

FREEDOM

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THE REVOLT IN RUSSIA.

LAST month's attempt to celebrate the anniversary of the execution of Alexander II. by that of his son and successor has revealed to all Europe the depth of the surging discontent now stirring amongst the people of Russia; the burning shame and indignation with which they see themselves crushed beneath a system of government which would have disgraced the Dark Ages.

As Leroy-Beaulieu has pointed out, Russia has been the scape-goat of Western Europe. Her people have borne the brunt of the successive tides of invasion by the savage and cruel hordes of Asia; by her brave resistance she has glutted their fury, by her industry she has satiated their greed. Thus Teuton and Kelt have been left the freer to develop their social life at the cost of the blood and the freedom of the Slav. It was this terrible task—this fate which has made her loss our gain—which checked the natural and promising development of Russia centuries ago. It is this service which she has rendered to Europe which has saddled her even down to to-day with the incubus of Eastern despotism: a despotism which in the nineteenth century calls it a crime for the men of one of the most intelligent and social races in the world to speak or write what they think, to live as they please, or to perform the simplest action on their own initiative.

It is only within the last thirty or forty years that the Russian nation has begun to recover from the agony of its long martyrdom: only for little more than twenty years that the educated classes have begun to feel their oneness with the masses of the people, and to join hands with them in a serious effort for deliverance.

This struggle, brief as it has been, has shown the revival of the old Slavonic spirit of daring and self-devotion, and won the admiring respect of every generous spirit in the civilised world. For the odds are desperate, and the people are roused to consciousness of their wrongs and of their hopes only by a succession of deeds of the most splendid heroism, and the sacrifice of thousands of the noblest lives in Russia.

The Tzar is the figure-head of an utterly corrupt bureaucracy, which chokes every possibility of natural social development; and therefore against him and his lackeys is arrayed, openly or secretly, every partisan of free thought or free action throughout the country, whether he be Socialist or social reformer, or merely a political Liberal desiring parliamentary institutions. At the present moment Alexander III. would appear to be assailed by an outbreak of discontent in every shape and form.

The Central Executive Committee of the Terrorist party, who killed Alexander II., seem to have taken no active part in the attempt this year. It was made by three Petersburg students, Andreyovsky, Petroff, and Generaloff, who belonged to a distinct terrorist group. In fact, such separate groups, either for the purpose of carrying on direct warfare with the Government, or for propagandist work amongst the people, have sprung up all over Russia. The last number of the *Messenger of the Will of the People* mentions about a dozen lithographed or printed newspapers, pamphlets, manifestos, etc., issued by as many different organisations. It was found that time was lost and energy wasted in waiting for orders from a common centre; and the revolutionary movement, in Russia as elsewhere, as it grows and increases in strength and size, gives larger and larger scope to individual initiative and local freedom of action.

The attempt to assassinate the Tzar was accompanied by a number of outbreaks amongst peasants and workmen in various parts of the country, which would seem to have been immediately put down, but all news about them has been suppressed. The considerable number of arrests amongst workmen, however, shows how rapidly the Socialistic side of the movement is spreading in the towns, in spite of Tolstoi's Bismarkian social "reforms."

The more political aspect of Russian discontent is represented by the conspiracy just discovered amongst the Liberals. The conspirators, whose motto is "The People, with the Tzar or against the Tzar," issue a lithographed paper, *The Constitutional*, setting forth the political and economic views of Western Europe as exemplified in the leading authors. They aim at forcing the Tzar to abdicate or grant a constitution. This is the party of landowners, country nobility, and the middle-class.

Besides these Terrorists, Socialists, and Liberals, the autocracy is beset by a considerable military conspiracy, in which the very guards who watch the palace doors are implicated.

No wonder that the Anitchkoff Palace is undermined with secret

passages containing sand-covered drums to reveal the faintest vibration, like a besieged fortress. No wonder that the gloomy and brutal despot, who chooses to make himself responsible for the ruin and destruction of thousands of better lives than his own every year, sneaks in Gatchina in terror for his life. No wonder that his underlings are arresting by hundreds nobles, officials, soldiers, traders, students, peasants, workmen, men and women alike; closing institutes and colleges; prohibiting afresh all voluntary associations and meetings; hanging officers in their barracks and prisoners in the fortress, and beating young girls until they are insensible. Such deeds and such precautions are the last orgy of power, the last exhibition of the cowardly terror of men who feel their authority slipping through their fingers.

