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LIBERTY

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W. M ROWE

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· ANARCHIST · COMMVNISM ·

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THE COMMUNE OF PARIS.

By LOUISE MICHEL.

THE SPECTRES.

Nous reviendrons foule sans nombre,
Nous viendrons par tous les chemins,
Spectres vengeurs sortant de l'ombre,
Nous viendrons nous serrant les mains.
Les uns pales dans la suaire,
Les autres encore sanglants
Les trous des balles dans leurs flancs, -
La mort portera la banniere.

We will return in a countless crowd,
We will return along all the ways,
Vengetul spectres from out death's cloud,
We will return wringing our hands;
Some of us pale in the winding sheet,
Some still bleeding, we will return -
With the open wounds where the bullets beat -
And Death shall carry the flag.

L. M., May, 1871.

INTRODUCTION.

Yesterday it would have been too soon to tell the story of the Commune: to-morrow it will be too late. What is passing around us to-day presents so many points of similarity with what took place then, that it is almost impossible not to recall that epoch in reading our own. Now, as then, events come thickly; the storm-clouds grow heavy, and in the tempest which is shaking the old world, the distracted compass in vain seeks the pole. Things are linked much as they were towards the close of the Empire; but there is a difference of scale. The struggle then was almost solely in France; this time it is throughout the world that human society seems about to change its axis.

Twice already within the last fifty years, England has shown hospitality to fugitives from the French hecatombs.

Our fathers fled, when in December, 1851, Louis Bonaparte betrayed the Republic. Our brothers escaped the slaughters of May, 1871, and in their turn came to ask of the great black City place to lay their heads. And now a third exodus is beginning.

It is right that a narrative of events should make England somewhat better acquainted with the men who take their place as workers in her midst. For the same old calumnies are being circulated to-day; the work of the *agents provocateurs* is just what it used to be, and has already found its victims; so that the story of the Commune of Paris, occurring, as it did, midway between the proscription of December, '51, and that which is now beginning, may fitly appear in an edition specially for England, where for the most part small attention has been given by the general public to what occurs on the continent, England having contented herself with opening her doors to the refugees.

The French edition, on the other hand, will consist mainly of impressions; and will make its appeal to those who have seen and heard the things related; the facts are familiar to them already, and the memory of them still fresh and vivid.

The English edition, adapted for rapid reading, will contain the facts, without commentary, but with incontestable references and quotations, clothing the skeleton fitly enough in its shroud.

The two editions will contain respectively the same number of parts, but these will be differently written.

The English edition will comprise the following:

Part I. The Death-Agony of the Empire.
Part II. The Republic of Sept. 4th, 1870. The Government of the National Defence.
Part III. The Commune of Paris.
Part IV. The Week of Blood-shed. Counsels of War. Executions. Transportations. Return.
Part V. From the time of the return from transportation, until to-day; when, for the third time, Freedom's lost children come to seek the asylum which England knows herself to be strong enough to grant them.

LOUISE MICHEL.

LONDON, *Sept. 1st*, 1894

PART I.

THE DEATH-AGONY OF THE EMPIRE.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY HISTORY; AND QUOTATIONS.

The movement of revolt, long since set on foot by poverty on the one hand, and by despotism and the persecutions which thwart the natural march of progress on the other, has been well described by Malon in his work, *The Third Defeat of the Proletariat*. (Published by Guillame Fils, Neuchatel, 1871.)

"The great demands of the 18th century (he says) had conquered the past at the cost of unheard of efforts. Despite enormous resistance, the divine right of kings had been cast beneath the scaffold of Louis XVI, and the way opened for social liquidation through the facilities gained for the *bourgeoisie*. Political liberty had been affirmed, and a program of social equality adopted. In short, humanity had been thrown on the lines of a radical transformation.

"Then succeeded a moment of general and legitimate relaxation. The fumes of sanguinary glory had however, blinded men, and caused the deviation of what energy remained. It was at this juncture that a few individuals whose hearts were touched by the sad lot of the people—toiling silently, suffering obscurely, fighting heroically, in other interests than their own—vowed themselves to a task such as could only be dared by men living in times of disturbance; being nothing less than that of transforming French society from top to bottom.

"We desire the common welfare. This welfare can only be established through equality. We will make equality. Perish existing civilization; we will make a clean sweep of it, so only that equality be achieved." Thus these audacious ones! Their method was crude; their idea being simply to get rid of the Government, and to decree and carry out an absolute equality of conditions.

"Two of these, Babœuf and Darthé, were denounced by a traitor, and were beheaded for this attempt at social renovation. Transportation and imprisonment were the lot of the other conspiritors, among whom were Buonarotti, Germain, Sylvain, Marechal, Cazin, Moray, Blondeau, Menessier, and Boin. . . . . *Naturally, these defeated men were prodigiously calumniated by the self-styled honest people. Those who assume this name persue a policy which includes the crushing and vilifying of men who aspire after a better social order.*" (Malon, pp. 13-14.)

If it did not bear date, Oct. 31st. 1871, this book of Malon's might appear to have been written yesterday: —

"It is time that, even at the risk of appearing barbarians, those who labor and who fight, those who with their sweat or their blood augment human capital, and are the most active agents of progress, — it is time that the workers should put in a claim to that idea which has been hitherto reserved for themselves by the parasite classes. . . . This struggle of the starveling against the spoiler, this eternal claim for justice against iniquitous privilege, has, however, at every epoch, been the very thing most severely stigmatised by the writers and orators belonging to the privileged classes. What thoughts of reprobation are called up by the revolt of the slaves of Greece and Rome, by those of the Roman plebeians who followed the Gracchi, and Cataline; and those, again, of the helots of Carthage, of the *Bagauds* of Gaul, (who revolted against the Roman emperors,) of the *Pastoureaux*, of the Jacobins of France, of the *Ciompi* of Florence, of the *Chaperons blancs* of Flanders, of Stenka Razine's Russian peasants, of the Anabaptists of Germany, etc. Each time the champions of the suffering, after having been pitilessly exterminated and submitted to atrocious penalties, have been held up for the execration of succeeding generations."

Let me permit Malon to speak further before taking up the parable on my own account; for these things constantly repeat themselves, and are for ever the main causes of revolt.

