FREEDOM

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NOTES.

FIFTY years more of dust-licking before an out-worn, meaningless superstition, and we are to make our continued want of energy and common sense an occasion of national rejoicing! National self-abasement for our folly would be more to the point.

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What possible meaning has all this cant about loyalty to the poor old German, who for fifty years has allowed herself to wear the cap and bells as Queen of England? Truly our civilisation, from the British Constitution to the women's dress improvers, has grown into such monstrous shapes that it is hard to discover its relation to the reason of mankind.

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When the sovereign of England was a great military leader, like the First and Third Edwards, or the centre of a national idea like Elizabeth, there was some meaning, though there might be little wisdom, in talking of loyalty. But Victoria is simply the most scandalous sinecurist in the land, and yet the workers are badgered or wheedled out of their pence by primrose dames and the like empty-headed sentimentalists, to show their loyalty by making her a further present of money. For 68 years they have supported her in luxury, what has she done for them in return?

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Before another fifty years are over and gone the workers of the whole civilised world will be asking some such question in right good earnest; asking it with a determination to get an answer that will set it at rest for ever; asking it not of kings and queens alone, but of ruling men and ruling classes of every sort and condition.

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In the little *divertissement* in Irish affairs lately caused by the *Times*, the Irish actors in the comedy at St. Stephens would have played a better part if they had allowed the mud thrown at them to dry and drop off, and a better part still if they had boldly avowed their willingness to be associated in name with the extremists of their party.

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If but for one thing, the present system of legislation should be condemned to die the death, and that is for the way in which it makes rogues of those who might be honest men enough. Amongst the so-called representatives of the people, who is there who is not eating his own words, or stifling the feeble aspirations after freedom and justice of which he was delivered on election platforms?

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What an awkward position that was at St. Austell for a sometime "friend of the poor and champion of economy," to be publicly confronted by the question, "Is it true that you refused to accept the office of Secretary to the Local Board until the salary had been raised from £1200 to £1500?"

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The question remained unanswered; and yet it seems the extra £300 had been demanded only because it was feared the lesser sum would be regarded by the agricultural labourers as a slight put upon their special representative! This delicacy of feeling has no doubt been much appreciated. It is possible, however, that the agricultural and all other tax-burdened labourers may come to contemplate the cropping of their tribunes' salaries with a philosophic calm.

A LESSON OF TO-DAY.

THE PAGNY AFFAIR.

LAST month France and Germany were once more on the brink of war, this time *pour les beaux yeux* of a French police functionary, who was planning intrigues in Alsace on behalf of his own government.

Ultimately the French Government, which, by the way, has been continually violating "international law" by fraudulently entrapping on French soil deserters who had taken refuge in Switzerland, by handing over political refugees to the Italian and Spanish Governments, and lastly by trying and sentencing foreign subjects for "crimes" committed on foreign soil, as readers who remember the Anarchist trial at Lyons are well aware this same French Government succeeded in snatching M. Schnaebele, its agent, from the hands of the "iron Chancellor." By way of a further comparison between "international law" as applied to well-paid State conspirators with that law in its relation to men striving to free themselves and their fellow-sufferers from the state of misery and slavery in which they are kept, we may refer to the case of our comrade Neve, kidnapped on Belgian soil by German detectives and conveyed away into Germany, to be tried for high treason and too probably sentenced to imprisonment almost for life. From these facts it is evident that there are conspirators and conspirators. Governments are indeed deep dyed in conspiracy; but then their members, unlike vulgar conspirators, claim the right to conspire without personally incurring any danger, whilst they expose their subjects to the awful penalty of war.

Under these conditions a little game with the lives and the peace of nations is being carried on in the diplomatic world, which promises just now to have a very tragic end.

In this as in other matters we have progressed. It was once the custom with diplomacy to aim rather at the top than at the bottom of the tree, and kings and ambassadors were chiefly exposed to the venom and dagger of adverse diplomatists. In the diplomatic warfare of our civilised time the heads of the governments are safe, and only the existence, the integrity, the welfare of nations are at stake.

None the less, however, we live in a state of brigandage, conducted in the most refined manner. From General Kaulbars to Commissaire Schnaebele, nay, from the chief conspirator of Europe, Herr Bismark, to his numerous little emulators and rivals in this and other countries, what these diplomats, official and *officieux*, public and secret, male and female, civil and military, princely and royal, are engaged in, is a work of destruction, the ruin of the peoples.

