OFFICES: 24 GREAT QUEEN STREET, LONDON, W.C.

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As all articles are signed, no special attention attaches to their position in the paper.

Articles and letters dealing with any phase of the social problem are invited and will be considered for publication in accordance with the above principles. They must be written on one side of the paper only, and accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication. MSS. can only be returned if a stamped directed envelope accompanies them.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Correspondents who write literature should either post, or state if they wish their parcels to be sent per rail or carrier, "carriage forward." Will Branch Secretaries please write Reports and Orders for Literature on a separate sheet.

BOOKS Received—Fabian Essays, cheap edition (Walter Scott). Mines and the Mining Industry. (South Africa.)

NEWS FROM NOWHERE:

A beautiful little islet begrown with graceful trees; on the slopes westward of us was a garden of very shady meadow on the south side of the river; while to the north was a wide stretch of mead rising very gradually from the river’s edge. A delicate spire of an ancient building rose up from out of the trees in the middle distance, with a high country house attached. More directly nearer to us, in fact not half a furlong from the water, was a quite modern house—a wide quadrangle of one story, the buildings that made it being quite plain. There was no garden between the house and the stream, but a row of pear-trees still quite young and slender; and though there did not seem to be much ornament about it, it had a sort of natural elegance, like that of the trees themselves.

As we sat looking down on this all the day of that sweet June day, rather happy than merry, Ellen, who sat next me, her hand clasped about one knee, leaned sideways to me, and said in a low voice which Dick and the stars might not have heard if I had not been so happy, so happy—so happy—love-making: “Friend, in your country were the houses of your field-labourers anything like that?”

I said: “Well, at any rate the houses of our rich men were not; there were more big ones than the face of the land.”

“I find that hard to understand,” she said. “I can see why the workmen, who were so oppressed, should not have been able to live in beautiful houses; for it takes time and leisure, and minds not overburdened with cares, to make beautiful dwellings; and I quite understand that these poor people were not allowed to live in such a way as to have these (to us) necessary good things. But why the rich men, who had the time and the leisure and the materials for building, as it would be in this case, should not have housed themselves well, I do not understand, as yet. Of course, I know,” she said, looking me full in the eyes and blushing, “that you mean to say that their houses and all they belong to them is quite generally necessary to be abstracted to you as being like yonder remnant of our forefathers’ work” (pointing to the spire); “that they were—let me see; what is the word?”

“Ruin,” said I. “We used to see there a sort of grandness and vulgarity of the rich men’s dwellings was a necessary reflection from the sordidness and bareness of life which they forced upon the poor people.”

She knelt her brows as in thought; then turned a brightened face on me, as if she had caught the idea, and said: “Yes, friend, I see what you mean. We have sometimes—those of us who look into these things—talked this very matter over; because, to say the truth, we have plenty of record of the so-called arts of the time before Equality of Life: and there are not wanting people who say that the state that society was not the cause of all that ugliness; that they were up against their life and to keep them down, and could have had better things about them if they had chosen; just as a man or body of men now may, if they please, make things more or less beautiful.”

“I stop! I know what you are going to say.”

“Do you?” said I, looking up, yet with a beaming him, “so, for the man’s and woman’s and child’s life and their children, and wish to be happy, and yet be careful of things, is a wisdom. It’s right.”

“true,” she said, “it is true. We have proved it true.”

I think amid this—something more interesting in her, and admiration for her, I was beginning to wonder how it would all end. I saw a light dimming, to fear of what might happen, of anxiety as to the remedy of that age for the missing of something one might set one’s heart on, when Dick rose to his feet and cried out in his hearty manner: “Neighbour Ellen, are you quarrelling with the guest, or are you worrying to tell us ways and means of building the proper sort of our own homes and villages, and make them such a thing which would have been made by others?”

“Indeed it is,” said I.

“Certainly, madam,” she said, “I must say for him that he has explained himself to me very well indeed, so that I quite understand him.”

“Indeed it is,” said she, looking down at me with a delighted smile of confidence in being understood.

