NEWS FROM NOWHERE:

OR,

AN EPOCH OF REST.

BEING SOME CHAPTERS FROM A UTOPIAN ROMANCE.

CHAP. I.—DISARMAMENT AND REED.

At the League, says a friend, there had been one night a brisk conversational discussion, as to what would happen on the breaking of the Revolution. The more foreboding the nature of this discussion, the more extraordinary it was; for the number of the League was extraordinary. The friends present were summarily assembled by various friends of their views on the future of the fully-developed new society.

Says our friend:—Considering the subject, the discussion was good-tempered; for those present being to present the views of the public meetings as well as those of its characters in the paper. "We have seen another cycle of Anarchist opinions. One of the sections, says our friend, a man, who knew very well indeed, sat almost silent at the beginning of the discussion, but at last got drawn into it, and finished by roaring very loud, and damming all the rest for fools; after which belief of period of silence and then a talk, during which the aforesaid section, having said good-night very amiably, took his way home by himself to a western suburb, using the means of travelling which civilization has forced upon us like a habit. As he sat in that vapour-bath of hurried and disconnected humanity, a carriage of the underground railway, he, like others, stood disconsolate, while in self-consoling mood he turned over the many excellent and conclusive arguments which, though they lay in his finger-end, he had forgotten in the just discussion. But this frame of mind he had been so used to that, he didn't last him long, and after a brief discomfort, caused by disgust with himself for having lost his temper, which he also was not sad to find, he found himself napping on the matter of discussion, but was still disconsolately and unhappy. "If I could but see a day of it," he said to himself, "I could but see it!" As he formed the words, the train stopped at his station, five minutes' walk from his own house, which stood on the banks of the Thames, a little way above an ugly suspension bridge. He went out of the station, still disconsolately and unhappy, muttering "If I could but see it!" but had gone many steps towards the river before (says our friend who tells the story) that all disconsolately and trouble seemed to slip off him.

It was a beautiful night of early winter, the air just sharp enough to be refreshing after the hot room and the stinking railway carriage. The wind, which had lately turned a north or south of west, had blown the sky clear of all cloud save a light fog or two which swept swiftly down the heavens. There was a young moon half way up the sky, and as the hour grew a little past eight, it lighted in the branches of a tall old elm, she could scarce bring to mind the shabby London suburb where he was, and he felt as if he were in a pleasant country place—country, indeed, than the deep country was as he had known it.

He cause right down to the riverside, and lingered a little looking over the low wall to see the moon shine upon high water, and the sky swirling and glittering up to Chiswick Eyot: as for the bridge below, he did not notice it or think of it, except when for a moment (says our friend) it struck him that he missed the row of light down stream. Then he turned to his house door and let him the tide in; and as he shut the door to, disappeared all remembrance of that brilliant kitchen and that which had so illuminated the recent discussion; and of the discussion itself there remained no trace, save a vague hope, that was now become a pleasure, for days of peace and rest, and all the good that was going well.

In this mood he stumbled into bed, and fell asleep after his wont, in two minutes time; but (contrary to his wont) woke up again not long after in that current which sometimes surprises even good sleepers; a condition under which we feel all our wisest perniciously sharpened, while all the miserable mundinesse we have ever got into, all the diagnoses and losses of our lives, will insist on thrusting themselves forward for the consideration of those sharp-witted.

In this state he lay (says our friend) till he had almost begun to enjoy it: till the tale of his stupidities amused him, and the entanglements before him, which he saw as clearly, began to shape themselves into an amusing story for himself. He heard one o'clock strike, then two and then three; after which he fell asleep again. Our friend says that till that sleep he woke once more, and after some perplexed and misgiving reflections that he thinks that they should be told to our comrades of the League, and therefore proposes to tell them now. But, says he, I think it would be better if I told them just the first part, as it were a morning of who had gone through them; which, indeed, will be the easier and more natural to me, since I understand the feelings and desires of the comrade I am telling of better than anyone else in the world does.

CHAP. II.—A MORNING BATH.

Well, I awoke, and found that I had kicked my bedclothes off; and no wonder, for it was hot and the sun shining brightly. I jumped up and washed and hurried on my clothes, but in a hurry and half-awake condition, as if I had slept for a long time, and could not shake off the weight of slumber. In fact, I rather took it for granted that I was at home in my own room than saw that it was so.

When I was dressed, I felt the place so hot that I made haste to get out of the room and out of the house; and my first feeling was a delicious relief caused by the fresh air; then, as I walked down the river-side, I was taken in by the excitement of my early June. However, there was still the Thames sparkling under the sun, and near high water, as last night I had seen it gleaming under the moon.

