

# FREEDOM

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## FORWARD !

**AFTER** the summer's apparent listlessness and inaction, the Revolutionary movement has started into fresh life, and, with that awakening, has entered upon a new phase of development.

The keynote of the new departure was struck last month by the unemployed of Norwich in the little placard, written and posted by unknown hands, which so seriously alarmed the local authorities that they swore in 200 special constables. "NOTICE TO ALL CONCERNED : *The unemployed do not intend to starve any longer. If employment is not found for them, they will soon make some.*"

As the result of the Government house-to-house enquiries at the close of the slack season last winter, it appears that amongst 29,451 men 8008 were out of work. At the beginning of September there were from 400 to 600 men, women and children utterly homeless, sitting night after night in and near Trafalgar Square—criminals in the eye of the English law, in that they were vagrants wandering about with no visible means of subsistence. From the statistics collected by the S.D.F. and the *Pall Mall Gazette* last year, it appears only too certain that at least 600,000 able-bodied men and women were out of work in London before the frost set in this October, and that calculation leaves unheeded the hundreds of thousands slowly starving on wages inadequate to maintain healthy life in a human being.

Yet this mass of misery is nothing new, nothing unusual. The distress is at present merely normal, say the committee of superior persons gathered in the Lord Mayor's comfortable parlour. But if the distress is the old, old story, the attitude of the sufferers is changed. What is new is the rising determination to suffer no longer.

Last winter the unemployed were so many isolated units, each man and woman tramping wearily and hopelessly from one property-monopolist to another, imploring for leave to work,—meekly accepting any odd job which kept him or her hanging, as it were, upon a single hair above the pit of starvation. With the exception of such spasmodic outbursts as the window-breaking in London and the Norwich riot, the people of late years have made no protest against the inhumanity of those men who appropriate to themselves the wealth of society, and live in luxury and ease on the labour of others, whilst masses of their fellows are starving. The only conscious and definite revolt came from small knots of Socialists—impracticable visionaries even in the eyes of their fellow-workmen.

Suddenly the scene is changed. The people are no longer tramping, each helpless and alone, entreating work as a boon. They are boldly meeting together and demanding work as a right. They have made common cause, and withstood and defeated like men the attempts of the police—the hired guardians of property-monopolists—to drive them, their sufferings and their wrongs, out of sight. And they have done this at the bidding of no leaders, in obedience to the rules of no organisation. Their action is the spontaneous outgrowth of the pressure of social needs and the ferment of ideas amongst the masses themselves.

The movement is small as yet, and formless, but nevertheless it is the beginning of the end. For the first time since middle-class Radicals threw dust in the eyes of the English people, and turned the revolt of the workers against capitalist and landlord tyranny into an agitation for the extension of the franchise, the inhabitants of London have swarmed unbidden and unsummoned into its streets and squares and parks to discuss, not a political, but a social grievance, and successfully asserted their right to do so.

At last the people seem to have lost all faith in patiently waiting for better days on earth to grow out of the "enlightened self-interest" of their masters, as they have lost all hope of the off-chance of better days in heaven. And the impulse is forming and growing in them to seek better days here and now by their own initiative, by the common action of those men who are equals and brothers in toil and misfortune. In the development of that impulse lies the salvation of society.

There is only one effectual relief for the suffering of the unemployed and ill-employed alike. To employ themselves; to substitute for the wage-system free and self-organised co-operation amongst the workers, for the direct supply of the needs of all.

Is it mockery when, instead of Government relief-works, we Anarchist Socialists preach such a remedy to starving men, who have nothing to work with, and no food or shelter whilst they work? No. To advise desperate men to wring temporary scraps of relief from the terrors of their oppressors—that is the mockery; for it puts into the hands of

those oppressors the means to retain their monopoly of wealth and power by ineffectual concessions, and so to prolong the misery they cause.

