

Meanwhile, the *Pall Mall* is still behind, and cannot quite come over to the truth; talks of the anti-Chinese precautions of the colonies, and goes in half-heartedly for the like here.

A little while ago it will be remembered that two girls were imprisoned with hard labour, because they were poor enough to be compelled to sleep in the open-air and resented the tortures of the workhouse. When asked about the sentence, the genial Matthews suggested that it was given to enable the prison chaplain to exert his saving influence. But Cunninghame Graham kept on with his questions, and now the hard labour is remitted, though the poor devils will have to stay out their time—not that this is such an awful hardship in these days, as the prison is much more healthy and comfortable than the “homes” of millions. S.

SOCIALISM IN A PALACE.

THE *Commonweal* of 28th April contained comrade Mark Manly's experience of a Socialist at a Primrose League banquet. This week we have to chronicle a more startling incident—that of Socialism being preached in a palace. The scene took place at the palatial residence of Lieut. Colonel Thorneycroft, Tettenhall Towers, near Wolverhampton, upon the occasion of the gathering of the Tettenhall Branch of the Primrose League in his private theatre. The theatre itself, to fully describe, would require the artistic abilities of our comrade William Morris. We therefore content ourselves with saying that its walls were graced by some of the most beautiful specimens of oak carvings, together with relics of bygone times in the shape of old armour and trophies of the chase. Added to this the massive building itself, together with the graceful artificial lights provided, falling, as they did, on an audience composed of every phase of society from the aristocratic idler up to the hard-handed artisan, rendered the scene at once charming and unique. The object of the gathering was to discuss the question of “How best to improve trade for the benefit of the working classes.” The intentions of the gallant colonel were evidently of the purest, for he had invited some twenty or thirty different leading men among the working classes to attend and take part in the discussion. Great praise is due to him for so bold a step. Among others who attended and took part were Mr. R. Juggins, agent for the trades' unionists of Darlaston and district; Mr. Homer, Cradley Heath Chainmakers; Mr. Cocking, of the Wolverhampton Compositors' Society; and William Haydn Sanders, as delegate of the Walsall Branch of the Socialist League. It is almost needless to say that Colonel Thorneycroft's views are those of a Fair Trader. In his opinion a prohibitive tax on all manufactured or partly manufactured goods imported into this country is nearly all that is required to give six days' work a week to the working classes, with a couple of hours' daily toil thrown in by the children, in order to help keep the family. This is the blessing they deduce from the application of Fair Trade, and this it was that the meeting was asked to assist in bringing about. To the great surprise of all, Mr. Juggins gave his personal support to the proposition, although in his speech he clearly admitted that the gunlock-makers and nut-bolt forgers, and also the chainmakers, were working sixty hours per week for wages varying from 7s. up to 15s. per week, although they had no foreign competition to encounter in those trades, and yet he was so blind and dead to economic facts that he failed to see that such a proposition as Fair Trade in no wise affected those whom he represented. He was followed by Mr. Homer, the “heaven-sent leader” of the Cradley Heath chainmakers, who, with shame and regret be it said, had no better news to tell the audience than that there were plenty of men among his class, the workers, whom he knew, who were able to earn for themselves and family a living, and yet were too idle and drunken to do so. It never seemed to dawn on this “heaven-sent leader's” mind that the present system breeds these wastrels, and that so long as it is retained wastrels there ever must be. It is noteworthy that none of the rich idlers present denounced any of their class for living luxurious and licentious lives, and we hope this will be a lesson for even Mr. Homer on a future occasion. He concluded by inveighing against overtime and advocating the eight hours system. Comrade Sanders was then called upon, and, in a vigorous, eloquent, and able speech, in which he demolished all ideas of ever improving the condition of the workers by political change, said that the salvation of the workers would not be brought about by simply demolishing the House of Lords, the throne, or the church, free education, free sale of land, and such-like political tinkering. All these things had been carried out generations ago in other countries and had failed, for workers of America, France, Germany, and other countries were under the heel of the capitalist, as here. The evil did not lie in overtime, nor was the remedy Free Trade or Fair Trade. As for work, we (the workers) did too much already, and the idea imagined by Colonel Thorneycroft, that working men wanted six days' work a week, was entirely wrong. They wanted less work, more leisure, and the full fruits of their labour. To-day working men built splendid houses and palaces for the rich, and miserable huts and slums for themselves. They made beautiful clothes for the rich, and shoddy clothes for themselves. They tilled the soil which produced beautiful food, and yet lived on garbage and rubbish. Everywhere we saw those who worked hardest fared the hardest.

