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THE LABOUR WAR IN WALES.

MORE depends upon the conflict that is now raging in South Wales than a careless observer might imagine. It is not alone a battle between the South Wales railway men and the rich railway company, it is really a fight between the railway companies and railway workers of Britain. South Wales has been chosen as the battle-field, and that is all. If the railway company is beaten, every one of these rich corporations in England, Wales, and Scotland may look forward to reduced dividends. If the men are defeated it may be the Sedan of the New Unionism, and the Norwoods and Liveseys may rejoice, for Labour will be once more a crushed slave beneath their feet. No wonder, then, that all who love the people are looking with so much interest to South Wales.

But there is another reason why Socialists should be interested in this Great Strike. If capitalists have united against labour, then on the other hand labour stands in serried ranks against capital. Sympathy is universal among the workers with the strikers. The dockers will not take coal from blackleg railway men, and the miners on their side not only will not dig coal, but they threaten that they will prevent by main force the running of trains by blacklegs. What with the men on strike, and the miners and the dockers who are locked out, the strike is practically a general one. This fact has been recognised even by the scribes of the capitalist press. The *Weekly Dispatch*, among other capitalist newspapers, has pointed this out. It says:

"Another point to be noted is this. The Welsh strike for the moment simply paralysed the life of the community. And why? Because it was a case where labour operated not merely by one combination, but by a combination of combinations, and because it contrived to neutralise the blackleg. The strikers first shut up the seaport of the district, and then strangled its railway system. If that were done in London—and it can be done—we leave it to our readers to say what would happen within twenty-four hours. The alternative would be surrender or civil war, and the sooner this ugly fact is faced the better."

We do not think that a General Strike even in London would involve civil war, because we do not know who would do the fighting on the part of the capitalist classes. With outbreaks among the soldiers in our garrison towns, and with a fierce discontent among them, of which these revolts are only the outward symptoms, it will not do for fat railway directors and other sweaters to rely too much on their army. As for the police they would simply, to use a graphic Americanism, be "chawed up" in the event of a popular outbreak. Robert knows this, and he will if he is a sensible man take care to be out of the way when trouble comes. We fear that so great is the unpopularity of the force, that a blue uniform would be a certain passport to Paradise. Of course, we would not insult the "respectable" police by hinting that they would be sent anywhere else by a revolutionary mob. Therefore, provoking general strikes by "smashing unions" is not to be such a safe amusement as some capitalists appear to think. Let them listen to the words of wisdom of the *Weekly Dispatch* again:

"Moreover, do people know what the effect of 'smashing up unionism' must be? As Professor Lugo Brentano, of Breslau, told the Germans in his great work on English guilds, nothing but the trades union stands between England and the social revolution."

What do you think of that, ye Norwoods and Liveseys? The *Dispatch*, and other papers that have said the same thing, are right, but

it will not be the social revolution of legality that these people are forcing on. Do you know what you are doing, you rich respectable gentlemen of the middle classes? When unions are smashed, what will happen then? Will the workers sink into the old condition of miserable slavery? Are the "resources of civilisation" exhausted when the unions are defeated? Do you know what you are doing?—you are provoking, not the Red, but the Black Terror. You are putting the torch into the hands of the incendiary to fire your mansions; you are urging on the masses to use those dread forces which the science of your civilisation has placed in their hands; you are whetting the sword for your own slaughter. That is what you are doing, gentlemen of the middle classes.

There is one thing which strikes us particularly in this crisis in South Wales—how much more advanced the men are than their leaders. Mr. Harford, the delegate of the men, accepts a compromise. The men, knowing their own business better than any trade-union leader, reject Mr. Harford's compromise, and stick to their original terms. But it has been reserved for William Abraham (Mabon) to treat the public to an exhibition of unexampled cowardice and treachery. He and two other gentlemen have issued a disgraceful document, in which they recommend the miners to let the company run the trains with their blacklegs, knowing well all the time that it is only the fear of having every bone in their bodies broken by the stalwart miners of Rhondda Valley that has kept shoals of blacklegs out of the district. We advise the miners not to follow this cowardly and treacherous advice. All the gentlemen who signed that document—we give their names, it is right that they should be remembered: William Abraham (Mabon), M.P.; William Evans (miners' agent); T. Pascoe Jenkins (president of the Rhondda Labour and Liberal Association, Pentre)—are in the pay of the Liberal party, a party that has always sold and betrayed the people. For all we know, they may be in the employ of the railway directors. We therefore advise the miners not to let a single train pass along the line manned by blacklegs. If the miners do, the treachery of Messrs. Abraham and Co. will be successful and the railway men will be defeated.

