Good Intentions.
I stole their goods to do them good.
To make them wholly interested.
I would know that it could.
But as I can't, I won't do it.
And give them just a little food.
Or water, if I'm in generous mood.
I speak to those who are not free,
Reproach the rich and the dead.
Put down the painting from the wall,
Sear at the folies of the dead,
Amuse, unless intruded.
Free speech and all its filthy bawd.
I give the priest a stake, a bread,
I do to the people good.
—Miriam Daniel.

The Essential Spirit of Reform.

The strong repugnance with which the suggestion of social reform is often met is strangely out of accord with the spirit of the age. The field of possible development in the arts and sciences generally still spreads to an inestimable horizon, and no one dare assert that the highest stage is ever approximated. The continents of the earth are still undergoing changes; at some points the shores of great oceans steadily sinking, at other points rising; great geological changes are known to be constantly under way in the interior of the earth as well as on its surface. Despite the most strenuous efforts of conservative views of religion even are unquestionably varying, and new phases of thought are daily presented for consideration are daily finding more extended acceptance. What warrant can there be for the assumption that social organization alone has reached the ultimate point, and with this of all things humility is to rest content? Is its present form so manifestly perfect that it leaves nothing to be desired? How can any fold their hands in peace while the eyes and ears of the most fortunate as how concreted are assailed on every hand by evidences of the distress of their fellow making happiness impossible to any, and the measure of happiness attainable exactly gradated by the degree of insensibility to the sufferings of others? The situation is admittedly perilous in the extreme and ominous of trouble to come. Let those who find it possible to close their eyes and ears still do so; but no candid observer denies the constant coincidence of the highest civilization with the most abject destitution and degradation. To a great proportion of the laboring class a life of incessant toil yields no other result than an old age of dependent mendicancy; millions are so entirely uneducated as to be cut off from every intellectual enjoyment; the hovels of the one class are staidly more comforting than the wives and children of the other class are housed; in the largest and wealthiest cities the poor are so crowded and huddled together that in countless instances all the members of a family are in a single room.

In the so-called lower stages of society—savage and barbarism—there are squaw and destitution, but where these exist they are features of the common lot. If any suffer, all suffer; such provision of food and shelter as any have in shared with others. In civilized countries alone do men, women, and children starve under the shadows of rocks overhanging with food, are naked and with unlimited supplies of clothing, are exposed to the hardness of the elements with means of shelter in abundance. Admit that civilization affords amelioration for many good, yet how far the relief falls short of the demand, and how many evils are created by the higher civilization unknown to less advanced conditions of society. Is the remedy then a return to savagery and barbarism? By no means. The abolition of this is not what it is assumed to be, if in the constant rearrangement of conditions there is not preserved as large a share as possible of all that works for the happiness of every section of the community. Progress is not what it is assumed to be, if it is observed that there is not carried on from stage to stage as much as possible of the phases of society from time to time left behind that work for the general good, allowing to drop away only those features that are useless and detrimental.

Bald cannibalism is revolting in the extreme to civilized men, but the theory of existing society is far more horrible than the idea of killing of one being and using their mortal bodies as meat. The present social order meets millions of infants at the threshold of life with a death warrant to be executed by torture extending thru every inch of their existence on earth, and these tortures inflicted only that others may revel in enormous excess, superfluous so great that scarcely anything is any more certain of mificent reward than the infliction of some new device for the extermination of the acted rieh, some novelty for the entertainment of those to whom the power to command every form of indulgence has brought nothing but weakness, some point of unique or surpassing display by which one set of the dominating class may outdo all previous undertakings of others. The use of these strong expressions is not intended to imply individual condemnation of the apparent beneficencies of the conditions under which we live, but only as a feasible attempt to characterize the condition of things, a system under which all suffer in different ways but in scarcely differing degrees.

Social reform aims at an amendment of conditions which would benefit all alike, notwithstanding it is frequently stigmatized as a scheme of apologists and of cynics. The scheme, but to take from those who have for the purpose of giving to those who have not. The adverse discussion of this subject is in fact constantly marked by willing ignorance and deliberate avoidance of the fact that, how exasperating to the intelligent student and greatly obstructing the effort to obtain light upon it. It is so much easier to assume an understanding of the position of an apostate than to expend the effort necessary to really comprehend him, that controversy degenerates into a fruitless multiplication of words. The desire for change in the social order is generally ascribed to springing from the idle, the incapable, the ignorant, the vicious, and the incorrigibly vicious, and the inference is constantly held out that all who have attained to any degree of prosperity under existing conditions naturally desire to make more to be in opposition to that. It is a fact open even to casual observation that social reform counts among its adherents men and women from every rank in life, by no means notably from the lower ranks, rather, the contrary; men of great wealth and high social position have at all times and are today found among the advocates of radical reforms; men of distinguished abilities in business and professional pursuits have devoted much time and means to efforts in this direction, and such men are heartily enlisted in the cause of reform today; men of the highest scientific attainments are associated with men in the front rank of literature as exponents of advanced views; the most cogent arguments of reformers are couched in language admirably sound; while men of exalted rank in aristocratical countries, and of illustrious ancestry in other countries, have laid aside all the advantages pertaining to such position to become apostles of the most ominous because most malignan theories. But there is no novelty in this to those who recount the early phases of the French Revolution, in which wealth, rank, and special privileges of every kind were enthusiastically cast away for the general good. So far from
FREE SOCIETY.