In support of his statements he quoted statistics from Mulhall, Leone Levi, Giffen, and others, showing that the total production of

wealth to day was more than enough to provide comforts for all. The national income was £1,250,000,000 per year, and of that sum the workers were said to get £450,000,000, or one pound out of every three. The other £800,000,000 going for rent, interest, and profit; 222,000 families receiving £333,000,000 between them, or an average income of £1,665, *vide* Mulhall's ‘Dictionary of Statistics.’ Men with £33 per week, he said, did not generally work. Here, then, lay the cause of poverty for the workers. The rich men consume, the poor men produce, and the remedy is to be found in a reconstruction of society wherein the rich of to-day shall labour for what they consume and the poor of to-day shall consume what they produce by their own labour. All the means of labour must be nationalised and treated as the common property of all—the land, the mines, factories, machinery, etc., all these must be under the full control of the workers; then they would be regulated so that every one shall have an equal opportunity of working, and the full fruits of his labour when he has worked.

This speech produced a marked impression on all present, and was followed by Mr. Cocking, who put forward as a remedy, taxing of all uncultivated lands, royalties on minerals to go to the State, and reduction in the hours of labour to eight per day.

The discussion was continued by Mr. Staveley Hill, Q. C., M. P., who pointed out that Mr. Juggins failed entirely to put forward any remedy, whilst with Mr. Homer he strongly agreed. As for Mr. Cocking's proposals he expressed his abhorrence, and regarded nationalisation of royalties as confiscation, and contended that Parliament had no right to interfere with private property. As for taxing uncultivated land, the fact was it would not pay to cultivate. With regard to Socialism, Mr. Hill seemed powerless to cope with it, for he admitted that all men were equal in the sight of God and should be in the sight of men, and wisely left comrade Sanders severely alone.

In response to an invitation of the chairman for any of the audience to take part in the discussion, comrade J. T. Deakin took the opportunity of severely criticising Mr. Staveley Hill, M. P., pointing out that Parliament had interfered with private property to the tune of confiscating 40 per cent. of landlord's rents in Ireland during the last few years, and that during the last century the dominant class had confiscated from the people no less than ten million acres of common land, and pointedly asked whether it was not a fact that the rent paid to landlords was the true reason why land would not pay to cultivate? It would grow grain, etc., for the people, but not keep an idle class; and the people when they got common sense would be very unlikely to continue the payment of rent. Labour was the source of all wealth; therefore all wealth belonged to the labourer, and he urged the working-men to organise for the purpose of asserting their rights. This could only come through Socialism, and Socialism would come to displace the present system as surely as past systems had given way to the present.

Mr. Hill, in reply, evaded the points raised; and in closing the meeting Lieut. Col. Thorneycroft expressed himself pleased with the information elicited, and heartily invited all delegates to be present at the next gathering in a few weeks' time, when our comrades will not fail to attend. J. T. D.

SOCIALISM FROM THE ROOT UP.

CHAPTER XXIII (*concluded*).—SOCIALISM TRIUMPHANT.

It remains to say something on the religious and ethical basis of which the life of Communal Society may be called an expression, although from another aspect the religion may be said to be an expression of that life; the two together forming an harmonious whole.

The word religion has been, and is still in most minds, connected with supernatural beliefs, and consequently the use of the word has been attacked as unjustifiable where this element is absent. But, as we shall proceed to show in a few words, this is rather accessory to it than essential.

In the first instance religion had for its object the continuance and glory of the kinship—Society; whether as clan, tribe, or people, ancestor worship forming the leading feature in its early phases. That in such an epoch religion should have been connected with what we now call superstition was inevitable, since at that time no distinction was drawn between the human and any other form of existence, whether in animal life or in inanimate matters, all being alike considered conscious and intelligent.

Consequently, with the development of material civilisation from the domination of things by persons to that of persons by things, and the consequent falling asunder of Society into two classes, a possessing and dominating class, and a non-possessing and dominated one, arose a condition of Society which gave leisure to the possessing or slaveholding class, the result of which was a possibility of observation and reflection amongst the upper class. As a consequence of this a process of reflection arose among this class which distinguished man as a conscious being from the rest of nature. From this again arose a dual conception of things: on the one hand was man, which was familiar and known, on the other nature, which was mysterious and relatively unknown. In nature itself grew a further distinction between its visible objects now regarded as unconscious things, and a supposed motive power which acted on them from behind, which was conceived of as manlike in character, but above mankind in knowledge and power, and no longer a part of the things themselves, but without them, and moving and controlling them.

Another set of dual conceptions arose along with this, firstly the distinction between the individual and Society, and secondly within the individual the distinction between the soul and the body. Religion now became definitely supernatural, and at last superstitious, as far as the cultured class was concerned, since they had gradually lost their old habit of belief in it.

