

So we went, and the street was as dull and as common as aught you could see.

Dull and dirty the room. Just over the chairman's chair  
Was a bust, a Quaker's face with nose cocked up in the air.  
There were commonprints on the wall of the heads of the party fray,  
And Mazzini dark and lean amidst them gone astray.  
Some thirty men we were of the kind that I knew full well,  
Listless, rubbed down to the type of our easy-going hell.  
My heart sank down as I entered, and wearily there I sat  
While the chairman strove to end his maunder of this and of that.  
And partly shy he seemed, and partly indeed ashamed  
Of the grizzled man beside him as his name to us he named;  
He rose, thickset and short, and dressed in shabby blue,  
And even as he began it seemed as though I knew  
The thing he was going to say, though I never heard it before.  
He spoke, were it well, were it ill, as though a message he bore,  
A word that he could not refrain from many a million of men.  
Nor aught seemed the sordid room and the few that were listening then  
Save the hall of the labouring earth and the world which was to be.  
Bitter to many the message, but sweet indeed unto me,  
Of man without a master, and earth without a strife.  
And every soul rejoicing in the sweet and bitter of life:  
Of peace and good-will he told, and I knew that in faith he spake,  
But his words were my very thoughts, and I saw the battle awake,  
And I followed from end to end; and triumph grew in my heart  
As he called on each that heard him to arise and play his part  
In the tale of the new-told gospel, lest as slaves they should live and die

He ceased, and I thought the hearers would rise up with one cry,  
And bid him straight enroll them; but they, they applauded indeed,  
For the man was grown full eager, and had made them hearken and heed.

But they sat and made no sign, and two of the glibber kind  
Stood up to jeer and to carp his fiery words to blind.  
I did not listen to them, but failed not his voice to hear  
When he rose to answer the carpers, striving to make more clear  
That which was clear already; not overwell, I knew  
He answered the sneers and the silence, so hot and eager he grew;  
But my hope full well he answered, and when he called again  
On men to band together lest they live and die in vain,  
In fear lest he should escape me, I rose ere the meeting was done,  
And gave him my name and my faith—and I was the only one.  
He smiled as he heard the jeers, and there was a shake of the hand,  
He spoke like a friend long known; and lo! I was one of the band.

And now the streets seem gay and the high stars glittering bright;  
And for me, I sing amongst them, for my heart is full and light.  
I see the deeds to be done and the day to come on the earth,  
And riches vanished away and sorrow turned to mirth;  
I see the city squalor and the country stupor gone.  
And we a part of it all—we twain no longer alone  
In the days to come of the pleasure, in the days that are of the fight—  
I was born once long ago: I am born again to-night.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

## THE "PALL MALL GAZETTE."

It has more than once been our duty to fall foul of the *Pall Mall Gazette* in this journal. We have attacked it and its editors unsparingly. And we are the more anxious now to say how sincerely we sympathise with them and thank them for their efforts—not without risk in this land of hypocrisy—to make generally known a condition of things almost too hideous for belief. The Socialist League has already, through the resolution of its Council, expressed the feeling of its members on this subject. Still, while I believe that I am speaking for many of my fellow-workers, I think it only fair to say that I alone am responsible for what follows.

The Government was, by the action of certain of its own adherents—the virtuous Mr. Cavendish Bentinck to wit—placed in a very awkward position. By its orders a few helpless men and little boys had been arrested for selling copies of a paper containing certain "revelations"—(of these revelations anon)—with regard to the "morality" of moral England. It was clear that if these men and boys were to be prosecuted for merely selling the paper, those who wrote, edited and published it must be prosecuted too. But this was impossible. It is a *secret de polichinelle* that many "highly respected" and respectable members of our governing classes would be hopelessly compromised if a prosecution were instituted. The *Pall Mall* distinctly announced that, while unwilling to expose individuals or drag certain persons into the matter, its editors would feel bound to do this in the event of a prosecution. Prudence is the better part of valour. Stern necessity forced Sir R. Cross to declare, in answer to Mr. Bentinck's question and amidst cheers from the "gentlemen," who felt evidently relieved by the decision, "that the Government would not prosecute."

