

Chapter 45

The Great Oration

The outlook for the approaching winter was--as usual--gloomy in the extreme. One of the leading daily newspapers published an article prophesying a period of severe industrial depression. 'As the warehouses were glutted with the things produced by the working classes, there was no need for them to do any more work--at present; and so they would now have to go and starve until such time as their masters had sold or consumed the things already produced.' Of course, the writer of the article did not put it exactly like that, but that was what it amounted to. This article was quoted by nearly all the other papers, both Liberal and Conservative. The Tory papers--ignoring the fact that all the Protectionist countries were in exactly the same condition, published yards of misleading articles about Tariff Reform. The Liberal papers said Tariff Reform was no remedy. Look at America and Germany--worse than here! Still, the situation was undoubtedly very serious--continued the Liberal papers--and Something would have to be done. They did not say exactly what, because, of course, they did not know; but Something would have to be done--tomorrow. They talked vaguely about Re-afforestation, and Reclaiming of Foreshores, and Sea walls: but of course there was the question of Cost! that was a difficulty. But all the same Something would have to be done. Some Experiments must be tried! Great caution was necessary in dealing with such difficult problems! We must go slow, and if in the meantime a few

thousand children die of starvation, or become 'rickety' or consumptive through lack of proper nutrition it is, of course, very regrettable, but after all they are only working-class children, so it doesn't matter a great deal.

Most of the writers of these Liberal and Tory papers seemed to think that all that was necessary was to find 'Work' for the 'working' class! That was their conception of a civilized nation in the twentieth century! For the majority of the people to work like brutes in order to obtain a 'living wage' for themselves and to create luxuries for a small minority of persons who are too lazy to work at all! And although this was all they thought was necessary, they did not know what to do in order to bring even that much to pass! Winter was returning, bringing in its train the usual crop of horrors, and the Liberal and Tory monopolists of wisdom did not know what to do!

Rushton's had so little work in that nearly all the hands expected that they would be slaughtered the next Saturday after the 'Beano' and there was one man--Jim Smith he was called--who was not allowed to live even till then: he got the sack before breakfast on the Monday morning after the Beano.

This man was about forty-five years old, but very short for his age, being only a little over five feet in height. The other men used to say that Little Jim was not made right, for while his body was big enough for a six-footer, his legs were very short, and the fact that he was rather inclined to be fat added to the oddity of his appearance.

On the Monday morning after the Beano he was painting an upper room in a house where several other men were working, and it was customary for the caddy to shout 'Yo! Ho!' at mealtimes, to let the hands know when it was time to leave off work. At about ten minutes to eight, Jim had squared the part of the work he had been doing--the window--so he decided not to start on the door or the skirting until after breakfast. Whilst he was waiting for the foreman to shout 'Yo! Ho!' his mind reverted to the Beano, and he began to hum the tunes of some of the songs that had been sung. He hummed the tune of 'He's a jolly good fellow', and he could not get the tune out of his mind: it kept buzzing in his head. He wondered what time it was? It could not be very far off eight now, to judge by the amount of work he had done since six o'clock. He had rubbed down and stopped all the woodwork and painted the window. A jolly good two hours' work! He was only getting sixpence-halfpenny an hour and if he hadn't earned a bob he hadn't earned nothing! Anyhow, whether he had done enough for 'em or not he wasn't goin' to do no more before breakfast.

The tune of 'He's a jolly good fellow' was still buzzing in his head; he thrust his hands deep down in his trouser pockets, and began to polka round the room, humming softly:

I won't do no more before breakfast!

I won't do no more before breakfast!

I won't do no more before breakfast!

So 'ip 'ip 'ip 'ooray!

So 'ip 'ip 'ip 'ooray So 'ip 'ip 'ooray!

I won't do no more before breakfast--etc.'

'No! and you won't do but very little after breakfast, here!' shouted Hunter, suddenly entering the room.

'I've bin watchin' of you through the crack of the door for the last 'arf hour; and you've not done a dam' stroke all the time. You make out yer time sheet, and go to the office at nine o'clock and git yer money; we can't afford to pay you for playing the fool.'

Leaving the man dumbfounded and without waiting for a reply, Misery went downstairs and after kicking up a devil of a row with the foreman for the lack of discipline on the job, he instructed him that Smith was not to be permitted to resume work after breakfast. Then he rode away. He had come in so stealthily that no one had known anything of his arrival until they heard him bellowing at Smith.

The latter did not stay to take breakfast but went off at once, and when he was gone the other chaps said it served him bloody well right: he was always singing, he ought to have more sense. You can't do as you like nowadays you know!

Easton--who was working at another job with Crass as his foreman--knew that unless some more work came in he was likely to be one of those who would have to go. As far as he could see it was only a week or two at the most before everything would be finished up. But notwithstanding

the prospect of being out of work so soon he was far happier than he had been for several months past, for he imagined he had discovered the cause of Ruth's strange manner.

This knowledge came to him on the night of the Beano. When he arrived home he found that Ruth had already gone to bed: she had not been well, and it was Mrs Linden's explanation of her illness that led Easton to think that he had discovered the cause of the unhappiness of the last few months. Now that he knew--as he thought--he blamed himself for not having been more considerate and patient with her. At the same time he was at a loss to understand why she had not told him about it herself. The only explanation he could think of was the one suggested by Mrs Linden--that at such times women often behaved strangely. However that might be, he was glad to think he knew the reason of it all, and he resolved that he would be more gentle and forbearing with her.

The place where he was working was practically finished. It was a large house called 'The Refuge', very similar to 'The Cave', and during the last week or two, it had become what they called a 'hospital'. That is, as the other jobs became finished the men were nearly all sent to this one, so that there was quite a large crowd of them there. The inside work was all finished--with the exception of the kitchen, which was used as a mess room, and the scullery, which was the paint shop.

Everybody was working on the job. Poor old Joe Philpot, whose rheumatism had been very bad lately, was doing a very rough job--painting the gable from a long ladder.

But though there were plenty of younger men more suitable for this, Philpot did not care to complain for fear Crass or Misery should think he was not up to his work. At dinner time all the old hands assembled in the kitchen, including Crass, Easton, Harlow, Bundy and Dick Wantley, who still sat on a pail behind his usual moat.

Philpot and Harlow were absent and everybody wondered what had become of them.

Several times during the morning they had been seen whispering together and comparing scraps of paper, and various theories were put forward to account for their disappearance. Most of the men thought they must have heard something good about the probable winner of the Handicap and had gone to put something on. Some others thought that perhaps they had heard of another 'job' about to be started by some other firm and had gone to inquire about it.

'Looks to me as if they'll stand a very good chance of gettin' drowned if they're gone very far,' remarked Easton, referring to the weather. It had been threatening to rain all the morning, and during the last few minutes it had become so dark that Crass lit the gas, so that--as he expressed it--they should be able to see the way to their mouths. Outside, the wind grew more boisterous every moment; the darkness continued to increase, and presently there succeeded a torrential downfall of rain, which beat fiercely against the windows, and poured in torrents down the glass. The men glanced gloomily at each other. No

more work could be done outside that day, and there was nothing left to do inside. As they were paid by the hour, this would mean that they would have to lose half a day's pay.

'If it keeps on like this we won't be able to do no more work, and we won't be able to go home either,' remarked Easton.

'Well, we're all right 'ere, ain't we?' said the man behind the moat; 'there's a nice fire and plenty of heasy chairs. Wot the 'ell more do you want?'

'Yes,' remarked another philosopher. 'If we only had a shove-ha'penny table or a ring board, I reckon we should be able to enjoy ourselves all right.'

Philpot and Harlow were still absent, and the others again fell to wondering where they could be.

'I see old Joe up on 'is ladder only a few minutes before twelve,' remarked Wantley.

Everyone agreed that it was a mystery.

At this moment the two truants returned, looking very important.

Philpot was armed with a hammer and carried a pair of steps, while Harlow bore a large piece of wallpaper which the two of them proceeded

to tack on the wall, much to the amusement of the others, who read the announcement opposite written in charcoal.

Every day at meals since Barrington's unexpected outburst at the Beano dinner, the men had been trying their best to 'kid him on' to make another speech, but so far without success. If anything, he had been even more silent and reserved than before, as if he felt some regret that he had spoken as he had on that occasion. Crass and his disciples attributed Barrington's manner to fear that he was going to get the sack for his trouble and they agreed amongst themselves that it would serve him bloody well right if 'e did get the push.

When they had fixed the poster on the wall, Philpot stood the steps in the corner of the room, with the back part facing outwards, and then, everything being ready for the lecturer, the two sat down in their accustomed places and began to eat their dinners, Harlow remarking that they would have to buck up or they would be too late for the meeting; and the rest of the crowd began to discuss the poster.

'Wot the 'ell does PLO mean?' demanded Bundy, with a puzzled expression.

'Plain Layer On,' answered Philpot modestly.

'Ave you ever 'eard the Professor preach before?' inquired the man on the pail, addressing Bundy.

'Only once, at the Beano,' replied that individual; 'an' that was once

too often!

'Finest speaker I ever 'eard,' said the man on the pail with enthusiasm. 'I wouldn't miss this lecture for anything: this is one of 'is best subjects. I got 'ere about two hours before the doors was opened, so as to be sure to get a seat.'

'Yes, it's a very good subject,' said Crass, with a sneer. 'I believe most of the Labour Members in Parliament is well up in it.'

'And wot about the other members?' demanded Philpot. 'Seems to me as if most of them knows something about it too.'

'The difference is,' said Owen, 'the working classes voluntarily pay to keep the Labour Members, but whether they like it or not, they have to keep the others.'

'The Labour members is sent to the 'Ouse of Commons,' said Harlow, 'and paid their wages to do certain work for the benefit of the working classes, just the same as we're sent 'ere and paid our wages by the Bloke to paint this 'ouse.'

'Yes,' said Crass; 'but if we didn't do the work we're paid to do, we should bloody soon get the sack.'

