

Freedom

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THE POLITICAL PENDULUM.

And be these juggling fiends no more believed
That palter with us in a double sense;
That keep the word of promise to our ear
And break it to our hope.—SHAKESPEARE.

So we are to have a change of government—that is to say, the Liberals go out and the Conservatives come in. And thousands of human beings, worked into a state of excitement by the daily Press, are persuading themselves that to them the matter is one of grave personal import. Poor little shopkeepers with Conservative tendencies are hopeful about an improvement in trade, and even perhaps have an indefinite expectation that the cruel competition of the stores round the corner will not be so hard on them with Lord Salisbury in and Lord Rosebery out. The Jingo of the music-halls and the clubs will crack an extra bottle of champagne over the fact, as they believe, that once again the British flag will wave triumphant in the face of foreign foes. The respectable voters of the middle classes (these are the substantial people who really have the vote, and to whom it is useful) will have some fun out of it also; those who prefer the humbug of Balfour having for the moment the laugh of those who prefer the humbug of Harcourt. Add to all this the activity of the clique of wirepullers, who are always scheming for a share in the jobbery which forms such an important factor in the art of government, and you have the chief elements which make up all this excitement over the swinging of the political pendulum.

Later on we are to have the nightmare of a general election, and the air will be thick with lying statements, cajolings, and promises, never to be kept. Then the worker, if he has a vote, will be a person to be patronised by the would-be "representative" who is seeking his "suffrage"; the poor wage-slave, who later on may go to the deuce, is at this particular moment to be flattered by the hypocritical attentions of the charlatans who profess to have a brotherly interest in his social condition. However, after all the weary years of legislative trickery, the worker finds the fundamental evils of his social condition still untouched, so that, as William Morris has truly said, if it were not for the papers and the placards, one might never know from one's social surroundings which party was in power. Finding this to be so, the worker does not rush to the poll with that enthusiasm which the promises of politicians might be expected to evoke. The truth is there is in a large section of the workers an inherent distrust of politics, as the voting figures constantly prove; yet these people as a rule have no conception of any methods other than political ones of destroying the evils which surround them, and, losing faith in these, they fall back into the slough of mere indifference.

Politics breed apathy. In face of all these facts the I.L.P. and the Social Democrats issue their manifestoes with apparently the utmost seriousness, and it is evident that a good deal of wasted activity is expended over the forthcoming general election; and the political whirlpool into which these organisations are drifting is obviously absorbing, as we always said it would, the best energies of those who are following political methods. Socialism, in fact, loses just in proportion as politics are adopted as the means to an end. Fortunately few besides the "leaders" will be lost in this maelstrom, but even these few are a loss to a cause which needs all its recruits.

Again we have been told that political action, if it does no other good, makes Socialist propaganda, keeps the question before the people, and enlightens them in the true principles of the new Society; but we seek in vain for the verification of this prophecy. It is not much enlightenment, for instance, for the S.D.F. to tell us that the late government was "the meanest and most hypocritical faction that ever played fast and loose with the welfare of a people." The same may be said of all governments, past, present, and to come. The same could be said of your administration, dear Social Democrats, if the welfare of the people should ever unfortunately depend upon you.

Our nature is subdued to what it works in, like the dyer's hand; and an aspirant to political power is just as much a victim to his vicious environment as is the slum-dweller to his. Just one gleam of Socialism comes in at the finish of the S.D.F. manifesto, where they ask that the whole people should own and work the railways, the factories, the mines, and the land; but even this statement is so overclouded by a list of palliative measures that its significance will be missed by the ordinary observer.

We, however, in England require no further object-lessons in the ways and means of State Socialism; besides our experiences at home we have not been unmindful of what has been happening abroad, and

the vagaries of the Social Democratic party in Germany alone would induce sincere people to seek for a higher ideal than a mere parliamentary program. And, after all, what has a million of Socialist (?) votes succeeded in doing for the German people?

For the people actually nothing; but on the crest of this Democratic wave we have seen carried into political prominence a group of men, who will make very good Bismarcks if their turn should come.

But will the swing of the political pendulum ever lift Social Democracy into power? is the question which many parties besides the Anarchists are seriously asking themselves. Even if we had hopes in political methods, even if we thought Social Democracy a good thing for men to strive for, we could not answer in the affirmative. We are convinced that history will never have to record the reign of Social Democracy. The reason is that no new form of government is possible consonant with a new basis for our social life. The idea is spreading that all forms of government bear the same evil fruit, and the thing which has done more even than Anarchism to spread this idea is government itself. For what government in all the world is there at the present day that inspires the respect of any sincere person? From the dominions of the Czar to the American Republic, not a single one. They are all tainted, all corrupt, and, so far as the future is concerned, they are all impossible.

The logic of the position cannot be escaped. Tottering by the mere fact of their own innate incompetence and corruption, and assailed from without by the relentless current of events and the growth of new ideas, the course of governments, which never did run smooth, is undoubtedly nearing its end.

Therefore it seems to us that any person who honestly desires the transformation of our present social state into one where liberty, equality, and fraternity are to have their real significance and become the facts of every-day life, must adopt an attitude of uncompromising hostility to political methods.

Even if some paltry alleviations of present evils were to be had by a resort to the ballot-box, would they be worth the disgrace and shame of dragging through the mire of party politics the grandest cause the world has ever known—the emancipation of humanity? We Anarchists at any rate will do what in us lies to point this moral to the workers. And while the Social Democrats and the I.L.P. will be doing their pitiful best to waste the energies and destroy the hopes of those who put trust in their "principles," we shall continue to exhort the workers to turn from politics to the consideration of their true interests.

Do not vote, but think. To vote is to annihilate your individuality; to think is to assert it. The ballot-box always leaves you where it finds you; but to exercise your reason, to grasp new ideas, that is to make true progress. Politics is a house of cards, but, as Emerson says, "they only who build on Ideas build for eternity."

SOME RECENT CRIMINAL CASES.

Some recent criminal cases, the Wilde case among them, afford considerable illustrations of the evils which in one way or another arise out of Law and all that goes with it.

These cases show incidentally to what an extent the practice of blackmailing—one of the most degrading of human trades—is carried on. And of course it is well known that in London and other large centres this practice exists as a huge and organised profession, not only utterly corrupting to those who pursue it, but with circumstances of the greatest horror to its victims, who often, however innocent, are unable to quash their persecutors or face the notoriety with which they are threatened, and who sometimes, as in a late instance Loway Gaol, are driven to suicide.

I will say that our judges almost always show their disrepute to this trade, and lately a man who had had the courage to secute a gang of blackmailers was warmly complimented. But the latter omitted to mention what is, after all, the whole matter, namely, that it is the Law which is mainly responsible for the existence of blackmailing. In the Wilde case the accused has been treated with honour, and a man, on their almost uncontradicted evidence, has been condemned to what some pious and blasphemous persons seem to hope may be a sentence of death, with the result probably of giving a considerable impetus to this odious kind of professionalism.

Possibly some people would say that the evils against which the Law is directed in these cases are so great that in order to root them out it is worth while to risk the creation of a class of criminal extortioners.

But since the Law cannot do what it sets out to do, since it cannot possibly regulate the intimate relations of any two people to one another (of whichever sex they may be), it may as well give up the vain enterprise, in which it mares more than it mends, and makes more trouble than it disposes of. Besides, in questions of morality between adults (as apart from violence or taking advantage of youth or weakness) the very gist of it all is that the parties concerned should be responsible for their own actions and its consequences; and it is obvious that there can be no truly moral relation between people unless they are free.

Surely we are going altogether the wrong way to work in this matter; and it were better to acknowledge at once that the only way to deal with the subject is by social reconstruction, by the encouragement of real affection, and the teaching of cleanly habits and ideas, especially to children and young things; whereas, with regard to this last point, it is notorious that our middle-class and public schools are hotbeds of vicious habits, in which no attempt is made to afford any enlightenment or instruction to those who are so sadly in need of it.

And this leads me to another point—that is, the general tendency to relegate all these matters to a kind of ominous silence, and to refuse absolutely to discuss them. I admit that sexual matters generally are often difficult to speak of, and not fitting for indiscriminate argument and publicity; but is it not largely to the rather cowardly silence on this particular subject that we must trace the state of our schools? and is it not a shame, simply on this account, to leave young folk to get themselves into dire trouble and confusion of mind, without a word of help or guidance to them?

Owing to this state of affairs there is undoubtedly in the public mind almost complete ignorance of some facts of human nature, which are really very important; and one of these facts—one which seems to explain a great deal that is otherwise dark—is the following. It appears that a considerable percentage—perhaps one in every fifty—of human beings are so born that they can only love (using the word in its best and largest sense) others of their own sex—that is, the person, if a woman, can only feel that complete dedication of the heart towards a woman; or if a man, towards a man. In all other respects these persons may be—often are—perfectly healthy and normal and capable; they may, and often do, feel a friendly interest in individuals of the opposite sex; in some cases, for social and other reasons, they marry, and may have children; but even so, they do not, and apparently cannot, really love their partner, and the marriage is generally unhappy for both parties.

