



"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.

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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.

G. J. POLLARD; E.—Many thanks. Will communicate with the secretary, REPUBLICAN (Dalston).—'Financial Reform Almanac,' Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1s.; 'American Almanac,' Trübner, 2s.

J. J. MARTIN (Tulare, Cal.); ALFRED CRIDGE (San Jose, Cal.); G. VENABLE SMITH (Cleveland, O.).—Information to hand, for which thanks. Shall be utilised as soon as space will permit.

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday December 15.

ENGLAND	Denver (Col.) Labor Inquirer	SWITZERLAND
Justice	Cincinnati (O.) Unionist	Zurich—Sozial Demokrat
Norwich—Daylight	New Haven (Conn.)—Workmen's Advocate	SPAIN
Club and Institute Journal	Paterson (N. J.) Labor Standard	Madrid—El Socialista
Londoner Arbeiter-Zeitung	Springfield (Ill.)—Voice of Labor	Cadiz—El Socialismo
Church Reformer	Chicago (Ill.)—Vorbote	La Justicia Humana
Christian Socialist	Knights of Labor	PORTUGAL
Practical Socialist	Portland (Oreg.) Avant-Courier	Lisbon—O Protesto Operario
The Socialist	Detroit (Mich.)—Labor Leaf	Voz do Operario
To-Day	FRANCE	Villafranca de Xira—O Campino
Freethinker	Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily)	AUSTRIA
Anarchist	Le Socialiste	Brunn—Volksfreund
INDIA	Le Revolte	HUNGARY
Madras—People's Friend	Guise—Le Devoir	Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik
Allahabad—People's Budget	Lille—Le Travailleur	ROUMANIA
Bombay—Times of India	HOLLAND	Bucharest—Pruncul Roman
Voice of India	Hague—Recht voor Allen	Jassy—Lupta
CANADA	BELGIUM	DENMARK
Toronto—Labor Reformer	Brussels—Le Chante-Clair	Social-Demokraten
Montreal—L'Union Ouvriere	En Avant	SWEDEN
UNITED STATES	Liège—L'Avenir	Stockholm—Social-Demokraten
New York—Volkszeitung	Antwerp—De Werker	NORWAY
Freiheit	ITALY	Kristiania—Social-Democraten
Truthseeker	Milan—Il Fascio Operaio	GREECE
Der Sozialist	Reggio—La Giustizia	Athens—Ardin
John Swinton's Paper	Brescia—Lo Sperimentale	
Boston—Woman's Journal		

### IS TRADE RECOVERING?

WE are being told by the middle-class press at present, that there are signs of the passing away of that depression of trade which nobody denies is real enough. Now, non-Socialists will doubtless look on Socialists who dread this recovery of trade as likely to calm down the present agitation as very dreadful persons; but I would ask them first to remember that the realisation of Socialism means to us a new and happy world; and considering how frightful are the sufferings of a large part of civilised populations, and how still more frightful is their degradation even in prosperous times of trade, we are surely justified by our point of view in thinking the speedy advent of Socialism worth paying a heavy price for. Furthermore, those of us who study history and believe in the evolution of the race, cannot doubt that Socialism can only be realised by the rotting away of the system which it is getting ready to supplant. No amount of preaching, of enthusiasm, or of devotion even, will induce the workers, with whom the worlds' future lies, to accept and to act upon mere abstract propositions of what they have a right to aspire to; necessity must push them on before they can even conceive of the future of equality and mutual good-will which we KNOW awaits them.

When the working-classes become conscious of the struggle which is always going on between them and the classes which live upon their labour, then they will be able and ready to face the dangers of the action which must come before the realisation of the new order of things; the dangers, the added miseries, the load of responsibility which must attend such action; then, and not till then. And necessity only can make them conscious of this struggle. The classes that live upon the labour of the workers, if they are not conscious of this, yet act instinctively as if they were. They act as if they knew that the consciousness of the class-struggle were being forced upon the workers. Except for a few poor-law and charity organisation pedants, no one in public ventures to speak of the working-classes with the brutality

