NOTES ON PASSING EVENTS.

This kind of news which we have lately received from Chicago could be a source of anxiety to those who watched the course of events in America even through the medium of the bourgeois papers. On the one hand the vast number of men out of work, "at least a million," says the Daily News; on the other the struggle of the Knights of Labour for the eight hours' day (elsewhere told of in this number of the Com/mon-wealth) which means really the claim for a rise of wages: on the one hand dislocation of the labour-market and want of "employment," on the other claims for a greater share of the waning profits of the "employers." Such a condition of things is just the one to bring about collision between two parties obviously irreconcilable—the employers, brutal, domineering short-sighted, seeing nothing but immediate gain or loss of high and mighty power; the workers, poor, in sheep's clothing, with no sheep to be found for a good price and thanks for the removal of a burden. The lightening was bound to flash from two such dark clouds as this drawing near to each other.

As for the immediate events, the fight of May 4th, was one of those pieces of bloodshed which are the natural results of driving oppressed men into a corner: it must have been clear to those taking part in the meeting that the police would take the first opportunity for attacking them, and even their dispersal would scarcely have saved them from a volley of shot. Men assembled in a great mass under such conditions are not likely to imitate the sham chivalry of the eighteenth century drilled hirelings, and request their enemy to fire first: it was a fight between people prepared to fight.

Meantime, we may note what was the nature of the speech of Samuel Fielden as told of in our bourgeois press, and the report of which brought out the "body of 400 police armed with staves and muskets . . . in extended platoon, which occupied the entire width of the street from house to house." It was just such a speech as is made by any of our speakers at street corners in London on Sundays. It was to guard against dispersal and arrest at the least, and probably also against immediate musket-shot that the revolutionists came armed on this occasion. They were driven into a corner, and they fought, as men of mettle are apt to do when in such a plight.

In short, it seems clear that the dominant class was determined in its fear of revolutionary action, to put down revolutionary opinion with a high hand; nor can it be denied that the Tuesday's fight has given them a good occasion to do so, and they are probably rejoicing even amid their terror at the outbreak, because of its affording them their opportunity, whether they deliberately provoked it or not. A white terror is certainly setting in, which is likely to be more vigorous and more ferocious, since in America the tyranny of middle-class democracy is not hampered by any of the sentiments which, half real and half hypocrisy, are the vogue in England—till the middle-class shall become quite awakened by fear.

The American press is even suggesting the repression of immigration as a remedy for the spread of Socialism. If they are really in earnest, and succeed in carrying out such a measure, the great uprising will not be long delayed. That such a thing should be even spoken of, shows how swift has been the advance of Socialism. Once the two great Commercial and Democratic Countries of the world prided themselves on being an asylum for political refugees: that was in the days when the refugees seemed no danger to commercial tyranny; which, therefore, was not sorry to hold in its bosom a half-hidden threat, for which it was not responsible, against absolutism, its own special enemy. Now, on the contrary, any spurt of fear sufficiently felt may at any time arouse the White Terror, either in England or America; nor will either Democracy, and, as aforesaid, especially the latter, be a whit behind the old Absolutism in vigour of repression when it is really touched by fear.

The thoughtful middle-class man—the master—sees two prospects before him—the first baleful, the second fortunate. The first is the practical break up of the system which makes him master, and his place could be filled by in which the rich and the poor have alike melted into equality. He could then either be a plodding director of healthy compulsion, or the condescending distributer of unparisuing rewards—but a man like other men, working for his own livelihood, winning his own pleasures, all chance of his keeping a thousand men poor for his pleasure denied to him. This is a dreadful prospect to him; therefore, looking round on the power which he and his fellows have with themselves and with another possible prospect. He sees his class, wise in time, suppressing all opinion determinately, though as slyly as possible; he sees part of the working-classes bribed into being his supporters, and the rest, the true haves-not, rigidly kept down. The old tyranny of the Roman empire is the model of his ideal: the jarring of families and tribes over now; the slaves reduced to sullen silence; the people kept quiet with broad and dog-fights; the rich free—free each man to hunt out his pleasure amidst the form of corruption which best suits his own sorrid soul. This is the ideal of our masters of to-day, expressed with more or less hypocrisy, more or less timidity, but always returned to as a solid comfort amidst the fears engendered by the obvious decay of their system.

Well, these two prospects are visible to us as well as to the masters; but they is another which they do not seem to see, though it is more likely to be realised than either of the others. It involves, however, the partial realisation of their ideal. This second Pax Romana (peace of the empire) brought about, no corner of the civilised world in which a man can openly proclaim the wrongs of the have-nots; any spoken word which may break the peace of corruption, a crime, a wickedness; for the proletariat the civilised world one vast prison, in short, and no escape from it save death; and then—the upheaval. Since nothing else death will deliver us, there will be a new man, who will choose a death which may bring about at least something. The word which may not be spoken will be whispered, and the whisper will be a gathering sign.

