NEWS FROM NOWHERE:
ON
AN EPOCH OF REST.

BRING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

CHAP. XXIX.—AN OLD HOUSE AMONGST NEW FOLK.

As I stood there Ellen detached herself from the merry group on the little strand and came up to me. She took me by the hand, and I was constrained to take her to the house at once; we need not wait for the others: I had rather not.

I had a mind to say that I did not know the way thither, and that the direction which Ellen should lead; but almost without my will my feet moved on along the road they knew; and I was led by a little field bounded by a backwater of the river on one side; on the right hand we could see a cluster of small houses and barns, and new and old, and before us a grey-stone barn and a wall partly overgrown with ivy, over which a few grey gables showed. The village road ended in the shallow of the aforesaid backwater. We crossed the road, and again almost without my will my hand raised the latch of a door in the wall, and we stood presently on a stone path, which led up to the old house to which fate in the shape of Dick had so strangely brought me in this new world of men. My companion gave a sigh of pleased surprise and enjoyment; nor did I wonder, for the garden between the wall and the house was redolent of the June flowers, and the roses were rolling over one another with that delicious superabundance of small well-tended gardens which at first sight takes away all thought from the beholder that of beauty. The blackbirds were singing their loudest, the doves were cooing on the roof-ridges, the rooks in the high elm-trees beyond were garrulous among the millions of swifts which were skimming about the gable ends. And the house itself was a fit guardian for all the beauty of this heart of summer.

Once again Ellen echoed my thoughts as she said: “Yes, friend, this is what I have come out for to see; this many-gabled old house built by the simple country-folk of the long past times, regardless of all the turmoil that was going on in cities and courts, is lovely still amidst all the hurly-burly of the better days that have created; and I do have at my friends tending it carefully and making much of it. It seems to me as if it had waited for these happy days, and held in it the gathered grums of happiness of the confused and turbulent past.”

I was led into the room, and there, on the sanded floor, bloomed the sunburned hand on the lichen wall, as if to embrace it, and cried out, “O me! O me! How I love the earth, and the seasons, and weather, and all that deals with it, and all that grows out of it,—as the earth has done!”

I could not answer her, or say a word. Her exultation and pleasure were so keen and exquisite, and her beauty so delicate, yet so interfered with energy, expressed it so fully, that any added word would have been commonplace and futile. I dreaded lest the others should come in suddenly and break the spell she had cast about me; but we stood there a while in the corner of the big room, and no one came. I heard the merry voices some way off presently, and knew that they were going along the river to the great meadow on the other side of the house and the garden.

We went out and looked up at the house: the door and the windows were open to the fragrant sun-cured air; from the upper window-sills hung festoons of flowers in honour of the festival, as if the others were the ones in love for the old house.

“Come in,” said Ellen. “I hope nothing will spoil it inside; but I don’t think so. Come! we must go back presently to the others. They have gone on to the tents; for surely they must have tents pitched for the haymakers—the house would not hold a tithe of the folk, I am sure.”

She led me on to the door, murmuring little above her breath as she did so. “The earth and the growth of it and the life of it: if I could but say or show how I love it!”

We went in, and found no soul in any room as we wandered from room to room,—from the rose-covered porch to the strange and quaint garrets amongst the great timbers of the roof, where of old time the tillers and herdsmen of the manor slept, but which—nights seemed now, by the small size of the beds, and the litter of useless and disregarded matters—became the nestings of loving flowers, feathers of birds, shells of startled eggs, caddis-worms in nuggets, and the like,—seemed to be inhabited for the time by children.

Everywhere there was but little furniture, and that only the most neighbourly; but the atmosphere was so extravagant love of ornament which I had noted in this people elsewhere seemed here to have given place to the feeling that the house itself and its associations was the ornament of the country life amidst which it had been left standing. And that ornamentment it would but take away its use as a piece of natural beauty.

We sat down at last in a room over the wall which Ellen had called the kitchen, which was originally of no artistic value, but which now had faded into pleasant grey tones which harmonised thoroughly well with the quiet of the place, and which would have been ill supplanted by brighter and more striking decoration.

I asked a few random questions of Ellen as we sat there, but scarcely listened to her answers, and presently became silent, and then scarce conscious of anything but that I was there in that old room, the doves
crrowing from the roofs of the barn and doveset beyond the window opposite to me.

My thought returned to me after what I think was but a minute or two, but which, as in a vivid dream, seemed as if it had lasted a long time. Then I saw Ellen striking up a touch of joy and pleasure and desire from the contract with the grey faded tapestry with its fulfil engine, which was now only bearable because it held great so faint and feelable.

She looked at me kindly, but as if she read me through and through. She said: “You have begun again your never-ending contrast between the past and this present. Is it not so?”

I said faintly: “I was saying to myself, the past, the present, the future? Should she not have said the contrast of the present with the future: of blind despair with hope?”