The General Assembly of New York seems to have given a blow to all chance for the prosperity of all other States in fear of legislation aimed at Anarchists, ostensibly, but in reality at one of the most cherished rights of American citizens. It passed and the Governor signed the act within a few days of its return, a fine not more than $5,000 and imprisonment for a term not to exceed ten years, upon anyone advocating Anarchistic doctrines by speech, writing or otherwise; a fine of $2,000 and imprisonment for the same offense if committed by a person who has been convicted of a like offense in the same manner as the preceding statute. The legislature of New York has thus joined the other States in an attempt to stifle the publication of books, and a like punishment upon any agent, owner or occupant of a house who permits an Anarchist to live in it. In short, the law declares that mere expression of belief in a political creed makes a criminal of a man.

We know of no law more outrageous and vicious in principle—none more American, and more dangerous as a precedent. An Anarchist is merely a person who does not believe that there should be any such thing as government. He may not by any means believe in the necessity of his destruction, but he may wish to destroy government. Not all Anarchists do so believe. And yet, under the provisions of this bill any man who should say that he believes mankind would be happier if government were abolished would be liable to ten years' imprisonment, and any man who should allow him to sleep under his roof would be liable to two years' imprisonment. We know of nothing better calculated to make converts to the Anarchistic creed, or to incite a belief in the innate iniquity of government, than such a tyrannical and inhuman law.

That it lies in the face of the United States Constitution, whether here or there. The man convicted under it would probably find himself ruined in pursuit before he could get the unconstitutionality of it determined, if he should get it determined at all. But apart from that, it marks a departure from the right and robust Americanism of the fathers that must be a source of uneasiness to every patriotic citizen.

According to the theory upon which this

* This article was written several years ago.
republic was founded, the Anarchist has the same right to advocate the abolition of all labor by the government, so long as he keeps clear of violence or a conspiracy to commit vio-

lence, that the Democrat has to advocate election of United States senators by direct vote of the people, or that a Republican has to advocate a protective tariff. The sound and healthy theory and no democracy can perpetuate itself that is based upon any other, for the moment that mere belief is made a crime, a club is made ready to the hands of the despot. It is this theory that the New York law and the bill now before congress transgresses. And the constitutional convention of this State, before it finally adjourns, should make it impossible for any future legislature of this State to make any such assault upon the right of Virginians to free speech and a free press.—Virginia First, Norfolk, Va., April 7, 1892.

Echoes from Europe.

A Spanish republican paper, El Pais, says: "The general strike seemed to be a dream; but it is no more so since the first attempt by Anarchists in Barcelona, Cijen, Coruna, and other places in the past, and therefore de-

demned the general strike as utterly futile, have so to say lost their case since the late instance in Barcelona. They say that nothing practical was gained, but to give some assurance that nothing will be done

in seven days than the Social Democrats in seven years. In consequence of the late event the whole world,—thinkers, workers, exploiters, rulers, and subjects—are all busy discussing the social problem. The hard-hearted rich, with their buttoned pockets, have become more anxious than they ever were in all the sermons of their priests."

The Imparcial, a liberal mouthpiece daily edited by a leader of the government to com-

minate the French and German governments, which have been able to stop and paralyze the workingman's movement thus far, has in La Librairie, a list of names of members of a revolutionary Anarchists committee—is in support of the strike condemned it in his journal, El Socialista, saying that it was provoked by Anarchists. Now his friend, leader of the Social Demo-

crats, in an interview given the liberal mouth-

piece paper Heraldo de Madrid, accuses the Anarchists of "involving the government in order to give the latter an opportunity to suppress the workers by force, and institute martial law so as to force the workers to lose their cause."

"So monstrous a slander in so un-

usual a form from the art like Chamberlain, and the Heraldo's reporter finds it necessary to make his excuses for reproducing so damaging and base an accusation, while the editor of the paper, an honest bourgeois and naturally a political enemy of Anarchism, expresses in a foot-note his deep indignation, regretting that any self-

respecting man could advance so unparalleled a calumny."

The Italian Socialists have lately declared that they will assist the "liberal" ministry as the smallest of two evils. What next?

The French and Belgian governments pro-

hibited meetings in which some Spanish Anarchists were invited to speak on the Barcelona strike and the atrocities perpetrated by the government. Thus the soli-
darity of all governments in concealing their bloody outrages was once more demonstrated.

