

NEWS FROM NOWHERE:

OR,

AN EPOCH OF REST.

BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

CHAP. II. (continued).—A MORNING BATH.

I FELT that I must make some conversation; so I pointed to the Surrey bank, where I noticed some light plank stages running down the foreshore, with windlasses at the landward end of them, and said, "What are they doing with those things here? If we were on the Tay, I should have said that they were for drawing the salmon-nets; but here—"

"Well," said he, smiling, "of course that is what they are for. Where there are salmon, there are likely to be salmon-nets, Tay or Thames; but of course they are not always in use; we don't want salmon every day of the season."

I was going to say, "But is this the Thames?" but held my peace in my wonder, and turned my bewildered eyes eastward to look at the bridge again, and thence to the shores of the London river; and surely there was enough to astonish me. For though there was a bridge across the stream and houses on its banks, how all was changed from last night! The soap-works with their smoke-vomiting chimneys were gone; the engineer's works gone; the lead-works gone; and no sound of riveting and hammering came down the west wind from Thorney-croft's. Then the bridge! I had perhaps dreamed of such a bridge, but never seen such an one out of an illuminated manuscript; for not even the Ponte Vecchio at Florence came anywhere near it. It was of stone arches, splendidly solid, and as graceful as they were strong; high enough also to let ordinary river traffic through easily. Over the parapet showed quaint and fanciful little buildings, which I supposed to be booths or shops, beset with painted and gilded vanes and spirelets. The stone was a little weathered, but showed no marks of the grimy sootiness which I was used to on every London building more than a year old. In short, to me a wonder of a bridge.

The sculler noted my eager astonished look, and said, as if in answer to my thoughts—

"Yes, it is a pretty bridge, isn't it? Even the up-stream bridges, which are so much smaller, are scarcely daintier, and the down-stream ones are scarcely more dignified and stately."

I found myself saying, almost against my will, "How old is it?"

"Oh, not very old," he said; "it was built, or at least opened, in 1971."

The date shut my mouth as if a key had been turned in a padlock fixed to my lips; for I saw that something inexplicable had happened, and that if I said much I should be mixed up in a game of cross questions and crooked answers. So I tried to look unconcerned, and to glance in a matter-of-course way at the banks of the river, though this is what I saw up to the bridge and a little beyond, say as far as the site of the soap-works. Both shores had a line of very pretty houses, low and not large, standing back a little way from the river; they were mostly built of red brick and roofed with tiles, and looked, above all, comfortable and as if they were, so to say, alive, and sympathetic with the life of the dwellers in them. There was a continuous garden in front of them, going down to the water's edge, in which the flowers were now blooming luxuriantly, and sending delicious waves of summer scent over the eddying stream. Behind the houses, I could see great trees rising, mostly planes, and looking down the water there were the reaches towards Putney almost as if they were a lake with a forest shore, so thick were the big trees; and I said aloud, but as if to myself—

"Well, I'm glad that they have not built over Barn Elms."

I blushed for my fatuity as the words slipped out of my mouth, and my companion looked at me with a half smile which I thought I understood; so to hide my confusion I said, "Please take me ashore now: I want to get my breakfast."

He nodded, and brought her head round with a sharp stroke, and in a trice we were at the landing-stage again. He jumped out and I followed him; and of course I was not surprised to see him wait, as if for the inevitable after-piece that follows the doing of a service to a fellow-citizen. So I put my hand into my waistcoat-pocket, and said, "How much?" though still with the uncomfortable feeling that perhaps I was offering money to a gentleman.

He looked puzzled, and said, "How much? I don't quite understand what you are asking about. Do you mean the tide? If so, it is close on the turn now."

I blushed, and said, stammering, "Please don't take it amiss if I ask you; I mean no offence: but what ought I to pay you? You see I am a stranger, and don't know your customs—or your coins?"

And therewith I took a handful of money out of my pocket, as one does in a foreign country. And by the way, I saw that the silver had oxydised, was like a blacklead stove in colour.

He still seemed puzzled, but not at all offended; and he looked at the coins with some curiosity. I thought, Well after all, he is a waterman, and is considering what he may venture to take. He seems such a nice fellow that I'm sure I don't grudge him a little over-payment. I wonder, by the way, whether I couldn't hire him as a guide for a day or two, since he is so intelligent.

Therewith my new friend said thoughtfully:

"I think I know what you mean. You think that I have done you a service; so you feel yourself bound to give me something which I

am not to give to a neighbour, unless he has done something special for me. I have heard of this kind of thing; but pardon me for saying that it seems to us a troublesome and roundabout custom; and we don't know how to manage it. And you see this ferrying and giving people casts about the water is my business, which I would do for anybody, so to take gifts in connection with it would look very queer. Besides, if one person gave me something, then another might, and another, and so on; and I hope you won't think me rude if I say that I shouldn't know where to stow away so many mementoes of friendship."