Vladimir, the Tzar's brother, "as great a scoundrel as any man in Russia," is to head the Committee of Investigation into the revolutionary movement. He will be troubled with no scruples as to the means of extorting avowals from his prisoners, and it will be well if the official exhibition of sentiment about the supposed torture inflicted by Bulgarian Regents be extended to a practical check upon such barbarities at home.

Meanwhile, the amiable Alexander has dissolved the Commission which was enquiring into abuses and drawing up a plan of reforms (there is always a Commission or so enquiring and drawing up plans in Russia, but nothing ever comes of it), and is said to meditate making the chief of police his Prime Minister. Effects in the shape of insurrection and conspiracy are produced without a cause worth investigating or removing, he thinks, and since whips have not sufficed he proposes to chastise his unhappy people with scorpions.

May he all the sooner lash them into universal and successful revolt; revolt which will fling him and his bureaucracy into the Limbo where the memory of departed tyrannies withers in the contempt of mankind.

THE PARIS COMMUNE.

(A Speech delivered by P. Kropotkin at the Commemoration at South Place on the 17th of March, 1887.)

SIXTEEN years have elapsed since the last serious attempt of the best representatives of the European *prolétaires*—the workmen of Paris—to shake off the yoke under which they are labouring—and suffering.

Sixteen years! and already we are again on the eve of one of those great uprisings which periodically visit Europe—of the great social revolution which is looked at with so much hope by the workmen of all civilised nations, with so much fear by all those who know their wrongs.

Much has been written since the outbreak of the Paris Commune about the uselessness of like "unsuccessful, unprepared revolutions." The theory-makers who fancy that revolutions are prescribed by a General Staff have condemned it. "What is the use of like unsuccessful attempts?" they say, with a great display of would-be science. And yet, the workmen all over Europe and the United States have taken up the anniversary of the Paris Commune as their—the workmen's—anniversary. To-night and to-morrow there will not be a city all over West Europe and America which you may perceive on a medium-sized map where the workmen will not unite together to commemorate the uprising of the people of Paris. Even in Greece and in South America, at Cape Colony and in Australia, they will meet together under the red banner of the oppressed. And while the workmen of different nationalities are incited by the middle-class writers to seize one another by the throat for the greater glory and enrichment of their employers; while our middle-class rulers are scheming manslaughter for the spring on a scale unparalleled as yet in history, Frenchmen and Germans, Italians and Englishmen, Spaniards and Swedes will meet together, and their hearts will beat as one great heart—that of Humanity. Their wishes will be wishes for the well-being of all humanity,—not of those only who grasp for themselves the fruits of the common human labour.

Whence comes this attraction exercised by the Paris Commune on the minds of all those who suffer and long for Equality and Freedom? If we go through the acts of the Paris Commune, we find but little, nearly nothing, which might answer to any extent to the desires and longings of Socialists. The measures initiated by the Government of

and energy upon articles made to sell, not to supply any one's needs. "I've been driven to waste a week over a lot of scissors," said one bright young fellow, "not one pair of which would cut." And another man exhibited with a contemptuous sneer the "tea-tasters," pieces of lead put in the spouts of metal tea-pots to bring them up to weight and enable them to be sold as good block-tin; "It is the middle-men force us into all this dishonesty," he said. In fact, though there has been a great outcry about spurious German hardware marked with the Sheffield stamp, no German goods can be worse than the articles now turned out by Sheffield herself; and the amount of adulteration and the hurry in workmanship increases year by year.

This hurry is the curse of the Sheffield workers. Their work is all done by the piece, and it is quantity not quality that pays. The strain and weariness of a perpetual rush to complete the greatest possible number of worthless articles made only to sell, is sickening for the men who are their own employers; for the factory hands it means destruction, mind and body. The factory owners vie with one another as to the intensity with which they can force their wretched slaves to toil. The average wage for all is adjusted by the pace at which the quickest hands can scramble through their job, and the masters try all sorts of tricks to discover the top of their victims' speed, and to keep them at it.