"Being crushed," says Malon, "the social revolution took refuge in secret societies, which, from 1793 to 1839, preserved and re-animated the revolutionary tradition in Europe. . . . . "

After painting the vicissitudes of the struggle for life, in which everything that begins by promising some amelioration to the workers, ends by giving it solely to those who are favored by fortune, Malon proceeds: -

"The sufferings of the proletariat became more and more intolerable. Even an economist may speak of this poverty as desired, organized, and maintained on the increase, by middle-class selfishness; every enjoyment is excluded from the existence of the unhappy classes; want and endurance stifles all their moral affections; for when it is necessary to struggle hour by hour only to live, all passions become concentrated in egoism. . . . . As Sismundi justly said, 'one feels ashamed of the human species on seeing to what depths of degradation it is capable of sinking, to what a less than human lot it is capable of submitting."

Yet despite this treatment, the workers do not become brutalized. Beneath the crushing pressure of the official world, they continue to agitate.

"Various shocks in the great industrial towns, as in St Etienne, Mulhouse, Lille, Limoges, Cleremont, Ferraud, gave notice that the proletariat would no longer accept without a struggle the slavery imposed upon it by financial and industrial companies. As early as 1832, the proletarians of Lyons wrote in red letters on their black flag, "Live working; or die fighting!" Having passed through La Croix Rousse (an open square in Lyons) fighting heroically, they were overcome and shot down in heaps.

"After this disaster, the secret societies resumed the struggle. In 1839, after St. Merry,[1] after the massacre of the Rue Transnonain, Barbé, Blanqui, and two or three hundred other heroes, attempted to break the tyranny of capital. A few years later (1846) French muskets forced the miners of St. Etienne to resume their painful toil in the mines, regarding which toil they had desired shorter hours and better pay." (Malon, pp. 22-23.)

Victor Considerant (author, communist, and refugee) thus describes the society of that time: "Society to-day is a heartless and merciless step-mother, who has, it is true, smiles to give to a small number of rich idlers and rogues, but who casts out and curses the great legions of her poorer children, whose hands are horny, and whose backs are bent with toil; she has no word for these except when she asks them for their money, their sweat, or their blood." ("*La Destinie Sociale.*")

In the historical summary already quoted, Malon further tells us that "In February, 1848, the workers resumed the struggle, inscribing on their banner 'The Right to Work.' Yet it was only their right

1. St Merry, a convent where some young people took refuge, and were put to death. Rue Transnonain, the scene of another massacre of the rebels. Both these atrocities took place under Thiers, in 1848.

to die that was recognised. The massacres of June, '48, and of December, '51, sufficiently proved this. In '48 the workers held out heroically for three days, and the cruelty of their enemies, the bourgeoisie, was absolutely ruthless. For four days the people were shot down in heaps."

An account follows of the abominable cruelties committed by the soldiers under Cavignac, who were spurred on by being made to believe that a Breton recruit had been sawn asunder between two planks, and by other calumnies which seemed the more readily swallowed the more preposterous they were.

"But that was not enough. Bourgeois and Jesuit - good friends henceforward, established in the Rue de Poictiers a veritable manufactory of calumnies under the direction of Thiers. In the provinces the word went round that Red Republicans and Socialists were synonymous terms for thief, plunderer, assassin, incendiary, and malefactor of the worst description; the country people being further informed that the large towns were infested with gangs who sought to rob the poor, and to batten on the labour of others."

Meanwhile the Empire went further ahead with its deep corruptions and its slaughterings; on one hand the wars in Mexico and in China, on the other the fetes at the Elysée; which last Victor Hugo thus satirized: "Republicans! There stands the guillotine. To-night there will be dancing at the Elysée."

Yet, despite the destruction both of the Roman Republic, and of the French Republic to which Louis Napoleon had given his oath, the Empire was left standing till Sedan. Then, indeed, "there ran a whisper of deliverance through the industrial centres." "Let us free ourselves!" was the cry of the factory, the mill, the workshop, and the mine.

"Then the strait waistcoat of force in which humanity had been stifled was rent in all directions. An unwonted tremor agitated both hemispheres. The Hindoos rose against the tyranny of English capitalists. North America fought for the emancipation of the negroes, and triumphed. Ireland and Hungary were full of disturbance. Poland was rising; while in Russia liberal opinion began to set the Slav peasants free, and the youth of Russia, fired by the words of Tchernichevsky, of Herzen, and of Bakounine, became propagandists of the social revolution. Germany, stirred by Karl Marx, Lassalle, Becker, Bebel, and Liebknecht, embarked on the Socialist movement.

"The English workers, keeping Ernest Jones and Robert Owen in remembrance, were seen actively associating.

"In Belgium, in Switzerland, in Italy, in Spain, the workers, perceiving that their politicians deceived them, were seeking means of improving their lot. The French workers were everywhere awakening from the torpor into which they had been plunged by the events of 1848 and 1851. In short the movement was growing more and more marked, and the proletarians tending increasingly to combine for common aid in the realisation of their vague but ardent aspirations." (Malon, p. 30.)

In London, at St. Martin's Hall, a meeting was convened on Sept. 28th, 1864, for the purpose of discussing the situation in Poland. Delegates from every part of the world having demonstrated the universal poverty, it was agreed that in face of this general human distress the cause of the proletariat at large should be taken up, regardless of national distinctions, or the special sorrows of any particular nation.

It was at this meeting that the "International Working Men's Association" (known as "The International") was officially born. It had existed, without self-recognition, ever since mankind had been divided into weak and strong, into slaves and masters.

With that meeting at St. Martin's Hall a new chapter opens, in which we will tell of the trials and prosecutions of the "International" in France.

NOTE.—One reason for quoting so much from Malon in the present chapter is, that in narrating events concerning the import of which feeling runs so high, it is well to call a witness from the dead. Hate is less ready, and judgment is calmer, when the witness has disappeared.

SOCIALISM IN DANGER.

By F. DOMELA NIEUWENHUIS.

International Socialism is to-day confronted by a problem of the gravest importance. Wherever the modern spirit prevails, wherever the new conscience has come to life, are found the same divergence of opinion, the same lamentable schism. In the stream of thought that makes for the ocean of righteousness two distinct currents flow side by side: they might be styled the parliamentary and anti-parliamentary, or the parliamentary and revolutionary, or better still, the authoritarian and the libertarian.