And he laughed loud and merrily, as if the idea of being paid for his work was a very funny joke. I confess I began to be afraid that the man was mad, though he looked sane enough; and I was rather glad to think that I was a good swimmer, since we were so close to a deep swift stream. However, he went on by no means like a madman:

"As to your coins, they are curious, but not very old; they seem to be all of the reign of Victoria; you might give them to some scantily-furnished museum. Ours has enough of such coins, besides a fair number of earlier ones, many of which are beautiful, whereas these nineteenth century ones are so beastly ugly, ain't they? We have a piece of Edward III., with the king in a ship, and little leopards and fleurs-de-lys all along the gunwale, so delicately worked. You see," he said, with somewhat of a smirk, "I am fond of working in gold and fine metals; this buckle here is an early piece of mine."

No doubt I looked a little shy of him under the influence of that doubt as to his sanity. So he broke off short, and said in a kind voice:

"But I see that I am boring you, and I ask your pardon. For, not to mince matters, I can tell that you are a stranger, and must come from a place very unlike England. But also it is clear that it won't do to overdose you with information about this place, and that you had best suck it in little by little. Further, I should take it as very kind in you if you would allow me to be the showman of our new world to you, since you have stumbled on me first. Though indeed it will be a mere kindness on your part, for almost anybody would make as good a guide, and many much better."

There certainly seemed no flavour in him of Colney Hatch; and besides I thought I could easily shake him off if it turned out that he really was mad; so I said:

"It is a very kind offer, but it is difficult for me to accept it, unless——" I was going to say, Unless you will let me pay you properly; but fearing to stir up Colney Hatch again, I changed the sentence into, "I fear I shall be taking you away from your work—or your amusement."

"O," he said, "don't trouble about that, because it will give me an opportunity of doing a good turn to a friend of mine, who wants to take my work here. He is a weaver from Yorkshire, who has rather overdone himself between his weaving and his mathematics, both indoor work, you see; and being a great friend of mine, he naturally came to me to get him some outdoor work. If you think you can put up with me, pray take me as your guide."

He added presently: "It is true that I have promised to go up-stream for the hay-harvest; but they won't be ready for us for more than a week: and besides, you might go with me, you know, and see some very nice people, besides making notes of our ways in Oxfordshire. You could hardly do better if you want to see the country."

I felt myself obliged to thank him, whatever might come of it; and he added eagerly—

"Well, then, that's settled. I will give my friend a call; he is living in the Guest House like you, and if he isn't up yet, he ought to be this fine summer morning."

Therewith he took a little silver bugle-horn from his girdle and blew two or three sharp but agreeable notes on it; and presently from the house which stood on the site of my old dwelling (of which more hereafter) another young man came sauntering towards us. He was not so well-looking or so strong-built as my sculler friend, being sandy-haired, rather pale, and not stout-built; but his face was not wanting in that happy and friendly expression which I had noticed in his friend. As he came up smiling towards us, I saw with pleasure that I must give up the Colney Hatch theory as to the waterman, for no two madmen ever behaved as they did before a sane man. His dress also was of the same cut as the first man's, though somewhat gayer, the surcoat being light green with a golden spray embroidered on the breast, and his belt being of filagree silver-work.

He gave me good-day very civilly, and greeting his friend joyously, said—

"Well, Dick, what is it this morning? Am I to have my work, or rather your work? I dreamed last night that we were off up the river fishing."

"All right, Bob," said my sculler; "you will drop into my place, and if you find it too much, there is George Brightling on the look out for a stroke of work, and he lives close handy to you. But see, here is a stranger who is willing to amuse me to-day by taking me as his guide about our country, and you may imagine I don't want to lose the opportunity; so you had better take to the boat at once. But in any case I shouldn't have kept you out of it for long, since I am due in the hayfields in a few days."

The newcomer rubbed his hands with glee, but turning to me, said in a friendly voice:

"Neighbour, both you and friend Dick are lucky, and will have a good time to-day, as indeed I shall too. But you had better both come in with me at once and get something to eat, lest you should forget your dinner in your amusement. I suppose you came into the Guest House after I had gone to bed last night?"

I nodded, not caring to enter into a long explanation which would have led to nothing, and which in truth by this time I should have begun to doubt myself. And we all three turned toward the door of the Guest House.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

DRIVE THE RICH ROBBERS AWAY.

Tune—"Drive the cold Winter away."

Who'er has a mind to freedom inclined,
A soul above life in a ditch,
No longer he'll bow, but come with us now
To break down the power of the rich.
You know very well, the poor live in hell,
Where manhood and honour decay;
So join in our band, with heart and with hand,
To drive the rich robbers away.