Imperial Bankquet Hall

'The Refuge'

on Thursday at 12.30 prompt

Professor Barrington

WILL DELIVER A

ORATION

ENTITLED

THE GREAT SECRET, OR
HOW TO LIVE WITHOUT WORK

The Rev. Joe Philpot PLO

(Late absconding secretary of the light refreshment fund)

Will take the chair and anything else
he can lay his hands on.

At The End Of The Lecture

A MEETING WILL BE

ARRANGED

And carried out according to the
Marquis of Queensbury's Rules.

A Collection will be took up
in aid of the cost of printing

'I can't see how we've got to keep the other members,' said Slyme;

'they're mostly rich men, and they live on their own money.'

'Of course,' said Crass. 'And I should like to know where we should be without 'em! Talk about us keepin' them! It seems to me more like it that they keeps us! The likes of us lives on rich people. Where should we be if it wasn't for all the money they spend and the work they 'as done? If the owner of this 'ouse 'adn't 'ad the money to spend to 'ave it done up, most of us would 'ave bin out of work this last six weeks, and starvin', the same as lots of others 'as been.'

'Oh yes, that's right enough,' agreed Bundy. 'Labour is no good without Capital. Before any work can be done there's one thing necessary, and that's money. It would be easy to find work for all the unemployed if the local authorities could only raise the money.'

'Yes; that's quite true,' said Owen. 'And that proves that money is the cause of poverty, because poverty consists in being short of the necessaries of life: the necessaries of life are all produced by labour applied to the raw materials: the raw materials exist in abundance and there are plenty of people able and willing to work; but under present conditions no work can be done without money; and so we have the spectacle of a great army of people compelled to stand idle and starve by the side of the raw materials from which their labour could produce abundance of all the things they need--they are rendered helpless by the power of Money! Those who possess all the money say that the necessaries of life shall not be produced except for their profit.'

'Yes! and you can't alter it,' said Crass, triumphantly. 'It's always been like it, and it always will be like it.'

'Ear! 'Ear!' shouted the man behind the moat. 'There's always been rich and poor in the world, and there always will be.'

Several others expressed their enthusiastic agreement with Crass's opinion, and most of them appeared to be highly delighted to think that the existing state of affairs could never be altered.

'It hasn't always been like it, and it won't always be like it,' said Owen. 'The time will come, and it's not very far distant, when the necessaries of life will be produced for use and not for profit. The time is coming when it will no longer be possible for a few selfish people to condemn thousands of men and women and little children to live in misery and die of want.'

'Ah well, it won't be in your time, or mine either,' said Crass gleefully, and most of the others laughed with imbecile satisfaction.

'I've 'eard a 'ell of a lot about this 'ere Socialism,' remarked the man behind the moat, 'but up to now I've never met nobody wot could tell you plainly exactly wot it is.'

'Yes; that's what I should like to know too,' said Easton.

'Socialism mean "What's yours is mine, and what's mine's me own,"'

observed Bundy, and during the laughter that greeted this definition Slyme was heard to say that Socialism meant Materialism, Atheism and Free Love, and if it were ever to come about it would degrade men and women to the level of brute beasts. Harlow said Socialism was a beautiful ideal, which he for one would be very glad to see realized, and he was afraid it was altogether too good to be practical, because human nature is too mean and selfish. Sawkins said that Socialism was a lot of bloody rot, and Crass expressed the opinion--which he had culled from the delectable columns of the Obscurer--that it meant robbing the industries for the benefit of the idle and thriftless.

Philpot had by this time finished his bread and cheese, and, having taken a final draught of tea, he rose to his feet, and crossing over to the corner of the room, ascended the pulpit, being immediately greeted with a tremendous outburst of hooting, howling and boing, which he smilingly acknowledged by removing his cap from his bald head and bowing repeatedly. When the storm of shrieks, yells, groans and catcalls had in some degree subsided, and Philpot was able to make himself heard, he addressed the meeting as follows:

'Gentlemen: First of all I beg to thank you very sincerely for the magnificent and cordial reception you have given me on this occasion, and I shall try to deserve your good opinion by opening the meeting as briefly as possible.

'Putting all jokes aside, I think we're all agreed about one thing, and that is, that there's plenty of room for improvement in things in general. (Hear, hear.) As our other lecturer, Professor Owen, pointed out in one of 'is lectures and as most of you 'ave read in the newspapers, although British trade was never so good before as it is now, there was never so much misery and poverty, and so many people out of work, and so many small shopkeepers goin' up the spout as there is at this partickiler time. Now, some people tells us as the way to put everything right is to 'ave Free Trade and plenty of cheap food. Well, we've got them all now, but the misery seems to go on all around us all the same. Then there's other people tells us as the 'Friscal Policy' is the thing to put everything right. ("Hear, hear" from Crass and several others.) And then there's another lot that ses that Socialism is the only remedy. Well, we all know pretty well wot Free Trade and Protection means, but most of us don't know exactly what Socialism means; and I say as it's the dooty of every man to try and find out which is the right thing to vote for, and when 'e's found it out, to do wot 'e can to 'elp to bring it about. And that's the reason we've gorn to the enormous expense of engaging Professor Barrington to come 'ere this afternoon and tell us exactly what Socialism is.

"As I 'ope you're all just as anxious to 'ear it as I am myself, I will not stand between you and the lecturer no longer, but will now call upon 'im to address you.'

Philpot was loudly applauded as he descended from the pulpit, and in response to the clamorous demands of the crowd, Barrington, who in the

meantime had yielded to Owen's entreaties that he would avail himself of this opportunity of proclaiming the glad tidings of the good time that is to be, got up on the steps in his turn.

Harlow, desiring that everything should be done decently and in order, had meantime arranged in front of the pulpit a carpenter's sawing stool, and an empty pail with a small piece of board laid across it, to serve as a seat and a table for the chairman. Over the table he draped a large red handkerchief. At the right he placed a plumber's large hammer; at the left, a battered and much-chipped jam-jar, full of tea. Philpot having taken his seat on the pail at this table and announced his intention of bashing out with the hammer the brains of any individual who ventured to disturb the meeting, Barrington commenced:

'Mr Chairman and Gentlemen. For the sake of clearness, and in order to avoid confusing one subject with another, I have decided to divide the oration into two parts. First, I will try to explain as well as I am able what Socialism is. I will try to describe to you the plan or system upon which the Co-operative Commonwealth of the future will be organized; and, secondly, I will try to tell you how it can be brought about. But before proceeding with the first part of the subject, I would like to refer very slightly to the widespread delusion that Socialism is impossible because it means a complete change from an order of things which has always existed. We constantly hear it said that because there have always been rich and poor in the world, there always must be. I want to point out to you first of all, that it is not true that even in its essential features, the present system has

existed from all time; it is not true that there have always been rich and poor in the world, in the sense that we understand riches and poverty today.

'These statements are lies that have been invented for the purpose of creating in us a feeling of resignation to the evils of our condition. They are lies which have been fostered by those who imagine that it is to their interest that we should be content to see our children condemned to the same poverty and degradation that we have endured ourselves.

I do not propose--because there is not time, although it is really part of my subject--to go back to the beginnings of history, and describe in detail the different systems of social organization which evolved from and superseded each other at different periods, but it is necessary to remind you that the changes that have taken place in the past have been even greater than the change proposed by Socialists today. The change from savagery and cannibalism when men used to devour the captives they took in war--to the beginning of chattel slavery, when the tribes or clans into which mankind were divided--whose social organization was a kind of Communism, all the individuals belonging to the tribe being practically social equals, members of one great family--found it more profitable to keep their captives as slaves than to eat them. The change from the primitive Communism of the tribes, into the more individualistic organization of the nations, and the development of private ownership of the land and slaves and means of subsistence. The change from chattel slavery into Feudalism; and the change from

Feudalism into the earlier form of Capitalism; and the equally great change from what might be called the individualistic capitalism which displaced Feudalism, to the system of Co-operative Capitalism and Wage Slavery of today.'

'I believe you must 'ave swollered a bloody dictionary,' exclaimed the man behind the moat.

'Keep horder,' shouted Philpot, fiercely, striking the table with the hammer, and there were loud shouts of 'Chair' and 'Chuck 'im out,' from several quarters.

When order was restored, the lecturer proceeded:

'So it is not true that practically the suite state of affairs as we have today has always existed. It is not true that anything like the poverty that prevails at present existed at any previous period of the world's history. When the workers were the property of their masters, it was to their owners' interest to see that they were properly clothed and fed; they were not allowed to be idle, and they were not allowed to starve. Under Feudalism also, although there were certain intolerable circumstances, the position of the workers was, economically, infinitely better than it is today. The worker was in subjection to his Lord, but in return his lord had certain responsibilities and duties to perform, and there was a large measure of community of interest between them.

'I do not intend to dwell upon this point at length, but in support of what I have said I will quote as nearly as I can from memory the words of the historian Froude.

"I do not believe," says Mr Froude, "that the condition of the people in Mediaeval Europe was as miserable as is pretended. I do not believe that the distribution of the necessaries of life was as unequal as it is at present. If the tenant lived hard, the lord had little luxury. Earls and countesses breakfasted at five in the morning, on salt beef and herring, a slice of bread and a draught of ale from a blackjack. Lords and servants dined in the same hall and shared the same meal."

'When we arrive at the system that displaced Feudalism, we find that the condition of the workers was better in every way than it is at present. The instruments of production--the primitive machinery and the tools necessary for the creation of wealth--belonged to the skilled workers who used them, and the things they produced were also the property of those who made them.

'In those days a master painter, a master shoemaker, a master saddler, or any other master tradesmen, was really a skilled artisan working on his own account. He usually had one or two apprentices, who were socially his equals, eating at the same table and associating with the other members of his family. It was quite a common occurrence for the apprentice--after he had attained proficiency in his work--to marry his master's daughter and succeed to his master's business. In those days to be a "master" tradesman meant to be master of the trade, not merely

of some underpaid drudges in one's employment. The apprentices were there to master the trade, qualifying themselves to become master workers themselves; not mere sweaters and exploiters of the labour of others, but useful members of society. In those days, because there was no labour-saving machinery the community was dependent for its existence on the productions of hand labour. Consequently the majority of the people were employed in some kind of productive work, and the workers were honoured and respected citizens, living in comfort on the fruits of their labour. They were not rich as we understand wealth now, but they did not starve and they were not regarded with contempt, as are their successors of today.

