

but they will be recompensed for that when the time comes, as it soon will, when all distinctions of party will merge into the two camps, of the people and their haters, for they will then know clearly why they are on the right side, as they will have joined it consciously and not by mere compulsion. I believe that many Radicals are now taking this course, and I would encourage them to think that all these apparent Tory victories are only so many signs of the enlightenment of the workers of their own interests, and the consequent development of the middle-class hatred against them.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

PRISON LIFE IN ENGLAND.

It is not my intention to put before you a record of the routine of prison life in England; that has been done already by my fellow-prisoner, Mowbray. I wish rather to deal with the principles involved in the method of dealing with criminals to-day. There is not a magistrate or judge in the land but prates at times, in stock phrases, about the law dealing with those who violate it in strict justice, and with a keen eye to the well-being and reformation of the prisoner himself.

Firstly, then, is prison discipline reformatory? Nowadays we look with horror at the old methods of burning at the stake, mangling with thumbscrew and boot, of torture, and stretching on the rack. Why? Because we see that these things mean nothing but torture, and have naught to do with justice. We see they have no reformatory elements about them. But, as far as the principle goes, where is the difference between these things and our present treadmill, plank-bed, starvation diet, and solitary dark confinement? The torture is not so intense, but still it is the principle of torture, and not of reformation, that is shown in these things. Is it reasonable, for example, to expect that a felon will be taught morals by treadmill exercise? You may torture him, but that torture does not teach him the wrongfulness of theft. Prison discipline confounds justice with revenge. The only element that even professes to be reformatory is the chaplain's ministration. But if the chaplain of Norwich prison is a type of them all, there will be but little good done. Briefly, his ministration consists of the following routine: Every morning at 8.30 the prisoners march in single file into the chapel; the litany is gabbled over by the parson as quickly as decency will allow; prisoners are marched back to their cells. This is slightly varied on Sundays by the introduction of a second service in the afternoon, where the weekly luxury of a sermon is indulged in; the said sermon generally being a glorification twenty minutes long of the justice of the prison system, with occasional insertions of flattery towards the Church of England. Once a fortnight I was visited by the chaplain in my cell for the first six weeks, after that he never came near until the day before my release. So much for the only professedly reformatory element in prison life. The fact of the matter is, a huge mistaken notion of what justice is has grown up in the minds of those who profess to dispense it. Stern, unbending and unmerciful, do they picture divine justice; as if an unmerciful thing was not unjust!

Another lesson that my prison life impressed on me more strongly than ever was the fact that the majority of the prisoners are men who have been made criminals by our infamous system of society. If it should ever be your lot to visit a prison (in any capacity) just observe, as you walk along the gloomy corridor the tickets on each cell door, on which is written the crime of the occupant of the cell. Nine out of every ten are poachers, vagrants, or thieves. Society makes criminals, and then punishes them for being what it made them.

It may, perhaps, be thought that prison life has at least this virtue, that once inside its walls all are treated alike; that there is no distinction of persons. But this is not so. The wealthy swell who gets into trouble is treated with every consideration possible by the officials. It is so easy for the doctor to certify that so-and-so is unfit for heavy work, provided so-and-so happens not to be a working man. Here are two cases in point. It is one of the prison regulations that all prisoners convicted with hard labour must work the treadmill for the first month, unless the doctor certifies them to be unfit for it. While I was in prison, a lieutenant in the army was sentenced to a month's hard labour for deserting his wife and family. He was a strong, able-bodied man, but, being somewhat of a swell, the doctor ordered him off the wheel, and put him at oakum-picking. Passing down the corridor a few days after, I saw his card marked, "half-task oakum." Here is another case. At the assizes held just before the sitting at which I was sentenced, two cases came on for trial. In one of them a boy of 16 was charged with stealing a few shillings from a shop. Sentence, six months' hard labour. In the other case the City Treasurer of Norwich, a "respectable" man, was charged with "embezzling" several thousands. Sentence, six months. The boy was put on hard labour, and kept at it till his time was up. The "gentleman" was put on the lightest work in the prison, in a comfortable office, with a good fire. He not only was on the best diet in the prison, but had extra hospital diet as well, and was, in consequence, the fattest man I saw while I was inside (except a burly inspector who came round on one occasion.) It was interesting to notice at exercise time how the hungry, lean men would watch the well-fed scoundrel round the yard, as if envious of his "prime" condition.

What would be a rational treatment for criminals it is not my object to write here. Were I writing a scheme, my first suggestion would be to remedy the unjust system that fills our prisons to-day. The only effect my imprisonment had upon me was to give me a deeper insight into the brutality of our civilization, and to spur me up to greater effort in the Socialist work.

FRED HENDERSON.

A Fable: To the Men in Possession.

It is a painful sight, no doubt,
To see you pottering about,
Fumbling with those conditions new
Of life which we commend to you,
Conditions which your heated brain
Tries to conceive, and tries in vain;
But when you, floundering in the mire,
Impute to us the low desire
To fling away (and see no harm)
Knowledge and beauty, change and
charm,
Just for a larger slice of cake,—
My friend, you make a slight mistake;
Lost in your purblind lust of pelf,
You think us even as yourself.
Come, rub your eyes, look round, and
see,
Who rules the world? 'tis you, not we;
Yet everywhere see beauty slain,
Trampled and fouled by greed of gain;
Man against man in bitter strife
Contending for the barest life,
And in that ruinous employ
Forgetting hope and light and joy.