So far so good. To recede is to acquit the editors of the *Pall Mall* of the only fault they could have been accused of—and which

would be indeed a serious one—the *invention* from purely prurient and base motives, of the matter published in their paper. Whatever doubts may have existed on this head—and how doubt *could* exist after the facts *officially* made known *four years ago* by the Parliamentary Commission is a mystery—are now set aside. We may take it that the Government and the whole governing classes admit the truth and fidelity of the *Pall Mall* revelations—which "revelations" are only, alas! stale news to those people who have studied the question. I would only here ask what compensation will be awarded the men and boys who were persecuted for selling a paper which the "Government" of the country does not dare to prosecute. Some compensation assuredly is due.

But we Socialists have something more serious to consider than even the wrong done to these few boys and men whom our "bold gendarmes" have "run in." We have to consider the question itself. The Queen, the Marquis of Salisbury, Mr. Gladstone, *e tutti quanti*, have expressed their sympathy and "horror." The question is therefore not only made respectable, but very sure to be shelved like that of the "Bitter Cry." And necessarily. All these people—and some may really be sincere in their horror—do not know how, or do not dare, to go to the bottom of the question. I have not observed that one single journal originally said that the horror was in the facts set forth, not their crude setting, or that the shame and wrong and woe thus laid bare are due to the whole condition of "Society" as it is to-day, and not to a few exceptional cases of immorality.

Then, after the first indignant protest of outraged British respectability, the middle-class press and the classes it represents soon recognised, with the perspicuity peculiar to the *bourgeoisie* of England, that a question which, if taken in hand by the workers themselves may prove dangerous, had better be comfortably killed "by much cherishing" than met by open opposition or downright honest indifference. The matter has, therefore, been "taken up"—taken up that it may be conveniently dropped so soon as the "sensation" shall have died out. And die out it must and will unless the class really concerned—unless the proletariat—take care that it does not.

I have no wish to insinuate that many of the good men and women whom the *Pall Mall* revelations have shocked are consciously helping to suppress "the movement" or aiding in the continuation of the very crimes they wish to prevent. I believe the *Pall Mall* editors and writers are thoroughly sincere. I believe the Earl of Shaftesbury and Mr. Morley are so. I even believe that there are people who can honestly "thank God Almighty" for "permitting to come to light" horrors which any respectable almighty deity would never have allowed to exist. I know many good men and women who are convinced that a new Criminal Act, extending the same penalties to men as to women (a suggestion with which I, too, am heartily in sympathy) and raising the age at which girls are supposed to be able to sell themselves, from 13, as now, to 16, or 18, or 21, would do away with the indescribable crimes and misery in our midst.

But is this so? Does not the very fact that these good people admit that many girls must and will at *some time* sell themselves to wealthy purchasers, demonstrate the rottenness of their whole theory? Does this not at once condemn any scheme of reform they may propose? And let us, for argument's sake, admit a great many improbable things. Let us suppose a Criminal Act has come into effect that embodies all the suggestions (many of which, I repeat, given the conditions of to-day, are no doubt righteous and just) of the new reformers; let us suppose a Royal Commission has actually, after a few thousand sittings, done something, and brought some criminals to book; let us suppose Sir Richard Cross has really left no stone unturned in searching for and punishing the said criminals. Let us suppose this, and that all the various "refuges," "armies" and kindly individuals have done everything they could do. What then? Where should we be? To all intents and purposes, *exactly where we are now*. A few individuals might have been punished, *a few* have been saved. And after? All would be the same for the great mass of the people as before.

So long as this accursed system of capitalistic production holds, a curse alike and a demoralisation alike to all classes, so long *must*—it is no question of individual will—this condition that is just now shocking us all continue also. So long as the producers are the bond-slaves of the capitalist and land-owning classes, so long will these things go on. So long, indeed, as we have two classes face to face, the one literally in a position to buy, and actually buying, the *bodies* of the other, so long will the crimes that necessarily result from such a system continue. The special form of crime just now stirring even the middle-class, is only one result of the whole system. Our lives are unnatural and horrible, and engender sins not due to natural depravity and wickedness but to an artificial and abnormal state of society. We produce not only the victims, the poor helpless girls and

children; we also manufacture the criminal men and women by the conditions in which we place them.