This remarkable difference of opinion was one of the chief topics discussed at the Zurich Congress, and although a resolution was adopted which was virtually a compromise, the question remained unsettled. The motion brought forward by the Paris Central Revolutionary Committee was drafted as follows:

"The Congress decides—

"The continuous struggle for the possession of political power by the socialist and worker's party is our chief duty, for only when the proletariat has won political supremacy will it be able by abolishing privileges and classes, and by expropriating the present ruling and possessing class, to obtain a complete hold of that power, and to found the Social Republic, firmly based on human equality and solidarity."

All must admit that the words run glibly, but that the task is by no means easy. Indeed, one must be very simple, not to say silly, to believe that political power can be used to abolish classes and privileges, and to expropriate the possessing class. First, we must work long and hard till we have obtained a parliamentary majority, and then, that difficult business accomplished, we must calmly and serenely proceed by legal enactments to expropriate the possessing class. *O sancta simplicitas!* As if the possessing class, having at its disposal all the "resources of civilisation" would ever permit you to go so far.

A proposition of the same nature, but more cunningly formulated, was tabled by the German Social Democratic party, and submitted for discussion by the Congress! In brief, it claimed that the struggle against the rule of the exploiting classes must be POLITICAL and have for its end THE CONQUEST OF POLITICAL POWER.

The object in view, then, is to be the possession of political power, and this programme is quite in harmony with the words of Bebel at the conference of the party held at Erfurt: "We have first to win and to use political power, so as to arrive simultaneously at economic power by the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. Once let political power be in our hands, the rest will follow as a matter of course."

Surely Marx must have turned in his grave when he heard such heresies defended by disciples who swear by his name. It seems to be with Marx as with Christ: many profess to worship him the better to betray his principles. Observe the language used by Bebel. He seems to wish to have it inferred that economic power will follow political power as a kind of aftermath. Is it possible to imagine political omnipotence enthroned beside economic impotence? Up to now we have all been teaching, under the guidance of Marx and Engels, that it is economic power which determines political power, and that the political power of a class in the state is merely the shadow of its economic resources. Economic subjection is the cause of all manner of slavery and social inferiority. And now we hear it said by the little gods of the Social Democratic party that political power must first be achieved, and that economic good things will follow: whereas it is exactly the opposite which is true.

Yes, they even went so far as to say: "So only he who will take an active part in the political struggle, and will make use of all the political resources at the disposal of the proletariat, will be recognised as an active member of the international revolutionary socialistic party."

We all know the classical phrase in Germany reserved for the expulsion of members of the party -hinausfliegen (to put him out). At the Congress at Erfurt, Bebel repeated what he had previously written (see "Protokoll," p. 67): "We must make an end of this continual grumbling and of these firebrands of discord who give the impression outside that the party is divided. I will take action at the next meeting of the party so that all misunderstanding between the party and the opposition shall disappear, and so that if the opposition does not rally to the attitude and the tactics of the party it shall have the opportunity to start a separate party."

Quite in the tone of the Emperor William, is it not? Just like His Imperious Majesty when he says of dissatisfied subjects: "If that does not please them, they have only to leave Germany. I, William, I do not allow grumbling, thus saith the Emperor." "I, Bebel, I do not permit grumbling in the party; I, Bebel, have spoken." Touching analogy!

It is desired to apply internationally this peculiarly German drill. Were the proposal accepted, and were Marx still alive, he himself would have to be expelled from the party he founded, that is if the inquisitors dared in his case to be consistent. Once the heresy hunt were commenced, a creed would have to be imposed, and every member of the party would have to declare with his hand on his heart that he believed implicitly in only one effective way of salvation—that through the possession of political power.

Opposed both to the French and the German resolutions on this subject at Zurich was that of the Dutch Social Democratic party, which formally declared that "the class war cannot be ended through parliamentary action."

That this contention was not devoid of interest to thinkers, and would have had many supporters among independent men is proved by the comments of an influential writer in the English socialist paper *Justice*, which were to the effect that the Dutch had raised a most effective and much needed protest, and that they led the way in which the Socialists of all countries would shortly have to follow.

We all know the fate of these various motions. That of Holland was defeated, but not ingloriously, for the Germans surrendered the most objectionable points in their manifesto, and in a manner quite parliamentary framed a feeble half-and-half declaration in the spirit of compromise, which all nationalities might be expected to tolerate for the occasion. We are proud that Holland alone took no part in this travesty of union, preferring the honour of isolation and the dignity of silence.

To be continued.

"Where the men and women think lightly of the laws; where the populace rise at once against the never-ending audacity of elected persons; where the citizen is always the head and ideal; where children are taught to be laws to themselves—there the great city stands."—*Walt Whitman*.

ANARCHIST-COMMUNISM IS THE UNION OF THE TWO FUNDAMENTAL TENDENCIES OF OUR SOCIETY, A TENDENCY TOWARDS ECONOMIC EQUALITY AND A TENDENCY TOWARDS POLITICAL LIBERTY.—KROPOTKIN

"LIBERTY" is a journal of Anarchist-Communism; but articles on all phases of the Revolutionary movement will be freely admitted, provided they are worded in suitable language. No contributions should exceed one column in length. The writer over whose signature the article appears is alone responsible for the opinions expressed, and the Editor in all matters reserves to himself the fullest right to reject any article.

We would ask our contributors, to write plainly and on one side of the paper only.

All Communications should be addressed,—The Editor, Liberty, 7 Beadon Road, Hammersmith, W.

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LIBERTY,

LONDON, OCTOBER, 1894.

Between Ourselves.

IN a free community we hold all would take their part in the necessary work of society. Quite recently, at a meeting in Hyde Park, we were met with the old objection that it would be unreasonable to expect our great men to work at the anvil and like laborious work, in fact it would unfit our poets and artists in their doing fine and delicate work; and our opponent contended that William Morris would be unable to produce the artistic work he now does. Since this is an objection we commonly meet with in propaganda we wrote to William Morris for an expression of his opinion on this subject. Here is his answer:

"It is asked what share in the general work will such persons as poets, artists, and the like take in a socialist state of things. The answer is, that if the general public wants such workmen they will exist, and if it does not they won't exist. If they exist they must have their livelihood like other people, and in order to earn their livelihood like others, they must have opportunities of doing the work which they can do best, and which will consequently be a pleasure to them to do: in short they will be exactly on the same footing as everybody else, *i. e.*, they will get what they want and do what they can. The only difference between their position now and then will be that then they will work for the benefit of those that work for them, *i. e.*, the whole people: whereas now they work for their masters, the rich class, that lives on the labour of others. In short there will be equality and mutual help."

