SOCIALISM FROM THE ROOT UP.
CHAPTER II.—MEDIEVAL SOCIETY.

We have now to deal with that Medieval Society which was based on the spiritual and material foundations of the Church and the State, and the principles of authority and hierarchy, and on which the feudalism and bureaucracy. The fullest, and one may say the most pedantic type of this society is to be found in the Medieval German Empire; it was modified somewhat in other countries; in France by the fact that the power of the feudal states was more limited, and less theoretically independent of the King, and practically were often at least as powerful. In England, on the contrary, the monarchy soon gained complete predominance over the great barons, and a kind of bureaucracy sprung up which interfered with the full working of the feudal system.

The theory of this feudal system is the existence of an unbroken chain of subordination, beginning at the base, and rising up to the monarch, of powers from the emperor down to the serf; it recognises no absolute ownership of land; God is the one owner of the earth, the emperor and his kings are his vice-gerents there, who may devolve their authority to their vassals and feudatories, who in their turn turn to their serfs. The serf, the proletarian, on whom all this hierarchy lives, and who has no rights as regard his own lord except protection from others outside the manor that he lives and works in; the manor lord was the incarnation of the compulsion and protection of God, which all men acknowledged and looked for.

It is quite clear that this system was mixed up with religious ideas of some sort; accordingly, we find that the Middle Ages had a distinct religion of their own, developed from that early Christianity which was one of the forces that broke up the Roman Empire. As long as it remained intact in its integrity, Christianity was purely individualistic; it based its power purely in religion, and had no commands to give about the government of this world except to obey "the powers that be" in non-religious matters, in which it was liable to all the complications which might distract its attention from the kingdom of God.

But in Medieval Christianity, although the idea of individual devotion to the perfection of the next world still existed, it was kept in the background, and was alone important in the sense of the idea of the Church, which was not merely a link between the earthly and the heavenly kingdoms, but even may be said to have brought the kingdom of heaven to earth by breathing its spirit into the temporal power, which it recognised as another manifestation of its own authority. Therefore, the struggles of the Temporal and Spiritual Powers, which form so large a part of the history of the Middle Ages, were not always in reality struggles of the Church against the state, but caused by the tendency of one side of the great organisation of Society to absorb the other without rejecting its theory; in short, on the one hand the Church was political and social rather than religious, while on the other the State was at least as much religious as it was political and social.

Such, then, was the theory of Medieval Society; but apart from whatever of oppression on life and thought was inherent in it, the practice of the theory was liable to many abuses, to which the obvious confusion and misery of the times are mostly referable. These abuses again were met by a protest in the form of almost constant rebellion against authority. The noble vassals of the feudal system, and the new vagabondage of Middle Europe, the Jacobines in France, and in England what may be called the chronic rebellion of the Foresters, which proves itself by the most bizarre and occasionally by the most cruel inquisitions, that it has given birth to the ballad epic known by the name of its author, Robin Hood. Resistance to authority and contempt of the "Rights of Property" are the leading ideas in this rough but noble protest.

Besides these irregular protests against the oppression of the epoch, there was another factor at work in its modification—the Guilds, which formed themselves into the system, and were accepted as a regular part of it. The ideas which went with the survivals of the primitive communism of the tribes were, on the one hand, absorbed into the feudal system and formed part of the order, while on the other, much developed associations for mutual protection and help, which at first were merely a kind of benefit societies according to the ideas of the times. These were followed by associations for the protection of trade, which were called the guilds, and partly developed into organisations for the protection and regulation of handicrafts—which latter were the result of the gradual transformation of the free cities, which had already begun to be formed from other developments, and partly into the craft-gilds, or organisations for the protection and regulation of handicrafts—which latter were the result of the growth of the guilds—merchants, accomplished not without a severe struggle, often accompanied by actual and very bitter war. The last remains of these craft-gilds are to be found in the city communities of the Middle Ages.

It should be noted that this tendency to association was bitterly opposed in its earlier days by the potentiates of both Church and State, especially the popes, who were at first the advocates for the French Empire. But the more it continued, the more it was felt to be necessary, and at last both the guilds and the free towns which their emancipated labour had created or developed were favoured (as well as fleeced) by the great monarchic kings as a make-weight to the powerful nobles and the Church.

