FACING THE WORST OF IT.

Though we Socialists have full faith in the certainty of the great change coming about, it would be idle for any one of us to attempt to prophesy as to the date of the realisation of our hopes; and it is well for us not to be so sanguine, since overcoming hope is apt to give birth to despair if it meets with check or disappointment. Although the oppression and robbery of the past and the present is preparing a certain revenge in the future, yet history has shown us over and over again that when the going gets half too hot, or if it is put to a metaphor as language will allow of, great revolutions have to wait till the force which is to destroy the old order and create the new is so overwhelming that there is no chance of any real or serious reaction marring the effects of the hopes and necessities which make great revolutions.

There are two streams of the force which is creating the new order of things, and which, already visible to thoughtful persons, will one day rise into a great flood-tide of change visible to every one, and make a new world. On the one hand the system under which we now live and which, we are firmly convinced, the last development of the oppression of privilege, its own weight pushing onwards towards its destruction. The energy and ceaseless activity which made its success so swift and startling are now hurrying it towards its end; there is not turning back possible; no passing for the title of that commerce which bears all life with it in the present; it is not only that its goal is ruin, but the goal is now within sight. Yet though the energy which is now sweeping onward to the sea of destruction cannot falter, yet it may itself create checks—odds, to keep up the metaphor,—in which we now living may whirl round and round a long time. So, that we may not be disappointed and be taken unawares, it is well to consider what these two forces are.

At the same time, although commercial ruin must be the main stream of the force for the bringing about revolution, we must not forget the other stream, which is the conscious hope of the oppressed classes, forged into a mighty current by the special circumstances of the commercial system which their hope now threatens with destruction. The commercial or capitalist system is being eaten out by its own energy; but that worst is yet to come. The last hand has not yet been put for it, yet, on the other hand, in doing so it will stimulate the energy which is consciously attacking it; and these attacks will be more powerful than its struggles to resist its coming face, the eddies in the current which was said.

As for these, let us look a little closer to see what form they are likely to take. First, the downward tendency of commerce may and probably will be checked by recoveries something of the nature of the rebounds from depression which were the rule for the last forty years before the depression of the six or seven years just passed set in, but far less complete and much shorter lived. It is threatened with such a recovery at any rate, and there may be some for some time at least; of course if it is realised we shall have plenty of discourses addressed to us of the "I told you so" kind, and the advocates of the capitalists who have any argument of power or tongues will be jubilant and one. Socialists, however, need not trouble ourselves much about their joy; because such a period is sure to be fruitful of disputes between the trade-unionists and the capitalists; and it will be our business to stimulate and support the claim to a higher standard of living, by which the brisker business and consequent bigger profits of the manufac-turers will enable the workers to make with success. The period of every recovery must certainly be followed by discontent of the discontent of the workers will be much increased by their losing, or their dreading to lose, the advantages gained in the better times; so that after all even this apparent check to the progress of the disintegration of the present system will be killed by making clearer to the workers the antagonism which exists between them and the chief-class—the employers.

As regards revolutions, I am not as above mentioned likely to come in the ordinary conditions of things, and would mean simply an emptying more or less of the shelves of the saltman. But recovery may come from another and more dramatic cause—to wit, the great European war with which we are now threatened. Such a war would give a great stimulus to trade while it lasted; just as if half London were burned down, the calamity would be of great service to those who were not burned out,—all the socialists, applying only to the idiotic system of war, which is going on under which we now suffer, and which is to do with a system in which man means production or service of some sort to the community. But "good" as the war might be for trade, it could not last for ever; and quite apart from the more specially political results which might come of it, the time would come when some one would have to say, as Owen said after the end of the great war of the beginning of the last century, either war, our war of the last year was man and beast.

Then would come the inevitable reaction, and what between falling prices, and crowds thrown out of employment, and the certain disappointment and disgust which would attend the exhaustion of the finish of the struggle, our present fiscal-society would receive a rude shock, which one might hope it would scarcely recover. But whether that were so or not, at least the inflation of the war-time would be far more than to be balanced after the settlement of the war. Only the most short-sighted of the capitalists can pray for war in the times we are in now, one would think, because behind the brilliant "war" mentality of the war stands its shadow—

THE COMMONWEAL.

ONE PENNY, WEEKLY.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

NOTES TO SOCIALIST NEWSPAPERS.—The Commonweal will be regularly sent to all Socialist Contemporaries throughout the world, and it is hoped that they on their side will regularly provide the Socialist League with their papers. Periodicals received during the week ending February 10th.

Justice

New Haven (Conn.) Worker

Along

National (New York)

Socialist

North Australian (Adelaide, S. A., Australia)

New York (Spotlight)

Worker's Advocate

Socialist

Worker's (Chicago)

Worker's (Brooklyn)

Worker's (Montreal)

Worker's (Philadelphia)

Worker's (London)

Worker's (Ottawa)

Worker's (Edinburgh)

Worker's (Chicago) (Ill.)—Vocete

Milan—Il Piozzo Operaio

Brussels—L'Echo Socialiste

Marseilles—Le Socialiste

London—Socialist

Hague—Bijen voor Allen

Leipzig—L'Union

Borders—De Werkver)

Eidg—Social Demokrat

Kristiansania—Social Demokrat

ITALY

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Germany

Czechoslovakia

ROUMANIA

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MINERS AGITATION IN SCOTLAND.

GREAT DISTRESS IN LANARKSHIRE—SOCIALIST DEMONSTRATION IN GLASGOW.

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