

distinguishing Socialists from the ordinary public when mixed up with them, and that processions helped them in attack. If a change of tactics should result disastrously to the *clients* of Monro, whom he designates "the people at large," they will have that official and Home Secretary Matthews to thank for their troubles.

F. KITZ.

NEWS FROM NOWHERE:

OR,

AN EPOCH OF REST.

BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

CHAP. XVII. (continued).—HOW THE CHANGE CAME.

"THAT evening the rebel prisoners were visited in their cells by *very* polite and sympathetic persons, who pointed out to them what a suicidal course they were following, and how dangerous these extreme courses were for the popular cause. Says one of the prisoners: 'It was great sport comparing notes when we came out anent the attempt of the Government to "get at" us separately in prison, and how we answered the blandishments of the highly "intelligent and refined" persons set on to pump us. One laughed; another told extravagant long-bow stories to the envoy; a third held a sulky silence; a fourth dammed the polite spy and bade him hold his jaw—and that was all they got out of us.'

"So passed the second day of the great strike. It was clear to all thinking people that the third day would bring on the crisis; for the present suspense and ill-concealed terror was unendurable. The ruling classes, and the middle-class non-politicians who had been their real strength and support, were as sheep lacking a shepherd; they literally did not know what to do.

"One thing they found they had to do: try to get the 'rebels' to do something. So the next morning, the morning of the third day of the strike, when the members of the Committee of Public Safety appeared again before the magistrate, they found themselves treated with the greatest possible courtesy—in fact, rather as envoys and ambassadors than prisoners. In short, the magistrate had received his orders; and with no more to do than might come of a long stupid speech, which might have been written by Dickens in mockery, he discharged the prisoners, who went back to their meeting-place and at once began a due sitting.

"It was high time. For this third day the mass was fermenting indeed. There was, of course, a vast number of working people who were not organised in the least in the world; men who had been used to act as their masters drove them, or rather as the system drove, of which their masters were a part. That system was now falling to pieces, and the old pressure of the master having been taken off these poor men, it seemed likely that nothing but the mere animal necessities and passions of men would have any hold on them, and that mere general overturn would be the result. Doubtless this would have happened if it had not been that the huge mass had been leavened by Socialist opinion in the first place, and in the second by actual contact with declared Socialists, many or indeed most of whom were members of those bodies of workmen above said.

"If anything of this kind had happened some years before, when the masters of labour were still looked upon as the natural rulers of the people, and even the poorest and most ignorant men leaned upon them for support, while they submitted to their fleecing, the entire break-up of all society would have followed. But the long series of years during which the workmen had learned to despise their rulers had done away with their dependence upon them, and they were now beginning to trust (somewhat dangerously, as events proved) in the non-legal leaders whom events had thrust forward; and though most of these were now become mere figure-heads, their names and reputations were useful in this crisis as a stop-gap.

"The effect of the news, therefore, of the release of the Committee gave the Government some breathing time: for it was received with the greatest joy by the workers, and even the well-to-do saw in it a respite from the mere destruction which they had begun to dread, and the fear of which most of them attributed to the weakness of the Government. As far as the passing hour went, perhaps they were right in this."

"How do you mean?" said I. "What could the Government have done? I often used to think that they would be helpless in such a crisis."

Said old Hammond: "Of course I don't doubt that in the long run matters would have come about as they did. But if the Government could have treated their army as a real army, and used them strategically as a general would have done, looking on the people as a mere open enemy to be shot at and dispersed wherever they turned up, they would probably have gained the victory at the time."

"But would the soldiers have acted against the people in this way?" said I.

Said he: "I think from all I have heard that they would have done so if they had met bodies of men armed however badly, and however badly they had been organised. It seems also as if before the Trafalgar Square massacre they might as a whole have been depended upon to fire upon an unarmed crowd, though they were much honeycombed by Socialism. The reason for this was that they dreaded the use by apparently unarmed men of an explosive called dynamite, of which many loud boasts were made by the workers on the eve of these events;

and of course the officers of the soldiers fanned this fear to the utmost, so that the rank and file probably thought on that occasion that they were being led into a desperate battle with men who were really armed, and whose weapon was the more dreadful, because it was concealed. After that massacre, however, it was at all times doubtful if the regular soldiers would fire upon an unarmed or half-armed crowd."

Said I: "The regular soldiers? Then there were other combatants against the people?"