Straws show which way the stream is running, says the proverb, and certain articles in the leading reviews of last month are strong indications of the serious attention being given unexpectedly in certain quarters to Anarchy and Socialism: these articles must be pleasant reading to comrades of all sections. The "Economic Review," the "Fortnightly," and the "New Review" should all be looked at, and certain of their contents carefully read. Malato's article in the last named periodical deserves especial consideration. Another article from Malato's pen, dealing with the principles of Anarchism, will shortly appear in the same periodical.

Even one of the most high-and-dry Church and Tory organs of the day is forced into noticing in courteous terms the "onward" movement: "Politicians may be loath to recognise that the government of the country has in a great measure passed into the hands of the working men, and they are now the real ruling class. But if this is true, and we do not suppose that any reasonable man is prepared to deny its truth, nothing is gained by refusing to act upon it. . . . Our new masters are not less intelligent than our former masters: they are only less instructed. If England is destined to see her empire broken up, her commerce destroyed, her manufactures left without a market, and her people denied work and food, it will be the fault, not of the new ruling class, *but of the politicians.*"

In the "Contemporary" for this month is an article entitled "Our Most Distinguished Refugee" (a biography of Prince Kropotkin) in which is told the following story:

"Shortly before he left Switzerland a curious incident occurred. He was informed, and his informant was a personage who then stood very near the Russian throne, that there was a plot on foot to kidnap him. Some police agents were to be sent into Switzerland in disguise, and the first time they came across the Prince in a lonely place they were quietly to take possession of him. There was to be no noise, no fuss: he was simply to disappear. All the details of the scheme, and the names of the officials who were responsible for it, were given. He knew it was no good applying to the Federal Council for protection: he therefore decided to appeal to the *Times*. He sought out a well-known representative of that journal and told him exactly how the matter stood. Acting on his advice Kropotkin deposited in the *Times* office all the documents bearing on the affair; and informed the contrivers of the plot of what he had done; informed them, too, that if any evil befel him, these documents, names, dates, everything, would be published. "You will hear no more of it, you will see," his friend remarked; and he was right.

In a recent number we referred to a work called "The Anarchist Peril," and to the incomplete, not to say inaccurate, character of the book. We pointed to the author's unjust manner of dealing with Bakunin, and to his superficial knowledge of the principles guiding Bakunin's life. Felix Dubois may to some be excused on the ground of ignorance, but no such excuse can be offered on behalf of our able contemporary *Reynolds*, and yet one of the staff of that journal, in a recent notice of Bakunin, has been guilty of great recklessness, or something worse. It is true the journalist in question has endeavoured to cover his handiwork in a number of quotations, but in the selection of these is displayed the want of proper care of which we complain. It is manifestly unfair to the author of "God and the State" to produce the assertion of a writer unnamed as to Bakunin being a "weak" thinker. In the face of an admission that Bakunin carried, in the Basle Congress, with Karl Marx against him, the following declaration, it is unsympathetic and untrue to describe Bakunin as "a man with more ambition than brains":

"I vote for the transfer to the community of the land in particular, and in general of all social wealth by virtue of a social liquidation. By 'social liquidation,' I mean the legal expropriation of all the actual holders of wealth by the abolition of the State and the existing policy as established by law, which are the only sanction and the sole guarantee of property as it at present exists; and the actual expropriation of the said holders of wealth, wherever possible, and as far as possible, and as soon as possible, by the force of events and circumstances."

With regard to a recently reported so-called Anarchist plot, we asked "Was it the work of the police?" We repeat the question in consequence of the arrest of eight Anarchists at Marseilles. The police charge these men with being concerned in a plot to blow up the Italian consulate, and assert that they have found at the lodgings of the prisoners a quantity of Anarchist literature. and a number of compromising letters from comrades in London and elsewhere. This is the old, very old police story. Anarchist literature, compromising letters! The police have always plenty of this sort of stock on hand. The literature costs them nothing, and the letters are not very expensive. The finding of such articles, after the accused are in prison, always answers its purpose—that of gulling the majority of newspaper readers, and strengthening the hands of Crispi.

That the Italian police, aided by their French confreres, can—and, in fact, must—continue this wretched system of wholesale apprehension is evident. Without it the bogie of Anarchism would cease to exist, and the occupation of half the continental police and their kindred spirits, the spies, would be gone. British newspapers aid in keeping up this diabolical terrorism. They print day after day, in their largest type, the accounts sent them from foreign and tainted sources, of Anarchists plots here there and everywhere. If they print a record of social progress, of a successful movement on the part of a few Russians, Germans, or Frenchmen to free themselves from the crushing tyrannies by which they are surrounded—then the smallest type is brought into use. This is the sort of justice of which big dailies are capable.

Much has been said about the discovery of a bomb in Rome and in its vicinity, and of Anarchist publications. Of course certain persons were first suspected and then arrested. The police have done their work, and the supporters of the system are supposed to have said "Thank you: we have been saved from another devilish outrage." The absurdity of the whole affair, as also the cruelty, is not noticed. It is not remembered either that about 200 bombs have at various times been found by the Italian police. It is curious, but true, that not one of these bombs was discovered in the act of exploding. As a matter of fact they are not made that way. Police bombs are harmless to all but suspects.

Comrade Merlino, in prison awaiting his trial, writes us that his mind has been much relieved by the failure of the authorities to prove that his brother (who holds the position of a public prosecutor) had stolen a document relating to the forthcoming trial. Why the government should have taken up such a prosecution is not easily discernible. If it was for the purpose of further crushing Merlino—and many will take this view—it has signally failed.

Next month we shall publish Walter Crane's beautiful design "The Chicago Anarchists," printed on good paper, price one penny.

CASERIO'S DECLARATION.

