

between them, because after all there are plenty of links between the idle appropriator of the results of other people's labour and the workman in the factory system; the various managers, clerks, and foremen are the sweating machinery in this case, and many of these are of the working-class just as the sweating tailor is. It is true that the organised sweating system carries the misery a stage lower down, in spite of the shameless defence of it which is being made before the Lords' Commission, and the last link the poor sweater is a speciality of the system, and a disgrace even to our disgraceful sham society. But it must never be forgotten, and we must repeat it again here, that all capitalistic production which is not purely individual, as the work of the doctor or the artist, is done by means of sweating in some form or other. It is the knowledge, conscious or otherwise, of this fact which gives some of the witnesses before the Lords' Commission courage to stand up and represent their horrible industry as a benefit to humanity; they cannot help feeling that the sympathy of the lords and gentlemen on the Commission will be accorded to those respectable people who are performing the whole duty of modern man by making a profit, even if they are forced by circumstances to be the instruments of inflicting misery upon other people; for as our worthy friend in the *Daily News* on the match-girls sees, that is the necessary process of commercial production: in short, the respectable factory capitalist excuses the sweater, respectable or not. Doubtless the conclusion that will be expressed in the report of the Commission on Sweating will be that the evils of the system have been much exaggerated, that the worst form of it is not widespread, that the system, with whatever exaggerated evils belong to it, is necessary to civilisation, nay, to humanity; all this probably in much these words, and as a practical rider to the conclusion, though *not* openly stated, that we the commission recommend that something be pretended to be done to keep the people quiet.

A friend of mine once expostulated with a hatter for the price he charged for his hats; the hatter had been dining, and wine inspired him to tell the truth. "Mr. ———," said he "how can I live in the style in which I do unless I charge you at least as high?"

This is really the conclusion which the Sweating Commission must come to. The misery of those who are sweated, whether by the drill of the factory or the many links of the sweating chain, is the high price that we pay for the glory of sustaining a class of idle rich men. Is the gain worth the price? Working men, it is for you to answer the question, and act according to your answer.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

THE REVOLT OF GHENT.

(Continued from p. 218.)

PEACE being made, the Earl is rather shy of Ghent, and takes up his quarters at Bruges, no doubt playing his old game of setting the towns against one another. The citizens of Ghent (one may suppose the respectables chiefly) are anxious for their Feudal Lord to come amongst them, so that they may be sure that the peace is really kept. After much persuasion, the Earl comes ungraciously enough, and the very first thing he says to "the men of the Law," as Froissart calls them—that is, the municipal chiefs, who go out to meet him—is thus given by Froissart: "Sirs, good peace requireth nothing but peace; and I would that these White Hats were laid down and amends made for the death of my Bailey, for I am sore required therein of all his lineage."

Here is the smouldering fire stirred again. "The men of the Law" answer humbly enough, and beg the Earl to come into the great square the next day and "preche to the people"; but the White Hoods make up their minds to be part of his audience. Well, he comes, and looks very angrily at the White Hoods; then from a window with a red cloth before him he makes a speech nearly as long as one of Mr. Gladstone's, winding up with a demand for the disbanding of the White Hoods. "At all these words that he spake before every man held their peace; but when he spake of the White Hats there was such a murmuring and whispering that it might well be perceived that it was for that cause."

In short, he took himself out of the town in a day or two in the worst possible temper.

The Ghentmen did not deceive themselves as to his intentions, and fell to victualling the town for a siege. Here Froissart moralises: "The rich sage and notable persons cannot excuse themselves of these deeds at the beginning. For when John Lyon first began to bring up the White Hats they might have caused them to have been laid down if they had lyst, and have sent other manner of persons against the pioneers of Bruges than they: but they suffered it because they would not meddle, nor be in no business nor press. All this they did and consented to be done, the which after they dearly bought, and specially such as were rich and wise: for after, they were no more lords of themselves, nor they durst not speak, nor do anything but as they of Ghent would. For they (the men of Ghent) said that neither for John Lyon nor for Gilbert Matthew nor for their wars nor broiles they would never depart asunder: for whatsoever war there were between one or other they would ever be all one, and ever ready to defend the franchises of their town. The which was well seen after; for they made war which endured seven years; in the which time there was never strife among them in the town: and that was the thing that sustained and kept them most of anything, both within and without: they were in such unity that there was no distance among them, as ye shall hear after in this history."