The unemployed cannot employ themselves. Why? Because all they need for their work—food, clothes, shelter, tools, machinery, workshops, factories, land—are monopolised by individuals, who will not let these things be used unless they can make a profit out of the labour of those who use them. The first thing, then, that the unemployed, and those whose lives are stripped of all joy by excessive work and miserable pay, and all who feel the wrongs of their fellows as their own, have to do, is to put an end once and for all to this monstrous monopoly of property. To lay hands directly on those stores of wealth which have been created by the workers, and from which all who work have a just claim to supply their needs.

The monopolists will resist? Then let them. The fight must be fought—and won; for it is the price of human development. We cannot shirk it and be men. And for those who fall in the struggle, it is a happier fate than slow starvation in a rat-hole, or to be cheived by the police from one door-step to another.

Then, when existing wealth and the land are free and common to all, self-employment will no longer seem a mockery to the workers, and every able-bodied man or woman who is unemployed will be so because he or she is a thief, a lazy vagabond who chosés to live idly on other people's labour.

## A PRACTICAL SOLUTION.

A HUNDRED and thirty thousand unemployed, in this city alone—such is the result of the parliamentary and private enquiries. Ninety-one thousand paupers; six hundred thousand at least of men, women, and children, out of the 4½ million inhabitants of London, in want of food, shelter, and clothes. Such is the result of aristocracy and middle-class rule. Our masters say that we must keep them, and provide them a rich living, because they alone are capable of organising our industries and trade. And that is the way in which they have organised them. Plenty of luxury for themselves; sheer misery for the masses.

One hundred and thirty thousand men, ready to work, but prevented from working; ready to till the fields and to grow for themselves the food they want; ready to build for themselves decent houses to lodge in; to extract coal for themselves to warm their modest homes; to weave and to sew for themselves the clothes to wear. But—prevented from tilling and growing, from building and weaving, by the land-owner, the money-lender, the owner of the manufactory and the shop-keeper.

All kinds of means are proposed every day for finding useful employment for those who are now unemployed. Some of the schemes might be a boon for humanity—not a sheer useless waste of human efforts and a new source of evils. But none of the good means can be put into practice, because everywhere the landlord, the banker, the capitalist stand in the way.

Suppose that any organised body of Socialists, who obviously enjoy the confidence of the workers, should distribute tickets in each house in London, and ask every unemployed person to write on his ticket what he is able and willing to do. Everyone would answer that he is ready to do some kind of useful work. The answers would be: "I am ready to work on a farm," or "Ready to work in a cotton mill," or at brick-laying, or at a cutlery, or boot, or cloth, or glass manufactory, and so on. In short, everybody would state his willingness to do something necessary for humanity.

By the way, if like tickets were distributed among those rich people who treat the unemployed as loafers and idlers, what would be their answers? "I am ready to preach patience to the workers, provided I have dined well myself"; "Ready to write leaders in newspapers, and to pronounce speeches, in order to prove that myself and my friends are the only people who can save England from an outbreak of the labourers"; "Ready to spend five afternoons in shopping and the sixth in visiting the poor"; "Ready to play the piano for two hours a day and to dance till daylight." Such would be the answers we should get from the West-end. While the East-end would testify its willingness to work, the West-end would testify its willingness to squander the produce of the East-end's labour.

Suppose, further, that a summons be issued to all the unemployed of London; that all those who are willing to work but have no work be invited to gather on a given day at some of the rich clubs which



## HOME RULE AND AFTER.

### IMPRESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH ANARCHIST IN IRELAND.

To coerce the Irish people into the commission of legal crime seems to be the aim and object of the policy of the present administration. Law to be observed must either be the crystallised expression of the beliefs of the vast majority of those to whom it is enunciated, or be based upon the superior and sufficient physical force of the law-makers. In Ireland part of the written or paper law is ineffective because it does not command the assent of the people, and the makers of the law are unable to use sufficient physical force to overcome the passive resistance of the law-breakers.

