



"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. can only be 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.

**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.

*Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday January 12.*

ENGLAND		Chicago (Ill.)—Vorbote	ITALY
Justice	Norwich—Daylight	Milwaukee (Wis.)—Volksblatt	Milan—Il Fascio Operaio
Londoner Arbeiter-Zeitung	Personal Rights Journal	Portland (Oreg.)—Avant-Courier	Turin—Il Muratore
Practical Socialist	To-Day	FRANCE	Rome—L'Emancipazione
National Review	Radical	Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily)	SWITZERLAND
Worker's Friend	Jus	Le Socialiste	Zurich—Sozial Demokrat
		Le Revolte	
		Guise—Le Devoir	SPAIN
		Lille—Le Travailleur	La Justicia Humana
		BELGIUM	Madrid—El Socialista
		Brussels—L'Avant-Garde	Cadiz—El Socialismo
		Liege—L'Avenir	PORTUGAL
		Antwerp—De Werker	Villafranca de Xira—O Campino
		AUSTRIA	Oporto—A Perola
		Vienna—Gleichheit	ROUMANIA
		Arbeiterstimme	Bucharest—Pruncul Roman
		HOLLAND	DENMARK
		Hague—Recht voor Allen	Social-Demokraten
UNITED STATES			
New York—Volkszeitung	Truthseeker		
Der Socialist	John Swinton's Paper		
Boston—Woman's Journal	Cincinnati (O.) Unionist		
Toledo (O.)—Industrial News			

### THE POLITICAL CRISIS.

It is difficult to write about the "Political Crisis" seriously, except so far as contempt may be serious. The bespattering with flattery for their patriotism of those members of the Government who are wanted to take themselves off; the flutter among the lesser men lest they too should be pulled off their perch and be boiled down for gravy for the new coalition pie; the terror of some Conservatives, like the *Standard*, lest Mr. Chamberlain should climb half-way down the tree; Mr. Goschen's anxiety that his position should not be misunderstood, whereas all the while it is as plain as the nose on Mr. Goschen's face that he is a high Tory reactionist. All this is sufficiently grotesque, and once more illustrates happily enough the dignity and honesty of Parliamentary Government, but otherwise does not concern us in the least.

All this on the Tory side; the Liberal position is perhaps a little more noteworthy, but also considerably more discreditable. The confusion in the Tory camp has given them hopes of success once more, and it is quite clear that most of those who may be called the responsible men of the party do in consequence look upon "compromise" in quite a different light from that in which it showed a few weeks ago. There are rumours afloat that Mr. Gladstone is prepared to cut down his Home Rule Bill, feeble as it is already, so that it would amount to nothing but a perpetual English-Irish squabble in the Westminster Parliament. This rumour the *Daily News* denies with all official solemnity; but as it admits the almost plenary power of the "Conference" to be held presently, which will have only one sincere Home Ruler (Mr. Morley) in it, this denial is not of much significance. Mr. Labouchere put the matter on a reasonable footing in his Reading speech when he practically pointed out that no conference between those who were for Home Rule and those who were against it could mean anything but surrender on one side or the other.

Clearly whatever comes of it the Gladstonians are anxious to surrender, if only they can put a good face on it and hoodwink the rank and file of their party to the extreme baseness of the proceeding;

otherwise they would have insisted on genuine Home Rule being made the basis of the Conference. It can scarcely be doubted that the Responsible Liberals will, if they dare, heave the Irish Jonah overboard; the only thing which will prevent them from doing so will be their fear of the consequences of their being accused of his murder when they reach the shore. Even if they do not they will have weakened themselves by their shilly-shally ways; if they do, no man with even the remains of wits in his head will take the trouble to distinguish them from their Tory competitors for loaves and fishes.

The moral to be drawn from these corrupt and degrading dodgings and shirkings is simple. Let the genuine Radicals turn from the collection of incompetent tricksters, and the battered and disgraced idols whom they hold up to our worship, and concern themselves with the serious questions of the day. Shall England make alliance with reactionary powers to crush out Revolution? Must we always have some piratical war on hand in order to conquer a fresh cheating-market for the harm of barbarous countries and our own unhappy population? Must we always have a mass of unemployed workmen hanging about, till to many of them, by the force of habit, work becomes impossible, and they are turned into mere loafers, a constant disgrace and a periodical terror to Society? Are we to be for ever satisfied with bestowing "mere subsistence livelihood" (i.e., semi-starvation) on the lower part of our labouring classes? Are the members of the artizan class for ever to be condemned to live poorly, without leisure or pleasure, in constant anxiety of falling into the gulf below them? Is the lower middle-class for ever to be stupid, vacant, and vulgar, and the upper middle-class to oscillate between blank Philistinism and simpering preciosity? In fine, why are these "classes," and what end do they serve? Let them face these questions un conventionally, and in the spirit of men who have abandoned the idea of finality in politics and social matters, and the old parties will soon be united in desperate opposition to the one Party of Progress, the Socialist Party.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

### A DREAM OF JOHN BALL.

(Continued from p. 13.)