The Russian minister of the interior, M. Sjipiaogin, who undertook to stamp out independent thought in the institutions of learning, has been exiled to some heavenly abode by a young shaft of lightning.

FREE SOCIETY.

Law.

Most people labor under the delusion that law is based on equality, and that its spirit recognizes one man to be as good as another. Blackstone says something like this. It has pleased God to create certain laws and endow them with great weight, and whose prerogative it is to rule and to create another class of poor who are dependent upon the wealth to be the bearer of support, and whose prerogative it is to obey. This he further says, is the fundamental principle upon which all law is based. Black-

stone is recognized as the greatest author-

ity on common law in our courts today.

H. W. KORB.

Correction.

I have read with much interest Albina L. Washburn's letter in FREE SOCIETY of April 6, but I think she has made a mistake in attributing to John Sherman, the man who sold himself body and soul and breeches to the money power, the saying "the way to resume is to resume." Unless I am much mistaken, it was Horace Greeley who said it. It was the New York Tribune, who first used the phrase.

As secretary of the United States treasury, John Sherman notified all the collectors of the custom houses to commence January 1, 1873, to accept greenbacks in payment of duties, and it was this action that made the so-called resumption of specie payments possible.

J. T. SMALL.

Provincetown, Mass.

Voices.

Cassidy: "Why don't ye ate yer dinner?"

Casey: "Shure this is Friday, an' Oll'n wonders" Cassidy: "What are ye won-

derin'?"

Casey: "Is turtle soup fishin' it's made out o' veal?"--Philadelphia Press.

Atmpt on every occasion to provide for nothing so much as that which is safe: for silence is safer than speaking. And omit speaking of whatever is without sense or reason.—Epictetus. If some of our legislators obeyed the latter, we would never speak at all.—Melbourne Tocsin.

"Christian Science" is making great head-

way among "society" ladies in Potomac. People with plenty of money and nothing to do, the idlers, the parasites of human so-

ciety, generally catch on to the nonsense of the hour. They haven't the brains for real science, but Christian Science is quite another matter. Let us hope the Potsdam "society" ladies will not get into the toils of a "Horso" and a "Swami."—London Free-

thinker.

The authorities of New York city could not afford to expend $5,000 a year to keep Bleeck's lawn in the Broadway gardens of Liberty, which was erected in New York harbor by patriotic Frenchmen and present-

ed as a token of esteem to the city; but it easily raised $60,000 to expend in law-

suits against their owner, Lord Bute, and his lawyer, whose name is Prince Henry. Is not this reason for believing that Liberty is fast becoming a back number in this country? Are the lessons at Bunker Hill and Cowpens forgotten? It seems so.—Southern Mercury.
The publication of C. L. James' "History of the French Revolution" is now assured. Those who have subscribed for the book, but have not yet sent in the money, are requested to do so at once. All who contemplate purchasing this excellent history of the French Revolution, should send in their advance subscriptions without delay. This work shows Comrade James at his best, being equine, accurate, with a wide scholarship, and a broad comprehension of events. It is an important contribution to the literature of the Revolution; and proves clearly that the events of this interesting period, always held up as an infulable argument against the Anarchist philosophy, are one of the strongest vindications of it.

A memorial meeting in honor of John P. Altgeld will be held in the Auditorium on Sunday, April 20. Clarence S. Darrow and others will deliver addresses.

**Splinters.**

New York newspaper has it that the New York Supreme Court has confirmed the sentence of the lower court against John Most. Thus the judicial outrage against him is now coolly consummated. Further details are not yet on hand.

New York now has a law "against Anarchy," compared with which the "omnibus sections" 240 and 250 of the Russian penal code will have to take a back set.

Several comrades in New York have been arrested for distributing the pamphlet "Coal Gas, Money, and Anarchy." Their cases were postponed by the police magistrate, who hoped to have them arraigned under New York's sanguine law concerning "Anarchy."  

Two editors have been arrested for "seditious" at Manila. It is a "crime" that was very common in American in Washington's time, and it is interesting many Americans who were guilty of it.

Major Wally, altho' he did not deny the atrocious charges against him, has been acquitted because he "obeyed orders." While this is a legally valid excuse for a soldier, who "does not think, but obeys," what about General Smith, who gave the order?

An enormous deficit in the English budget is one of the fruits of the Boer war for the British taxpayer. The chancellor of the exchequer proposes to raise a part of the 200,000,000 deficit by additional taxes, and saddle the rest on future generations thru a loan. This must be a gratifying outlook for the English workers; who, however, have the remedy in their hands by stopping the war.

The Boers continue their defensive warfare with an admirable tenacity. In England on the other hand, groundings are becoming louder and louder at the enormous cost of the conquest.

