

urinals the glory of ornamenting the junction of important thoroughfares.

Policemen perform many offices which they are not compelled to do by statute. They watch shebeens lest detectives pounce upon them unawares; they procure half-pint bottles of whiskey in the night-time for belated swells on payment of a trifling commission; they assist the Society for the Suppression of Vice by levying taxes upon prostitutes and brothel-keepers; they render thieving a less remunerative profession by exacting blackmail from thieves and reseters; and they save the public the cost of extending police-office accommodation by accepting "tips" from respectable criminals and permitting them to go home to their own more commodious and comfortable mansions.

The marvellous gift which policemen acquire of being able to testify as eye-witnesses concerning occurrences which they have not seen, has been frequently noted and commented upon. The fact that this faculty becomes sometimes so objective or hyllo-ideal that they aver to having witnessed incidents which never occurred, has brought it and the police themselves into disrepute with matter-of-fact people. But it should be borne in mind, in all fairness to the police, that the disadvantages which result from the possession of this gift are not infrequently balanced by the possession of another of an opposite tendency, which prevents them seeing—or at least recollecting having seen—incidents which transpired before their eyes and in which they themselves prominently participated. This peculiar mental endowment is the one intellectual characteristic which gives policemen an advantage over their fellows, and it inspires in common people more terror than even their truncheons and big boots. Divested of it, they would be as Parliament without party or newspapers without advertisements—their dominion over the citizens would speedily perish.

The notion that policemen are bigoted upholders of law and fanatical respecters of public order has been somewhat shaken by recent events. There never was, indeed, the slightest foundation for such an opinion. As a matter of fact, the police are, and always have been, practical Anarchists in their own way. They break the law in private as naively as they break the heads of the citizens in public; and half a dozen of them placed in the middle of a crowd will produce more anarchy in five minutes than all the foreign sections could do in five years. Wherever two or three policemen are gathered together, riot and disorder dwell in the midst of them.

Policemen have no political principles and they belong to no political party. They are not Socialists, but neither are they Tories, or Liberals, or Radicals—they are simply policemen. They are not opposed to Socialism; they are simply opposed to Socialists. They are not in favour of landlordism or capitalism; they are simply in favour of landlords and capitalists. They would club down Liberals and Tories, landlords and capitalists, as jauntily as they do Socialists, crofters, and tenant-farmers if their pay and pensions depended upon their so doing;—and perhaps they shall some day.

J. BRUCE GLASIER.

(To be concluded).

NEWS FROM NOWHERE:

OR,

AN EPOCH OF REST.

BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

CHAP. XXVI.—THE UPPER WATERS.

We set Walter ashore on the Berkshire side, amidst all the beauties of Stratley, and so went our ways into what once would have been the deeper country under the foot-hills of the White Horse; and though the contrast between half-cocknified and wholly unsophisticated country existed no longer, a feeling of exultation rose within me (as it used to do) at sight of the familiar and still unchanged hills of the Berkshire range.

We stopped at Wallingford for our mid-day meal; and though of course all signs of squalor and poverty had disappeared from the streets of the ancient town, and many ugly houses had been taken down and many pretty new ones built, I thought it curious that the town still looked like the old place I remembered so well; for indeed it looked like that ought to have looked.

At dinner we fell in with an old, but very bright and intelligent man, who seemed in a country way to be another edition of old Hammond. He had an extraordinary detailed knowledge of the ancient history of the country-side from the time of Alfred to the days of the Parliamentary Wars, many events of which, as you may know, were enacted round about Wallingford. But what was more interesting to us, he had detailed record of the period of the change to the present state of things, and told us a great deal about it, and especially of that exodus of the people from the town to the country, and the gradual recovery by the town-bred people on one side and the country-bred people on the other of those arts of life which they had each lost; which loss, as he told us, had at one time gone so far that not only was it impossible to find a carpenter or a smith in a village or small country town, but that people in such places had even forgotten how to bake bread, and that at Wallingford, for instance, the bread came down with the newspapers by an early train from London, worked in some way, the explanation of which I could not understand. He told us also that the townspeople who came into the country used to pick up the agricultural arts by carefully watching the way in which the machines worked,