'The next great change came with the introduction of steam machinery. That power came to the aid of mankind in their struggle for existence, enabling them to create easily and in abundance those things of which they had previously been able to produce only a bare sufficiency. A wonderful power--equalling and surpassing the marvels that were imagined by the writers of fairy tales and Eastern stories--a power so vast--so marvellous, that it is difficult to find words to convey anything like an adequate conception of it.

'We all remember the story, in *The Arabian Nights*, of Aladdin, who in his poverty became possessed of the Wonderful Lamp and--he was poor no longer. He merely had to rub the Lamp--the Genie appeared, and at Aladdin's command he produced an abundance of everything that the youth could ask or dream of. With the discovery of steam machinery, mankind became possessed of a similar power to that imagined by the Eastern

writer. At the command of its masters the Wonderful Lamp of Machinery produces an enormous, overwhelming, stupendous abundance and superfluity of every material thing necessary for human existence and happiness. With less labour than was formerly required to cultivate acres, we can now cultivate miles of land. In response to human industry, aided by science and machinery, the fruitful earth teems with such lavish abundance as was never known or deemed possible before. If you go into the different factories and workshops you will see prodigious quantities of commodities of every kind pouring out of the wonderful machinery, literally like water from a tap.

'One would naturally and reasonably suppose that the discovery or invention of such an aid to human industry would result in increased happiness and comfort for every one; but as you all know, the reverse is the case; and the reason of that extraordinary result, is the reason of all the poverty and unhappiness that we see around us and endure today--it is simply because--the machinery became the property of a comparatively few individuals and private companies, who use it not for the benefit of the community but to create profits for themselves.

'As this labour-saving machinery became more extensively used, the prosperous class of skilled workers gradually disappeared. Some of the wealthier of them became distributors instead of producers of wealth; that is to say, they became shopkeepers, retailing the commodities that were produced for the most part by machinery. But the majority of them in course of time degenerated into a class of mere wage earners, having no property in the machines they used, and no property in the things

they made.

'They sold their labour for so much per hour, and when they could not find any employer to buy it from them, they were reduced to destitution.

'Whilst the unemployed workers were starving and those in employment not much better off, the individuals and private companies who owned the machinery accumulated fortunes; but their profits were diminished and their working expenses increased by what led to the latest great change in the organization of the production of the necessaries of life--the formation of the Limited Companies and the Trusts; the decision of the private companies to combine and co-operate with each other in order to increase their profits and decrease their working expenses. The results of these combines have been--an increase in the quantities of the things produced: a decrease in the number of wage earners employed--and enormously increased profits for the shareholders.

'But it is not only the wage-earning class that is being hurt; for while they are being annihilated by the machinery and the efficient organization of industry by the trusts that control and are beginning to monopolize production, the shopkeeping classes are also being slowly but surely crushed out of existence by the huge companies that are able by the greater magnitude of their operations to buy and sell more cheaply than the small traders.

'The consequence of all this is that the majority of the people are in a condition of more or less abject poverty--living from hand to mouth.

It is an admitted fact that about thirteen millions of our people are always on the verge of starvation. The significant results of this poverty face us on every side. The alarming and persistent increase of insanity. The large number of would-be recruits for the army who have to be rejected because they are physically unfit; and the shameful condition of the children of the poor. More than one-third of the children of the working classes in London have some sort of mental or physical defect; defects in development; defects of eyesight; abnormal nervousness; rickets, and mental dullness. The difference in height and weight and general condition of the children in poor schools and the children of the so-called better classes, constitutes a crime that calls aloud to Heaven for vengeance upon those who are responsible for it.

'It is childish to imagine that any measure of Tariff Reform or Political Reform such as a paltry tax on foreign-made goods or abolishing the House of Lords, or disestablishing the Church--or miserable Old Age Pensions, or a contemptible tax on land, can deal with such a state of affairs as this. They have no House of Lords in America or France, and yet their condition is not materially different from ours. You may be deceived into thinking that such measures as those are great things. You may fight for them and vote for them, but after you have got them you will find that they will make no appreciable improvement in your condition. You will still have to slave and drudge to gain a bare sufficiency of the necessaries of life. You will still have to eat the same kind of food and wear the same kind of clothes and boots as now. Your masters will still have you in their

power to insult and sweat and drive. Your general condition will be just the same as at present because such measures as those are not remedies but red herrings, intended by those who trail them to draw us away from the only remedy, which is to be found only in the Public Ownership of the Machinery, and the National Organization of Industry for the production and distribution of the necessaries of life, not for the profit of a few but for the benefit of all!

'That is the next great change; not merely desirable, but imperatively necessary and inevitable! That is Socialism!

'It is not a wild dream of Superhuman Unselfishness. No one will be asked to sacrifice himself for the benefit of others or to love his neighbours better than himself as is the case under the present system, which demands that the majority shall unselfishly be content to labour and live in wretchedness for the benefit of a few. There is no such principle of Philanthropy in Socialism, which simply means that even as all industries are now owned by shareholders, and organized and directed by committees and officers elected by the shareholders, so shall they in future belong to the State, that is, the whole people--and they shall be organized and directed by committees and officers elected by the community.

'Under existing circumstances the community is exposed to the danger of being invaded and robbed and massacred by some foreign power. Therefore the community has organized and owns and controls an Army and Navy to protect it from that danger. Under existing circumstances the

community is menaced by another equally great danger--the people are mentally and physically degenerating from lack of proper food and clothing. Socialists say that the community should undertake and organize the business of producing and distributing all these things; that the State should be the only employer of labour and should own all the factories, mills, mines, farms, railways, fishing fleets, sheep farms, poultry farms and cattle ranches.

'Under existing circumstances the community is degenerating mentally and physically because the majority cannot afford to have decent houses to live in. Socialists say that the community should take in hand the business of providing proper houses for all its members, that the State should be the only landlord, that all the land and all the houses should belong to the whole people...

'We must do this if we are to keep our old place in the van of human progress. A nation of ignorant, unintelligent, half-starved, broken-spirited degenerates cannot hope to lead humanity in its never-ceasing march onward to the conquest of the future.

Vain, mightiest fleet of iron framed;
Vain the all-shattering guns
Unless proud England keep, untamed,
The stout hearts of her sons.

'All the evils that I have referred to are only symptoms of the one disease that is sapping the moral, mental and physical life of the

nation, and all attempts to cure these symptoms are foredoomed to failure, simply because they are the symptoms and not the disease. All the talk of Temperance, and the attempts to compel temperance, are foredoomed to failure, because drunkenness is a symptom, and not the disease.

'India is a rich productive country. Every year millions of pounds worth of wealth are produced by her people, only to be stolen from them by means of the Money Trick by the capitalist and official class. Her industrious sons and daughters, who are nearly all total abstainers, live in abject poverty, and their misery is not caused by laziness or want of thrift, or by Intemperance. They are poor for the same reason that we are poor--Because we are Robbed.

'The hundreds of thousands of pounds that are yearly wasted in well-meant but useless charity accomplish no lasting good, because while charity soothes the symptoms it ignores the disease, which is--the PRIVATE OWNERSHIP of the means of producing the necessities of life, and the restriction of production, by a few selfish individuals for their own profit. And for that disease there is no other remedy than the one I have told you of--the PUBLIC OWNERSHIP and cultivation of the land, the PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF the mines, railways, canals, ships, factories and all the other means of production, and the establishment of an Industrial Civil Service--a National Army of Industry--for the purpose of producing the necessities, comforts and refinements of life in that abundance which has been made possible by science and machinery--for the use and benefit of THE WHOLE OF THE

PEOPLE.'

'Yes: and where's the money to come from for all this?' shouted Crass, fiercely.

'Hear, hear,' cried the man behind the moat.

'There's no money difficulty about it,' replied Barrington. 'We can easily find all the money we shall need.'

'Of course,' said Slyme, who had been reading the Daily Ananias, 'there's all the money in the Post Office Savings Bank. The Socialists could steal that for a start; and as for the mines and land and factories, they can all be took from the owners by force.'

'There will be no need for force and no need to steal anything from anybody.'

'And there's another thing I objects to,' said Crass. 'And that's all this 'ere talk about hignorance: wot about all the money wots spent every year for edication?'

'You should rather say--"What about all the money that's wasted every year on education?" What can be more brutal and senseless than trying to "educate" a poor little, hungry, ill-clad child? Such so-called "instruction" is like the seed in the parable of the Sower, which fell on stony ground and withered away because it had no depth of earth; and

even in those cases where it does take root and grow, it becomes like the seed that fell among thorns and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it bore no fruit.

'The majority of us forget in a year or two all that we learnt at school because the conditions of our lives are such as to destroy all inclination for culture or refinement. We must see that the children are properly clothed and fed and that they are not made to get up in the middle of the night to go to work for several hours before they go to school. We must make it illegal for any greedy, heartless profit-hunter to hire them and make them labour for several hours in the evening after school, or all day and till nearly midnight on Saturday. We must first see that our children are cared for, as well as the children of savage races, before we can expect a proper return for the money that we spend on education.'

'I don't mind admitting that this 'ere scheme of national ownership and industries is all right if it could only be done,' said Harlow, 'but at present, all the land, railways and factories, belongs to private capitalists; they can't be bought without money, and you say you ain't goin' to take 'em away by force, so I should like to know how the bloody 'ell you are goin' to get 'em?'

'We certainly don't propose to buy them with money, for the simple reason that there is not sufficient money in existence to pay for them.

'If all the gold and silver money in the World were gathered together

into one heap, it would scarcely be sufficient to buy all the private property in England. The people who own all these things now never really paid for them with money--they obtained possession of them by means of the "Money Trick" which Owen explained to us some time ago.'

