It is told of Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary—the Alfred
of his time and people—that he once heard (once only) that
the old itinerants were over-worked and underfed.
He took the matter to heart, being a person of
a just man, besides being more valiant than they were, even in the old
feudal days. So he called together such lords and councillors as he
saw best fitted, and they took him for a ride; and when they were
ready he and they set out, over rough and smooth, decked out in all
the glory of attire which was the wont of those days. Thus they rode
by meadows, which were watered, and also by some fields, and through
it to the vineyards where men were working on some distant
slopes that went up from the river: my tale does not say whether that
were Theiss, or Donau, or what river. Well, I judge it was late spring
or early summer, and they noticed over the hills, with distinctness
for the vintage is late in those lands, and some of the grapes are not gath-
ered till the first frosts have touched them, where the wine made from
the strongest of them was sweet and pleasant, and the drunkard
and boys, and young maidens, tolling and swinking; some hooch
between the vine-rows, some bearing baskets of dung up the steep
slopes, some in one way, some in another, labouring for the fruit they
should never eat, and the wine they should never drink. There
brought the King and got off his horse and began to climb up the stony
ridges of the vineyard, and his lords in like manner followed him,
wondering in their hearts what was toward; but to the one was fol-
lowing, next after him he turned about and said with a smile, “Yes,
lords, this is a new game we are playing to-day, and a new knowledge
will come from it.” And the lord smiled, but somewhat sourly.
For the people, in great part, are not the votes of these
golden lords. I judge that they did not know the King, since it was little
likely that any one of them had seen his face; and they knew of him
but as the Great Father, the mighty warlord, a little less likely was it to any
man there whether Turk or Magyar was their over- lord, since to one
master or another they had to pay the due tale of labouring days in
war and peace, and the lives of the children, and the grants that were
left on the days when they worked for themselves and their wives
and children. Well, belike they knew not the King; but amidst those
rich lords they saw and knew their own lord, and of him they were
sure afraid. But sought it availed them to free away from those strong
men and strong horses—they who had been toiling from before the
rising of the sun, and now it wanted little more than an hour or
night, and the sun was with the lords and was close and warm, and
the rows on the days when they worked not
for them, but were free. The King smiled, and set me right if I order
them wrong: but the rest of you, go play!”
The carle knew not what to think, and let the King stand with his
hand stretched out, while he looked askance at his own lord and baron,
whom heard his voice, and was glad that his master, the King, knew
of his valley and his lands.
Then the carle lets the foe come into the King’s hand; and
the King falls to, and orders his lords for vine-dressing, to each
due share of the work: and whiles the carle said yea and whiles nay to
his ordering. And then ye should have seen velvet cloaks cast off,
and mantles of fine Flemish scarlet go to the dusty earth, as the lords
and knights busied them to the work. So they buckled to; and to most
of them it seemed good game to play at vine-dressing. But one there
was who, when his scarlet cloak was off, stood up in doublet of glorious
Persian web of gold and silk, such as men make not now, worth a
hundred foris for each man of his band. He was of great stature,
and his face gave the job of toing and froing up and down the hill with
the biggest and the frailest dung-basket that there was; and therewith
the silken lord screwed up a grin, that was sport to see, and all the lords
laughed; and as the carle amazed away, and all the lords
laughed, and the carle amazed away, and all the lords
laughed, he said:
“Do serve this son’s son of a whore that he should bid me carry dung!”
For you must know that the King’s father, John Hunyad,
one of the greatest warriors of the world, the Hammer of the Turks,
was nothing in this world, though he was great.

Well, they sped the work bravely for a while, and loud was
the laughter as the loins smote the earth and the stonf stonked the
and the crowd of dugs were at their work, and weeping the tears of

civilisation and enlightenment: Why both have been monopolised by the
gruddy and irritable pell-mell; and art and science are forbidden to
ameliorate the condition of the working-class.—W. Hazlitt's Ribes.
more days added to our year's tale of lords' labour, then are we lost without remedy. And their hearts sink within them.

Sir John is a very good fellow, and has a true bearing in the heavens, and it was noon and more. And now there was no more laughter among those tolerating lords, and the strokes of the hoe and mattock came far slower, which, with a sudden fall down at the bottom of the hill and looked out on the river; but the King yet worked on doggedly, so for shame the other lords yet kept at it. Till at last the next man to the King let his hoe drop with a clatter, and swore a great oath. Now he was a spending in the present day, that famous Black Band that had so often rent the Turkish array; and the King loved him for his sturdy valour; so he says to him, "I thought, wrong Captain?"

