

in his belief that monopoly and competition are the twin pillars that sustain the world: but it is no time in the heat of battle, in the very face of danger, with the dying round us in their agony, to weigh motives finely, and discriminate between the ignorant and vicious.

All those against us are against us; to none of average intellect is the way to knowledge closed, and they dare not plead ignorance. There are men who hearing will not hear, and seeing will not see; are we asked for "mercy" to these men? It is not our business to go out of our way to attack them; but if they place themselves in our path they must know what they are to look for.

Upon our side it is not the mere opinions of men that rule, but the irrefutable facts of nature. Each of us in his place fulfilling these laws in fighting for the progress of mankind, if on any plea he falter or swerve aside he is a traitor to humanity and false to himself. He must go forward, and that against all resistance and over all obstacles; not least over the "convictions," real or feigned, of the apostles of plunder and legalised rapine. S.

"Oh, the happy time, my brethren," says the corner preacher, with upturned eye-balls and clasped hands, "when we shall all meet up above"—this last in a deep bass. But don't get into the same 'bus or compartment of railway carriage down here below if you happen to be dressed in working garb. Defer the meeting until you get "up above." It's first, second, and third class down here, as the case of *Hunt v. Glover* has recently shown. It's quite enough for third class to have the pleasure of working to keep first and second, without disturbing the equanimity of Christians like the two "gentlemen" witnesses for the 'bus conductor by rubbing up against them. Wait till we all meet up above, dear brethren, and twang the eternal harp; but keep your distance down here, or we'll call the guard.

"It is not too much to say that if the poor would eat horse or donkey enormous social dangers that now seem inevitable would disappear." Thus writes the *Standard*, in commenting upon the "great and happy news" to the persons who belong to the class to whom the matter is so vitally interesting, viz., that cat's meat is being foisted upon the poor at the price of butcher's meat. Thus at one side we have a school of vegetarians, whose hopes of saving society are based upon the hope of persuading working folk to subsist on horse beans and the outside leaves of cabbages; and on the other we find the organ that represents the class who guzzle and gorge what their hands never earned, advising us to make our insides receptacles for diseased jackasses, in order that their wine-bibbing and feasting shall continue undisturbed. F. K.

FEUDAL ENGLAND.

(Concluded from p. 282.)

THE complete feudalism of the fourteenth century fell, as systems always fall, by its own corruption, by development of the seeds of change, some which indeed had lain asleep during centuries, to wake up into activity long after the events which had created them were forgotten.

The feudal system was naturally one of open war; and the alliances, marriages, and other dealings family with family, made by the kings and potentates, were always leading them into war by giving them legal claims, or at least claims that could be legally pleaded, to the domains of other lords, who took advantage of their being on the spot, of their strength in men or money, or their popularity with the baronage, to give immediate effect to their claims. Such a war was that by which Edward I. drew on England the enmity of the Scotch; and such again was the great war which Edward III. entered into with France. You must not suppose that there was anything in this war of a national, far less of a race character. The last series of wars before this time I am now speaking of in which race feeling counted for much was the Crusades. This French war, I say, was neither national, racial, or tribal; it was the private business of a lord of the manor claiming what he considered his legal rights of another lord who had, as he thought, usurped them; and this claim his loyal feudatories were bound to take up for him; loyalty to a feudal superior, not patriotism to a country, was the virtue which Edward III.'s soldiers had to offer if they had any call to be virtuous in that respect. This war once started was hard to drop, partly because of the success that Edward had, falling as he did on France with the force of a country so much more homogeneous than it; and no doubt it was a war very disastrous to both countries, and so may be reckoned as amongst the causes which broke up the feudal system. But the real causes lay much deeper than that. The system was not capable of expansion in production; it was, in fact, as long as its integrity remained untouched, an army fed by slaves, who could not be properly and closely exploited; its free men proper might do something else in their leisure, and so produce art and literature, but their true business as members of a conquering tribe, their concerted business, was to fight. There was, indeed, a fringe of people between the serf and the free noble who produced the matters of handicraft which were needed for the latter, but deliberately, and as we should now think, wastefully; and as these craftsmen and traders began to grow into importance and to push themselves, as they could not help doing, into the feudal hierarchy, as they acquired *status*, so the sickness of the feudal