"Yes," said he, "we shall come to that presently."

"Certainly," I said, "you had better go on straight with your story. I see that time is wearing."

Said Hammond: "The Government lost no time in coming to terms with the Committee of Public Safety; for indeed they could think of nothing else than the danger of the moment. They sent a duly accredited envoy to treat with these men, who somehow had obtained dominion over people's minds, while the formal rulers had no hold except over their bodies. There is no need at present to go into the details of the truce (for such it was) between these high contracting parties, the Government of the empire of Great Britain and a handful of working-men (as they were called in scorn in those days), amongst whom, indeed, were some very capable and 'square-headed' persons. The upshot of it was that all the definite claims of the people had to be granted. We can now see that most of these claims were of themselves not worth either demanding or resisting; but they were looked on at that time as most important, and they were at least tokens of revolt against the miserable system of life which was then beginning to tumble to pieces. One claim, however, was of the utmost immediate importance, and this the Government tried hard to evade; but as they were not dealing with fools, they had to yield at last. This was the claim of recognition and formal status for the Committee of Public Safety, and all the associations which it fostered under its wing. This it is clear meant two things: first, amnesty for the 'rebels,' great and small, who, without a distinct act of civil war, could no longer be attacked; and next, a continuance of the organised revolution. Only one point the Government could gain, and that was a name. The dreadful revolutionary title was dropped, and the body, with its branches, acted under the respectable name of the 'Board of Conciliation and its local offices.' Carrying this name, it became the leader of the people in the civil war which soon followed."

"O," said I, somewhat startled, "so the civil war went on, in spite of all that had happened?"

"So it was," said he. "In fact, it was this very legal recognition which made the civil war possible in the ordinary sense of war; it took the struggle out of the element of mere massacres on one side, and endurance plus strikes on the other."

"And can you tell me in what kind of way the war was carried on?" said I.

"Yes," he said; "we have records and to spare of all that; and the essence of them I can give you in a few words. As I told you, the rank and file of the army was not to be trusted by the reactionists; but the officers generally were prepared for anything, for they were mostly the very stupidest men in the country. Whatever the Government might do, a great part of the upper and middle classes were determined to set on foot a counter revolution; for the Communism which now loomed ahead seemed quite unendurable to them. Bands of young men, like the marauders in the great strike of whom I told you just now, armed themselves and drilled, and began on any opportunity or pretence to skirmish with the people in the streets. The Government neither helped them nor put them down, but stood by, hoping that something might come of it. These "Friends of Order," as they were called, had some successes at first, and grew bolder; they got many of the officers of the regular army to help them, and by their means laid hold of munitions of war of all kinds. One part of their tactics consisted in their guarding and even garrisoning the big factories of the period: they held at one time, for instance, the whole of that place called Manchester which I spoke of just now. A sort of irregular war was carried on with varied success all over the country; and at last the Government, which had at first pretended to ignore the struggle, or treat it as mere rioting, definitely declared for 'the Friends of Order,' and joined to their bands whatsoever of the regular army they could get together; and made a desperate effort to overwhelm 'the rebels,' as they were now once more called, and as indeed they called themselves.

"It was too late. All ideas of peace on a basis of compromise had disappeared on either side. The end, it was seen clearly, must be either absolute slavery for all but the privileged, or a system of life founded on equality and Communism. The sloth, the hopelessness, and if I may say so, the cowardice of the last century, had given place to the eager, restless heroism of a declared revolutionary period. I will not say that the people of that time foresaw the life we are leading now, but there was a general instinct amongst them towards the essential part of that life, and many men saw clearly beyond the desperate struggle of the day into the peace which it was to bring about. The men of that day who were on the side of freedom were not unhappy, I think, though they were harassed by hopes and fears, and sometimes torn by doubts, and the conflict of duties hard to reconcile."

"But how did the people, the revolutionists, carry on the war? What were the elements of success on their side?"

I put this question, because I wanted to bring the old man back to the definite history, and take him out of the musing mood so natural to an old man.

