WHERE ARE WE NOW?

It is good from time to time for those who are engaged in a serious movement to look back and review the progress of the past few years; which involves looking around them and noting the way the movement is affecting the ideas of society on which the tremendous fabric of civilization is founded, and which has been built upon various doctrines of society, that men absorbed in such a movement are apt to surround themselves with a kind of artificial atmosphere which distorts the proportions of things outside, and prevents them from seeing what is really going on, and consequently from taking due council as to what is best to do.

It is now seven years since Socialism came to life again in this country. To some the time will seem long, so many hopes and disappointments as have been crowded into them. Yet in the history of a serious movement seven years is a short time enough, and few movements surely have so much to do, and so much of progress during this short time in one way or another or Socialism has done.

For what was it which we set out to accomplish? To change the system of society on which the tremendous fabric of civilization is founded, and which has been built upon various doctrines of society, that men absorbed in such a movement are apt to surround themselves with a kind of artificial atmosphere which distorts the proportions of things outside, and prevents them from seeing what is really going on, and consequently from taking due council as to what is best to do.

Consider, the quality of those who began and carried on this business of reversing the basis of modern society! Who were the statesmen who took up the momentous questions laid before England of the thirteenth century by the English Socialists! Who were the great divinities who preached this new gospel of happiness from their pulpits? Who were the natural philosophers who proclaimed their hope and joy at the advent of a society which should last use their marvellous discoveries for the good of mankind?

There is no need to take a pen in hand to write their names. The traveller (i.e., the toiler) had fallen among thieves, and the priest and the Levite went by on the other side; or perhaps in this case threw a stone at two of the wounded men: it was but a Samaritan, an outcast, an unrespectable person, who helped him.

Those who set out "to make the revolution"—that is, as aforesaid, to put society on a new basis, contradictory to the existing one—were a few working-men, less successful even in the wretched life of labour than their fellow; a sprinkling of the intellectual proletariat, whose keen pushing of Socialism must have seemed pretty certain to extinguish their limited chances of prosperity; one or two outsiders in the game political; a few refugees from the bureaucratic tyranny of foreign governments; and here and there an unpractical, half-cracked artist or author.

Yet such as they were, they were enough to do something. Through them, though not by them, the seven years of the new movement toward freedom have, contrary to all that might have been expected, impressed the idea of Socialism deeply on the epoch. It is true that the tollers have not begun to reap benefit from that impression; but it was impossible that they should. No permanent material benefit could come from them until Socialism has ceased to be militant, and is merged in the new society. But as I said the other week, the move-
FALSE REMEDIES FOR POVERTY.

In all directions, and from nearly all parties of the State, we see various proposals for the solution of the greatest problem of the day—poverty. It is a question which concerns everyone, and one which very few indeed connected with politics would admit that there will be any such a thing as a labour question at all. We were told by Liberal and Conservative alike that the Socialist labour problems were a sideshow. The voice of the people who have been silent, alas! too long; and true to the order to which our rulers and masters belong, even now they refuse to listen, or to deal with, the truth, but vainly attempt to keep the people off the road. The workers (of this country) to go or mislead the people of this country, even as the people on the Continent have been misled and deceived by somewhat similar propositions.

Let us take a sample or two of the proposals—and there are many before us at the present time. The one which seems to meet with most favour is that relating to pensions for worn-out or disabled persons. Those who are now the breadwinners would be cut off completely, but are further expected to contribute from their already scant wages to this pension fund, from which they are to draw a certain sum per week after they are 65 years of age. Considering that the average life of the worker is only 35 in the whole country, and in some particular districts—such as London, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, etc.—it is only some 27, we would ask (who would it be?) is this really a matter of concern? I have no hope of its even being a good palliative; as it appears to me, it is only another method of easing the pockets of our masters of their poor-rates; or in other words, our rulers are getting rid of the body-servants of our trade, because they are worn out. It may be that the workers compelled (seeing their stone yard and oakum-picking tests have failed) to insure themselves whilst young in order not to be a burden on the State?—the State class will rather slip under the docked 1s. per week from about 16 years old to 65, and then to have 10s. per week after that for life. What a glorious prospect for the worn-out decrepit wretch who can contrive to live 60 years? But, as the immense mass of the workers have no chance of living so long, I cannot see what this precious scheme with its pauper pensions has to do with them. What fools we workers are, and have, to be misled ever plausible cry. The position I take up might seem to the wilfully blind that I have no sympathy with the old, but I think that those who care to study will see that it is much better to end the system (at once) that renders for the workers to the end of their days. Seeing as I do that every able-bodied worker can and does produce three times as much as he consumes, I would warn any worker from expecting any success from this so-called insurance scheme, and would have them in mind that its professed aim at making it impossible for cases of "extreme hardships" to exist; but "hardships" mark, but only "extreme hardships"; not a solution of the question, but only a little point over a little hill. The people and the workers as well, can live and will be, can be, can only, to be broken up or curtail the power of the workers' party. The workman sees this if I am afraid they are doomed to a sudden and the burden becomes too great, and then a crash must come. Well, it may be said, this is only one scheme; there is the new and old unionism, which is securing more for the workers—more wages, less hours, more leisure, and the like. Will it be possible for the workers to use this money to beautify his home, increase his knowledge, and build up the physical condition of himself and family; and all for what?—that he may continue to work. Nay, I think, it does not. The workers unions we have growing up with lightning rapidity the federated unions of the capitalists; and what, pray, is their object? It is, and can only be, to break up or curtail the power of the workers' party, and to make the public believe which are already appearing—can end successfully for the workers? I don't believe it will.

Say our critics, these are only two instances. Well, let us take a third. The workers are to get and keep the franchise; which is most difficult, for according to both returning officers in the Eccles division of Lancashire, the number of removals has been something alarming, and this is not the only thing struggling against the growth of removal must increase. But, for the sake of argument, we will suppose the workers get, and do keep, the franchise. Does anyone really believe that they are going to avoid an appeal to force to settle this great question? What do you think the land-holding and capitalist class are made of? Does anyone think they will give up all their monopoly and the power it gives them without a struggle? If there is anyone who believes this if I am afraid they are doomed to a sudden and brutal awakening to the truth. The only thing worth dying for is freedom; but I am afraid a large number of workers are doomed to lay down their lives for a mere shadow, and all because they are either blind or vitally. The workers will see, if they will, find out the truth of the economical position and strengthen the workers' position in the coming struggle by being prepared to raise the cry, "The land for the people, the product to the producer," and not in the shape of a petty shuffling, a petty chattering, a petty gabbling. "No Compromise" must be written large on our flag, and "No Surrender" be firmly engraved in heart and head. If the workers are going to fight for anything less than this, then their case is hopeless, because it will end in disappointment and failure. Isn't this the

A DEAR GENT.—"Men cease to regard money!" cries Boul of Houdtch. What else do all men strive for? The very Bishop informs me that Chiny has more than a million and a half of its people living on a little more than a minimum of five thousand five hundred in its pocket.—Carlyle.—  "Past and Present!" To the "Philosophers."—O Anti-Slavery Convention, loud-sounding, loud-loud, and therefore false. The great test of its justice, and I will complain of nothing. Only, black Quaxie over the seas being free and free," and, in short, the eggs of all kinds of birds, with thry dull, thry dull, to the "sixty thousand valets in London itself who are yearly dismissed to the streets, to be what they can, when the season ends;" or to the hunger-striking bakers at Manchester, Lancashire, Buckinghamshire, and all the shires! . . Quaxie has already virtually avails and clothing; Quaxie is not dying of such despair as the yellow-coloured pale man.—Carlyle.—  "Past and Present!"