



OFFICES: 24 GREAT QUEEN STREET, LONDON, W.C.

HAVE YOU NOT HEARD HOW IT HAS GONE WITH MANY A CAUSE BEFORE NOW: FIRST, FEW MEN HED IT; NEXT, MOST MEN CONTEMN IT; LASTLY, ALL MEN ACCEPT IT—AND THE CAUSE IS WON!

THE COMMONWEAL is the official organ of the Socialist League; but, unless definitely so announced by the Editors, no article is to be taken as expressing in more than a general way the views of the League as a body. In accordance with the Manifesto and Statement of Principles of the League, the COMMONWEAL is an exponent of International Revolutionary Socialism. On minor differences of opinion the widest freedom of discussion is maintained. As all articles are signed, no special significance attaches to their position in the paper.

Articles and letters dealing with any phase of the social problem are invited and will meet with earnest consideration. They must be written on one side of the paper only, and accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication. MSS. can only be returned if a stamped directed envelope accompanies them.

Advertisements can only be inserted if unobjectionable in all particulars. Scale of charges and special quotations may be obtained from the Manager.

Subscriptions, including postage:—For British Islands, Europe, United States, and Canada, a year, 6s.; six months, 3s.; three months, 1s. 6d.

Remittances should be made in postal orders or halfpenny stamps.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- C. K. B. (Sherborne).—Thanks; will be used.
- G. P. (Lancaster).—Your letter is much too long for publication in our overcrowded columns.
- J. P. (Norwich).—We have written for the information, as you ask us to keep the matter quiet.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
Notes on News	MORRIS and SPARLING 385
The Men of the Revolution:—Danton and Marat	D. J. NICOLL 386
In the United States	H. F. CHARLES 387
American Catholics on the Labour Question	H. F. C. 387
Monopoly	WILLIAM MORRIS 388
Correspondence 389
Out of the House of Bondage	C. W. BECKETT 389
Revolutionary Calendar 389
The Labour Struggle	D. J. NICOLL 390
Executive Announcements, Reports, Lecture Diary, and Notices of Meetings	391
Advertisements, New Publications, etc., etc.	392

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday December 4.

ENGLAND	Boston—Woman's Journal	SWITZERLAND
Brotherhood	The Dawn	Arbeiterstimme
Church Reformer	Investigator	ITALY
Christian Socialist	Buffalo—Arbeiter-Zeitung	Rome—L'Emancipazione
Justice	Chicago (Ill)—Vorboten	SPAIN
Labour Elector	Detroit—Der Arme Teufel	Madrid—El Socialista
Labour Tribune	San Francisco Arbeiter-Zeitung	PORTUGAL
London—Freie Presse	Philadelphia—United Labour	Lisbon—O Protesto Operario
Norwich—Daylight	Princeton (Mass.)—Word	GERMANY
Railway Review	S. F.—Coast Seamen's Journal	Berlin—Volks Tribune
Worker's Friend	FRANCE	AUSTRIA
L'Associazione	Paris—La Revolte	Wien—Arbeiter-Zeitung
INDIA	Le Proletariat	Brunn—Volksfreund
Bankipore—Behar Herald	La Revue Europeenne	DENMARK
Madras—People's Friend	Bourse du Travail	Social-Demokraten
UNITED STATES	HOLLAND	Copenhagen—Arbejderen
New York—Der Sozialist	Hague—Recht voor Allen	SWEDEN
Truthseeker	Middelburg—Licht en Waarheid	Malmö—Arbetet
Jewish Volkszeitung	BELGIUM	Stockholm, Social-Demokraten
Twentieth Century	Antwerp—De Werker	ARGENTINE REPUBLIC
United Irishman	Ghent—Vooruit	Buenos Ayres—Vorwärts
Workmen's Advocate	Liege—L'Avenir	

MONOPOLY.

I WANT you to consider the position of the working-classes generally at the present day: not to dwell on the progress that they may (or may not) have made within the last five hundred or the last fifty years, but to consider what their position is relatively to the other classes of which our society is composed: and in doing so I wish to guard against any exaggeration as to the advantages of the position of the upper and middle-classes on one side and the disadvantages of the working-classes on the other side; for in truth there is no need for exaggeration; the contrast between the two positions is sufficiently startling when all admissions have been made that can be made. After all, one ought not to go further than the simple statement of these few words: *The workers are in an inferior position to that of the non-workers.*

When we come to consider that everyone nowadays admits that labour is the source of wealth—or, to put it in another way, that it is a law of nature for man generally that he must labour in order to live—we must all of us come to the conclusion that this fact, that the workers' standard of livelihood is lower than that of the non-workers,

is a startling fact. But startling as it is, it may perhaps help out the imaginations of some of us—at all events of the well-to-do, if I dwell a little on the details of this disgrace, and say plainly what it means.