system increased on it, and the shadow of the coming commercialism fell upon it. That any set of people who could claim to be other than the property of free men should not have definite rights differentiated sharply from those of other groups, was an idea that did not occur to the Middle Ages; therefore, as soon as men came into existence that were not serfs and were not nobles, they had to struggle for *status* by organising themselves into associations that should come to be acknowledged members of the great feudal hierarchy; for indefinite and negative freedom was not allowed to any person in those days; if you had not *status* you did not exist except as an outlaw. This is, briefly speaking, the motive power of necessity that lay behind the struggle of the town corporations and craft guilds to be free, a struggle which, though it was to result in the breaking up of the mediæval hierarchy, began by an appearance of strengthening it by adding to its members, increasing its power of production, and so making it more stable. About this struggle, and the kind of life which accompanied it, I may have to write another time, and so will not say more about it here. Except this, that it was much furthered by the change that gradually took place between the landlords and the class on whom all society rested, the serfs. These at first were men who had no more rights than chattel-slaves had, except that mostly, as part of the stock of the manor, they could not be sold off it; they had to do all the work of the manor, and to earn their own livelihood off it as they best could. But as the power of production increased, owing to better methods of working, and as the country got to be more settled, their task-work became easier of performance and their own land more productive to them; and that tendency to the definition and differentiation of rights, moreover, was at work for their benefit, and the custom of the manor defined what their services were, and they began to acquire rights. From that time they ceased to be pure serfs, and began to tend towards becoming tenants, at first paying purely and simply *service* for their holdings, but gradually commuting that service for fines and money payment—for rent, in short.

Towards the close of the fourteenth century, after the country had been depopulated by the Black Death, and impoverished by the long war, the feudal lords of these copyholders and tenants began to regret the slackness with which their predecessors had exploited their *property*, the serfs, and to consider that under the new commercial light which had begun to dawn upon them they could do it much better if they only had their property a little more in hand; but it was too late, for their property had acquired rights, and therewithal had got strange visions into their heads of a time much better than that in which they lived, when even those rights should be supplanted by a condition of things in which the assertion of rights for any one set of men should no longer be needed, since all men should be free to enjoy the fruits of their own labour. Of that came the great episode of the Peasants' War, led by men like Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, and John Ball, who indeed, with those they led, suffered for daring to be before their time, for the revolt was put down with cruelty worthy of an Irish landlord or a sweating capitalist of the present day; but, nevertheless, serfdom came to an end in England, if not because of the revolt, yet because of the events that made it, and thereby a death-wound was inflicted on the feudal system. From that time onward the country, passing through the various troubles of a new French war of Henry Vth's time, and the War of the Roses, did not heed these faction fights much. The workmen grew in prosperity, but also they began to rise into a new class, and form a class underneath the old working men, and to lay the foundations of capitalistic production. England got carried into the rising current of commercialism, and the rich men and landlords to turn their attention to the production of profit instead of the production of livelihood; the gildless journeyman and the landless labourer slowly came into existence; the landlord got rid of his tenants all he could, turned tillage into pasture, and sweated the pastures to death in his eagerness for wool, which for him meant money and the breeding of money; till at last the place of the serf, which had stood empty, as it were, during a certain transition period, during which the non-capitalistic production was expanding up to its utmost limit, was filled by the proletarian working for the service of a master in a new fashion, a fashion which exploited and (woe worth the while!) exploits him very much more completely than the customs of the manor of the feudal period. I hope to be able hereafter to go into the question of the life and production of the workman of the earlier period. At present I will make an end by saying that the feudal serf worked hard, and lived poorly, and produced a rough livelihood for his master; whereas the modern workman, working harder still, and living little if any better than the serf, produces for his master a state of luxury of which the old lord of the manor never dreamed. The workman's powers of production are multiplied a thousand-fold; his own livelihood remains pretty much where it was. The balance goes to his master and the crowd of useless, draggle-tailed knaves and fools who pander to his idiotic sham desires, and who, under the pretentious title of the intellectual part of the middle classes, have in their turn taken the place of the mediæval jester. Truly, if the Positivist motto, "Live for others," be taken in stark literality, the modern workman should be a good and wise man, since he has no chance of living for himself! And yet, I wish he were wiser still; wise enough to make an end of the preaching of "Live on others," which is the motto set forth by commercialism to her favoured children.

