A WORD TO THE POLICE.

Brazen and shameless impudence has ever been a distinguishing characteristic of a hired bully, and the stout men in blue who guard the fat persons, and, above all, the fat parties of the London middle-classes, have never been deficient in this necessary quality of their vile calling. Yet, shameless and brazen as we know their impudence to be, it is not as a shock of surprise even to those of us who have seen most of them, to find them posing as underpaid workers, and raising a piteous cry concerning higher wages and "pensions." Warm from the congested business of bludgeoning under-sized and overstrained postmen on the way to demonstrate on Clerkenwell Green, these well-fed chawbacos from the country districts hold meetings, elect delegates, present petitions, and formulate demands and pass resolutions couched in quite mutinous, not to say revolutionary, terms. Apparent to those men who are betraying their brethren every day for the sake of the safe weekly wages and the warm uniform, and the certain pension secured to them, and of the countless tips and gratifications of all kinds given to them on all hands, are so many proofs of their inherent willingness, as to suppose that the workers, whose ranks they have left, will sympathise with them because they find the devil a hard taskmaster, as in the long run he generally is.

If any policeman reads this number of the Commonwealth, he may be really surprised to learn that he is regarded by us revolutionary Socialists (and not, as we believe, by us only, but by tens of thousands of London workers not yet Socialists) as an infamous scoundrel. We will endeavour to make clear to the presumably dull intellect of this bossy why this should be so. Let him understand that Socialists in general (and the present writer least of all) blame no man who, under present conditions, is driven into what we look upon as an anti-social trade. For aught we care, he may get his living by thieving on the Stock Exchange or at the Bar, he may join even the hired assassins of the army, or carry advertisements of swindlers in the streets, and yet be a good comrade. We recognise the fact that, like the rest of us, he is a slave and cannot help himself. But, slave though he be, there must surely be certain limits beyond which he can not go, although the penalty for not passing them be even the Christian Hell itself. If he be born an agricultural labourer and be expelled by landlordism from the fields whereon he has grown to manhood, we can understand that he may easily drift into the London force. There he must, of course, perform the "duty" which is set him to do. Yet, surely, not all such duty. Even you, our dull-brained friend, must see that you would not be justified in committing murder at the command of your inspector, or even of "I, Sir Edward Bradford" himself. You see it in the abstract, do you? But that is precisely what the police of London, you yourself, perhaps, have done—not in the abstract, but in the concrete. Not yet three years ago, at the command of your Commissioner, you set upon and cruelly bludgeoned your fellows, men of your own class from all parts of London, on their way to peaceably demonstrate in Trafalgar Square. You bludgeoned them and killed some; others you made prisoners, and when you got them inside your station yards and had them completely at your mercy, you beat them before trial within an inch of their lives; jeering and mocking meanwhile at the fools who, unlike you, had not sold their manhood for a compliment from the "beak," or a share of the cook's cold mutton. But why need we recall the memories of "Bloody Sunday"? Not that they need much recalling to London workers! What you were three years ago, that you are to-day. On May-day this year you broke up our processions, tore our banners, and (brave men that you are) assaulted and insulted some stalwart labourers (who, let us hope, will never endure the shame of having given suck to creatures like you) on Clerkenwell Green.

Great, doubtless, is the powers of organisation and what is called "discipline," and you may plead that you have made yourselves mere machines, and act like automatons at the word of command. Even if true, such an excuse would not avail you much. We may remind you of those sentries on duty at Buckingham Palace that Sunday afternoon last autumn, who broke all military rule and doubtless incurred punishment by facing round, and presenting arms to the dockers' procession as it passed to Hyde Park: contrast their conduct with yours. But the excuse is not true; you have played no active part in the outrages of the last few years; you have absolutely revelled in the base and bloody tasks which have been set you; you have cracked coarse jests as you have cracked heads; and you have shown yourselves brutal, cowardly hounds, who know neither justice nor mercy, you hired prostitutes, the baser and meaner because you claim to be "men."

