

that idea at once. Socialism is in its infancy as a cause. Socialism is not popular. The Socialists are few in number. Twenty years hence all this will be changed, and then the dailies will discover that early Socialists, though crude thinkers, were useful in preparing the public mind for the great utterances of the press. In fact, we are preparing the ground for the harvest which other men shall reap. So mote it be.

The Pope calls the pioneers of Socialism, "crafty agitators." That word crafty implies that these "agitators" are seeking their own ends. I know many Socialists, and many Socialistic leaders. I know none who can make profit of it. *Most* of the leaders, such as Ruskin, Morris, Hyndman, Carpenter, Shaw, De Mattos, Annie Besant, and Bland, would lose in money and position were Socialism adopted now.

We Socialists don't complain about these things, but we respectfully submit the evidence to the jury, and ask for a verdict of acquittal on the charge of "Battening." We claim that we give our time and strength to the poor, and that we get but little in return but suspicion, and envy, and slander. God bless the poor, say I, and pity them. They are hard task-masters, and as thankless as they are foolish, but they cannot help it, poor creatures, and we hope to do them good.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LABOUR REPRESENTATION.

The practice of modern Parliaments, with reporters sitting among them, and twenty-seven millions, mostly fools, listening to them, fills me with amazement.—*Carlyle*.

Being a practical man, John, you will naturally say to me that having told you what I believe to be the true solution of the Social Problem, I ought to show some plan for working that solution out.

I think that the best way to realise Socialism is—to make Socialists. I have always maintained that if we can once get the people to understand how much they are wronged we may safely leave the remedy in their own hands. My work is to teach Socialism, to get recruits for the Socialist Army. I am not a general, but a recruiting

sergeant. The most useful thing you can do is to join the recruiting staff yourself, and enlist as many volunteers as possible. Give us a Socialistic people, and Socialism will accomplish itself.

However, I may as well say a few words on the subject of Labour representation. The old struggles have been for political emancipation. The coming struggle will be for industrial emancipation. We want England for the English. We want the fruits of labour for those who produce them. This issue is not an issue between Liberals and Tories, it is an issue between Labourers and Capitalists. Neither of the Political Parties is of any use to the workers, because both the Political Parties are paid, officered and led by Capitalists whose interests are opposed to the interests of the workers. The Socialist laughs at the pretended friendship of Liberal and Tory leaders for the workers. These Party Politicians do not in the least understand what the rights, the interests, or the desires of the workers are; if they did understand they would oppose them implacably. The demand of the Socialist is a demand for the nationalisation of the land and all other instruments of production and distribution. The Party leaders will not hear of such a thing. If you want to get an idea how utterly destitute of sympathy with Labour the present House of Commons is, just read the reports of the speeches made on the occasion when Keir Hardie opposed the vote of congratulation on the Royal marriage, or when he and other Labour members raised the question of the employment of troops at Hull; or notice the attitude of the Party Press towards Socialism, Trade Unionism, Independent Labour Candidates, and the leaders of strikes. It is a very common thing to hear a Party Leader deprecate the increase of "class representation." What does that mean? It means Labour representation. But the "class" concerned in Labour representation is the working class, a "class" of some twenty-seven millions of people. Observe the calm effrontery of this sneer at "class representation." The twenty-seven millions of workers are not represented by more than a dozen members. The other classes—the landlords, the capitalists, the military, the law, the brewers, and idle gentlemen—are represented by something like six

hundred and fifty members. This is class representation with a vengeance.

And, mind you, this disproportion exists not only in Parliament, but in all county and municipal institutions. How many working men are there on the County Councils, the Boards of Guardians, the School Boards, and the Town Councils?

The Capitalists, and their hangers-on, not only make the laws—they administer them. Is it any wonder, then, that laws are made and administered in the interests of the Capitalist? And does it not seem reasonable to suppose that if the laws were made and administered by workers, they would be made and administered to the advantage of Labour?

Well, my advice to you working men is to return working men representatives, with definite and imperative instructions, to Parliament and to all other governing bodies.

Some of the old Trade Unionists will tell you that there is no need for Parliamentary interference in Labour matters. The Socialist does not ask for "Parliamentary interference," he asks for Government by the people and for the people.

