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ONE PENNY.

THE MORROW OF THE ELECTIONS.

THE results of the elections so far are curious and instructive, although apart from the Irish question, surely no voting contest has ever been held on such apparently trivial issues. In spite of which fact it must be said that the elections have gone in a way satisfactory to revolutionists. For in the first place they have been a humiliation to both the two nominal parties that govern the State; nay, they certainly tend to make parliamentary government ridiculous and impossible under those two parties. Only by intensifying the party hypocrisy to a degree which will make it obviously monstrous, can the Liberals and Tories continue the pretence of their existence as separate and opposing forces. The formation of the Moderate or Anti-revolutionary Party is going on much more quickly than one dared to hope it would a few months ago.

The Tories have been forced from one entrenchment after another of their untenable position of sham feudal reaction, and have been forced to become Whigs. The Whigs on the other hand have had, and still have, a groundwork of reality for their position, namely the resistance of Capitalistic society, at present so powerful, to any and every change which will further the emancipation of labour. Therefore they have not budged an inch, and neither will nor can do so until Revolution sweeps them away. Here are two parties then, with absolutely no difference in their policy, who have been struggling desperately for office at the poll, and striving to discover differences between them which might warrant their contention in the eyes of the electors.

It would have been quite impossible to sustain this appearance of difference but for the fiction of the Great United Liberal Party including in itself the advanced opinions of the Radicals. Mr. Chamberlain has been worth his weight—in votes—to both Tories and Whigs in the past elections; first by giving a cry to the Tories against the Liberals, which drew a great many "Liberal" voters into the Tory-Whig ranks, and next when the Whigs were in process of being soundly beaten, coming to their rescue with the field-labourers and other genuine Radicals who saw (never having been taught anything better) in the vague hints and meagre programme of the Radical leader hopes of progress or even revolution, and thought that he might at some time or other (date not given) be able to impress his opinions on his Whig colleagues.

This is a farce which is not likely to be played again; indeed Mr. Chamberlain in his speech at Leicester as good as promised that he would not be a party to it. So that we are on the eve of the declaration of a distinct Radical Party which will force the so-called Liberals into alliance with the Tories, although that coalition is not likely to come about so bluntly and frankly as the Tories seem to imagine it will; though it is natural in them, since they are now beaten into non-entity, to call on the Whigs, who really agree with them, to declare their agreement at once with no more palaver.

But the Radicals deceive themselves if they think they are likely to form a strong party in Parliament. For if they are progressive they must become revolutionary, as I believe many of them are disposed to be; and as events open before them and they declare themselves, section after section will fall off from them. When the Nonconformists find that the disestablishment of the Church will not further their form of superstition they will become Whigs; when the lower middle-class find that democracy will not keep the rates down they will become Whigs. And so the game will go on till we have Whigs on one side, and on the other those who are against privilege of all kinds, that is to say who are striving for the abolition of all classes: such people are now called *Socialists*, whatever they may be called in the future.

In short Parliament is not kept together for such a "residuum"; the powerful party in it, now that the strife for the people and against them is declaring itself, will always be the party that sees in all progress demands to be resisted or evaded as time and circumstance may serve. This party may change its name and may within the next few years even be called the Radical party, but it will not include in it a vast number of those who for want of the knowledge of a really popular creed are now proud to be called Radicals, and who will then oppose it (though I hope not in Parliament) as they have just been opposing the Tories, and in a few months it is to be hoped will be opposing the Whigs.

One word of warning meantime to such men as these: The Radical Party, at least through its leaders, has declared against the right of the Irish to govern themselves; it has now at any rate become impossible for anyone to deny that the Irish nation is determined that their government shall be Irish and not English; the Radicals, therefore, had best ask themselves what right a party has to be considered progressive that denies their right to this. The question is a serious one, for it means no less than this: Is England prepared to grant the demands of the Irish people in this matter, or to govern them by court martial? There is no third course open in the matter, even to Mr. Gladstone. The members of the Radical Party who cannot see their way straight in this question will soon find themselves Whigs and declared reactionaries.

Finally, it may seem a small matter to many Socialists that the field-labourers have generally voted Liberal; but it must be remembered what their circumstances are, and how strong the influences brought to bear upon them have necessarily been, and then I think it will be acknowledged that the fact is encouraging, although, of course, their "representatives" that were all they had to choose from, will betray them. For they have at least voted against their masters, and generally shown much spirit in so doing. It is our business now to show them what their masters are, and why they are their masters, and when we do this I cannot think that they will be slow to learn that there is something more helpful for them than Parliamentary Radicalism, to wit the combination of themselves with their other brethren of the Residuum for the doing away with the master-class altogether.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

CAPITALISM IN INDIA.

It may be interesting to English readers to be told something of the people of India.

In order to show the radical difference between Englishmen and Indians in their whole manner of life, it is necessary to point out that while with the former the individual is the unit, with the latter the unit is the community, or caste, in which the particular individual is born. The caste consists of a certain number of families, it may be fifty, it may be five thousand, though the latter number is rarely exceeded. There are tens of thousands of castes in the continent, each one exclusive of and distinct from the other.

As the population increases, the tendency manifests itself for castes to split up into still smaller communities, and so to isolate individuals from each other. The basis of the caste life is the community of families; each one is personally acquainted with the other, they marry only in the caste, they may not marry any outside person. The whole system is of course based upon religion. The priest is supreme. He regulates every detail of ceremony in marriage, birth, death, of religious observances at eclipses and astrological epochs, at anniversaries of birthdays, deaths and other family events. Every event is accompanied by a feast either to the nearly allied families or to the whole caste. Extensive premises are built and kept up by caste subscription, for the purpose of providing sufficient accommodation for the thousands of people who have to be fed at these festive gatherings, not infrequently for a week at a time.

Though the different peoples comprised under the definition of Hindoos are divided into thousands of communes or castes, each one complete in itself for every relation of life, yet there are four broad classes into which these communities are sometimes aggregated—viz., the priest or Brahmin, the soldier, the merchant or shopkeeper, and the cultivator, while outside of these are millions of so-called outcastes, *i. e.*, people supposed to have no caste, who notwithstanding they are degraded in the social scale, are just as exclusive as the rest and as tenacious of the customs appertaining to their particular communities. The priest caste, consisting of probably twenty millions of people, arrogate to themselves the right of belonging to one indivisible community, entitled to drink, eat, and marry among themselves without restriction. No Brahmin woman dare marry one not a priest; the penalty of such a breach of dignity is lifelong exclusion from caste. But on the other hand, especially in Bengal, a priest is allowed to marry fifty wives or more, selected from lower castes, the only condition being a good dowry from each.

The penalties attached to the loss of caste are hardly conceivable. It is a system of boycotting extending to food, drink, servants, business