He answered: "Well, they did not lack organisers; for the very

conflict itself, in days when, as I told you, men of any strength of mind cast away all consideration for the ordinary business of life, developed the necessary talent amongst them. Indeed, from all I have read and heard, I much doubt whether, without this seemingly dreadful civil war, the due talent for administration would have been developed amongst the working men. Anyhow, it was there, and they had leaders far more than equal to the best men amongst the reactionaries. For the rest, they had no difficulty about the material of their army: for that revolutionary instinct so acted on the ordinary soldier in the ranks that the greater part, certainly the best part, of the soldiers joined the side of the people. But the main element of their success was this, that wherever the working people were not coerced, they worked, not for the reactionists, but for 'the rebels.' The reactionists could get no work done for them outside the districts where they were all-powerful; and even in those districts they were harassed by continual risings; and in all cases and everywhere got nothing done without obstruction and black looks and sulkiness; so that not only were their armies quite worn out with the difficulties which they had to meet, but the non-combatants who were on their side were so worried and beset with hatred and a thousand little troubles and annoyances that life became almost unendurable to them on those terms. Not a few of them actually died of the worry; many committed suicide. Of course, a vast number of them joined actively in the cause of reaction, and found some solace to their misery in the eagerness of conflict. Lastly, many thousands gave way and submitted to the rebels; and as the numbers of these latter increased, it at last became clear to all men that the cause which was once hopeless was now triumphant, and that the hopeless cause was that of slavery and privilege.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

TO BE CONTINUED.]

CORRESPONDENCE.

HOW TO WIN LANCASHIRE.

DEAR COMRADES,—If Lancashire is to take its proper place in the ranks of Socialism, we must be up and doing, and to do our work properly we must have a system, or else our efforts will be very materially depreciated, and the Cause will suffer. It has been dinned into our ears many times during elections, and especially by the party which has secured a majority of the seats, that "what Lancashire says to-day England will say to-morrow." If this be an axiom, then we must work to get Socialism in the ascendancy; and with an educated working class we ought and can do it. In this county we have at least nineteen towns with populations numbering over 20,000 without a single recognised place of meeting, either indoors or outside. These towns are: Oldham, 152,511; Preston, 93,707; Bury, 49,746; Burnley, 69,110; Wigan, 48,916; Warrington, 45,275; Ashton, 43,389; Accrington, 31,435; Bacup, 25,033; Hyde, 28,629; Heywood, 23,050; Lancaster, 20,724; Chorley, 22,792; Widnes, 24,919; Tottington, 20,324; Worsley, 23,787; Barrow in Furness, 47,276; Staleybridge and Duckinfield, 56,614; Todmorden and Nelson, 34,242; Leigh and Redford, 21,733; Gorton 33,096; St. Helens, 57,234; Southport, 32,191; and another score of towns just on the borders of these big towns, with populations from 8,000 to 20,000. They are all big enough to establish branches and provide speakers of their own. These are Atherton, Blackpool, Clitheroe, Colne, Crumpsall, Droyloden, Earlstown Junction, Eccles, Failsworth, Haslingden, Hindley, Newton-le-Willows, Padiham, Prestwich, Radcliffe, Rawtenstall, Sowerbybridge, Stretford, Westhoughton, and Whitefield.

Let every branch in Lancashire see to it. Let them determine which place is the easiest to attack, and make the attack at once. Let the branch send two or more members for some time. Let the meetings be held once a week, be punctual, and ask for enquirers to be seen after meeting. Don't make meetings too long; you may educate, but it is just as desirable to organise. Get a corresponding secretary; and you may rely upon it that a branch will be formed and you will not require to send more than one speaker afterwards. You should always take *Commonweal* and leaflets and pamphlets. Let us work hard, pull well together, and victory will be ours.—Yours fraternally,

E. H. P.

P. S.—A collection should be made at all meetings for the local propaganda fund to pay travelling expenses for speakers. We want the best talent procurable. All Socialists are enthusiastic enough, but not always rich enough to travel further than they can walk.—E. H. P.

A SOCIAL MEETING

WILL BE HELD

AT THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB,

40 BERNER STREET, E.,

On Tuesday, June 24th, at 8.30 p.m.

All Revolutionary Socialists are invited. The position of the *Commonweal*, and the best means of advancing the Revolutionary Propaganda will be discussed. To be followed by a Concert. Admission free. Further particulars next week.

SHEFFIELD SOCIALISTS.—We have a very encouraging report to make of the work accomplished here during the past week. To us in Sheffield the "Rev." is getting sensibly nearer. Had our usual meetings at Monolith, Westbar, and Rotherham. We are also holding open-air meetings on week nights as follows: Monday at Handsworth Woodhouse, a mining village about five miles out; Wednesday night in the Wicker; and Thursday, Bramall Lane. We sold last week 270 *Commonweal*, and a quantity of pamphlets and *Freedom*; we expect to equal it this week. The attendance at all our meetings has greatly increased, and the interest is getting almost intense. The members are one and all working with a will, and in the heartiest comradeship. Our comrade Andrew Hall, of Chesterfield, visits us on Sunday next, and we are expecting record audiences.