On calm reflection, do you wonder that you are not appreciated at your own valuation? Seriously speaking, are you not vile and infamous? Do you wonder that we look upon your attempt to represent yourselves as ill-used workers as about the sublimest height yet reached by the blatant insolence of persons whose offensive impertinence springs from their utter lack of perception or intelligence? Yet even now, one way of repentance is still open to you as it is to others: it may not be open long. Even yet, you may save yourselves from that true wrath which is really coming, the wrath of the workers in the revolution. You claim that you, too, can organise a strike for better wages and shorter hours. Organise a strike first, then, for nobler ends. Strike against such employment as you have been lately put to. The next time you are ordered to "dispel" a procession through May Day and refuse the cowardly and brutal work like men. Will you take this advice, now you find that the tyrants who have used you as tools for their dirty work are beginning to suppress your meetings? When the new Chief Commissioner, fresh from butchering natives in Hindustan, will not even allow you to meet in order to complain a little about your grievances! Now is the day of salvation; now is the time; now is the hour for refraining this very day to carry out your new despot's orders you will win the sympathy of the working classes, and they will support you in your agitation. Prove that you are men, and not cowardly flunkeys, base and clinging to the rich but brutal, murderous, bullies with the power, and you will have the kindly help of your brothers in obtaining your demands. Refuse, and you will neither get sympathy nor help, and you will fail—as cowards always fail—in your agitation.

W. B.

NEWS FROM NOWHERE:

AN EPOCH OF REST.

BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

CHAP. XIX. (continued)."THE DRIVE BACK TO HAMMERSMITH." As soon as I had spoken I perceived that I had got back to my old blunder; for I saw Dick's shoulders shaking with laughter; but he did not say a word, but handed me over to the tender mercies of Clara, who said—"Why, I don't know what you mean. Of course we can afford it, or else we shouldn't do it. It would be easy enough for us today, we will only spend our labour on making our clothes comfortable; but we don't choose to stop there. Why do you find fault with us? Does it seem to you as if we starved ourselves of food in order to make ourselves fine clothes? or do you think there is anything wrong in liking to see the coverings of our bodies beautiful like our bodies are—just as a deer's or an otter's skin has been made beautiful from the first? Come, what is wrong with you?"

I bowed before the storm, and stumped out some excuse or other. I must say, I might have known that people who were so fond of architecture generally would not be backward in ornamenting themselves; all the more as the shape of their raiment, apart from its colour, was both beautiful and reasonable—veiling the form without either muffling or caricaturing it. Clara was soon mollified; and as we drove along toward the wood before mentioned, she said to Dick—"I tell you what, Dick: now that kinsman Hammond the Elder has seen our guest in his queer clothes, I think we ought to find him something decent to put on for our journey to-morrow; especially since, if we don't, we shall have to answer all sorts of questions as to his clothes and where they came from. Besides," she said, slyly, "when he is clad in handsome garments he will not be so quick to blame us.
for our childhoodness in wasting our time in making ourselves look pleasant to each other.

"All right, Clara," said Dick; "he shall have everything that you—
that he wants to have. I will look something out for him before he gets up to-morrow."

CHAPTER XX.—THE HAMMONDS GUEST-HOUSE AGAIN.

Amidst such talk, driving quietly through the balmy evening, we came to Hammersmith, where we were received by our friends there. Bothin, in a fresh suit of clothes, welcomed me back with stately courtesy; the weaver wanted to button-hole me and get out of me what old Hammon had said, but was very friendly and cheerful when Dick warned him off; for I think I have a hope that he and I, by the same pleasant, so kindly, that I felt a slight pang as our hands parted; for to say the truth, I liked her better than Clara, who seemed to be always a little on the side of the other. She was as frank as a child, and had the trick to get honest pleasure from everything and everybody about her without the least effort.

We had quite a little feast that evening, partly in my honour, and partly no one knew what was said in honour of Dick and Clara coming together again. The wine was of the best; the hall was redolent of rich summer flowers; and after supper we not only had music (Annie, to my mind, surpassing all others for sweetness and cleanliness of voice, as well as for feeling and meaning), but at last we even got to telling stories, and sat there listening, with no other light than that of the summer moon streaming through the windows, which was a delightful change from the long, long time to time long passed, when books were scarce and the art of reading somewhat rare. Indeed, I may say here that, as you will have noted, the stories were books, and I was very much pleased to see that books, so great a pleasure to our forefathers, were not great readers considering the refinement of their manners and the great amount of leisure which they obviously had. In fact, when Dick, especially, mentioned a book, he did so with an air of a man who has accomplished an achievement; as much as to say, "There, you see I have actually read that!"