This strange fact has only lately, through the researches of men of science, been put on a solid basis of organised knowledge; but the evidence now is incontrovertible, and is supported by such abundant data and literature that the reader is surprised to find (what he possibly never before suspected) that a population of this kind is in reality existing all around him: surprised, until he remembers that such men and women will naturally, under ordinary circumstances, never reveal themselves to an outsider, and will keep their own counsel on a subject which the world does not understand.

It need hardly be said that a tragic destiny often clouds the lives of these strange beings. The boy so born grows up to find himself different from others; do what he may, he cannot alter his own nature; however pure his love may be (and the evidence seems to show that as a rule the love of such an one is much less sensual than the love of the ordinary man), his least expression of affection or intimacy is misinterpreted, suspected, and attributed to the commonest desire. No one reaches a hand or explains his own nature to him. Silence reigns; he feels an outcast among his fellows. He doubts himself, he doubts the truth of his affection and of his best feelings. Not infrequently his life is blighted, or, taking a wrong turn, runs down into mere desperation and excess.

Similar troubles, more or less, attend the girl who is born with the homogenic temperament. Surely, in face of the sufferings of this class and the difficulty and reality of the problems which they have to face, it is time that there should be some sane and impartial consideration of the whole subject.

EDWARD CARPENTER.

RELIGION and the LABOR MOVEMENT.

When we compare a present-day Socialist and labor paper with one of ten or twenty years ago of this or other countries, we meet the same economic and political doctrines—fallacies in our eyes—but they were put forward in the old papers in a serious, thoughtful, and energetic way, largely differing from the flippant, racy, would-be witty which modern labor papers seem to be proud—where you sometimes puzzled to find where their Socialism comes in at all. We well on this, but deal with one striking difference between new labor literature, namely, the invasion of modern religious cant, by priests and parsons, advocates of what Christianity or Christian Socialism—some even utter the Christian Anarchism!

This is, among others, a most deplorable feature, and one of the surest symptoms that the direction which this movement is taking is altogether wrong. As some are inclined to consider this a secondary question, we will explain our reason why we think it to be a matter of grave importance. When we read in the chief organ of the Independent Labor Party the following, written by the president of that party, Mr. Keir Hardie, M.P.—“It ought to be a rule right throughout the movement to hold neither committees nor conferences on Sunday, and as few other meetings that day as possible. . . There is a very strong

element, especially in London, just outside the movement, but with strong leaning towards it. This is largely religious and great care should be taken not to give unnecessary offence thereto. Sunday conferences and Sunday committees, not being necessary, are just the sort of thing to make this class look askance at the movement, and this is not well. This I repeat, is the element which must be won ere the movement will be a factor to be reckoned with in London politics. It is this class which gives the I.L.P. its strength in the provinces, and it is the lack of it which constitutes its weakness in London” (*Labor Leader*, June 1, 1895)—when we read this cynical appeal to a supposed Socialist party to pander to the prejudices of religious maniacs, who grudge the people the small right to spend a few hours of their only day of repose as they like best, we think that it is not uncalled for to discuss this question.

Should this question be left alone on account of the freedom of conscience? We might as well abstain from Anarchist propaganda altogether. We want to induce people to free themselves from the bonds of authority in every form, and it matters nothing whether this authority is “freely” accepted or not; for the matter of that, is not the wage system also “freely” accepted by the masses?—they are “free” not to sell their labor, and, as we know, are “free” to starve if they prefer this to wage-slavery. In the same way, people afflicted with the misery of religious convictions are “free” to act according to them—that is, to be bondsmen of the various clerical parties or to disregard them, incurring thereby certain risk and trouble in the future, and, in their conscience, in the present already. Thus these people are not free at all, and the words “freedom of conscience” applied to the absurd imaginations they are possessed of are just the same mockery as the words “freedom of contract” applied to the wage system; and as the sophistic appeals to the latter by (“Liberty” and) Property defenders are exposed, the equally futile appeals to “freedom” of religious opinions merit the same scornful rebuke.

The origin of these religious opinions, as has often been explained, is twofold. First, the primitive ignorance of our savage ancestors, which led to the explanation of natural phenomena by supposed personal beings living and acting within and by them, these beings—the gods of the rivers, mountains, clouds, trees—were endowed with faculties and ideas corresponding to those of contemporary mankind; and as mankind progresses, but traditions are liable to remain unaltered or progress more slowly, soon a mass of mythological traditions accumulated, the directly human origin of which was being forgotten, and purposely made obscure by the caste which lived by transmitting these traditions, etc.—the priests. So they formed a ready material for minds of a speculative turn, who embodied so-called moral doctrines within them. Morals are nothing but the consequences drawn from public opinion of a given period and place; and as public opinion varies in different circles and surroundings, moral doctrines accordingly vary; but once connected with this mass of mythological traditions, they were given a divine origin also. In the same way those various gods were arranged and organised in various ways, corresponding perhaps to the constitutional evolutions in the various tribes, and formed here a republic, here a hierarchy, and some particularly morbid monarchists did away with all of them in favor of the unscrupulous unique despot whom people still call “God.”

All this mythology, with embodied moral doctrines, is handed down by the priest-caste; and, as Hottentots believe what their priests and sorcerers tell them, our “civilised,” “intelligent,” “educated” Christians believe what their priests and sacred scriptures tell them; and all governments uphold this teaching because it teaches submission to authority and belief in celestial compensation for earthly misery.

The latter belief is the second cause of the strength and persistence of those primitive superstitions. After all, all the poor know is that they are exploited and shamefully treated, and everyone tries to make the best shift for himself. Only a portion of them have come to Socialist or Anarchist opinions, and of these the former are hopelessly fooled again by the politicians. The great remainder try to make the best of their position, thinking it best to imitate the unscrupulous methods of their exploiters, if they have a chance; or they believe in some retaliatory justice that will bring about their turn, and this tendency is worked upon by priests and parsons of all descriptions, who tell them to believe in celestial rewards for their sufferings in this life.

Thus the origin of religion is ignorance, and one of the strongest factors upholding it is directly used to uphold at the same time authority and exploitation, with all their dire consequences.

Religious people will, perhaps, tell us that religious doctrines are not always servile to the constituted powers of society, that they are persecuted, and they will adduce as a chief example the story told in their scriptures of the life and death of Jesus Christ; further they will dwell on the large participation of priests in modern social and even Socialist movements.

Dealing with the first objection, persecution is indeed not only sometimes the fate of religious creeds—it is their very essence. Like every State considers itself as the State, regarding other States as enemies, hence strives to extend and conquer, and makes war inevitable as long as we allow States to exist—every religion purports to be the religion, and wants to be the only religion, and, notwithstanding all cant of love and hypocrisy, is spread by all means of stratagem and force, cruelty and bestiality, if they are only within its power. The Inquisition of Spain rouses the indignation of English Protestants; but did Catholics fare any better in England and Ireland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? Persecution and oppression are as inseparable from religion as exploitation is—the feeding of hosts of idle persons living by fraud, otherwise called parsons and priests.

It has never been proved that Jesus Christ existed. The most likely explanation of the stories current about him is that there existed at that time in Palestine a semi-philosophical, semi-social, and semi-mystic movement or several movements, some of the episodes of which, together with any amount of new fabrications and rearranged old stories, were later on put together, and by-and-by crystallised round a number of persons, Jesus Christ and others, of whom nobody has been able to decide whether they are taken from these episodes or altogether products of fancy, or (like the Messiah legends connecting them with the older Jewish traditions) the work of designing intriguers or their dupes. Under these circumstances it is altogether indifferent whether some commonplace moral doctrines are met with in these "scriptures" or not; those of them which please some of us are side by side with the most repugnant doctrines; and whilst there are many good actions for which one would not find a precedent in these "scriptures," there is scarcely a vile and infamous act which could not be fully justified according to them. Men who dared to think freely have always been the first victims of the disciples of Christ: the Catholics burned Bruno, and the Protestant Calvin burned Servetus, etc.

Nothing is worse for progress than if any religion be coquetting with it: for as the material greed of churches is insatiable, so is their wanton desire to crush progress, and to rule in their place absolutely and without hope or mercy.

We will try to illustrate this from history, and see how it applies to the present situation.

About the time of the origin of Christianity the pagan religions were decaying—dying of the ridiculous and absurd—and Materialist and Atheist theories were not absent, which might have supplanted them by-and-by; also a social movement against the economic system, a corrupted minority, fed and clothed by slaves, existed; the slaves often rose in open rebellion; Communistic theories were well known, etc.—all seemed, as to-day, on the eve of a great revolution. But this was not to happen; in the right time to perpetuate slavery and misery for a thousand years more Christianity originated, that is, all those germs of revolt, all Materialist and Communist doctrines, were trodden down, replaced by the hope in celestial reward, the "millennium," the "coming reign of God," and ignorance, superstition, and brute force ruled again till late in the middle ages, for twelve centuries and more.

