

SOCIALISM IN ENGLAND

Discussed by the Leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party.

TRUE EASTERN QUESTION FOR ENGLAND

A Brilliant Plan for Larger Privileges for the Laboring Classes—The Present Condition of the Poor People of London.

Copyrighted 1911 by the Irving Syndicate. "We are all socialists now," Sir William Harcourt said, or at all events is reported to have said the other day. Very likely he did say it. The declaration describes fairly well a remarkable change in public feeling. Of course it will not be supposed that Sir William Harcourt meant to say that here in England we are all in favor of the theory that property is robbery, or that there ought to be a general redistribution of goods, or that the capital should be divided among the working men, or even that the land should be nationalized. Sir William Harcourt is a man who understands very well what he is talking about, and who has a quick faculty to apprehend and appreciate the gradual changes, the advances or reactions in English public opinion. He is one of the very ablest public men in England, and he has been often accused of inconsistency and even of mere self-seeking because he was privileged to see much sooner than others of his class when an old political or social creed was played out, and when a faith adapted to the altered condition of human affairs must come into existence. I can quite understand why he said that we are all socialists now. We are all, or nearly all of us, willing to accept the fundamental principle of what seems to me the true creed of socialism, that the government or state, however you define either, is bound to take a direct and active interest in the well-being of the citizens.

Edmund Burke laid down the famous doctrine that the whole business of government and of legislation is to divide twelve honest men are got into every jury box. That is to say that the whole business of the state is to see that its citizens are protected by honest legislation and by honest men to administer it. Now, I have an enthusiastic admiration for Edmund Burke. I am convinced that he was one of the greatest of all thinkers that ever lived. But, although he was said to see everything and to foresee everything, he certainly did not foresee far enough when he thus defined the duty of the state. The growing socialism of England, to which Sir William Harcourt must have been alluding, was the growth of that public opinion which is willing to admit that the state has much more to do for the citizen than merely to make it sure that he shall have justice awarded to him in the civil or the criminal courts. My first intimate acquaintance with English politics was formed during the reign of what was called the Manchester school. The faith of the Manchester school was in free competition. Abolish all legislation which interferes with free competition—and trust to human energy and human nature and the beneficence of the market for all the rest. The Manchester school accomplished some great successes. It abolished numbers of legislative restrictions that favored one class, or that was called "one interest," at the expense of another. Its work was decidedly a work of advancement. But its dogma was all too narrow, and it was too fanciful. Its main belief was that free trade with foreign nations and free competition at home would remove the most of the barriers that stood in the way of human progress. Some of the enthusiasts of the school were at one time for having the postal service itself left open by competition to private contract.

GRIEVANCES AND WRONGS OF LABOR. Then came an inevitable reaction which the Manchester school had itself directly helped to bring about by the extension of the political franchise, and the extension of the franchise gave power to the working class. The workingmen soon made it known that they had grievances and wrongs which could not be left to the operation of free competition and the widening beneficence of human nature. They insisted that they had grievances and wrongs which only legislation could remove. The first of what I should call the great socialist measures of the English legislature, before workingmen had much share in the franchise, was the factories act carried by the late Lord Shaftesbury in 1844. There had been a previous measure passed by the same philanthropist in 1842, but that act only concerned itself with what related to the working of women and children in mines. The factories act of 1844 was clearly based upon the principle that the state had a right to interfere with what was then erroneously and absurdly called the freedom of contract between employer and employed. On the ground, among other grounds, that it did thus interfere with the freedom of contract and freedom of competition the Manchester school opposed the passing of the factories act. Nobody ever questioned the sincerity and the public spirit of the men who on behalf of the Manchester school opposed that legislation. Nobody could have questioned the motives of men like Cobden and Bright. But Lord Shaftesbury triumphed, and every one now admits that his triumph was a public benefit and a public blessing.

THE TENDENCY TOWARD SOCIALISM IN ENGLAND.