The evening passed all too quickly for me; since that day, for the first time, I thought I had the pleasure of the evening without any of that sense of incongruity, that dread of approaching ruin, which had always beset me hitherto when I had been amongst the beautiful works of art of the past, mingled with the lovely nature of the present; both in the result of the long centuries of quietness, which had compelled men to produce the art, and compelled nature to run into the mould of the ages. Here I could enjoy everything without an eye to the injustice of another and the fear which I looked for to be a luxury; the ignorance and dulness of life which went to make my keen appreciation of history; the tyranny and the struggle full of fear and misgivings which yielded to make the romance of the past.

Two hours went, and Dick, to my delight, did not help us to leave the city, and where the hay-field was it was then the picture of it as I remembered it, and especially the images of the women engaged in the work rose before me: the row of gant figures, lean, flat-breasted, ugly, without a trace of form or beauty; their bodies dressed in coarse, threadbare print gowns, and hideous flapping sun bonnets, moving their rheas in a listless mechanical way. How often had that marred the loveliness of an June day, and added to its abominable weather. The weaver and men, and women engaged in the work, the women, especially, white-faced, looking pale and thin, peopleed with men and women worth of the sweet abundance of early summer, of its endless wealth of beautiful sights, and delicious sounds and scents. And now, the world had grown old and wise, and I was to see my hope realised at last!

WILLIAM MORRIS.

"(This Story begun in No. 208, January 11, 1890. A few sets of Dick Vanders can still be had.)"

SOCIALISM IN THE PROVINCES.

LEICESTER.

Socialism has now firmly caught on here, and shows every sign of spreading. Mr. Shaw, the Chamberlain, has the town in a sort of agitated state. There is a long and rather loud discussion. The Sunday following, our old friend Peacock, of Nottingham, lectured morning and evening—ruffling, in his second address, the well-to-do voters of the borough. It was a strange, sensible, and effective address, and the well-to-do listeners, who, usually, are rather indifferent to political matters, were struck with the address. Peacock, of Nottingham, was the next speaker, who tore the enmity from the thought of her, in a very telling and personal experience. Sunday June 1st, Cartwright, of Walsall, delivered two addresses. For a young fellow of twenty-three, he is surprisingly fresh and confident, and put the principles of Socialism before his hearers with force and animation. June 8th, Raymond Unwin, of Chesterfield, gave us two most thoughtful addresses—morning, "Democracy"; evening, "The Crisis of the Pitt." The speaker's enunciation of his unswerving devotion and terrible cut-throat competition was hailed with applause by the audience.

Friday, June 9th, we made our first excursion this year of the villagers. Bayard addressed the people of Astley, a large village five miles out. Thomas Shaw, and other villagers, got a good start for Astley to oppose our views, and there was animated discussion, and great excitement among the audience. The next day Sunday, we visited Tower Grove, of London, and, at a local capital, a brewer, a male personal attack upon him; but a friend of ours in Astley, who whispered to the groom the information that his employer was anavising employer, our comrades lasted out, and turned the table beautifully on the capitalist, to the immense delight of the villagers. Comrade Taylor also spoke at this meeting. Tuesday 13th, a new station was opened up on the Old Cross, Belgrave Drive. Friday 20th we paid a third visit to Astley, a Positive friend taking the chair for us. Pleasure of discussion again. But Sunday 22nd was by far our greatest day this season. Mrs. Lacy, of London, speech the next day, was a most popular speaker, and the fact of her being a woman told with her Leicester audience. Three quartés Harvard were sold, 14d. 3d. collected, and six new members were enrolled.

We have had discussion at most of our meetings; and long after we have been through the village, it has not been quiet among the villagers. The discussion is a continual one, and of this great fact. It is a political discussion; it is a discussion of the factory system. This is a fundamental question. It is an absolute question, and is one of the most important questions that comes before the people. It is a question of the utmost importance. It is a question of the utmost importance.

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