The Torch of Reason,0 published by Discontent, suggests that Louis F. Post, editor of the Puck, be asked to form a committee to take up a fight against the present encroachments on free press by the federal government, especially in its post-office department. Both of whom know the law, confidently ensues. It is time something is done to stem the tide of advancing arrogance, which threatens to make out of every postmaster a press censor.

This week's news comes from Europe that Switzerland has broken off diplomatic relations with Italy, on account of its refusal to prosecute an Anarchist paper at the request of the Italian consul. It is to be hoped that this is a "taxation" sign, and indicates a change of policy on the part of Switzerland. After twenty years, beginning with the expulsion of Kropotkin, Switzerland has been acting as scavenger police for the despots of Europe, giving up political prisoners, banishing anarchists continually at the request of one nation and another, until the denizen of the Swiss nation has been abusively proposed. Indeed a suppressing nation does no business and for its own sake, it is high time that Switzerland leave her position as maid for the European political police.

I would very much like to suggest to the big guns Wm and James that the space of Free Society could be used to better advantage than casting personal reflections. It is not true, as Wm says, that James advised the assassin to act; nor did he call Coitogos a fool or an imbecile. Nor on the other hand is it fair for James to assume that Wm had not been acting on the general strike idea. I earnestly hope that further discussion of this question will have a different tone.

**Current Comment.**

A few weeks ago, all that remains of the grand old Populist party humpied itself together at Louisville, and quietly committed suicide. A brazen new party was started; at least the name is new, but the "party" is composed chiefly of wire-pullers, men like O'Farrell and his man Milton Park, both of whom the writer knows personally. Park is a professional politician of limited caliber, and Parker is a well-meaning fellow, who, so far as political principles are concerned, couldn't find either end of himself in the dark. The new party will probably now go "way back and sit down.

Statesman and Patriot Hawley, from the land of wooden nutmegs, bobbed up in the Senate during the debate on the so-called anti-Anarchist bill, and heroically reminded us that he would give (for he forgets how much) for a good shot at an Anarchist. The difference between this senatorial pin-head and Leon Cezagiga is, that the latter was willing to give his life for a good shot at his man, but had the courage to act up to his convictions, while this would-be assassin, Hawley, is too cowardly to fire anything but his mouth, and doubtless, if confronted by a real live Anarchist, he would run like a scared rabbit.

C. L. James, champion of his copyrighted "Movement in Favor of Ignorance," including vivisection and vaccination, probably intended to be a reproach to life, as a whole, by disposing of my comments on the General Strike, but his witstock needs a diagram and a couple of foot-notes for proper illumination. He says that, since I am tired of talk and want action, it is the most advisable for me to set James, however, once wrote a calory of the Monster Slayer, in which he advised the assassin to act, and when a few months later, Cezagiga took his advice and acted, James was one of the first to fling the wigwag of "fool" and "imbecile" at his own Buffalo Monster Slayer. He makes a curious arrangement of the army of Social Revolution, when he places Anarchists as the reserve. An army's reserve is always in the rear. Is that James' conception of the Anarchist position? It is not mine. The Anarchists are the vanguard, not the reserve, and they will be found under the red flag on the first barricade.

The fashionable swells of the Paris boulevards are wearing leather neckties, as the latest fad. It seems that these parasites of wealth must have something new to amuse them. Perhaps the whole idea is that the employer supply the luxuries of these useless butterflies of fashion, willing one day supply them with still another fad in neckties—that of hemp.

A job lot of political rainbow-chasers and government-worshiping gold brick dupes, including that host of pulpitiing pulpители who have quenched the preaching of purgatory to pump wind for the prohibition fallacy, as well as an assorted aggregation of well-meaning but witless wights who clamor for the government ownership of everything under high heaven's vaulted dome, from railroads to the Presbyterian religion, are chuck full of the fool notion that all the ill to which frail flesh is heir, from the failure of the Montana wheat crop to the blind-staggers, is due to the law. The legalists' twofold belief is totalable nonsense, and nowhere more so than in America, the so-called land of liberty.

I observe that, since the Buffalo tragedy, Brother James F. Morton, Jr., of Discontent, has become a philosophic Anarchist. Now,
James ought to know, if he doesn't, that B. R. Tucker has his saying on that term toward which he took out about the time of the hanging of the Chicago martyrs, for reasons very similar to those which probably influenced Morton to try the same dodge. Tucker is not alone in having his sayings on the chances if he will go after the frolistic James, for claim-jumping, and the latter had better hold on to his scalp with both hands.

What the Anarchist movement in this country needs and needs the worst kind, is a good big subscription fund for the purpose of supplying some of its members with backbones. A fellow with a backbone as elastic as an Indian rubber string is not a glittering success as a soldier in the army of revolutionary radicalism.