And the point which concerns us here is, that these Christian doctrines were not introduced, at the beginning, by force or imposed by mere superstition, but they were carefully draped in all the most modern (at the time) social and Socialist phraseology; and when they had taken the spirit out of the movement and converted the rebellious slaves into submissive sheep bringing in the subterranean caves, not to forge weapons for revolt, but to lie prostrate before crosses, and worshipping what was for them, indeed the perpetrator of their misery—the new, pure, reformed, true, real and unique "God." When that was done, by-and-by the powers of the church were extended, and it reigned supreme for centuries to come—the darkest times of history.

When after a thousand years, from various reasons, among which one is the re-discovery of the ancient Greek literature and philosophy, so long hidden away by Christian ignorance and intolerance—also by the tendency to corruption inherent to the most strongly established power—the Christian religion seemed to be played out, like paganism formerly was, when for the people it was a mockery, a ware sold by the priests for so and so much, and for the educated classes Greek materialism revived (the humanists); when also the people became rebellious again, the peasants (the slaves of that period) revolting in England, France, Germany, the artisans of the towns becoming stronger and more independent, the towns rejecting feudal rule and federating among themselves, Communistic ideas reviving (see for all this Kropotkin's "Mutual Aid in the Medieval City," *Nineteenth Century*, August-Sept., 1894), we should expect a new world arising—one, though superstition and prejudices of all kinds were still very strong, in some respects agreeing with our ideals.

But no; again religion, the curse of mankind's efforts towards progress, stepped in; the old religion, about to be destroyed or to rot away, was reformed, purified, made apparently better, and the result was that progress was again deferred for centuries and thus the modern States were created, the power of kings strengthened, the revolts of the people drowned in blood, the life of the people, once for a short time called "merrie," made dreary and miserable again, as it is to-day.

On the other side the only movement which can be said to have attained the ends it had in view—the great French Revolution—was preceded by a period of warfare against all religious superstition; Voltaire's "Ecrasez l'Infame" (Crush the Infamous) was the watchword of the struggle, and religion was never allowed to interfere with it, nor was it with the Paris Commune when the Archbishop of Paris was shot, nor with any serious revolutionary movement born of Socialist and Anarchist ideas.

The lesson of these examples can easily be applied to the present social movement; and here we come to the other objection mentioned above, the participation of priests in an apparently progressive way in the modern social movements.

If they are allowed to go on in this way they will, hand-in-hand with the electioneering politicians, lead away, adulterate, or usurp for the purpose of establishing their own domination, all the spirit of revolt now slowly but surely rising in the masses. The social revolution would again fail, as it failed eighteen hundred and five hundred years ago, and new ages of darkness, misery, and enthrallment would follow.

That priests and their followers only seek to get a hold on the labor movement to hamper and injure it is evident here in England from their own conduct; they will always be found to advocate the most

half-hearted reforms; and there are people stupid enough to be glad of these new friends instead of shunning their polluting contact. Before all, if they had any serious objects in view but the benefit of their own trade, they would study modern science, and then those of them who are not downright idiots would not uphold their nonsensical theological doctrines. But they take care not to do that or to make their conclusions known; and what good can these people, whose trade is based on superstitious submission, like the capitalist's is on submission to economic robbery, do to any movement that, if it is to be of any use to the workers, means to destroy all exploitation from the root?

A look at the Continental Socialist movements is useful here. There are in most countries Social Democrats, though often not looking favorably on Freethought propaganda, at any rate who do not open the doors of their party to priests to any extent; in some countries not at all. There could not, I am sure, a single priest be found in the Italian or Austrian Social Democratic movements, and the consequence or reason, as you will take it, is obvious. The priests in Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, etc., belong, if not purely clerical conservative, to the so-called Christian Social, Social Reform, and Anti-Semitic parties—that is, to parties which openly and avowedly combat the Social Democratic movement with fair and foul (usually foul) means. Here the priests are in their right place: trying to save the still uncorrupted workers from the Socialist poison, and not being admitted within the movement (as traitors never are), they must watch from outside, and do their best to fight Socialism.

Only in our happy England they are admitted within the movements, and have a much easier time of it than on the Continent, where the average Socialist shuns a priest as he would shun the police.

The consequences of all this to us Anarchists seems to be clear: we must be fully aware that the labor movement is threatened not only from outside enemies, but from those most despicable enemies, the priest and the politician who have already got within it. To those who only care to have the people persuaded to vote for them, the presence of the priest must be a godsend indeed; for a better ally in fraud and plunder than the priest the politician could not find. But as we wish the people to be free, materially and intellectually (which, in our conception, are both the same), we must fully face all these enemies, and of priests and politicians alike say, with Voltaire, *Ecrasez l'Infame* (Crush the Infamous)! N.

REVIEW.

A noteworthy little publication, from the pen of a semi-sympathiser with Anarchist Communism, is H. Joachim Gehlsen's brochure on *Das Christenthum u. der Anarchistische Communismus*. The author sees in Free Communism the goal of human progress; but he fails, we think, to catch the deeper tones of the modern revolutionary stirring. He thus interprets the cry of the age, at least so far as the discontented masses are concerned:—"Away with the philosophy of the State! Away with the religion of the Church! Long live Materialistic Atheism!"

Surely this is a most inadequate expression of the movement hourly growing in momentum and definiteness all over the civilised world—a movement in whose war-cry two distinctly moral elements—indignation and aspiration—are increasingly audible. The deepest note of all is, "Away with Private Property and the Tyranny of Mammon!" And hence, "Away also with the twin hirelings, Church and State, whose actual function it is to maintain and protect that tyranny! Make way for the Individual Man; make possible the Solidarity of Peoples."

Without food, no freedom; and if we note the attitude of crowds to-day, we soon become aware that their materialism goes no deeper than the recognition of this patent fact. All cant about "Fraternity" on the part of those who, under any pretext of expediency, bolster up existing institutions, is increasingly detestable in honest ears. Man cannot discover a brother in the full-fed exploiter of his life and labor.

L. S. B.

A note in the newspaper of June 30th, says that an Englishman has been tor to pieces in Russia. He was the most cruel exploiter of his workpeople, and, unable to stand it longer, they revenged themselves with barbaric fury. Some troops have been sent to fusillade them.

"A great service would be done by any man who would analyse the legislation, say of the last half-century, and compare the expected results of Acts of Parliament with their proved results. He might make it an instructive revelation by simply taking all the preambles, and observing how many of the evils to be rectified were evils produced by preceding enactments. His chief difficulty would be that of getting within any moderate compass the immense number of cases in which the benefits anticipated were not achieved, while unanticipated disasters were caused. And then he might effectively close his digest by showing what immense advantages have, in instance after instance, followed the entire cessation of legislative action; not indeed that any such an accumulation of cases, however multitudinous and however conclusive, would have appreciable effect on the average mind. Political feticism will continue so long as men.....recognise only proximate causes, and never think of the remoter and more general causes by which their special agencies are set in motion. Until the thing which now usurps the name of education has been dethroned by a true education, having for its end to teach the nature of the world they live in, new political delusions will grow up as fast as old ones are extinguished. But there is a select class existing, and a larger select class arising, on whom a work of the kind described would have an effect, and for whom it would be well worth while to write it."—HERBERT SPENCER on "Political Feticism," in "The Reader," June 10th, 1865.

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NOTES.

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.

Of all the absurd positions into which the evil genius of compromise has ever placed conflicting interests, surely this notion of the union of employers and employed is the most outrageous. Yet we read, as a sober statement, that an "Industrial Union of Employers and Employed" is being organised. It requires no foresight to prophesy its utter failure, but it is a pitiable sign of the corruption amongst the labor "leaders" to find there are some treacherous enough to advise the workers to take part in it.

We hope and believe, however, that these "leaders" will not by any of their specious phrases succeed in luring the workers into this increase of sheer imbecility. For even the most thoughtless of the toilers must recognise that these pretended friends are after all the men who rob them, and whose interest it is to continue doing so. In fact, a little reflection would show the workers that this move on the part of the exploiters proves how much they fear their employees when their attitude is directly antagonistic! The straight path and no compromise should be the watchword of the workers. But, dull as the Britisher may be as a rule, we fancy that this little scheme is too farcical even to delude him.

VEGETARIANISM AND SLAVERY.

Who amongst us that has experimented in a vegetarian régime has not admired the civil and attentive young ladies, in their sober black dresses and spotless white aprons, who serve us with the dainty dishes which, as vegetarians tell us, are to make of man a less ferocious animal, a gentler and more humane member of society, besides benefiting him in health and pocket?

Well, it is nice to have all these good things promised us, but what about the lives and happiness of those who are to help us to these blessings? Here are some statements which the *Star* publishes concerning the treatment of their employees by the vegetarian capitalist. One of the aforesaid young ladies, who was employed from 11.30 a.m. till 4 p.m. (she was a half-timer), received 5s. per week for her services, and from this was deducted 2d. per week in case of breakages. If perchance a breakage does occur, then the unfortunate has to pay half the cost in addition to the stoppage made every week. No gratuities are allowed to eke out her miserable pittance. Now, people who employ others and treat them in this way, no matter how they may try to evade the fact, are practically living at the expense of the lives and happiness of those out of whom they make their profit. In other words, it is simply a refined and indirect form of cannibalism; so that, amongst other monstrous anomalies of the present age, we have Cannibalistic Vegetarianism! To such disgrace does the curse of capitalism bring us.