'They obtained possession of them by usin' their brain,' said Crass.

'Exactly,' replied the lecturer. 'They tell us themselves that that is how they got them away from us; they call their profits the "wages of intelligence". Whilst we have been working, they have been using their intelligence in order to obtain possession of the things we have created. The time has now arrived for us to use our intelligence in order to get back the things they have robbed us of, aid to prevent them from robbing us any more. As for how it is to be done, we might copy the methods that they have found so successful.'

'Oh, then you DO mean to rob them after all,' cried Slyme, triumphantly. 'If it's true that they robbed the workers, and if we're to adopt the same method then we'll be robbers too!'

'When a thief is caught having in his possession the property of others it is not robbery to take the things away from him and to restore them to their rightful owners,' retorted Barrington.

'I can't allow this 'ere disorder to go on no longer,' shouted Philpot, banging the table with the plumber's hammer as several men began talking at the same time.

'There will be plenty of tuneropperty for questions and opposition at the hend of the horation, when the pulpit will be throwed open to anyone as likes to debate the question. I now calls upon the professor to proceed with the second part of the horation: and anyone wot interrupts will get a lick under the ear-'ole with this'--waving the hammer--'and the body will be chucked out of the bloody winder.'

Loud cheers greeted this announcement. It was still raining heavily, so they thought they might as well pass the time listening to Barrington as in any other way.

'A large part of the land may be got back in the same way as it was taken from us. The ancestors of the present holders obtained possession of it by simply passing Acts of Enclosure: the nation should regain possession of those lands by passing Acts of Resumption. And with regard to the other land, the present holders should be allowed to retain possession of it during their lives and then it should revert to the State, to be used for the benefit of all. Britain should belong to the British people, not to a few selfish individuals. As for the railways, they have already been nationalized in some other countries, and what other countries can do we can do also. In New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Japan and some other countries some of the railways are already the property of the State. As for the method by which we can obtain possession of them, the difficulty is not to discover a method, but rather to decide which of many methods we shall adopt. One method would be to simply pass an Act declaring that as it was contrary to the public interest that they

should be owned by private individuals, the railways would henceforth be the property of the nation. All railways servants, managers and officials would continue in their employment; the only difference being that they would now be in the employ of the State. As to the shareholders--'

'They could all be knocked on the 'ead, I suppose,' interrupted Crass.

'Or go to the workhouse,' said Slyme.

'Or to 'ell,' suggested the man behind the moat.

'--The State would continue to pay to the shareholders the same dividends they had received on an average for, say, the previous three years. These payments would be continued to the present shareholders for life, or the payments might be limited to a stated number of years and the shares would be made non-transferable, like the railway tickets of today. As for the factories, shops, and other means of production and distribution, the State must adopt the same methods of doing business as the present owners. I mean that even as the big Trusts and companies are crushing--by competition--the individual workers and small traders, so the State should crush the trusts by competition. It is surely justifiable for the State to do for the benefit of the whole people that which the capitalists are already doing for the profit of a few shareholders. The first step in this direction will be the establishment of Retail Stores for the purpose of supplying all national and municipal employees with the necessaries of life at the

lowest possible prices. At first the Administration will purchase these things from the private manufacturers, in such large quantities that it will be able to obtain them at the very cheapest rate, and as there will be no heavy rents to pay for showy shops, and no advertising expenses, and as the object of the Administration will be not to make profit, but to supply its workmen and officials with goods at the lowest price, they will be able to sell them much cheaper than the profit-making private stores.

'The National Service Retail Stores will be for the benefit of only those in the public service; and gold, silver or copper money will not be accepted in payment for the things sold. At first, all public servants will continue to be paid in metal money, but those who desire it will be paid all or part of their wages in paper money of the same nominal value, which will be accepted in payment for their purchases at the National Stores and at the National Hotels, Restaurants and other places which will be established for the convenience of those in the State service. The money will resemble bank-notes. It will be made of a special very strong paper, and will be of all value, from a penny to a pound.

'As the National Service Stores will sell practically everything that could be obtained elsewhere, and as twenty shillings in paper money will be able to purchase much more at the stores than twenty shillings of metal money would purchase anywhere else, it will not be long before nearly all public servants will prefer to be paid in paper money. As far as paying the salaries and wages of most of its officials and

workmen is concerned, the Administration will not then have any need of metal money. But it will require metal money to pay the private manufacturers who supply the goods sold in the National Stores. But--all these things are made by labour; so in order to avoid having to pay metal money for them, the State will now commence to employ productive labour. All the public land suitable for the purpose will be put into cultivation and State factories will be established for manufacturing food, boots, clothing, furniture and all other necessaries and comforts of life. All those who are out of employment and willing to work, will be given employment on these farms and in these factories. In order that the men employed shall not have to work unpleasantly hard, and that their hours of labour may be as short as possible--at first, say, eight hours per day--and also to make sure that the greatest possible quantity of everything shall be produced, these factories and farms will be equipped with the most up-to-date and efficient labour-saving machinery. The people employed in the farms and factories will be paid with paper money... The commodities they produce will go to replenish the stocks of the National Service Stores, where the workers will be able to purchase with their paper money everything they need.

'As we shall employ the greatest possible number of labour-saving machines, and adopt the most scientific methods in our farms and factories, the quantities of goods we shall be able to produce will be so enormous that we shall be able to pay our workers very high wages--in paper money--and we shall be able to sell our produce so cheaply, that all public servants will be able to enjoy abundance of

everything.

'When the workers who are being exploited and sweated by the private capitalists realize how much worse off they are than the workers in the employ of the State, they will come and ask to be allowed to work for the State, and also, for paper money. That will mean that the State Army of Productive Workers will be continually increasing in numbers. More State factories will be built, more land will be put into cultivation. Men will be given employment making bricks, woodwork, paints, glass, wallpapers and all kinds of building materials and others will be set to work building--on State land--beautiful houses, which will be let to those employed in the service of the State. The rent will be paid with paper money.

'State fishing fleets will be established and the quantities of commodities of all kinds produced will be so great that the State employees and officials will not be able to use it all. With their paper money they will be able to buy enough and more than enough to satisfy all their needs abundantly, but there will still be a great and continuously increasing surplus stock in the possession of the State.

'The Socialist Administration will now acquire or build fleets of steam trading vessels, which will of course be manned and officered by State employees--the same as the Royal Navy is now. These fleets of National trading vessels will carry the surplus stocks I have mentioned, to foreign countries, and will there sell or exchange them for some of the products of those countries, things that we do not produce ourselves.

These things will be brought to England and sold at the National Service Stores, at the lowest possible price, for paper money, to those in the service of the State. This of course will only have the effect of introducing greater variety into the stocks--it will not diminish the surplus: and as there would be no sense in continuing to produce more of these things than necessary, it would then be the duty of the Administration to curtail or restrict production of the necessaries of life. This could be done by reducing the hours of the workers without reducing their wages so as to enable them to continue to purchase as much as before.

'Another way of preventing over production of mere necessaries and comforts will be to employ a large number of workers producing the refinements and pleasures of life, more artistic houses, furniture, pictures, musical instruments and so forth.

'In the centre of every district a large Institute or pleasure house could be erected, containing a magnificently appointed and decorated theatre; Concert Hall, Lecture Hall, Gymnasium, Billiard Rooms, Reading Rooms, Refreshment Rooms, and so on. A detachment of the Industrial Army would be employed as actors, artistes, musicians, singers and entertainers. In fact everyone that could be spared from the most important work of all--that of producing the necessaries of life--would be employed in creating pleasure, culture, and education. All these people--like the other branches of the public service--would be paid with paper money, and with it all of them would be able to purchase abundance of all those things which constitute civilization.

'Meanwhile, as a result of all this, the kind-hearted private employers and capitalists would find that no one would come and work for them to be driven and bullied and sweated for a miserable trifle of metal money that is scarcely enough to purchase sufficient of the necessaries of life to keep body and soul together.

'These kind-hearted capitalists will protest against what they will call the unfair competition of State industry, and some of them may threaten to leave the country and take their capital with them... As most of these persons are too lazy to work, and as we will not need their money, we shall be very glad to see them go. But with regard to their real capital--their factories, farms, mines or machinery--that will be a different matter... To allow these things to remain idle and unproductive would constitute an injury to the community. So a law will be passed, declaring that all land not cultivated by the owner, or any factory shut down for more than a specified time, will be taken possession of by the State and worked for the benefit of the community... Fair compensation will be paid in paper money to the former owners, who will be granted an income or pension of so much a year either for life or for a stated period according to circumstances and the ages of the persons concerned.

'As for the private traders, the wholesale and retail dealers in the things produced by labour, they will be forced by the State competition to close down their shops and warehouses--first, because they will not be able to replenish their stocks; and, secondly, because even if they

were able to do so, they would not be able to sell them. This will throw out of work a great host of people who are at present engaged in useless occupations; the managers and assistants in the shops of which we now see half a dozen of the same sort in a single street; the thousands of men and women who are slaving away their lives producing advertisements, for, in most cases, a miserable pittance of metal money, with which many of them are unable to procure sufficient of the necessaries of life to secure them from starvation.

'The masons, carpenters, painters, glaziers, and all the others engaged in maintaining these unnecessary stores and shops will all be thrown out of employment, but all of them who are willing to work will be welcomed by the State and will be at once employed helping either to produce or distribute the necessaries and comforts of life. They will have to work fewer hours than before... They will not have to work so hard--for there will be no need to drive or bully, because there will be plenty of people to do the work, and most of it will be done by machinery--and with their paper money they will be able to buy abundance of the things they help to produce. The shops and stores where these people were formerly employed will be acquired by the State, which will pay the former owners fair compensation in the same manner as to the factory owners. Some of the buildings will be utilized by the State as National Service Stores, others transformed into factories and others will be pulled down to make room for dwellings, or public buildings... It will be the duty of the Government to build a sufficient number of houses to accommodate the families of all those in its employment, and as a consequence of this

and because of the general disorganization and decay of what is now called "business", all other house property of all kinds will rapidly depreciate in value. The slums and the wretched dwellings now occupied by the working classes--the miserable, uncomfortable, jerry-built "villas" occupied by the lower middle classes and by "business" people, will be left empty and valueless upon the hands of their rack renting landlords, who will very soon voluntarily offer to hand them and the ground they stand upon to the state on the same terms as those accorded to the other property owners, namely--in return for a pension. Some of these people will be content to live in idleness on the income allowed them for life as compensation by the State: others will devote themselves to art or science and some others will offer their services to the community as managers and superintendents, and the State will always be glad to employ all those who are willing to help in the Great Work of production and distribution.

