



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.

A. C., E. P., and others.—Reports too late; must be to hand first post on Tuesday morning.

UNDER CONSIDERATION.—J. S. (Birmingham); D. McC. (Glasgow).

CA IRA.—“Ca Ira” is said to have been first sung in Paris in May or June 1790. The “Carmagnole” became popular about two years later.

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday December 12.

ENGLAND Blackburn—N. E. Daily Gazette Northern Daily Telegraph Justice Labour Tribune London—Freie Presse Norwich—Daylight Personal Rights Journal Railway Review Telegraph Service Gazette Sozial Demokrat Worker's Friend	ALARM Workmen's Advocate Boston—Woman's Journal Liberty Chicago (Ill.)—Yorbote Detroit—Der Arme Teufel Milwaukee—National Reformer St. Louis (Mo.)—Die Parole San Francisco Arbeiter-Zeitung San Francisco Chronicle Coast Seamen's Journal	BELGIUM Ghent—Vooruit Liege—L'Avenir Antwerp—De Werker
NEW SOUTH WALES Hamilton—Radical	FRANCE Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily) Le Parti Ouvrier (daily) La Revolte Le Proletariat Le Ca Ira Lille—Le Cri du Travailleur St.-Etienne—La Loire Socialiste Sedan—La Revolution	ITALY Gazetta Operaia Rome, L'Emancipazione (daily)
INDIA Bankipore—Behar Herald Madras—People's Friend	HOLLAND Hague—Recht voor Allen	SPAIN Barcelona—El Productor Madrid—El Socialista Seville—La Solidaridad
UNITED STATES New York—Der Socialist Freiheit Truthseeker Volkzeitung Jewish Volkszeitung	GERMANY Berlin—Volks Tribune Brunn—Arbeiterstimme Wien—Gleichheit	HUNGARY Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik
		WEST INDIES Cuba—El Productor

IN AND ABOUT COTTONOPOLIS.

ON Sunday the 2nd, I delivered my annual lecture to the Sunday Society at Ancoats to an audience larger than usual. These lectures are not followed by questions and discussion, so there was not much opportunity for finding out what the audience thought about Socialism. The audience seemed, as usual, much made up of the “lower middle-class” and the “aristocracy of labour.” But there was a sprinkling of our comrades of the S.D.F., with whom to help I engaged in a good private discussion at tea (which followed the lecture) with enquirers and carpers, which is also a usual feature of these gatherings. In the evening I went with comrade Hunter Watts to the rooms of the Manchester Branch of the S.D.F., where I addressed our comrades. The members of the branch were almost all of the non-aristocracy of labour, but many of them were as eager and earnest as could be desired. I take it that the above-said aristocracy of labour in Manchester are very shy of Socialism, though it is making very good progress among the labouring class even in Manchester itself. There is also a good deal of sympathy (as it is called) from the definitely well-to-do, who say here as elsewhere: “We agree with you, but—”

On Monday the 3rd, I went to Bolton and lectured (by request) on “Art and Socialism.” The audience was fair only, the room not being full. The chairman was a middle-class man who really seemed in sympathy, and I think the audience was in the main socialistic. The condition of labour in Bolton is very instructive; business is brisk there, very brisk; but there are among the spinners at least 4,000 out of employment, and with no hope of it. Moreover, a great deal of the “employment” that there is, is at starvation wages; the “piecers” often fathers of families work for the noble reward of from 12s. to 13s. a-week! I was told that the engineers here were in a very depressed state of mind after last year's strike, with all its excitement, and were in an attitude of abject humility before their masters; which, dismal as it is, seems to be a natural consequence of defeat in a struggle which had no ideal in it, whose aim was the usual narrow one of strikes in this country.

On the 4th, I went to Blackburn and lectured in the Spinner's Hall, which was not quite filled; our comrade Sharman took the chair. The audience were very eager, and took up all the points well. One or two of the questions asked were to the point, but it seems that these were asked by Socialists. The others were of the usual type, questions asked by persons who expect the lecturer to say so-and-so, and are perhaps put out by his perversity, but nevertheless ask the question they had intended to ask before they heard him.

The open-air meetings have been very brisk in Blackburn, where there is a good open space in which no meetings are interfered with. The branch of the S.D.F. is good here, and there is a strong branch of the S.D.F. at the neighbouring town of Darwen.