The guests at the luncheon for Prince Henry on the occasion of the launching of the Meteor, stole all the silverware as souvenirs, and, in consequence, the chef, who had borrowed the pincers, forks, and spoons from his neighbors, is bankrupt. The fellow is entitled to but scant sympathy. He ought to have known that the class he was to entertain live by theft; and that the idea of a kitchen without pots is exploded myth. He will, on the next such occasion, keep both eyes upon everything not locked up or nailed down.

I notice that a stickler of Chicago's piano pupils have gone into convulsions over the brutal killing for pass time of pigeons and other birds by feelingless sportmen. This meets my hearty approval. The fact that these advanced agents of imprisonment and blazes have not evaporated all their milk of human kindness jilting damnation for heretics is encouraging—gives me renewed confidence in human kind. But if they will skip the sporting page of the daily papers for once, and allow their pious imaginations to absorb some of the details of what is going on in South Africa and the Philippines, in the name of Christian civilization, we may find that the brutal killing, plundering, and starving of HUMAN BEINGS by the agents of government, is a fact also deserving of their pious protest. But I have a faint suspicion that these cruel and brutal sportsmen, who are helpless and defenceless children will be treated by these sanctimonious soul-savers with a perfect hurricane of silence.

By the Wayside.

That the legislators of New York are fit for the insane asylum, no intelligent man will doubt; but that the "Anarchy Bill," which enters it a crime to give an Anarchist shelter, could be ever contemplated without comment and protest from the press, shows clearly whither we are drifting.

The female students of the Chicago University had one of their eyes opened by Prof. Martin, when he informed them that the wedding ring, which Conrado Emma Goldman compares with a dog license, was but a relic of barbarism,—an appliance by which the female slave was dragged from the market by her master, the grogels became indigent and contemplated starting an anti-wedding ring society. Now, if Prof. Starr damaged the knot, he damaged the bond which it sought to unearth the origin of marriage, we may soon hear of an anti-marriage society among the learned Brundillah,—a step which would strike at the institution of slavery and not at the people of the present husband but at the master of ancient times, but she is still a slave,—the property of her husband.

"My wife is a free woman; she can do as she pleases," a Socialist boastfully asserted during a friendly chat on the social problem. "Does it ever happen to you to come home after midnight?" he was asked. "Oh, yes, quite often, I reply frankly. Then, you do not believe in the ownership of human being, and your wife is a free woman, you do not mind it if she happens to come home after midnight?" "Oh, ma'am, that's a horse of a different color," he said. Yet, the wives are "free women" as long as they are obedient slaves, and strictly comply with the double standard of morality and the whims and vices of their masters. A healthy revival is taking place in the ranks of the Socialists all over the world. The axiomatic formula of that, "as the mode of production changes, all institutions must change, in obedience to inexorable laws," is being analyzed, and they begin to realize that such "faith" leads to disastrous fatalism, and that Socialism will not come about as a gift from heaven.

It never occurred to the fanatical Marxist that, while the mode of production has been completely revolutionized during the last century, the old age of the slave has not eluded the people. Ideas and institutions hitherto, say, a hundred years old. It never dawned upon him that the events in remote Russia, where the mode of production was almost ancient, upset his philosophy. There, the ideas of hundreds of peasants have been completely revolutionized. In fact so much so, that they recognize no marriage laws, refuse to serve in the army, and consider the crown only as a brother,—as their superior.

Recent events in Europe are encouraging, and the coming dawn of a free and happy humanity is clearly visible on the horizon. The refusal of Russian soldiers to shoot at their fellow men, the uprising in Spain, and the friendly attitude of the Belgian troops toward the Socialist demonstrations—all these phenomena, are a greater significance in the course of human progress than millions of so-called Socialist votes.

Even the American workers are awakening. Thousands of letters in this city declared to go on strike, despite their leaders, and the latter were almost thunder-struck at such unusual independence. The leaders favored a settlement and were enraged at the ingratitude, but after the latter showed unwillingness to obey orders. True, the workers yet manifested considerable timidity in walking on their own feet, and failed thru the trickery of their own leaders, but after the infant has made its first attempt to walk alone it will soon accomplish the task.

I certainly obey the law while it exists," says Ada A. Mugnon to the Chicago Times, and Comrade Morton believes that she "states the correct position of the philosophic Anarchist." What an absurdity! Neither Morton nor Ada Mugnon, nor anyone else for that matter, obey the law while it exists. If all people did obey the laws they would neither be altered nor reproved; for it is the law-breaker, the image-breaker, the man who begins to ignore and defy laws and customs, who is the forerunner of a revolution. Before I can be convinced of the correctness of such position, he must prove that institutions ever continued to exist until the collectivity was ready for the change. It appears to me, we know where. If the Anarchists will have to be built, and instead of decaying reason, as resistance does according to Morton, it will soon animate the reasoning faculties of the legislators.

