SATURDAY, JULY 21, 1888.

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ANTI-SWEATING DEMONSTRATION
IN HYDE PARK, SUNDAY, JULY 22, 1888.

The Socialist League has appointed the following, who will speak on its behalf from Platform No. 6:


The following is the resolution which will be moved at the meeting:

"That this meeting, while protesting against the extortion practised under what is known as the Sweating System, points out that this is a necessary result of production for profit, and must continue until that is put an end to; and therefore calls upon all workers to combine in order to bring about Social Revolution, which will place the means of production and exchange in the hands of the producers."

The following are the times and places of meeting—

E.S.
Deepest ... 1.45
Brick Lane Station ... 2.50
(Acid white for those from Bermondy, Walworth, and Peckham.)
Obelisk, Blackfriars Road ... 3.15
St. Thomas's Hospital ... 3.30
Victoria ... 4.0

E.A.S.
Canning Town ... 1.0
Paddington ... 1.15
Tottenham Road, Mile End ... 2.15
West End ... 2.15
Whitechapel, Commercial Street ... 2.45
(Please note the Triangular, Hackney.)
Massion House ... 3.0
to Holborn Circus ... 3.30
to Tottenham Court Road ... 3.45

SWEATERS AND SWEATERS.

No. 1.—MATCHES BY THE FACTORY DRILL.

The London Trades' Council having taken up the strike of the match girls, it did at any rate go on long enough to force the attention of even the stupidest of the capitalist class, and the girls have at least gained something out of the struggle; and surely nobody but the cruellest as well as the stupidest of bourgeois will grudge them that small gain. For the rest, like other strikes, it is a necessary incident in the war of capital and labour; whatever may be the fate of any particular strike, the whole mass of strikes forms one side of this great war: if there were no strikes but those which were likely to succeed in times like the present, the manufacturing capitalists would have an easy time of it, and would reduce the workers under their control to the very lowest point of misery; but as it is, even people in such a wretched condition as these poor match girls can make themselves felt temporarily, and can help to swell the mass of opposition to the manufacturers' ideal, to wit, human machinery which will give not more, but less, trouble than the machinery of mere dead matter, and will be as contented as that; so that Mrs. Beatt and the others whose exertions have made this strike possible have done and are doing good service.