Yet in one thing the modern proletarian has an advantage over the mediæval serf, and that advantage is a world in itself. Many a century lay between the serf and successful revolt, and though he tried it many a time and never lost heart, yet the coming change

which his martyrdom helped on was not to be for him yet, but for the new masters of his successors. With us it is different. A few years of wearisome struggle against apathy and ignorance; a year or two of growing hope—and then who knows? Perhaps a few months, or perhaps a few days of the open struggle with brute force, with the mask off its face, and the sword in its hand, and then we are over the bar. Who knows, I say? Yet this we know, that ahead of us, with nothing betwixt except such incidents as are necessary to its development, lies the inevitable social revolution, which will bring about the end of mastery and the triumph of fellowship.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

ARTIST AND ARTISAN.

AS A WORKMAN SEES IT.

To be a labourer, and to earn by dint of bodily or mental exertion that subsistence which predominating capitalism at present condemns the worker to receive, is considered by our snobbish plutocratic society of to-day to be something very contemptible and vulgar. But, on the other hand, the man who is an artist—that is to say, the man who obtains very often a very comfortable living by deft skill of hand and grandeur of conception, is looked upon by the idlers of society as an extraordinary being, and received everywhere with adulation and respect. This opinion unfortunately is shared by many working men. They look up to the artist with something more than the veneration which is due to them as individuals who certainly do a good deal towards making life more beautiful and happy. In short, while the artisan is despised as an unthinking drudge—as one of the common toiling millions—the artist is regarded as a darling of society and a great man. Let us devote a short time in endeavouring to discover who is the most necessary, the most useful and essential to the well-being of society. We will assume to elucidate this point, a man placed upon an uninhabited island, totally devoid of both the necessaries and luxuries of life. Suppose such a man approached by a person who offers upon the one hand a number of priceless artistic treasures: statues by Canova, Michael Angelo; paintings by Rembrandt, Rubens, and Vandyck; or poems by Byron and Shelley, and on the other hand offers a loaf of bread, a homely garment, a spade, etc., some of the simple products of the toil of the ordinary artisan, and see which he will choose. A man so circumstanced would at once turn to the latter. Why so? Because they are the primary necessities of existence, and without them he cannot live. It will at once be seen, therefore, that the artisan is of much more service to the community in which he dwells, inasmuch as he provides the necessities of life; whereas the artist is simply of secondary importance, he simply producing articles of luxury.

Without labour men *could not live*. Without art life *would be possible*, although I confess that life without any of that pleasure and delight which is caused by artistic effort would be very unpleasant, and in fact almost unbearable. The artisan makes life possible; the artist makes it enjoyable. Hence I contend on these grounds that the artisan should be regarded with the same amount of honour as the artist; for while the artisan makes things, the artist beautifies them. Both being equally useful to society both should be socially equal. Until this conclusion is arrived at, and as long as men will despise the labourer and the products of his labour, meanwhile worshipping the artist and art, the achievement of a state of social equality—that great object which all Socialists are endeavouring to obtain will remain unaccomplished.

JIM ALLMAN.

AS AN ARTIST SEES IT.

I have nothing to object to in our comrade's remarks, but a word or two may be pardoned in explanation of the fact that an artist is looked upon as a gentleman (a sort of one), and sometimes receives a certain portion of the respect accorded to that class, which, however, is dealt out so much more liberally to the mere money-maker in other trades; to the landowner, manufacturer, contractor, stockjobber, or what not; in short, it is dealt out to members of the proprietary class exactly in proportion to the obviousness of their living by *owning* wealth and not *creating* it. In other words the less pretence they make to be more than mere thieves, the more they are honoured.

However, let that pass, as it must be admitted that the artists when they gain the point at which they receive any recognition from the public at all, do as hangers-on share in the plunder won by the class to which, if our workmen friends knew it, they are admitted somewhat *grudgingly*. Now, it must be admitted by all thoughtful people that the conventional flattery of the intellect, which is conventionally supposed as a separate and specially worshipful quality, to be the main-spring of the artist's capacity, is both stupid and harmful. But, like all the rest of our conventionalities, it is founded on history; it is a birth of the individualist commercial system which we are at work combatting to-day, with good hope of seeing it disappear. It is that system which has divided the old craftsman into two, artist and artisan. For, before the rise of capitalism in the sixteenth century, the artisan did not differ in kind from the artist; all craftsmen who made anything were artists of some kind, they only differed in degree, and only a few of those who had very special gifts of hand and brain have so much as left their names behind them. No one knows, e.g., the name of the man who designed Westminster Abbey, although it