Gentlemen of the Jury,

It is not a defence that I desire to make, but simply an explanation of my act. From my earliest years I began to see that our society is badly organised, that unhappy men are constantly driven through poverty to commit suicide, leaving wives and children in saddest circumstances. Thousands of workmen seek work and do not find it. Poor families are seen asking for bread, shivering with cold, and suffering the most cruel privations. Poor children are seen crying hungrily to their unhappy mother, who, having nothing herself, can give them nothing: the few things that were in the house have all been sold or pawned, and the poor folks thus reduced to begging, which often means to be arrested as vagrants.

I left my native country because I had often wept at the sight of little girls, 8 or 10 years old, obliged to work 15 hours a day for the wretched wage of 20 centimes (2d.). Young girls of 18 or 20, or even older, also work 15 hours a day for a ridiculous wage. And such is not only the case with my compatriots. All over the world, the workers toil the long days through for a morsel of bread; while their labour produces millions and millions for their exploiters. In Italy they get little to eat but bread, water, and a little rice; so that by the time they are 30 or 40 they are worn out by toil, and go to the hospital to die. And besides, in consequence of deficient nourishment and excessive work, they are attacked by *pellagre*, a disease which (as the doctors acknowledge) specially attacks those whose food is insufficient, and who lead lives of suffering and privation.

I reflected, and said to myself, "A vast number of people are famished, and their children suffer, while in the towns there is no lack of bread or clothing. I saw the great shops full of garments and woollen stuffs, and and others full of food that every one needed; while on the other hand, thousands of people were doing nothing and producing nothing, yet living on the labor of the workers, violating the daughters of the people, possessing dwellings of forty or fifty rooms, and numbers of horses and servants, in short, every enjoyment of life. Ah, how I suffered! seeing this vile, badly-organised society. Often I said to myself—"Those who accumulated fortunes were actually the cause of social inequalities."

In my childhood I was taught to love my country; but when I saw that thousands of workers are obliged to leave the country, leaving their parents or children in distress, I thought within myself—The workers have no mother country. Our country is the wide world. Those who preach love of one's native land do so because they themselves find the means of life in it, just as birds defend their nest because they are comfortable there.

I had believed in God; but when I saw such injustice between men, I perceived that instead of God having created men, it was men who had created God; and that those whose interest it is to teach belief in heaven and hell, are the very people who desire their private property to be respected, while keeping the people in ignorance.

In consequence of all this, I became an Anarchist.

On the 1st of May, '91, when the workers of the whole world expressed their claims, all the governments, whether monarchical or republican, replied with their guns and prisons; many workers were killed or wounded, and still more were imprisoned. It was at this time that I became an Anarchist, for I was satisfied that the Anarchist Ideal fitted my ideas. It is only among Anarchists that I have found good, sincere men who know how to contend for the welfare of the workers.

So then I, too, began to make Anarchist propaganda, and I was not long in passing on to action.

I have not been long in France: but quite long enough to assure myself that all governments are alike. I have seen the poor miners of the north, whose pay was insufficient to feed their families, protest against their employers by means of strikes, and then, after a struggle of three months, I have seen them forced by hunger to resume work on the old terms. As to the Government, it took no heed whatever of these thousands of workers; it was taken up with great festivities in honour of the Franco-Russian alliance. There was a talk of imposing new taxes, in order to find the millions necessary for these festivities, and those who had sold their conscience to the bougeoisie—the journalists—wrote articles to show that the alliance between France and Russia would bring great advantages to the workers. Nevertheless, we poor workers found ourselves still in the same poverty, and obliged to pay new taxes to meet the expenses of these great governmental heads. Then, when we asked for work or bread, we were answered by bullets, just as had been the case with the miners of the north, the agricultural laborers of Sicily, and so many others.

Not long ago, Vaillant threw a bomb in the Chamber of Deputies in protest against existing society. He killed nobody, only wounding some; and yet bourgeois justice condemned him to death. And not content with condemning the guilty, they began to persecute the Anarchists at large; arresting them by hundreds; not that they had anything to do with Vaillant, but because they had been present at Anarchist conferences. The Government took no thought of their wives and children; it cared little that those it arrested are not the only sufferers; that their children are crying for bread! Bourgeois justice gave no heed to these poor innocents who know nothing about society; *they* are not to blame that their fathers are in prison, they ask only to be fed.

Then the raids were continued, correspondence violated, conferences and meetings forbidden; there was the most infamous oppression used against us. Even to-day, they are arresting hundreds of Anarchists only for having written some article or other in a newspaper, or for having expressed some idea in public.

If the Governments, then, employ guns, chains, and prisons against us, are we Anarchists, who are defending our lives, to remain cooped inactively at home? *Are we to deny our Idea, which is the truth?* No; on the contrary, we will reply to the governments with dynamite and the bomb, with steel and the dagger. In a word, we ought to do our utmost to destroy the bourgeoisie and the governments.

Emile Henry threw a bomb in a restaurant. I have avenged myself with the dagger!

You gentlemen of the jury, are the representatives of bourgeois society. If you wish to take my head, well, take it! But do not imagine that by so doing you will check the Anarchist propaganda. Take care; for what men sow that they reap! The Governments have begun to make martyrs; those garotted at Xeres, those hung in Chicago, those shot at Barcelona, those guillotined in Paris. The last words which these pronounced at the moment of their execution meant Death to the bourgeoisie.(1) Their words have crossed the seas and frontiers, they have penetrated into the towns and villages, into the dwellings of millions of workers. This multitude has hitherto allowed itself to be led by those who pretend to direct them under the names of Associations, Corporations, Syndicates, and other mystifications which have only served the ambitious

(1) [illegible] the people said was "Death to the Bourgeoisie!" But this [illegible] But the sense is all right.

desirous of getting themselves elected as deputies or as town-councillors, in the idea of living without doing anything. But now the people are recognising that nothing short of violent revolution will avail to make good the rights of the workers against the bourgeoisie. When that happens, workers will no longer commit suicide through poverty, they will no longer suffer long years in prisons, they will no longer be hung, garotted, guillotined: on the contrary, the bourgeoisie—the kings, presidents, senators, deputies, judges of assizes, and so on—will die among the people's barricades in the throes of the Social Revolution.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

RUSSIA.