THE INTERNATIONAL DRAMA.

The spirit of internationalism is growing apace in all directions. Alphonse Daudet comes amongst us and loses his prejudices against the English; Wagner's operas arouse the enthusiasm of Paris, and Germany sends the Ducal Court Company of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha to perform the revolutionary plays of Sudermann—for they are revolutionary, say what you will.

In *Die Ehre* (which the German company have been performing at Drury Lane) Sudermann shows us that "Honor" (the title of the piece) is much the same sort of commercial commodity in Germany that it is here. He produces a play which exposes the gangrene of the commercial spirit underlying the most of our relationships in the present system. There is no exaggeration in it whatever. Read any libel case and see how honor is valued, or again any breach of promise case or any divorce case, and so on and so on. It is the same nineteenth-century counterfeit all the way through, and reflects to a nicety the corrupt medium in which our lives are passed. There is, however, a hopeful light penetrating all this—and that is Anarchism. Yes, only through the spirit of Anarchism, which refuses all compromise with the political and social evils of the present system, can be found for humanity a condition of life which will render a dignified and honor-

able existence possible. Sudermann's plays are helping to clear the way for this fast-approaching era of social regeneration.

SYSIPHEAN LABORS.

Two hundred lady preachers, members of the World's Woman's Christian Temperance movement, gave London the benefit of their services on Sunday, June 16. It was the beginning of "a week of effort," the "effort" being directed to the legal suppression of the "drink curse." Now, by the drink curse is meant the workers' indulgence in intoxicating beverages; for who ever heard these good ladies denouncing my Lord Tomnoddy for his extensive and expensive wine-cellar? Not they, indeed; they have too much love for the titled toper to denounce his little foibles. What these gentry want to do is to patter and fad with the lives of the toiling masses, thereby gaining a little cheap notoriety in the columns of the *Daily Chronicle*, and introducing into their own empty and useless lives a little morbid excitement. Not but what some of these folks may wish to see less of the evils of drink, the reality of which evils we do not wish to deny. But we blame these people for indulging their fads, because there are other evils of which they are perfectly well aware, but which they entirely ignore. Shall we remind them, for instance, of the overcrowding in London, of 60,000 families living in one room? Think of the horror of it. Is not this sufficient to drive 60,000 men—aye, and 60,000 women too—to the public-house, even though when there they will again become the victims of commercialism in consuming the adulterated rubbish which the State-licensed vendor of this poison will serve out to them. Or again, what of starvation, with all its degrees of pain and suffering, and which, as Professor Huxley tells us, brings a whole series of maladies in its train, which he has termed "starvation diseases"? Does not this fact need a little study and attention, so that one might learn the causes of it and do one's best to end it for ever? But this would be too serious a task for these goody-goody busybodies, and it might ultimately interfere with their own well-spread tables and elegantly-clothed persons. They'll none of it; which is another reason why the workers should ignore them, and turn their attention to the only problem which really concerns them—How can we get freedom and bread?

GOOD SAMARITANS.

The Wilde case continues to excite a certain amount of discussion, the most noticeable feature of which is the growth of a more humane view of the whole question. We believe this case will become historical from the fact that a few courageous people have stood by the man in his time of trial, and, notwithstanding the odium incurred thereby, have shown that sympathy which may prove the greatest factor in encouraging any change in the future social conduct of Wilde, should he outlive the venomous sentence which "society" has pronounced upon him. We must express our admiration for Stewart Headlam's brave conduct both in offering bail and in discussing the subject in the columns of the *Church Reformer*. Mr. Selwyn Image also has displayed a similar courage, and we will quote his words on this subject, only remarking that we should hope to see the same spirit displayed towards all the victims of the present system who fall into the clutches of the law. After applauding the spirit which Oscar Wilde has displayed during his trial, Mr. Image adds: "As regards his future, so far from being in despair, I am full of hope. My acquaintance is not altogether a small one nor an unrepresentative one, and I know that there are men and women amongst them, thank God, true enough to champion his name and memory during the months that he is undergoing his imprisonment, and ready, when that imprisonment is over, to welcome him as their friend, and to help him to recover his spirit and to do good work for the world. ... And if in any way my friendship and services may be in some use in helping him to this end, I shall esteem it as one of the privileges and honors of my life."

OVER THE WATER.

Democratic Parliamentarism has everywhere given rise to corruption. That is well known in England, which does not yet enjoy true Democracy.

In that line the world's record is held by the United States, and some very interesting items are given in *Les Temps Nouveaux*, No. 7. Italy and France come next, with slight differences in the way the thefts are done.

In France another scandal (but it no longer scandalizes anybody) has become known lately: it is connected with the construction of the Southern Railways. It is rather a small thing compared with the Panama swindle, but it involves much the same "honorable members" as the previous ones. Of course, every politician and every member of the upper ten thousand knows the names of those who have been bribed; but the Government refused to prosecute them, the Chamber approved of that decision, and the Socialists shrank from publishing all that they knew, because— Well, it may be that some Radical ally, even some Socialist friend, took his part in the bargain.

But this new disclosure, incomplete as it may be, will not add to the respect of the people for their "representatives."

We have a French proverb: "What you have decided to do, do smilingly." The officers of the French squadron at Kiel, in not following that precept, seem to be rather ridiculous; but that is not our business: what we wish to emphasize is the double game of the French Socialist Deputies.

They boast of being internationalists, but, on the other hand, they would be very glad to obtain the support of the Chauvinist voters who were of so much use to Boulanger. Accordingly they interpellated and blamed the Government for having accepted the invitation of the German Emperor; they complained of its want of self-respect towards William, and of this and that, but they had not a word to stigmatize the humility of France towards the autocrat of Russia. (I won't say "the alliance with the Russians," as the poor moujiks have never been asked their opinion on the matter.)

The *Clarion* is wrong: the Socialist Deputies have been trying to appear more patriotic than anyone in France, and they have covered themselves with ridicule.

The Government and the Senate have concocted together one of the most atrocious Bills that have ever evolved from the brains of legislators. It is for the purpose of interdicting the strikes among workers paid by the State (powder-makers, gunsmiths, mechanics in the naval workshops, matchmakers, tobacco workers, etc.), and amongst the railway employees.

The preamble of this Bill is a most interesting piece of work; the arguments may be imagined. I suppose you admit the identity of public interests and of State interests. It is not difficult to prove that the security of the State is not complete if its workmen are allowed to strike work; that the welfare of the national budget demands that a rise in wages should be a thing unknown.

And what about the personal liberty, the rights of the workers? Oh, they are engaged in a free contract with the State; before asking for work from it they know all about the advantages and disadvantages of the work; and, moreover, if they are not satisfied they may go away,—but separately, because a strike is a conspiracy, and to conspire against the State is worth from six days to five years imprisonment!

In spite of the efforts of the Government it is not likely that the Bill will become law. I think the workers are not in such a state of demoralization as to let it go easily through the Chamber of Deputies; but if they should, it would degrade them completely and bring them to the same level as domestics, who never think of striking.

Later on, if we enter the Socialist State dreamed of by the Marxists, when every worker will be an official, then the idea must come again to light; that is the natural outcome of the system. If the Anarchist spirit does not prevail, to have another idea than the State-employer will be high treason.

The workpeople of a factory in Cambrai had struck work and came the next day to discuss matters with the employer. His son without provocation shot twice at the strikers with a rifle through the locked gate, and wounded five persons: a boy of fourteen, three girls under eighteen and a man forty-eight years old. He has been prosecuted and fined £4 with the benefit of the First Offenders Act; that is, he pays nothing and goes scot free. That decision is a fair sample of French magistracy.

SOCIALISM OR DEMOCRACY.

WHAT IS SOCIALISM?

How comes it that a purely political and Radical program goes by the name of "true and scientific Socialism"; while a Communist formula, based on individual autonomy and free association, is now designated a Utopia, or the dream of mad revolutionaries? To answer this question I will take a historical parallel.

It seems to me that, in our times, we are passing through a period of political and social evolution much resembling that of the Reformation. We know that the latter was brought about, on the one hand, by the monstrous pretensions and abuse of power of the Church and the Papacy, and, on the other, by the great discoveries which shook to their foundations the fables and childish legends of Holy Writ,* upon which the authority of the Papal Church was based. Similar causes lie at the root of the social movement of our era. The military and bureaucratic State became more and more centralised, and swallowed up both the wealth of nations and the life and freedom of individuals. The despotism of Napoleon and the Restoration, the reaction of the Holy Alliance, the Austro-Bourbon domination in Italy, roused public opinion at the beginning of our century. On the other hand, the great discoveries of positive science and mechanical and industrial inventions completely transformed existing European civilisation. Our annual production is thirteen times what it was in 1812.† The new power of the steam engine, the rapidity of exchange in the region of commerce, as in that of ideas, its daily press and cheap postal service, have destroyed frontiers, and changed the order and the unity of nations.