D. J. NICOLL.

NEWS FROM NOWHERE:

OR,

AN EPOCH OF REST.

BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

CHAP. XXV.—STILL UP THE THAMES.

As we went down to the boat next morning, Walter could not quite keep off the subject of last night, though he was more hopeful than he had been then, and seemed to think that if the unlucky homicide could not be got to go over-sea, he might at any rate go and live somewhere in the neighbourhood pretty much by himself; at any rate, that was what he himself had proposed. To Dick, and I must say to me also, this seemed a strange remedy; and Dick said as much. Quoth he:

"Friend Walter, don't set the man brooding on the tragedy by letting him live alone. That will only strengthen his idea that he has committed a crime, and you will have him killing himself in good earnest."

Said Clara: "I don't know. If I may say what I think of it, it is that he had better have his fill of gloom now, and, so to say, wake up presently to see how little need there has been for it; and then he will live happily afterwards. As for his killing himself, you need not be afraid of that; for, from all you tell me, he is really very much in love with the woman; and to speak plainly, until his love is satisfied, he will not only stick to life as tightly as he can, but will also make the most of every event of his life—will, so to say, hug himself up in it; and I think that this is the real explanation of his taking the whole matter with such an excess of tragedy."

Waiter looked thoughtful, and said: "Well, you may be right; and perhaps we should have treated it all more lightly; but you see, guest" (turning to me), "such things happen so seldom, that when they do

happen we cannot help being much taken up with it. For the rest, we are all inclined to excuse our poor friend for making us so unhappy on the ground that he does it out of an exaggerated respect for human life and its happiness. Well, I will say no more about it; only this, will you give me a cast up stream, as I want to look after a lonely habitation for the poor fellow, since he will have it so, and I hear that there is one which would suit us very well on the downs beyond Streatley; so if you will put me ashore there I will walk up the hill and look to it."

"Is the house in question empty?" said I.

"No," said Walter, "but the man who lives there will go out of it, of course, when he hears that we want it. You see, we think that the fresh air of the downs and the very emptiness of the landscape will do our friend good."

"Yes," said Clara, smiling, "and he will not be so far from his beloved that they cannot easily meet if they have a mind to—as they certainly will."

This talk had brought us down to the boat, and we were presently afloat on the beautiful broad stream, Dick driving the prow swiftly through the windless water of the early summer morning, for it was not yet six o'clock. We were at the lock in a very little time; and as we lay rising and rising on the in-coming water, I could not help wondering that my old friend the pound-lock, and that of the very simplest and most rural kind, should hold its place there; so I said:

"I have been wondering, as we have passed lock after lock, that you people, so prosperous as you are, and especially since you are so anxious for pleasant work to do, have not invented something which would get rid of this clumsy business of going up-stairs by means of these rude contrivances."

Dick laughed. "My dear friend," said he, "as long as water has the clumsy habit of running down hill, I fear we must humour it by going up-stairs when we have our faces turned from the sea. And really I don't see why you should fall foul of Maple-durham lock, which I think a very pretty place."

There was no doubt about the latter assertion, I thought, as I looked up at the overhanging boughs of the great trees, with the sun coming glittering through the leaves, and listened to the song of the summer blackbirds as it mingled with the sound of the backwater near us. So not being able to say why I wanted the locks away—which, indeed, I didn't do at all—I held my peace. But Walter said—

"You see, guest, this is not an age of inventions. The last epoch did all that for us, and we are now content to use such of their inventions as we find handy, and leaving those alone which we don't want. I believe, as a matter of fact, that some time ago (I can't give you a date) some elaborate machinery was used for the locks, though people didn't go so far as to try to make the water run up hill. However, it was troublesome, I suppose, and the simple hatches, and the gates with a big counterpoising beam, were found to answer every purpose, and were easily mended when wanted with material always to hand: so here they are, as you see."