The man who controls the bodies and souls
Of his fellows, because they are poor;
Who sweats all his wealth from woe and ill-health,
And steals all their pitiful store;
A wolf with man's face, he's a foe to his race,
The helpless and weak are his prey,
He never will mend until we make an end,
And drive the rich robbers away.

Not much do we get, however we sweat,
Our masters their profit must make;
And then for the rent, we must be content
The landlord shall some of it take.
The kids and the wife must scramble through life,
Be thankful to eat when they may,
Be often half-fed and go hungry to bed,
Till we drive the rich robbers away.

And don't be afraid of injuring trade,
To us it is always the same;
For bad trade or good, it is well understood
The worker must lose at the game.
The game is so played, and the rules of it made,
That the workers have always to pay;
And well do we know, it must ever be so
Till we drive the rich robbers away.

Though they can with pride in carriages ride,
While we go on foot in the mud,
It is we who provide; while, whatever betide,
We ne'er get enough of good food.
Indeed we deserve to suffer and starve
Until we no longer obey;—
Then rise like a man, and do all that you can,
To drive the rich robbers away.

AN GEALBHAN.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

GERMANY.

At Offenburg, a new Socialist paper is about to be published under the title of *Frankfurter Volksstimme* (The People's Voice of Frankfurt). At Munich, the *Münchener Post* (Dispatch of Munich) is to appear as a daily organ, under the editorship of Vollmar and Birk, two candidates to the Reichstag. At Dresden, the *Sächsische Arbeiterzeitung* (Saxon Worker's paper) appears now three times a week. At Erfurt the *Thüringer Tribune* is about to appear in a larger size, and at Magdeburg a new trades' paper, *Wanderburschen* (The Wandering Toiler), will shortly come into existence. As it seems, Bismark has not got it all his own way.

Two Anarchist pamphlets, entitled 'Arbeitslos' (Out of Work) and 'The 11th of November' (Chicago Commemoration), have been prohibited by the Berlin authorities.

Our comrade Bruno Reinsdorf, the brother of August Reinsdorf, who was beheaded four years ago for taking the principal part in the Niederwald attempt, has been arrested at Pegau, a small village of Saxony, on his return from New York, where he was working in the *Freiheit's* printing department. The reason given for his arrest is such a stupidly false one that we expect him to be set free almost immediately.

A most strange event has recently occurred at Carlsruhe. M. Guttstein, royal attorney at the supreme tribunal of the great duchy of Bade, has made a formal adhesion to the social democratic party! If it is true, methinks that this clever attorney shall not much longer sit on the bench.

BELGIUM.

One of the oldest forerunners of the social revolutionary movement in Belgium has just died at an hospital of Brussels: not an unusual reward for many who have given all their life and all their energies to the cause of the proletariat. Nicolas Coulon was born at Liège, in the year 1816. A tailor by profession, he was at the same time an exceedingly clever popular writer. It was Coulon who published the first paper in Belgium which was exclusively edited by working-men. He acted in the revolution of 1830 in Brussels, and in that of 1848 at Paris. In the last years of his life he became blind, and of course he died very poor. Coulon has taken a most prominent part in the various democratic and revolutionary movements of his own country and of France. He has always been, it can be truly asserted, the right man in the right place; and the Belgian Socialists will undoubtedly ever remember most kindly their old "père Coulon."

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY.

The Austrian Socialist press makes good headway, and this is all the more remarkable when we think that the political conditions under which our Austrian comrades have to live are far from being favourable to the development of Socialist journalism. There are no less than eight papers,

which all are, we are glad to say, very well supported by the Austrian proletarians. They are: *Sozialdemokratische Monatschrift* (Socialdemocratic Monthly Review); *Arbeiterzeitung* (Worker's Gazette); *Volkspress* (People's Press); *Fachblatt für Drechsler* (Turner's Trade Paper); *Glühlichter* (Glimmerings); *Freigeist* (Freethinker); *Heslo*, and *Cervanky*.

Again we ask the readers and sympathisers of the *Weal* to do all they can towards supporting their own paper. Surely English Socialists, if worth anything at all, can manage as well as their much more unfortunate brethren of Austria! Why, then, don't they do it?

SWITZERLAND.

Our comrades Nicolet, Darbellay, and Hänzi, who last summer placarded in various towns of Switzerland an Anarchist manifesto, have now been tried at the Court of Assize at Neuchatel and acquitted. Comrade Nicolet, for his defence, read out a piece of poetry directed against kings and potentates, and of a very much more revolutionary character than the manifesto complained of, and then declared to the astounded tribunal and members of the jury, that that piece of incendiary poetry had been written some time previous to his own leaflet by the very same attorney-general who now prosecuted himself and his friends. Hence a prompt and general acquittal!