To begin, then, with the foundation; the workers eat inferior food and are clad in inferior clothes to those of the non-workers. This is true of the whole class: but a great portion of it are so ill-fed that they not only live on coarser or nastier victuals than the non-producers, but have not enough even of these to keep up their vitality duly; so that they suffer from the diseases and the early death which come of semi-starvation: or why say semi-starvation? let us say plainly most of the workers are starved to death. As to their clothes, they are so ill clad that the dirt and foulness of their clothes forms an integral part of their substance, and is useful in making them a defence against the weather; according to the ancient proverb, "Dirt and grease are the poor man's apparel."

Again, the housing of the workers is proportionately far worse, as far as the better-off of them go, than their food or clothing. The best of their houses or apartments are not fit for human beings to live in, so crowded as they are: they would not be, even if one could step out of their doors into gardens or pleasant country or handsome squares; but when one thinks of the wretched sordidness and closeness of the streets and alleys that they actually do form, one is almost forced to try to blunt one's sense of fitness and propriety, so miserable they are. As to the lodgings of the worse-off of our town workers, I must confess that I only know of them by rumour, and that I dare not face them personally; though I think my imagination will carry me a good way in picturing them to me. One thing, again, has always struck me much in passing through poor quarters of the town, and that is the noise and unrest of them, so confusing to all one's ideas and thoughts, and such a contrast to the dignified calm of the quarters of those who can afford such blessings.

Well! food, clothes, and housing—those are the three important items in the material condition of men, and I say flatly that the contrast between those of the non-producers and those of the producers is horrible, and that the word is no exaggeration. But is there a contrast in nothing else—education, now? Some of us are in the habit of boasting about our elementary education: perhaps it is good as far as it goes (and perhaps it isn't), but why doesn't it go further? In ordinary parlance, *elementary* is contrasted with *liberal* education. You know in the class to which I belong, the professional or parasitical class, if a man cannot make some pretence to read a Latin book, and doesn't know a little French or German, he is very apt to keep it dark as something to be ashamed of, unless he has some real turn towards mathematics or the physical sciences to cover his historical or classical ignorance; whereas if a working-man were to know a little Latin and a little French, he would be looked on as a very superior person, a kind of genius—which, considering the difficulties which surround him, he would be: inferiority again, you see, clear and plain.

But after all, it is not such scraps of ill-digested knowledge as this that give us the real test of the contrast; this lies rather in the taste for reading and the habit of it, and the capacity for the enjoyment of refined thought and the expression of it, which the more expensive class really has (in spite of the disgraceful sloppiness of *its* education), and which unhappily the working or unexpensive class lacks. The immediate reason for that lack I know well enough, and that forms another item of contrast: it is the combined leisure and elbow-room which the expensive class considers its birthright, and without which, education, as I have often had to say, is a mere mockery; and which leisure and elbow-room the working class lacks, and even "social reformers" expect him to be contented with that lack. Of course you understand that in speaking of this item I am thinking of the well-to-do artizan, and not the squalid, hustled-about, misery-blinded and hopeless wretch of the fringe of labour—*i.e.*, the greater part of labour.

Just consider the contrast in the mere matter of holidays, for instance. If a professional man (like myself, for instance) does a little more than his due daily grind—dear me, the fuss his friends make of him! how they are always urging him not to overdo it, and to consider his precious health, and the necessity of rest and so forth! and you know the very same persons, if they found some artizan in their employment looking towards a holiday, how sourly they would treat his longings for rest, how they would call him (perhaps not to his face) sot and sluggard and the like; and if he has it, he has got to take it against both his purse and his conscience; whereas in the professional class the yearly holiday is part of the payment for services. Once more, look at the different standard for the worker and the non-worker!

What can I say about popular amusements that would not so offend you that you would refuse to listen to me? Well, I must say something at any cost—*viz.*, that few things sadden me so much as the amusements which are thought good enough for the workers; such a miserable killing—*yea*, murder—of the little scraps of their scanty leisure time as they are. Though, indeed, if you say that there is not so much contrast here between the workers' public amusements and those provided for the middle classes, I must admit it, with this explanation, that owing to the nature of the case, the necessarily social or co-operative method of the getting up and acceptance of such amusements, the lower standard has pulled down the whole of our public amusements; has made, for instance, our theatrical entertainments the very lowest expression of the art of acting which the world has yet seen.