"Besides," said Dick, "this kind of lock is pretty, as you can see; and I can't help thinking that your machine-lock, winding up like a watch, would have been ugly and would have spoiled the look of the river: and that is surely reason enough for keeping such locks as these. Good-bye, old fellow!" said he to the lock, as he pushed us out through the now open gates by a vigorous stroke of the boat-hook. "May you live long, and have your green old age renewed for ever!"

On we went; and the water had the familiar aspect to me of the days before Pangbourne had been thoroughly cocknified, as I have seen it. It (Pangbourne) was distinctly a village still—i.e., a definite group of houses, and as pretty as might be. The beech-woods still covered the hill that rose above Basildon; but the flat fields beneath them were much more populous than I remembered them, as there were five large houses in sight, very carefully designed so as not to hurt the character of the country. Down on the green lip of the river, just where the water turns toward the Goring and Streatley reaches, were half a dozen girls playing about on the grass. They hailed us as we were about passing them, as they noted that we were travellers, and we stopped a minute to talk with them. They had been bathing, and were light clad and bare footed, and were bound for the meadows on the Berkshire side, where the haymaking had begun. At first nothing would content them but we must go with them into the hayfield, and breakfast with them; but Dick put forward his theory of beginning the hay-harvest higher up the water, and not spoiling my pleasure therein by giving me a taste of it elsewhere, and they gave way, though unwillingly. In revenge they asked me a great many questions about the country I came from and the manners of life there, which I found rather puzzling to answer; and doubtless what answers I did give were puzzling enough to them. I noticed both with these pretty girls and with everybody else we met, that in default of serious news, such as we had heard at Maple-durham, they were eager to discuss all the little details of life: the weather, the hay-crop, the last new house, the plenty or lack of such and such birds, and so on; and they talked of these things not in a fatuous and conventional way, but as taking, I say, real interest in them. Moreover, I found that the women knew as much about all these things as the men: could name a flower, and knew its qualities; could tell you the habitat of such and such birds and fish, and the like.

It is almost strange what a difference this intelligence made in my estimate of the country life of that day; for it used to be said in past times, and on the whole truly, that outside their daily work country people knew little of the country, and at least could tell you nothing about it; while here were these people as eager about all the goings

on in the fields and woods and downs as if they had been Cockneys newly escaped from the tyranny of bricks and mortar.

I may mention as a detail worth noticing that not only did there seem to be a great many more birds about of the non-predatory kind, but their enemies the birds of prey were also commoner. A kite hung over our heads as we passed Medmenham yesterday; magpies were quite common in the hedgerows; I saw several sparrow-hawks, and I think a merlin; and now just as we were passing the pretty bridge which had taken the place of Basildon railway-bridge, a couple of ravens croaked above our boat, as they sailed off to the higher ground of the downs. I concluded from all this that the days of the game-keeper were over, and did not even need to ask Dick a question about it.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

TO BE CONTINUED.]

(This Story began in No. 209, January 11, 1890. A few sets of Back Numbers can still be had.)

SOCIALISM IN THE PROVINCES.

NOTTINGHAM.