"Nay, lord," says he, "ask the headman yonder what ails us."

"Headman," says the King, "what ails these strong knights? Have I ordered them to work?"

"Nay, but shirking ails them, lord," says he, "for they are weary; and no wonder, for they have been playing hard, and are of gentle blood."

"Is that so, lord," says the King, "that ye are weary already?"

Then the rest hung their heads and said nought, all save that captain of war; and he said, being a bold man and no like: "King, I see what thou wouldest be at; thou hast brought us here to preach us a sermon from that Plato of thine; and to say sooth, so that I may swink no more, and go eat my dinner, now preach thy worst? Nay, if thou wilt be priest I will be thy deacon. Will thou that I ask this labouring thing to be a thing two, three minutes?"

"Yes," said the King. And there came, as it were, a cloud of thought over his face.

Then the captain straddled his legs and looked big, and said to the Carle: "Good fellow, how long have we been working here?"

"Two hours or thereabout, by the sun above us," says he.

"And how much of thy work have we done in that while!" says the captain, "thou hast been his eye at him and many a generation."

"Lord," says the Carle, grinning a little despite himself, "I be not worth with my word. In the first half-hour ye did five-and-forty minutes' work, and in the next half-hour scant a thirty-minutes' work, and the third half-hour a fifteen minutes' work, and in the fourth half-hour two minutes' work."

The grin now had faded from his face, but a glum came into his eyes as he said: "And now, as I suppose, your day's work is done and ye will go to your dinner and all that sweet and drink the strong; and we shall eat a little rye-bread, and then be working here till after the sun has set and the moon has begun to be in its increase; and now ye shall be as it were in a strange place; where, nor what white body ye shall hold in your arms while the night flits and the stars shine; but for us, while the stars yet shine, shall we be it again, and betheakc ye for what! I know not what game ye shall be devising for to-morrow as ye ride back home; but for us when we come back here to-morrow, it shall be as if there had been no yesterday and nothing done therein, and that day's work shall be nought to us also, for we shall win no respite from our toll therewith, and the morrow of to-morrow will all be to begin again once more. Therefore, if ye are thinking to lay some new tax or tale upon us, think twice of it, for we may not bear it. And all this I say with the King here beside me, and this black velvet jerkin and the gold chain on his neck, is the King; nor do I think he will slay me for my word since he hath so many a Turk between his might and my sword!"

Then said the captain: "Shall I smite the man, O king or hath he preached thy sermon for thee?"

"Smite not, for he hath preached it," said the King. "Yet when and where ye think, other men may be hanged therefor, and now have I another sermon to preach; but I will refrain me as now. Let us down and to our dinner."

So they went, the King and his gentlemen, and sat down by the river under the rustle of the poplar, and they ate and drank and were merry. And the King bade bear up the broken meats to the vine-dressers, and a good draught of the archer's wine, and to the headman he gave a broad gold piece. But when the poor folk had all under their hands, it was to them as though the kingdom of heaven had come down to earth.

In the cool of the evening rode the king and his lords. The King was distraught and silent; but at last the captain, who rode beside him, said to him: "Preach me now thine sermon after, O king!"

"I think thou knowest it already," said the king, "else hadst thou not spoken in such wise to the Carle; but tell me, what is thy craft and the craft of all these whereby ye live, as the potter by making pots and so forth?"

Then said the captain: "As the potter lives by making pots, so we live by robbing the poor."

Again said the king: "And my trade?"

"Said he, Thy trade is to be a king of such thieves, yet no worse than the rest."

But the King laughed.

"Bear that in mind," said he, "and then shall I tell thee my thought toward thee. Carle, I thought, were I thou or such as thou, then would I take in the bag or a spear, or were it only a hedge-stake, and hid others the like, and forth would we go; and since we would be so many, and with nought to lose save a miserable life, we would do battle and prevail, and make an end of the craft of kings and of lords and of usurers, and there should be but one craft in the world, to work, to merit for ourselves and to live merry thereby."

"Then, this, is thy sermon. Who will heed it if thou preachest it?"

Said the King: "They who will take the mad king and put him in his house, therefore do I forbear to preach it. Yet it shall be preached."