Even Tolstoy, who is considered the foremost apostle of non-resistance, does not advocate obedience to law while it exists. On the contrary, wherever people refuse to obey law, he says, the people will substitute their own. Tolstoy is ever ready to encourage them in their resistance, and points out very emphatically, that there is no hope for betterment unless we "refuse to do evil, and to obey all laws involves doing a great many evils."

"It is fear of the club, not conscience, that makes cowards of us all," says J. Wilton in his letter to "Life Without a Master." "Fear, fear of a little trouble or inconvenience determines our course, and we obey the officer of the law for the same reason that the slave obeys his master. In both cases, it is not a question of force of me, but of fear of inconvenience, but one of fear and expediency. So the world goes, and a race of cowards who are not assert themselves in any way continues to perpetuate itself.

Since the "Buffalo tragedy," the anxiety of many Anarchists to be classified among the godly-goody people has become quite a fate in our ranks, and the term "philosophical" be a synonym for timidity. For timid it occurs to me that when the Christians had gained the esteem of the Roman ruling classes, they had gone quite a distance on the downward slope of humility and asceticism, but they were in the process of becoming more and more non-conformists. The Christians may differ on methods of propaganda and tactics to realize their idea, but the adjective "philosophical" applies to every Anarchist on earth, and it is rather a question of the people on the part of those who monopolize the term. Mendol not become Anarchists unless they become philosophers, and if they do not, he cannot be considered a philosopher.
III

The workman's wife has gone down to the front door, leaving the little one asleep upstairs. The woman is quite thin, and is dressed in a cotton gown. She is wearing a lot of wool from her mattress to the second-hand dealer; the mattress had gone thus; now, there only remained the tick. She has hung

IV

THE PIT OF IT.

The air is filled with frosty rain and a frost-tipped nimbus. The city pavements are glistening, wet where the snow has fallen, litter and die.

In the gray dawn of a late December morning, on every corner, three avenues meet and cross each other. I glanced over my shoulder; and the unusual sight of the moon at full, partially obscured by the leaden clouds gave rise to the thought.

The next moment I was struggling to maintain my balance, hold my hat, and keep the cape about my shoulders; for the rain-wet snow blew against a fury of wind upon me. A worm-like street lined with factories turned off from the main way, and in this I stopped hoping to find shelter from the wind.

I had gone but a few yards when from the alley-way darted a small child, a shawl covering her head and shoulders and was grasped firmly in her hands; her bare limbs protruding from beneath a short skirt terminated in rags. The rubbers many sizes too large; which she shuffled along the pavement, at the same time bending her head, and hurrying along at a pace which told of long practice.

This little girl was of a curious desire to know what brought a child out so early on such a winter morning. I followed, perhaps two blocks, when she stopped near a main street and mounted a flight of stone steps, leading to one of three houses.

She glanced about, and satisfied that she was not watched, lifted something to her mouth.

The window on the second floor of the house was open, and a man's angry voice shook the silence.

The kettle dropped from the child's hands, spilling its milky contents as it rattled angrily along the pavement and settled in the gutter. The child shuffled around the corner—the door-house flew open and the man hurried after her, drawing on his overcoat as he went. And the next minute shrieks and cries startled the listless neighborhood into action; and reaching the corner I saw the man grasping both the child's hands in his, and seeking to loosen her grasp while he hit at his fingers and screamed in a fury of protest.

A policeman appeared, and to him the man told he had been trying to catch this thief for three weeks; and together they dragged the child toward the patrol box.

She no longer struggled to escape, but stood perfectly still when they loosened their hold, crouching the last of her three buns to her mouth, as if fearful of losing it.

From under a mass of tangled hair a pair of small black eyes glittered with rat-like cunning, but showed not the least gleam of interest in what was taking place about her.

They carried the policeman for the patrol; while a number of people and another officer gathered to ask what the trouble was—Torn away—the vision of a child offered for sacrifice to the ancient idols flashed through my mind; and I turned again to see if what had witnessed was real or only some vision of the Pagan times.

Yes; it was real enough. The two police men and the other might in the dim half-light had passed for the Druid priests; but the child—

FREE SOCIETY.

It needled the nineteenth century with its factories and its torture, its poverty and slums to finish that piece of premise running.

It had never entered the head of a barbarian to make the victim he meant to sacrifice.

MARIE HAMN.

The Slack Season.

When the workmen reach the factory in the morning they find it looking frigid, as if overcast by a cloud of rain. The machine with its slender limbs and motionless wheel, stands silent at the end of the great room; and this adds to the feeling of depression, for its promise of wages, in ordinary times, convey to the whole house the courage of a giant inured to the task.

The master comes down from his little private room, and with an air of sadness addresses his men:

"My good fellows, there is no work today—I receive no orders; countermands reach me from all quarters. I shall remain with you, however. In the month of December, till which is passed, this month, which in previous years, has been a very busy one, threatens to ruin the most stable firms—we must suspend everything.