Or again, a cognate subject, the condition of the English language at present. How often I have it said to me, You must not write in a literary style if you wish the working classes to understand you.

Now at first sight that seems as if the worker were in rather the better position in this matter; because the English of our drawing-rooms and leading articles is a wretched mongrel jargon that can scarcely be called English, or indeed language; and one would have expected, *a priori*, that what the workers needed from a man speaking to them was plain English: but alas! 'tis just the contrary; I am told on all hands that my language is too simple to be understood by working-men, that if I wish them to understand me I must use an inferior quality of the newspaper jargon, the language (so called) of critics and "superior persons"; and I am almost driven to believe this when I notice the kind of English used by candidates at election time, and by political men generally—though of course this is complicated by the fact that these gentlemen by no means want to make the meaning of their words too clear.

Well, I want to keep as sternly as possible to the point that I started from—viz., that there is a contrast between the position of the working classes and that of the easily-living classes, and that the former were in an inferior position in all ways. And here at least we find the so-called friends of the working classes telling us that the producers are in such a miserable condition that if they are to understand our agitation we must talk *down* to their slavish condition, not straightforwardly to them as friends and neighbours—as *men*, in short. Such advice I neither can nor will take; but that this should be thought necessary shows that, in spite of all hypocrisy, the master-class know well enough that those whom they "employ" are their slaves.

To be short, then, the working-classes are, relatively to the upper and middle-classes, in a degraded condition, and if their condition could be much raised from what it is now, even if their wages were doubled and their work-time halved, they would still be in a degraded condition, as long as they were in a position of inferiority to another class—as long as they were dependent on them—unless it turned out to be a law of nature that the making of useful things necessarily brought with it such inferiority!

Now, once again, I ask you very seriously to consider what that means, and you will, after consideration, see clearly that it must have to do with the way in which industry is organised amongst us, and the brute force which supports that organisation. It is clearly no matter of race; the highest noble in the land is of the same blood for all he can tell as the clerk in his estate office, or his gardener's boy. The grandson or even the son of the self-made man may be just as refined, and also quite as unenergetic and stupid as the man with twenty generations of titled fools at his back. Neither will it do to say, as some do, that it is a matter of individual talent or energy. He who says this, practically asserts that the whole of the working-classes are composed of men who individually do not rise above a lowish average, and that all of the middle-class men rise above it; and I don't think any one will be found who will support such a proposition, who is himself not manifestly below even that lowish average. No! you will, when you think of this contrast between the position of the producing and the non-producing classes, be forced to admit first that it is an evil, and secondly that it is caused by artificial regulations; by customs that can be turned into more reasonable paths; by laws of man that can be abolished, leaving us free to work and live as the laws of nature would have us. And when you have come to those two conclusions, you will then have either to accept Socialism as the basis for a new order of things, or to find some better basis than that; but you will not be able to accept the present basis of society unless you are prepared to say that you will not seek a remedy for an evil which you know can be remedied.

Let me put the position once more as clearly as I can, and then let us see what the remedy is.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

J. BRONTERRE O'BRIEN OR HENRY GEORGE.

Sir,—Many years ago a Mr. John Days left London for America (Kansas or California), and took out with him a quantity of the late Mr. Bronterre O'Brien's writings. Now I have been told upon very good authority that George having fell in company with Days, and having read O'Brien's papers, etc., etc., got his initial ideas from this source. Seeing Mr. T. F. Walker's letter in last week's issue of the *Commonweal*, it might be interesting to some of your readers to know if it were possible to ascertain how far the statement is true, as it might appear there existed a desire in some quarters to blot the memory of a man and a scholar, who suffered much and died poor "for conscience sake." Any light thrown on the above would oblige.—Yours faithfully,
GEORGE E. HARRIS.
3, Northumberland Street, Marylebone, W., Dec. 2, 1889.

The Detroit *Evening News* said in a recent editorial: "The logic of Democracy is Anarchism, and the logic of Republicanism is State Socialism or Communism."

The *Patrick Henry* is the title of a new weekly paper published at Springfield, Mo. It is the organ of the Order of Anti-Monopolists, "and of all who strive for justice."

The first number of the *Eight Hour Herald* was issued November 3, at 824 Howard Street, San Francisco. It is to appear monthly, and will be edited by Myles L. Fasland.

The veteran labour advocate, John Swinton, is still very ill, and has been ordered by the doctor to the Mediterranean for a year. He has probably reached Nice by this-time, as he was to leave New York on the 2nd. Wherever he goes, the good wishes of all Socialists will be with him.