“You know it?” she said, after a moment. “Come! come out of the room, and let us see the house. And I will give you the key of the suddenness: ‘Come! you must go to the others before they come here looking for us. And let me tell you, my friend, that I can see you are too apt to fall into mere dreamy musings; no doubt you think this: why you are not yet used to the spring of energy, of work which is pleasure and pleasure which is work.”

She paused a little, and as we came out into the lovely garden again she said: “My mind has been wandering in thinking that you wondered what I should have been if I had lived in those past days of turmoil and oppression. Well, I think I have studied the history of them to know pretty well. I should have been one of the poor, for my father whom I was working for was one of the shepherds. Well, I could not have borne that; therefore my beauty and cleverness and brightness (she spoke with no blush or simple of false shame) would have been sold to women, and my life might have been indeed; for I know enough of that to know that I should have had no choice, no power of will over my life; and that I should never have bought pleasure from the rich men, or even opportunity of action, whereby I might have won some true excitement. I should have wrecked and wasted in one way or another, either by penury or by luxury. Is it not so?”

“Indeed it is,” said I.

Ellen was going on something else, when a little gate in the fence, which led into a small elm-shaded field, was opened, and Dick came with hasty cheerfulness up the garden path, and was presently standing between us, a hand laid on the shoulder of each. He said: “Well, young lady, I brought you the key of the house, but without a crowd in it. Isn’t it a jewel of a house after its kind? Well, come along, for it is getting towards dinner-time. Perhaps you, guest, would like a swim before we sit down to what I fancy will be a good long feast!”

“Yes,” I said, “I should like that.”

“Well, goodbye for the present, neighbour Ellen,” said Dick. “In the afternoon, Clara. I hope I can have you, as I fancy she is more at home amongst our friends here.”

Clara came out of the field as she spoke; and with one look at Ellen I turned and went with Dick, doubtless, if I must say the truth, whether I should see her again.

William Morris.

(to be continued in our next.)
SWEATING AMONG THE FISHERMEN.

Of all the white-slavery there is in Christian, commercial, and loyal England, perhaps the most in the demoralising, unorganised, and down-trodden fishermen, none is worse. Little do the people in our inland villages and towns know the hardships, starvation, and degradation these men have to endure, and to prove their blest they bear so much of and get so few of, and the way they are robbed by the owners and middlemen. Well might John Ruskin say, "England has become a nation of thieves." Everything to rob everybody, else they are not bravely and strongly, but in the cowardly and loathsome ways of lying trade.

Those who work along the shore without like those on the land, have to go begging and crawling, cap in hand, to their so-called masters for a petty pittance, not sufficient to keep body and soul together, but by their uncertain wages, and often-times no wages, the stern masters of the whole world, do rise and shake off the chains of commercial slavery, and strike down monopoly and authority! Know ye not that the workers produce all wealth, yet do they often work against their lives, and children, have no necessities of life; whilst the idlers—not the poor devils who hang about the shops, wearing adulterated food, false money, and back groceries—is perhaps nearer the mark, in filthy, insanitary slums, not fit for dogs to live in, but those rich idlers, those swearers, "those luxurious drones with their lazy blood"—litter the land, are the thieves, the united thieves.

"The men are sweaters, the sweaters are monopoly shares; we are the poor land, the unpardoned debtors, the unpaid men."

But the fisherman. It will be as well to state here the conditions on which the men are engaged, as most people inland think the boats belong to the men—which they should do. After all expenses are paid, including tax on the catch, wages, repairs, and insurance, the remainder of the money, earned by the men, is divided into seventeen shares, because the master has done nothing, the crew seven shares; seven shares are again divided into ten and a half shares amongst the crew of ten men and a boy as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shares</th>
<th>Number of Shares</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Master or Skipper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dorman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Whaleman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rope-man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Net-stower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 Scuppers or 2 Junkers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 for the Boy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As will be seen by the above, the master, who does the least work and gets the most sleep, also gets the most pay. The first four get more than the last thirteen, who do the hardest and the riskiest work, for the least paid. The owner, the damned monopolist, the greatest curse of the century, and the man who gets a large part of the boat put together. Men, is not this your eating fish and drinking whiskeys paid for blood? See to this, like true men, if you are too cowardly to do it for your own sakes, think of your children at home. You who are touched with humanity, think of them with the children of your masters—may they, not be bear comparison; their little feet cold and often bare as they have to trot off to school, sometimes with their little laps, whilst the children of the monopolist have the best of everything their hearts can desire, and your daughters, who will cover them in their homes, helping their overworked mother, have to wait on them hand and foot.

If only we can get the mothers to understand Socialism, our cause is won: for instead of respect for authority into their little hearts, which when they reach manhood, takes so much to knock out of them, they would instill into your young hearts the noble principles of Socialism.