And noticing the workmen looking at one another deciding to return home, in terror of approaching hunger, he added in a lower tone:

"I am not an employer, no, I vow I am not. My position, also, is not so perhaps as yours. I have lost fifty thousand francs in a week. I am stopping work today so as not to deepen the abyss; and I have not the first sou of the money I shall require to meet my engagements on the 6th. You see I am speaking to you as to friends, I am hiding nothing from you. Tomorrow, perhaps, the process-servers will be here. It is no fault of ours, it is! We have struggled on to the end, but have had to face you through this bad time; but it is all over now, I am in stricken down; I've no more bread to share.

Then, he held out his hand to them. The workmen gave it in silence. And, for some minutes, they remained there, gazing with clenched fists at their useless tools. On other mornings, the files sang, the hammers marked the rhythm from jaguerak; and all his seems already to be sleeping in the dust of bankruptcy. Twenty or thirty families will be without food in the coming week. Some of the women who had been working in the factory have tears in the corners of their eyes, she is endeavoring to appear more firm. They put on a pious look and say that no one can die of hunger in Paris.

Then, when the master leaves them, and they see him turn and vanish down in a week, overwhelmed by a disaster which is perhaps even more serious than he acknowledges, they withdraw by one by one, choking before they are out of the room, with lamps rising in their throats, and as disheartened as if they were leaving a deathbed. The corpse is work, the great silent machine, the sinister skeleton of which stands there in the obscurity.

The workman is outside, in the road, on the pavement. He has been running about the streets for a week without being able to find employment. He has been from door to door, offering his arms, his hands, his whole self for any kind of labor, the most degrading, the hardest, the most fatal. All doors have been closed to him.

Then, he was willing to work at half price. The doors did not open. Were he to work for nothing, he could not be employed. It is the slack season; the market season that sounds the death-knell of the garment完了。 He has stopped all trades, and money, cowardly money, has hidden itself away.

At the end of the week it is, indeed, all up with him. The workman's hope is a hopeless effort, and he returns home slowly, his hands empty, worn out with wretchedness. It is raining on that particular night, and Paris looks dismal in the mud. He walks along in a somber mood, without feeling it, thinking of nothing but his hunger, stopping so as to reach his destination later. He has been over a parapet of the Seine; the swollen waters flow with a prolonged noise: spacey, white caps have splashed in the air at one of the piers of the bridge. He looks more forward, the huge torrent passes beneath him, hailing him fearfully to come. He seeks to find himself that it would be cowardly, and he goes away.

It has stopped raining. The sky's is glazed in the windows of the jeweller's shops. If he were to break a sheet of glass, he could grasp with one hand wherein to put it for years. Lights are appearing in the kitchens of the restaurants; and behind the white muslin curtains he sees people eating. He hurries along, ascends to the foundry, passing by the earthen pipes, thickly furled, in the between rain. Poverty is roasting on spits, by the ham, and bed, and pauper-camps' shops, by all that epicurean part of Paris, which displays its contemptible when one is hungry.

As his wife and little girl had been crying in the evening, he had promised to bring food home at night. He had not dared to go and tell them he had lied, before the evening. As he walked along he thought of how he would go in, if he would tell them to give them patience. However, they could not remain any longer without tormenting. He was willing to try and do so, but his wife and little one were too delicate. And for moment, he has the idea of begging. But when a lady and gentleman pass beside him, and he thinks of extending his hand, his arm becomes stiff, and he feels a lump in his throat. He stands there on the pavement, and while respectable persons turn aside their head, fancying, at the sight of his ferocious, starving look, that he must be intoxicated.
FREE SOCIETY.

7

that up before the window to keep out the
draught, for the little one coughs a great deal.

Without saying anything to her husband, she
was on her side, had endeavored to get work.
But the slack season has been more cruel for
the women than for the men. There are un
happy events in rooms on all sides, and the
smallest breath of wind in the house. She met
one beggar at the corner of a street; another
is dead; another has disappeared.

She, fortunately, is married to a good man,
and a husband who does not drink. They
would be in comfort, if the slack season had
not disposed of them all. She has used up all
her credit. She owes money to the baker,
the grocer, and does not even dare pass by her
shops anymore. In the afternoon she went
to her sister to borrow a franc; but there,
also, she had found such poverty that she
came to cry without speaking, and both of
them, her sister and herself, had wept for a
long time together. Then, as she was leaving,
she promised to take her a piece of bread if
her husband brought anything home.

The husband does not return. It rains. She
seeks shelter under the doormat; great
drops of water fall upon her. There is a
tempest, and the rain soaks her thin gown. At
times she feels impatient; she goes out, notwith
standing the downpour, goes to the end of
the street, to see if she cannot perceive the
person she is expecting coming along the road
in the distance. And when she returns she
is wet thru; she smooths down her hair with
her hands, to wipe it, she still takes patience
although she is wet. She fattens the in
vocation of her love.