rose up amongst the King's Court, and doubtless was talked about enough in its time; and meantime every joiner or mason or blacksmith was doing his share of work towards the pleasure which our comrade feels is necessary to the life of man, and never dreaming of receiving any special reward for the beauty or invention in his work; although doubtless he did receive the unconventional and genuine praise and thanks of his neighbours for it, just as he gave it to his neighbour craftsmen. With the growth of the historic sense which is a gain of the present century, with the knowledge of the continuity of history which we have now learned, we have come to a conscious knowledge that the intellect of man works co-operatively and collectively; but although the workmen of the Middle Ages were not conscious of this fact, they were happier than we are in this respect, that they practised that co-operation in their production of beauty; whereas we, as long as we are under the domination of the profit-grinders, cannot do so; and the result follows which I have so often spoken of, that art is a skinny drowsy skeleton amidst the stir and enormous riches of modern civilisation; and that too in an age, which as I have just said, has discovered that it was the collective people, and not a few miraculous individuals who have produced all worthy, that is all genuine, art in the past. I say when art is hopeful and progressive there is plenty of it for every one, and every one is in some sense an artist, and those who produce beauty are not demi-gods but men, and all can understand them; it is only when beauty produced by man becomes rare that we take to deifying its producers. There is little that is mysterious about the plagiarists and compilers of the Augustan age of Rome; the authors of that mass of platitudinous rubbish, that fresh flowing well-spring of stupidity, are well known and amply ticketed. But modern research has made Homer a dim and doubtful shadow to us, while it has added clearness to our vision of the life of the people of that time, who were the real authors of the Homeric poems. Beowulf, the first and the best poem of the English race, which they bore hither across the seas with them, has no author but the people. No other authors has the splendid literature of our Scandinavian kinsmen, the best tale-tellers the world has seen, through whom we can to-day live with the people of Northern Europe in the tenth century, and know them, not as puppets of chivalry romance, but good fellows such as our living friends are to-day. Again, along with William Cobbett, contrast the dungeon-like propriety of St. Paul's, the work of a "famous" architect, with the free imagination and delicate beauty of the people-built Gothic churches, that were raised by masons who had no architect over them, and who did their work for the reward of a free life, and needed no fame as an extra; and then consider how the people build. In short, our comrade will understand me when I say that what we want is to extinguish not the artist, but the mere artisan, by destroying the flattery-craving flunkey in the one, and the brutal toil-worn slave in the other, so that they may both be men; in which case they must be artists in one way or other, that is, they must take an interest in life.

Meanwhile, I cannot see that any extra reward should be given to a man for following an "intellectual" calling. If he does his work in it well, it is more pleasurable to him than a "non-intellectual" one, and why should he be paid twice over? If he does it ill, let him be pulled out of it in the gentlest way possible, and learn to do what he *can* do. A poet doesn't need paying for his poetry (he is not paid much now), because he will write better poetry and not worse if he has an ordinary occupation to follow. As for the other mere artists, a painter for instance, I admit that he will probably have to stick to his painting if he has to do it well; but then he should be paid not for the "intellectual" part of his work, but for the workman's part of it; finishing up everything properly, doing everything as well as it can be done in all respects. This will take something out of him. But the exercise of his "intellect" will take nothing; it is mere play.

The long and short of it is this, a decent life, a share in the common life of all is the only "reward" that any man can honestly take for his work, whatever it is; if he asks for more, that means that he intends to play the master over somebody. When the workers have made up their minds to be free, he won't get that, so he may make himself easy, and get amusement out of his work as he can, if he is a "superior person." Well, I end as our comrade, with the word "equality," which will one day become a real thing and no mere word, and so cure all our troubles.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

The following advertisement appeared in a London daily this week:

ENGINEERS' Tool Makers (thoroughly first-class experienced) wanted; only those need apply who can bring satisfactory references from former employment, where they have worked for a number of years as tool-makers; all such references will be most strictly inquired into before any man is started. All applicants must be sober, good timekeepers, thoroughly respectable, and able to work any kind of lathe or machine usually found in an engineer's factory; their work will have to stand the test of quantity as well as quality; a week will not be allowed for an hour's job. Handy-men, engine-drivers, very old or very young men, don't apply; the Company, desiring to engage only the very best of men, will in return pay the very best of wages. Apply between 9 and 12 to the Managing Director, etc.

We refrain from giving the firm to which the pure-souled perfect applicants must address themselves; there must already have been such a crowd anxious to enrol themselves under such a brilliant banner! But we should like to learn what "the very best of wages" are that the Admirable Crichtons earn; what hours they have to work; and how they like it? After all, is not this nauseous rubbish only an adroit puff for "the Company" itself?—S.