

THE OTHER KIND OF MAN

There are some who are conciliated by Conciliation Boards. There are some who, when they hear of Royal Commissions, breathe again—or snore again. There are those who look forward to Compulsory Arbitration Courts as to the islands of the blest. These men do not understand the day that they look upon or the sights that their eyes have seen.

The almost sacramental idea of representation, by which the few may incarnate the many, arose in the Middle Ages, and has done great things for justice and liberty. It has had its real hours of triumph, as when the States General met to renew France's youth like the eagle's; or when all the virtues of the Republic fought and ruled in the figure of Washington. It is not having one of its hours of triumph now. The real democratic unrest at this moment is not an extension of the representative process, but rather a revolt against it. It is no good giving those now in revolt more boards and committees and compulsory regulations. It is against these very things that they are revolting. Men are not only rising against their oppressors, but against their representatives or, as they would say, their misrepresentatives.

The inner and actual spirit of workaday England is coming out not in applause, but in anger, as a god who should come out of his tabernacle to rebuke and confound his priests.

There is a certain kind of man whom we see many times in a day, but whom we do not, in general, bother very much about. He is the kind of man of

whom his wife says that a better husband when he's sober you couldn't have. She sometimes adds that he never is sober; but this is in anger and exaggeration. Really he drinks much less and works much more than the modern legend supposes. But it is quite true that he has not the horror of bodily outbreak, natural to the classes that contain ladies; and it is quite true that he never has that alert and inventive sort of industry natural to the classes from which men can climb into great wealth. He has grown, partly by necessity, but partly also by temper, accustomed to have dirty clothes and dirty hands normally and without discomfort. He regards cleanliness as a kind of separate and special costume; to be put on for great festivals. He has several really curious characteristics, which would attract the eyes of sociologists, if they had any eyes. For instance, his vocabulary is coarse and abusive, in marked contrast to his actual spirit, which is generally patient and civil. He has an odd way of using certain words of really horrible meaning, but using them quite innocently and without the most distant taint of the evils to which they allude. He is rather sentimental; and, like most sentimental people, not devoid of snobbishness. At the same time, he believes the ordinary manly commonplaces of freedom and fraternity as he believes most of the decent traditions of Christian men: he finds it very difficult to act according to them, but this difficulty is not confined to him. He has a strong and individual sense of humour, and not much power of corporate or militant action. He is not a Socialist. Finally, he bears no more resemblance to a Labour Member than he does to a City Alderman or a Die-Hard Duke. This is the Common Labourer of England; and it is he who is on the march at last.

See this man in your mind as you see him in the street, realise that it is his open mind we wish to influence or his empty stomach we wish to cure, and then consider seriously (if you can) the five men, including two of his own alleged oppressors, who were summoned as a Royal Commission to consider his claims when he or his sort went out on strike upon the railways. I knew nothing against, indeed I knew nothing about, any of the gentlemen then summoned, beyond a bare introduction to Mr. Henderson, whom I liked, but whose identity I was in no danger of confusing with that of a railway-porter. I do not think that any old gentleman, however absent-minded, would be likely on arriving at Euston, let us say, to hand his Gladstone-bag to Mr. Henderson or to attempt to reward that politician with twopence. Of the others I can only judge by the facts about their status as set forth in the public Press. The Chairman, Sir David Harrell, appeared to be an ex-official distinguished in (of all things in the world) the Irish Constabulary. I have no earthly reason to doubt that the Chairman meant to be fair; but I am not talking about what men mean to be, but about what they are. The police in Ireland are practically an army of occupation; a man serving in them or directing them is practically a soldier; and, of course, he must do his duty as such. But it seems truly extraordinary to select as one likely to sympathise with the democracy of England a man whose whole business in life it has been to govern against its will the democracy of Ireland. What should we say if Russian strikers were offered the sympathetic arbitration of the head of the Russian Police in Finland or Poland? And if we do not know that the whole civilised world sees

Ireland with Poland as a typical oppressed nation, it is time we did. The Chairman, whatever his personal virtues, must be by instinct and habit akin to the capitalists in the dispute. Two more of the Commissioners actually were the capitalists in the dispute. Then came Mr. Henderson (pushing his trolley and cheerily crying, "By your leave."), and then another less known gentleman who had "corresponded" with the Board of Trade, and had thus gained some strange claim to represent the very poor.

Now people like this might quite possibly produce a rational enough report, and in this or that respect even improve things. Men of that kind are tolerably kind, tolerably patriotic, and tolerably business-like. But if any one supposes that men of that kind can conceivably quiet any real 'quarrel with the Man of the Other Kind, the man whom I first described, it is frantic. The common worker is angry exactly because he has found out that all these boards consist of the same well-dressed Kind of Man, whether they are called Governmental or Capitalist. If any one hopes that he will reconcile the poor, I say, as I said at the beginning, that such a one has not looked on the light of day or dwelt in the land of the living.

But I do not criticise such a Commission except for one most practical and urgent purpose. It will be answered to me that the first Kind of Man of whom I spoke could not really be on boards and committees, as modern England is managed. His dirt, though necessary and honourable, would be offensive: his speech, though rich and figurative, would be almost

incomprehensible. Let us grant, for the moment, that this is so. This Kind of Man, with his sooty hair or sanguinary adjectives, cannot be represented at our committees of arbitration. Therefore, the other Kind of Man, fairly prosperous, fairly plausible, at home at least with the middle class, capable at least of reaching and touching the upper class, he must remain the only Kind of Man for such councils.

Very well. If then, you give at any future time any kind of compulsory powers to such councils to prevent strikes, you will be driving the first Kind of Man to work for a particular master as much as if you drove him with a whip.