The Russian Free Press Fund in London has reprinted a very interesting pamphlet, lithographed copies of which have for some time been circulating secretly in Russia. It is signed by the Russian novelist Korolenko, and is headed: "Reminiscences of Tchernishevsky." Korolenko, like most other gifted Russian literary men, has spent a part of his life in prison and in Siberia; and, while living in the wild Yakout country (to which he had been exiled for refusing to take the oath of allegiance to Alexander III), he began to collect, from various sources, information about the life and circumstances of the great writer, who for 17 years had been buried alive in the Arctic deserts of the north-east. So completely was Tchernishevsky cut off from the world of living men, that for a long time even his fellow-exiles, stationed in the more inhabited parts of Siberia, fully believed him to be dead. When at last, in 1883, he was brought home to Russia, after 20 years of imprisonment and exile, he was, as Korolenko puts it, in the position of a man who returns to the world after having lain asleep for a century.

When Korolenko, in his turn, was allowed to come back to Europe, he made the personal acquaintance of the dying Tchernishevsky, and his little book contains his own reminiscences, as well as the information which he collected while in Siberia. The book ends with a delightful little legend which he took down from the lips of a peasant in eastern Siberia. The curiosity of the country people was naturally aroused by the extraordinary precautions taken by the government to keep Tchernishevsky from holding any communication with the world, and they had invented their own explanation of the case as follows:

"Tchernishevsky was a great general and chief of all the senators. One day the Czar called all the senators together and said: 'They say things are going badly in my kingdom and the people complain. How shall we set things right?'"

"Well, all the senators began to talk; one said one thing and one another. But Tchernishevsky held his tongue. Then the Czar said: 'Why don't you speak, my Senator Tchernishevsky?' And he said: 'It's all very well, what your senators say; that's not the real thing. The real thing little father (the Czar) is quite simple: look at us, what a lot of gold and silver we have hanging about us; and how much work do we do? We don't work at all. And the people in this kingdom that work most have'nt even got shirts to put on. Everything's upside down. What you had better do is to take a little of our riches away from us, and a little of the burden off the other people.'"

"When the senators heard that, they were very angry. And the chief of them said: 'There are bad times coming, when one wolf wants to eat the other wolves,' and they all went away, one after another. So Tchernishevsky and the Czar were left alone together. And the Czar said: 'Well my lad, I can't help it! I'm very fond of you; but there's nothing for it; I must send you far away, because I can't manage all my business with no one but you to help me.'"

"And the Czar cried; but all the same he sent Tchernishevsky to the worst place he could find—right up north."

Because the great interest attaching to everything which throws light upon the history of such a man as Tchernishevsky, this little book has a value of its own from the circumstances of its appearance. In signing his name to it while living in Russia, where the police were already inclined to look askance upon him, Korolenko has done a brave action, and set an example which many literary men would do well to imitate.

"La Père Peinard"—the irrepressible—is again to the front. "Il N'est Pas Mort" comes forth like a Phœnix from the ashes made by police suppression, and thousands of No. 1 are already in the hands of Anarchists all the world over. Pouget is editor-in-chief of the new and lively venture, and we wish him all the success his pluck and energy so thoroughly merit. Friends of the cause can obtain the new journal at 23, King Edward Street, Islington, London, N.

PARLIAMENTARY POLITICS IN THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT.

I.

UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE.

Before examining the influence that parliamentarianism has exerted on the socialist movement, it is as well to study universal suffrage, whether considered as a basis of political life, or as a means of emancipation. For it is precisely universal suffrage which, by giving to parliamentarianism the sanction of a pretended popular consent, has rendered it possible for a certain kind of socialism to engage itself in the sphere of parliamentary politics, there to become corrupted and bourgeois.

If, among the political institutions that rule, or may rule human societies, there is one which has seemed specially to appeal to principles of equality and justice, and which has aroused, and still arouses, lively hopes among men of progress, it is certainly that of universal suffrage. According to its own apostles, universal suffrage is to close for ever the era of revolutions, and to open the way to peaceful reforms, made in the interests of all, and with the consent of all. Laws are to be put on a level with civilization, and since they can always be modified, will constantly correspond with the needs, and with the will of all men; or, at any rate, with that of the majority. The exploitation and oppression of the great mass of mankind by a small number of rulers and property-holders will no longer have either grounds or means for existing; and if, in truth, the poverty of the greater number is not an invincible law of nature, but a social deed which society is capable of correcting, then will this poverty disappear, along with all the sufferings and degradations which are derived from it. And, indeed, at a first glance this forecast appears to be well grounded in logic.

In society, as at present constituted, everything is regulated by the laws. Those who make the laws are the deputies—the representatives. These are nominated by the electors. Then it follows that it is the electors, or more strictly the majority of the electors, who command and dispose of everything. And since the workers are the most numerous, they, if they could vote, would become the arbiters of their own fortune and of the whole social organisation.

But against this apparently self-evident conclusion, facts arise with their all-powerful eloquence.

There are countries in which universal suffrage has already long existed and operated. In other countries, universal suffrage has been established, abrogated, and re-established; the moral and material condition of the masses remaining meanwhile unchanged.

A little knowledge of history or of statistics, or simply to have travelled a little, or to have read the journals of no matter what party, is sufficient to show anyone that universal suffrage, even without the trammels of a monarch and a senate, and even with the complement of the *referendum* and "popular initiative," has never availed to ameliorate the lot of the workers. The differences, however real, between the condition of the workers of different countries and different epochs are to be explained on economic, moral, and political grounds, independently of the existence of universal suffrage; and it is not rare to find that in countries where the workers have no vote, they nevertheless enjoy more freedom and general well-being than in countries where the suffrage is universal.

In a republic as in a monarchy, and alike whether suffrage be universal or restricted, parliaments are always composed of landowners, lawyers, and other privileged persons; and the laws passed by parliaments only serve to sanction the exploitation of the workers, and to defend the exploiters.

In short, from the Napoleonic *Coup d'Etat* to the bourgeois massacres—from the cowardly and thievish invasions of peoples weak in military forces, to the frightful poverty of the workers and the assassination of insubmissive starvelings—from the great plunderings of conquerors to the caprices of ministers, there has been no infamy great or small—there has been no outrage against civilisation, against progress, against humanity—which universal suffrage, adroitly manipulated, has not absolved, justified, and extolled. The tears of women, the sobs of the unfortunate have been mocked and embittered by the votes of the unfortunate themselves. Whence, then, this contradiction between actual facts, and the results which logic might lead us to expect? Is it perchance an inexplicable phenomenon?—a sort of sociological miracle?

