



"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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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.

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.

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday February 16.

ENGLAND	NEW HAVEN (CONN.)—WORKMEN'S ADVOCATE	ITALY
Justice	Portland (Oreg.) Avant-Courier	Milan—Il Fascio Operaio
Jus	Milwaukee (Wis.)—Volksblatt	SPAIN
Norwich—Daylight	Valley Falls (Kan.)—Lucifer	Madrid—El Socialista
Londner Arbeiter-Zeitung	FRANCE	PORTUGAL
Cotton Factory Times	Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily)	Oporto—A Perola
Christian Socialist	Le Socialiste	HUNGARY
Worker's Friend	Le Revolte	Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik
SOUTH AUSTRALIA	Guise—Le Devoir	ROMANIA
Adelaide—Our Commonwealth	Lille—Le Travailleur	Jassy—Lupta
UNITED STATES	HOLLAND	DENMARK
New York—Volkszeitung	Hague—Recht voor Allen	Social-Demokraten
Der Sozialist	BELGIUM	SWEDEN
John Swinton's Paper	Liege—L'Avenir	Stockholm—Social-Demokraten
Boston—Woman's Journal	Antwerp—De Werker	NORWAY
Springfield (Ill.)—Voice of Labor	SWITZERLAND	Kristiania—Social-Demokraten
Chicago (Ill.)—Vorbote	Zurich—Sozial Demokrat	

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 too sanguine, since overweening 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 retribution is halt-foot; or perhaps, to put it with a little 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 is, we are firmly convinced, the last development of the oppression of privilege, is of 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 no turning back possible, no pausing for the tide 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—eddies, 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 may be.

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, forced into union and antagonism by the very success of the commercial system which their hope now threatens with destruction. The commercial or capitalistic system is being eaten out by its own energy; but that energy may on the one hand create partially new conditions 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 fate, the eddies in the stream above 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. We are threatened with such a recovery at present, and there may be some foundation for the threat. 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 power of pen or tongue will be jubilant and noisy. We Socialists, however, need not trouble ourselves much about their joy; because such a period is sure to be fruitful of disputes between the trades-unionists and the capitalists; and it will be our business to stimulate and support the claim to a higher standard of livelihood which the brisker business and consequent bigger profits of the manufacturers will enable the workmen to make with success. The period of recovery will certainly be followed by another depression, and the discontent of the workmen 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 but lead us so much nearer to revolution by making clearer to the workers the antagonism which exists between them and the thief-class—the employers.

Such recovery as above mentioned would come in the ordinary condition of things, and would mean simply an emptying more or less of the shelves of the salesman. 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 this, of course, applying only to the idiotic system of rewarding labour under which we now suffer, and having nothing to do with a system in which work 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 century, "the war, our best customer, is dead."

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 thief-society would receive a rude shake, 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 counterbalanced by the depression of the following peace. Only the most short-sighted of the capitalists can pray for war in the times we are now in, one would think, because behind the brilliant "respectable" war stands its shadow, revolution.

And yet though they may dread war, still that restless enemy of the commercial system, the demon which they have made, and is no longer their servant but their master, forces them into it in spite of them; because unless commerce can find new capacities for expansion it is all over, or will be in a very few years; the partial and brief recovery of trade before mentioned is too insignificant to be worth much notice; the one thing for which our thrice accursed civilisation craves, as the stifling man for fresh air, is *new markets*; fresh countries must be conquered by it which are not manufacturing and are producers of raw material, so that "civilised" manufactures can be forced on them. *All wars now waged, under whatever pretences, are really wars for the great prizes in the world-market.* And certainly if the countries, the chances for whose monopolisation (distant chances too) are now leading Europe into a war the end of which no one can foresee, can be opened up to commerce, and when opened up satisfy the expectations of the national pirates who are "on the account" in this matter, the dissolution of our present system may be somewhat checked. Yet, on the other hand, this very success would stimulate the cut-throat competition of the commerce-gamblers; and once more, since of their plunder they would only yield to the workers as much as the latter compelled them to yield, whatever "prosperity" might follow such enterprises, would, now that the idea of Socialism has taken root amongst the workmen of Europe, be accompanied by fresh demands on their part; and these demands again would necessarily act as a spur to the competition of the gamblers, and make the pace faster and more furious; so that perhaps even the glorious hope of flooding Central Africa and China with trade "goods" which nobody wants, will turn out when attained but Dead Sea apples to the capitalist.

These three chances of checking the onward course of capitalistic commerce to its annihilation, are the only visible ones I think:—1st. The lessening of stocks and consequent slight temporary recovery; 2nd. A great European war, perhaps lengthened out into a regular epoch of war; and 3rd. The realisation of the hopes of important new markets, which hopes are the real causes of hostility between nations. How far they might act as checks on Socialism it is not possible to foretell; but that they will not be unmixed advantages to Capitalism is, I think, certain, nor is there anything about the possibility of their happening, which need discourage us. Probably none of them would have much influence in checking the growing tendency towards the union of the workers in England. Certainly they would have no power to break that spirit of union which already exists among the great nations of the Continent.

