



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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C. A.—Ruskin's "Usury: a Reply and a Rejoinder" to the Bishop of Manchester, appeared in the *Contemporary Review* for February 1880, p. 316.

MARSEILLAISE.—The English words usually sung to this air ("Ye sons of France, awake to glory," etc.) were first published (anonymously) in Spence's 'Pigmeat, or Lessons for the Swinish Multitude' for 1793, p. 67.

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday February 15.

ENGLAND	FRANCE	SWITZERLAND
Die Autonomie	San Francisco Arbeiter-Zeitung	Zurich—Sozial Demokrat
Jus	Coast Seamen's Journal	
Justice		SPAIN
Labour Tribune	Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily)	El Productor
Norwich—Daylight	La Revolte	Madrid—El Socialista
Railway Review	L'Autonomie Individuelle	
	Guise—Le Devoir	GERMANY
SOUTH AUSTRALIA		Berlin—Volks Tribune
Adelaide—Our Commonwealth	HOLLAND	AUSTRIA
	Hague—Recht voor Allen	Brunn—Volksfreund
INDIA	Amsterdam—Voorwaarts	Vienna—Gleichheit
Bankipore—Behar Herald		ROMANIA
UNITED STATES	BELGIUM	Jassy—Lupta
New York—Der Sozialist	Seraing (Ougree)—Le Reveil	
Volkszeitung	Ghent—Vooruit	DENMARK
Boston—Woman's Journal	Antwerp—De Werker	Social-Demokraten
Chicago—Alarm	Brussels—L'Avant-Garde	
Vorbote	Liege—L'Avenir	SWEDEN
Denver (Col.) Labor Enquirer		Stockholm, Social-Demokraten
Milwaukee (Wis.)—Volksblatt	ITALY	Malmo—Arbetet
N Haven—Workmen's Advocate	Milan—Il Fascio Operaio	
Providence (R.I.)—The People	Rome—L'Emancipazione	NORWAY
		Kristiania—Social-Democraten

ON SOME "PRACTICAL" SOCIALISTS.

THE study of economics is no doubt necessary for militant Socialists; the more a man knows of them in all their details the more able he is to meet not only the sophistries of the "educated" anti-Socialist, but, which is still more important, the awkward and hard-to-be-answered questions which people who have never thought of these matters at all sometimes stumble on.

Of course, that he should be able to make his knowledge of any use depends on whether he has understood what he has learned, especially in dealing with enquiring ignorance. The "educated" man will sometimes be flooded by a phrase, will retire abashed before "surplus value," and refuse to tackle the iron law of wages, on the same grounds that the Oxford undergraduate declined to give his examiner any information about King David for fear he should be lugged all through the Kings of Judah and Israel; but the ignorant man may require information after he has got over the first shock of the unaccustomed enunciation of the big-worded dogma. So that our student of economy had best be careful to look to it that he can translate his phrases into a language "understood of the people." But when our learner has really got to know something about economics; nay, when he has them at his fingers ends, he still has to beware of another trap, or rather of two more. He has (for as old a Socialist as he may be) to take care that he does not read the present into the future, to suppose that when the monopoly in the means of production has been abolished, and no one can any more live on the labour of others, but must do some recognised service to the community in order to earn his livelihood, yet, nevertheless, people's ways of life and habits of thought will be pretty much as they are now. The other trap generally besets the way of the same kind of Socialist who is apt to fall into the first-named; it is the too entire absorption in the economic view of Socialism, and the ignoring of all its other aspects.

The kind of Socialist who is most likely to be caught by these traps is he who considers himself as specially practical; although the due deduction from the last one at any rate would be the abstention from action of all kinds, and the acceptance of the position of an interested but helpless spectator. Your "practical" man is (very naturally) anxious that some step towards Socialism should be taken at once, and also that it should be taken under definitely Socialist auspices, therefore, he really addresses himself to people who would be likely to be frightened into mere hostility by any apprehension of a large change in the life of Society; he is thinking entirely of the conservative side

of human nature as the thing to be won over, and ignores that which exists just as surely, its revolutionary side. The result is that the wolf of Socialism gets clad in the respectable sheep-skin of a mild economic change; yet not with much success. I have been present on several occasions when this experiment has been tried, and have been much amused by the demeanour of the respectables, who trying to be convinced, or at least to appear to be, have nevertheless showed uneasiness, as if they detected the disguised animal, and noted his glistening teeth and red jaws peeping out from under the soft woolly clothing of moderate progress. Also, though it was less amusing, it was as instructive to note the look of those convinced but not fully instructed Socialists who were present, on whom the sight of the transmogrified sham amiable monster produced nothing but blank disappointment and dismay. Altogether, these occasions have been to me hours of humiliation and discouragement; and I think also that there was no gain in the humiliation; neither I nor the other comrades needed to undergo it. The opponents were not won over by it, they were only confused and puzzled, and made feel as if they had been laughed at.

