

If John Poorman lives in a district where *some* out-door relief is given, he is questioned minutely as to his circumstances. Unless he is really destitute—that is, has sold or pawned every article of furniture and apparel not absolutely necessary to existence—relief will be refused. Possibly John Poorman resolves to stay out a little longer, and goes on tramp to see if anything will turn up. Any day you may see two long processions on the road between Preston and Blackburn moving on in that Micawber hope—one going to Preston from Blackburn, the other from Preston to Blackburn, to seek work where no work is, because it would profit the worker only. The inevitable result of such a pilgrimage is that sooner or later the tramp and vagrant finds himself without the pence needed to pay for a night's lodging. If he knows the law—and the law supposes every Englishman to enjoy its acquaintance—he knows that the penalty of sleeping in any barn or outbuilding, under a haystack or hedgerow, or in a field or on a common—in which he might be thought to have some common-right—is imprisonment as a vagabond. He is thus driven to go to the tramping-ward of the nearest workhouse. On arrival there he finds that the old notion that an English worker sins when he moves out of his parish is still lively. The tramp is the black sheep the Poor Law especially detests and the Local Government Board seeks to exterminate. In 1881 the average number of this class was 6979, and Parliament passed the following brief Bill in the hope of extinguishing him :

"4. Section five of the Pauper Inmates Discharge and Regulation Act, 1871, is hereby repealed, and in lieu thereof it is hereby enacted as follows : A casual pauper shall not be entitled to discharge himself from a casual ward before nine o'clock in the morning of the second day following his admission, nor before he has performed the work prescribed for him as in the said Act mentioned ; and where a casual pauper has been admitted on more than one occasion during one month into any casual ward of the same union, he shall not be entitled to discharge himself before nine o'clock in the morning of the fourth day after his admission, and he may at any time during that interval be removed by any officer of the guardians, or by a police constable, to the workhouse of the union, and be required to remain in such workhouse for the remainder of the period of his detention. Provided that in computing the number of days during which a casual pauper may be detained under this section Sunday shall not be included."

The effect of this Act has been to reduce the number of vagrants in 1884 to 4,096. Thus, if John Poorman goes in on Saturday night he is a prisoner until nine o'clock on Tuesday morning. His dietary is worse than that given to the vilest convicted criminal, and often he is required to do his work in solitary confinement.

Satisfied with three day's imprisonment, John Poorman returns to his own parish, again visits the relieving officer, and accepts an invitation to see the Guardians. As soon as he enjoys this high honour he discovers that they are mis-named Guardians of the Poor, and that their proper title is Custodians of the Rates. Various Boards adopt various rules as to outdoor relief. When given it amounts to from 2s. to 3s. per week mostly given in kind, that is in bread—often of poor quality and short weight—and groceries open to the same suspicion (I am now referring to no union or person in particular, but have in mind the complaints often reported in various newspapers. I have collected some of these, but have no space to quote them). The whole tendency of the system constantly fostered by the Local Government Board is towards the abolition of outdoor relief, the ideal of Sydney Smith and other promoters of the new poor law. This is fully shown by the fact that in 1874 the number of outdoor paupers was 683,739, falling in 1884 to 585,068, while the number of indoor paupers, which in 1874 was 143,707, rose in 1884 to 180,846. These figures show the real cause of the alleged diminution of pauperism to be the increased severity of the house test. On this point Mr. Hoyle's testimony given on page 151 of 'Our National Drink Bill,' deserves attention : "In 1871, a change took place in the system of giving relief. Orders were sent from the Central Board in London to apply more rigorously the workhouse test ; and in regard to able-bodied paupers, both in the house and out of it, to apply the stone-breaking and other tests. The Poor Law inspectors visited Boards of Guardians to press these points upon them. County Conferences were held to ensure united action. I am not here writing off the book, for I was myself a Poor-law Guardian in Bury for the ten years from 1870 to 1880, and witnessed the whole of the proceedings, and on more than one occasion I felt compelled to raise my voice against the harshness of some of the proceedings." The Local Government Board, in its Annual Report for 1884-5, at page 17 says : "This decrease is wholly due to a falling off in the number of adult able-bodied persons receiving outdoor relief, the mean number of indoor paupers who were adult and able-bodied being larger in 1884 than in 1874."

WM. SHARMAN.

(To be continued.)

The *Pall Mall Gazette* has been sending to Madame de Novikoff to ask whether it is true, as is generally supposed, that the Czar of all the Russias has been driven out of his senses by that very human but not very dignified passion, terror. Everybody outside the *Pall Mall* supposes Madame de Novikoff to be a Russian political agent. The *Pall Mall's* proceeding, therefore, is, to say the least of it, grotesque. It is much as if he had sent to the devil's varlet to ask the truth about those awkward rumours of hoofs and horns, and those rumoured strange views of his majesty's about the welfare of the human race. The varlet, as in duty bound, replies that it is all a foul lie ; that his Satanic Majesty has ten toes like other people, and is a prince of well-known benevolence. Of course the public is satisfied with this answer !—W. M.