Besides these obvious resources of the system we are attacking, there are less obvious possibilities about which one may speculate, perhaps with some profit; these more speculative possibilities point to attempts of Capitalism at avoiding its doom, which would lead to more ruin and suffering than are likely to be involved in even those

above-mentioned. I have not space to call our reader's attention to them at present, so I will end by saying that our part as acknowledged and organised Socialists is, while we watch keenly the development of the causes which would lead to the destruction of the present system, even if there were no acknowledged Socialists at all, to do all we can to aid the *conscious* attacks on the system by all those who feel themselves wronged by it. It is possible that we may live to see times in which it will be easier than now for the labourer to live as a labourer and not as a man, and there is a kind of utilitarian sham Socialism which would be satisfied by such an outcome of times of prosperity. It is very much our business to meet this humbug by urging the workers to sustain steadily their due claim to that fullness and completeness of life which no class system can give them. The claims of non-Socialist workmen go little beyond the demand for a bigger ration, warmer coat, and better lodging for the slave; and even Socialist workmen, I think, are apt to put their claims too low, at least in this country; for, indeed, one must say with a sense of shame in one's own better luck not possible to express, that the conditions under which they live and work make it difficult for them even to conceive the sort of life that a man should live.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

MINERS AGITATION IN SCOTLAND.

GREAT DISTRESS IN LANARKSHIRE—SOCIALIST DEMONSTRATION IN GLASGOW.

REPORTS of the progress of the agitation amongst Scottish miners for an advance of wages have appeared pretty regularly in the Labour Column of *Commonweal*. Readers of that column are no doubt aware that about a month ago the Central Board of the Federation of Scottish Miners recommended the various districts to cease work for some four or five days with the view of bringing the struggle to a crisis and forcing the masters to concede the advance demanded. Acting upon this advice, the great majority of miners in the north and west of Scotland ceased work. As a result of this policy a considerable number of the masters yielded, and their men resumed work at advanced wages. The greater portion of the masters, however, absolutely refused to grant any increase of wages whatsoever. In consequence of this refusal the men in most districts prolonged their holiday. A fortnight ago the Board, fearing the holiday would become an actual strike, recommended the men to return to work in the meantime. This advice was rejected with indignation by the overwhelming body of the miners of the Hamilton, Motherwell, and Airdrie districts of Lanarkshire—the districts, I may say, where Socialist opinions have most deeply penetrated. The serious consequences of this resolution the men knew only too well. For many months now they had been working only five days per week, at a wage of 3s. per day—which, after deductions for doctor, powder, tools, etc., left only some 12s. 6d. per week on which to keep themselves and their families. It is obvious that on such an income the miners would have little or nothing saved to meet the present emergency. Indeed their families in many instances were at starvation's door before the strike began. Their present condition is distressing in the extreme.

Painful scenes have been witnessed in some of the mining villages. Women and children begging for food at their own doors. Little children wandering about the streets crying for bread. In some instances the shopkeepers, partly through sympathy and partly through fear of bread-riots taking place, have distributed loaves amongst the starving people. In one village a butcher distributed half a cow. The authorities, too, alarmed at the aspect of affairs, have advised the merchants to shut their shops early and barricade their windows. In anticipation of disturbance mounted police have been drafted to some of the districts.

And it is thus, in the nineteenth century in Christian Britain, that the workers must plead with their Christian masters for justice—their masters, who plunder them and toil them to death; who strip their little children and cast them naked and famishing out into the winter's cold!

J. B. G.

Since receiving the above the news has reached London of the hunger-riots at Blantyre and elsewhere in the district; but the bourgeois press is usually not anxious to give any real explanation of such occurrences, and has not done so on this occasion; therefore our communication has some interest even at this date.

On Sunday last, the Glasgow Branch of the Socialist League held a great demonstration on Glasgow Green, for the purpose of expressing sympathy with the miners on strike. The local press puts the number present at not less than 30,000. There were three platforms, at which the following resolutions were spoken to by members of the League, Wm. Small, the Secretary, and Mr. M'Munn, Chairman of the Lanarkshire Miners' Association, and other comrades and friends:—

"That this meeting of the workers of Glasgow hereby expresses its heartiest sympathy with the miners, their wives and children, in their present sufferings, and wishes full and speedy success to the resolute effort now being made to obtain an advance in wages; and that it condemns the attitude of the masters as grossly selfish and unjust."

"That this meeting is of opinion that the cause of all those who work for wages is one and the same, that the present struggle is only one incident in the world-wide conflict between the labourer and the capitalist, and that not until the land, mines, and machinery, and all means of production and distribution are held and used by the workers for the common benefit can that conflict cease, and a secure and happier social system be attained."

In supporting the second resolution, Mr. M'Munn said the present

fight was not about 6d. a-day. The masters had made up their minds to fight Socialism, and he admitted that Socialistic opinions were spreading amongst the miners.