“I am so, more will I say, and I must say for him that he has explained himself to me very well indeed, so that I quite understand him.”

“Indeed it is,” said she, looking down at me with a delightful smile of confidence in being understood.

I looked at her, and felt a sort of affection for her, and her presence, and the air of her, and the beauty of her, and the beauty of her—

The Commonweal, September 13, 1890.
THE GREAT LAND THIEVES.

LETTER III.—CYMBU FYDD.

"The proud throne shall crumble, the diadem shall waste, the pride of those who reign; and War shall lay his poppy down, the fame that borest chivalry, the glory earned in deadly fray will fade, and the peace which calls hearts forth and feeds the expectant nations."—Purcell.

In turning one's attention to Wales as a scene of landlord domination and the extortions, one is struck by the present passiveness of the tenants, a once brave and hardy race in the hands of their despoilers. To see the descendants of the wild and daring Celtic tribes imprisoned in mine and factory, slaving for a pittance, and to traverse their once beautiful hills and valleys, but now disfigured by blast-furnaces and prodigious accumulations of filth; to see (and smell) what were once pure gushing mountain streams turned into deadly disgusting sewers,—then truly can we say with Marx that commercialism shapes the world after its own image.

As a writer in a local Glamorgan journal has remarked, the once lovely vales have been converted into teeming hives, resonant with the clashing of iron, and the industry itself has driven the resources and population at an amazing rate. It is enlarging everything except its sanitation. Beauty and purity have fled the scene, but commerce and typhus reign in their stead.

Hireling capitalist scribes and political economists wax ecstatic over the impetus given to trade by the utilization of the vast mineral resources of Wales, but the other side of the shield is carefully kept out of view. The hideous disfigurement of the country, the waste of life and limb, the overwork and scanty pay, are glossed over, if not ignored. Moreover, the same sage writers carefully keep silent upon the monstrous pretensions of landowners, which claims the minerals beneath the soil. It is contended by the landlords that the tenants of South Wales receive £365,000 per annum from mining rents and royalties, and of this enormous tribute paid to idle thieves who have never mined a shovelful of coal or an ounce of ore Wales pays a large proportion. My Lord Marquis of Bute, owner of 116,635 acres of land, holds a rent per ton royalty upon coal raised in Glamorganshire Valley. His lordly castle at Cardiff stands out in strange contrast to the wretched conditions of the mining population.

The swarm of men and boys who daily descend the mines and pursue their deadly calling, to emerge again only at nightfall, must first earn this tribute, to themselves and his fellows. Nor is this the whole of the tax levied upon their labour. £20 per annum is the customary rent of the coal-thieves. Before a mine can be sunk an enormous bonus must be paid the landowner. The mining lease is frequently so high, and bristles with so many pitfalls, especially to the small landowner, that it is not uncommon for landlords to sink the mines without any return. South Wales claim the cottages built by others upon the expiry of the leases, and thus a society which punishes the thief of a loaf with imprisonment exacts rents into lawgivers and legislators those who thieve legally the results of other's work.

The question of Way Leaves, i.e., the tax or fine paid to the landlord upon the soil the coal be touched for mining, also the rents and royalties, is a matter upon which one would think the owner and landowner are incumbent upon the better shoulders of the miner. At present he pays his hopes on Malbon, and other House of Commons debates, and we are to believe that the House will divest themselves of Parliamentary hallucinations, and take a sharp and decisive method of ridding himself of both. If we leave the underpaid miners and quarrymen, and turn to agricultural Wales, we find Landlordism pressing like a blight upon the land. Lord Cranbrook has insisted upon the need of greater attention being paid to agriculture in Wales. The class to which his attention is directed is in the same way, as elsewhere, for the neglected state of agriculture. Of the 4,700,000 acres of land, once completely wild, the greater portion has been seized by the land thieves. 270 odd persons claim 4,000,000 acres of the soil. One writer says at the ancient Parliament of South Wales, 943 acres were sold for £20, and the landowner, Holyhead, Cardiff, and other towns are owned by patentee robbers.