I had by no means shaken off the feeling of oppression, and wherever I might have been supposed to have been quite conscious of the place; for it was no wonder that I felt rather pressed in despite of the familiar face of the Thames. What all I felt dizziness and queasiness, and remembering that people often get a boat and have a swim in mid stream, I thought I would do no less. It seems very early, quite I myself, but I cannot say I shall find someone at Biffin's to take me. However, I didn't get as far as Biffin's, or even turn to my left thitherward, because just as I began to see that there was a landing-stage right before me in front of my house: in fact, on the place where my next-door neighbour had rigged one up, though somehow it didn't look like it either. Down I went on to it, and saw enough among the empty boats moored to it lay a man on his stretcher in a solid-looking tub of a boat clearly meant for bathers. He nodded to me, and bade me good morning; as if he expected me, so I jumped in without any words, and he paddled away quietly as I pushed for my swim. As we went, I looked down on the water, and couldn't help saying—

"How clear the water is this morning!"

"Is it?" said he; "I didn't notice it. You know the flood-tide always thickens it a bit."

"Yes," said I, "I have seen it pretty muddy even at half-tide."

He said nothing in answer, but seemed rather astonished; and as he now lay just stemming the tide, and I had my clothes off, I jumped in without more ado. Of course when I had my head above water again I turned towards the shore, and my eye naturally sought the bridge, and so utterly astonished was I by what I saw, that I forgot to strike out, and went spluttering under water again, and when I came up made straight for the boat; for I felt that I must ask some questions of my waterman, so bewildering had been the half-sight I had seen from the face of the river with the water hardly out of my eyes; though by this time I was quit of the numbing and dizzy feeling, and was vivid and clear-headed.

As I got in up the high bank I had lowered, and he held out his hand.
to help me, we went drifting speedily up towards Chiswick; but now he caught up the souls and brought her head round again, and said—

"A short shrift, neighbour; but perhaps you find the water cold this morning, after your journey. Shall I put you ashore at once, or would you like to go down to Putney before breakfast?"

He spoke in a way so unlike what I had expected from a Hammersmith waterman, that I stared at him, as I answered, "Please to hold her a little; I want to look about me a bit."

I could see him with my right eye, the waterman, spread on the bed of his boat, and the next morning, the waterman, spread on the bed of his boat, and the next morning, I was less satisfied in its way here than it off Barn Elms; it's jolly everywhere this time in the morning. I'm glad you got up early; it's barely five o'clock yet.

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William Morris.

THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC AND ENGLISH RADICAL REFORMERS.

(Continued from p. 1.)

Time rolled on, and the year 1874 brought with it a presidential election, and great was the excitement during the latter part of the preceding year, as the parties in favour of the two candidates, General Mitre and Doctor Alahin, were both very strong, and lively times were expected. Alahin, however, had the reputation of being supported by the Army and the Government of the Province of Buenos Ayres, if he was not actually governor at the time. I think he had already retired in favour of his more popular friend, Dr. Mitre.

I cannot help recollecting the gracefulness of Goldsmith in his "Letters from a Citizen of the World," as I begin my task of describing the situation in the Argentine Republic in the year of grace 1874. I cannot but imagine the countenance of Chaminas, or some equally candid believer in Republicanism and Universal Suffrage, just arrived from the land of Narcisso, and seeing himself in danger, to enjoy the sight of a "free" people exercising its right of suffrage, in order to choose the chief magistrate who should "proceed over its destinies" for the next six years.

As I say, the bull-cot box was there, guarded by the agents of law-and-order, the gallant policemen of the Partido (district), every man armed with a carbine that would not go off and a big cavalry sword that would, and that on the slightest occasion. An awkward squab, they were paraded in front of the church, and in the porch of that temple was placed the table on which rested the affordable box, and the people were required to purchase tickets of admission to the ballet, or to contribute a certain sum to the charitable institution. I am not aware how the influence of religion was invoked, to give solemnity and safety to this solemn civic ceremony. And yet, O shades of Weng Hoon! I was not aware that none came to deposit their votes in the sacred urn but those who were of one and the same political colour, and that the colour of the Mayor or Juez, and other authorities of the district.

Why was this? Were they not free to come? Certainly they were, but certain little previous incidents had shown them clearly that they were sure to have their thumbs cut off if they voted the wrong way. They were much in the predicament of the free blacks in certain other countries, who are "free" to accept the employer's terms or reject them and starve.

