THE COMMONWEAL
ONE PENNY, WEEKLY.

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. only returned if a stamped directed envelope is forwarded with them.
Subscriptions.—For Europe and United States, including postage, per year, 6s. six months, 3s.; three months, 1s. 6d.
Business communications to be addressed to Manager of the COMMONWEAL, *13 Farringdon Road, E.C. Remittances in Postal Orders or halfpenny stamps.*

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

M. A. MALOY (Sheffield).—Your report cost us a penny, only a half-penny stamp being affixed to the envelope.

F.—The coincidence is as your friend says: the Illinois Conspiracy Law was passed on the anniversary of the signing of the Magna Charta, June 15—advance made in 672 years!

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday December 14.

ENGLAND
Anarchist
Jus
London—Freie Presse
Labour Tribune
Norwich—Daylight
Railway Review
Worker's Friend
NEW SOUTH WALES
Hamilton—Radical
SOUTH AUSTRALIA
Adelaide—Our Commonwealth
Melbourne—Liberator
INDIA
Bankipore—Behar Herald
Madras—People's Friend
UNITED STATES
Our Union
New York—Der Sozialist
Truthseeker
Boston—Woman's Journal
Chicago—Labor Enquirer
Denver (Col.) Labor Enquirer
Detroit (Mich.)—The Advance
Fort Worth (Tex.)—South West
Milwaukee (Wis.)—Volksblatt
St. Louis (Mo.)—Die Parole
San Francisco Arbeiter-Zeitung
Coast Seamen's Journal
FRANCE
Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily)
La Revolte
Lille—Le Travailleur
HOLLAND
Hague—Recht voor Allen
Amsterdam—Voorwaarts
BELGIUM
Seraing (Ougree)—Le Reveil
Ghent—Vooruit
Antwerp—De Werker
Brussels—L'Avant-Garde
Liege—L'Avenir
ITALY
Marsala—La Nuova Eta
Rome—L'Emancipazione
SPAIN
Madrid—El Socialista
Barcelona—Acracia
GERMANY
Berlin—Volks Tribune
HUNGARY
Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik
ROUMANIA
Jassy—Lupta
Muncitoriul
DENMARK
Social-Demokraten
NORTH AFRICA
Tunis - L'Operaio

THE CONSCIENCE OF THE UPPER CLASSES.

IT seems to be universally admitted that the conference held on December 5th in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, on the prevailing distress in London was the direct outcome of the unemployed agitation, for joining in which so many poor men have been sentenced with a spite at once so malignant and so petty that it fairly sickens an honest man to think of it. These rich and well-to-do persons were driven to meet together by a fear which I do not say they all felt in their own persons, but which is certainly permeating their class, a fear so easily aroused that a few hundred destitute, unarmed, peaceably behaved persons parading London streets could strike terror into the hearts of the well-to-do of the richest city of the most powerful empire in the world.

It is scarcely worth while to criticise the various schemes and opinions of the speakers at the meeting. In plain terms, the one person who said anything worth listening to was Cardinal Manning, and it is a curious sign of the times that a high official of the Catholic Church should give a lesson in sociology to Liberal and Radical politicians, humanitarian dissenting ministers, and professional philanthropists—the latter represented by Mr. Arnold White, who, one might think, would be glad, if he dared, to advocate a battue of the useless foreigners and quick-breeding Britons of London, after the fashion of the Spartan Helot-hunts.

Of the Cardinal it must be said that he showed none of that base and cowardly hatred of the degraded poor (the poor whose degradation is caused by the exclusive "refinement" of the rich) which is the ordinary feeling of the cultured classes, whether openly expressed or veiled under the pretext of poor-law-philanthropy. Said he: "Thirty years ago I went into places where it was said the police dared not go, and found them very harmless."

Again, as a Catholic prelate he was not concerned to support the cheerful commercial optimism (about other people's troubles) which is the lining, so to speak, of the moral pessimism of the well-to-do; and he exposed their miserable evasion of setting down the greater part of the unemployed demonstrators as criminals and loafers, and roundly accused "society" of being responsible for their existence. Lastly he attacked, however mildly, the ferocity of the philanthropists about out-door relief. In fact it is clear that he could see nothing else for dealing with the present distress but that very out-door relief in some form or other, the horror of which a few years ago had established itself firmly in the hearts of all philanthropists as a kind of holy dogma not to be questioned; a piece of altruistic piety invented to take the place of the now obsolete "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." There is a great deal of virtue in the Latinisation of an English word: A Gods' name (or the Other One's) don't "pauperise" people! But you may carefully keep them poor and feel none the worse for it!

The Cardinal wound up with what may be regarded as an official tag, about "voluntary agencies," and the necessity of "visiting the homes of the poor." This was what his office compelled him to say and need not be noticed, if it were not of value as showing that we must not reckon on real help from the Catholic clergy. All that can be expected of them is the administration of charity in its less insulting and kindlier form, and the occasional startling of smug respectability from its after-dinner doze by the enunciation of some obvious social truth, which the genuine Catholic, with his contempt of human life on the earth except as a preparation for another, non-human life, finds it easy to see; but which is quite strange to the commercial religionist engaged in saving his own soul in this world and the next at everybody else's expense.

For the rest nothing was proposed except a mere bundle of evasions of the fact that our system of production is breaking down into ruin through its own triumph. Whatever middle-class rule has put before itself as an aim it has won; but the well-being of the worker was never its aim and could not be; his endurance and quietude only has been aimed at. But since the middle-class ideal is that there should be widely-spread comfort for those living wholly or partly on the labour of others, while those *others* should not be so sorely pinched as to rebel or refuse to work, the safeguards against the ruin of the system of wage-slavery have been disregarded; especially the chief safeguard, the organisation of labour; the widening of the basis of spoliation by making it as easy as may be for the worker to pinch and screw himself out of his class into that of the robbers of labour, has been thought safeguard enough in this direction; but this safeguard is now yielding to the increase in the pace of competition; and we are face to face with the consequences of the wholesale *waste of labour* which is sure to happen in a society composed of rich and poor in an epoch well equipped with mechanical resources.

We have been forcing the great mass of the workers to make things of no use to the workers (or to any one else for that matter), and we have assumed that we shall always be able to find people willing to take these pieces of manufacture from us in exchange for food and other necessaries which are produced by the workers, and not by the buyers of the useless things. When we come to think of the fact, that these buyers of inutilities have nothing to buy them with except the necessaries which they steal from the workers, part of which they must dole out to them again as slave-rations under the modern name of "wages," one need be no longer astonished that the scanty and seemingly harmless gatherings of the unemployed should have frightened the class that owns "Society," and made them ask "What's to be done now?" *They* will not find an answer, though the answer will come; because any attempt they may make to limit the waste of labour will but act as a lever for the destruction of the Society which they are so eager to *save*.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

Jottings from the Bylaws of the Coast Seamen's Union of the Pacific Coast.

1. Be truthful and honest, generous and courageous. It is for these objects, also, that the Union is formed. Try and make yourselves MEN in every sense of the word.
2. Educate yourself on the Labour question, and try to become thoroughly acquainted with all the details of your occupation.
3. When on board, try to do your work *well*—first, because the better workman you are, the better man; second, because to be a Union man should be synonymous with being an able and ready seaman.
4. Avoid backbiting and jealousy of each other as the supremest curse. Nothing so quickly breeds discontent and division as these low vices. Either speak well of your brother or be silent.
5. Consider it an honour to be a Union man, and a dishonour to be a liar, gambler, scandal-monger and mischief breeder.
6. Do not permit any member of the Union in your hearing to prophesy evil or defeat of the Union, outside of the meetings.