'By this time the nation will be the sole employer of labour, and as no one will be able to procure the necessaries of life without paper money, and as the only way to obtain this will be working, it will mean that every mentally and physically capable person in the community will be helping in the great work of PRODUCTION and DISTRIBUTION. We shall not need as at present, to maintain a police force to protect the property of the idle rich from the starving wretches whom they have robbed. There will be no unemployed and no overlapping of labour, which will be organized and concentrated for the accomplishment of the only rational object--the creation of the things we require... For every one labour-saving machine in use today, we will, if necessary,

employ a thousand machines! and consequently there will be produced such a stupendous, enormous, prodigious, overwhelming abundance of everything that soon the Community will be faced once more with the serious problem of OVER-PRODUCTION.

'To deal with this, it will be necessary to reduce the hours of our workers to four or five hours a day... All young people will be allowed to continue at public schools and universities and will not be required to take any part in the work of the nation until they are twenty-one years of age. At the age of forty-five, everyone will be allowed to retire from the State service on full pay... All these will be able to spend the rest of their days according to their own inclinations; some will settle down quietly at home, and amuse themselves in the same ways as people of wealth and leisure do at the present day--with some hobby, or by taking part in the organization of social functions, such as balls, parties, entertainments, the organization of Public Games and Athletic Tournaments, Races and all kinds of sports.

'Some will prefer to continue in the service of the State. Actors, artists, sculptors, musicians and others will go on working for their own pleasure and honour... Some will devote their leisure to science, art, or literature. Others will prefer to travel on the State steamships to different parts of the world to see for themselves all those things of which most of us have now but a dim and vague conception. The wonders of India and Egypt, the glories of Rome, the artistic treasures of the continent and the sublime scenery of other

lands.

'Thus--for the first time in the history of humanity--the benefits and pleasures conferred upon mankind by science and civilization will be enjoyed equally by all, upon the one condition, that they shall do their share of the work, that is necessary in order to, make all these things possible.

'These are the principles upon which the CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH of the future will be organized. The State in which no one will be distinguished or honoured above his fellows except for Virtue or Talent. Where no man will find his profit in another's loss, and we shall no longer be masters and servants, but brothers, free men, and friends. Where there will be no weary, broken men and women passing their joyless lives in toil and want, and no little children crying because they are hungry or cold.

'A State wherein it will be possible to put into practice the teachings of Him whom so many now pretend to follow. A society which shall have justice and co-operation for its foundation, and International Brotherhood and love for its law.

'Such are the days that shall be! but
What are the deeds of today,
In the days of the years we dwell in,
That wear our lives away?
Why, then, and for what we are waiting?

There are but three words to speak
"We will it," and what is the foreman
but the dream strong wakened and weak?
'Oh, why and for what are we waiting, while
our brothers droop and die?
And on every wind of the heavens, a
wasted life goes by.

'How long shall they reproach us, where
crowd on crowd they dwell
Poor ghosts of the wicked city,
gold crushed, hungry hell?

'Through squalid life they laboured in
sordid grief they died

Those sons of a mighty mother, those
props of England's pride.

They are gone, there is none can undo
it, nor save our souls from the curse,
But many a million cometh, and shall
they be better or worse?

'It is We must answer and hasten and open wide the door,
For the rich man's hurrying terror, and the slow foot hope of
the poor,

Yea, the voiceless wrath of the wretched and their unlearned
discontent,

We must give it voice and wisdom, till the waiting tide be
spent

Come then since all things call us, the living and the dead,
And o'er the weltering tangle a glimmering light is shed.'

As Barrington descended from the Pulpit and walked back to his accustomed seat, a loud shout of applause burst from a few men in the crowd, who stood up and waved their caps and cheered again and again. When order was restored, Philpot rose and addressed the meeting:

'Is there any gentleman wot would like to ask the Speaker a question?'

No one spoke and the Chairman again put the question without obtaining any response, but at length one of the new hands who had been 'taken on' about a week previously to replace another painter who had been sacked for being too slow--stood up and said there was one point that he would like a little more information about. This man had two patches on the seat of his trousers, which were also very much frayed and ragged at the bottoms of the legs: the lining of his coat was all in rags, as were also the bottoms of the sleeves; his boots were old and had been many times mended and patched; the sole of one of them had begun to separate from the upper and he had sewn these parts together with a few stitches of copper wire. He had been out of employment for several weeks and it was evident from the pinched expression of his still haggard face that during that time he had not had sufficient to eat. This man was not a drunkard, neither was he one of those semi-mythical persons who are too lazy to work. He was married and had several children. One of them, a boy of fourteen years old, earned five shillings a week as a light porter at a Grocer's.

Being a householder the man had a vote, but he had never hitherto taken much interest in what he called 'politics'. In his opinion, those matters were not for the likes of him. He believed in leaving such difficult subjects to be dealt with by his betters. In his present unhappy condition he was a walking testimonial to the wisdom and virtue and benevolence of those same 'betters' who have hitherto managed the affairs of the world with results so very satisfactory for themselves.

'I should like to ask the speaker,' he said, 'supposin' all this that 'e talks about is done--what's to become of the King, and the Royal Family, and all the Big Pots?'

"Ear, 'ear,' cried Crass, eagerly--and Ned Dawson and the man behind the moat both said that that was what they would like to know, too.

'I am much more concerned about what is to become of ourselves if these things are not done,' replied Barrington. 'I think we should try to cultivate a little more respect of our own families and to concern ourselves a little less about "Royal" Families. I fail to see any reason why we should worry ourselves about those people; they're all right--they have all they need, and as far as I am aware, nobody wishes to harm them and they are well able to look after themselves. They will fare the same as the other rich people.'

'I should like to ask,' said Harlow, 'wot's to become of all the gold and silver and copper money? Wouldn't it be of no use at all?'

'It would be of far more use under Socialism than it is at present. The State would of course become possessed of a large quantity of it in the early stages of the development of the Socialist system, because--at first--while the State would be paying all its officers and productive workers in paper, the rest of the community--those not in State employ--would be paying their taxes in gold as at present. All travellers on the State railways--other than State employees--would pay their fares in metal money, and gold and silver would pour into the State Treasury from many other sources. The State would receive gold and silver and--for the most part--pay out paper. By the time the system of State employment was fully established, gold and silver would only be of value as metal and the State would purchase it from whoever possessed and wished to sell it--at so much per pound as raw material: instead of hiding it away in the vaults of banks, or locking it up in iron safes, we shall make use of it. Some of the gold will be manufactured into articles of jewellery, to be sold for paper money and worn by the sweethearts and wives and daughters of the workers; some of it will be beaten out into gold leaf to be used in the decoration of the houses of the citizens and of public buildings. As for the silver, it will be made into various articles of utility for domestic use. The workers will not then, as now, have to eat their food with poisonous lead or brass spoons and forks, we shall have these things of silver and if there is not enough silver we shall probably have a non-poisonous alloy of that metal.'

'As far as I can make out,' said Harlow, 'the paper money will be just

as valuable as gold and silver is now. Well, wot's to prevent artful dodgers like old Misery and Rushton saving it up and buying and selling things with it, and so livin' without work?'

'Of course,' said Crass, scornfully. 'It would never do!'

'That's a very simple matter; any man who lives without doing any useful work is living on the labour of others, he is robbing others of part of the result of their labour. The object of Socialism is to stop this robbery, to make it impossible. So no one will be able to hoard up or accumulate the paper money because it will be dated, and will become worthless if it is not spent within a certain time after its issue. As for buying and selling for profit--from whom would they buy? And to whom would they sell?'

'Well, they might buy some of the things the workers didn't want, for less than the workers paid for them, and then they could sell 'em again.'

'They'd have to sell them for less than the price charged at the National Stores, and if you think about it a little you'll see that it would not be very profitable. It would be with the object of preventing any attempts at private trading that the Administration would refuse to pay compensation to private owners in a lump sum. All such compensations would be paid, as I said, in the form of a pension of so much per year.'

'Another very effective way to prevent private trading would be to make it a criminal offence against the well-being of the community. At present many forms of business are illegal unless you take out a licence; under Socialism no one would be allowed to trade without a licence, and no licences would be issued.'

'Wouldn't a man be allowed to save up his money if he wanted to, demanded Slyme with indignation.

'There will be nothing to prevent a man going without some of the things he might have if he is foolish enough to do so, but he would never be able to save up enough to avoid doing his share of useful service. Besides, what need would there be for anyone to save? One's old age would be provided for. No one could ever be out of employment. If one was ill the State hospitals and Medical Service would be free. As for one's children, they would attend the State Free Schools and Colleges and when of age they would enter the State Service, their futures provided for. Can you tell us why anyone would need or wish to save?'

Slyme couldn't.

'Are there any more questions?' demanded Philpot.

'While we are speaking of money,' added Barrington, 'I should like to remind you that even under the present system there are many things which cost money to maintain, that we enjoy without having to pay for

directly. The public roads and pavements cost money to make and maintain and light. So do the parks, museums and bridges. But they are free to all. Under a Socialist Administration this principle will be extended--in addition to the free services we enjoy now we shall then maintain the trains and railways for the use of the public, free. And as time goes on, this method of doing business will be adopted in many other directions.'

'I've read somewhere,' said Harlow, 'that whenever a Government in any country has started issuing paper money it has always led to bankruptcy. How do you know that the same thing would not happen under a Socialist Administration?'

