

creant, has murdered "niggers" with "explosive balls," and burnt their villages by the score, but it has never fallen to his lot to steal "half a million square miles" of territory.

There should be great rejoicings in the City among the hundred-per-shenters. O, Father Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! there never was such a chance for the children of Israel since they came out of Egypt with other people's jewellery!

But, meanwhile, other "Christian" powers, notably France, do not like this little bit of "bishness." It looks as if the "Christian" powers may yet fall to cutting each other's "Christian" throats in their evangelical eagerness to "Christianise and civilise" the poor unfortunate African. Such zeal for the Gospel of "vun hundred per shent" is worthy of our respectful admiration. Tartuffe, Maw-worm, Pecksniff, and Stiggins may take a back seat after this. "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," including "vun hundred per shent." Let us *prey*. D. N.

## NEWS FROM NOWHERE:

OR,

### AN EPOCH OF REST.

BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

CHAP. XIX.—THE DRIVE BACK TO HAMMERSMITH.

I SAID nothing, for I was not inclined for mere politeness to him after such very serious talk; but in fact I should like to have gone on talking with the older man, who could understand something at least of my wonted ways of looking at life, whereas with the younger people, in spite of all their kindness, I really was a being from another planet. However, I made the best of it, and smiled as amiably as I could on the young couple; and Dick returned the smile by saying: "Well, guest, I am glad to have you again, and to find that you and my kinsman have not quite talked yourselves into another world; I was half suspecting as I was listening to the Welshmen yonder that you would presently be vanishing away from us, and began to picture my kinsman sitting staring in the hall at nothing and finding that he had been talking a while past to nobody."

I felt rather uncomfortable at this speech, for suddenly the picture of the sordid squabble, the dirty and miserable tragedy of the life I had left for a while, came before my eyes; and I had as it were a vision of all my longings for rest and peace in the past, and I loathed the idea of going back to it again. But the old man chuckled and said:

"Don't be afraid, Dick. In any case, I have not been talking to thin air; nor, indeed, to this new friend of ours only. Who knows but I may not have been talking to many people? For perhaps our guest may some day go back to the people he has come from, and may take a message from us which may bear fruit for them, and consequently for us."

Dick looked puzzled, and said: "Well, gaffer, I do not quite understand what you mean. All I can say is, that I hope he will not leave us: for don't you see, he is another kind of man to what we are used to, and somehow he makes us think of all kind of things; and already I feel as if I could understand Dickens the better for having talked with him."

"Yes," said Clara, "and I think in a few months we shall make him look younger; and I should like to see what he was like with the wrinkles smoothed out of his face. Don't you think he will look younger after a little time with us?"

The old man shook his head, and looked earnestly at me, but did not answer her, and for a minute or two we were all silent. Then Clara broke out:

"Kinsman, I don't like this: something or another troubles me, and I feel as if something untoward were going to happen. You have been talking of past miseries to the guest, and have been living in past unhappy times, and it's in the air all round us, and makes us feel as if we were longing for something that we cannot have."

The old man smiled on her kindly, and said: "Well, my child, if that is so, go and live in the present, and you will soon shake it off." Then he turned to me, and said: "Do you remember anything like that, guest, in the country from which you come?"

The lovers had turned aside now, and were talking together softly, and not heeding us; so I said, but in a low voice: "Yes, when I was a happy child on a sunny holiday, and had everything that I could think of."

"So it is," said he. "You remember just now you twitted me with living in the second childhood of the world. You will find it a happy world to live in; you will be happy there—for a while."

Again I did not like his scarcely veiled threat, and was beginning to trouble myself with trying to remember how I had got amongst this curious people, when the old man called out in a cheery voice: "Now, my children, take your guest away, and make much of him; for it is your business to make him sleek of skin and peaceful of mind: he has by no means been as lucky as you have. Farewell, guest!" and he grasped my hand warmly.

"Good-bye," said I, "and thank you very much for all that you have told me. I will come and see you as soon as I come back to London. May I?"

"Yes," he said, "come by all means—if you can."

"It won't be for some time yet," quoth Dick, in his cheery voice; "for when the hay is in up the river, I shall be for taking him a round through the country between hay and wheat harvest, to see how our friends live in the north country. Then in the wheat harvest we shall do a good stroke of work, I should hope,—in Wiltshire by preference; for he will be getting a little hard with all the open-air living, and I shall be as tough as nails."