An outrage and reprisals follow. The kindred of Roger Dauterne, the slain Bailey, come upon forty ships of the Ghentmen in the Scheld, and put out the eyes of the mariners and maim them, and so send them home to Ghent. In return for this horror John Pruniaux, Captain of the White Hoods, marches suddenly on Oudenarde and beats down the two towers and gates of that town looking toward Ghent and the wall between them. The Earl of course is or feigns to be greatly enraged; though the rulers of Ghent refuse to avow the deed; but after some coming and going a sort of a peace is patched up again; Oudenarde is given up by the Ghentmen, John Pruniaux on the one side and the maimers of the mariners on the other side are banished: and on these terms of peace the curtain falls again.

It rises on a lordly act of dastardliness on the part of the Earl, who gets John Pruniaux delivered to him by the Duke of Burgundy and strikes off his head. Also, "Then the Earl went to Ypres and did here great justice, and beheaded many evil-ruled people such as had been at the death of his five Knights there slain and had opened the gates to them of Ghent."

This lordly fashion of keeping the peace was not well seen to by the Ghentmen, and the war began again more sternly than ever, and also now took more definitely the aspect of a class struggle. "Then Peter du Bois¹ said: Sirs, if ye will believe me there shall not a house stand upright of never a gentleman in the country about Ghent. . . . That is truth, said all the other. Let us go forth and beat them all down."

Which was not a mere flourish of speech, as the White Hoods, who are now identified with the town of Ghent, set to work at once; so that "when the gentlemen knights and squires being at Lysle with the Earl and thereabout heard tidings how their houses were burnt and beaten down, they were right sore displeased, and not without good cause." In short, the Earl let loose his chivalry on Ghent, his bastard son the Hase of Flanders at their head, and there was plenty of hard skirmishing after the fashion of the time.

The Ghentmen for their part summoned their vassals "the knights and squires of Heynault" to come and do them service for their holdings under pain of forfeiture; as also their Constable or Burgrave, Hervé Dantoing. It was a matter of course that the gentlemen did not come, and that the Constable sent an insolent and threatening answer. The Ghentmen retorted by destroying the houses of their disobedient vassals, who had legally forfeited their rights. This incident is a curious illustration of the mediæval *status*: the burgesses of Ghent, who were not noble, yet in their collective capacity could claim the services of noblemen, who held lands under feudal service to the town, and legally punish them for disobedience.

Well, on the part of Ghent the war went on briskly enough; but though they were still in nominal alliance with the other cities, yet in the latter, and especially in Bruges, the mean crafts had not the same power as in Ghent, and any defeat was certain to detach Bruges, and likely to detach Ypres and Courtray from the popular cause. Bruges fell off first; there was a struggle between the respectables and the mean crafts in the town, in which the former were victorious, and they at once sent to invite the Earl among them. To Bruges he came nothing loth. "At the Earl's coming were taken all the principals of them that had their hearts Ghentoise, and such as were suspect, and so were put in prison more than 500, and little by little their heads were stricken off." After this stroke of resolute government Bruges became the headquarters of the Earl, and the war began to go heavily against the Ghentmen.

The Earl marched with a considerable army to attack Thorout and Ypres, and the Ghentmen sent two bodies of men for the relief of those towns under the command of Peter du Bois, John Bull, and Arnold Clarke. But the affair was ill-managed; the two corps missed supporting each other, and that commanded by John Bull fell into an ambuscade, and one of those curious mediæval routs took place, which some of us may the better understand after the sights of Bloody Sunday.

Peter du Bois, cool and wary as usual, held his men together and retreated to Ghent; but the fugitives from John Bull's corps, who with him had got into Courtray, in their rage and terror slew their captain, and both Ypres and Courtray fell. The Earl massacred 700 of the mean crafts in Ypres "to encourage the others," and sent off 300 hostages to prison in Bruges, and afterwards 200 from Courtray. 3,000 of the Ghentois fell in the combat before Ypres.