A firm, for instance, will announce that they are offered a valuable order, only it must be done by such and such a day; will the men see if they cannot manage it, just for this once? And some extra pay or "a treat" is promised as an inducement. The poor fools fall into the trap, strain every nerve and muscle to get through the job in less than the usual time; and then in a week or two, the price of piece-work has gone down, they are told; so if they would live, they must get through as much every week as they managed to do under the special pressure.

So it goes on, until the existence of these men is simply one ceaseless round of scurrying routine work, for which they receive barely enough to keep body and soul together.

A Sheffield factory is a heartrending spectacle. The noisy, dirty, stifling workshops, crowded with pale, worn, hollow-eyed, hopeless faces, which are scarcely raised for a moment as the visitor passes; the hurrying hands, which seem part of the machine they tend or supplement; the bowed, weary figures hastily shuffling to and fro; and then the grinders' sheds, where men sit bent almost double over the ceaselessly revolving stones, their faces covered and their throats choked with the flying dust, their feet soaking in muddy slush; the whole is horrible to see. What must it be to feel it day after day, week after week, year after year, until mind and body sink exhausted beneath the strain? No wonder that grinders rarely live to be forty; and that many of them drink, loaf, and sleep all the time they are not working. Their lives have been made a hell to them by the selfish greed of a handful of cruel and unscrupulous individuals. "They are a troublesome lot," said the capitalist. "Take a deal of looking after. They're after striking now; but I'm working 'em half-time, and that'll take 'em down a peg or two, so that they won't have much chance." And his hard, mean face took an expression of yet sharper cunning and greed.

Wonderful to relate, they have still some spirit left, these poor fellows. On one of the "hull" doors they have pasted up a notice, "*No cadgers for the Queen need apply.*" It would be a good thing if all the workers had as much common sense.

The bright spot in Sheffield life is the "Socialist Society." Our comrade Edward Carpenter, who was well known in the town as one of the most popular lecturers of the Cambridge University Extension Scheme, has succeeded during the last year in drawing together a knot of workers, both men and women, animated by a like love of man and hatred of oppression with himself. The Society is rapidly increasing in size, and is engaged in energetic propaganda. Its headquarters are the old debtor's jail! There is a smart and tempting coffee tavern, and over it a capital hall for lectures, which is filled week by week with an audience manifesting a deep and growing interest in Socialism. The Society itself tends to become more and more revolutionary, more Anarchist in tone, as its members think out the economic problem for themselves and learn to appreciate the practical uselessness of attempts at "Parliamentary action."

Anarchist lecturers meet with a cordial and sympathetic reception, and at the close of last month the Society organised a meeting for our comrade P. Kropotkin in the biggest hall in Sheffield, which was filled with an enthusiastic audience.

THE PEOPLE TO THEIR LAND.

(Tune: "Andreas Hofer.")

O high rocks looking heavenward,
O valleys green and fair,
Sea-cliffs that seem to gird and guard
Our Island—once so dear!
In vain your beauty now ye spread,
For we are numbered with the dead:
A robber band has seized the land,
And we are exiles here.

The moonlight glides along the shore
And silvers all the sands,
It gleams on halls and castles hoar
Built by our father's hands.
But from the scene its beauty fades,
The light dies out along the glades:
A robber band has seized the land,
And we are exiles here.

The plowman plows, the sower sows,
The reaper reaps the ear,
The woodman to the forest goes
Before the day grows clear;
But of our toil no fruit we see,
The harvest's not for you and me:
A robber band has seized the land
And we are exiles here.

The cattle in the sun may lie,
The fox by night may roam,
The lark may sing all day on high
Between its heaven and home;
But we have no place here, to die
Is the one right we need not buy:
Then high to heaven our vows be given,
We'll have our land or die.

SOCIALISM AND SEX.