The older unionists think that Trade Unionism is strong enough in itself to secure the rights of the worker. This is a great mistake. The rights of the worker are the whole of the produce of his labour. Trade Unionism not only cannot secure that, but has never even tried to secure that. The most that Trade Unionism has secured, or can ever hope to secure for the workers, is a comfortable subsistence wage. They have not always secured even that much, and, when they have secured it, the cost has been serious. For the great weapon of Unionism is a strike, and a strike is at best a bitter, a painful, and a costly thing.

Do not think that I am opposed to Trade Unionism. It is a good thing; it has long been the only defence of the workers against robbery and oppression; were it not for the Trade Unionism of the past and of the present, the condition of the British industrial classes would be one of abject slavery. But Trade Unionism, although some defence, is not sufficient defence.

You must remember, also, that the employers have copied the methods of Trade Unionism. They also have organised and united, and in the future strikes will be more terrible

and more costly than ever. The Capitalist is the stronger. He holds the better strategic position. He can always outlast the worker, for the worker has to starve and see his children starve, and the Capitalist never gets to that pass. Besides, capital is more mobile than labour. A stroke of the pen will divert wealth and trade from one end of the country to the other; but the workers cannot move their forces so readily.

One difference between Socialism and Trade Unionism is that whereas the Unions can only marshal and arm the workers for a desperate trial of endurance, Socialism can get rid of the Capitalist altogether. The former helps you to resist the enemy, the latter destroys him.

I suggest to you, John, that you should join a Socialist Society and help to get others to join, and that you should send Socialist workers to sit upon all representative bodies.

The Socialist tells you that you are men, with men's rights, and with men's capacities for all that is good and great—and you hoot him and call him a liar and a fool.

The Politician despises you, declares that all your sufferings are due to your own vices, that you are incapable of managing your own affairs, and that if you were entrusted with freedom and the use of the wealth you create you would degenerate into a lawless mob of drunken loafers, and you cheer him until you are hoarse.

The Politician tells you that *his* party is the people's party, and that *he* is the man to defend your interests, and in spite of all you know of his conduct in the past you believe him.

The Socialist begs you to form a party of your own, and to do your work yourself, and you write him down a knave.

To be a Trade Unionist and fight for your class during a strike, and to be a Tory or a Liberal and fight against your class at an election is folly. During a strike there are no Tories or Liberals amongst the strikers; they are all workers. At election times there are no workers; only Liberals and Tories.

During an election there are Tory and Liberal Capitalists, and all of them are friends of the workers. During a strike there are no Tories and no Liberals amongst the employers. They are all Capitalists and enemies of the workers. Is there any logic in you, John Smith? Is there any perception in you? Is there any *sense* in you?

You never elect an employer as president of a Trades Council; or as chairman of a Trade Union Congress; or as member of a Trade Union. You never ask an employer to lead you during a strike. But at election times, when you ought to stand by your class, the whole body of Trade Union workers turn into black-legs, and fight for the Capitalist and against the workers.

I know that many of these Party Politicians are very plausible men, and that they protest very eloquently that their party really means to do well for the workers. But to those protests there is one unanswerable reply. Even if these men are as honest and as zealous as they pretend to be, I suppose you are not gullible enough to believe that they will do your work as well as you can do it yourselves.

I say to you then, once more, John Smith, that the most practical thing you can do is to erase the words Liberal and Tory from your vocabulary, write Socialist in the place and resolve that henceforward you will elect only Labour Representatives, and *see that they do their duty.*

CHAPTER XXVII.

IS IT NOTHING TO YOU?

If you fail in your duty to men, how can you serve spirits?
He who renovates the people reaches the borders of extreme virtue.
To know what is just, and not to practise it, is cowardice.

—*Confucius.*

Gold is worth but gold: love's worth love.—*Swinburne.*

Oh my brother, if you only knew

What to me in these things is understood,

As it seems to me it would seem to you,

What was good for the Cause was surely good.

—*Francis Adams.*

When I began these letters, Mr. Smith, I promised to put the case for Socialism before you as clearly and as plainly as I could, asking you in return to render a verdict in accordance with the evidence.

I have now done the work as well as I could under the circumstances; and I leave the matter in your hands.

“Merrie England” is not as lucid, nor as strong, nor as complete as I hoped to make it, but it may serve to suggest the wisdom of wider studies.

A good work of this kind has long been needed. I have not had time, nor health, nor opportunity to do it