'Ear, 'ear,' said Crass. 'I was just goin' to say the same thing.'

'If the Government of a country began to issue large amounts of paper money under the present system,' Barrington replied, 'it would inevitably lead to bankruptcy, for the simple reason that paper money under the present system--bank-notes, bank drafts, postal orders, cheques or any other form--is merely a printed promise to pay the amount--in gold or silver--on demand or at a certain date. Under the present system if a Government issues more paper money than it possesses gold and silver to redeem, it is of course bankrupt. But the paper money that will be issued under a Socialist Administration will not be a promise to pay in gold or silver on demand or at any time. It will be a promise to supply commodities to the amount specified on the note, and as there could be no dearth of those things there could be no

possibility of bankruptcy.'

'I should like to know who's goin' to appoint the hofficers of this 'ere hindustrial harmy,' said the man on the pail. 'We don't want to be bullied and chived and chased about by a lot of sergeants and corporals like a lot of soldiers, you know.'

'Ear, 'ear,' said Crass. 'You must 'ave some masters. Someone's got to be in charge of the work.'

'We don't have to put up with any bullying or chivying or chasing now, do we?' said Barrington. 'So of course we could not have anything of that sort under Socialism. We could not put up with it at all! Even if it were only for four or five hours a day. Under the present system we have no voice in appointing our masters and overseers and foremen--we have no choice as to what master we shall work under. If our masters do not treat us fairly we have no remedy against them. Under Socialism it will be different; the workers will be part of the community; the officers or managers and foremen will be the servants of the community, and if any one of these men were to abuse his position he could be promptly removed. As for the details of the organization of the Industrial Army, the difficulty is, again, not so much to devise a way, but to decide which of many ways would be the best, and the perfect way will probably be developed only after experiment and experience. The one thing we have to hold fast to is the fundamental principle of State employment or National service. Production for use and not for profit. The national organization of industry under

democratic control. One way of arranging this business would be for the community to elect a Parliament in much the same way as is done at present. The only persons eligible for election to be veterans of the industrial Army, men and women who had put in their twenty-five years of service.

'This Administrative Body would have control of the different State Departments. There would be a Department of Agriculture, a Department of Railways and so on, each with its minister and staff.

'All these Members of Parliament would be the relatives--in some cases the mothers and fathers of those in the Industrial Service, and they would be relied upon to see that the conditions of that service were the best possible.

'As for the different branches of the State Service, they could be organized on somewhat the same lines as the different branches of the Public Service are now--like the Navy, the Post Office and as the State Railways in some other countries, or as are the different branches of the Military Army, with the difference that all promotions will be from the ranks, by examinations, and by merit only. As every recruit will have had the same class of education they will all have absolute equality of opportunity and the men who would attain to positions of authority would be the best men, and not as at present, the worst.'

'How do you make that out?' demanded Crass.

'Under the present system, the men who become masters and employers succeed because they are cunning and selfish, not because they understand or are capable of doing the work out of which they make their money. Most of the employers in the building trade for instance would be incapable of doing any skilled work. Very few of them would be worth their salt as journeymen. The only work they do is to scheme to reap the benefit of the labour of others.

'The men who now become managers and foremen are selected not because of their ability as craftsmen, but because they are good slave-drivers and useful producers of profit for their employers.'

'How are you goin' to prevent the selfish and cunnin', as you call 'em, from gettin' on top THEN as they do now?' said Harlow.

'The fact that all workers will receive the same pay, no matter what class of work they are engaged in, or what their position, will ensure our getting the very best man to do all the higher work and to organize our business.'

Crass laughed: 'What! Everybody to get the same wages?'

'Yes: there will be such an enormous quantity of everything produced, that their wages will enable everyone to purchase abundance of everything they require. Even if some were paid more than others they would not be able to spend it. There would be no need to save it, and as there will be no starving poor, there will be no one to give it away

to. If it were possible to save and accumulate money it would bring into being an idle class, living on their fellows: it would lead to the downfall of our system, and a return to the same anarchy that exists at present. Besides, if higher wages were paid to those engaged in the higher work or occupying positions of authority it would prevent our getting the best men. Unfit persons would try for the positions because of the higher pay. That is what happens now. Under the present system men intrigue for and obtain or are pitchforked into positions for which they have no natural ability at all; the only reason they desire these positions is because of the salaries attached to them. These fellows get the money and the work is done by underpaid subordinates whom the world never hears of. Under Socialism, this money incentive will be done away with, and consequently the only men who will try for these positions will be those who, being naturally fitted for the work, would like to do it. For instance a man who is a born organizer will not refuse to undertake such work because he will not be paid more for it. Such a man will desire to do it and will esteem it a privilege to be allowed to do it. He will revel in it. To think out all the details of some undertaking, to plan and scheme and organize, is not work for a man like that. It is a pleasure. But for a man who has sought and secured such a position, not because he liked the work, but because he liked the salary--such work as this would be unpleasant labour. Under Socialism the unfit man would not apply for that post but would strive after some other for which he was fit and which he would therefore desire and enjoy. There are some men who would rather have charge of and organize and be responsible for work than do it with their hands. There are others who would rather do delicate or

difficult or artistic work, than plain work. A man who is a born artist would rather paint a frieze or a picture or carve a statue than he would do plain work, or take charge of and direct the labour of others. And there are another sort of men who would rather do ordinary plain work than take charge, or attempt higher branches for which they have neither liking or natural talent.

'But there is one thing--a most important point that you seem to entirely lose sight of, and that is, that all these different kinds and classes are equal in one respect--THEY ARE ALL EQUALLY NECESSARY. Each is a necessary and indispensable part of the whole; therefore everyone who has done his full share of necessary work is justly entitled to a full share of the results. The men who put the slates on are just as indispensable as the men who lay the foundations. The work of the men who build the walls and make the doors is just as necessary as the work of the men who decorate the cornice. None of them would be of much use without the architect, and the plans of the architect would come to nothing, his building would be a mere castle in the air, if it were not for the other workers. Each part of the work is equally necessary, useful and indispensable if the building is to be perfected. Some of these men work harder with their brains than with their hands and some work harder with their hands than with their brains, BUT EACH ONE DOES HIS FULL SHARE OF THE WORK. This truth will be recognized and acted upon by those who build up and maintain the fabric of our Co-operative Commonwealth. Every man who does his full share of the useful and necessary work according to his abilities shall have his full share of the total result. Herein will be its great difference from the present

system, under which it is possible for the cunning and selfish ones to take advantage of the simplicity of others and rob them of part of the fruits of their labour. As for those who will be engaged in the higher branches, they will be sufficiently rewarded by being privileged to do the work they are fitted for and enjoy. The only men and women who are capable of good and great work of any kind are those who, being naturally fit for it, love the work for its own sake and not for the money it brings them. Under the present system, many men who have no need of money produce great works, not for gain but for pleasure: their wealth enables them to follow their natural inclinations. Under the present system many men and women capable of great works are prevented from giving expression to their powers by poverty and lack of opportunity: they live in sorrow and die heartbroken, and the community is the loser. These are the men and women who will be our artists, sculptors, architects, engineers and captains of industry.

'Under the present system there are men at the head of affairs whose only object is the accumulation of money. Some of them possess great abilities and the system has practically compelled them to employ those abilities for their own selfish ends to the hurt of the community. Some of them have built up great fortunes out of the sweat and blood and tears of men and women and little children. For those who delight in such work as this, there will be no place in our Co-operative Commonwealth.'

'Is there any more questions?' demanded Philpot.

'Yes,' said Harlow. 'If there won't be no extra pay and if anybody will have all they need for just doing their part of the work, what encouragement will there be for anyone to worry his brains out trying to invent some new machine, or make some new discovery?'

'Well,' said Barrington, 'I think that's covered by the last answer, but if it were found necessary--which is highly improbable--to offer some material reward in addition to the respect, esteem or honour that would be enjoyed by the author of an invention that was a boon to the community, it could be arranged by allowing him to retire before the expiration of his twenty-five years service. The boon he had conferred on the community by the invention, would be considered equivalent to so many years work. But a man like that would not desire to cease working; that sort go on working all their lives, for love. There's Edison for instance. He is one of the very few inventors who have made money out of their work; he is a rich man, but the only use his wealth seems to be to him is to procure himself facilities for going on with his work; his life is a round of what some people would call painful labour: but it is not painful labour to him; it's just pleasure, he works for the love of it. Another way would be to absolve a man of that sort from the necessity of ordinary work, so as to give him a chance to get on with other inventions. It would be to the interests of the community to encourage him in every way and to place materials and facilities at his disposal.

'But you must remember that even under the present system, Honour and Praise are held to be greater than money. How many soldiers would

prefer money to the honour of wearing the intrinsically valueless
Victoria Cross?

'Even now men think less of money than they do of the respect, esteem or honour they are able to procure with it. Many men spend the greater part of their lives striving to accumulate money, and when they have succeeded, they proceed to spend it to obtain the respect of their fellow-men. Some of them spend thousands of pounds for the honour of being able to write "MP" after their names. Others buy titles. Others pay huge sums to gain admission to exclusive circles of society. Others give the money away in charity, or found libraries or universities. The reason they do these things is that they desire to be applauded and honoured by their fellow-men.

'This desire is strongest in the most capable men--the men of genius. Therefore, under Socialism the principal incentive to great work will be the same as now--Honour and Praise. But, under the present system, Honour and Praise can be bought with money, and it does not matter much how the money was obtained.

'Under Socialism it will be different. The Cross of Honour and the Laurel Crown will not be bought and sold for filthy lucre. They will be the supreme rewards of Virtue and of Talent.'

'Anyone else like to be flattened Out?' inquired Philpot.

'What would you do with them what spends all their money in drink?'

asked Slyme.