"And not heeded," said the Captain, "save by those who head and hang the setters forth of new things that are good for the world. Our trade is safe for, a valiant man may for a while come forward. And therewith they came to the king's palace, and they ate and drank and slept, and the world went on its ways.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

CORRESPONDENCE

"MARSHALL & CO."

Mr. J. L. Malson misunderstands my short statement. I am not at all "the man of the article for which he is responsible; nor did I come forward to defend a system or champion a class." Neither do I wish to discuss "any matter with any one who uses such language as Mr. Malson's. I only claimed, as the article in question referred to personal matters, to warn any one who may have read it not to believe an absurd compilation of falsehood. You have given me the opportunity of doing this, and there I will leave the matter.

JOHN MARSHALL.

VEGETARIAN DIET.

Let not the progress of humanitv be stayed, not by a floating straw; but, stay, will vegetarianism help or hinder! Admitting all that can be said of employers' greed, and, in fact, being in a position to prove the keenness of their mind in this matter, yet I believe the vegetarian ideas justly cited to be a great improvement. The cost of meat is small, but meat does not make a tolerable food alone, "groceries" of various kinds have to be substituted largely for butchers' goods, and the cost of fuel to cook farinaceous foods is larger; the cooking stews are also more considered than the old-fashioned ones. I would suggest that any Socialist who hears a capitalist recommend vegetarianism, should ask him to supply a suitable cooking range so that it may have one fair trial, and I think the vegetarian capitalist will climb down.

But I think vegetarianism is a very powerful agent for us; the teeming millions cannot have vegetarian diet, and live, until the land is municipally or the present cultivation is strengthened, or what is wanted to sustain life. Take the example of celery, a hardy plant if you know how to handle it; and a belt, land-harred iron door against rhizomatism, bumbo, and scintica, if you know how to eat it; it can be grown for a pennyworth a "head," but the stupid way of doing everything brings the price up to two or three pence in town. A cultivator growing such stuff as celery gets his rent raised by the perfumed seigneur who calls himself a "share" and which has the effect of increasing the price; again, a grower of this class of food is helped by having a greenhouse; if he builds one it becomes the property of the landlord from the simple fact of being built upon his ground! Be these thy gods, O Israel! Vegetarianism may help Socialism, but it cannot be generally adopted until the cap has (want-0f) a separate away. It is desirable in itself, for, beyond the circumstance of prohibiting guilt, it keeps the young children from restlessness and other troubles.

CHARLES WALKDEN.

SIGNs OF THE TIMES.

I took a good long walk this morning with various small adventures.

1. A boy of seven or eight, with whom I talked. He was close to the cottage where he lived, on the top of Barbury Hill, where is a British camp. He said he never asked his father for anything. I asked him for a drink of milk. He said, "No, he never had milk to drink." After some talk he only drank tea, and then with a glum in his eye he added: "I have a cup of milk a month since at the farm." The ceiling was the roof of the cottage, which was old, and the walls were stone. There was a window in the wall, but it was covered with old canvas.

2. Salvation Army at Chiseldon. I was talking with a man after the sermon was over (I happened to get to the village about service was ending), and after a few words he volunteered that he didn't know which were worse, Liberals or Tories, and that he wished all of them turned out.

3. Labourer in train. He began to pitch into Arch, so I asked him what he would do, and after a bit of grumbling against the masters, I further asked him why he and his pals didn't put the masters into the poor-houses and leave them there, and then set to work and till the ground for themselves. To which he responded readily that if they had any one to lead them they would set about it to-morrow. Other things show in a country how widely ideas of revolution are spreading. This village of Chiseldon is deep in the country, far away from the town and yet the only two countrymen I talk to are ready for anything, if "anyone will lead them."

C. J. FAULKNER.

Marlborough (Wiltz).

THE FREEMAN'S JOURNAL ON THE LATE TRADES' UNION CONGRESS IN PARIS.

The Freeman's Journal, referring to the International Trades' Union Congress lately held in Paris, takes occasion to ridicule its "Socialism of a very red hue indeed," and states, "We are, of course, making the State a kind of fairy god-mother to the children of toil. Yet with all the visionary schemes of which the Congress gravely approved, some practical and recommendable proposals were mingle. For instance, the prevention of the employment of children under fourteen years in factories, the liability of employers for accidents, the system of arbitration of all workshops, and the making the same thoroughly sanitary for the workers. All these," it adds, "have been recognised by British law."

The Freeman's Journal refers to the employing of the children, the law is quietly passed over by getting the children to declare they are fourteen years of age. This was