"But you will take me along, won't you, Dick?" said Clara, laying her pretty hand on his shoulder.

"Will I not?" said Dick, somewhat boisterously. "And we will manage to send you to bed pretty tired every night; and you will look so beautiful with your neck all brown, and your hands too, and you under your gown as white as privet: that will get some of those strange discontented whims out of your head, my dear. However, our week's haymaking will do all that for you."

The girl reddened very prettily, not for shame but for pleasure; and the old man laughed, and said:

"Guest, I see that you will be as comfortable as need be; for you need not fear that those two will be too officious with you: they will be so busy with each other that they will leave you a good deal to yourself, I am sure, and that is real kindness to a guest, after all. O, you need not be afraid of being one too many, either: it is just what these birds in a nest like, to have a good convenient friend to turn to, so that they may relieve the ecstasies of love with the solid commonplace of friendship. Besides, Dick, and much more Clara, likes a little talking at times; and you know lovers do not talk unless they get into trouble, they only prattle. Good-bye, guest; may you be happy!"

Clara went up to old Hammond, threw her arms about his neck and kissed him heartily, and said: "You are a dear old man, and may have your jest about me as much as you please; and it won't be long before we see you again; and you may be sure we shall make our guest happy; though, mind you, there is some truth in what you say."

Then I shook hands again, and we went out of the hall and into the cloisters, and so in the street found Greylocks in the shafts waiting for us. He was well looked after; for a little lad of about seven years old had his hand on the rein and was solemnly looking up into his face; on his back, withal, was a girl of fourteen, holding a three-year-old sister on before her; while another girl, about a year older than the boy, hung on behind. The three were occupied partly with eating cherries, partly with patting and punching Greylocks, who took all their caresses in good part, but pricked up his ears when Dick made his appearance. The girls got off quietly, and going up to Clara, made much of her and snuggled up to her. And then we got into the carriage, Dick shook the reins, and we got under way at once, Greylocks trotting soberly between the lovely trees of the London streets, that were sending floods of fragrance into the cool evening air, for it was now getting toward sunset.

We could hardly go but fair and softly all the way, as there were a great many people abroad in that cool hour. Seeing so many people made me notice their looks the more; and I must say, my taste, cultivated in the sombre greyness, or rather brownness, of the nineteenth century, was rather apt to condemn the gaiety and brightness of the raiment; and I even ventured to say as much to Clara. She seemed rather surprised, and even slightly indignant, and said: "Well, well, what's the matter? They are not about any dirty work; they are only amusing themselves in the fine evening; there is nothing to foul their clothes. Come, doesn't it all look very pretty? It isn't gaudy, you know."

Indeed that was true; for many of the people were clad in colours that were sober enough, though beautiful, and the harmony of the colours was perfect and most delightful.

I said, "Yes, that is so; but how can everybody afford such costly garments? Look! there goes a middle-aged man in a sober grey dress; but I can see from here that it is made of very fine woollen stuff, and is covered with silk embroidery."

Said Clara: "He could wear shabby clothes if he pleased,—that is, if he didn't think he would hurt people's feelings by doing so."

"But please tell me," said I, "how can they afford 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.)

ARBROATH.—There may be reason to doubt whether eight hours demonstrations serve to directly advance Socialism; but it must be gratifying to all Socialists to see discontent prompting men to formulate demands of any definite and not absolutely ridiculous kind. Those who believe in evolutionary Socialism will be specially glad to hear that the movement for shorter hours is being well sustained in Scotland. On Saturday, in the Abbey Green at Arbroath, some 2,000 persons assembled to demand the institution of an eight hours day. The meeting was held under the auspices of the Mill and Factory Operatives Union, and contingents were present from the Dundee, Forfar, Brechin, Montrose, Kirkcaldy, and other surrounding districts. Previous to the assembly on the Abbey Green, there was a long and well-organised procession of the Arbroath trades and industries, along with the contingents from a distance. As there were a few Socialists among the speakers, a good deal more than the ordinary trades unionist talk went on. Ritchie (Dundee), Eddy (Glasgow), Spence, Bisset, and myself (from Aberdeen) supported the resolutions, which were carried unanimously, and with a heartiness that might have surprised those who think that Scotchmen can't cheer. With so much discontent expressed by the speakers, and endorsed by the hearers, the wonder is that so small a safety-valve as the demand for an eight hours day is sufficient to let it off.—L.