O wisdom of the worldly-wise!
Is *this* what you so dearly prize?
But we are bound to better ends,
We seek a world of happy friends,
A world of mirth, wherein we know
Beauty shall blossom forth and blow,
Transcending far and making poor
The best your guineas can procure;
Where Wisdom, born of work and rest,
To every soul shall give a zest
Such as afore she never gave
To vacant lord or broken slave;
Where fellowship of man with man,
Unchecked by caste's unholy ban,
Nor by that fleecer's cunning foiled

Which sets the spoiled against the
spoiled,
Shall flood earth with so large a joy
No power of hell can e'er destroy.

THE FABLE.

A swarm of flies, one summer day,
Were feasting in a lordly way;
Perfect the blue sky overhead,
But they, intent upon the "spread",
(Whose odour but too well betrayed
The spot where the repast was laid,
Strove, each of sweets to get his fill,
And got on famously, until
A heedless traveller sets his heel
A thought too near the festive meal.
How briskly then each little beast
Springs to defend the savoury feast.
"Base plunderer, hence! Low tramp,
away!
We know quite well what you would
say;
Make us all equal; yes, indeed,
We know your wild Utopian creed.
How dare you, Sir, how dare you thus
Lay hands on what belongs to us?"
"Wax not so hot, O little flies,"
The smiling traveller replies,
"I grieve my presence should afford
Naught save disquiet to your board,
Still more that my unwary tread
Brings such a buzz about my head.
Wherefore, be reassured, I pray;
Groundless, I swear, is your dismay;
Our tastes, our ends, are not the same;
I hunt for very different game.
On this wide common free and fair
I do but seek for orchids rare;
Wag not so virulent a tongue;
I covet not your hoard of dung."

C. W. BECKETT.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

BELGIUM.

The miners of Sars-Longchamps and Bouvy, at La Louviere, have struck, owing to the enforcement of the following regulations: 1. If a worker fails to go to work without giving notice he shall pay a fine of two francs; if he fails to work on two following days he shall cease to belong to the pit and five days' salary shall be withheld. 2. All offence, insubordination, or refusal to obey shall be punished by a fine of ten francs. 3. He who commits any damage whatever during his worktime or causes an accident to occur shall pay a fine equivalent to the damage done.

I mentioned a fortnight ago that the almanack of our Ghent comrades, "Vooruit," had been speedily exhausted. After the first ten thousand had been sold out a second edition of the same number was printed, and now they have to announce a third issue.

L'Avenir (the Future) of Liege, the weekly organ of the Walloon Socialists of Belgium, will in future appear twice a-week. Comrade Blanvallet will continue to be the editor of it.

GERMANY.

Four Bohemian tailors have been expelled from Dresden. Their lodgings were searched, with the result that a great number of copies of *Freiheit* were found. Comrade Morgenstern, a Socialist journalist, was also expelled from Bavaria.

Last week a new trial for secret conspiracy was begun at Posen. Some thirty Socialists are implicated in it, and the justice-farce is performed *within closed doors*. We know that this means in Germany—conviction against all evidence. It is said that the farce will last a fortnight.

In Freiburg (Brisgau) comrades Haugh and Fuchs have been sentenced to eight and five months imprisonment respectively for distribution of prohibited literature and for being members of a secret society—this meaning the Social Democratic party! Comrades Böhle and Stuck were sentenced to two months each, Boll and Yörger to four and three months for the same "crimes."

At Dresden the Socialist Municipal Councillors Stelzer, Horn, and Müller got four and three months respectively, and the editor of the 'Sächsisches Wochenblatt' five weeks imprisonment for libeling policeman Rosbaum. We have always been of opinion that it is impossible to calumniate a German policeman.

It is suggested among the German Socialists that if the Anti-Socialist laws are enforced by the addition of a paragraph whereby our comrades may be *exiled* from their country, the ways and means of their propaganda will change altogether. So, for instance, it is said that they are likely to give up at once all parliamentarism—i.e., that they will no longer take part in the electioneering business. If that is so, we are certain that the new "law" will have exactly the contrary effect to that which its "makers" intend to give it, then assuredly a fresh revolutionary impetus will be given to the whole movement, and that is what we want everywhere.

SPAIN.

Our Spanish friends continue to issue a considerable number of pamphlets relating to the Chicago trial. I mentioned some weeks ago the 'Proceso de los Anarquistas' published as the second volume of the Anarchist-Communist Library of Barcelona: I am glad to announce that a new relation of the same trial has been issued at Madrid, entitled 'Proceso de los Anarquistas en Chicago.' It contains a very ably and concisely written resumé of the facts, extracts of the speeches of our dead comrades, some of their letters, and general considerations on the whole justice-farce, by our friend Ernesto Alvarez. I am also informed that comrade Alvarez soon will start a new revolutionary organ, to be entitled *La Bandera Roja* (the Red Flag). We wish in advance good luck to our new colleague.

V. D.