



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

## 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?"