On the 5th I had to address a very different audience to these; to wit, the ladies and gentlemen gathered together for the rather mild amusement of listening to artists talking about art. I was not able to get to Liverpool in the morning, and so missed hearing Walter Crane's address; but I was told that he spoke very plainly in condemnation of the present system of production. I myself had a large audience (in the Rotunda), and of course spoke nothing but Socialism. I challenged opposition, as I had heard that some of the capitalists were going to “smash me up”; but I am sorry to say that they thought better of it; and the little that was said turned out to be of a discouraging feebleness, turning on the village-industry and technical education. The next day I heard a paper of Cobden-Sanderson on Craft-Ideals, in which he preached Communism pure and simple. Also an architect, not a Socialist, received applause for asking the question, What was the use of museums and art education if the social condition of the people remained what it is now? I shall have a few words to say about this same congress next week, so I will say no more now.

The evening of the 6th I went to Rochdale and lectured to an audience fair in numbers and otherwise good. It was followed by a long conversational debate, the questions being, as a matter of course, the usual ones, but, by the working men present, asked and stuck to with the pertinacity and in the good-natured bullying manner with which I am familiar in Lancashire and the North generally. Two or three middle-class opponents were of great use to me in enabling me to state my position again and again. One of these said that as far as Rochdale and the neighbourhood generally was concerned I had exaggerated the poverty of the workers! But this I conclude to be a conventional tradition, the birth of the history of the sham co-operation which began with the good intentions of the Rochdale Pioneers, and has now by the confession of very moderate people become a reactionary force, “Divi” being the one thing looked to, and jobbing in “Co-op” shares being a favourite occupation among the small capitalists created by the system.

Anyhow our comrades gave me a very different view of the “prosperity” of the workers of Rochdale, and told me that wages were very low and hours very long there, and that in short the masters had it pretty much their own way. The branch of the S. D. F. is strong in numbers, and has in it some very strenuous and sincere propagandists.

Altogether, except in Liverpool, where there is nothing doing, the S. D. F. branches are doing well in S. Lancashire; the drawback to their usefulness is that they are giving so much attention to electioneering matters; a course of action which, whatever else may be said about it, must trench upon the time which they ought to be giving to learning Socialism thoroughly, so as to be able to hold their own in argument with the non-Socialists around them. I say this in spite of the fact that I talked with some of our comrades who had mastered the subject by dint of very hard work done in the “leisure” which their slavery allows them.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

LIVERPOOL AND ITS POOR.—The *Manchester Guardian* lately printed the following letter from a correspondent:—A week or two ago the Clerk of the Liverpool Select Vestry called attention to the fact that pauperism was increasing in the city. In explanation of the circumstance, he asserted that the accommodation offered to paupers in the Liverpool workhouse was so good that persons who formerly shrank with horror from “the house” were now flocking in, and were even advising their friends to haste to take advantage of parish good cheer. An outsider surveying the social condition of Liverpool may perhaps find some more probable explanation of the increase of pauperism than a desire on the part of the poor to rush into what is known in the Midland counties as the “Bastille.” Two causes operate to produce in Liverpool a large amount of chronic destitution. One is its geographical position, and the other is the nature of the employment offered to its labouring population. Liverpool is the place to which the Irish peasant, driven from home by bad government and landlord rapacity, first directs his steps. It is, in fact, a kind of junction where the poor, not only of Ireland but of Europe, change trains. And a very considerable proportion of these unfortunate persons never get any further, but remain year after year to swell the large squalid population. They are tempted to make Liverpool their home because they have in most cases no technical skill, and nothing but physical strength on which to rely for their daily bread. Now Liverpool affords comparatively little scope for the skilled artisan; it has no manufactures and no great industries requiring the higher kinds of manual dexterity. But it has a great shipping trade, which affords a somewhat precarious employment for men who have nothing to turn into daily bread but brawn and muscle. Great crowds of unskilled labourers herd together in the poor quarters of the city. It is estimated that there are between ten and thirty thousand (authorities differ) dock labourers and cotton porters in Liverpool, and these men do not make, on an average, more than ten shillings per week in wages. It is obvious that a labourer who has a wife and family, whose earnings do not exceed this sum, who is always out of work during many weeks of the winter, may easily—nay, must often—be brought face to face with the alternative of starvation or the poorhouse. It is indeed surprising that there is not a greater proportion of pauperism in Liverpool than actually exists. New persons realise how enormous is the disparity in numbers between the classes which enjoy comfort and comparative security and the classes which are actually destitute or hovering about the brink of poverty. In Liverpool there are over 600,000 inhabitants, but only 17,000 of them pay income-tax on their yearly earnings. That is to say, only about 17,000 persons in Liverpool make £3 a week and over by their daily labour, and of these only 7,000 are returned as earning more than £400 a year. These striking figures show that a little increase in the price of provisions is sufficient to account for an increase of pauperism, without the existence of any consuming passion on the part of the poor to seek the sybaritic retreat of a Liverpool workhouse.