But I do not mean to say that these one-sided Socialists are generally acting disingenuously, or merely trying to smooth down a hostile audience. I believe, on the contrary, that they do not see except through the murky smoked glass of the present condition of life amongst us; and it seems somewhat strange, not that they should have no vision of the future, but that they should not be ready to admit that it is their own defect that they have not. Surely they must allow that such a stupendous change in the machinery of life as the abolition of capital and wages must bring about a corresponding change in ethics and habits of life; that it would be impossible to desire many things which are now the main objects of desire; needless to guard against many eventualities which we now spend our lives in guarding against; that, in short, we shall burn what we once adored, and adore what we once burned.

Is it conceivable, for instance, that the change for the present wage-earners will simply mean hoisting them up into the life of the present "refined" middle-classes, and that the latter will remain pretty much what they are now, minus their power of living on the labour of others? To my mind it is inconceivable; but if I could think such a prospect likely, I should join with Mr. Bradlaugh (whose idea of the aims of Socialism is probably just this) in a protest against the dull level of mediocrity. What! will, e.g., the family of the times when monopoly is dead be still as it is now in the middle classes, framed on the model of that of an affectionate and moral tiger to whom all is prey a few yards from the sanctity of the domestic hearth? Will the body of the woman we love be but an appendage to her property? Shall we try to cram our lightest whim as a holy dogma into our children, and be bitterly unhappy when we find that they are growing up to be men and women like ourselves? Will education be a system of cram begun on us when we are four years old, and left off sharply when we are eighteen? Shall we be ashamed of our love and our hunger and our mirth, and believe that it is wicked of us not to try to dispense with the joys that accompany procreation of our species, and the keeping of ourselves alive, those joys of desire which make us understand that the beasts too may be happy? Shall we all, in short, as the "refined" middle-classes now do, wear ourselves away in the anxiety to stave off all trouble, emotion, and responsibility, in order that we may at last merge all our troubles into one, the trouble that we have been born for nothing but to be afraid to die? All this which is now the life of refined civilisation will be impossible then.

I have often thought with a joyful chuckle how puzzling, nay inexplicable to the generations of freedom, will be those curious specimens of human ingenuity called novels now produced, and which present with such faithful detail the lives of the middle-classes, all below them being ignored except as so many stage accessories; amongst them all, perhaps, Dickens will still be remembered; and that because of what is now imputed to him as a fault, his fashioning a fantastic and unreal world for his men and women to act in. Surely here again all will be changed, and our literature will sympathise with the earlier works of men's imagination before they learned to spin out their own insides like silkworms into dreary yarns of their sickly feelings and futile speculations; when they left us clear pictures of living things, alive then and for ever. We shall not desire and we shall not be able to carry on the feverish and perverted follies of the art and literature of Commercialism.

I wonder that those who will insist in reading the life of the present into a world economically changed, do not see how they start wrong from the beginning; and I wonder all the more as they are often clear-headed and capable persons.

The competition of the profit-market forces us under our present system to turn our attention overmuch to producing wares with the least possible labour; our epoch is compelled to sacrifice everything to this necessity. Considering the aspect of London and our great manufacturing centres, for instance, it seems that if it were possible for us to go on for long at our present rate of sacrificing to this tyrant of cheap production, the time would come when having to choose between the greater part of us living in cellars and never seeing the sun again, and foregoing the cheapening of cotton cloth by a halfpenny a yard, we should be compelled to choose to submit ourselves to the former—inconvenience. This I say is our necessity at present, because the competition for profits, which is the master of production, is a system of mere waste, first as a war and next as a bonfire, so to say, for the consumption of the product of labour merely in the interests of the power of the proprietary classes. Or may we not say that the gentili-