This is no new doctrine to Socialists. They do not need sensational articles to make them realise to what humanity has fallen. The old Communist manifesto of 1848, our own manifesto of 1885, equally declare that under the present unnatural régime we must expect unnatural crimes. With our "property bourgeois marriage we must accept its complement of venal prostitution." This is no new thesis with us, but we may be allowed just at this moment to point out that we Socialists alone, of all parties, declared long since that, to quote the bourgeois press itself, "something must be done." It is only the "something" we differ about.

There are those who accuse us of being, to say the least, "unpractical," because instead of trying "to help where we can" we demand a revolution. I maintain that we Socialists alone are truly practical, because we alone dare to go to the root of the ill. Ask a doctor to cure a patient living under absolutely unhealthy conditions in the midst of pestilential air and unsanitary surroundings. He will tell you you must change these surroundings if you would save the life of the individual. We but apply to many, to all individuals—i.e., to society—what the doctor applies to the one. We say so long as human beings are the slaves they now are—whether they be the slaves of wealth or of poverty—this disease must continue.

And so, instead of trying to do what is impossible, and seeking to make healthy individuals where the whole system is diseased, we say, "do away with this unnatural state of things. Do not foster unnatural crime by unnatural conditions. Live free and healthy lives, and men and women will be free and healthy. Abolish the cause of the disease and the disease will disappear. For why do these poor little children sell themselves? *Because they and their belongings are poor.* They want the money for bread which certain rich individuals, who buy them as they would any other commodity, can give them. And so long as there is a class that must sell its labour-power—and the labour-power of the poor takes many forms—so long must this iniquity continue.

Ere I conclude, there is one special point I must touch on. There are some, even among our friends, who will be shocked that a woman should speak of these matters, and who hold that "womanly custom had left it better unsaid." Against this I protest with all my strength. If this is no woman's question, what is? We may shrink from handling it as the young medical student shrinks from entering the dissecting room, but if we would heal, we have no right to turn aside. While this wrong is being done—and as it is done to one child, to one woman, it is done to all women—we must face it, grapple with it, and vanquish it—not, cowardlike, turn back. It is no pleasant task, truly,—but are the lives of the mass of us pleasant? We, the women, must, above all the rest, bestir ourselves. Us chiefly it concerns, and we must work only with those who can really help us; those who understand that the "salvation" of society means the revolution of society. The old biblical story may serve our turn. We need a deluge—aye! though it were one of blood—to wipe out the sin and wickedness of this society of ours. It is with those who would revolutionise society that our work as women lies.

In conclusion, but a word. I would it might go forth and fill all hearts as mine is full. I say to all men and women who would change this shameful life we lead: Remember always and everywhere what the work before us is. Think, you men, of what, under the present condition of society—which no Act of Parliament can remedy—what your sisters, what the women you love, and would make your wives, what your children may be driven to. And you women, as you hold your little babes in your arms—those little ones, blood of your blood, flesh of your flesh, dearer to you than life itself—think that in a few short years they will have to sell their little pure bodies or starve. Worse than this. Think that you, who now love them so, may fall to this—that you yourselves will sell them, these babes you have brought forth in pain and anguish, as you sell any other of your few possessions—as, perchance, you have had to sell, or will sell, your own selves. Think of this and all it means. And, thinking of it, come and fight with us Socialists against a state of things so utterly hideous.

Men and women, come to us. Work with us. Do not believe those who tell you any political party, or any "reformers" or any special legislation, can do away with crimes that are only the result of our whole system of society to-day. If you would do away with these crimes, you must do away with their cause. Help us. Help us to save not only yourselves, men and women; not only your little children. Help us also to save the very criminals, who now "drain your sweat and drink your blood." Come to us. Join hands with us; and hand in hand, heart to heart with us, labour in this great cause. Never forget that when once the people will there is no gainsaying them. Once you rise "in unvanquishable number," you are many, they—your enemies—"are few."

ELEANOR MARX AVELING.