By them race-jealousies are evoked, by them civil discords are fostered; in every place each noble cause is sullied by their contact. "Foreign gold," "foreign emissaries" are the taunts with which are met—unhappily, with truth—the demands of people struggling to be free.

If political parties—National, Constitutional, Liberal, Home Rule, etc.—realised to what an extent they are played with by the intrigues of foreign Governments, their anger at the fact would perhaps cool their enthusiasm, and on due reflection they might even adopt the only course open to men striving for the welfare of the people, rather than to further the aims of their most deadly enemies.

There is one cause which is unanimously opposed by all governments, the cause of International Revolutionary Socialism.

The present moment is ominous; and although the "Pagny affair" may be settled, there is no doubt that we are in face of a very grave situation. It is no time for half measures, for Parliamentary coquetries, or for drilled and marshalled agitations. We must prepare to fight, either to be crushed in our generation, or to win for ever.

THE END SET BEFORE US.

WHEN the approach of serious revolutionary movements is generally felt, it is very difficult to hold back from trying to raise a corner of the veil which conceals the future,—from trying to foresee what may be the possible issue of the approaching disturbances. Of course, historical forecasts as a rule are exceedingly difficult. We know that the keenest minds who lived, in times past, on the eve of great revolutions, failed to foresee the probable issues of the coming events. Some of their predictions went too far; but some others were rapidly distanced by the revolution. It must be avowed, however, that those forecasts were too often mere expressions of the personal wishes of the prophets; and that they very seldom had the character of really scientific predictions.

These last are always conditional, because science can do no more than to show that, if such and such conditions prevail, their consequences will be so and so.

If we proceed in this way, and analyse the movement which we see growing round about us, and try to divine its probable outcome, we must say with great regret—that if the Socialist movement continues on the same lines as it goes on now; if no new ideas as to its real aims and possible sphere of action are brought forward, and spread among the toilers of the soil and workshop its results will be disappointing to those who expect from it a thorough modification of the present conditions of labour.

But, if the danger is perceived; if those who will not fail to perceive it succeed in attracting public attention on this point, both during the

THE ENFORCEMENT OF LAW.

[We have received the following from a non-Anarchist correspondent. We insert it in the belief that the measured and quiet words in which our contributor describes how the ancient customs and sense of mutual responsibility of the English people have been turned in the hands of evil men and ruling classes into an instrument of cruelty and oppression, may stir some of our readers to think for themselves what is the true meaning of that blind subservience to the law, to which they are daily exhorted by their pastors and masters. Ed.]

Not by argument, but by mere dogged pressure of a class-majority, fighting in its old dull method the fight for its proprietary monopolies, the Jubilee Coercion Bill is being forced through Parliament. But outside of the House the more lissome of the Tories, and their mercenary troops, the politically doomed and desperate band of "Liberal Unionists," make some pretence to their constituents and to the purveyors of public dinners that there is "constitutional" necessity for the Bill. Anarchy, they say in effect, is rampant in Ireland. The first condition of civilised society is the enforcement of "the law." This Bill will enable us to enforce the law, therefore this Bill is necessary for Ireland. Most Tories must know, and some "Liberal Unionists" have even admitted, that, apart from matters relating to the land, no charge of lawlessness could be laid against the Irish by the most superstitious of disciplinarians. But this does not prevent the coercionist speakers from appealing, and with some success, to audiences whose ideas on Irish affairs, and the questions really involved in the present struggle, are vague and prejudiced, to support them in their efforts to maintain what they are pleased to call the fundamental principles of civilised society. It is hardly possible for them to attempt to disguise any longer the fact that the real object of the Irish revolt is the expropriation of the landlord class, and they wisely abstain from plunging into argument in justification of the legal claims of that class. For they can see clearly enough from what has passed in England since 'Progress and Poverty' was written that the discussion of this question results in but one opinion among the people. With the audiences to whom they especially appeal it is safe to let the sleeping dog of criticism of the rights of property lie, to take it for granted that a rent-receiving class is part of the necessary order of the universe, and that accordingly machinery for the enforcement of the legal claims of that class is of equally unquestionable necessity.