which I am old enough to remember as the common manner of talk about them. All kinds of philanthropical schemes are set on foot for their supposed benefit by the richer classes, from the building of goody-goody people's palaces up to schemes which are a kind of demi-semi-Socialistic. The aim of all this philanthropy is undoubtedly to make it somewhat easier for the workers to live—as wage-slaves; and possibly many of the philanthropists believe that they are acting thus of their own free-will; but as a class they not so doing, necessity is compelling them on the one hand to keep the poorest slaves quiet by hope of charity in some form or another; and on the other to give all opportunity possible for the better paid workers to rise into the capitalist class. To make the basis of exploitation as wide as possible, to interest as many as possible in the plunder of labour, is the aim of all middle-class dealings with the workers which are not mere demented folly. It is clear that this attempt at diverting the aspirations of the workers into the channel of mere individual self-interest has not the same chance of success when times are bad and trade slack, as in periods of commercial prosperity; and if that prosperity should when it came turn out to be steady and continuous, Socialism would become a mere "pious opinion"; because the pleasure and excitement of the gambling for livelihood which would be open to all the better-off workmen, would blind them to the degradation of their condition and the sordidness of the desperate struggle. In short, the class-struggle would tend toward the creation of a new class formed out of the superior workmen, just as our present middle-class has been formed out of the guild-craftsmen and freedmen of the Middle Ages.

To counteract this tendency is the main business of Socialists at present. To assert the necessity of the wage-workers, not only of all countries but also of all conditions, to unite; to refuse to admit any distinction between skilled and unskilled, employed or unemployed, must be our answer to the bourgeois attempt at building up a new middle-class. And Socialists must consider that if that tendency becomes a fact and the new class does grow up, it will show that we have been mistaken in supposing that the present system was rotting to its end. It would mean that Socialism was put off not for fifty years, but for centuries.

Therefore, at the risk of being accused of want of sympathy with suffering, and inhuman party spirit, we are bound to hail the signs of the rotting away of commercialism, the depression of trade and confusion of politics, just as an oppressed people hails the war which is to set them free. It is unheard of and impossible that birth should take place without struggle and suffering; but in spite of that we long for the birth.

As for the recovery of trade with which we are threatened, the signs of it are not very obvious as yet. Probably in many cases it is simply a matter of speculation, as the *Cotton Factory Times* of November 26 tells is the case with the apparent recovery in that industry; in others it simply means that the stocks have been somewhat worked off, and so give opportunity for beginning fresh over-production. An account to hand of the final report of the Commission on the Depression of Trade makes no boast of recovery, and is not very heroic in its proposed remedies. After having admitted that "there is a tendency in the supply of commodities to outrun the demand," they say, "that the great object to be aimed at is to diminish the cost of production, so far as it can be done consistently with the maintenance of sound quality and good workmanship." Has it occurred to these Gothamites that the only way of reducing the cost of production is by reducing the labour used in producing, and under our present system that can only be done by lowering wages. What these curious persons propose is to remedy over-production by producing more on the one hand, and by decreasing our power of consumption on the other.

The ridiculous position of these Commissioners is an indication amongst others numerous enough, that a recurrence to the roaring times of trade is unlikely to happen, or at least that if it did, the recovery would speedily be followed by a deeper depression. That means that the state of trade will go from bad to worse, until at last the workers will be forced to take the organisation of labour into their own hands, and make an end of our system of usury and robbery. That is the apparent logical conclusion to be drawn from passing events; nevertheless, disturbing influences may put off the day of change; and I hold that the above-mentioned possible tendency toward a new lower middle-class is even now visible as one of them, and must be guarded against sedulously. Therefore, we should set our faces sternly against any proposal which seemed likely to benefit one part of the workers, while it left the other out in the cold, however specious its form might be; and at the same time we should above all things put forward complete equality of condition as our ultimate end

WILLIAM MORRIS.

The political economy of our age can be summed up thus: When you get an undue advantage hold on to it and have special laws made to protect you in the enjoyment of it, and hold on to all you can steal until the prison bars stare you in the face, then disgorge enough to purchase immunity, start a bank with the remainder, join a missionary society and take a front pew in church.—*Industrial News*.

One of the delightful results of our vaunted system is well shown by the report submitted by the treasurer of New South Wales to its Parliament. In a fertile country, with enormous annual production of wealth, and no "spirited foreign policy" to sustain, there is yet a very large and increasing number of men unemployed, "stagnation of business," and the deficit of £1,350,000 with which the present financial year was begun will be much over two millions at its close!