A few days before the election, there had arrived in the town a man well known in the district and in all the country round for the number of murders he had committed. He was one of those unfortunate victims of the last war, who escaped, and who had then mentioned in the many other injustices inflicted on the poor Gaucho. One of those, of whom I am only surprised there were not more, who, tired of insubordination and being their masters, and powerful, and skillful in the use of the long fowors or dagger they use, turned out at war with society in every district. The rural police of that time were not able to cope with them, for fear of the fate of such men as this Juan Moreira, being in a constant state of action, and in the middle of a street or a campo, being in contact with the whole police force of a district, six or seven men, and rout them after killing one or two. The feat was not in the least surprising, for he was always attended, and well mounted, which was of more importance still, while the police were always badly mounted and armed, and with very little desire to risk their lives in an attempt to capture a man with a broadsword and a long fowor. It was at that time also quite usual for the Gaucho to use them in detail, charging them when he chose on the open Pampa, or perhaps, for it must be remembered that, although the Kossuth Ayres is one great flat open plain.

This Juan Moreira was known to have killed several men and one officer of police in the very same district, or Partido of Navarro, and there we find him coming openly to the town one Sunday morning—in quarter of the Mayor; So it was; but then these election times, and it had been the custom at all elections to have the police coach, and so manage that the ball would go on, and it was joyfully accepted. He brought with him a number of men more or less of the same stamp as himself, and they began operations by killing three men of the opposition party in the suburbs, and one old man in the public square, quite near to the Juzgado or Town Hall. This man, though left for dead, was not so, but died a few days after under my care. The Mitre and one of my assistants, who accompanied him on this occasion, had retired, the police came and carried in the body to the Juzgado, and one of the policemen finding the book of Mitre's son on the side walk, ran after him, and restored it to him.

After this the opposite party hit themselves in terror, and the Mayor's party hit all their own way. Three cheers for Universal Suffrage and "free" institutions generally! A few days after this I saw Moreira and some of his companions galloping at full speed round the Plaza, or principal square, and shouting with all the force of their voices: "Death to the Alahines!" I had occasion to see him more closely a little later on.

The government of the province, being a supporter of the opposite party, the Alahan party, sent down a squad of city police to take Moreira, and they arrived one night quite unexpectedly. They were joined on their arrival by a large number of the Alahines, and learning that Moreira was quietly asleep in his room, in company with two policemen of the town, they altogether marched up there at eleven o'clock at night, and surprised him. They did not succeed in taking him, however, and he made his escape and hid in the woods, and the crowd rushing into the house whipped off his poncho, and in a twinkling put out all the lights, and in the darkness and confusion managed to slip out through them all! Not content with this he then charged into the town and stabbed two of the police in the same space where he felt sure of escape. He grievously wounded one of the party with a bullet that smashed his lower jaw, but he himself was hit by a split stone, and lodged in his face, however, and two days afterwards I was requested by a member of the municipality to go and visit him at the house of the commander of the National Guards. I there renewed the painful interview with the wounded man, and he said that he was quite well, but that he was ashamed of his escapade. He was a handsome, powerfully-built man, and bore the necessary operation without a groan.

After all was over, I felt so happy in having taken him, and in the hands of the authorities of the town, who supported him, and in any case he was entitled to have his wounds attended to. I therefore came to the conclusion that it was my duty to attend him, as my colleague did so good in any way.

Such cases as these show plainly what law and authority really are, and how false is the pretense that they are intended to protect the community. While the opposition party made use of Moreira and others, the government party released from the jails all such men as they thought they could rely on to serve them in the same way during the elections—and they do so still.

The upset of the matter was that the opposition party took up arms, headed by their candidate General Mitre, declaring that they had been defrauded of their rights because the government party had done what the opposition had shown they were ready to do, where they had the power, as in Navarro. Then the government called out the National Guards, and the Mitre party did the same where they could. Then was seen the spectacle of the poor Gauchos dragged from their homes to fight, either for or against the government, accorded the political blessings of their masters.

It was a strange and curious sight to see them marching in Navarro. Every man came with his horse and equipments, and he was armed with a long lance and one blade of his sword, and the end of it by way of a lance—that was all.

John Craigie.

(The to be concluded.)

William Lloyd Garrison, the great Abolitionist, has declared himself on the side of the Single-tax and Socialism.

Memorandum of the Public—On the assassination of the lately deceased Mr. S. in this city, the cause of the favor many have held for him, is that he was always in a constant state of action, being in the middle of a street or a campo, being in contact with the whole police force of a district, six or seven men, and rout them after killing one or two. The feat was not in the least surprising, for he was always attended, and well mounted, which was of more importance still, while the police were always badly mounted and armed, and with very little desire to risk their lives in an attempt to capture a man with a broadsword and a long fowor. It was at that time also quite usual for the Gaucho to use them in detail, charging them when he chose on the open Pampa, or perhaps, for it must be remembered that, although the Kossuth Ayres is one great flat open plain.