HE said: "Many strange things hast thou told me that I could not understand; yea, some my wit so failed to compass, that I cannot so much as ask thee questions concerning them; but of some matters would I ask thee, and I must hasten, for in very sooth the night is worn old and grey. When thou sayest that in the days to come, when there shall be no labouring men who are not thralls after their new fashion, that their lords shall be many and very many, it seemeth to me that these same lords, if they be many, shall hardly be rich, or but very few of them, since they must verily feed and clothe and house their thralls, so that that which they take from them, since it will have to be dealt out amongst many, will not be enough to make many rich; since out of one man ye may get but one man's work; and pinch him never so sorely, still as aforesaid ye may not pinch him so sorely as not to feed him. Therefore, though the eyes of my mind may see a few lords and many slaves, yet can they not see many lords as well as many slaves; and if the slaves be many and the lords few, then some day shall the slaves make an end of that mastery by the force of their bodies. How then shall thy mastership of the latter days endure?"

"John Ball," said I, "mastership hath many shifts whereby it striveth to keep itself alive in the world. And now hear a marvel: whereas thou sayest these two times that out of one man ye may get but one man's work, in days to come one man shall do the work of a hundred men—yea, of a thousand or more: and this is the shift of mastership that shall make many masters and many rich men."

John Ball laughed. "Great is my harvest of riddles to-night," said he; "for even if a man sleep not, and eat and drink while he is a-working, ye shall but make two men or three at the most out of him."

Said I: "Sawest thou ever a weaver at his loom?"

"Yea," said he, "many a time." He was silent a little, and then said: "Yet I marvelled not at it; but now I marvel, because I know what thou wouldst say. Time was when the shuttle was thrust in and out of all the thousand threads of the warp, and it was long to do; but now the spring-staves go up and down as the man's feet move, and this and that leaf of the warp cometh forward and the shuttle goeth in one shot through all the thousand warps. Yea, so it is that this multiplieth a man many times. But look you, he is so multiplied already; and so hath he been, meseemeth, for many hundred years."

"Yea," said I, "but what hitherto needed the masters to multiply him more? For many hundred years the workman was a thrall bought and sold at the cross; and for other hundreds of years he hath been a villein—that is, a working-beast and a part of the stock of the manor on which he liveth; but then thou and the like of thee shall free him, and then is mastership put to its shifts; for what should avail the mastery then, when he no longer owneth the man by law as his chattel, nor any longer by law owneth him as stock of his land, if the master hath not that which he on whom he liveth may not lack and live withal, and cannot have without selling himself?"

He said nothing, but I saw his brow knitted and his lips pressed together as though in anger; and again I said: "Thou hast seen the weaver at his loom: think how it should be if he sit no longer before the web and cast the shuttle and draw home the sley, but if the shed open of itself and the shuttle of itself speed through it as swift as the eye can follow, and the sley come home of itself; and the weaver standing by and whistling *The Hunt's up!* the while, or looking to half-a-dozen looms and bidding them what to do. And as with the weaver so with the potter, and the smith, and every worker in metals, and all other crafts, that it shall be for them looking on and tending, as with the man that sitteth in the cart while the horse draws. Yea, at last so shall it be even with those who are mere husbandmen; and no longer shall the reaper fare afield in the morning with his hook over his shoulder, and smite and bind and smite again till the sun is down and the moon is up; but he shall draw a thing made by men into the field with one or two horses, and shall say the word and the horses shall go up and down, and the thing shall reap and gather and bind, and do the work of many men. Imagine all this in thy mind if thou canst, at least as ye may imagine a tale of enchantment told by a minstrel, and then tell me what shouldst thou deem that the life of men would be amidst all this, men such as these men of the township here, or the men of the Canterbury guilds."