As the Papacy and the despotic Church were forced to yield to the demands of the rebellious conscience of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, so in our times, the autocratic and centralised State will see itself forced to yield to the demands and assaults of the enriched middle-class and the proletariat. But the popular conception of the Reformation differed much from those of Luther, Melancthon and the German kings and princes upon whom they depended. Since John Huss and the Faborites, Giordano Bruno, and Campanella with his "City of the Sun," Thomas Münzer and the Anabaptists, we find the Reformation everywhere identified with the Communist Christian revolution. In the "Anabaptist profession of faith," so popular among the peasants of Germany and the Low Countries, we read:

"I. There are no priests of tribes or sects. Every man may be regenerated by the inspiration of God and take the office of priest, preaching by example.

II. The bodies regenerated by the Spirit ought to dwell together in a perfect community of goods.

VI. No ceremonial worship. Man ought to earn his living by the work of his hands.

VIII. No Anabaptist may govern or let himself be governed by force. His rule is the Word of God. It is better to die than to submit to slavery or to impose it on others."

And they died free, calumniated, exterminated by the legal and prudent reformers. The Reformation of the rich triumphed. It emancipated from the temporal authority and clerical domination, but left the people in the same condition of ignorance, poverty and slavery. Yes, the prudent triumphed, but only by falsifying the spirit and aspirations of the people. Luther, and the theologians of the epoch, wedded the Reformation to princes and kings.

* Surely the Reformation on its religious side was a revolt against the traditional authority of the Catholic Church and the additions it had ventured to make to the Scriptures. Most of the Reformers were fanatical Bible-worshippers, basing their revolt upon an appeal to "God's Word;" as later, in politics, the rebel party appealed to written law and the ancient constitution as against the king's divine right and unlimited authority.—TRANSLATOR.

† Freedom, August 1894, page 53.

The like is happening at present to Socialism. Formulated and spread as a conception of the solidarity of human life, a life organised by society (hence the term Socialism) and not by the State, Socialism was, among the English and French, really Socialist and not "Social" Democratic. According to Robert Owen, St. Simon, Louis Blanc, Proudhon and the rest, he who said the word "Socialism" thereby repudiated all idea of classes; for it was impossible to conceive of one Socialism as bourgeois or aristocratic and another as democratic: Democratic Socialism would seem mere tautology. But this was among the English and French; towards 1840, Socialism began to spread in Germany. The faith of the universities was entirely Hegelian and reactionary. Better men, like Ludwig Boerne and H. Heine, deplored the state and disposition of public opinion in the Fatherland. One section of German youth, imbued with reactionary philosophy suited, as we have seen, to the doctrines of the Restoration, detached themselves from their master. They declared themselves revolutionaries with the State and by the State. Marx, Engels and Lassalle were amongst them.

Mr. Engels tells us that he and Marx have put Hegel's system on its feet. No matter how they have set it up, the fundamental doctrine that the individual must be sternly subjected to the authority of the State has remained intact. When, in 1848, the "Communist Manifesto" of the German party appeared, it was entirely conceived in accordance with an all-powerful State: the State must monopolise everything, organise everything, even an industrial army, even the cultivation of the fields according to a general plan. By this ardent love for the State they drew closer to the Jacobins and especially the Blanquists. These latter always remained active revolutionists. Since their first attempt, with the chivalrous Barbès, they have not ceased to conspire and make attempts to possess themselves of power. In Germany the authoritarian Communists adopted pacific, legal and parliamentary tactics. The very natural desire to attain their end led them into a path of compromise. Like the Blanquists and Socialists of 1848 in France, they have degenerated into a Radical party of Socialistic tendency, as may be seen in their programs formulated by Liebknecht.

Do you think, reader, that I wish to blame them? Not at all. The old Blanqui and Barbès were all their lives men of great character, full of sympathy. I am always full of admiration for their unshakable courage, their devotion to the cause of the people. No less admiration have I for the heroic Russian Terrorists, who desired to seize upon power and the State to decree a social revolution. But all these great characters and noble careers say frankly and plainly that what the movement required was not "scientific Socialism." Never did those heroic revolutionaries put forward the ridiculous pretention of possessing Socialism as their own monopoly, as do the children of reactionary metaphysics.

Their program is a Liberal and Radical political program. As Radicals with Socialistic sympathies they may render immense services to Germany, by proclaiming a democratic republic, by inaugurating the alliance of the republics of central Europe. But, for this, they must renounce the absurd pretention of possessing the monopoly of science, and the right of calumniating and defaming all revolutionary attempts, as they did in 1875-6 against the Bosnians, and in 1876 against the manifestations at St. Petersburg, in 1877 against the attempt at Benevento, in 1878 against Nobel and Gaedel, later against Reinsdorf, against Verner, against the Chicago Anarchists, against the unhappy, starving creatures shot down in Berlin in 1892 by the army that Herr Bebel thinks not sufficiently disciplined.

However, it must be recognised that if Luther, Melancthon & Co. altered the character of the Reformation, by suppressing the Socialistic demands, for the benefit of kings and princes, these Marxist gentry, in their turn, have renamed Socialism to get more votes at elections. If Luther wedded the Reformation to princes, Engels and the rest have wedded Socialism to the State. Another "marriage de convenance." Conventional marriages are very profitable, but never command one's sympathy.

W. TCHERKESOV.

Let Us Reason Together.

The letter of W. J. Robins in last issue is, I think, a sign of the times. Anarchism is undoubtedly attracting thoughtful minds; but while I am more than pleased to see our Mutualist friends adopting a more cordial attitude toward us, and rightly asking comrades to "examine the theory of Mutual Banking with an unprejudiced mind," I would return the request with compliments and ask them to do the same with respect to the theory of Communism. Anarchism is above all things eclectic. Both Mutualism and Communism are but economic forms: it is only when the principles of Anarchy are applied to these as to others that we shall be able to prove which is best.

There is one thing, however, which I cannot help laying very great stress upon, and it is the unnecessary and stupid confusion and misrepresentation our Mutualist friends lay themselves open to by not sticking to their right name, and implying that there is tautology between Individualism and Anarchism. The economic form of Individualism is the right of the individual to appropriate the result of other people's labor over and above what he pays them in wages, though he generally has to share this surplus according to agreement with the usurer, landlord and government.

Mutualism denies this by affirming the right of the individual to the full result of his labor, through co-operation, leaving nothing to be appropriated by capitalist organizer of industry or finance, and repudiates the claims of landlord and State-government.

Mutual Banking, while a useful and even necessary concomitant of a Mutualist form of industry, since it is unable to do more than indicate a method of warding off the absorption of small proprietors who, however, usually find it more expedient to realise their property and invest it in some capitalist joint-stock enterprise, finding the income derived therefrom (the result of exploiting labor), a nice addition to the wages they get while working for some capitalist firm. They generally form a buffer class between the mass of the workers without property and the big monopolists. To the huge mass of the former Mutual Banking in capitalist industry appears to be almost a mockery.

Mutual Banking, in fairness to our friends, must not be confounded with Mutualism. It is only a small part of it, one tiny plank; and it seems to me that without the others, which I consider far more important, the platform will never be built by which the workpeople will be able to raise themselves out of the capitalist slavery of to-day. Since Mutualism destroys Individualist monopoly by affirming the freedom of the workpeople from exploitation, and the liberty of the individual worker to take the full result of his labor, Communism becomes easy of realisation because it simplifies matters: Mutualism is but a converse Communism tainted with the interests and prejudice of small proprietors belonging to a bygone condition of industry. Communism deprives no one of the power to appropriate the produce of his labor to his own use; it only deprives him of the power to economically subject others' labor by such appropriation. It desires to make common to all members of society the whole of that species of property which plunders labor. Personal property is not thereby converted into common property; the property idea itself has not been destroyed, only the social character of property is entirely changed, its class interests are gone for good. We mean only to abolish that miserable spoliation by which the workpeople only live to increase capital for others, and are kept alive only in so far as it may serve the interests of the ruling classes.

When labor can no longer be changed into a monopolising social power, when personal property can no longer be converted into an engine of plunder, from that moment the Communist declares the individual is economically free.

In conclusion, our friend Robins seems to think we are in some way opposed to the establishment of Mutual Banking. Nothing of the kind! We do not trouble ourselves about it because we have nothing to bank, nothing to exchange except our labor-power, and we have yet to learn that even the Mutual Bank will discount short bills on labor not yet embodied in the raw material as a commodity of some sort.

If the small middle-class were not so entirely occupied in scrambling and struggling to become big middle-class they would adopt it at once, if they had any sense.

Yes, some of us Anarchist-Communist wage-workers have looked into it with unprejudiced minds, and can see nothing in it for us. Maybe we "do not comprehend its real importance," but when he says "this would free the enormous amount of capital now idle and cause a great demand for labor," we rather think we do. To show the causes of present poverty, to get our fellow-workers to desire with us the abolition of all State governments, to repudiate the claim of any form of property to plunder labor, to teach the co-operation of labor in association as equals,—this is the inspiring work we find pleasure in.

J. TURNER.

ANARCHISM & POTATOES.