Now, I hold that when a state comes to interfere with freedom of contract, even in the case of women and children only, that state has gone good way along the path of socialism—genuine socialism. Since the passing of the factory acts, England, under whatever government, has been moving farther and farther, faster and faster, along that path. What has become of the principle of contract as between landlord and tenant in Ireland? Tory governments as well as liberal governments have decreed that it is done. I have just said that the phrase "freedom of contract" as it was once used, is erroneous and absurd. Between the English capitalist and the English working man, between the Irish landlord and the Irish tenant, there was in the old day no freedom of contract. There could be none. There is no freedom of contract between a fasting man and a full man. The full man can wait; the hungry man cannot wait. In the older days, the famous romance, "The Count of Monte Cristo," the wicked banker, Danglars, I think was his name, is captured by a brigand chief and held to ransom. Poor Danglars grows very hungry and asks for food. He is told that he can have food, but he must pay for it. He says he is willing to pay for it, and asks what the price of a fowl would be. He is told of some enormous sum—many thousands of francs. He angrily demurs, but he is positively assured that it is all a matter for himself—he need not eat, and if he does not eat he will not have to pay, but if he decides to eat he must pay. Now, that is not by any means an unfair illustration of what used to be called in the old days "freedom of contract." A hungry working man with a wife and children depending upon him applies for employment and is told he can have it if he is willing to work twelve or fourteen hours a day. He has no alternative—such was freedom of contract. Against that principle all the social legislation of modern England has set its face. Only the other day I voted in the division lobby of the House of Commons in favor of the second reading of a measure to limit the working hours of men to eight hours a day. The second reading was carried by a large majority. Parliament has taken upon itself to watch over the housing of workingmen and of the poor in general. There are acts to govern the management of common lodging houses. There are acts to regulate the employment of women and their hours of work in ordinary shops where dressmaking and millinery business are carried on. The air is full of schemes for the establishment of some system of old age pensions. We hear of some sort of universal state life assurance for all people—a principle that, it will be remembered, found great favor in the eyes of Prince Bismarck. We have abandoned the old ways altogether. The man who would at the

PRETENDED TO BE ONE OF THEM.

How a Professional Athlete Won Races at a Farmer's Festival.

BREWSTER, N. J., June 16.—At the games of the Brewster Athletic club the contestants were the young farmers of the neighboring towns. The games were just about to be started, when a tall, smooth-shaven man inquired of the starter if he could take part. He said he worked for a farmer near one of the neighboring towns and he looked the part, wearing blue overalls, a soft hat and appearing quite innocent.

NO REAL POWER BUT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

But then, let it be remembered, that if we have got back, as for the time we certainly have got back, to the principle of paternal government, we have quite passed away from the era when government was in the hands of a despot or of a privileged class. We are now in a very different position. For some time to come a growing interference on the part of the state with the organization of capital and labor. But then by whom is that state interference to be initiated and regulated and controlled? By a house of commons which contains amongst its members the representatives of the laborer as well as of the capitalist, and the employer as well as of the player; of the Scottish crofter as well as of the Scottish laird; of the Irish tenant-farmer as well as of the Irish landlord. We need not feel alarmed about the result of such an union. There is no real legislative power in England but the power of the House of Commons, and the House of Commons is now as nearly as possible a legislative representative of the whole people, all classes, all ranks, all interests; and it will become more strictly and comprehensively so representative as the next few years go on. We have clearly then altogether given up, for the time at least, the doctrine that the state can do nothing to help the poor, to enable the poor to help themselves, to enforce proper systems of labor, to insist that those who work for daily bread shall be enabled to work under decent conditions and with due regard to health—and in fact to assert the right of interfering, for the good of the whole community, between those who employ and those who are employed.

THE TRUE EASTERN QUESTION.

I have said more than once in the House of Commons and at English public meetings that in my solemn conviction the true eastern question for England is the condition of the poor in the east and of London and in the similar regions of all the great provincial cities and towns of these islands. After all, it is just barely possible that the Russians or the Germans or the French, or all three combined, may not attack us. It is also possible, conceivable at least to Englishmen—certainly conceivable to me who am not an Englishman—that even if thus attacked for no apparent reason whatsoever, we might manage to hold our own. But it is absolutely certain that the condition of our poor in our great cities is a source of the most alarming and dangerous danger to the state. I am therefore in favor of English statesmanship turning its special attention to the condition of our poor. If it would give but half the attention to that subject which it has given through generations to foreign policy I think it very likely indeed that some remedy for the evil could be found. Do not tell me that in such matters statesmanship can do nothing. I ask how we know that, and when has statesmanship ever seriously and persistently tried what it could do? I know no better defense of England than a prosperous and a contented people. I remember what the Antiquary, who is the hero of Scott's immortal novel, says to Edie Ochiltree, the chartered beggar who declares that if the rumors of French invasion are true he will fight, old as he is, for the country where he has always lived, and where everybody has been kind to him. "Bravo, bravo, Edie," the Antiquary exclaims. "The country's in little ultimate danger when the beggars are ready to fight for his land." After all, I am quite in accord with the Antiquary. Therefore and for many other reasons I draw comfort and hope from the spread of genuine socialism in England; from the recognition of the fact that the state is bound to take account of the condition of the helpless, and that statesmanship is not limited to a concern with foreign affairs and a pedantic aloofness to the condition of the bulk of the English people. In that sense, as Sir William Harcourt says, we are all socialists. The state, at least in England, has acknowledged that it cannot any longer afford to fold its arms, to look down upon the suffering and wretched struggles of the country's social life, and composedly wait for the survival of the fittest.