The thrifty quarrymen and labourers have, by self-denial and treasonable exertion, brought great tract of brown hill-side into cultivation, and built cottages worth £110,000, with the result that the land thieves have increased their rents fourfold, and charged them for "improvements." In Carnarvonshire and Merionethshire, half a million worth of property thus created lies at the mercy of peers and patricians.

A few samples of landlord tyranny are sufficient to illustrate the quibbles. A grants a lease to A, A must keep a dog for the benefit of his landlord's pig, or he may not. He must agree to a suit to be instituted in his name, but by the landlord, against anyone whom it may please the landowner to prosecute. And it is with this, that tenant magnates are obliged to procure a kith and kin. The landlord may shoot or hunt over his tenant's land, but the tenant must not kill or snare the game which destroys his crops. For each and all the things the tenant may not do there are fines which range from £20 to £200. Superadded to landlord and capitalist is the parson of the Established Church. He exacts tithe from a people who neither desire nor receive his ministrations. Bodies of police and troops, with emergency men, are being moved about the country, valiantly setting upon the chattlest and stock in satisfaction of the claims of a State parson. Truly the spectacle is a strange one to see the followers of the lowly Nazarene enforcing their claims. One robber of tramps and swells, and enlisting in their service hired bullies in the shape of sounderly emergency men!

Religious and political Nonconformity is punished in the most arbitrary manner. Wholesale evictions, ending frequently in the death of the victims, are the penalty for disobedience to landlord mandates. Legislation is supposed to have given the tenant some protection in respect to game and holdings, but they dare notavail themselves of the provisions of the Acts without incurring the risk of eviction. So a tenant may have his garden produce eaten in a night by hares and rabbits, and yet must not harm one; in short, the tenant's rights are that of the rivers, the stream, the fields above and below are mine, saith the lord of the soil.

The pettifying politicians who crawl at the heels of the Great Liberal Party, duelling with the fish with the people with the hope that with their advent to power, the evils under which the Welsh are groaning can never come again. Yet, singular to relate, the list of the great landowners of the country show Liberals and Tories in nearly equal proportions, and the most exciting and tyrannical of all are the members of the Liberal party. Socialism has found a foothold in Wales. As it grows in strength the old political and religious fetishes will lose their worshippers, and Wales will truly advance towards the Social Revolution.

F. KITE.

FREE SPEECH MEETING AT SHORT STREET.

Last Sunday morning, a demonstration was held by the Socialist League in Newport, New South Wales, to protest against the imprisonment of the writer of the previous Thursday. Our comrades brought a van and banners, but though congeneror's banner habitually stood in the street, and though a testarder said "Come and call on the police," every attempt to satisfy him was not allowed to use their van. Comrade Buckler took the chair, and was ably seconded by Parker, Kite, Mrs. Law, and others. A large crowd was assembled, who, encouraged the speakers, and showed every sympathy with the meeting. A resolution to condemn only Miss Leighton's arrest, but also the attack on Free Speech to meet with sympathy.

ANZACS.—On Sunday night, 1st August, Leetoom lectured to an unusually large number of the young men on the hardships and fatigues of life in the camps and Leatham addressed an open-air meeting on Castle Street on Thursday night. Thursday night and Saturday afternoon. Lieut.-Col. W. Cooper made a speech at the meeting at the last. The place was to a large audience. Our new red flag apparently added to the enthusiasm both of the speakers and the audience. The literature sold well.

RANCE.—On Sunday afternoon we had three splendid meetings at morning Hasulet Moor, afternoon Woodhouse Moor, evening Vicars Croft—when Mowbray was speaking a hundred men who were there were so excited that they had been threatened seriously. We sold 133 Commonwealth and some copies of Freedom and the comrade from London, Mr. Bland, from Bradford, visited us on Saturday night, and J. Burgess, of Glasgow, was with us on Sunday; he hopes to find employment here. And the Cause goes marching on.

VARNISH—Good meeting addressed by Leggat for an hour and a half, Good sale of Commonwealth and Freedom; Ld. Gd. collected. Comrade Burnie announced for next Sunday.