On coming into harbour with her catch, and directly she touches the quay, she is covered with a swarm of men and boys anxious to get a job, telling out her catch. They are the men, who by the sweat of their brows, raise the boat expenses instead of out of the owner's share. When all the herring are gone, the boat is washed down and get ready for sea again. But all this is done by the master, while he is ready by 12 or 1 o'clock, and very often go to sea again the same day. If not, the crew are allowed a night's sleep, but in summer this is not often, for ten days, but they are late the owner sets another slave on his place, sometimes paying him much more than the men get, as some are out of the man's share that stops ashore. Sometimes by an accident of this kind a man with wife and family has to go the whole of the fishing for nothing, the owner having paid most of his money away to the man he set on his place, the rest of his wages go for sea clothing.

The following is a bill one of the Yarmouth men had stopped out of his share:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair Shad Boots</td>
<td>£ 1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair Duffed Trousers</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair Grey Gersewy</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair White Gersewy</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Sea Shirts</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Pair Leggings</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Pair Mitta</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Knife</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total                            | £ 2.10 |

Money Stolen                      | £ 1.12  |

The amount was not including the other sweaters' pound of flesh.

A sweating explorer, one of the great unpaid, has monopolised in this story. We hope it is a sorry tale.

And so the game goes on year after year, to the latter part of December, when the boats make up, which last three or four days. Then comes the grand settling of accounts, some getting £10 or £15 for twenty or more weeks of the worst of slavery, whilst others pay off their "debits" the owner taking good care that they be not given in. After Christmas the fishermen who have been overworking with hunger and drink, go off to break stones or some other slavery for 2s. per day. Some day they will go to the sweat and demand the wealth they have stolen from the workers.

J. HEADLEY.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

GERMANY.

The discussion of the proposed party programme, etc., will be the order of the day at the Congress going on, and is already striking a great deal of bad temper. The way in which the old ones want to enforce their authority is certainly very provoking, especially as everybody knows that they are very far from being harmonious. It is far from being harmonious, and drifted about according to circumstances, that it might be said it is surprising that the Socialists are not such a great number as they are. Berlin seems to be the stronghold of the "kickers," and some meetings have there been from harmonious. No doubt that the enemies of the Socialist movement are rather pleased at this sight, but that can't be helped. It is better that these differences are open and freely discussed than kept back; they only go in the body of the form, forming diseases much worse than those which can receive open treatment. We are waiting for the Congress, and most members wished that the meeting should be stopped till then, though it is not at all unlikely that a split will take place.

The great lock-out in Hamburg is nearly at an end now. It can't be said that it has ended quite in favour of the workmen, though it is true they combined capitalists have been unable to smash the union (which was their desire), and must take on without asking them to sign a paper declaring that they belong to no union; but on the other hand the unions have lost a good many members and have an enormous drain on their funds. The com- munist have sent all friends who have had the money to do so, to keep up the wages, and after all, if the beneficial results are not great, the workmen have learnt to stand together, and the different trades will work more and more in com- bined union; if one organisation is touched it will be felt and resented by all.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

The son of our old friend, John Bedford Leno, in writing to his father a few days since from Healesville, N.S.W., says:

"The masters of this continent are beginning to quake. The miners, to which our workers belong, I believe, are being fairly treated. The workers here are like a bundle of sticks, the tie that binds them being formed of one common interest. We have been having strike in the pound weekly for six months in order to keep the men out at a neighbouring pit. I can see that Labour is about to turn the table on Capital, on, in other words, assume the position of 'boss.'—Yours, dear father, William Leno, Miner."

"The Labour World."

Michael Davitt's paper, although "moderate" in tone, is certainly the best written and best edited of all to the "Corporative" party. Mr. Morrison Davidson begins a fine series of articles entitled 'The Book of Labour.' The "Scottish Notes" and the column on 'Social Contracts' are also excel- lent. "Our political sensation," reveals about the political situation, Government with Pigott, and also concerning the way dynamite explosions have been got up by the "holy-roofed" party, are promised for next week.

We are glad to see Mr. Davitt doesn't share the Republican prejudices of our old friend Reynolds, since the following appears in the pages of the "Labour World."

"Let us hear no more trash about 'free' America as compared with down- trodden Europe. Both continents are dowred by the rich men who own the commercial out of which a very large part of the money of the United States is all absorbed by private persons, as it will be in 20 years. If anything will reveal the difference between America and Europe in the future, it is the way as wage-workers are concerned. Wages may be higher in America, but the mass of the people will not be able to live like the common citizens. For while swinging, lively, and merciless oppression, many American capitalists have their European brethren far behind."

Mr. Reynolds thinks our workers have everything to learn, and his friends know the condition of the American workers, unlike the writers in Reynolds, whose knowledge springs from reading the works of Mr. Andrew Carnegie.

EXCURSION TO SHIRLEY HILLS will take place on Sunday, September 25th. Buses will start from the Office at 10 a.m. The Social Democratic Federation, Labour Hall, 50 South Bridge, Edinburgh. Business meeting Friday at 6 p.m. Secretary, W. T. Dail, 20 D unins Street.