The Earl then besieged Ghent, but loosely enough, as the Ghentmen were able to get supplies from Brussels, Brabant, and Liege, and generally from the whole country behind them, where the people were in complete sympathy with the rebels, especially in Liege.

A sharp combat took place before Nivelles, where the Ghentmen were again defeated, with the loss of two of their captains, Rafe of Harselles, a man of noble blood, and John Launoy. Of this matter Froissart, telling how the Ghentmen retreated into the church at Nivelles, says: "John de Launoy all abashed and discomforted entered into the minster to save himself, and went into the steeple, and such of his company as could get in with him, and Rafe de Harselles abode behind him and recoiled his company, and did great feats of arms at the door, but finally he was stricken with a long pike through the body and so slain. Thus ended Rafe of Harselles, who had been a great captain in Ghent against the Earl; and the Ghentois loved him greatly because of his wisdom and prowess, but for his valiantness this was his end and reward."

The Earl bade his men set fire to the church, and I give you the

¹ Peter Bush would be his due English name.

end of this tragedy in Froissart's own words as a dreadful little picture of mediæval war: "Fire, faggots, and straw were set together round about the church; the fire anon mounted up to the covering of the minster. There died the Ghentois in great pain, for they were burnt quick, and such as issued out were slain and cast again into the fire. John Launoy who was in the steeple, seeing himself at the point to be burnt, cried to them without 'Ransom! Ransom!' and offered his coat which was full of florins to save his life. But they without did but laugh and scorn at him, and said to him, 'John, come out at some window and speak with us, and we shall receive you; make a leap in like wise as ye have made some of us to leap within this year; it behoveth you to make this leap.' When John Launoy saw himself in that point, and that he was without remedy and that the fire took him so near, that he saw well he should be burnt, he thought it were better for him to be slain than to be burnt, and so he leapt out at a window among his enemies; and there he was received on spears and swords and cut all to pieces. Thus ended John Launoy."

Peter du Bois was posted so badly at this battle that he was kept by a marshall from helping. He once more drew off, and got into Ghent in good order, and it was a near thing that he did not share the fate of John Bull at the hands of the enraged people. But after all the Earl raised the siege and went back to Bruges. Skirmishing, however, still went on, and the Ghentoise, after some successes, had another body of men cut up, 1,100 out of 1,200, says Froissart, and Arnold Clarke slain.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

(To be continued.)

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

ITALY.

There is a slight stir in Italy just now over the scandalous lengths which various forms of usury have reached in that country. As *Il Democratico* of Cremona observes in an article on the question, of all the ingenious forms of usury, from the State establishments, Institutes of Credit, and the like, downward, the worst is that on a small scale which deals entirely with the working-folk and wrests from them in bad times one-fourth, one-third, and not seldom one-half of next season's earnings, crops and produce of their labour. "In certain parts of Italy, especially in the south where the money-circulation and commercial exchange are scanty on account of the poor means of distribution and communication, etc., usury sometimes reaches 50 per cent. No one protests against such an enormity, and the peasant of Calabria, who half through the winter borrows a half *tomolo* (56 lb.) of grain has to return for it a whole *tomolo* at the following harvest, thanks his usurer for the loan, and, without thinking, looks upon him as his benefactor." And yet the working-people prefer to pay such enormous prices to help them at a pinch, to going to the *Monte di Pietà* (government pawn shops), where the interest is of course lower, or apparently so. The reason is that at these establishments all sorts of difficulties are made, and, in short, Red Tape reigns supreme, to the humiliation and exceeding torment of the needy, who shrink from official badgering (of which in truth they already have more than enough in that happy land), and prefer to it the ready hand of the private usurer, putting behind them all thought of the future, too heavy in mind and heart with the cares of to-day to think of what may come upon next year or next month. Social reformers will talk of putting down usury by popular Institutes of Credit and the like philanthropic schemes, whereas growing Socialist ideas will soon show people that nothing less than national prosperity can do away with the foundation of what is courteously called the *commercial system*.