RUSSIA.

A telegram from Moscow, *via* Vienna, says that Captain Tolotouchine, chief of the secret police, while making a descent upon a Nihilist club, was shot dead by a young woman named Olga Gontscharenko, who afterwards blew her own brains out rather than be arrested. Whilst we deeply deplore the death of the young combatant in the cause of liberty and justice, we cannot help sympathising with her in the prompt punishment of the police-hound's intrusion.

VICTOR DAVE.

IN AUSTRALIA.

MR. W. GRAHAME, member for Newcastle (N.S.W.), has lately gone insolvent, and had therefore to contest his seat over again. Mr. James Curley, the miners' general secretary, opposed him as a "labour candidate," and won after a "tough fight." Mr. Grahame is a believer in the restrictive policy; whilst Curley goes for free trade. This district is red-hot protectionist, and would have been all for boodler Grahame, had not the majority of the miners among the electors been in favour of their secretary. So far as can be seen, Curley has proved true and honest to the miners, both during strikes and in times of smoothness; rather too straight, in fact, for some of the big mine-owners over here. Many a time, no doubt, have they wished him out of office, and perhaps have done a great deal to prejudice many of the miners against him. This feeling has grown up in two or three districts since the last strike, in 1888, until at last, it almost seems, the feeling becoming more bitter, it has made him run for a chance at the legislative game; and the result is, that he has the honour (?) of taking a hand in the country's affairs. Whether he will act fair and square is a question as yet; he has to sit alongside some of the biggest rogues and scoundrels the earth has produced among the law-makers; and if they have not the magic power, while filling their own pockets with boodle without doing the least amount of work for it, to turn his assistance away from the workers and destroy those many true sentiments of his, it will be one of the greatest wonders of the age.

One large mine-owner was heard to say, when he heard that Curley had won the seat, "It's a good job; it's a good job," and stamped his foot on the ground with delight. This goes to show that one coal-monopolist at least was happy at partly getting one of their enemies into their clutches. It seems to prophesy that the miners can say "good-bye" to their man, who has worked earnestly for them for a period of nine years, and that now he is entering upon a road which leads to more slavery and monopoly.

The Victorian authorities have taken steps to close the wharf at Melbourne, so as to keep away the speakers who have been addressing the people there on Sundays. This goes hard against the Anarchists and Socialists, as it is their chief place of resort for propaganda work. To show that they mean business and keep up a pretence of impartiality, the authorities have come down upon a teetotal orator who made his stand upon the wharf, and fined him £5 or seven days in the "House of Correction." Upon this a meeting was held, and a very large crowd, numbering 2,000, gathered together to discuss the action taken by the Government. The meeting "firmly maintained" their right of meeting on the wharf, and have resolved to try and get public support in carrying on meetings there.

After finishing the business of the wharf affair, the opening of the public library and other institutions on Sundays was then discussed. The 2,000 strong then paraded the streets in the vicinity of the library, and before the gates of the latter institution they strongly asserted that such a place should be opened on Sundays.

The bill brought forward in the Victorian Legislative Assembly for the suppression of Sunday newspaper selling, has passed its second reading. The tyrannical law-makers of Victoria are gradually developing, and making stronger the restrictive laws of that so-called "protective" colony. We have not come to that exactly in New South Wales yet, but, who knows?

A strike recently occurred at Broken Hill, N.S.W., where about 2,500 miners refused to work with non-unionists. The strike only lasted about a week, when the miners (unionists) partly gave way and resumed work again.

The men that work on the top of Greta Pit (N.S.W.) have come out on strike, the cause being that they wish only to work eight hours per day, as the men do below the surface. Different unions are preparing to give help to the strikers, who fear a long struggle.

The unemployed army is rather large up in Brisbane, and deputations are seeking the presence of the "law-makers" often, to see what can be done towards keeping the people from dying of starvation.

The latest news interesting to Socialists comes from Melbourne, and excerpted from the *Evening News* (Sydney), Nov. 21, 1889:—

"An organised demonstration of Socialists paraded up Bourke Street last evening, with the intention of invading Parliament House to see Dr. Maloney, the member for West Melbourne, whose sympathies are known to be with them on the point that the public libraries should be open on Sundays. There were some hundreds of them. The police got wind of the project, and a posse of constables were summoned from Russell Street barracks and pursued the crowd up the street. Seeing that they were pursued the Socialists ran to gain the entrance to Parliament House first, but half-a-dozen constables reached the steps first, and forming themselves in a line blocked the crowd, some of whom were very excited. There was some wrangling but no violence, and several names were taken."

Hamilton, N.S.W., Nov. 21, 1889.

ROBERT STUART.