Let us examine the phenomenon more closely: it may be that a complete and therefore truer chain of reasoning will lead us to the conclusion that universal suffrage has, after all, only issued in that result which in strict logic it ought to yield.

ERRICO MALATESTA.

PROGRESS. When one thinks of the Greeks playing, praying, labouring, lecturing, dreaming, sculpturing, training, living everlastingly in the free wind and under the pure heavens, and thinks that the chief issue of civilisation is to pack human beings into rooms like salt fish in a barrel, with never a sight of leaf or cloud, never a whisper of breeze or bird, oh, the blessed blind men who talk of progress! Progress, that gives four cubic feet of air apiece to its children, and calls the measurement Public Health! —"Ariadne," (*Ouida*).

MINE AND THINE.

The following lines are literally translated from a poem written in Flanders in the 14th century, and show how the men of that day longed for the simplest Communism, probably with nearly as much reason amidst the high handed open violence of kings and scoundrels, as we have for our longing amidst the fraudulent veiled violence of capitalists and scoundrels.

Two words about the world we see,
And nought but "Mine" and "Thine" they be.
Ah! might we drive them forth and wide
With us should rest and peace abide;
All free, nought owned of goods and gear
By men and women though it were.
Common to all all wheat and wine
Over the seas and up the Rhine.
No manslayer then the wide world o'er
When "Mine" and "Thine" are known no more.

Yea, God, well counselled for our health,
Gave all this fleeting earthly wealth
A common heritage to all,
That men might feed them therewithal
And clothe their limbs and shoe their feet
And live a simple life and sweet.
But now so rageth greediness
That each desireth nothing less
Than all the world, and all his own;
And all for him and him alone.

Translated by William Morris.

ANARCHY AND VIOLENCE.

Continued from page 71.

For my part, I protest against this confusion between acts wholly different in moral value, as well as in practical effects.

Despite the excommunication and insults of certain people, I consider it an essential point to discriminate between the heroic act of a man who consciously sacrifices his life for that which he believes will do good, and the almost involuntary act of some unhappy man whom society has reduced to despair, or the savage act of a man who has been driven astray by suffering, and has caught the contagion of this civilised savagery which surrounds us all; between the intelligent act of the man who, before acting, weighs the probable good or evil that may result for his cause, and the thoughtless act of the man who strikes at random; between the generous act of one who exposes himself to danger in order to spare suffering to his fellows, and the bourgeois act of one who brings suffering upon others for his own advantage; between the anarchist act of one who desires to destroy the obstacles that stand in the way of the reconstitution of society on a basis of free agreement of all, and the authoritarian act of the man who intends to punish the crowd for its stupidity, to terrorise it (which makes it still more stupid) and to impose his own ideas upon it.

Most assuredly the *bourgeoisie* has no right to complain of the violence of its foes, since its whole history, as a class, is a history of bloodshed, and since the system of exploitation, which is the law of its life, daily produces hecatombs of innocents. Assuredly, too, it is not political parties who should complain of violence, for these are, one and all, red-handed with blood spilt unnecessarily, and wholly in their own interest; these, who have brought up the young, generation after generation, in the cult of force triumphant; these, who when they are not actual apologists of the Inquisition, are yet enthusiastic admirers of that Red Terror which checked the splendid revolutionary impulse at the end of last century, and prepared the way for the Empire, for the Restoration, and the White Terror.

The fit of mildness which has come over certain of the bourgeois, now that their lives and their purses are menaced, is, in our opinion, extremely untrustworthy. But it is not for us to regulate our conduct by the amount of pleasure or vexation which it may occasion the bourgeois. We have to conduct ourselves according to our principles, and the interest of our cause, which, in our view is the cause of all humanity.

Since historical antecedents have driven us to the necessity of violence, let us employ violence; but let us never forget that it is a case of hard necessity, and in its essence contrary to our aspirations. Let us not forget that all history witnesses to this distressing fact—whenever resistance to oppression has been victorious it has always engendered new oppression, and it warns us that it must ever be so until the bloody tradition of the past be for ever broken with, and violence be limited to the strictest necessity.

Violence begets violence; and authoritarianism begets oppression and slavery. The good intentions of individuals can in no way affect this sequence. The fanatic who tells himself that he will save people by force, and in his own manner, is always a sincere man, but a terrible agent of oppression and reaction. Robespierre, with horrible good faith and his conscience pure and cruel, was just as fatal for the Revolution as the personal ambition of Bonaparte. The ardent zeal of Torquemada for the salvation of souls did much more harm to freedom of thought and to the progress of the human mind than the scepticism and corruption of Leo X. and his court.

Theories, declarations of principle, or magnanimous words can do nothing against the natural filiation of facts. Many martyrs have died for freedom, many battles have been fought and won in the name of the welfare of all mankind, and yet the freedom has turned out after all to mean nothing but the unlimited oppression and exploitation of the poor by the rich.

The Anarchist idea is no more secured from corruption than the Liberal idea has proved to be, yet the beginnings of corruption may be already observed if we note the contempt for the masses which is exhibited by certain Anarchists, their intolerance, and their desire to spread terror around them.

Anarchists! let us save Anarchy! Our doctrine is a doctrine of love. We cannot, and we ought not to be either avengers, nor dispensers of justice. Our task, our ambition, our ideal is to be deliverers.

ERRICO MALATESTA.

The Prejudice against Property.

To the Editor of *Liberty*.

The main objections to the property idea which stand out clearly in L. S. Bevington's contribution in the last issue, are two. One is that "there exists no individual producer"; the other, that the ownership of the product of one's labour is essentially "an instrument of rulership and power over the opportunities of *others*."

(1) It is patent to everyone that the "individual producer" of a commodity merely puts the finishing touch, so to speak, to a mass of labor performed by other hands. But my "individual producer" is not merely the *last* man occupied in the process of production—he is each of the contributors from the beginning to the end. Materials are *bought* by the commodity finisher, so indeed are his tools; even his ideas and ability have cost him time and energy to acquire. In estimating the price of "his" product, he never calculates more than the personal energy he has expended upon it, plus the cost of the materials and wear and tear of tools, which is the price of other men's labor incorporated into the product, for which he has paid in advance. Therefore L. S. B's objection doesn't militate against the equity of appropriation in the slightest.