Socialists are familiar enough with the character which the *Times*, and the bourgeois press generally, delight to proclaim for the British working man. His special distinction is that he is so law-abiding, and we are continually given to understand that our cause is hopeless here because the B. W. M. is so enamoured of law and order and the rights of property. We have all of us heard this familiar sophistry applauded, even in workmen's clubs, but we are encouraged by the fact that throughout all history there has never been an instance of a class, having power, and its eyes open, that abstained from changing in its own interest the laws by which it would abide, and defining the rights of property which it intended to recognise. Least of all is the history of England enouraging for those who trust that the nation which, of the great European peoples, earliest rid itself of monarchic and feudal despotism, will show at this period that it has lost its "political good sense."

The appeal, then, is to the law-loving citizen. The assumption is made (and what an assumption it is, when we remember the "non-resistance" controversies of the eighteenth century!) that the English people acknowledge as a principle, that it is the first duty of the citizen to obey the Law, no matter what the working of the Law may be, and further, so long as any law remains in force, to assist, and if need be to strengthen the hands of the executive, for its enforcement. It is pointed out that the executive in Ireland is powerless to enforce certain existing laws, that witnesses will not give evidence nor juries convict in cases where a conviction would be the triumph of a law abominable to the people affected, a law which is exercised only in the interest of an alien crew of rent-receivers. And it is assumed that it is an obvious necessity that extraordinary powers should be given to this crew for the trepanning of witnesses and the ensuring of convictions.

There is no need to be an Anarchist to see the flimsiness of this. True it is that the Judaism and Clergianity in which this nation has so long been steeped, have created for what was once the Common Law, by reflection from the Jewish Decalogue, something of august and superhuman authority, and have obscured the simplicity of the principles on which it was founded. But the most enamoured student of the law, the most convinced advocate of the concerted regulation of individuals by the community, will be the last man to be imposed on by the current phrases about its majesty, its wisdom, and the civic duty of not resisting it. He will know that the laws of England first took form as the local customs of independent communes, that their authority rested on two main supports, superstition and local convenience; that superstition having evaporated, general convenience remains now as ever the sole admissible apology for law, and that most of the cant which is still common upon the subject is due to the deliberate importation by the clergy and the lawyers of Judaic and Imperialist ideas, for the aggrandisement of their patrons and the consolidation of the authority of kings. Again and again have the English people repudiated these attempted perversions of their national principles, and their revolts against monarchy and aristocracy have been in one aspect the expression of their insistence that the law has no authority higher than or apart from the people among whom it lives.

The action of juries and witnesses in Ireland is the action shown by them wherever the jury system exists, under circumstances at all analogous, as in the West Indies and the Southern States of America. The jury, it is significant, one of the most important survivals of the primitive local machinery of "law," still retains in practice much of its old independence, and in its constant conflicts with the Bench of Judges, has been driven to the illogical expedient of acquitting in the teeth of evidence defendants who by the law would suffer when the jury think they should not. And Constitutionalists and Tories should look back to their simple-minded Saxon ancestry, and should hail with respect the primitive independence of the jurymen of Connemara and of Kerry who interpret the public opinion of their society, and who dispense in their several neighbourhoods that justice which makes for public utility, unblinded by the ignorance and superstition which permitted the feudal and regal law of England to be forged into an engine of exploitation and oppression.

A PAINTER OF THE PEOPLE.

An exhibition of pictures is now taking place in Paris which is of interest to all those whose feeling is one with the masses of the people.

Some Socialists are inclined to look for little sympathy from painters. Some even have tried to set fire to picture galleries, saying like the earlier Nihilists of Russia, that a cobbler, who makes what is useful, is greater than Raphael, who only made what is beautiful, and that when men and women are dying of slow starvation before our eyes, it is idle to think of mixing a pot of colour.

Is this not a mistake? Are not painters as much with us as poets, writers, and even shoemakers? To take Jean François Millet as an example. Born a labourer, he learnt to draw in Paris, and then took a cottage some forty miles from town and painted working men and women. He simply drew them as they were, and let them tell their own tale. Women with bent backs gleaning in the burning fields, old men with faces grown imbecile by excessive toil, sharpening a scythe or hoeing the hard ground, little children minding geese. In one picture a labourer rests by the wayside, his heavy load of faggots beside him. Death grasps him by the shoulder, but the man turns to lift again his burden; so deadened is he by ceaseless toil that he does not even feel that he is dying.