OUT OF THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE.

How say ye, friends, are they in fun
Who boast that slavery's day is done?
Think of the lives ye lead, and say
If slavery yet abides, or nay.

Or think ye then the fates decree
The few to lives of luxury,
The mass to poverty and pain?
Slaves ye are, and shall remain.

Or in another world than this
Hope ye for homes of hazy bliss,
Where earthly loss is heavenly gain?
Slaves ye are, and shall remain.

Or bide ye till your masters yield
Of their free grace the powers they wield?
Shall they bow down to loose your chain?
Slaves ye are, and shall remain.

Or strive ye each for self alone?
Not thus can Mammon be o'erthrown.
Who fights but singly, fights in vain.
Slaves ye are, and shall remain.

Then cast off sloth and slavish fear,
Make heaven a thing of now and here,
Nor wait upon your lords' good-will,
Or, sooth, ye may be waiting still.

But marshal you in order fair,
Wait for the word, then forward bear
The flag that, fluttering in the van,
Claims equal rights for every man.

Lo, at the shout of Liberty,
Yon braggart hirelings break and flee!
Your day doth dawn, their star doth wane;
Free shall ye be, and shall remain.

C. W. BECKETT.

REVOLUTIONARY CALENDAR.

WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 14, 1889.

8	Sun.	1643. John Pym died. 1806. Trial of Thomas Kilmartin and John Killerlane, "Thrashers," at Sligo, acquitted; and of Patrick Fagan, death. 1837. Faneuil Hall meeting on Lovejoy's assassination; Wendell Phillips' first speech. 1881. Trial of General Mrovisky for having overlooked the dynamite mine laid under the street (M. Sadovays) where the Czar had to pass. The session of the Senate was held on this occasion in a cheese-shop.
9	Mon.	1789. John Stockdale tried for libel on the House of Commons. 1793. Trial of John Lambert, printer, and James Perry and James Gray, proprietors, of the <i>Morning Chronicle</i> , for "seditious libel" in publishing an address of a meeting of the Society for Political Information held at Derby, addressed "to the Friends of Free Inquiry and the General Good." 1793. Trial of Wm. Hudson, M.D., for "seditious words" uttered in the London Coffee House, Ludgate Hill, on Oct. 1, when he called "George Guelph" a "German hog-butcher, a dealer in human flesh by the carcass." 1824. Battle of Ayacucho.
10	Tues.	1805. W. L. Garrison born. 1828. Beranger imprisoned for his political songs. 1839. Special Assize opened at Monmouth for the trial of Chartists concerned in the late rising. 1840. Thos. F. Burke born. 1855. August Spies born.
11	Wed.	1792. Trial of the French king; lasts till 16th.
12	Thur.	1653. Cromwell made Protector. 1806. Coll. Laurence, and Chas. Flynn, Thomas Horan, Daniel Regan, and Daniel Callaghan, "Thrashers," sentenced to death at Castlelar.
13	Fri.	1204. Maimonides died. 1799. Heine born. 1867. Clerkenwell explosion. 1884. London Bridge explosion.
14	Sat.	1799. George Washington died. 1831. Affray at Carrickshock between police and people, caused by the attempt of the latter to get at a process server who was serving latitats for tithes; killed, two countrymen, eleven constables, and the chief of police; many wounded. 1873. Agassiz died. 1883. Herr Hlubeck, police superintendent of Florsdorf, a suburb of Vienna, killed after leaving a Socialist meeting.

We are not disputing the theory that emigration from "countries where population is congested" is a cure. Indeed, given a wise selection of the emigrants, we readily admit that the remedy is not only a remedy but a good one. Let the idle rich, the wasteful aristocrats and plutocrats, and the devourers of industry generally be induced to emigrate, and the useful classes—the industrious wealth producers—will be at once relieved. Will great statesmen never learn that it is not the number of competent seamen that endanger the safety of the Ship of State? If there are leaks in the hold the wreck will not be averted by compelling the workers among the crew to walk the plank, but by stopping the leaks and compelling the idlers to man the pumps.—*Journal of United Labour*.

A correspondent closes his letter thus: "I admire your work and appreciate the work of all others in the same direction, although I am too cowardly at the present time to openly avow myself before the community. But I am gradually growing bolder." How do you manage to look yourself in the face? What do you suppose will become of you if you know the right and do it not? "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" These questions are not asked to rebuke you, because I know that it *does* require iron courage to do right. But did you ever think how much better it is to thoroughly respect yourself than to have gold or place or power that you would not have if you did not exchange your self-respect for it?—*Twentieth Century*.