gathering an idea of handicraft from machinery; because at that time almost everything in and about the fields was done by elaborate machines used quite unintelligently by the labourers. On the other hand, the old men amongst the labourers managed to teach the younger ones gradually a little artizanship, such as the use of the saw and the plane, the work of the smithy, and so forth;—and once more, by that time it was as much as—or rather, more than—a man could do to fix an ash pole to a rake by handiwork; so it would take a machine worth a thousand pounds, and a group of workmen, to do five shillings' worth of work. He showed us, among other things, an account of a certain village council who were working hard at all this business; and the record of their intense earnestness in getting to the bottom of some matter which in time past would have been thought quite trivial, as, for example, the due proportions of alkali and oil for soap-making for the village wash, or the exact heat of the water into which a leg of mutton should be plunged for boiling.—all this joined to the utter absence of anything like party feeling, which even in a village assembly would certainly have made its appearance in an earlier epoch, was very amusing, and at the same time instructive.

This old man, whose name was Henry Morsom, took us, after our meal and a rest, into a biggish hall which contained a large collection of articles of manufacture and art from the last days of the machine period to that day; and he went over them with us and explained them with great care. They also were very interesting, showing the transition from the makeshift work of the machines (which was at about its worst a little after the Civil War before told of) into the first years of the new handicraft period. Of course, there was much overlapping of the periods: and at first the new handwork came in very slowly.

"You must remember," said the old antiquary, "that the handicraft was not the result of what used to be called material necessity: on the contrary, by that time the machines had been so much improved that almost all necessary work might have been done by them; and indeed many people at that time and before it used to think that machinery would entirely supersede handicraft; which certainly, on the face of it, seemed more than likely. But there was another opinion, far less logical, prevalent amongst the rich people before the days of freedom, which did not die out at once after that epoch had begun. This opinion, which from all I can learn seemed as natural then, as it seems absurd now, was, that while the ordinary daily work of the world would be done entirely by automatic machinery, the energies of the more intelligent part of mankind would be set free to follow the higher forms of the arts as well as science and the study of history. It was strange, was it not, that they should thus ignore that aspiration after complete equality which we now recognise as the bond of all happy human society?"

I did not answer, but thought the more. Dick looked thoughtful, and said:

"Strange, neighbour? Well, I don't know. I have often heard my old kinsman say that the one aim of all people before our time was to avoid work, or at least they thought it was; so of course the work which their daily life forced them to do seemed more like work than that which they seemed to choose for themselves."

"True enough," said Morsom. "Anyhow, they soon began to find out their mistake, and that only slaves and slaveholders could live solely by setting machines going."

Clara broke in here, flushing a little as she spoke: "Was not their mistake once more bred of the life of slavery that they had been living?—a life which was always looking upon everything, except mankind, animate and inanimate—'nature,' as people used to call it—as one thing, and mankind as another. It was natural to people thinking in this way that they should try to make 'nature' their slave, since they thought 'nature' was something outside them."

"Surely," said Morsom; "and they were puzzled as to what to do, till they found the feeling against a mechanical life, which had begun before the Great Change amongst people who had leisure to think of such things, was spreading insensibly, till at last under the guise of pleasure that was not supposed to be work, work that was pleasure began to push out the mechanical toil, which they had once hoped at the best to reduce to narrow limits indeed, but never to get rid of; and which, moreover, they found they could not limit as they had hoped to do."

"When did this new revolution gather head?" said I.

"In the half-century that followed the Great Change," said Morsom, "it began to be noteworthy; machine after machine was quietly dropped under the excuse that the machines could not produce works of art, and that works of art were more and more called for. Look here," he said, "here are some of the works of that time—rough and unskilful in handiwork, but solid and showing some sense of pleasure in the making."

"They are very curious," said I, taking up a piece of pottery from amongst the specimens which the antiquary was showing us; "not a bit like the work of either savages or barbarians, and yet with what would once have been called a hatred of civilisation impressed upon them."

"Yes," said Morsom, "you must not look for delicacy there: in that period you could only have got that from a man who was practically a slave. But now, you see," said he, leading me on a little, "we have learned the trick of handicraft, and have added the utmost refinement of workmanship to the freedom of fancy and imagination."

I looked, and wondered indeed on the deftness and abundance of beauty of the work of men who had at last learned to accept life itself

as a pleasure, and the satisfaction of the common needs of mankind and the preparation for them as work fit for the best of the race. I mused silently; but at last I said—

"What is to come after this?"

The old man laughed. "I don't know," said he; "we will meet it when it comes."

"Meanwhile," quoth Dick, "we have got to meet the rest of our day's journey; so out into the street and down to the strand! Will you come a turn with us, neighbour? Our friend is greedy of your stories."