It is curious, though, to see how the capitalist press have straightforwardly set their locks up, and set to work to whitewash the extremely "spectable" firm—company, I should say—who live on this miserable industry. What has become of the "Bitter Cry" and all the fashionable slumming which followed it? Why, this industry, which is of such commercial importance to the world—of shareholders—is just the very thing that all that dead-end sympathy was poured out on; and yet now we find the press, which was so "interested" in the affairs of the East End workers four years ago, is quite content to leave the match girls to the tender mercies of Messrs. Bryant and May and other such benefactors of the human race; and if any attempt is set on foot to make these poor folk conscious of the fact that they are part of a great class which must struggle for existence and should struggle for a decent life, immediately we find the papers, to say the least of it, tender of the rich and harshly critical of the poor, scattering broadcast inundoes against the disinterested people who really feel the "Bitter Cry," telling more about the actual facts of the strike, chucking over the slavery of the poor wretches who hug their chains and are angry with the strikers for making them risk the loss of starvation wages which they are doomed to want, poor shabby people as these, and the public for which they write, who simply want to be mildly amused by other people's troubles, are not likely to note one lesson which would seem to be pretty clearly taught by the expenditure of this manufacturer to the light of day, and that is the utter helplessness of any philanthropic remedies for these miseries, or, indeed, any remedies but the one remedy of destruction of the whole system of the robbery of the wage; still less are they likely to see that this flourishing and respectable company, the names of whose managers are a kind of household words, is a reduction ad absurdum of the competition for profits which is the "bond of society" at present. The superintendence of "cultural" institutions is of the necessity of profit-grinding is as gross as ever superstition was. I take as an illustration a sentence from an article in the Daily News by a well-intentioned sort of person apparently, and read:—"These poor people are really the victims, not of any exceptional greed for hard usage of Messrs. Bryant and May (coal savers, though, my friend!) but of that steady onward rush of the great industrial machine whose course is directed by the needs and welfare of those immediately beneath its wheels, but of the community at large for generations to come." I think it is worth repeating, but it is that tall talk. Let us pick this match-making business from the "steady onward rush," and see what it means. It is a very simple story, and a very shabby one. A lot of helpless girls and women are driven by fear of mere destitution to hire themselves out at starvation wages to do mechanical and unlovely work, and are devilishly drily by a perfected system which aims at wasting nothing (except human life) and the result of their labour is sold at the lowest price possible in order that the money passing through the hands of the company may be turned as often as possible; and in order to do that even the wretched wages are clipped by fines, which have the double advantage of helping in the drilling as well as saving the wage outlay. That is the process; what is the gain that comes of it, beyond the keeping alive in misery a number of girls? Certain persons are able to live a luxurious and useless life without working, and matches are made so cheap that the public buy twice as many as they want of them and waste half. Here is a gain indeed for "the generations to come." Are we so helpless that this shabby story is to be told over and over again, and the sad fact always a doin'? Once more, a farthing of matches is no great plunder to take from a "victim of the great industrial machine, and, on the whole, I think it was better to try to direct it by the needs and welfare of those immediately beneath its wheels"—only you cannot, as long as the machine is composed of capital and wages, averts the evil by the force of the laws. And all wise men will do so, and spread discontent till we make a better bargain than selling ourselves to the Devil—for nothing.

No. 2.—PASSING ON THE PINCH.

It is noteworthy that we are to-day having the extreme form of that process which the capitalist has dragged up before the public face. On the one hand there is this system of the complaintless drill of the factory, obvious authoritative compulsion, and on the other the compulsion which passes through the links of the sweating system, in the last link of which more obvious necessity of bread-eating compels the poor sweater to compel. When the two systems are brought face to face it will be seen that there is little enough to choose
between them, because after all there are plenty of links between the idle appropriators of it all, and the officers, and the workmen 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 sympathetic tailors did not come in for twopenny and below rewards; they were all for the cause of the shameless defence of it which is being made before the Lords' Commission, and the last link the poor sweater is a specialty of the society, and a dike against our disgraceful slave society. But perhaps we must repeat it again here, that all capitalist 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 a matter of course that this will be accorded to those respectable men 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 infamy apart of the machinery; for all will be broad lighted in the Daily News on the match-girls, see, 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 examination it is, is needed to civilize 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 evil in check.

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 the following exclamation: "Did you ever 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 army or the machinery, and that 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. 718.

Peace being made, the Earl is rather 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 respectable 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 very much the way 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 the chronicler as not being altogether on the Earl's side, but perhaps the latter would have been the case. The Earl, accordingly, laid down the peace, and made his terms for the paying of the debt of his old war with the White Hoods. "At all these words that he spake before every man held their peace; but when he spake of the White Hoods there was a 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 do not deceive themselves as to his intentions, and fell to erecting the walls of a town. For here Froissart毛孔is: "The rich sage and notable persons cannot excuse themselves of these deeds at the beginning. For when John Lyen first began to bring up the matter of the Hoods, and the old Earl him out, and the new Earl, if they had lust, and have sent other manner of persons against the pioneers of Bruges than they; but they suffered it because they would not mobile, nor be in no business nor press. All this they did and committed, and in the name of the Earl, telling lies, and saying such a thing as was rich and wise: for after, they were no more lords of them, nor they durst not speak, nor do anything but as they of Ghent would have them. The Earl of Ghent came to his company as they of Ghent were, and not for Gilbert Matthew nor for their wars nor brothes they would never depart. For whatsoever war there were between one other or 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."