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NOTES ON MATTERS PARLIAMENTARY.

But as the passing days are with hopes of events to come, hard as the times are now, and troubles as the outlook is, there has seldom passed a month in which there is so little to say about the proceedings of that "republican" body, called Parliament, as according to the views of the worthy persons is the only instrument by means of which the reconstruction of our social order can be carried out. It has as usual manifested its usual brutality and imbecility, and for the most part been doing nothing but trying hard to sit on two stools at once, with apparently little fear of the consequences, which however duly follow in the shape of a more peremptory dismissal, the results of which are nobody's business.

I fairly assume his wish to do all that can be done under the present circumstances. Considering his position, he may be said to admit the existence of hard times for the few, and to be anxious not to say anything offensive to the feelings of the many. But, after all, phrases will not feed folk, and it seems to me he gives them little else. I should like to ask Mr. Chamberlain if he really thinks that useful work (and he clearly aims at that) can be given to the unemployed "without competing with that of other labourers employed?" And also how long such hybrid work as he proposes can go on if the present distress goes on, or only betters a little? It is all after only playing at finding productive or serviceable work for the unemployed. Surely Mr. Chamberlain knows this. To be thinking nothing more exalted than, "After me the Deluge." 

Well, at least he is resigning his place, and his motives for doing so are being much canvassed. One can easily imagine them. Perhaps he thinks that the old order will not be much changed, and that the new order will not. Perhaps with a bit of luck, he will be able to secure that the old order will be re-established, and that the new order will not be much changed. Perhaps he may succeed in doing this; but I doubt if he is the man to succeed. Perhaps he is far enough away from the men who paint Mr. Gladstone's bill will probably be for them. Perhaps he is not far enough away from those arrangements made, the Irish laws are not so much in the electorate, but still existing: that and the English taxpayer will have to pay for it; and Mr. Chamberlain well dread the English taxpayer.

But perhaps, again, he sees that Mr. Gladstone's schemes mean separation simply, in the long run, and that when this is found out, the "great heart of the English people," of which we sometimes hear, will be ready to burst with rather undignified rage, and will serve up those politicians who brought matters to this pass, and Mr. Chamberlain naturally does not want to be served out. Yet it would scarcely answer his purpose to find himself the representative of the stupid prejudices of Englishmen against Irishmen, which is quite as strong among Liberals and Radicals as it is with the other side.

But of course he has a good opportunity for sitting on two stools. If the democratic side and Home Rule win he can say, "How could I consent to buy out the landed titles on their own terms, with all the dangers obviously that would arise?" If the Whig-Republican integrity of the empire will not suit him, he can say, "How could I consent to the injury done to the great Anglo-Saxon race and its future—by admitting that a nation of Cæsars don't belong to that race?" The temptation towards shifting is great; but it might be better to sit and see the whole business for England really is.

"Shall Ireland separate with civil war or without it?" And for Ireland: "Shall we be allowed to deal with the land as we wish?"

WILLIAM MORRIS.

THE PILGRIMS OF HOPE.

X. READY TO DEPART.

I SAID of my friend new-found that at first he saw not my faults; You, he and I and my wife were together there and there;
And as his work increased and my den to a dwelling grew,
He came there often enough, and yet more together we drew.
Then came a change in the man; for a month he kept away,
Then came again and was with us for a fortnight every day,
And seemed himself, which was little his wont with us.
And at first I had no inkling of what constrained him thus;
I might have thought that he faltered, but now and again there came,
When we spoke of the Cæsars and his doing, a flash of his eager flange.
And seemed himself for a while; then the brightness would fade away,
And he gloomed and shrank from my eyes.

Thus passed day after day,
And grievous I grew; and I pondered: till at last one eve we sat

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LESIONS IN SOCIALISM.

XI.—THE LUST FOR SURPLUS-VALUE IN ENGLAND.

We have, following "Das Kapital," taken an example of the shameless devices of the exploiter to obtain unpaid labour from the exploited, from eastern Europe. Now, under the same guidance, let us trace out some of the history of these same devices in England. To understand the terrible and disgraceful history, let us first remind ourselves of the general provisions of that Act of 1850, which is the first step towards the abolition of serfdom.

The regular recurrent crises in our capitalist method of production continue to the last of the capitalist after surplus-labour in degree. His anxiety to prolong the working day becomes at these times more acute. With interrupted production, short time working, less time spent in work, the more of that working time must from the capitalist's point of view be surplus working-time. Hence the worse trade is, the more unscrupulous are the masters. Thus, Horner reports that when in his district 129 factories were closed, 143 were standing still, and all the rest were working very short time, work was not prolonged beyond the legal limits. The same thing occurred habitually during the cotton crisis time of 1861-62.

Masters contentedly and men for the most part (as yet) unconsciously recognize the formation of surplus-value by this surplus (unpaid) labour.

"Let me work my factory 10 minutes a day over the legal time," says one manufacturer; "and you will put £1000 a-year into my pocket." And the men and children call one another "full-timers" and "hastlers," as their hours are the 13 or only 6 a day. Unconsciously, they in the very names, recognize that they are to the capitalist and under our modern system of production, nothing but personal labour.

Press of other matter in the "Commonwealth" this month makes this article shorter than usual. I am the more content with its brevity, as the next number of the journal will be the first of the weekly series, and the detailed history of the cruel exploitation of English workers can well begin in our issue of May.

Act of 1850 (legalised limits) Monday to Friday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. of working day 1 Saturday 6 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Meal times ... 1½ hour, breakfast; 1 hour, dinner.

Nibbling and cribbing ... Encroachment on meal-times at both ends. Beginning earlier, leaving off later than legal times.

Full-timers, half-timers ... The names for those whose working-day is respectively 12 and 6 hours. The phrases embody the idea of the worker as a personified labour.

EDWARD AVBING.

THE IMBECILITY OF WHOLESALE THRIFT.

Perhaps the keenest specimen of "the most perfect illustration of "insult added to injury," is now being perpetrated by certain of our bourgeois friends. The reason for the present depression in trade, for thousands of working men being absolutely without the means of subsistence, for young girls taking to the streets in shoals—so numerous indeed, that even here competition has asserted its dread supremacy, and a woman's person is so cheap as to be barely worth the selling—for all this misery, this starvation, this prostitution is the excessiveness of the working classes! In other words, the British workman should no longer be content with living on nothing, but should curtail his necessities, so that he may live on something less than nothing.

Such a theory propounded in an epoch of universal self-denial and hideous privation, might be expected to have been promptly laughed out of countenance from the very source, the