The great lesson which mankind has to learn is, how they may most speedily deliver themselves from the economical and political theories which enslave them to-day. To aid them in the performance of this discovery, the Socialist teachers tell us that the great children we have been from time immemorial engaged in riveting or polishing their chains, though truth and freedom have not always wanted worthy advocates. I rely greatly on the sacredness of the Cause, and trust my existence, my integrity, and sincerity will be supported by other qualities which nature may have denied me. If the popular mind be disenfranchised, the road to liberty will be short and easy. The people of the world, in my opinion, is to destroy them as best. The life of nations have necessarily their paroxysms when the principle of laissez-faire, after a protracted struggle, is overcome by the principle of change. The work of years is then crowded into a day, enthusiasm and passion are enlisted in the service of wisdom, and re-Enslaved, life is sacrificed, but society emerges from the turmoil advanced whole centuries beyond the point at which it stood at the beginning of the revolution. In this country, the people of view, since the days of the American revolution and they have too frequently conned innovations imperceptible from their minuteness in imitation, as they do, of time, which, though the greatest of all innovators, brings about its changes by slow degrees. But this, to my mind, is timidity, shallow rig our will be the disaster to the rulers and monopolists, the greatest cause of avoiding them is by ceasing to exist as rulers and monopolists and taking their fair share of the world's useful work. C. W. Mowbray.

(Coal in Kent.)

The news that coal had been discovered in Kent, and that it would provide employment, has rather revived the hopes and expectation to some hearts and of terror to others. Amongst those who have anything to lose, those who are able to live in tolerably pleasant places without being too stupid by poverty to prevent their enjoyment, the idea of coal is an interesting theme, and I think the latter feeling prevails. The thread of the creation of the new black country on the ruins of the rural beauty of some of the most beautiful and delightful, and close to the towns, the most well-to-do people, who do not claim direct relationship with Mr. Podsnap, as a real terror not to be compensated by the hope of that vague and somewhat doubtful advantage, additional commercial prosperity. This feeling seems pretty evenly through the conventional midwifery which is being written in the newspapers about the splendour of the discovery, and the splendid energy of that great and beneficent employer of labour, Sir Edward Watkin, whose virtue this grand discovery is advertising in a quite providential manner. We know pretty well that though a few capitalists may make fortunes over the job, and a few landlords fill their pockets with the royalties for working the collieries, there will be no benefit to the people, and no distress to the well-to-do public a ghastly disaster, which will not be compensated by the possible reduction in the price of coal used for household purposes; a benefit which would be obtained at a much lower price by compelling the railways to carry the coal at reasonable rates. (I say nothing about the profits of the coal-masters and the royalties of the landlords of the existing coal-fields, as they should go to the miners and other workmen engaged in getting the coal and making it marketable).

But some of our working-men readers will perhaps cry out, "O damnable class principles!" (a sentiment in which a knowledge of facts compels me to concur), "Won't this new discovery be a great benefit to the workers?"

Well, I don't think Socialist working-men are under any delusions on the subject of coal strikes. I know precisely well that whatever may suffer from the establishment of a new manufacturing hell in the south-east of England, will not be compensated to them by any amount of profit, for instance, to the colliery owners. They have been informed by this time that Sir Edward Watkin and his pals will stick to whatever swag they may fill out of Kentish coal, which belongs to the people not to them, and will only yield to the workers what will be oozed out of the coal-field by the sweat of their brows.

But to non-Socialist workers I must point out that whatever gains may be made will pass them by. The new coal-fields will give employment to a limited number of men, and the rate of wages of workers there now, is wages which just take the place of the slaves' housing and rations of old centuries; wages also subject to all the precariousness which curses the lives of all other workers at present. It will of course be industrious, but that is a wrong and a wicked. Well, if we are so permanently and generally, with such an article of necessity as coal, it will on the other hand reduce the wages of the workers. The only advantage of the present condition of the London workers is concerned, it will leave them in the same condition as they are in now, and will but destroy the beauty of the country which will one day be theirs in reality, and not in name only as it is now. The wonder is that to this extent will waste more of the labour of the workers than they do now; but no poor man will have advanced one step nearer towards the attainment of wealth, that is, to a decent enjoyable life.

For the rest, so far, a merely manufacturing district is the thing of all others which are based on the opportunity. Poor Tom Dooley, forever, and if you (and I think you can) you can take the yield of victuals from the fields of Kent, and you will have done some good; for though the profit-monger with in the present eat up the extra produce, and keep it from reach- ing the poor, and all who have the means to buy the extra produce, and all who are in the interest of the working man, and monopolist capitalism (i.e., class robbery) it would at once become real would be to be used by our tooming population.