At this stage there arose a conflict not only of belief but also of ethical conceptions; the ceremonies and customs based on the earlier ideas, on a nature composed of beings who were all conscious, became meaningless and in many cases repulsive to the advanced minds of the epoch; hence arose a system of esoteric explanation and the Mysteries.¹ An importance began to be attached to the idea of a future life for the individual soul, which had nothing in common with the old idea of a scarcely broken existence, founded not on any positive doctrine, but on the impossibility of an existing being conceiving of its non-existence; an idea naively expressed, for instance, in the burial ceremonies of all early races, in which food, horses, arms, etc., are buried with the dead man as a provision for his journey to the unknown country. These ideas, and the doctrines and ceremonies embodying them, grow in number and body as the stream of history broadens down, till they finally issue in the universal or ethical religions (as opposed to the tribal or nature-religions) of which Buddhism and Christianity are the great historical examples, and in which the original ceremonies and their meaning have become fused with each other, and with the new ethics of these religions, and are supposed to express these ethics more or less symbolically. An illustration of what has here been said may be found in the fusion of the ancient notions of sacrifices in the doctrine of the Atonement.²

We have said that with the rise of civilisation tribal society became divided into classes, owing to the growth of the individual ownership of property as opposed to its corporate ownership. The old relations of persons to society were thus destroyed, and with them much of the meaning of the old ethical ideas. In the tribal society, the responsibility of the individual to the limited society of which he formed a part was strongly felt, while he recognised no duty outside his tribe. In the new conception of morality which now arose he had, it is true, duties to all men as a man, irrespective of the community to which he belonged, but they were vague and could be evaded or explained away with little disturbance of the conscience; because the central point round which morality revolved was a spiritual deity who was the source of morality and directly revealed himself to the individual conscience. These two, the tribal ethics, the responsibility to a community however limited, and the universal or introspective ethics, or responsibility to a divinity to whom humanity was but a means of realising himself, and to whom therefore the duties of man to man were of secondary importance¹—are the two ethical poles. But though the tendency was in this direction from the beginnings of civilisation, it took historically many centuries to realise itself, and only reached its final development in Christianity; and has now under the influence of competitive economics taken the final form of the devil-take-the-hindmost doctrine and practice of modern society.

As regards the future form of the moral consciousness, we may safely predict that it will be in a sense a return on a higher level to the ethics of the older society, with the difference that the limitation of scope to the kinship society in its narrower sense, which was one of the elements of the dissolution of ancient society, will disappear, and the identification of individual with social interests will be so complete that any divorce between the two will be inconceivable to the average man.

We may say in conclusion that this new ethic is no longer a mere theoretic speculation, but that many thousands of lives are already under its inspiration. Its first great popular manifestation was given in the heroic devotion of the working-classes of Paris in the Commune of 1871 to the idea of true and universal freedom, which was carried on by the no less complete devotion of the little band of Russian revolutionists who made so little account of their individual lives in their engrossing passion for the general life of humanity.

Everywhere the same feeling is spreading, and even in England, the chosen home of bourgeois bureaucracy, which, with the instinctive cunning of a business country, gives every opportunity to well-to-do persons for forgetting the general welfare in that of the individual, it is getting more irrepensible every day. This wave of ethical feeling is no doubt the result of the development of the class struggle now rapidly approaching to the crisis which will abolish all classes: in fact, the mere hope, ever growing nearer to realisation, of an economical change which will make life easy and refined for all, is what has made this ethical idea possible, as the habits which the new economical system will engender will make any other form of ethics inconceivable: since once for all a change in the economical system of society must always be accompanied by fresh ethical ideas.

¹ The mysteries were nothing but a practice of the ancient rude ceremonies now treated as revelations to certain privileged persons of this hidden meaning which could not be understood by the vulgar: that is, people began to assume that the ancient rude and sometimes coarse ceremonies (belief in which directly as explanations of natural events now appeared to them incredible) wrapped up mystical meanings in an allegorical manner; e.g., a simple sun-myth would be turned into an allegory of the soul and the divinity,—their relative dealings with a present and future life.

² See article "Sacrifice" in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' (9th Edition), by Professor Robertson Smith.

¹ "Morality, thou dreadful bane,
What tens of thousands thou hast slain!"

(Protestant hymn.)

We may be asked, since we have been putting forward the doctrine of evolution throughout these chapters, what Socialism in its turn will evolve. We can only answer that Socialism denies the finality of human progress, and that any system of which we can now conceive of as Socialism must necessarily give way to a new development of society. But that development is necessarily hidden from us by the unfinished struggle in which we live, in which for us the supreme goal is the Socialism we have been putting forward. Nor do we repine at this limitation of our insight; that goal is sublime and beautiful enough which promises to us the elevation of the whole of the people to a level of intelligent happiness and pleasurable energy, which at present is reached, if at all, only by a chosen few at the expense of the misery and degradation of the greater part of mankind; and even by those few, is held on such a precarious tenure that it is to them little better than a pleasant dream disturbed by fantastic fears which have their birth from the terribly real sufferings of the ordinary life of the masses on whom they live.