SELF-HELP.

(ANON. Translated by J. L. JOYNES.)

"HERE, Common Folk, a bone ! Catch ! Hold it tight,
And gnaw and worry it with all your might.
'Self-help' the thing is called ; and, credit me,
'Tis that alone will your salvation be."

So cries a certain rascal knave to you ;
Then straight make answer, "This thing I will do :
I'll gnaw—for your plan tallies with my own—
But you yourself, you hound, shall be the bone."

"I'll 'help myself' from you ; but first I'll tear
From off your face the mask of lies you wear,
And keep the thing for ever for a show,
With whips and screws and instruments of woe."

"And next I'll hurl upon the rubbish-heap
The cradle that has lulled me long to sleep ;
And warming to my work when I've begun,
I'll help myself in far more ways than one."

"For when I've set your tyranny aside,
I'll seek that monstrous monument of pride,
That makes the soul of free-born man its slave,
The high-throned Church, thought's thousand-year-old grave"

"One word is strong to lay its ramparts low,
Like trump that cracked the walls of Jericho :
Yea, Knowledge all its wonders shall contemn,
And work new wonders by o'erthrowing them."

"In righteous wrath with my resistless hand,
I grasp the pillars that to prop it stand ;
And shake and snap them with a giant's strength,
Whose thousand-year-old bonds are loosed at length."

"And 'Hallelujah !' with a deafening din
I shout, as idols and their shrines crash in :
While through the crash a voice of jubilee
Cries, 'Reason, prisoned ages long, is free.'"

"The cross is made my weapon ; from the shrine
I hunt the Priests with their own sacred sign :
Now since nigh nineteen centuries of pain
Is he that hangs there first made glad again."

"A surer sign of victory I bear,
A banner red—but 'Peace' is written there :
Peace is the sign that tyranny shall cease ;
Yea, Revolution's self is nought but peace."

"The earth is rocked and shaken ; marching come
Freedom's battalions to the tuck of drum,
And burst the barriers in her path that stood,
Break down all evil, and build up all good."

"The plough, that chain that bound me to my lord,
I'll forge afresh into a two-edged sword :
The means men's cruel craft has used so long
To crush me down shall yet avenge my wrong."

"On march the hosts with Freedom's flag unfurled,
Like storm, from pest that purifies the world ;
Break Pride's defences ; tread the traitors down ;
Pluck off and trample on the tyrant's crown."

"The earth rejoices in the rising sun ;
A gladdened world gives thanks for freedom won ;
Oppression's yoke lies broken at our feet—
'Self-help' with ringing cheers we all will greet."

The party of Labour is not an outburst of passion ; it is the result deep causes, working by and through social evolution.

Edward Atkinson, the economist of slops and scraps, is very much afflicted by the waste of food in cooking. We are a great deal more affected by the waste of life in production and want of justice in distribution.

England is vigorously prosecuting the work of building railroads in India. As usual, her enterprise is inspired by the highest considerations of philanthropy, and exclusively designed to prevent the recurrence of famine among the Hindoos. But it may, incidentally, enable Great Britain to obtain from the East all the wheat she needs at lower prices than she is paying to our farmers ; in which case India may yet starve, notwithstanding the railways, as Ireland is occasionally doing, while philanthropic John Bull eats her potatoes.—*The (N. Y.) Leader.*

STRANGE INDEED !—The following extract is from an Essay of Montaigne (b. 1533), translated by Florio, chap. 30. Montaigne is writing about the North-American Indians :—"Three of that nation, ignorant how deare the knowledge of our corruptions will one day cost their repose, securitie, and happinesse, and how their ruine shall proceed from this comerce, were at Rouen in the time of our late king, Charles IX., who talked with them a great while. They were shewed our fashions, our pompe, and the forme of a faire citie ; afterwards, some demanded their advice, and would needs know of them what things of note and admirable they had observed amongst us : they answered three things, the last of which I have forgotten, and am very sorie for it ; the other two I yet remember. They said : 'First, they found it very strange that so many tall men, with long beards, strong and well armed as it were about the king's person, would submit themselves to obey a beardlesse childe, and that we did not rather chuse one amongst them to command the rest. Secondly, they had perceived there were men amongst us full-gorged with all sortes of commodities, and others which, hunger-starved and bare with neede and povertie, begged at their gates : and found it strange these men so needie could endure such an injustice, and that they took not the others by the throate, or set fire on their houses.'"