WE are still pegging away in Nottingham. On Sunday July 6, our comrade Proctor spoke twice—in Sneinton Market in the morning on "Quack Remedies for Poverty"; in the evening, in the Great Market Place, on "The Historical Development of Trade Unions." On Sunday July 13, comrade W. K. Hall, of Manchester, visited us, and gave three addresses in his excellent style before good audiences, our comrade Peacock silencing some working-men politicians who were giving some opposition on the temperance question. On Sunday July 20th comrade Andrew Hall, of Chesterfield, gave three stirring addresses to very large audiences. He created great interest by the way in which he spoke of gaining our object by any means. He advocated the same methods in defence of our cause as were used against us. We are expecting some lively meetings when our comrade again visits us, which he has promised to do in a few weeks' time. On Sunday July 27th no meetings were held, our members having the annual picnic, the place chosen this year being Naupanton, on the borders of Charnwood Forest. The weather was all that could be desired, and we all spent a most enjoyable day, rambling amongst the bracken and foxgloves, mounting the rocks, and trespassing in the woods in defiance of Law-'n'-order, arriving in Nottingham about 11 p.m. On Sunday August 3rd our comrade Harry Carless, of Walsall, visited us again, and spoke in his usual eloquent and able manner, his addresses producing a great impression on capital audiences. Last night, August 9, comrade Proctor assisted at the first meeting held in Derby by the Midland Counties Socialist Federation, a splendid start in preaching Socialism being made, this being the first Socialist meeting held in this town. During the past month we have increased the sale of the *Commonweal* at our meetings, also having disposed of a number of pamphlets, especially the "Rights of Labour," "Monopoly," and "True and False Society." We have also had good collections. Although this is not such a glowing report as has been made by some of our comrades, we consider it a very satisfactory one, and hope to produce better results in the future by dint of hard work and preaching the cause in season and out of season. Our lecturers for the ensuing month are Mowbray, Bingham, Leonard Hall, George Cores, and Miss Lupton. A. CLIFTON.

LEICESTER.

UNDER the auspices of the Leicester Branch of the S.L. and the Midland Counties Socialist Federation, meetings have been held at the villages of Oadby, Ansty, and Wigston, and the towns of Loughborough and Derby. These meetings have been addressed by comrades Chambers, Taylor, Proctor, Barclay, Purcell, and Mowbray, of London. Notwithstanding that it has been Bank Holiday week, and money must necessarily be scarce, we have sold a very large quantity of literature. The meeting in Derby was to me a great surprise. Some 2,000 people answered the announcement made on the posters and handbills, and gathered early in the Market Place in order to hear what Socialism is. There was little or no opposition worth mentioning, and about 15s. worth of literature was sold by our Nottingham comrades and the Leicester Branch; £1 0s. 3d. was collected towards expenses. This is the first meeting that has been held in Derby, and to my mind the results only prove more conclusively than ever the need for more country propaganda. Owing to the rain, our meeting at Russell Square, Leicester, was shorter than usual; but, as if to make up for the loss in the morning, a very large meeting indeed was held in Humberstone Gate. Mowbray spoke out strongly and vigorously, and after his address was finished the audience kept up a discussion until 11 p.m. Filled by the spirit of emulation, our Leicester comrades are intent on entering the lists with the comrades of Sheffield, whose work recently shows what metal they are made of. The sale of literature in Leicester has been for the week about 8s., and 9s. 4d. has been collected towards expenses. I have been compelled to promise the Nottingham comrades that I will give Nottingham a turn as soon as possible. I can safely say that everything shows me that if we only work hard at our propaganda as Socialists, we shall make better headway than we have done before. Three hearty cheers for the Social Revolution is the greeting we send from the Midlands. C. W. M.

'COMMONWEAL.'—On Sunday, August 10th, Miss Lupton and McGinn held a good meeting at Hyde Park, and collected 3s. 7d. In our hall, A. Brookes addressed fair audience on "Labour."

STREATHEAM.—At Fountain on Sunday night, a short but interesting meeting was held, interesting on account of interference by the law-'n'-order lams, short on account of a heavy pour of rain; Gospellers on the path and Revolutionary Socialists on their track, makes it necessary for "pass along, please" to the respectably-dressed crowd and "get away here" to the underpaid groaning worker; our purpose was served, however, and a good meeting was held.

ABERDEEN.—At adjourned Conference held on Monday, August 4th, among a good deal of other business, a set of rules for the regulations of branch business was gone over, amended, and adopted. On Tuesday and Wednesday nights new ground was broken at the Quayside, good meetings being addressed there by Duncan, Atkinson, and Leatham. At Castle Street on Saturday night, W. Cooper and Leatham spoke to the usual large crowd. At Sunday night meeting (indoors) a paper on "German Railways" was read and discussed.—L.

GLASGOW.—Last week we had a visit from comrade R. S. Bingham (of Sheffield), who was taking a holiday in Scotland. Bingham, who gave us a cheering account of the progress of the Cause in Sheffield, spoke at mid-day on Jail Square, and in the evening at Paisley Road Toll; Glasier and Joe Burgoyne also spoke.