NEWS FROM NOWHERE.

BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

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

"Well, the Sunday of the meeting came, and great crowds came to Trafalgar Square in procession, the greater part of the Committee amongst them, surrounded by their band of men armed somehow or other of the people, and not a peaceful nor quiet, though there were many spectators to see the procession pass. Trafalgar Square had no body of police in it; the people took quiet possession of it, and the meeting began. The armed men stood round the principal platform, and there was amidst the general crowd; but by far the greater part were unarmed.

"Most people thought the meeting would go off peaceably; but the men of the crowd had heard from various quarters that something would be attempted against them; but these reports of Prague, and they had no idea of what threatened. They soon found out.

"For before the streets about the Square were filled, a body of soldiers came near the ranks, and I saw the street crowded, and to that mass were added not only the men, but the women, and the children, except under the influence of the height of terror, which was soon to be supplied to them. A few of the armed men struggled to the front, or climbed up to the base of the monument which then stood there, that they might face the wall of hidden fire before them; and to most men (there were many women amongst them) it seemed as if the end of the world had come, and to-day seemed strangely different from yesterday. No sooner were the soldiers drawn up as aforesaid than, says an eye-witness, 'a glittering officer on horseback came prancing out from the ranks on the south, and read something from a paper which he held in his hand; something which very few heard; but I was told afterwards that it was an order for us to disperse, and a warning that he had legal right to fire on the crowd else, and that he would do so. The crowd took it as a challenge of some sort, and hoarse threatening roar went up from them; and after that there was comparative silence for a little, till the officer had got back into the ranks. I was near the edge of the crowd, toward the soldiers,' says this eye-witness, 'and I saw three little machines being wheeled out in front of the ranks, which I knew for mechanical guns. I cried out, "Throw yourselves down; they are going to fire!" But no one scarcely could throw himself down, so tight as the crowd were packed. I heard a sharp order given, and wondered where I should be the next end. It was as if the earth had opened, and held us up bodily amidst it. It is no use trying to describe the scene that followed. Deep lanes were mowed amidst the thick crowd; the machines passed over the ground, and the shrieks and wails and cries of horror filled all the air, till it seemed as if there were nothing else in the world but murder and death. Those of our men who were still unburst cheered wildly and opened a scattered fire on the soldiers. One or two fell; and I saw the wipers going up and down the ranks, urging the men to fire again; but they received the orders in sudden silence, and let the butts of their guns fall. Only one sergeant ran to a machine-gun and began to set it going; but a tall young man, an officer too, ran out of the ranks and dragged him back by the collar; and the soldiers stood motionless while the horror-stricken crowd, nearly wholly unarmed (for most of the armed men had fallen in that first discharge), drifted out of the Square. I was told afterwards that the soldiers on the west side had fired also, and done their part of the slaughter. How I got out of the Square I scarcely know; I went, feeling the ground under me, what with rage and terror and despair."

"So says our eye-witness. The number of the slain on the side of the people in that shooting during a minute was prodigious; but it was not easy to keep a count at the time. There were about one and two thousand. Of the soldiers, six was killed outright, and a dozen wounded."

"Still, the fire was a毫ne with excitement. The old man's eyes glittered and his face flashed as he spoke, and told the tale of what I had often thought might happen. Yet I wondered that he should have got so elated about a mere massacre, and I said:

"How fearful! And I suppose that this massacre put an end to the whole revolution for that time?"

"No, no," cried old Hammond; "it is begun!"

"He filled his glass and mine, and stood up and cried out, "Drink this glass to the memory of those who died there, for indeed it would be a long tale to tell how much we owe them."

"I drank, and he sat down again and went on.

"That first massacre would not be budge, not even, except the military organisation of the state was formed the civil war; though, like all such events, it gathered head slowly, and people scarcely knew what a crisis they were acting in."

"Terrible as the massacre was, and hideous and overpowering as the first horror had been, when the people had time to consider it, their feeling was one of anger rather than fear; although the military organisation of the state of siege was now carried out without shrinking by the clever young general. For though the ruling-classes when the news spread next morning felt one gasp of horror and even dread, yet the Government and their immediate backers felt that now the wine was drawn and must be drunk. However, even the most reactionary of the capitalist papers, with two exceptions, stunned by the tremendous news, simply gave an account of what had taken place, without making any comment upon it. The exceptions were one a so-called 'liberal' paper (the Government of the day was of that complexion), which, after a preamble in which it declared its undeviating sympathy with the cause of labour, proceeded to point out that in times of revolutionary disturbance it behoved the Government to be just but firm, and that by far the most merciful way of dealing with the poor madmen who were attacking the very foundations of society (which had made them mad and poor) was to shoot them at once, so as to stop others from drifting into a position in which they would run a chance of being shot. In short, it praised the determined action of the Government as the sceme of human wisdom and mercy, and extolled in the inauguration of an epoch of reasonable democracy free from the tyrannical falsities of Socialism."

"The other exception was a paper thought to be one of the most violent opponents of democracy, and so it was; but the editor of it found his manhood, and spoke for himself and not for his paper. In a few simple, honest words he said it was to consider a society was worth which had to be defended by the massacre of unarmed citizens, and called on the Government to withdraw their state of siege and put the general and his officers who fired on the people on their trial for murder. He went further, and declared that whatever his opinion might be as to the doctrines of the Socialists, he for one should throw in his lot with the people, until the Government atoned for their atrocity by showing they were prepared to listen to the demands of men who knew what they wanted and whom the depravity of society forced into pushing their demands.