"I will go as far as Oxford with you," said he; "I want a book or two out of the Bodleian Library. I suppose you will sleep in the old city?"

"No," said Dick, "we are going higher up: the hay is waiting us there, you know."

Morsom nodded, and we all went into the street together, and got into the boat just above the town bridge. But just as Dick was getting the sculls into the rowlocks, the bows of another boat came thrusting through the low arch. Even at first sight it was a gay little craft indeed—bright green, and painted over with elegantly drawn flowers. As it cleared the arch, a figure as bright and gay-clad as the boat rose up in it; a slim girl dressed in light blue silk that fluttered in the draughty wind of the bridge. I thought I knew the figure, and sure enough, as she turned her head to us, and showed her beautiful face, I saw with joy that it was none other than the fairy godmother from the abundant garden on Runnymede—Ellen, to wit.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

TO BE CONTINUED.]

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

NOTES ON NEWS.

WE admire Mr. Cunninghame Graham greatly, and we especially like his command of forcible language, which puts our vocabulary to shame. But we think it would be better if Mr. Graham, in his zeal for "constitutionalism," would occasionally be a little more accurate. It is quite true he might have thought he was quite safe in repeating a wretchedly stale commonplace, very popular among constitutional trade-unionists and peace-at-any-price Radicals, when he told the English people last week in a contemporary that "violent revolution is alien to the spirit of tradition of your race." When we hear this sort of thing from an educated man, you are tempted to ask whether historical study has formed a part of his education. We will ask Mr. Graham, however, if it is not a fact that the English working class, before they were starved down and crushed into cowardly submission, were not the boldest, most stubborn and rebellious race in Europe?

Did you ever hear of Wat Tyler, Mr. Graham, and have you read what Professor Thorold Rogers says about the effect of "violent revolution" in his time? Let us quote the passage from the Professor's book, 'Six Centuries of Work and Wages':

"Once in the history of England only—once, perhaps, only in the history of the world—peasants and artizans attempted to effect a revolution by force. They nearly succeeded; at least they became for a short time the masters of the situation. That they would have held the advantages they gained at Mile End had they provided against the tragedy of Smithfield, is improbable. But they caused such terror by what they actually did, that they gained all that they claimed, and that speedily. The English labourer for a century or more became virtually free and certainly prosperous."

Now, Mr. Graham, what do you think of that? Do you know that "the golden age of the English labourers," the famous fifteenth century, followed close upon that revolt, which was conducted according to "Continental methods," and included the burning of palaces, and hanging and beheading of lawyers, tax-gatherers, and other enemies of the public weal? Do you also know, Mr. Graham, that Henry VII., one of the most grasping of English kings, was afraid to tax the people because he knew they would rebel, and preferred to tax the nobles instead? Mr. Hallam's 'Constitutional History' is our authority for this statement. Have you ever heard of Jack Cade, Kett the Tanner, Robert Aske, Lilburne and the Levellers, the Luddites and the physical-force Chartists? Why, Mr. Graham, a man of your courage and ability ought to be ashamed to talk Manchester Quakery. Let's have no more of it.

We are glad to welcome another accession to the "moderate" party. Parliamentary candidates run with money from "a friend" suit ill with "Revolutionary Social Democracy." We are not surprised, therefore, to see that Mr. Hyndman is opposed to the "general strike," and thinks the people are "short-sighted" who advocate it. It would lead to a "dictatorship." Indeed? Well, in these days of dynamite and other dangerous explosives we don't envy the "dictator." But one thing does astonish us. In our ignorance we always thought that a dictatorship was rather in Mr. Hyndman's line. Is it possible that his dwindling popularity leads him to believe that he wouldn't be the "dictator," and it is this which makes him suddenly such a "determined" opponent of "tyranny"? We should like to know.

There are still some kind-hearted people who believe in that venerable fraud and child kidnapper, Doctor Barnardo. For their benefit we quote part of a report of the meeting of the Chorlton Board of

Guardians from the *Manchester Evening News* of August 18th, in which the story is told of a boy who had been sent into slavery and brought back to England at the request of his friends.