ANDARNO.—In consequence of the many and heavy fines on the weavers in a large cotton-factory here, they the employes turned "nasty" and proceeded to thrash an overseer, one Hoffmann. Several arrests were made, and a strike of the *apparecchiatori* (strippers), to the number of 800 have left the works. The strikers are quiet and make no demonstrations of anger at present.

MILAN.—The strike of basket-makers still continues, the strikers receiving some help from various other trade associations, their own Association being very poor.

M. M.

FRANCE.

Boulanger went last week to the Chamber, read a speech prepared for him, and behaved himself in as coarse and brutal a manner as if he was already Dictator. He was afterwards challenged to a duel by Prime Minister Floquet and seriously wounded next morning, his recovery being not at all certain. All this is a matter of great indifference to us. Scoundrels of this type are the product of the present rotten system. The exploiters of all countries have the presentiment of the coming proletarian revolution, and are ready to lick the boots of the first adventurer who seems to present them stronger guarantees of law, order, and sacred property than the Government under which they actually live. So the French bourgeois submitted to Napoleon I. and III.; the German bourgeois care now no more for the most elementary liberties if only Bismarck protects them, as they imagine, against the growing Socialist movement, etc. It may fairly be said that unscrupulous cynicism is about the only virtue required in a bourgeois hero of to-day, be his name Gambetta, Bismarck, or Boulanger. Of course, they must also devise certain means to deceive the less intelligent part of the people, and the question of patriotism, national defence, is one of their most-used tricks, another being promises in the line of some kind of State Socialism, like the magnificent so-called "social reform" of Germany, by which a disabled worker is now to get a yearly pension of £4 or £6, provided he pays for it most of his life. As to Boulanger personally, one of the wanton slaughterers of the Commune, he seems not even to have got much brains in his head, or he would not act in the way he lately did. May be the bourgeois see that, and let him drop, and he will disappear; or he may still go on in his old way. At any rate, another person of the same kidney is sure to take his place sooner or later. By the way, some supposed Socialists are sure to go over on all such occasions to the gang of the new Dictator, thus clearing the party of their presence.

A new Socialist daily paper will shortly appear at Marseilles, edited by Félix Pyat, with Eng. Chatelain, T. B. Clement, Alphonse Gormain, Emile Courret, etc., as contributors.

Eugène Chatelain's *Coup de Feu* will be issued weekly from September 1 next. It was hitherto fortnightly.

At St. Etienne a new paper, *La Loire Socialiste*, with the rather vague and impractical programme of uniting the Socialist parties, has made its first appearance, another paper of the same kind having failed not long ago.

The management of the Fourierist Familistère of Guise has passed from the widow of the founder, Godin, into the hands of M. Dequenne, Madame Godin being about to use her time in publishing her husband's works. This establishment, like other similar experiments, is rather based on partnership or profit-sharing than on any socialistic system, and revelations were made shortly before M. Godin died showing how little the personal liberty of the workers employed therein is cared for.

GERMANY AND AUSTRIA.

To replace some recently-suppressed papers, two new organs have been started, viz., the *Bremer Tageblatt* (since July 1, at Bremen) and the *Grundstein*, an organ of the building trade (at Hamburg). It would be too monotonous to chronicle all arrests that took place recently at Hamburg, etc.

The present London match-girl strike will give some interest to the following details on the earnings of Silesian match-box makers, recently published in the *Schlesische Volkszeitung*. The price of 1,000 is 7½d.; if they are labelled, 8½d. The barley-flour for paste (one pound for 2,000 boxes, 2½d., must be paid for by the worker himself. A woman with three children, who, up from their fifth year, work from four in the morning until eight or nine at night all the time they are out of school, may make 3,000 to 4,000 boxes in a week, and thus earn from 1s. 10d. to 2s. 10d. per week, from which 7d. to 9d., the cost of the paste, must be deducted. So, when Bryant and May say they would transfer their factory to Norway or somewhere else, they are sure to find still cheaper labour than in the East-end of London. Present society offers no remedy against this to the workers, except that a few tricks of the employers may sometimes be repelled by international solidarity of the working classes, as was the case recently at Hamburg, where, in the great strike of the cabinet-makers and joiners, the masters sent for some hundred men from Holland. They went there, learned that they were engaged under false pretences and that they were going to be used as scabs; and they refused to take up work under these circumstances.