'I might reasonably ask you, "What's done with them or what you propose to do with them now?" There are many men and women whose lives are so full of toil and sorrow and the misery caused by abject poverty, who are so shut out from all that makes life worth living, that the time they spend in the public house is the only ray of sunshine in their cheerless lives. Their mental and material poverty is so great that they are deprived of and incapable of understanding the intellectual and social pleasures of civilization... Under Socialism there will be no such class as this. Everyone will be educated, and social life and rational pleasure will be within the reach of all. Therefore we do not believe that there will be such a class. Any individuals who abandoned themselves to such a course would be avoided by their fellows; but if they became very degraded, we should still remember that they were our brother men and women, and we should regard them as suffering from a disease inherited from their uncivilized forefathers and try to cure them by placing them under some restraint: in an institute for instance.'

'Another good way to deal with 'em,' said Harlow, 'would be to allow them double pay, so as they could drink themselves to death. We could do without the likes of them.'

'Call the next case,' said Philpot.

'This 'ere abundance that you're always talking about,' said Crass, you

can't be sure that it would be possible to produce all that. You're only assoomin' that it could be done.'

Barrington pointed to the still visible outlines of the 'Hoblong' that Owen had drawn on the wall to illustrate a previous lecture.

'Even under the present silly system of restricted production, with the majority of the population engaged in useless, unproductive, unnecessary work, and large numbers never doing any work at all, there is enough produced to go all round after a fashion. More than enough, for in consequence of what they call "Over-Production", the markets are periodically glutted with commodities of all kinds, and then for a time the factories are closed and production ceases. And yet we can all manage to exist--after a fashion. This proves that if productive industry were organized on the lines advocated by Socialists there could be produced such a prodigious quantity of everything, that everyone could live in plenty and comfort. The problem of how to produce sufficient for all to enjoy abundance is already solved: the problem that then remains is--How to get rid of those whose greed and callous indifference to the sufferings of others, prevents it being done.'

'Yes! and you'll never be able to get rid of 'em, mate,' cried Crass, triumphantly--and the man with the copper wire stitches in his boot said that it couldn't be done.

'Well, we mean to have a good try, anyhow,' said Barrington.

Crass and most of the others tried hard to think of something to say in defence of the existing state of affairs, or against the proposals put forward by the lecturer; but finding nothing, they maintained a sullen and gloomy silence. The man with the copper wire stitches in his boot in particular appeared to be very much upset; perhaps he was afraid that if the things advocated by the speaker ever came to pass he would not have any boots at all. To assume that he had some such thought as this, is the only rational way to account for his hostility, for in his case no change could have been for the worse unless it reduced him to almost absolute nakedness and starvation.

To judge by their unwillingness to consider any proposals to alter the present system, one might have supposed that they were afraid of losing something, instead of having nothing to lose--except their poverty.

It was not till the chairman had made several urgent appeals for more questions that Crass brightened up: a glad smile slowly spread over and illuminated his greasy visage: he had at last thought of a most serious and insurmountable obstacle to the establishment of the Co-operative Commonwealth.

'What,' he demanded, in a loud voice, 'what are you goin' to do, in this 'ere Socialist Republic of yours, with them wot WON'T WORK!'

As Crass flung this bombshell into the Socialist camp, the miserable, ragged-trousered crew around him could scarce forbear a cheer; but the

more intelligent part of the audience only laughed.

'We don't believe that there will be any such people as that,' said Barrington.

'There's plenty of 'em about now, anyway,' sneered Crass.

'You can't change 'uman nature, you know,' cried the man behind the moat, and the one who had the copper wire stitches in his boot laughed scornfully.

'Yes, I know there are plenty such now,' rejoined Barrington. 'It's only what is to be expected, considering that practically all workers live in poverty, and are regarded with contempt. The conditions under which most of the work is done at present are so unpleasant and degrading that everyone refuses to do any unless they are compelled; none of us here, for instance, would continue to work for Rushton if it were not for the fact that we have either to do so or starve; and when we do work we only just earn enough to keep body and soul together. Under the present system everybody who can possibly manage to do so avoids doing any work, the only difference being that some people do their loafing better than others. The aristocracy are too lazy to work, but they seem to get on all right; they have their tenants to work for them. Rushton is too lazy to work, so he has arranged that we and Nimrod shall work instead, and he fares much better than any of us who do work. Then there is another kind of loafers who go about begging and occasionally starving rather than submit to such abominable

conditions as are offered to them. These last are generally not much worse off than we are and they are often better off. At present, people have everything to gain and but little to lose by refusing to work. Under Socialism it would be just the reverse; the conditions of labour would be so pleasant, the hours of obligatory work so few, and the reward so great, that it is absurd to imagine that any one would be so foolish as to incur the contempt of his fellows and make himself a social outcast by refusing to do the small share of work demanded of him by the community of which he was a member.

'As for what we should do to such individuals if there did happen to be some, I can assure you that we would not treat them as you treat them now. We would not dress them up in silk and satin and broadcloth and fine linen: we would not embellish them, as you do, with jewels of gold and jewels of silver and with precious stones; neither should we allow them to fare sumptuously every day. Our method of dealing with them would be quite different from yours. In the Co-operative Commonwealth there will be no place for loafers; whether they call themselves aristocrats or tramps, those who are too lazy to work shall have no share in the things that are produced by the labour of others. Those who do nothing shall have nothing. If any man will not work, neither shall he eat. Under the present system a man who is really too lazy to work may stop you in the street and tell you that he cannot get employment. For all you know, he may be telling the truth, and if you have any feeling and are able, you will help him. But in the Socialist State no one would have such an excuse, because everyone that was willing would be welcome to come and help in the work of producing

wealth and happiness for all, and afterwards he would also be welcome to his full share of the results.'

'Any more complaints?' inquired the chairman, breaking the gloomy silence that followed.

'I don't want anyone to think that I am blaming any of these present-day loafers,' Barrington added. 'The wealthy ones cannot be expected voluntarily to come and work under existing conditions and if they were to do so they would be doing more harm than good--they would be doing some poor wretches out of employment. They are not to be blamed; the people who are to blame are the working classes themselves, who demand and vote for the continuance of the present system. As for the other class of loafers--those at the bottom, the tramps and people of that sort, if they were to become sober and industrious tomorrow, they also would be doing more harm than good to the other workers; it would increase the competition for work. If all the loafers in Mugsborough could suddenly be transformed into decent house painters next week, Nimrod might be able to cut down the wages another penny an hour. I don't wish to speak disrespectfully of these tramps at all. Some of them are such simply because they would rather starve than submit to the degrading conditions that we submit to, they do not see the force of being bullied and chased, and driven about in order to gain semi-starvation and rags. They are able to get those without working; and I sometimes think that they are more worthy of respect and are altogether a nobler type of beings than a lot of broken-spirited wretches like ourselves, who are always at the mercy of our masters,

and always in dread of the sack.'

'Any more questions?' said the chairman.

'Do you mean to say as the time will ever come when the gentry will mix up on equal terms with the likes of us?' demanded the man behind the moat, scornfully.

'Oh, no,' replied the lecturer. 'When we get Socialism there won't be any people like us. Everybody will be civilized.'

The man behind the moat did not seem very satisfied with this answer, and told the others that he could not see anything to laugh at.

'Is there any more questions?' cried Philpot. 'Now is your chance to get some of your own back, but don't hall speak at once.'

'I should like to know who's goin' to do all the dirty work?' said Slyme. 'If everyone is to be allowed to choose 'is own trade, who'd be fool enough to choose to be a scavenger, a sweep, a dustman or a sewer man? nobody wouldn't want to do such jobs as them and everyone would be after the soft jobs.'

'Of course,' cried Crass, eagerly clutching at this last straw. 'The thing sounds all right till you comes to look into it, but it wouldn't never work!'

'It would be very easy to deal with any difficulty of that sort,' replied Barrington, 'if it were found that too many people were desirous of pursuing certain callings, it would be known that the conditions attached to those kinds of work were unfairly easy, as compared with other lines, so the conditions in those trades would be made more severe. A higher degree of skill would be required. If we found that too many persons wished to be doctors, architects, engineers and so forth, we would increase the severity of the examinations. This would scare away all but the most gifted and enthusiastic. We should thus at one stroke reduce the number of applicants and secure the very best men for the work--we should have better doctors, better architects, better engineers than before.

'As regards those disagreeable tasks for which there was a difficulty in obtaining volunteers, we should adopt the opposite means. Suppose that six hours was the general thing; and we found that we could not get any sewer men; we should reduce the hours of labour in that department to four, or if necessary to two, in order to compensate for the disagreeable nature of the work.

'Another way out of such difficulties would be to have a separate division of the Industrial army to do all such work, and to make it obligatory for every man to put in his first year of State service as a member of this corps. There would be no hardship in that. Everyone gets the benefit of such work; there would be no injustice in requiring everyone to share. This would have the effect also of stimulating invention; it would be to everyone's interest to think out means of

doing away with such kinds of work and there is no doubt that most of it will be done by machinery in some way or other. A few years ago the only way to light up the streets of a town was to go round to each separate gas lamp and light each jet, one at a time: now, we press a few buttons and light up the town with electricity. In the future we shall probably be able to press a button and flush the sewers.'

'What about religion?' said Slyme. 'I suppose there won't be no churches nor chapels; we shall all have to be atheists.'

'Everybody will be perfectly free to enjoy their own opinions and to practise any religion they like; but no religion or sect will be maintained by the State. If any congregation or body of people wish to have a building for their own exclusive use as a church or chapel or lecture hall it will be supplied to them by the State on the same terms as those upon which dwelling houses will be supplied; the State will construct the special kind of building and the congregation will have to pay the rent, the amount to be based on the cost of construction, in paper money of course. As far as the embellishment or decoration of such places is concerned, there will of course be nothing to prevent the members of the congregation if they wish from doing any such work as that themselves in their own spare time of which they will have plenty.'

'If everybody's got to do their share of work, where's the minister and clergymen to come from?'

'There are at least three ways out of that difficulty. First, ministers of religion could be drawn from the ranks of the Veterans--men over forty-five years old who had completed their term of State service. You must remember that these will not be worn out wrecks, as too many of the working classes are at that age now. They will have had good food and clothing and good general conditions all their lives; and consequently they will be in the very prime of life. They will be younger than many of us now are at thirty; they will be ideal men for the positions we are speaking of. All well educated in their youth, and all will have had plenty of leisure for self culture during the years of their State service and they will have the additional recommendation that their congregation will not be required to pay anything for their services.

