THE COMMERCEAL, March 29, 1890.

NEWS FROM NOWHERE:

ON AN EPOCH OF REST.

BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

CHAP. X. (continued.)—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

"Tell me in detail," said I, "what lies east of Bloombury now?"

Said he: "There are but few houses between this and the outer part of the old city; but in the city we have a thickly-dwelling population. Our streets are filled with crowds of people going to and fro; and the houses are so close together that it is not possible to pull down the houses in what was called at the end of the nineteenth century the business quarter of the town, and what later got to be known as the aristocratic quarter. It was, however, that they stood hideously thick on the ground, were roomy and fairly solid in building, and clean, because they were not used for living in, but as gaming booths; so the poor people from the cleared slums took themselves up into a new stratum of society, till this day there is not a single band to think of something better for them; so the buildings were pulled down so gradually that people got used to living thicker on the ground than in houses, and so became the most popular part of London, or perhaps of all these islands. But it is very pleasant there, partly because of the splendour of the architecture, which goes further than what you will see elsewhere. However, this crowding, if it may be called so, does not go further than a street called Aldgate, a name and which perhaps you may have heard of. Beyond the houses are scattered wide about the meadows there, which are very beautiful, especially when you get on to the lovely river Lea (where old Isaac Newton used to live), and then you will find the fanciful cottages of Old Ford, names which of course you will not have heard of, though the Romans were busy there once upon a time."

Not heard of!" said I. "How strange! that I who had seen the very remnant of the pleasantness of the meadows by the Lea destroyed, should have heard them spoken of with pleasantness come back to them in full measure.

Hammond went on: "When you get down to the Thames-side you come on the Docks, which are works of the nineteenth century, and are still in use, although not so thronged as they once were, since we have discovered what we can use them for, and we have long ago dropped the pretension to be the market of the world. About these Docks are a good few houses, which, however, are not inhabited by many people permanently; I mean, those who use them come and go a good deal, the place has long ceased to be and for pleasant dwelling. Past the Docks eastward and landward it is all flat pasture, once marsh, except for a few gardens, and there are very few permanent dwellings there: scarcely anything but a few sheds, and oots for the men who look after the cattle great number of cattle. But however, what with the beasts and the men, and the scattered red-tiled roofs and the hayricks, it does not make a bad holiday to get a quiet pony and ride about there on a sunny afternoon of autumn, and look over the river and the craft passing up and down, and on to Shooters' Hill and the Kentish uplands, and then turn round to the wide green sea of the Essex marsh-land, with the great domed line of the sky, and the sun shining down in one flood of golden light over the long distances.

There is a place called Canning's Town, and further out, Silvertown, where the pleasant meadows at these pleasantness doubtless were once slums, and...

The other, which I got on my ear, but I could not explain why to him.

So said I: "And south of the river, what is it like?"

He said: "You would find it much the same as the land about Hampstead. It was all marsh-land, and the wind, and the Vale, and the place called Canning's Town, and further on, Silvertown, where the pleasant meadows at these pleasantness doubtless were once slums, and..."

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So said I: "Now I tell me about the other towns of the country."

He said: "As to the big murky places which were once, as we know, the centres of manufacture, they have, like the brick and mortar desert of London, disappeared; only, since they were centres of nothing but 'manufacture,' and served no purpose but that of the gambling market, they have left less signs of their existence than London. The fact is that each place has made this an easy matter, and some approach to their break-up as centres would probably have taken place, even if we had not changed our habits so much: but they being such as they are, and as the manufacture would have been threatened by the end of the 'manufacturing districts,' as they used to be called. For the rest, whatever coal or mineral we need is brought to grass and sent whither it is needed in the same fashion."

The other, which I got on my ear, but I could not explain why to him.

So said I: "No, no," said he, "it hasn't gone that way. On the contrary, there has been but little clearance, though much rebuilding in the smaller towns. Their suburbs, indeed, when they had any, have melted away into the general country, and space and elbow-room has been got in their centres; but there are the towns still with their streets and squares and market-place, and a certain amount of houses, but not so many as the most popular part of London, or perhaps of all these islands. But it is very pleasant there, partly because of the splendour of the architecture, which goes further than what you will see elsewhere. However, this crowding, if it may be called so, does not go further than a street called Aldgate, a name..."

William Morris.

CORRESPONDENCE.

INVENTORS UNDER SOCIALISM.

Sir,—in course of my studies of social matters, I have carefully considered the subject of the Manifesto of the Socialist League, published in pamphlet form. I am also desirous to test the truth of the assertions contained therein.

I can readily apprehend that certain employers of labour who appropriate large profits from business enterprises may possibly be considered merely as moneyed gaugers and forsworn, and who, interest on capital be not considered due to them, are entitled to no more than their share of the labour done. The capitalist, however, is superior to this class, there constantly arises men of original talent, who invent new things, or new ways, and whose claim on profit appear to me to be of a higher character than the capitalist. An individual of inventive faculty may do what has constantly been done before—namely, devise an improved chiseling tool, which shall be sold on a very high price, and already in demand. He employs labour for the manufacture, and pays liberally the fullest wages of the trade, but the new process is never adopted, because the manufacturer does not have forsworn which has hitherto been readily paid, and not considered as oppressive.

This hypothetical case may be taken as representative of the position of men who possess mental, not money capitals, such as the Arkwrights, the Wedgwoods and the Salters; and my difficulty is, How would Socialism deal with the matter?

Would the inventor be permitted to appropriate the increased profit, and so become a money capitalist, accumulate property, and become rich on the labour of the workers? Would he be allowed to charge a rate of profit of 10% on his capital, whereas his commercial establishments would only yield 2 or 3%? And would it be considered as 'manufacturing districts,' as they used to be called. For the rest, whatever coal or mineral we need is brought to grass and sent whither it is needed in the same fashion."

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