"Of course, this editor was immediately arrested by the military power; but his bald words were already in the minds of the people and produced a great effect: so great an effect that the Government, after some vacillation, withdrew the state of siege, though at the same time they strengthened the military organisation and made it more stringent. Three of the Committee of Public Safety had been slain in Trafalgar Square; of the rest, the greater part went back to their old place of meeting and there awaited the event calmly. They were arrested there on the Monday morning, and would have been shot at once by the general, who was a mere military machine, if the Government had
not shirk before the responsibility of killing men without any trial. The two old principles of the Brotherhood of Humanity is one of the eternal truths that govern the world's progress on lines that distinguish human nature from brute nature. The principle of competition is simply the application of the brutal law of commerce between man and man, and most muting. Therefore, so long as competition continues to be the ruling factor in our industrial system, the highest development of the individual cannot be reached, the infatuation of being the last dollar is never worth the while itself, a thing which would avail unless practically applied. Therefore, those who seek the welfare of a great and enduring Republic, must endeavor to put an end to competition, and put in its place another based on the nobler principle of association. But in striving to apply this nobler and wiser principle to the working of our social and political institutions, it is necessary to guard against such changes; we make no war upon individuals; we do not censure those who have accumulated immense fortunes simply by carrying to a logical end the rules of competition. For in every large business, of which there are many thousands and syndicates, of which the people at present complain, demonstrate the propriety of a vast principle of association, and therefore, we must not make this principle a little further, and have all industries operated in the interest of all by the nation—the people organized—the organic unity of the whole people. The present industrial system is all right as long as it produces; it proves itself abundant by the immense waste of energy and material which is admitted to be its companion. Against this system we must fight, for it brings the nation into the slavest state; for in the possession of slavery it has wrought and would perpetuate, we pledge our best efforts.

All this reads very well; but, when examined, it only comes to a rather crude State Socialism after all, and there seems but little need for the new name, and none for the tremendous fuss that is being made about it. Dr. J. W. Miller, speaking before the First Nationalist Club of San Francisco the other day, was careful to point out that "Nothing is worse than the man who tells with his muscles—the editor, book-keeper, manufacturer, or merchant is just as much a labourer, works as hard and as long as the others. He is no different from the 'proletariat of the toilers,'" the Journal of the Knights of Labour, and no doubt many are disposed to consider it valid reasoning. There is one sense, indeed, in which it is true. We do not need to go back to the past to find that work is that of superintendence or a subordinate order of brainwork. No society can organize their work so as to keep the manager, the foreman, the Order of the Knights of Labour. We wish, indeed, that the classes who live by brain labour would realize that they have a common interest and common rights with the manual workers. There is no bar which would not exclude them from co-operating as members in full standing with their brethren of the class more generally recognized as "laborers" in the noble work of emanipulating (oil from the clothes of the exploiting class. Our only regret is, that so few of them seem willing to sink caste distinctions and unite with the manual workers.

As to the other class, the brain workers, who are also employers or capitalists, they occupy a somewhat different position. Still, even against these men we have no quarrel, provided they are not really seeking to make an effort to rectify the abuses of the industrial and economic system. We have no quarrel with them as workers; far from it. But we do say that, although the conditions of our work, perhaps a good deal of work, they draw most of their income, not from their work, but from the fact that they control the means and forces of production, and are able to levy a tribute on the earnings of others. Obviously it is the shallowest sort of subterfuge to say that a millionaire landlord ought to be classed as a worker because he chooses to keep his own books and thereby saves penmen, what amounts to a cost on every dollar of his income, or that a bondholder can also claim to eat his bread a hundred times over because he clips his neighbour's bread. But this is a point which we are not at all disposed to discuss further.

S. WHO ARE "LABOURERS." A common objection of the hired apologists for capitalism to the labour movement is that the term "labour" is used in too restricted a sense. "We are not all labourers," they say, "the average man is far better off than the man who toils with his muscles—the editor, book-keeper, manufacturer, or merchant is just as much a labourer, works as hard and as long as the others. He is no different from the 'proletariat of the toilers,'" the Journal of the Knights of Labour, and no doubt many are disposed to consider it valid reasoning. There is one sense, indeed, in which it is true. We do not need to go back to the past to find that work is that of superintendence or a subordinate order of brainwork. No society can organize their work so as to keep the manager, the foreman, the Order of the Knights of Labour. We wish, indeed, that the classes who live by brain labour would realize that they have a common interest and common rights with the manual workers. There is no bar which would not exclude them from co-operating as members in full standing with their brethren of the class more generally recognized as "laborers" in the noble work of emanipulating (oil from the clothes of the exploiting class. Our only regret is, that so few of them seem willing to sink caste distinctions and unite with the manual workers.

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"Trade is always the harbingers of peace," says the prophet of San Francisco. Is it? retVal the Bulletin. Think again—what of Britain's little and big trading wars all over the world? With America, China, in Asia, in Africa, India, Egypt, Siam, everywhere.