While writing his article for June *Freedom*, comrade Bell did not "care a copper" whether the commonly assumed relation between men and property is real and natural or not. Well, that sort of indifference is likely to remain quite in order till the next social corner has to be turned by the mass of civilised mankind. Then all that which is sham in our institutions will pass into limbo. Yet in evading the question as to whether the notion of property is or is not based on real and natural (and hence irreversible) grounds, it seems to me that it is comrade Bell and not L. S. B. who "gives away our Anarchist position." Anarchism will bear investigation right down to the bed-rock of natural verity, out of which language originally took its rise. To desophisticate our talk is not to indulge in "metaphysics."

Meanwhile comrade Bell sees in his mind's eye two equal gardens belonging to two equal (or, at any rate, similarly circumstanced) garden-owners. He next sees garden-owner A growing lots of potatoes while garden-owner B, despite equal opportunities (in the matter of means, tools, muscle and leisure), grows flowers, or leaves Nature to grow only weeds, thus evidently showing himself unequal to A so far as constitutional taste, aptitude, and propensity are concerned. Poor A soon finds this out; for B makes no offer of his flowers, nor of his unused tools, nor even the garden-space for A's children to play in. And yet he is caught bagging some of the potatoes A had cultivated, on the pretext that A only wants them to sell, while he, B, wants them to eat. And so, naturally, a hot dispute arises between them. Comrade Bell then turns his mind's eye on L. S. B., and asks what that passer-by would say.

Probably nothing; only "think the more." The likely reflection would be—"Those two claimants of as much as they can get along the respective lines of least resistance for their unlike temperaments must be left to fight it out. I am neither policeman, judge, nor jury; and even honest amateur meddlers are liable to mistake." The reflection would wind up with an impatient sigh, meaning: "Oh, for Anarchy! and that common-sense condition of society which would make both A and B look silly fools—A, for toiling and moiling at producing private potatoes only to buy other things with which he could have and welcome by more direct means; B for exposing himself to the bruises or bad names which are the natural meed of the aggressive upsetter of other people's hobbies, instead of getting his potatoes peaceably elsewhere as his socially conceded right."

Truth to tell, the sordid little scene conjured up by comrade Bell as a conundrum for ultra-Communists to guess their way out of, is an apt case in point, showing what a nuisance property-owning may make of one's neighbour. Both A and B are likely types enough under our existing uneasy conditions; but both would show as "cranks," and by no means common "examples," in a healthy social environment. I conceive the Anarchist task at present to consist in eye-opening (in the case of self and others) as to what it is that human nature really wants to be at. Beneath all narrowly selfish workings, longings, grudgings and grabbings each man, I take it, is only taking his own mind's shortest cut to freedom; and not one in a million would at all object to being fair to Dick, Tom, and Harry, if he could only first make sure he wasn't risking his own personal liberties. I don't see much use in asking how we would run equal garden-owning or potato-selling in the absence of policemen; but it does seem to me desirable that we should have a clear idea as to what "owning" involves in the way of inconvenience, and how it is that, behind the back of the property assumption and its indispensable though unreliable and expensive "Robert," human nature persistently tends to work out its own salvation. Most neighbours happen to do one another little unweighed, unmeasured, roughly equivalent good turns over the garden wall; and potato-stealing isn't half as usual as under present miserable conditions it ought to be, if human nature were as individualistic as property-croakers gratuitously assume.

Comrade Bell fails to see that property holding, so far as it empowers at all, is synonymous with monopoly, since arbitrarily to associate with your own will and caprice the use by others of anything whatever which you are unable to put to direct use yourself is to make your will an obstructive factor in other people's opportunities. Everything you trade with, you govern by. Property in anything, merely for trading with it, monopolises that thing as yours; and even though you are not the least in the world a would-be governor (and may under the commercial system be obliged to trade with your superfluity as the only alternative to being governed yourself), yet you are a must-be governor, all the same, of those who have no superfluity at all. Such is the very fact of the matter.

Comrade Bell is doubtless right in saying that "the essential thing is liberty to MAKE, not to TAKE," (he means take away, of course). That is exactly the point. With liberty to make afforded to all who already take pleasure in productive activity, to say nothing of the many more who would find delight in working usefully and steadily if the present physical and moral slavery attached to labor were removed,—with all this natural impulse to cheerful productivity liberated, society could not but find itself so wealthy that none need take away from others in order to supply himself. As to "unbalanced" Communism, I don't understand the term. Does comrade Bell mean that free society would still contain the unconvinced private trader trying (even without statutory protection) to accumulate superfluity for the purpose of bargain-driving? Why not?—to begin with, at any rate. To be free, society must include different methods, resulting from the different predilections of differing men. Only, with FREE Communism once merrily afoot (which under a law-protected property system can never be the case), it is hard to see of what advantage the private bargain-driving could be to either party engaged in it. To me it seems certain that the game would quickly be seen to be not worth the candle. A stile set in a hedge or fence may offer itself as the easiest point to go one's own way over; and quite a crowd of delayed pedestrians may collect round it awaiting their turn; but imagine the hedge removed and the ditch levelled, while the stile is yet left standing as someone's private property! who would then want to climb over it as the easiest way of getting across country?

On this point I may, perhaps, be forgiven for quoting from a letter on Free Access which I wrote more than a year ago to the "Weekly Times & Echo":

"If, having produced that which he cannot consume or enjoy, the producer stickles for a right to prohibit the use of the remainder by others, save on terms imposed by himself, there can be but one motive for his doing so. He must be believing that the retention of his product (always at more or less inconvenience to himself) is necessary, in order to prevent his going short of something which someone else has produced. He wants it, in short, to bribe someone else to hand him something which the other only withholds for like reasons. All this is comprehensible under the existing competitive system (which is but a confused plexus of artificial hindrances), but it would show like a craze in a free and healthy society. Even now the assumption is false that, beside wanting to have his own needs satisfied, his own opportunities open, his own activities free, and his own enjoyments secured, your fellow-man cares at all to hinder your reception of like benefits. He only gets in your way because he thinks you will get in his if he does not. The queer acquisitive grudge which makes men keep what they don't want in order to buy what they do want may also be partly due to the delusion that enough could not be immediately forthcoming of everything for everybody. And so, to make sure for themselves, the privileged market-managing minority have bungled affairs so far that the divorce between natural demand and natural supply is now-a-days well-nigh complete."

Comrade Bell's bracketing of a question regarding a market-gardener's potatoes with a question as to a woman's person is altogether surprising, since insistence on personal freedom is no less surely the starting point of Anarchism than denial of the arbitrary connection between person and things is the outcome of that insistence. The very words "a woman's person" are tautological. A woman is a person and it is as herself, not as her property, that she claims not to be aggressively treated. In the letter from which I quoted I made my opinion clear on this point,—"[People] commit absurdity in claiming to own themselves;..... it is a mere playing with words. I do not 'own' myself. I am myself. A, B, or C is not I. Therefore 'hands off!' And that is all about it."

L. S. BEVINGTON.

AN ANARCHIST VIEW OF THE Legal Eight-Hour Day.

We think by this time most of those who have followed our criticism of the LEGAL eight-hour day have begun to see the position we take up. That we do not consider the eight-hour day of serious importance at all is, also, easily understood. We have discussed it because the political Social-Democrats have, in their usual fair-minded way (sic), repeatedly affirmed that the reason we will not excite ourselves in trying to popularise a belief in the efficacy of an eight-hour law is because we either have not the sense to understand the question, or else we are against all bettering of the condition of the workpeople.

As to the first, we think we have shown that we have looked into the matter, have taken the trouble to analyse and observe, and from these

observations drew our conclusions. We do not care to be satisfied with mere affirmation and generalisation. But not only us; a large body of definite Socialists, for the most part Trade-unionists, and placing little faith in legal enactments on account of the bitter experience they have had of the little good legislation can accomplish, are beginning to adopt much the same attitude as ourselves. Only last March when at the London Trades Council the forthcoming May-day Demonstration was under discussion, one of the delegates, a well-known straightforward Socialist, moved an amendment that no demonstration be held, and urged as the reason, and quite rightly, that the time had gone by to agitate for an eight-hour day, that the employers had already anticipated it and that if anything was to be done to benefit the unemployed it must be reduced to a four-hour day. He also drew attention to the position of importance these demonstrations placed the political leaders in, and noticed the lapse of heart and interest as, year after year, the demonstration was held without result and without the slightest prospect of any on the ordinary political lines. Another had the hardihood to say point blank that unless the organised workers were prepared to declare a general strike to obtain it nothing was likely to come of it.

These are the opinions which have grown up in the ranks of the organised workers and rise out of the experience they are getting of the importance of political action.

We should indeed fail to understand the question if we tried to popularise a palliative which we knew from the beginning would leave the whole plundering position of the exploiters untouched, and would not bring even the relief to the suffering of the toilers which its advocates profess. We should indeed lack common sense if, as advocates of a newer and nobler form of society, we allowed the more intelligent and advanced of the rank and file of the workers to get beyond us in their efforts to break through the old to establish the new. As to being against all bettering of the condition of the workers, it is not true and they know it. Because we stick to Socialist first principles and continually demonstrate that the workpeople as a class can never permanently improve their position until they gain control of the productive powers of society, and that the way to gain that control is by annihilating all acknowledged modes of spoliation by which they have been plundered and with it the entire system of spoliation and robbery; because we stick to what we believe to be the truth and will not turn to the right or left for temporary political gain they declare we do not wish to assist in the emancipation of labor.