The breakers of the law are, however, so united in their opposition to the operation of the written law, and so bound together by common interests, that by the sanction of individual conviction (the only sure and certain basis of law) and the inherent force of voluntary organisation, they are able successfully to defy and set at naught the edicts of the law-makers and administrators. On more than one occasion, during a recent visit to Ireland, I found that even some members of the constabulary were in sympathy with the aims and objects of the National League, but that their economic servitude prevented their manifesting that sympathy in any public or practical manner. Under the shadow of the Vice-regal Lodge in Phoenix Park, I found such an one, who, thorough Nationalist at heart, and fervent admirer of Mr. Gladstone, was nevertheless troubled about the economic condition of the body-guard of law and order if controlled by an Irish Parliament. He was much afraid that neither pay nor pension would in the days to come be so high as at present. Other members of the constabulary expressed the same view, but these few exceptions only served to throw into greater contrast the tone and manner of the constabulary as a body. Its members have all the vices of pampered men. In any village or small town their barrack is the largest building; and at every railway station two, three, or more members of the force are to be seen peering and prying into every railway carriage. They occasionally relieve the monotony of a comparatively luxuriously idle career by the promotion of moonlighting and other outrages, apparently by way of way of exemplifying their utility to the bureaucracy at the Castle. I happened to be near Lisdoonvarna the day after Sergeant Whelehan had been killed, and was immediately informed by an Irish friend that the so-called "outrage" was a "put-up" or police job intended to divert the attention of the English people from the murders at Michelstown. The evidence given at the inquest on the body of Whelehan has more than justified my friend's statement, and shows that the police in Ireland are animated by the same spirit as their *confreres* in Russia, and I fear I must add Chicago. The contempt and detestation in which they are held in Ireland seemed summed up in a sentence I heard uttered by an Irish Member of Parliament from a Tipperary platform to some four thousand of his constituents, that "no decent man should walk on the same side of the street with a policeman."

No sentiment expressed at that platform seemed more acceptable to the people to whom it was addressed, save perhaps the one which expressed thanks to the friendly English invader. The friendly English invaders of Ireland this autumn—even those who, like myself, look beyond Home Rule for national salvation—have met with such a reception as could only be accorded by a generous, forgiving, and kindly-hearted people.

Their forgiving disposition is still further evidenced by the fact that even yet the door of reconciliation is not shut irrevocably against any moderately decent landlord.

I should, however, be sorry to lead anyone to think that there are many moderately decent landlords in Ireland; but the study of economics is not more popular in Ireland than in England, and the fact that a man is a landlord counts for something with the Irish people. Many tenants would be content to pay what they consider a fair rent to an individual landlord provided they had fixity of tenure and the rent paid was spent in the country. "Indeed, we want to let the landlords down *aisy*," said an Irish shopkeeper to me, "and so we will let them have a House of Lords to amuse themselves in; but if they won't stop in the country, devil a bit will they have any rent out of the country."

The majority of the people—or at any rate of the articulate people—would apparently be satisfied with making the landlords annuitants on the land, or with some form of peasant proprietary; but the effect of the teaching of Michael Davitt is to be traced in many a cottier's hut and small shopkeeper's house, and though that teaching is not so sound economically as might be wished, it yet leads by stages to the recognition of the truth that all wealth is produced through the pressure of society, and is the joint property of the community. It is the imperfect appreciation of this idea by the Irish people which makes a tour in Ireland in some respects a sad holiday. The revolt of the workers must in due evolutionary course follow Home Rule, and as the members of the Irish Parliamentary Party are fully abreast, if not ahead, of the majority of the Irish people, in social questions, it is exceedingly desirable that the men who at present represent Ireland at Westminster should also serve her on College Green.