DENMARK AND SWEDEN.

The Danish Socialist Democratic party has just edited a translation of "Capital" (473 pp., price 2 kroner), at the same time Domela Nieuwenhuis's "Capital and Labour" is published in the *Social-Democraten*, of Copenhagen.

Axel Danielson, editor of the Malmö *Arbetet*, already under sentence of one year's imprisonment, has again been sentenced for blasphemy (!) to ten months. The loss of the editor will be hard to bear for the paper which had so soon developed from a weekly into a thrice-a-week organ.

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.

On August 12th-14th a congress of the Spanish *Sociétés de Resistance* will be held at Barcelona, with the object of forming a new federation of the said societies.

A *Revolução Social* has been published at Oporto.

OTHER COUNTRIES.

Looking over the countries in which no regular Socialist movement exists, we find discontent and revolt taking this or the other form spread everywhere. Besides new small peasant riots in Roumania, Russia, Galicia, we hear, for instance, of a large meeting being held at Sant Iago, Chili, to protest against capitalism, and in particular some tramcar company. Twenty-five cars were afterwards heaped together, ignited by petroleum, and burned. This would show a struggle against monopolism even there, whilst we were only aware of a Socialist agitation at Buenos Ayres, Montevideo, and Rio de Janeiro. On the other side of the Pacific strikes of Chinese workmen are reported. The freight-carriers at Shanghai and the dock labourers at Hongkong struck work; the taxes at Shanghai having been augmented, and a vexatious demand—each worker to deliver his photograph to the employer—at Hongkong, were the immediate reasons. The Chinese coolies are not at all without feelings of solidarity, as is generally believed. We do not know what became of the Knights of Labour assembly formed last year at New York by Chinese workers, but we know that in China itself they often organise themselves similar to the Russian *artels*. The articles of E. Reclus, 'The Internationale and the Chinese,' (*Le Travailleur*, March, 1878), L. Méchniboff who has just died at Clarens, on 'The Chinese Associations' (*ib.*, May, 1878), and some notes reprinted in *Le Devoir* of February 27, 1887, contain useful information on this subject. In consequence of the inundations, general revolts, in which the military partly sided with the people, occurred in large districts of China, and took the right direction of a war against the rich, not those of any political movement. In the province Bantam of Java another rising of the people took place. In this part of that island 2 gulden (nearly 4s.), in Cheribon 1½, in Krawang 1½, in Tapara 2½, etc., are the yearly wages of a servant paid by the exploiting Netherlanders. In Algeria a famine ravages the country; whilst the French Government thinks of relieving the proprietors of land by compensating them for their loss by locusts, etc., they heap together troops in the southern parts to be ready to crush the starving natives. The Arabians of the south are said to be on the verge of a rebellion; they remember of the famine of 1867, when 100,000 of them died of typhus and starvation, and it is possible that they will go on in large tribes against the French, with the vigour and fanaticism their fellow tribes displayed in the Soudan. So we see everywhere struggle against exploitation, and we might learn from these uncivilised peoples, at any rate, to strike boldly at the exploiters who represent the system, instead of begging for political and even very small social reforms, as is generally done.

* *

An intelligent lad of 14 or 15 asked a friend of ours if he would be so good as to give him a little information on the subject of politics; because, said he, the only information I can get about them is from the newspapers. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou perfected praise!—W. M.

METROPOLITAN PAUPERISM.—The weekly return of metropolitan pauperism shows that the total number of paupers relieved in the first week of the current month was 90,621, of whom 54,350 were indoor and 36,271 outdoor paupers. The total number relieved shows an increase of 2,884 over the corresponding week of last year, 4,333 over 1886, and 6,772 over 1885. The total number of vagrants relieved on the last day of the week was 893, of whom 698 were men, 178 women, and 17 children under sixteen.