

From the Workers' Point of View

Freedom Press (London)

December, 1886

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TO THE EDITOR OF "FREEDOM."

Many thanks for the copy of *Freedom* sent to me the other week. I hope it will be the means of snapping some of the links in the chain that makes us the slaves of landlords, capitalists, and others who live out of the labors of the workers everywhere. Why we should be for ever producing wealth and yet not have the power of enjoying it ourselves, is more than I can understand. The staple trade of this village is shoe work, and most of that of a common sort. One manufacturer resides in the place; the others live at a distance. We are somewhere in the position of the Irish. The land is claimed by absentee landlords, who must have their rent for doing nothing live There are over two thousand acres of land in the parish, and as many people live in the village; but the farmers say they cannot make it pay to cultivate the land, and so very few people are employed on it. Yet the men in the towns blame us because we will not follow the plow and produce food for them whilst they make slices for us; and so the strife goes on. The accursed system of competition grinds us down. There seems nothing worth living for. The warehouses are full of clothes, but we cannot earn wages to buy them; provisions are plentiful, but the plainest diet is our fare, and not enough of that. Children are doing the work of men and women. There seems no hope for us under the present system. If the Revolution does not come soon our children will curse the day of their birth. Their inheritance will be one of care and sorrow, and they like ourselves will be the slaves of other.

It is impossible to protect ourselves from the fleecers, who are always on the look out to rob us. Last month a few of its village folks thought Are would boycott the coal-merchant, and put the profit into our own pockets instead of his. We sent for a truck of coal. There were seven tons in the truck. The coal cost five shillings and three pence per ton at the mouth of the pit; but the carriage for bringing it about forty miles by Midland Railway made its price ten shillings and nine pence per ton, or more than double, when it arrived here. I wonder how much the poor miner would get out of that for his share? He would have to risk life and limb for very little. But then flesh and blood are so cheap nowadays; human life is thought very little of-not worth taking into consideration. We are just so many machines for our masters to use for their own advancement, whilst our degradation gets deeper every day. One would think the workers would look after their interests more. I have read that with improved machinery one man can do the work of ten. Then how must the other nine live? The means of production ought to be under the power of the workers, then they need have no fear of improved machinery. It ought not to be a whip in the employer's hand to keep the laborer's wages down. If all would do their share of work there need not be overburdened souls wishing themselves under the sod, that they may be at rest. That we may soon witness the real emancipation of labor is the sincere wish of

AN ENGLISH SLAVE.

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