Their wilful accusations only prove the weakness of their position, a weakness born of trying to win the political support of the workers by deception, of pretending to resist robbery by dishonesty. In fact it is the continual postponement of even those temporary improvements in the condition of labor, through trusting to the political machinery of the capitalists to effect it, that we are continually fighting against. The return of fifty or even a hundred M.P.s pledged to the Legal Eight-hour Day would not stir our pulses in the least; we know what to look for, we have the object lesson in Germany. But had the workers only continued the line of policy so successful in the case of the Gasworkers and those in the building trade a considerable number of those contests might have culminated in a general strike, and who knows but what in the enthusiasm and excitement a serious attempt might not have been made to break through the superstitious respect of the workers for the property that plunders them, and a sensible and intelligent attempt made to control and direct their own labor in the future and themselves dispose of its products.

This is the actual position that we take upon this question of the eight-hour day the same as on the whole question of labor legislation. We see that it is only an attempt to deal with effects and leaves the cause still at work, that the belief in the efficacy of an Eight-hour Law tends to induce the workpeople to place faith in statute law as a means of relief, while we see clearly that if they ever gain their emancipation it will be by destroying all existing capitalistic security and capitalistic guarantees of which statute law is the expression and government the very embodiment.

While, therefore, we should always take part in any agitation which the workers may be engaged in we should take great care to always point out with all the force and clearness possible the actual position we occupy on this as on other questions.

While we should, always and everywhere, assist every movement of the workers against existing industrial conditions, and do our little best to make the object of the now annual demonstrations a declaration for the solidarity of the workpeople of all countries, we should decline to conceal our opinions and our ends and declare openly that these ends can only be accomplished by the overthrow of all existing political and industrial arrangements. This is becoming more and more necessary now the class war is assuming a definite form and those who were revolutionary in some respects a few years back are drifting rapidly into the political rut, anxious only to secure more votes and thus likely to become in the near future more reactionary seats. They hold fast by old political dogmas and doctrines in opposition to the altered tactics necessary through the rapidly changing industrial conditions of the workpeople. They seek, therefore, logically enough from their point of view, to deaden all direct attacks of the organised workers and to divert all possible energy into the political channel for the purpose of returning them to political power. And where they are returned they distinguish themselves from the other political parties only by making an organised business of the use of Socialist and revolutionary phrases from which, however, all the original meaning and spirit has long since departed.

Hence, they violently denounce and oppose all those who literally translate into action the sentiments they may have spoken, and thereby prove themselves wilfully dishonest, a dishonesty all the more contemptible on account of the fanatical faith of their followers in the miraculous powers of their political panacea.

Our conclusions drawn from the foregoing observations on this matter are: That something more substantial than a legal eight-hour day is necessary if we are to get a really serious class movement. It must be something that not only the political voter can take an interest in, not only organised labor take an interest in, but something in which the weakest and worst off shall feel they are also deeply interested. And this will only be when they begin to see that the cause of their degradation is about to be removed, and that their help is required before it can be accomplished. There must be everywhere a clear and distinct declaration for the complete repudiation of capitalist domination of industry, not a desire to regulate the conditions of labor under capitalism.

There must be a determination to abolish, once for all, political governments, which to-day are merely committees for managing the affairs of industry in the interest of the capitalists and are always the organised power of one class which enables it to oppress another, and not any attempt to induce workpeople to put their faith in governmental legislation on their behalf.

Our policy must be to criticise, not to condemn the mistaken efforts of our fellows to better their condition; to point out that the Trade-unions cannot and that Parliament will not secure even such a poor palliative as the Eight-hour Day for all while the great mass of the workpeople believe in existing social arrangements. But immediately they cease to believe in them and attempt to destroy them this and many other measures now neglected will be rapidly

brought on deck and thrown overboard to save the sinking ship of capitalist piracy.

We who wish to form no party, nor to mould the labor movement, we who claim to be the most determined and advanced section of the workers in all countries have every reason to continue our propaganda; for we see clearly that those who—to win momentary popularity—preach “palliatives to-day, political action to-morrow, and ‘Hurrah for the Social Revolution!’ later,” who are everything by turns and nothing for long,—these will be discounted sooner or later.

Keeping in the ranks of our fellows, taking part in all their efforts and struggles, encouraging them by our personal conduct and example let us press on for such social and industrial conditions that eight-hour laws or eight-hour workdays will not be thought of except as echoes of the past, under which we shall work just so long as it suits our comfort and convenience, and no longer.

J. TURNER.

A DIALOGUE.

(Concluded.)

Other Fellow. Yes: being poor means being governed, body and soul. Being rich means governing.

Dunce.—Govern? that's another new word.

Other Fellow.—Same as law. That is to say, Government is a trick in two moves: First move, make your will “law”; second move, injure people who disobey your will, that is who “break” your law.

Dunce (indignantly).—And, top of all this, you mean to tell me the people are wise not to laugh at the officers, spoil the arsenals, make a bonfire of law-papers and title-deeds, and—

Other Fellow.—For Peace and Quiet's sake stop that nonsense. Why, it's true—it's—it's Anar—, at any rate it's revo—I mean it's downright unconstitutional to talk that way! It is quite constitutional to lock men up for less than that sometimes.

Dunce (after reflection).—Well, I've got an idea that can't be unconstitutional. Suppose all the poor people chose a little set of men like themselves to make the laws, how would the rich people get along then?

Other Fellow.—Come, dunce; you're getting quite a politician! and that's the very thing the rich folk more than anyone else would be glad to see you stop at, because your interests would have to lie their way then, and real changes could be avoided.

Dunce.—How's that? Surely poor men's laws would be all fair and square; and there would be plenty of everything—bread, occupation, education, and liberty,—for everyone then, and no money to hitch the wheels with.

Other Fellow.—Poor men's laws! Ha! ha! Poor men don't need laws to make them able to dig and plant, or build machines and houses, or make roads, or steer ships, or take notice and learn things, and think. They can do all that as easily as bees can make a honeycomb and fill it, directly you sweep all the legal money-rubbish out of the way, and let them get at the land, and at the machinery they have already made. It is only parasites that can't get hold of what they want any way except by turning the workers' honey into money, and then wiping it into their own pockets by the great law-trick.

Dunce.—Well, but poor men in the talking-shop might talk their wills into law, mightn't they? and make it illegal for anyone to live at other people's cost.

Other Fellow.—No: poor men are not patent men, warranted to keep square where it is cheaper to turn round. They are just like other men so far as that goes, and once inside the “gas house” their first job is to stop there, and get themselves made into rich men if they can. Their “honorable” position makes them change their tastes to fit the present system and their memories get hazy about their mates in the street. And it soon dawns upon them that in order to run any laws at all with reference to a class that the laws don't suit, it is needful to do more than talk and report and tie knots in red tape. They must have the disposal of *Tyranny's tricolor!*

Dunce.—Eh? What's that?

Other Fellow.—Tranny's three colors, I say, Red, Black, and Blue:—Soldiers, Priests and Policemen. If they have truncheons, cordite, and hell-fire to drive their laws home with, well and good. But law, without these little aids, ends in gas, and looks silly. And these three implements cost money, don't you see? How are law-makers to expect to get the business folks' money to pay for brute force and clerical cunning, when it is to oppose business and riches with?

Dunce.—Why, by taxes. I didn't know what law was till you told me, but the tax-collector told me the law could force me to pay my taxes, and had a right to the money to keep up the Royal Family, and the Army, and the Church, and God knows what. But if we had the government we could force the rich people to pay for things we care about, couldn't we?—Education, and Science, and Art, and beautiful smooth roads and railways, and electric locomotion, and miles of splendid gardens and free parks. Oh, my!

Other Fellow.—How you do gallop on. It is all wrong. Governments can only get money into their hands by taxing the folk who have money. And more and more people would be short of money, to pay government or anyone else, if business got shaky or trade came to a standstill. And business and trade would get shaky directly people with a little money stopped a trick called “investing.” And they would stop investing if Government couldn't be trusted to back up business for them, and to

leave the control of the land and other capital just where it is. No, no, dunce. Even if it were any good to anyone to have this or that set or class of men forcing their notions on all the rest, there would still be no chance of getting government worked by our sort in our behalf. No need to waste time and energy that way. Everything that really wants doing can be done by arrangements made directly among those able and willing to do it, without any formalities forced on them (with fines attached) by men at a distance not directly concerned in it. Red tape is expensive, mind you, besides tangling everybody's fingers.

Dunce.—Then what earthly reason have the people for not joining together and getting whatever there's enough material and machinery for, without bothering about the law? What is there to stop the poor policemen and soldiers from helping the people to employ themselves without orders from officers? What earthly reason—

Other Fellow.—Look here! You forget the Church. There's no earthly reason, but there's an unearthly one. The priests and parsons live at the people's cost, like the rest of the business world. They don't produce any wealth but they are allowed by the law to use up a good deal in exchange for the service they do the Royalties and Law-and-War-makers, Bankers and Stockbrokers, Pleasure-seekers and loafing Landgrabbers. Their job is to keep the people's minds dull and quiet, so that they should not make awkward inquiries, and find out how the whole swindle began and what it's kept going for. They chloroform the people's wits.