E. BELFORD BAX AND WILLIAM MORRIS.

BRUMMAGEM SWEATING.

In a discussion recently at a meeting of the Birmingham Trades' Council, some shocking revelations were made as to "sweating" carried on in the town. The Birmingham *Daily Post* took up the subject and appointed a representative, whose inquiries have disclosed a still more appalling state of things than was presented to the Trades' Council. After some general remarks as to the "sordid, coarse, callous" ruffians who form the large majority of the employers, and the aspect of the wretched victims who eke out a miserable existence in the sweating dens, the writer concludes:—"There is reason to affirm that the half has not been, and cannot be told. The tour of inspection revealed 66 sweaters in the town, and 129 men and 240 women working for them. Six girls, a machinist, a presser, and the contractor were found in one room, so small that no girl could leave her place unless others quitted the room to make passage for her. Ten women and three men occupied the small attic of a good-looking house in Bath Row. These are typical cases. Trade is slack during nine months of the year, and busy during three months. When the busy season comes it is not uncommon for men to work several days and nights without intermission; while women ply their needles from six o'clock in the morning, and girls, who, for fear of the Factory Acts, are sent home at eight o'clock with a heavy allotted task to finish overnight, work often still longer. The average wage earned under these conditions is said by the toilers to be 12s. a-week by women, something more by men, and a few shillings less by girls. Some of the women and girls in the busiest season, and most of them in the slack season, earn only 5s. to 7s. 6d. a week. After working harder than any slave ever worked on a sugar plantation, the women are content, and even proud, to take home 16s. or 18s. at a week end, and one woman was heard to boast that by stopping up all night, like a man, she had once made 20s. in a week. A Hungarian who employs ten girls at trousers-making, contracts to do for 3s. 9d. the kind of work for which the price recognised by the workman's trade society is 5s. 6d. For the performance of that work by the people he employs, he pays 1s. 9d. at the most. There is one place in town which turns out sixty pairs of trousers every week, and if the profits be at the rate named the sweater makes £6 for himself. A still lower price is contracted for by a sweater who has nine girls and a few men working for him. He undertakes to make up any kind of trousers at 3s. 6d. a pair, although the price ranges in legitimate working from 5s. 3d. to 7s. 6d. He then pays 1s. or 9d. a pair to his girls and women for doing the greater part of such work as cannot be done by machine. 'I have known men start work on a Thursday morning,' said one man, 'and not finish until Sunday evening at seven. They take their meals and their beer while working. It is 'nigger driving.' When they are not paid by the piece the contractor stands and watches them work, for fear they should rest for a minute; and when it is piecework they're at, the price is so low that they nigger-drive themselves.' The tyranny of the sweaters is absolute."

THE CHEAPEST MARKET.

We deny in toto that saying which is taken as an axiom in our devil-take-the-hindmost system of political economy to the effect that a man has a right to "buy in the cheapest market." He has no right to do any such thing. He employs the labour that produces the goods that he buys; the "cheapest market" means slave labour; the man who maintains that he has a right to "buy in the cheapest market" thereby asserts that he has a right to employ slave labour and perpetuate slavery, and, as we said before, he has no right to do any such thing.

The man who employs labour, whether directly as a so-called employer, or indirectly as a consumer, owes a duty to labour which he employs—a duty which he may not shirk without reaping the penalty either as an individual or as a member of the body politic; either in his own person, or by having his sins visited upon his children. It is his duty to lift the labour which he employs up to a higher standard of social, moral and intellectual life—up to a larger degree of freedom.

But it is a good deal easier to find fault with others' short-comings than it is to keep ourselves free from sin in this direction. We apply the epithets of "heartless," "grasping," "soulless," and the like to men who are directly employing labour, while we ourselves, when we say to a dealer "Are those your best figures?" "Can't you let me have that just a few cents cheaper?" are equally grasping, and heartless, and soulless, for every cent we thus save comes out of the labour at the other end—the two cents difference between the 50c. and the 48c. shirt means a cut of 24 cents per dozen to the wretched being who stitched on them 18 hours a day in the misery of the living death of slow starvation.

Far from having the "right to buy in the cheapest market," it is the duty of every man to buy the goods that pay living wages to labour. Labour must co-operate with labour instead of competing against labour. If every man who buys will ask for goods with a square label, and buy no others, labour will be protected in receiving living wages, and no need of a tariff to help it along either.—*Cleveland Workman.*