Millet painted misery from the bitter experience of his own heart, for he lived miserably, often not having enough money to buy bread. No one understood him; his pictures would not sell. Now he is dead, rich men give untold sums to possess the works of art that portray the social outcome of their own injustice and greed; only like the Persian king to find themselves confronted on their own walls by the sentence of their overthrow. When Millet's pictures are exhibited, all the world flocks to see them, and he has had imitators by the hundred.

The peasant painter, driven by the craving of his genius to spend his life in putting on canvas the story of the sufferings of his fellows, is one of the voices of the spirit of the age. He is one of those entrusted by Nature with the gift of giving expression to voiceless pain and wrong, expression that all the world can feel and see. Through the work of its artists, its painters, its poets, its writers, its musicians, society becomes conscious of itself, and the inner life of men in all its endless variety is revealed to their brethren. The Social Revolution can spare its painters as ill as its poets. From the mystery of Watts' gigantic visions of Life and Death, to the tender pity and truth of Miss Dorothy Tenant's sketches of street life, all art work of true artists is the cry of the deepest needs and yearnings, as well as the highest aspirations of man, and as such it is one of the forces leading up to the coming Revolution.

LAW AND ORDER IN IRELAND.

VIII.—UNDER GOOD QUEEN BESS.

The news that a small body of Spaniards and Italians had taken possession of the fort of Smerwick on the Kerry coast brought the whole of England's force to bear upon that point. Famine forced the little garrison to surrender. The men were disarmed, and Captain (afterwards Sir) Walter Raleigh superintended the cutting of their throats. For this and similar services Raleigh was rewarded with 40,000 acres of land in county Cork, which he afterwards sold for a goodly sum to Richard, first Earl of Cork.

The illustrious poet, Edmund Spenser, was present at the Smerwick butchery, but whether he took active part in it or was merely a critical spectator of it we know not. He, however, was presented by his patrons with a piece of land and a fine house, which was in a subsequent revolt burned down. One of his children was accidentally burned with it, and all the cultured class of England execrated this abominable act of Irish barbarity!

If Spenser did no fighting he did some writing in the cause of his masters. The measure for subjugating Ireland as laid down by him outrivals in its heartlessness the policy prescribed by Machiavelli for the general use of princes. He advocated the systematic destruction of the crops and the creation of famine thereby, which would ensure pestilence. He protested that his means would be certain of success, "and that speedily, for although none of them should fall by the sword, nor be slaine by the soldiers, yet thus being kept from manurance and their cattle from running abroad, by this hard restraint they would quietly consume themselves and devoure one another."

This was the course pursued by the government. Munster was ravaged most thoroughly, and Spenser himself tells us of the effects upon the people. "They looked," he says, "like anatomies of death, they spoke like ghosts crying out of their graves. They did eat dead carrion where they did find them—yea, one another soon after, in as much as the very carcases they spared not to scrape out of their graves." The rebels, according to another eye-witness, were brought to so low a condition that three children were seen eating the entrails of their dead mother, upon whose flesh they had fed many days, having roasted it by a slow fire.

A third writer enumerates the amusements of the soldiery, *after the suppression of the Desmond rebellion*. They collected their chance prisoners and filled houses with them, which they then set on fire, driving back with their spears the unhappy wretches who strove to escape from the flames. They tossed children from one to another on their spear-heads, excusing themselves when remonstrated with about this unnecessary cruelty by saying they feared the little victims might grow up to popish rebels. Women were to be seen hanging upon trees with the babes they had been suckling strangled in the mother's hair.

Holinshed adds his testimony to the efficacy of Spenser's panacea. "Whoever did travel from one end of Munster to the other would not meet any man, woman, or child saving in towns or cities, and would not see any beasts. The harvest having been burned year after year, famine cleared the land of those who had escaped the sword."

One would imagine the spirit of resistance must have been completely crushed by such a reign of terror. But Elizabeth had to face a revolt more formidable than any preceding ones. It was headed by Hugh O'Neil, a nephew of Shane's, who had been brought up in the English court, caressed by its queen, who fondly