The condition of one part of medieval life industrial was thus quite altered. In the earlier Middle Ages the serf not only did all the field-work, but most of the handicrafts, which now fell entirely into the hands of the guilds. It must be noted also that in their best days there were no mere journeymen in these crafts; a workshop was manned simply by the workman and his apprentices, who would, when their time was out, become members of the guild like himself; mastership, in our sense of the word, was unknown.

By about the year 1350 the craft-gilds were fully developed and triumphant; and in the next century may conveniently be accepted as the end of the first part of the Middle Ages.

By this time serfdom generally was beginning to yield to the change introduced by the gilds and the field-servants partly drifted into the towns, where they became affiliated to the guilds, and partly became free men, though living on lands whose tenure was unfree—copyholders, we should call them. This movement towards the break-up of serfdom is seen at its best by the Engadine's. Besides the movement against the guilds, or so-called free labour. Besides the continued and his apprentices, the workshop now has these "free labourers" in its unprivileged workmen, that is, who were nevertheless under the domination of the gild, and compelled to affiliate with it. The guildsmen now began to be privileged workmen; and with them began the foundation of the present middle-class, whose development from this source went on to meet its other development on the side of trade which was becoming noticeable. In 1453 Constantinople was taken by the Turks, and the art of printing was being discovered and read; a thirst for new or revived learning, outside the superfluities of the medieval Church and the quain, curiously persisted, and half a generation of popular thought was rising, and all was getting ready for the transformation of medieval into modern or commercial society.

E. BIRFORD BAX AND WILLIAM MORRIS.
(To be continued.)

TRADE DEPRESSION.

The Cobden Club is not exactly the sort of body that one would expect to find publishing arguments which simply reduce our industrial system to an absurdity. Such, however, is the case, as we shall very soon see.

In a tract on Trade Depression, written by Augustus Mongredien, and published at the instigation of the Cobden Club, the author, in 1884, which sprang from the work of John Bull in Kent, and John Listler (dyer) in East Anglia, which was the answer of the combined yeomen, emancipated and unemancipated serfs, to the attempt of the nobles to check the movement.

For, the development of the idea that the flocking in of the free serfs into the towns laid the foundations for another change in industrialism; with the second part of the medieval period appears the free-guild, or so-called free-labour. Besides the continued and had his apprentices, the workshop now has these "free labourers" in its unprivileged workmen, that is, who were nevertheless under the domination of the gild, and compelled to affiliate with it. The guilds now began to be privileged workmen; and with them began the foundation of the present middle-class, whose development from this source went on to meet its other development on the side of trade which was becoming noticeable. In 1453 Constantinople was taken by the Turks, and the art of printing was being discovered and read; a thirst for new or revived learning, outside the superfluities of the medieval Church and the quain, curiously persisted, and half a generation of popular thought was rising, and all was getting ready for the transformation of medieval into modern or commercial society.

E. BIRFORD BAX AND WILLIAM MORRIS.
(To be continued.)

TRADE DEPRESSION.

The Cobden Club is not exactly the sort of body that one would expect to find publishing arguments which simply reduce our industrial system to an absurdity. Such, however, is the case, as we shall very soon see.

In a tract on Trade Depression, written by Augustus Mongredien, and published at the instigation of the Cobden Club, the author, in 1884, which sprang from the work of John Bull in Kent, and John Listler (dyer) in East Anglia, which was the answer of the combined yeomen, emancipated and unemancipated serfs, to the attempt of the nobles to check the movement.

For, the development of the idea that the flocking in of the free serfs into the towns laid the foundations for another change in industrialism; with the second part of the medieval period appears the free-guild, or so-called free-labour. Besides the continued and had his apprentices, the workshop now has these "free labourers" in its unprivileged workmen, that is, who were nevertheless under the domination of the gild, and compelled to affiliate with it. The guilds now began to be privileged workmen; and with them began the foundation of the present middle-class, whose development from this source went on to meet its other development on the side of trade which was becoming noticeable. In 1453 Constantinople was taken by the Turks, and the art of printing was being discovered and read; a thirst for new or revived learning, outside the superfluities of the medieval Church and the quain, curiously persisted, and half a generation of popular thought was rising, and all was getting ready for the transformation of medieval into modern or commercial society.

E. BIRFORD BAX AND WILLIAM MORRIS.
(To be continued.)