Our comrade Glasier writes:

From copies of newspapers sent you will see that our demonstration was a great success. We have allied the miners with Socialism definitely. The press reports give but a poor notion of the speeches. At the platform presided over by comrade McLaren, M.A., three cheers for the Social Revolution were given with great enthusiasm. Not a single hand at any of the platforms was held up against the second resolution, which you will observe was a purely Socialist one. Our meeting has created a profound impression, and has alarmed the bourgeoisie not a little. It is greatly to the credit of our comrades R. F. Muirhead, M.A., and Arch McLaren, M.A., that they bravely came forward and took the chairs at two platforms, as they are both well connected and run seriously the risk of damaging their academical careers. We have given our large room here up to the miners for the time being as a place of call, etc. They are in Glasgow in large numbers collecting subscriptions. We handed over to them as the result of collection £24. In great haste, yours fraternally,

J. BRUCE GLASIER.

84, John Street, Glasgow, Feb. 14.

The *Scotsman* states that the above sum of £24 was collected mostly in copper, which is gratifying evidence of the widely-felt sympathy with the object of the demonstration, notwithstanding the large discount which the capitalist press endeavour to make for "small, ragged, dirty boys," "loafers," and the "respectable people attracted by curiosity." The Branch also distributed 15,000 copies of a stirring, well-written manifesto, which cannot fail to do good in awakening the workers to a sense of the necessity of the Socialists' claim for a change in the basis of Society. Altogether the Branch deserves credit for the admirable manner in which the demonstration was got up and carried through. The news will comfort and encourage the Brotherhood throughout the world.

T. B.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"T. LEMON AND THE S. D. F."

Our friend Sturt's letter should have been sent to *Justice*, as the provocation came in this instance from that quarter. If I had been less moderate and acted with less consideration for the Cause, and unsparingly exposed the "tactics" I only pointed at, it is probable that comrade Sturt's letter would not have been penned, or he might perhaps have shared in the "sore feelings" which in my case provoked the sarcasm, the use of which he deprecates. Removed as he is far from the "madding crowd," and with only partial knowledge of the case before him, he can easily perform the easy task of the candid friend.

F. KITZ.

"ABSENTEEISM."

I quite agree with G. D. L., and yet I hold by the view that if a man receive a thousand pounds or a thousand pounds' worth, it makes no difference where he consumes it. Take the first law of motion, as often expressed: "A body once set in motion will continue to move in the same straight line for ever." It is no contradiction to this law to point to bodies set in motion and then stopping. Again, the law of gravitation is not contradicted by the fact that balloons and other bodies ascend from the earth. Such occurrences merely demand further explanation, which goes towards confirming the general statement.

Suppose that an Irish landlord receives £1000 from his tenant and remains in Ireland. There he spends his £1000—returns it, so to speak, to the Irish; but he returns it for the worth of £1000—he consumes that much. Thus, instead of having a thousand sovereigns less, Ireland has so much less commodities. The landlord, by the hypothesis, does nothing; he simply consumes. How can that increase, *by itself*, the resources of Ireland? Suppose that instead of landlords we had bottomless pits, and that into these pits it was customary to throw rent (Ireland, however, has no pits of her own, so her rents come over to the pits of this country), would Ireland be under any disadvantage then, provided she had not the additional trouble of sending her rents a longer distance? I can see between a landlord and a bottomless pit no difference—except this: a bottomless pit may be harmless, an idle landlord *cannot* be.

Let us again suppose that Irish landowners remained in Ireland and spent their rents there. I am now going to speak of what would happen *under existing circumstances*. Ireland would then become quite a gay, prosperous *looking* place. Population would increase, and the increase would be of the well-to-do. All these well-to-do people, however, called into being by the needs of the landlords, would practically be creatures of the landlords. There would be just as much misery and suffering as there is now—yea, more, the voice of the suffering would never be heard, it could never penetrate the mass of toadyism that lay between it and the free air. I don't suppose Ireland is any worse off just now than England—I am sure she isn't. Perhaps the briefest way to bring this out is to imagine what the effect in England would be if our landlords were to become absentees—were to spend their rents somewhere else. One very marked effect, and about the first, would be an extraordinary diminution in the number of prostitutes (This just reminds me, by the way, of the high virtue ascribed to Irish women, which they doubtless owe to absenteeism.) Following on this diminution in the number of prostitutes would be the disappearance of all sorts of hells; then would go the oily shopkeepers—The reader, however, may be safely left to fill in the picture for himself. England would then assume its real appearance—a sepulchre; now it is a very much whited sepulchre; so much so, indeed, that many think it a gay saloon, and exclaim—poor devils!—"Oh, what a happy place is England!"

Absenteeism is a good thing; it brings home to the commonest understanding the absurdity of landlordism; if practised more widely, would soon lead to its extinction. With all this I don't suppose any will more readily concur than G. D. L.

W. B. R.

It has been decided by the Council of the Social-Democratic Federation that there shall be a Church Parade of its members at St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday afternoon, the 27th of the present month.