"THAT will reconcile me to life," writes Emerson, "and renovate nature, to see trifles animated by a tendency, and to know what I am doing." And which of us, tortured and reduced well nigh to despair by the horrible degradation of human dignity in the existing hypocritical and unnatural sexual relations, does not feel the need for such a vision of the end and meaning of our present pain, if still we are to fight on. This essay by K. P.¹ is one of those jets of thought which pierce the misty confusion of times when the air is full of the dust of out-worn forms and faded beliefs with a ray of positive and reasoned conviction, pointing the road to a new order in human life more in correspondence with our consciousness of reality.

Following the method which is the recognised basis of rational generalisation concerning the future development of society amongst all schools of scientific Socialists, the author of 'Socialism and Sex' traces in rough outline the growth of certain broad tendencies in the past, the form they have assumed in the present, and the indications they afford as to their probable direction in the future. But he differs from most scientific Socialists in taking the two fundamental functions of animal life, nutrition and reproduction, as together and equally the determining factors of social development amongst mankind. Economic relations alone are not the main root from which all other relations amongst men have sprung; sexual selection, he holds, has played an equal part with the struggle for subsistence, in forming each variety of social life. A particular method of sex relationship, and a particular method of wealth distribution would seem always to have corresponded to one another and existed simultaneously in every community, both expressing the same fundamental idea of appropriation by horde, tribe, group, family, or individual. Common possession, the supremacy of women, the supremacy of men, have succeeded one another, both in the relation of the sexes and in the relation of human beings towards wealth; and now we find ourselves in a period of transition in which new relations of both sorts are in process of formation; the relations of fundamental human equality.

"The leading principle of modern socialism" (*i.e.* the coming form of economic relations) is that "a human being, man or woman, unless physically or mentally disabled—has no moral right to be a member of the community—unless he or she is labouring in some form for the community." The main object of Socialism is to secure to each individual a free field for his labour, and the supply of his needs in return for his work. This is the economic independence which is essential to the moral dignity of each man and woman in a free society. But our present form of sexual relationship is an effectual bar to the attainment of this economic independence by women.

At present the work of the majority of women, *i.e.*, those who are married, and are not actively engaged in productive labour, may be divided into two classes:—

Firstly, the difficult and onerous task of rearing children. A task often fulfilled with a reckless or despairing ignorance, which is fatal to the mother's health and happiness, and is actively injurious to the community.

Secondly, home duties, *i.e.*, cleaning and moving from one place to another a variety of objects, mostly superfluous for human well-being, and which might be thrown out of the window with more advantage to the real dignity of life than the famous stone that Thoreau decided unworthy of the expenditure of energy required to dust it. Very often a large slice of such a woman's time is wasted over some muddling cooking, which with a little organisation might be accomplished (what is necessary of it) with infinitely less labour. A handful of intelligent persons, with adequate appliances, might easily perform the labour of food preparation for a whole community; whereas, we have now, at least one woman in every household spending half her day on it, generally with lamentably inadequate results.

Amongst the rich, the activity of women is mostly expended in misdirecting the labour of others.

A great deal of the second class of work is essentially degrading. It is unnecessary, and it is inartistic. It creates nothing, it produces nothing of real beauty and utility, and therefore it fails to satisfy the strongest and most human instincts of the worker.

The method of remuneration is equally destructive to self-respect. In both classes of employment, payment is doled out to the worker at the good pleasure of her lover. The more pressure she can put upon him the more payment she can exact; and to an ungenerous and unscrupulous woman there are no limits to this pressure but the generosity and wealth-gaining powers of the man she exploits in virtue of her position of economic dependence; whilst to a selfish man the woman appears merely as the hired instrument of his pleasure and comfort, in fact, his chattel-slave.

We live in days of the individual ownership of social wealth and the individual ownership of women by men. It is no new observation that the position of woman and wage-worker are very similar under these conditions of universal exploitation. Both must labour, not at their own pleasure, but at the pleasure of a master. The wage-worker can refuse his employer's terms, but only at the risk of starvation, the woman is bound to her lover by the same tie, and in both cases the current morality of the masters preaches the submissive acquiescence of the slave, and stigmatises revolt as anti-social and foolish.

¹ 'Socialism and Sex,' by K. P. W. Reeves, 185 Fleet Street, E.C. Price 2d.