"Yea," said he; "but before I tell thee my thoughts of thy tale of wonder, I would ask thee this: In those days when men work so easily, surely they shall make more wares than they can use in one country-side, or one good town, whereas in another, where things have not gone as well, they shall have less than they need; and even so it is with us now, and thereof cometh scarcity and famine; and if people may not come at each others' goods, it availeth the whole land little that one country-side hath more than enough while another hath less; for the goods shall abide there in the storehouses of the rich place till they perish. So if that be so in the days of wonder ye tell of (and I see not how it can be otherwise), then shall men be but little holpen by making all their wares so easily and with so little labour."

I smiled again and said: "Yea, but it shall not be so; not only shall men be multiplied a hundred and a thousand fold, but the distance of one place from another shall be as nothing, so that the wares which lie ready for market in Durham in the evening may be in London on the morrow morning; and the men of Wales may eat corn of Essex and the men of Essex wear wool of Wales; so that so far as the flitting of goods to market goes, all the land shall be as one parish. Nay, what say I? Not as to this land only shall it be so, but even the Indies, and far countries of which thou knowest not, shall be, so to say, at every man's door, and wares which now ye account precious and dear-bought, shall then be common things bought and sold for little price at every huckster's stall. Say then, John; shall not those days be merry, and plentiful of ease and contentment for all men?"

"Brother," said he, "meseemeth some doleful mockery lieth under these joyful tidings of thine; since thou hast already partly told me to my sad bewilderment what the life of man should be in those days. Yet will I now for a little set all that aside to consider thy strange tale as of a minstrel from over sea, even as thou biddest me. Therefore I say that if men still abide men as I have known them, and unless these folk of England change as the land changeth—and for sooth of the men, for good and for evil, I can think no other than I think now, or behold them other than I have known them and loved them—I say if the men be still men, what will happen except that there should be all plenty in the land, and not one poor man therein, unless of his own free will he chose to lack and be poor, as a man in religion or such like; for there would then be such abundance of all good things that as greedy as the lords might be, there would be enough to satisfy their greed and yet leave good living for all who laboured with their hands; so that these should labour far less than now, and they would have time to learn knowledge, so that there should soon be no learned and unlearned, for all should be learned; and they would have time also to learn how to order the matters of the parish and the hundred, and of the parliament of the realm, so that the king should take no more than his own; and to order the rule of the realm, so that all men, rich and unrich, should have therein; and so by undoing of evil laws and making of good ones, that fashion would come to an end whereof thou speakest, that rich men make laws for their own behoof; for they should no longer be able to do thus when all had part in making the laws; whereby it would soon come about that there would be no men rich and tyrannous, but all should have enough and to spare of the increase of the earth and the work of their own hands. Yea surely, brother, if ever it cometh about that men shall be able to make things, and not men, work for their superfluities and that the length of travel from one place to another be made of no account, and all the world be a market for all the world, then all shall live in health and wealth; and envy and grudging shall perish. For then shall we have conquered the earth and it shall be enough; and then shall the kingdom of heaven be come down to the earth in very deed. Why lookest thou so sad and sorry? what sayest thou?"

I said: "Hast thou forgotten already what I told thee, that in those latter days a man who hath nought save his own body (and such men shall be far the most of men) must needs pawn his labour for leave to labour? Can such a man be wealthy? Hast thou not called him a thrall?"

"Yea," he said; "but how could I deem that such things could be when those days should be come wherein men could make things work for them?"

WILLIAM MORRIS.

(To be concluded).

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### JOIN HANDS ALL ROUND.

It is known to the readers of 'Josephus' that the cause of the Jewish defeat by the Romans was due to the differences which existed between their various sects, which, instead of uniting together to fight the enemy, exhausted their strength in fighting with each other. The above statement ought to serve as a lesson to us Socialists, Anarchists, Communists, etc. It is painful to see the discord between the various sects, how one attacks the other, and how each one pulls in a different direction. Can any one suppose that with such actions we will ever reach that for which we strive?

We find among us: State Socialists, Revolutionary Socialists, Christian Socialists, Anarchists, Communists, Communistic-Anarchists, Socialistic-Anarchists, and Collectivists; each one of these denounces the others. Yet we are all the children of the same parent, namely—The Present System, and we all aim to free humanity from its chains of slavery. But it may be said: "How can we unite together when we disagree in the means and in the ends?" Nonsense! There are no such differences between Socialism and Anarchism which should render their advocates so antagonistic. It is only owing to the ambition of idealists, who wish to show their ideas superior to those of others; it seems as though we all intended to spend our time, talents, and energy in discussing ideas and deserting the *real work*.