But fresh are the manufacturers for producing the inanities and abominations of civilization, what shall we say about them? This—i.e., the present they are instruments for carrying on the robbery of the poor by the rich, for producing counters to be used in the gambling market, which at once dominates and supports the capitalistic system of production. That is one function of their production; and the other is the making of goods for poor people, which none but poor people (i.e., slaves) would buy. But if the working man is poor, and is not the interest of the poor, will be the office of the manufacturing districts in the present if we are cursed with them. And in the future when we have become free, and no longer need the toys of the foe, the rage of the slave, what shall we do with them? They will be mere nuisances to be got rid of at the expense of labour and trouble.

Let us hope, then, that coal in Kent will turn out an empty scare; this nothing but a blatant advertisement for the working man's friend, Sir Edward Watkin.

William Morrell.

CORRESPONDENCE.

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIALISM.

Mr. Rickaby's letter, though written in a friendly and conciliatory spirit, requires, I think, some answer. Let it be admitted that Christianity, like all religions, was an inclusion of a system of morals in common with Socialism. Let it also be admitted that many of the "seers and unjust charges" of which Mr. Rickaby writes, are aimed at the stupidities of the Christian Socialism of to-day. Kirchbach, at least, whose stamp sincerely condemned; granted this, yet if Christianity is "a revelation addressed to all ages" it can be neither as to political and social institutions, which, if they are to be binding on men's consciences, and not merely pieces of arbitrary coercion, must be founded on a system of morals and political the social facts or a theory of life in which people have ceased to believe. At the risk of offending "real Christians," however well-meaning or honest they may, we must not overlook the fact that Christianity also, under its present form, has only been an instrument of the rich and powerful. Mr. Rickaby's contrast between real and actual Christianity evades the point of difference; that real (I should call it) Ideal Christianity has never and never will be realized at all. Christianity has been at first, and has taken the various forms which social, political, economic cir- cumstances have forced on it. The modern capitalism and com- mercialism of modern capitalism being the bundle of hypocrisies which, as I have said, Mr. Rickaby with other Christian Socialists condemns. When this lengthy period has been supplanted by one in which Socialism is realised, will not the system of morality, the theory of life, be all-embracing, and can it be other than the Socialist theory? Where then will be the Christian ethic—absorbed in Socialism? Are the social ethics of ethics will then be needed; there will be no protest needed against the theory of life, because they will then be commonly held, we shall only have the freedom which we have won. William Morrell.

THE IMPERIAL MOUNTAIN AND ITS MOUSE.

According to the Reichszeiger, the following is the agenda-paper of the Labour Conference called by the German Emperor:

I. Regulation of Work in Mines: (a) Is work underground to be prohibited for children under a certain age, and for females? (b) Are the working hours to be limited in mines in which the work is particularly dangerous to health? (c) Is it possible in the general interest, in order to secure a regular output of coal, to subject the work in coals to inter- nal regulation?

II. Regulation of Sunday Labour: (a) Is Sunday work in general to be prohibited, except in cases of emergency? (b) What exceptions are to be made? Are the exceptions to be established by governmental or local acts? Are they exceptions to be decided by international agreement, by law, or by administrative action?

III. Regulation of Children's Work: (a) Are children up to a certain age to be excluded from industrial work? (b) How is the age up to which work is to be excluded to be determined? (c) Is it to be the same for all branches of industry, or different? (d) What restrictions on working hours and the sort of work permitted, are to be enforced for children permitted to take on industrial work?

IV. Regulation of the Work of Youths: (a) Is the work of young people who are past the age of childhood to be subjected to restrictions? (b) Up to what age are the restrictions to be made applicable? (c) Are they to be prescribed? (d) Are exceptions to be made from the general rules for single branches of industry?

V. Regulation of Women's Work: (a) Is the work of married women to be restricted in the day time or at night? (b) Is the industrial work of all females (married and unmarried) to be subjected to certain restrictions? (c) Are restrictions to be imposed on the conditions of employ- ment to be permitted from the general rules for single branches of industry, or by special regulation?

VI. Putting into Practice of the Regulations adopted: (a) Are provisions to be made for carrying out the regulations adopted, and for their control? (b) Are regulations and orders to be held by the representatives of the respective Governments, or to be submitted to them?