"Mr. Tomlinson said he had seen the boy. He was ten years of age and the story that he told of the life he had led in Canada rather shocked us (Mr. Tomlinson's) opinion as to the value of emigration. Here was a lad of ten years of age, who had not passed the fifth standard, and who was made to work on a farm from five in the morning till ten o'clock at night. He was not supplied with the food to which boys in England were accustomed, and said he had not tasted beef since he left this country. His story altogether was more like an account of 'white slavery' than anything else. If that was a sample of the treatment accorded to boys who were sent to Canada, the sooner juvenile emigration was stopped the better."

The fact is the whole business is a philanthropic fraud. Poor little boys without any friends are sent out to Canada by hypocritical scoundrels of the Barnardo type, to be worked like slaves by brutal farmers. We have very strong reasons to believe that all the atrocities of our old factory system are committed by those slave-drivers upon these helpless children. These guardians are going to investigate the affair. We hope it will be done thoroughly, and are also of opinion that when it is done that, that philanthropic swindler Barnardo will find the East-end rather too hot for him. N.

Our old friend Reynolds last Sunday had the ineffable effrontery to advocate in set terms the unconditional "endowment" of John Burns with a handsome annuity for life at the expense of the workers, and as a "reward" for his past labours in their cause! This preposterous proposal throws much light on the motives of some self-dubbed "friends of the people."

No writer in the *Commonweal*, no member of the League (so far as I know), has ever joined in the ignoble attacks on Burns which have been made in certain quarters. We, at any rate, have always thought well of his motives, and recognised the thoroughly good work done by him, both in spreading revolt and even in organisation, although (as anti-Parliamentarians) we deplored his wasting his energies on County Councils and such-like tomfoolery.

The fact, however, that such a suggestion as this should be seriously entertained, shows how demoralising the whole system of "leadership" is to those "led." If Burns does not repudiate the indiscreet zeal of his friends, it will show also (not for the first time) how demoralising the system is to the "leader" himself. In any case we assume that Free Communists have something better to do with such coin they possess than to contribute in any form to the support of any "leader." R. W. B.

LANDLORDISM AND POVERTY.

LANDLORDISM for centuries has been, and is now, the curse of civilisation and the progenitor of crime, vice, and misery. Poverty follows landlordism as surely as light follows darkness; where we find exorbitant rents, so in proportion do we find an equivalent amount of extreme poverty.

The question then arises—how are we to remove the cause, so as to banish the effect? Is it to be done by constitutional means, or philanthropical schemes, or even the working-men's dwellings? No! What we want to do, and what every British worker ought to do, is to overthrow it themselves, and wait no longer for those who say they have the workers' interests at heart, but unite together and fight for that liberty to live which is the birthright of all men, even though it may cost us our lives. The land for the people shall ever be our watchword.

Such is the tenacious grip of this monster that its victims dare not lift up their heads to protest against the cruel oppression that enthrals them. The outcome of landlord usurpation we find has been fully and graphically illustrated in Ireland, where the cruelties of the police, soldiery, and "civic" authorities for the last century have been especially horrible and cold-blooded.

The very materials of the houses in which the workers are forced to live have been paid for several times over, and yet their occupants have still to slave in order to keep those in idleness who toil not. Then it appears to me, and I think any man with a spark of humanity in him, will agree that the causes of poverty are not, as many well-meaning people would lead us to suppose—namely, that of drunkenness, extravagance, and so forth—but of landlordism.

I have examined this subject very closely, and I find that the harder the masses work the more wretched and unhappy they become; for if by chance they do succeed in obtaining a rise of wages (which is seldom), the land-thief scoops down upon them and adds another lash to the already bleeding backs of his victims, and extorts from them in rent the additions they may have obtained by strikes.

Not long ago a friend of mine related to me (what is an everyday occurrence) how he settled some twenty years ago in a very poor neighbourhood, agreeing to pay £60 a-year for his house to carry on his business. After a time he managed to build up a decent concern, till about six months ago, when his lease expired, and he applied in the usual course for a renewal, when he was told that £100 would in the future be the yearly rental. Now this man had to get this extra rent from somewhere, consequently down went his workmen's wages, and then these workmen had either to deny themselves some article of food or clothing, or go and live in a worse slum than that in which they already existed, in order to pay this extra demand made upon their master for rent.

Well, to give way to the sentiments of my mind upon this matter, I will quote the words of a celebrated divine: If men are such cowards to put up with this, they deserve to be slaves.

I am glad that we Socialists are fully alive to the situation, and are leading the people in a No-Rent crusade. It is time something practical was done to drive this hellish monster, Landlordism, into oblivion. C. A. STONE.