'Another way: If a congregation wished to retain the full-time services of a young man whom they thought specially gifted but who had not completed his term of State service, they could secure him by paying the State for his services; thus the young man would still remain in State employment, he would still continue to receive his pay from the National Treasury, and at the age of forty-five would be entitled to his pension like any other worker, and after that the congregation would not have to pay the State anything.

'A third--and as it seems to me, the most respectable way--would be for the individual in question to act as minister or pastor or lecturer or whatever it was, to the congregation without seeking to get out of doing his share of the State service. The hours of obligatory work

would be so short and the work so light that he would have abundance of leisure to prepare his orations without sponging on his co-religionists.'

"Ear, 'ear!' cried Harlow.

'Of course,' added Barrington, 'it would not only be congregations of Christians who could adopt any of these methods. It is possible that a congregation of agnostics, for instance, might want a separate building or to maintain a lecturer.'

'What the 'ell's an agnostic?' demanded Bundy.

'An agnostic,' said the man behind the moat, 'is a bloke wot don't believe nothing unless 'e see it with 'is own eyes.'

'All these details,' continued the speaker, 'of the organization of affairs and the work of the Co-operative Commonwealth, are things which do not concern us at all. They have merely been suggested by different individuals as showing some ways in which these things could be arranged. The exact methods to be adopted will be decided upon by the opinion of the majority when the work is being done. Meantime, what we have to do is to insist upon the duty of the State to provide productive work for the unemployed, the State feeding of schoolchildren, the nationalization or Socialization of Railways; Land; the Trusts, and all public services that are still in the hands of private companies. If you wish to see these things done, you must

cease from voting for Liberal and Tory sweaters, shareholders of companies, lawyers, aristocrats, and capitalists; and you must fill the House of Commons with Revolutionary Socialists. That is--with men who are in favour of completely changing the present system. And in the day that you do that, you will have solved the poverty "problem". No more tramping the streets begging for a job! No more hungry children at home. No more broken boots and ragged clothes. No more women and children killing themselves with painful labour whilst strong men stand idly by; but joyous work and joyous leisure for all.'

'Is there any more questions?' cried Philpot.

'Is it true,' said Easton, 'that Socialists intend to do away with the Army and Navy?'

'Yes; it is true. Socialists believe in International Brotherhood and peace. Nearly all wars are caused by profit-seeking capitalists, seeking new fields for commercial exploitation, and by aristocrats who make it the means of glorifying themselves in the eyes of the deluded common people. You must remember that Socialism is not only a national, but an international movement and when it is realized, there will be no possibility of war, and we shall no longer need to maintain an army and navy, or to waste a lot of labour building warships or manufacturing arms and ammunition. All those people who are now employed will then be at liberty to assist in the great work of producing the benefits of civilization; creating wealth and knowledge and happiness for themselves and others--Socialism means Peace on earth

and goodwill to all mankind. But in the meantime we know that the people of other nations are not yet all Socialists; we do not forget that in foreign countries--just the same as in Britain--there are large numbers of profit seeking capitalists, who are so destitute of humanity, that if they thought it could be done successfully and with profit to themselves they would not scruple to come here to murder and to rob. We do not forget that in foreign countries--the same as here--there are plenty of so-called "Christian" bishops and priests always ready to give their benediction to any such murderous projects, and to blasphemously pray to the Supreme Being to help his children to slay each other like wild beasts. And knowing and remembering all this, we realize that until we have done away with capitalism, aristocracy and anti-Christian clericalism, it is our duty to be prepared to defend our homes and our native land. And therefore we are in favour of maintaining national defensive forces in the highest possible state of efficiency. But that does not mean that we are in favour of the present system of organizing those forces. We do not believe in conscription, and we do not believe that the nation should continue to maintain a professional standing army to be used at home for the purpose of butchering men and women of the working classes in the interests of a handful of capitalists, as has been done at Featherstone and Belfast; or to be used abroad to murder and rob the people of other nations. Socialists advocate the establishment of a National Citizen Army, for defensive purposes only. We believe that every able bodied man should be compelled to belong to this force and to undergo a course of military training, but without making him into a professional soldier, or taking him away from civil life, depriving him

of the rights of citizenship or making him subject to military "law" which is only another name for tyranny and despotism. This Citizen Army could be organized on somewhat similar lines to the present Territorial Force, with certain differences. For instance, we do not believe--as our present rulers do--that wealth and aristocratic influence are the two most essential qualifications for an efficient officer; we believe that all ranks should be attainable by any man, no matter how poor, who is capable of passing the necessary examinations, and that there should be no expense attached to those positions which the Government grant, or the pay, is not sufficient to cover. The officers could be appointed in any one of several ways: They might be elected by the men they would have to command, the only qualification required being that they had passed their examinations, or they might be appointed according to merit--the candidate obtaining the highest number of marks at the examinations to have the first call on any vacant post, and so on in order of merit. We believe in the total abolition of courts martial, any offence against discipline should be punishable by the ordinary civil law--no member of the Citizen Army being deprived of the rights of a citizen.'

'What about the Navy?' cried several voices.

'Nobody wants to interfere with the Navy except to make its organization more democratic--the same as that of the Citizen Army--and to protect its members from tyranny by entitling them to be tried in a civil court for any alleged offence.'

'It has been proved that if the soil of this country were scientifically cultivated, it is capable of producing sufficient to maintain a population of a hundred millions of people. Our present population is only about forty millions, but so long as the land remains in the possession of persons who refuse to allow it to be cultivated we shall continue to be dependent on other countries for our food supply. So long as we are in that position, and so long as foreign countries are governed by Liberal and Tory capitalists, we shall need the Navy to protect our overseas commerce from them. If we had a Citizen Army such as I have mentioned, of nine or ten millions of men and if the land of this country was properly cultivated, we should be invincible at home. No foreign power would ever be mad enough to attempt to land their forces on our shores. But they would now be able to starve us all to death in a month if it were not for the Navy. It's a sensible and creditable position, isn't it?' concluded Barrington.

'Even in times of peace, thousands of people standing idle and tamely starving in their own fertile country, because a few land "Lords" forbid them to cultivate it.'

'Is there any more questions?' demanded Philpot, breaking a prolonged silence.

'Would any Liberal or Tory capitalist like to get up into the pulpit and oppose the speaker?' the chairman went on, finding that no one responded to his appeal for questions.

The silence continued.

'As there's no more questions and no one won't get up into the pulpit, it is now my painful duty to call upon someone to move a resolution.'

'Well, Mr Chairman,' said Harlow, 'I may say that when I came on this firm I was a Liberal, but through listenin' to several lectures by Professor Owen and attendin' the meetings on the hill at Windley and reading the books and pamphlets I bought there and from Owen, I came to the conclusion some time ago that it's a mug's game for us to vote for capitalists whether they calls themselves Liberals or Tories. They're all alike when you're workin' for 'em; I defy any man to say what's the difference between a Liberal and a Tory employer. There is none--there can't be; they're both sweaters, and they've got to be, or they wouldn't be able to compete with each other. And since that's what they are, I say it's a mug's game for us to vote 'em into Parliament to rule over us and to make laws that we've got to abide by whether we like it or not. There's nothing to choose between 'em, and the proof of it is that it's never made much difference to us which party was in or which was out. It's quite true that in the past both of 'em have passed good laws, but they've only done it when public opinion was so strong in favour of it that they knew there was no getting out of it, and then it was a toss up which side did it.'

'That's the way I've been lookin' at things lately, and I'd almost made up my mind never to vote no more, or to trouble myself about politics at all, because although I could see there was no sense in voting for Liberal or Tory capitalists, at the same time I must admit I couldn't

make out how Socialism was going to help us. But the explanation of it which Professor Barrington has given us this afternoon has been a bit of an eye opener for me, and with your permission I should like to move as a resolution, "That it is the opinion of this meeting that Socialism is the only remedy for Unemployment and Poverty."

The conclusion of Harlow's address was greeted with loud cheers from the Socialists, but most of the Liberal and Tory supporters of the present system maintained a sulky silence.

'I'll second that resolution,' said Easton.

'And I'll lay a bob both ways,' remarked Bundy. The resolution was then put, and though the majority were against it, the Chairman declared it was carried unanimously.

By this time the violence of the storm had in a great measure abated, but as rain was still falling it was decided not to attempt to resume work that day. Besides, it would have been too late, even if the weather had cleared up.

'P'raps it's just as well it 'as rained,' remarked one man. 'If it 'adn't some of us might 'ave got the sack tonight. As it is, there'll be hardly enough for all of us to do tomorrer and Saturday mornin' even if it is fine.'

This was true: nearly all the outside was finished, and what remained

to be done was ready for the final coat. Inside all there was to do was to colour wash the walls and to give the woodwork of the kitchen and scullery the last coat of paint.

It was inevitable--unless the firm had some other work for them to do somewhere else--that there would be a great slaughter on Saturday.

'Now,' said Philpot, assuming what he meant to be the manner of a school teacher addressing children, 'I wants you hall to make a speshall heffort and get 'ere very early in the mornin'--say about four o'clock--and them wot doos the most work tomorrer, will get a prize on Saturday.'

'What'll it be, the sack?' inquired Harlow.

'Yes,' replied Philpot, 'and not honly will you get a prize for good conduct tomorrer, but if you all keep on workin' like we've bin doing lately till you're too hold and wore hout to do any more, you'll be allowed to go to a nice workhouse for the rest of your lives! and each one of you will be given a title--"Pauper!"'

And they laughed!

Although the majority of them had mothers or fathers or other near relatives who had already succeeded to the title--they laughed!

As they were going home, Crass paused at the gate, and pointing up to

the large gable at the end of the house, he said to Philpot:

'You'll want the longest ladder--the 65, for that, tomorrow.'

Philpot looked up at the gable.

It was very high.