. Then came the commercial crash of 1847 and the Irish famine, and with both the prospect of revolution.

The French Revolution of 1848 saved the English middle class, The Socialistic pronunciamentos of the victorious French workmen frightened the small middle class of England