It is the course which will bring about this that the American middle-classes seem to be taking. Already the air is stilled with the sense of repression, and heavy with boasts of the violence of the wel/ toms, who see success before them, especially since they hope to detach the mass of their own workmen from the revolution. And they probably will succeed in this at least, in showing the starved-out proletarians of Europe that they no longer have a city of refuge in America, but will meet them exactly the same opposition which they are used to in Europe. Once more, it is impossible that this should not hasten the coming Revolution all over the world.

Nor it must be said are the ruling-classes quite ignorant of the fact that they will at least have rough times to pass through before they can attain to the peace of perpetual universal slavery, the hope of which they so vainly hug. It is a sign of the times that the Tory Standard could have an article on the other of the others. It involves, however, the facts of the genuine evolution of Socialism, and which sees that the outbreak is no mere accident to a peculiar form of our present system, but a consequence of the spread of enlightenment, and the results of steady propaganda. In the face of such admissions we need not combat the usual fallacies which the same article puts forward, since although the writer says, "That in the long run the forces of order will prevail in America and in Europe, we do not for a moment doubt," it is clear from the rest of his article that he does very much doubt it.

Grand Court ceremonies have varied the budget of terrible and doubtful news to hand during the last few days; the same morning which gave the papers the happy chance of describing the hard won police victory at Chicago, gave them the opportunity of a long account of the glories of the costumes of the Drawing Room. In other words, the loads of idiocy with which the Court ladies try to set off their somewhat doubtful charms. One almost wonders that even such empty fields as these are not ashamed to play such a farce in the midst of all these tragedies.

Or that farce of all farces, the Queen opening the Colonial Exhibition with a Court ceremonial, crowned by the degradation of a man of genius! It fairly sickens one to think that the man who wrote "Raship," with its passion and deep sympathy for the wrongs of the poor, should have been driven by mere yielding to convention, to allow such slunkney dogged as this Jingo "Odd" to appear with his name tacked on to it. That the Press, including the Pall Mall, should puff that paper and that piece, as if it were not just a piece of commercial advertisement (who gets the money realised by it, by the way?) and with their tongues in their cheeks proceed to
pursue the exemplification it offers of the loveliness of the perpetual unity of the empire; and even your House Rules must be bigger in point to the moral.

Examples of the last remain of the art of India which our commercia-

tialism has destroyed, have been made to do duty as a kind of guiding

for the northwinds of the rest of the show, and are a sorry sight indeed

of what the art has been. We shall pass. There are, perhaps, certain exhibits of examples of the glory of the Empire which have been, I think, forgotten. We might begin at the entrance with two pyramids, a la Tinsor, of the skulls of Zealot, Arab and Malayan, to demonstrate in resistance to the benevolence of British commerce. A specimen of the wire whips used for softening the, minds of rebellious Janasaces under the paternal sway of Governor Eryx may be shown, separately with a selection of other such historical monuments, from the blankets in-

fected with small-pox sent to unfriendly tribes of Red Skins in the latter eighteen century down to the rope with which Louis Riel was hanged last year, as a remark, in particular, on the form of landing. The daily rations of an Indigo ract and of his master under one class case, with a certificate of the amount of nourishment in each, furnished by Professor Huxley. The glory of the British army gained in various successful battles against barbarians and savages, the same enclosed in the right eye of a louse. The mercy of Colonists towards native popula-

tions; a strong magnifying-glass to see the same by. An allegorical picture, of course, for the literary classics that are reprinted for six months in the Colonies. A pair of crimson plumes with these by

Lord Tennyson's "Ode" on the opening of the Exhibition, embroidered in gold, on canvas. A great many other exhibits of nature could be found suitable to the exposition of the Honour, Glory, and Usefulness of the British Empire.

Rebellion, it seems, will soon be the fashion. Lord Wolseley disdains to deny the apparently preposterous bragg of the Orange Chiefcais; so it may be supposed there is at least some truth in it. We Socialists are not, of course, going to cry horror on rebellion; but the complacency with which we would be inclined, in our normal forms, to accept it—made respectable people against other forms of rebellion. Bourgeois moralists will discover that everything is fair and even beautiful in defence of the sacred rights of property, when they next appeal, after properly attacking.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

THE COMMERCIAL HEARTH.

(Concluded from page 51.)

We defy any human being to point to a single reality, good or bad, in this modern bourgeois family, without the help of the indefinable but most perfect specimen of the complete sham that history has presented to the world. There are no holes in the texture through which reality might chance to peer. The Bourgeois hearth dreads honesty as its cat dreads cold water. The literary classics that are reprinted for six months in the Colonies. A pair of crimson plumes with these by

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