ties, the luxuries, the pomp of these classes in an ascending scale, from the small villa dweller to the great territorial magnate, are the necessary baits held out to the producing classes to ensure their "content" with the present state of things. "It is true," they proclaim, "that you are in an inferior position now, because you belong to the useful class; but there is no legal disability preventing you from rising out of that class; by means of thrift, self-denial, and clever rapacity, you may attain to this nice stuccoed villa with its 'art objects' and nick-knacks, its smiling obsequious servants, and vacant wife and daughters dressed up to the nine; next, as you grow older and colder and stupider, this mansion awaits you with all the 'refinements of civilisation,' flunkies, libraries, parties, seats in Parliament and the rest of it; and at last, when you have really come to believe in yourself as a benefactor to the human race, because you, once the robbed, have become a robber on the very largest scale, here is your park with its surrounding acres, and the state and majesty of a landed gentleman amongst the toilers afield who have even less than you began with when you were a useful man. There shall you found a family, take a peerage, and die universally respected."

Expensive baits these! Yet necessary while classes last, since the lapse of time has evolved us out of the simpler systems of chattel slavery and serfdom.

I won't go into figures as to the cost of these two gulfs of waste necessary to the stability of our present system, the waste of commercial war, the waste of the supporting a proprietary class with all its camp-followers and hangers-on; nor do I suppose that we shall ever know how prodigious a waste we have saddled ourselves with in this matter; but it is clear that it is prodigious. Well, under the new conditions of Society commercial war will have died out, and with it the wasteful occupations that support it; and class-rule will have disappeared, so that its waste will have gone; labour will no longer be directed in the interest of the profit-grinder or the idler, and the task of the producers will be so easy, that the dogma which our pessimist friends now hold that men will always do their work in the way which gives them least trouble (understood whatever sacrifices they have to make for it), will cease to have any meaning; because there will practically be no longer any compulsion to work.

Mark Twain says, apropos of Tom Sawyer's white-washing, that work is labour that we are compelled to do, and pleasure labour that we choose to do, which we beg our economico-pessimist friends to remember.

Meantime, I hold that we need not be afraid of scaring our audiences with too brilliant pictures of the future of Society, nor think ourselves unpractical and utopian for telling them the bare truth, that in destroying monopoly we shall destroy our present civilisation. On the contrary, it is utopian to put forward a scheme of gradual logical reconstruction of society which is liable to be overturned at the first historical hitch it comes to; and if you tell your audiences that you are going to change so little that they will scarcely feel the change, whether you scare any one or not, you will certainly not interest those who have nothing to hope for in the present Society, and whom the hope of a change has attracted towards Socialism. It is a poor game to play (though so often played in politics) to discourage your friends in order to hoodwink your foes for a brief space. And certainly the Socialists who are always preaching to people that Socialism is an economic change pure and simple, are very apt to repel those who want to learn for the sake of those who do not.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

LITERARY NOTES.

'Prison Poems; or, Lays of Tullamore' (*Nation* office, Dublin, 6d.) consists of a number of songs and parodies—chiefly political—written by T. D. Sullivan during his imprisonment in Tullamore gaol, which show that the writer of "God Save Ireland" and "A Song from the Backwoods" has not lost his old power. This is his description of Tullamore and his prison life;

Oh, Tullamore Gaol is a charming
place
(Bang the bolts and clatter the tins),
'Tis Loyalty's school for the Irish race
(At six a.m. the trouble begins).
Rub and scrub, and tramp away,
Pull and pick, and hammer all day,
Smash the stones and turn the clay
(And mourn for your political sins).

A dear old man is Featherstone-Haugh
(Bang the bolts and clatter the tins).
As tender and sweet as a circular-saw
(At six a.m. the trouble begins).

He describes the Irish Secretary as

A being thin and shanky, white of visage, tall and lanky,
Looking ill at ease and cranky, came and stood upon the floor;
In his hands some keys he dangled, keys that harshly clinked and jangled,
And over his right optic a large pane of glass he wore—
When it fell, he slowly raised it, and replaced it as before—
This he did, and nothing more.

It was a great shame that in a country so wealthy as this, a country which possesses such magnificent resources, they had thousands of people wanting bread.—*Mr. Mundella, M.P.*

The ultimate purpose of the State is not to rule men, to keep them in fear, to subject them to the will of others, but, on the contrary, to allow each as far as possible to live in security; that is, to preserve for each his natural right to live without harm to himself or his neighbour.—*Spinoza.*

The Shade of Judge Jeffreys to the English Bench.