(2) The presumption that the mere control, by the individual, of his product, is tantamount to enslaving the *rest* of mankind, is really ridiculous. As long as *each* has the opportunity to control his product (which Anarchy minus Communism is sufficient to guarantee) there will be an equality of status, and, consequently, slavery will be out of the question. To pretend that opportunities of production are limited in respect to all men's needs (simply because there is an artificial disproportion between supply and demand to-day which is incidentally due to a vicious monetary system) is to re-state the monstrous proposition of Malthus.

The greatest objection of all to Communism is its impossibility. Primitive man only tolerated it through sheer necessity. His movement towards liberty has been in proportion as he has outgrown the communistic instinct, which he inherited from his mute progenitors. Civilized man could not go back if he would. He must advance. If individual liberty has been found wanting by the worker, it is because it has been denied to *him*, not because of it. Yours truly,

Henry Seymour.

LAND UNCULTIVATED: PEOPLE STARVED.

Kropotkin has contributed more than one article to the *Nineteenth Century* on the subject of agriculture: from one of them, entitled "The Coming Reign of Plenty," we make the following extracts :—

THE ERRONEOUS OPINIONS OF TO-DAY.

We have been taught, both by economists and politicians, that the territories of the West European States are so overcrowded with inhabitants that they cannot grow all the food and raw produce which are necessary for the maintenance of their steadily increasing populations. Therefore the necessity of exporting manufactured ware, and of importing food. And we are told, moreover, that even if it were possible to grow in Western Europe all the food necessary for its inhabitants, there would be no advantage in doing so, as long as the same food can be had cheaper from abroad. Such are the present teachings and the ideas which are current in society at large. And yet, it is easy to prove that both are totally erroneous: the territories of Western Europe could grow plenty of food for much more than their present population, and that an immense benefit would be derived from their doing so.

AGRICULTURE NEGLECTED.

Thirty years ago the soil of Britain nourished one inhabitant on every two acres cultivated; why does it require now three acres in order to nourish the same inhabitant? The answer is plain: merely and simply because agriculture has fallen into neglect during the last thirty years. In fact the area under wheat has been reduced since 1853-60 by full 1,590,000 acres, and therefore the average crop of the last four years was below the average crop of 1853-60 by more than 40,000,000 bushels, and this deficit alone represents the food of more than seven million inhabitants. At the same time the area under barley, oats, beans, and other spring crops has also been reduced by further 560,000 acres, which at the low average of thirty bushels per acre would represent the cereals necessary to complete the above for the same million inhabitants. And so we can say that if the United Kingdom imports cereals for 17,000,000 inhabitants instead of 10,000,000, it is simply because more than 2,000,000 acres have gone out of cultivation. But the same decrease is seen under the heads of green crops and the like.

MAKING COMPARISONS.

France nourishes from 170 to 178 inhabitants per square mile, while this country provides with home-grown food only 145 out of the 290 persons who inhabit each square mile of her territory; and when we take into account the inferior food of the Irish, and the Scotch highlanders, and the paupers, we cannot say that the average food of the French is inferior to the average food in this country. But, as already said, we must not compare extensive agriculture with intensive; if we intend to make a fair comparison we must take another country of intensive culture: for instance, Belgium. And there the comparison will not be in favour of these islands.

Belgium also grows an average of 27 one-tenth bushels of wheat per acre; but her wheat area is relatively twice as large as that of the United Kingdom; it covers one-eleventh part of the cultivated area or one-twelfth of the aggregate territory. Besides Belgium cultivates on a larger scale industrial plants, and although she keeps the same amount of cattle on the acre as the United Kingdom, her aggregate crops of cereals are five times larger with regard to the cultivated area, and seven times larger with regard to the aggregate territory.

WHAT MIGHT BE DONE.

If the soil of the United Kingdom were cultivated only as it was thirty years ago, 24,000,000 people, instead of 17,000,000, could live on home-grown food; and that culture, while giving occupation to at least 750,000 men, would give nearly 3,000,000 wealthy home customers to the British manufacturers. If the 1,590,000 acres on which wheat was grown thirty years ago—only these, and not more—were cultivated as the fields are cultivated now in England under the allotment system, which gives on the average forty bushels per acre, the United Kingdom would grow food for 27,000,000 inhabitants out of 35,000,000. If the now cultivated area of the United Kingdom (80,000 square miles) were cultivated as the soil is cultivated on the average in Belgium, the United Kingdom would have food for thirty seven million inhabitants; and it might export produce, without ceasing to produce, so as freely to supply all the needs of a wealthy population. And if the population of this country came to be doubled, all that would be required for producing the food for seventy million inhabitants would be to cultivate the soil as it is cultivated in the best farms of this country, in Lombardy, and in Flanders, and to cultivate the meadows which at present lie almost unproductive around the big cities in the same way as the neighbourhoods of Paris are cultivated.

If we take all into consideration; if we realise the progress made of late in the gardening culture, and the tendency towards spreading its methods to the broad field; if we watch the cultural experiments which are being made now—experiments to-day and realties to-morrow—and ponder over the resources kept in store by Science, we are bound to say that it is utterly impossible to foresee at the present moment the limits as to the maximum number of human beings who could live, and enjoy life, upon a given area of land, nor as to what a variety of produce they could advantageously grow in any latitude.

CAUSES THAT CANNOT LAST.

The Landlord, the State, or the Money-lender, take for themselves so considerable a part of the produce grown by the farmer, from one-fourth to one-third, and more, that agriculture cannot go on under such circumstances: the tribute levied upon it is too high, and it is rendered still heavier by the tribute levied by the manufacturer. But these are social causes: they do not depend upon the unproductivity of the soil, nor upon over-population. And these causes cannot last.

Liberty Bookshelf.

The following can be obtained at the Office of "Liberty," or will be forwarded on receipt of stamps.

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Comrades would greatly assist by sending notices of meetings for insertion under the above heading, and turning up to sell "Liberty" and the literature of the Cause. Special local notices, if sent in by the middle of the month, will be prominently displayed on the number of copies ordered. Will comrades co-operate to make these notices as complete as possible.

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