LONDON, ENGLAND, MAY 15. JUSTIN McCARTHY.

INDUSTRIAL NOTES.

The finest grade of matches is made of cork pine. Bermuda farms bear three successive crops in one year. Nevada is second in gold production and fourth in silver. The manufactured product of Great Britain amounts to about \$4,100,000,000 a year. The fastest shorthand writer in the world is a young Dublin man, George Bunbury. He can write 250 words in a minute. By an English invention camel's hair cotton plant and chemicals are being substituted for leather in machinery beltting with considerable success. Krupp of Prussia claims as the result of experiments that while only 10 to 15 per cent of heat units are utilized in the modern steam engine, if the coal is powdered to an impalpable powder and exploded in cylinders, after the manner of an ordinary gas engine, 75 to 80 per cent of the heat units may be realized. The new Atlantic cable which is now being laid in sections between Ballinakillings Bay, Ireland, and Cape Hatteras, for the Commercial Cable company, is in many respects a notable piece of work. The cable is about 2,100 miles in length; its conductor contains more than 1,100,000 pounds of copper and is armored with over 10,000,000 pounds of steel wire. Copper must have been one of the earliest metals known, worked and valued in human industry. It ranks second to silver in malleability and ductility, or third as compared with gold, which is the most malleable metal known, and next to iron in tensile strength, and, being an abundant metal, native in many parts of the world, it often lies at or near the surface of the earth. A new steel cantilever bridge is to be built across the gorge at Niagara Falls, just below the cataract. It will be owned by a syndicate of New York capitalists. In form it will be a combination of the arch and cantilever principles, with a span of 1,000 feet, or 200 feet longer than any arched bridge in existence. It will have accommodations for trolley cars, railroad cars and foot passengers. A railroad which the Germans have built in Asia Minor, extending from Ismid, a harbor about sixty miles from the coast, east by south 209 miles to Angora, has as a little wood in it, perhaps, as any in the world. Not only the rails and bridges, but the ties and telegraph poles are of iron, nine-tenths of it furnished by German works, chiefly by Krupp. Probably the largest piece of cut glass ever made in America is on exhibition in New York City. It weighed seventy pounds before it was decorated and just about twenty pounds in the cutting. The piece is a punch bowl eight inches high and twenty-four inches in diameter. The actual cost of production was nearly \$400. In the treasure room of the Maharajah of Baroda is stored a carpet which cost \$100,000. It is only ten by six feet, but is woven from strings of pure pearls, with a center and corner circle of diamonds. It took three years to make it, and was intended as a gift to a Mohammedan beauty.

RECOVERING FROM THE FLOODS.

Fraser River Falling Rapidly and Railroads Re-Establishing Communication.

VANCOUVER, B. C., June 16.—Reports from the interior state that the river is still falling rapidly. At New Westminster the mills are now able to resume operations, although the lower part of the city is not entirely free from water. It is reported that the Fraser made some considerable change in its course. Soundings will have to be carefully taken all along the river. At Chilliwack the water has fallen four feet. Farmers will soon be able to take stock and estimate losses. The freshet has washed away a large amount of land at the mouth of the river. On Tuesday the Fraser river fishery press house took a slide into the river and sailed into the gulf of Georgia. Wednesday morning part of the cannery went, and a large number of cans and salmon boxes were lost. Yesterday the Great Northern received service between South Westminster and Seattle. The Canadian Pacific also dispatched a train yesterday.

HAIL AND LIGHTNING.

Severe Thunderstorms in Chicago—Narrow Escape from Falling Granite.

CHICAGO, June 16.—A severe electrical, rain and hail storm passed over this city yesterday, doing considerable damage. Lightning struck the top of the Teutonic building, which is ten stories high, and knocked a fifty-pound piece of granite from the cornice to the pavement, where it narrowly missed two policemen. The thunder and noise of the falling stone caused several horses to run away. Gottlieb Gotski, a laborer, was instantly killed by lightning and several houses on the west and north sides were struck and damaged.

QUOTING.

III. June 16.—The most destructive hail storm in years passed over this city yesterday afternoon. Hail stones covered the ground several inches deep. Corn, wheat and oats and all kinds of fruits and vegetables are ruined. Many windows were broken.

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The Morse Dry Goods Co. Retiring from Business. You know it—everybody knows it—No one doubts it when once inside the store—Business could not be continued and such prices quoted—You never saw anything like it—Your friends were here this week—Such crowds—Your last chance for bargains—When we are gone nothing will ever be worthy the name of bargain in comparison with our great closing sale.