"I'll be judge, I'll be jury,
Said cunning old Fury,
I'll judge you, condemn you, and put you to death."
—*Alice in Wonderland.*

Bravo, my masters! So ye still inherit
A portion of your father Jeffreys' spirit!
It glads my ghost, in these degenerate days
Of manners mild and philanthropic ways,
That still my true-born children of the ermine
Can twist a law to snare these pestilent vermin,
These noisy, stubborn, socialistic knaves,
Who crack their crowns upon policemen's staves,
Because, forsooth (may gallows' grace betide 'em!)
Their precious British birthright is denied 'em—
The right of bawling in the highways. Fudge!
Would they had come to Jeffreys as their judge!
For then, I vow, ere justice had been baffled,
The rogues had known the pillory or scaffold,
And paid such price for treasonable guile,
As erst paid Sidney and the Lady Lisle.

Heigh-ho; I mind me, times are changed since then!
But ye, my hearties, quit ye still like men
In this same fight wherein I fought of yore—
The worthy rich against the worthless poor.
Flinch not, my big-wig bullies of the bench!
'Tis your inheritance to wrest and wrench
The sense o' the laws, intimidate the jury,
And win by fraud where I prevailed by fury.
Flinch not, nor question they deserve it well,
But sentence, sentence to the felon's cell;
Till every factious rascal sees with awe
'Tis Jeffreys' self still animates the law!

H. S. S.

THE STORY OF A DRESS COAT.

THE Paris correspondent of a Swiss journal tells a quaint tale of a dress-coat. Maxime Lisbonne, the Communist, received an invitation to present himself, along with other political guests, at the palace of the President. He accepted, and duly attended. It was necessary that he should renounce his Communist nonconformity for the occasion, and conform to the present evil world by appearing before Citizen Carnot in a dress-coat. This temporary backsliding from primitive principles in dress was naturally viewed with distrust and suspicion by his revolutionary comrades, and he was called upon to defend himself before the "Equals of Montmartre." "Citizens," said he, "it is true that I have visited the President of the Republic. I can assure you that he receives the people in a good and honourable manner. But you will ask, why should I, Lisbonne, and not another, have gone to the palace of the President as the representative of the people? For a very good reason; I was the only one who possessed a dress-coat." "How did you get it?" shouted several voices; "have you been herding with the Aristos?" "Citizens," continued Maxime Lisbonne, "you are aware that I am an actor. I had a dress-coat in which I performed the part of the Manager in 'Thirty Years; or, the Life of an Actor' at the Bouffes du Nord. I found this old coat somewhat out of fashion and stained with grease spots, from which I cleansed it with spirits. One of Citizen Carnot's guests as he passed him sniffed at me and observed, 'It is a notion which would have occurred to nobody except a revolutionist to perfume himself with petroleum.'" The "Equals" were disarmed of their suspicions, and laughed heartily. Lisbonne told his *frères et amis* that he regarded the "aristocratic old coat" as the common property of all, and that it would be at the service of any comrade who might need it for a public occasion.

COMMUNE CELEBRATION.

THE annual celebration of the Commune of Paris is this year being organised by the Socialist League and the Social Democratic Federation. It is intended to make the celebration as distinctively English as possible, at the same time representatives of our foreign Socialist brethren will be invited to attend and speak on the occasion.

The 18th of March this year falls on a Sunday, and it is hoped that either a theatre or large hall will be secured for the celebration. Should, however, it be found impossible to obtain a suitable place on the Sunday, the meeting will then be held on the Saturday, *i.e.*, the 17th of March.

It is intended to make the celebration a large and imposing one, and that this may be done funds must be collected for the printing and hiring of the meeting-place, etc. Friends and comrades are earnestly asked to take in hand the collection of money, for which purpose cards will be issued. Donations may be sent to Comrade CLIFTON (S.D.F.), Treasurer; or to H. A. BARKER (S.L.), Secretary, 13, Farringdon Road, E.C.

[All monies received at the above address will be duly acknowledged in these columns.]

Just fancy in this democratic country Mr. Blunt in prison and Mr. Balfour in the House of Commons.—*Sir Wilfred Lawson.*

In my own private concerns with mankind I have observed that to kick a little when under imposition has a good effect. A little sturdiness when superiors are much in the wrong sometimes occasions consideration, and there is truth in the old saying that if you make yourself a sheep the wolves will eat you.—*Franklin.*