A VISION OF HELL;

OR, A PEEP INTO THE REALMS BELOW.

HEAVENS! what a list!—what shoals on shoals
Of sinners sentenced, on hell's rolls,
To scorpion-whips and brimstone-coals!
Tremble, ye lords of funds and acres!
Now is the time to save your souls,
Ye money-grubbing Jews and Quakers,
Bow your stiff wills unto your Maker's,
Ere death calls in your undertakers!

Foremost in sinful guilt and pride
Scowled land-usurpers, money-changers—
'Twixt these the world is crucified;
Authors of all its woes and dangers,
To which men otherwise were strangers.

What streams flow from this fountain-head!
What myriads tangled in their toils!
What countless hosts these monsters lead!
Who share their crimes, to share their spoils,
Filling the earth with woes and broils!

Loan-mongers, landlords, millionaires,
Contractors, usurers, speculators,
Stockjobbers, brokers, bulls, and bears,
Blacklegs, monopolists, regraters,
Dealers in spiritual wares;
And House of Commons' sham debaters,
Yea, the whole tribe of legislators,
Who cater for these depredators,
Most of them rotten fornicators,
All of them licensed spoliators,
Tramplers on right, and people-haters,
Rogues every man, and all first-raters;
With swarms of hunters after place—
A hungry, servile, graceless race.

Discounters, notaries, lawyers, proctors,
The scum of gluttonous corporations,
Of bubble-company concoctors,
Fit tools for rank abominations,
Attorneys gorg'd by litigations;
Managers drown'd in peculations,
Pauls, Redpaths, Robsons, of all stations,
Steep'd to their chins in malversations,
The produce of their incubations,
And scandal of corrupted nations.

Land-factors, merchants, bankers, brewers,
Proprietors of "hells" and stews,
Foresters, turf-men, hired reviewers,
And fabricators of false news,
With smooth-fac'd Quakers, "saints," and Jews,

Such as pious thieves would choose
For missions to back slums and mews,
To coddle thieves, on their acquittals,
With sermons, tracts, and broken victuals,
Which they would gladly leave for skittles,
Or "swag" to earn them fresh committals.
Conscious their blots would bear the light,
Compared with their's who'd washed them white.

Legions there were of cotton lords,
And manufacturers, whom free trade
Make candidates for hell's rewards,
Through blood-stain'd fortunes wrung, not made,
From famished serfs in graves soon laid.

No devils were half so hypocritical
As these close-fisted, grinding skin-a-flints,
Most brazen-faced, yet parasitical,
With falsehood traced in all their lineaments;
Bullies to serfs, to tyrants, sycophants,
And primed with purse-proud, upstart insolence,
Which swell'd them out to huge dimensions,
Based only on their own pretensions.

Though "*Lib'rals*" styled, none e'er can love them,
So opposite their actions show them;
Take all they can from those above them,
And nothing give to those below them.
Behold the shibboleth to know them!
For never yet was Liberal known
To let the poor have even their own.

By J. BRONTERRE O'BRIEN.

An infamous sentence has been passed upon Moses Harman, the editor of *Lucifer*. He is a very plain-spoken sexual reformer, and did not shrink from printing an unusually strong letter from one of his correspondents. For this offence he has actually been sentenced to five years' imprisonment and a fine of three hundred dollars, which he is never likely to pay. Such a sentence makes one gape with wonder. Would any judge who was not a wretched bigot pass it, or would it be tolerated by any people not eaten out with hypocrisy? The wife-beaters and woman-outragers are at large, and this well-meaning, if mistaken, man is treated as a criminal of the deepest dye. Even if society—God bless its sweet, pure soul!—felt obliged to discountenance such a publication as *Lucifer*, one would think that a week's imprisonment would suffice, at least to begin with. But five years! It takes one's breath away. Yet this happens in America, where they are holding meetings to protest against the Czar's treatment of political prisoners. "Frailty, thy name is woman," says Hamlet. That's a mistake. But this is true—Hypocrisy, thy name is Christian civilisation.—*Free-thinker*