## THE CONGO.\*

WERE it not for our Socialism—for our conviction that the present, like every previous world-order, must pass away as a tale that is told—a book such as this of Mr. Stanley's would leave upon us a settled melancholy only to be relieved by the hope that astronomical research might before long be in a position to assure us of the absorption of this planet by the sun at an early date. "*Ewige vernichtung nimmt uns auf*," sing the crew of the "Flying Dutchman" in their weariness of the continuous round of a pleasureless and purposeless existence—a cry which the Stanleyised savage will, we imagine, before long be expressing in eloquent Congoese, as he looks back to the time before commerce, Christianity and civilisation had done their dire work—or, shall we say, to the time ere the European trader and missionary had begun to take a kindly interest in him.

"Short as was my view," says Mr. Stanley (Vol. I., p. 130), "of this concourse of bronzed aborigines, I foresaw a brilliant future for Africa, if by any miracle of good fortune I could persuade the dark millions of the interior to cast off their fabrics of grass clothing and don the second-hand costumes made, say, at Whitechapel. See what a ready market lies here for old clothes, etc." That's the style! Brilliant future, old clothes, cheap spirits, last of all, the "factory system!" Mr. Stanley talks of *persuading* "the millions of the interior" to adopt the vile European shoddy which, as he must be well aware, means deterioration of *physique*, if not death, to the savage used to natural conditions. We all know what that *persuading* signifies. There is a *crescendo* in the market-hunters' persuasion which culminates in the roar of Gatlings and the rattle of Schneider rifles. After this, freedom of trade in cheap goods is established, deterioration more or less slow, but none the less sure, succeeds the rougher and readier war-carnage.

The band of harpies, traders and missionaries combined, who have followed in the track of Mr. Stanley's marauding expedition may be estimated by the following extract from the preface to the present volumes:

"Besides the work of the International Association, of which these volumes are the record, the English Baptists have carried the banner of peace up the Congo beyond the equator; and the American Baptists, taking up the work begun by the Livingstone Congo Mission, are urging on the civilising work side by side with their English brethren. London and Church Missionary Societies have planted their Christian flags on Lakes Victoria and Tanganika. The African Lakes Company and the Free Kirk of Scotland are earnestly at work on Lakes Nyassa, and are advancing to Lake Tanganika. Serpa Pinto and Weissman have crossed Africa; Iven and Capello have performed remarkable journeys to the east of Angola. Monsieur de Brazza has given France a West African Empire; Germany has entered the field of colonial enterprise, and has annexed all the territory in South West Africa, between Cape Frio and British colonies in South Africa, the Cameroons territory and a fertile province in East Africa; Italy has annexed territory on the Red Sea; Great Britain has annexed the Niger Delta; and Portugal now possesses 700,000 square miles of African territory."

Thus the plundering goes merrily on. The explorer reconnoitres the ground, the missionary prepares the soil, the trader "works" it. The time is then ripe for protectorates and annexations, followed by the wholesale conversion of the refractory nation, by fire and sword if other means fail, to the gospel of—"old clothes."

The present volume narrates the process of wheedling and hocusing native chiefs in preparation for the "pounce." "The fact of my arrival at Ulundi has become generally known, and various chiefs have sent their boys to me to say I must expect friends and visitors. It is politic to submit to any trifling delay of this kind, for I shall presently have to obtain workmen from them to make the great waggon-way into the interior" (Vol. I., p. 164). The italics in this passage are our own, but it is only one picked out haphazard which illustrates the process above referred to.

Wellnigh every page of the book expresses the hope and faith of the market-hunter's pioneer, that the redemption of Africa by international capitalism draweth nigh. Mr. Stanley of course takes great interest in "Christian missions." But we will do him the justice to say that he can hardly deceive anyone as to the special reasons for his interest in them. Christianity, it is perfectly obvious, is to Mr. Stanley the indispensable handmaid of the great religion of the nineteenth century, commercial enterprise, and for this reason alone is to be respected. It is true he baptises a chief now and again, but there is no serious attempt to disguise the fact that the water of baptism, as received from Mr. Stanley's hands, is a sign that the devoted chief is possessed of the faith that moves "old clothes" rather than mountains. We could hardly fancy Mr. Stanley with an ineffable

\* *The Congo; or, The Founding of a Free State.* By Henry M. Stanley.