Dunce.—That's a bit! How can they chloroform anyone who doesn't choose?

Other Fellow.—Why, by telling them corrupting lies about wrongs and rights, and making out there's a dreadful curse on people who don't believe what parsons and priests say, and by keeping them so ignorant that they have no chance of discovering where the lies come in. These lovers of darkness have the decency to dress up in black; it is about the only honest thing they do. They cadge for money to run their music, illuminations, scents, millinery, and entertainments in church—bait for women and children; and, back of it all, their job is to steal a march on straightforward progress, so as to keep the game as long as possible in the hands of those classes whose interest it is to run churches. They are after their own grub in the only way they know. It is a very respectable way of lying, cheating and tyrannising. In this free country these black ones are all the sons of gentles and nobles and highly-respectable commercials.

Dunce.—Still I don't see how they can tie the hands of the people, and prevent soldiers and police from joining them in trying for freedom.

Other Fellow.—No, their hands? no. They know a trick worth two of that. They tie their consciences while they are young. They are funks about argument with men, but by flattering and baiting the women they get the children trusted to them in their schools of ignorance, because the little creatures are so defenceless against lies, that the best of them can be made to grow up with just that shaped conscience that it suits law and property for wage-slaves to have. When the people find out what the Church is after, then there's hope for the people. Not before.

Dunce.—Well, your information has made me feel sure of one thing: Law is only a fine word for coarse, cruel force wrapped up in fraud and cunning. And its only use is to keep up property, and to keep rich people easy and unopposed. It is a big infernal swindle!

Other Fellow.—Agreed, old man. It is not Power but Freedom we want. You are a dunce, and I am a fool; but I think it would puzzle a philosopher to prove we were wrong.

L. S. BEVINGTON.

PROGRESS & POVERTY.

The various schemes and proposals for the "constitutional" reform of the grievances of the workpeople without interfering with the rights (or rather privileges) of the proprietary class, however beneficial they may appear to be, have a general tendency in two directions:—

Firstly, under the sway of the Municipalisers and Land-nationalisers, to change the army of monopolists and profit-grinders into holders of bonds and debentures (diluted 25 per cent of their face-value) with interesting incomes gathered and guaranteed to them by the "State."

Secondly, empowered by the seething discontent of the workpeople, their Democratic, Labor, and Radical "representatives" will pass laws to pay themselves a salary and to create swarms of tax-collectors and officials who will peculate, regulate, frustrate, moderate, "decorate," arbitrate, PROCRUSTINATE, and annihilate wherever possible any individual liberty or initiative that may remain even from the present order of things.

These two tendencies partly explain the collapse of one of our pet theories which we cherished very much some 9 or 10 years ago. As we saw the big monopolists swallowing up the smaller ones, the concentration of industry and the introduction of machinery throwing workers out of employment, and the employment of women and child workers at wages barely sufficient to pay their rent, we thought that, in the intensity of their misery, this mass of wretchedness squeezed against the legal wall would rebound and overwhelm the horde of monopolists who were crushing them.

But we found that the monopolist class accommodated itself to its surroundings and from the ranks of the proletaires not required for useful labor it formed a second class of parasites who ministered to its pleasures, lusts and vicious habits which increase in proportion to its wealth:—workers producing expensive luxuries, funkeys, buillies, policemen, soldiers, pimps, politicians, magistrates, lawyers, judges, spies, provocative agents, "free laborers," emergency men, editors and writers for the press, gaolers, priests and prostitutes. These parasites cling to and defend the monopolists against the discontented and

suffering workers, who, bewildered by the Democrats and the Bureaucrats, the politicians and the parasites, do not seem to know what to do for themselves. The superstitious respect and veneration for Authority and Property, carefully taught them in their childhood, causes them to fear the unknown paths of Freedom; and only gradually, driven desperate by the repulsive hopelessness of their condition under capitalistic rule, do they begin to understand their common humanity and see the possibility of Freedom. After all, it is easy to perceive that we workers produce for each other the necessities of life in addition to supporting the primary and secondary parasites, and it could not be more difficult or entail more suffering to satisfy our needs much more fully without the interference and control of those who rule and rob us to-day.

T. C.

LET US DISCRIMINATE.—The essence of the property idea does not lie in the liberty to be himself afforded to the property-owner, but in the power it affords him of prohibiting equal liberty to such others as he may prefer to exclude. This is evident when we take into consideration the unquestionable fact that in the simple nature of things one is freer without custody of property than with it; whereas without property one can not for one's own advantage coerce, or cause to be coerced, other claimants for equal liberty.

L. S. BEVINGTON.

THE PROPAGANDA REPORTS.

South-East London Propagandist Group.—Although, during the past two months, some of our meetings have fallen through owing to a lack of speakers, we have kept our propaganda prominently before the people by numerous other means. Several very successful meetings, however, have been held in Southwark Park and on Deptford Broadway. Comrade Young spoke twice in Southwark Park and replied to some opposition from Social-Democrats; comrade Banham also addressed three meetings, all very successful. Sunday, June 16, in the morning, comrades Quinn and Banham addressed a good audience in Southwark Park; in the afternoon a debate took place between our comrade Quinn and an individualist named Moody. In the evening on Deptford Broadway, Banham and Quinn again addressed a large audience, and were opposed twice by a Christian who advised "trust in God" as a solution for all human ills; but the crowd "wasn't having any." He also gave it as his opinion that "if the Anarchists got into Parliament, they would create hell with the laws." We agreed with him, although not quite in the sense in which he meant it. Comrade Banham replied very effectively, the crowd were almost entirely in our favor and a sergeant and inspector of police and several detectives were very patient listeners.

Comrades in South London are requested to note that at Langridge's Coffee Palace, Old Kent Road, discussions take place every alternate Monday, commencing June 24th, at 8. Now then, Brixton, Clapham, Westminster and other South London comrades, rally up in force!

W. H.

A meeting of the South London Anarchists, called by comrades Banham and Reece, was held on Monday, June 24th, to form a South London Group for propaganda purposes. There was a good attendance of comrades from all parts, and it was decided to meet at the same place fortnightly. Comrade Large was chosen treasurer of the group, and comrade Hart reporter of meetings, etc., to *Torch, Freedom*, and other papers. Comrade McDonald is our librarian, to whom members of the group may apply for whatever literature he may have at his disposal. Comrade Quinn was appointed secretary to obtain a regular succession of speakers for Southwark Park and Deptford Broadway. All comrades willing to speak at these places would oblige by letting him know when they will be able to do so. It was also decided to sell all South London literature on behalf of the group, and that collections should be made for propaganda purposes. A point of possible interest to intending speakers is that the group decided to provide dinner and pay the fares of speakers at above stations. It was decided to continue the Hyde Park (Thursday evening at 8) meetings, as they promise to be exceptionally successful; all comrades who can should turn up.

Other matters of local interest were decided, and the group dispersed at a late hour. The proceedings were brought to a close with the playing of the Marseillaise. The next meeting will be held on Monday evening July 8th; all comrades are requested to attend and co-operate energetically to push the movement forward.

C. T. Q.

Hyde Park.—In this section we are getting on splendidly. Anarchist propaganda has been carried on briskly and energetically from Sunday, May 26th, with very good results. The meetings have been addressed by Tochatti, Turner, Kelly, Young, Leggatt, Quinn and Harragan. Large audiences have been held together for several hours in succession, and their interest has been evidenced by the lively discussion which the appeal for questions and opposition has evoked. The persevering young fellows and the bewitching young damsels who devote themselves to the dissemination of printed Anarchism have done themselves proud—having sold 36 shillingsworth at the five meetings ending with June 23rd. The collections have amounted to 8s. 1d., 4s. of which has been sent to Nicoll for the Walsall Amnesty Fund. Thursday-evening meetings were commenced in Hyde Park on Thursday, June 20, and will be carried on every week.

T. R.

LONDON.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Sundays.—Regents Park, Southwark Park, Beckton Road (Canning Town), Salmon & Ball (Bethnal Green Road), and Hoxton Church, at 11.30.

Hyde Park and Finsbury Park at 4. Barking Broadway at 7. Deptford Broadway, Clerkenwell Green and Wood Green Road (Tottenham) at 8.

Tuesdays.—Garnault Place, Clerkenwell, at 8.30.

Thursdays.—Hyde Park at 8.30.

No. 1.—The Wage System. By Peter Kropotkin. 1d.

No. 2.—The Commune of Paris. By Peter Kropotkin. 1d.

No. 3.—A Talk about Anarchist COMMUNISM BETWEEN TWO WORKERS. By E. Malatesta. 1d.

No. 4.—Anarchist Communism: ITS BASIS AND PRINCIPLES. By Peter Kropotkin. 1d.

No. 7.—Expropriation. By Peter Kropotkin. One Penny.

No. 8.—Anarchism and Outrage. By C. M. Wilson. One halfpenny.

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