I will now endeavour to show the identity of Socialists and Anarchists in means and in ends. Socialists accuse Anarchists as preachers of violence, but Anarchists never preached unreasoned violence as the means of overthrowing the present system. They are as intelligent as Socialists, and they know that through riots we shall not gain our demands; they preach that violence should be met with violence, and who is justified in asserting the contrary? Anarchists attack Socialists as depriving them of individual liberty. What is individual liberty? Every individual should have liberty to live on this earth; every individual should have liberty to work; every individual should have the liberty to enjoy all the wealth he has produced; and every individual should have liberty to obtain education according to his or her talents. Does not Socialism grant all these liberties? What is the individual liberty which one would not be able to exercise under Socialism? Such individual liberties through which the liberties of others are injured of course would be denied, but this Anarchists admit.

Again, Anarchists are scared at the Socialistic laws, State, Government, but forget that although the same in name it will be different in nature. As regards laws. I do not see what they are afraid of; if they would only carefully consider the Socialistic plan they would realise that laws as they exist now shall cease. In fact, I do not see a necessity for any laws; when you examine the present laws you find the greatest part of them treating on private property; laws regulating capital and labour; laws of bankruptcy, strikes, boycotts, etc.; laws about armies and navies, and so forth. All these, and many others, could not exist under Socialism, and therefore laws will be out of place. The State will not be what it is now, it will merely be as a committee in a society to transact the business of the society. What can such a state do to oppress the people? Even according to the Anarchistic theory there must be some appointed to carry on the business of the group, I mean a medium who shall collect the products from the producers and distribute it to the consumers.

After all, let us not forget that the chains of oppression will be broken, and all will have liberty to live according to their pleasure. There will be no Russian despot or Bismark to prevent. Why should we quarrel about such details while the principal thing is yet so far off? Agitate the Social Revolution to the down-trodden workers and to all other people of sorrow; let us all unite, and thus be better able to fight the enemy. Having said so much, I venture to suggest that a Conference should take place of all the various bodies under the banner of revolution, also such as Trade Unionists, Knights of Labour, at which should be considered the best method for the emancipation of the workers, even the adoption, perhaps, of one common platform for which we could work, so that we may not be like scattered sheep, each going a different direction, but all united under one banner and one name we should march toward the Golden Future.

J. FINN.

Boston, Mass., Dec. 2, 1886.

### "THE PINCH OF POVERTY."

It is pleasant to see how, as soon as one sets to work seriously to consider the present condition of things, he is immediately led towards Socialism. Geo. R. Sims, who has floundered into the question of our present social system, in his article "The Pinch of Poverty" in the *Daily News*, after telling us that "We cannot get rid of poverty altogether," has contrived to discover "any one who wishes to invite the co-operation of the governing classes in attacking the causes of poverty must be hampered by the knowledge that he is inviting the men upon whose support he relies to smash, destroy, and pulverise some of their most cherished and venerated superstitions. Many of the altars upon which the poor are sacrificed are the altars of the very gods whom the rich regard as the presiding deities of their own prosperity;" that "the causes of a vast number of cases of distress among working people" are "too many children and too much rent," and that "one cannot be satisfied with the state of affairs as it now exists." Without entering on his ideas with regard to working folk having too many children, which seem to me to resolve themselves into the belief that working-men and women have no right to the physical constitution of human beings; or else, that there should be greater prostitution; it is well to observe that he has come, somewhat late perhaps, to the conclusion. "Directly we have found out how to give the poor three or four rooms for the price they are now paying for one or two we have commenced operations against one of the attackable causes of over-population." Moreover, "the conditions under which the poor are compelled to live cause them to be vicious, drunken, and improvident. They are housed in a condition favourable to vice, their surroundings are favourable to drunkenness, and the lack of protection given to their earnings and their savings is favourable to improvidence. The poor are systematically overcharged for lodging and for food, and there is little or no security for their savings." In an earlier portion of the same article he says, "Divide a given quantity of anything among a certain number of people, and, if some have considerably more than their share, then some must have considerably less." A truism, certainly, yet one not obvious to all. This sort of writing is surely a mark of progress, coming as it does from one whose delight seems to be his, apparently self-assumed, office of Advertiser-in-Waiting to the Court. G. P.