



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.

- CLUB SECRETARY.—We shall be pleased to insert notices of your lectures regularly if you send them in time. We make no charge.
- O. F.—The "White Terror" was that which followed the restoration of the Bourbons in 1815, when the clericals and reactionaries took a wild and sweeping revenge.
- S. F.—"Selections from the Poems of Alex. Petöfi," translated by Henry Phillips, jun., Philadelphia (privately printed), 1885; 12mo. "Translations from Alexander Petöfi," by Sir J. Bowring, London, 1886; 8vo. "Gems from Petöfi and other Hungarian Poets," W. N. Loew; New York, 1881; 8vo. None of these contain any of his revolutionary poetry.
- S. M.—Warren Hastings, Governor-General of India, was tried by the peers of Great Britain for "high crimes and misdemeanours," the taking of bribes, etc. The trial lasted 145 days, covering seven years and three months; beginning February 13, 1788, ending with his acquittal April 23, 1795. Sheridan's was chief among the great speeches delivered in the course of it.
- S. C. H. and J. S. R.—Replies next week.

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday December 19.

ENGLAND	Chicago—Knights of Labor	ITALY
Freedom	Vorbote	Turin—Nuova Gazzetta Operaia
Die Autonomie	Die Fackel	Rome, L'Emancipazione (daily)
Justice	Herald	SPAIN
Labour Tribune	Detroit—Der Arme Teufel	Barcelona—El Productor
London—Freie Presse	San Francisco Arbeiter-Zeitung	Madrid—El Socialista
Montrose Review	Coast Seamen's Journal	PORTUGAL
Norwich—Daylight	Valley Falls (Kan.)—Fair Play	Lisbon—O Protesto Operario
Postal Service Gazette	FRANCE	Porto—A Revolucao Social
Railway Review	Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily)	GERMANY
Rochdale Observer	Le Parti Ouvrier (daily)	Berlin—Volks Tribune
Social Demokrat	La Revolte	AUSTRIA
The Union	Le Proletariat	Wien—Gleichheit
Worker's Friend	Le Coup de Feu	Brunn—Volksfreund
NEW SOUTH WALES	Lille—Le Cri du Travailleur	HUNGARY
Hamilton—Radical	St.-Etienne—La Loire Socialist	Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik
INDIA	HOLLAND	ROMANIA
Banking—Behar Herald	Hague—Recht voor Allen	Jassy—Municipal
Madras—People's Friend	BELGIUM	DENMARK
UNITED STATES	Ghent—Voortuit	Social-Demokraten
New York—Der Sozialist	Liege—L'Avenir	SWEDEN
Truthseeker	Antwerp—De Werker	Malmö—Arbetet
Alarm	SWITZERLAND	Stockholm, Social-Demokraten
Baecker Zeitung	Arbeiterstimme	NORWAY
Workmen's Advocate	Geneva—Przedswit	Kristiania—Social-Demokraten
Boston—Woman's Journal		
Liberty		

TALK AND ART.

THE ART CONGRESS (or whatever is the proper name for it) at which I assisted last week, may easily be made a mark at which to shoot shafts of ridicule. The crowds of lion-worshipping ladies, the many worthy artists set up to speak about an art which is above all things a matter of the instructed eye and deft hand; and many of them into the bargain but poor speakers, in all senses of the word (small blame to them for that same, since above all things their craft is of *doing*). The bands of idle busy-bodies; the stock phrases bandied about by people who, if questioned about them, would have been able to give but a sorry account of their meaning; and which phrases, when repeated to a reasonable person for the fiftieth time, became at last difficult to reply to with the amiable grin expected on the occasion instead of an outburst of the fury within him. All this the outward manifestation of the set of fashion towards "earnestness" in the minor arts is discouraging enough, and I thought I discerned in the faces of my Socialist friends whom I met there some of the shame-facedness which I myself felt. Nor did I wonder that the "manufacturers" lay low under the storm of open denunciation and implied censure and scorn which was the leading feature of the Congress: nay, I had an uncomfortable sensation, as though I could feel them chuckling at our expense, as if they were saying, "Well, after all, this fine gathering for talk, and all its materials, including the well-fed, well-clothed, well housed artists who are abusing us, have passed through our hands before they got here, and by no means unfruitfully for us. You also, our friends the artists, are our slaves, though your tether may be somewhat longer than that of our factory hands; nor do we much heed your talk, for it and your Congress and your village industries do us

no harm on the one hand, and are rather good for trade on the other. In short, we are the masters of the situation, and you cannot help it; and indeed the greater part of you would be very sorry to help it if you could, and sacrifice your comforts to disturbance in the present and severity of life in the future."