At present, as a nation, Ireland stands on the eve of the realisation of her hopes. The dreams which her poets have dreamed, and the visions which her younger sons have always seen, are to be dreams and visions no longer. She is to be a nation—a "United Ireland," govern

ing herself and working out her own salvation. For seven centuries this has been her ideal and her demand. In proportion to the length and severity of the struggle has been the hope and expectation of the people, but now, on the eve of victory, the poorer people have a presentment that national parliament rule is but the dawn of their deliverance—that their daybreak is not yet. They hunger and thirst for economic independence even more than for national independence; but whilst national independence seems to them obtainable, economic independence appears remote, and only realisable, if realisable at all, through the efforts of Irish parliamentary men. This was humourously though pathetically illustrated in the course of a conversation I had with a working woman whom I met in a village near Queenstown, gathering for her own use the fruit which the hedgerows afford for sustenance to the poor and needy, and who told me that she was an advocate for "Home Rule and bottled porter." I elicited from her that the ability to buy bottled porter represented in her mind the power, rather than the favourite direction, of affluence, but that she doubted if a national parliament would enable her to reach that point in the scale of luxury.

Her belief in the natural poverty of Ireland is shared by most of its people, who are content to accept economic servitude as the accepted portion and lot of the vast majority. A national parliament will intensify economic discontent, and by its deeds convince the workers that the movement which shall give them class freedom, or economic independence, must emanate from themselves.

## THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM.

### BRITAIN.

THE UNEMPLOYED OF LONDON.—Towards the middle of last month the increasing number of Londoners who could get no work to do began to assemble day by day in Trafalgar Square to discuss their situation and endeavour to force the property-monopolists to allow them to labour. On October 12 they marched in procession, with black flags flying, to wait on Sir James Ingram at Bow Street Police Court, where that respectable magistrate informed them that they were "making a theatrical exhibition," and that "the law provided a sufficient maintenance for persons who chose to avail themselves of it." Asked if he would give them food and shelter in prison if they sacked bakers' shops, he replied that they were "exceedingly impertinent," and "deserved no compassion." Even this brutality unfortunately stirred the people to no further action than a march through the city. On October 14 they walked in procession to the Mansion House, and were set upon and beaten and kicked by the police. The next day the police violently attacked the meeting in Trafalgar Square, hustling, striking, charging, and trampling the people, and this policy of provocation and brutality continued until, on the 19th, the unemployed were finally driven out of the Square and betook themselves to Hyde Park, whither they were pursued by the constables, horse and foot. For four days the conflict was carried on in and round the park. On one occasion the gates were closed on the people and the mounted police charged the crowd thus hemmed in and helpless. On other days they principally signalled themselves by attacking the unemployed as they returned from the day's meeting, severely injuring many and arresting all who showed special energy and manhood in resisting. The police-courts have been crowded day by day with "rioters." One case may suffice to illustrate the "justice" they obtained. W. Macdonald, carpenter, charged at Marlborough Street with riotous conduct and assaulting the police, for calling on the people to defend themselves with stones and striking a constable, was asked what he had to say for himself. He replied: "Very little. I intended going home quietly after the meeting, but no sooner had I left the park than a crowd of policemen came rushing round the corner and knocked me down. I jumped to my feet and went for the first policeman I saw, and that happened to be the sergeant. If it had been any other man besides one in policeman's clothes I would have done the same." The magistrate: "Three months' hard labour." But when a workman, who had seen a number of police raining blows on one man and called out, "What scandalous conduct! are you Englishmen?" and thereupon been seized by the beard and beaten with a truncheon, brought a charge of assault against a constable, the case was dismissed by police magistrate Newton, with the remark, "Whatever treatment the complainant has received, he only met with his deserts."

But in spite of police-court terrorism and sentences of hard labour by the dozen, the people defended themselves with sticks and stones and their fists, and held their meetings just the same; and on Sunday October 23rd they returned to Trafalgar Square in a solid mass, filling the huge square to overflowing, and afterwards marching in procession to Westminster Abbey.

Coercion in London has failed. There has been an outcry in the middle-class Liberal press against the brutality of the police; for the middle class also have an interest in vindicating the right of public meeting. The Government dare not try coercion in London and Ireland too, and so the unemployed may hold meetings as they please. But a man can't support his family on public meetings, and the men are not much nearer employment. They have been to the Home Office, the Mansion House, the police courts, Westminster Abbey, and found everywhere the so-called servants of the people and administrators of their affairs declaring themselves powerless to help in this extremity.