That at first seemed to me to be the mocking echo of our talk at Liverpool; and no doubt not one cog or fly-wheel will be displaced in that horrible South Lancashire by all the murmuring sea of talk. Yet after all even this set of fashion against commercial production on one side of it, and the silence of the manufacturers under it, are tokens of the sickness of society and the change drawing near: an epoch whose system is healthy and flourishing does not protest against and is not conscious of any loss which it suffers from the necessary process of that system; it accepts without murmur the gains which the system has brought about, and only thinks of fresh gains to be obtained by the perfecting of the process which has been found necessary to the conditions of life of the passing day. Nor, in spite of their chuckling, are the manufacturers in as good a position as they boast themselves: we know that. They are driven by necessity to find work for the demon which they have created, and which threatens to eat them up. Perhaps it is the knowledge or suspicion of this fact that keeps them silent under the attack of the artists. Else one would have expected to have seen many utterances like a clever letter published the other day in the *Manchester Guardian*, the writer of which told the artists roundly that it was their business to paint and not to talk (meaning, of course, that they should forget that they, scrubs as they are, are citizens), taunting them with wrapping themselves up in the past and not heeding the present world-grief (he used the German word), and reminding people that a spinning-jenny was a much more important thing than a carved chest or an illuminated manuscript.

All this sounds at first sight like common-sense, and even seems to have some elevation of aim in it; but after all it is but clap-trap. Let us forget the grievance of the humbug and hypocrisy that always hangs itself on to every movement that shows discontent with the present, and see what it is that the artists are aiming at, those of them who are in earnest. Their aim, instinctive or conscious, is to make everybody an artist; whereas the aim of the *Guardian* letter-writer (signing himself "P.") is to make everybody a "manufacturer" or a manufacturer's "dependent." To him the spinning-jenny is glorious, not because it produces yarn which the public can use, but because it produces "hands" whom the manufacturers can use; so no wonder that "P." wants the artists to glorify the modern world-grief, since it is the system which he and his live by and have created. "P.'s" aim is to realise a world for the manufacture of market-wares—i.e., manufacturers' profits—made without the will of the makers and in the teeth of their miserable toil.

And what for? That Manchester may be made. And why should Manchester be made? That market-goods bearing a profit may be made. What a lamentable vicious circle! But the artists' aim is that all men should be artists. Folly! cries "P.," and perhaps also some of our readers. But wait a little! What is an artist? A man who works at useful work that is fit for him and according to his own will. Therefore the artists are right in their aim; for when work is so done the world will be happy, but not before. Here is a worthy aim indeed; whereas "P." and his brethren have no aim, nothing more than an instinct for going on living at the expense of the workers.

I say again, in wishing to make all people artists, the artists are absolutely right, whatever follies they may be entangled in while they are still unconscious of their aim and its meaning. But those of them who are worth anything will not long remain unconscious of their aim. They see through the hypocrisy about the world-grief, with which the Philistine tries to sentimentalise filth, stink, and hideousness; their senses as human animals have led them on the right road so far at least as to demand beauty and interest in life for themselves at any rate, and they will soon find out that they cannot have this except by means of the co-operation of the labour that produces the ordinary wares of life; and that co-operation again they cannot have as long as the workmen are dependent on the will of a master. They must co-operate consciously and willingly for livelihood, and out of that free co-operation will spring the expression of individual character and gifts which we call art. Then those spinning-jennies which so affect "P.'s" soul will be used for producing yarns which we want, and not yarns that we only want to sell.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

NOTICE.

Subscribers who find a red mark against this notice are thereby reminded that their subscriptions have expired and must be renewed before the New Year if they wish to continue to receive *Commonweal*.

ENGINE-DRIVERS' HOURS.—What does Colonel Rich mean when, in his report on the collision at the Subway Junction of the Great Western Railway, he presents to the Board of Trade the hours of duty of the engine-driver in such a form as he has selected? He says the driver commenced work at 4.45, but was not working between 9.50 and 12.37 p.m., 1 and 2 p.m., 2.30 and 4 p.m., 4.55 and 5.55 p.m. At 7.13 p.m. he came into collision, but Col. Rich declines to say that he had been on duty 14½ hours, as he had been, simply because between the hours mentioned above the man was not running a train. Is Colonel Rich so ignorant of railway matters as to believe that in those intervals he has quoted the driver had nothing else to do but twirl his thumbs or lie on his back? If he is so credulous as to believe such things, the fact is to be deplored that one holding such a position as he does should be so easily gulled.—*Railway Review*.