Passers-by elbow her as they go back
wards and forwards, she makes herself as
small as possible so not to be in anyone’s way.
Men stare her full in the face; at times she
feels a sort of love for loneliness, for
across her neck. It seems as if all the dubi
side of Paris, the street with its mud, its
raw lights, its rolling of carriages, would
like to catch her and cast her in the gutter.
She can’t take her hand. There is a
barrier opposite, and she thinks of the
little one asleep upstairs.

Then, when her husband at length appears,
laughing, with his arm around his wife, he
gives his wife sour looks. She wants to wash
the dishes forward and gases at him anxiously.

"Well !" she stammers.

He does not answer, but hangs his head.
Then, she goes upstairs first, as pale as
death.

IV

Upstairs, the little one is sleeping. She
has not slept, she is thinking in front of
a candle end that is flickering on a corner of
the table. And something monstrous and
heart-rending passes over the countenance
of that chit of seven, who has the worn and
shriveled face of a grown woman.

She is seated at the edge of a trunk which
serves her as a bed. Her bare feet are hang
ing down, shivering with cold; her sickly,
doll-like hands gather the rag that form her
covering about her chest. She feels a
burning there, a fire she would like to ex
tinguish. She is thinking.

She has never had any playthings. She
cannot go to school because she has no shoes.

But that was a long while ago. It
had been necessary to move; and, since then,
the. she seemed as if an intense chill had ap
proached over her home. Then, she had ceased to
be happy; she had been always hungry.

She is entering upon something very pro
found, without being able to understand it.
Everyone is hurrying her along. She has sought,
however, to accustom herself to the feeling
and is handling. She feels that she must be
too little, that it is necessary to be big to
understand. Her mother, no doubt, knows
all about it. So many things are told to children.
If she dared she would ask her who it is that
puts you into the world in this way in order that
you may be hungry. Then, their home is so
unhappy! She looks at the window where the tick
of the mattress is flapping, at the bare walls,
the rickety furniture, at all that disgraced as
pect of the garret to which the slack season
conveys such women. She fancies, in her ignorance,
that she must have dreamt of warm rooms with beautiful
shiny things; she closes her eyes to see them again;
and, thus, her eyelids, which have become thinner,
the candle that is casting a blaze of gold into
which she would like to go. But the wind is
blowing, and such a draught comes thru the
window that she is seized with a fit of
coughing. Her eyes become full of tears.

Formerly she felt afraid when left alone.
Now she does not know whether she is affain
or it; it is all the same to her. As they
have not had anything to eat since the previ
days, they eat everything. She feels her mother
has gone downstairs to get some bread. Then
that thought interests her. She will eat her
bread into very small pieces; she will take
them slowly, one by one. She will play with
her bread.

Her mother has returned, her father has
closed the door. The little one looks at both
their hands very much surprised; and, as
her parents say nothing for a moment, after
a moment, in a hum drum tone:

"I am hungry, I am hungry."

The father is seated in an obscure corner,
with his head between his hands; he remains
there, beside their husbands shoulders, quivering
with heavy, silent sobs. The mother, standing
her tears, has come to put the little one
to bed again. She covers her with all the
clothes in the place, and tells her to be good
and go to sleep. But the child, whose teeth
are clattering with cold, and who feels the
burning in her chest more acutely, becomes
very soft. She hangs round her mother’s
neck, and then murmurs softly:

"Tell me, mamma, why are we hungry ?"

From "Stories for Ninon," by Emilie Zola.

For Prompt Action.

Now, just as the eighth financial crisis
against the people is being completed at
Washington, by handing over the sole
right to issue paper money to the bankers
—to overcome, very small class of the nation
—the class that foments and profits by war,
and supports Churches. Now is the oppor
time for the general strike, and, not
for shorter hours and wage rates, but that
the people issue their own money, to them
all about the nation, and until the value shall
be ONE HOM OF LABOR. Let the $ mark be a
relic of past barbarism, cannibalism.

The Labor Exchange was a logical at
tempt to better conditions, but it did not
enlist the confidence of the millions.

Labor’s own medium of exchange, based
on the only standard of value, that ever did
exist, will have, will have, confidence of
the class of which every nation depends for
for everything it enjoys; and, Labor’s super
money would have all the people and all
that Labor produced, at the back of it.

With such a medium of exchange, every
toy would die, and with it that other demon,
gave it birth, and which sucks it—
government.

Will some noble fellow of either sex, under
take to send this suggestion to every labor
union in our nation, (I would do so but for
the lack of two things—one is lack of knowl
edge of the names and addresses of all unions
and the other thing; well guess.

The Central Labor Union of Cleveland,
Ohio, have as their first plank—"Abolition
of National Banks, and substituting
legal tender Treasury notes for them, for
money direct by the govern
ment."

Surely this is feasible an honest ground
on which to undertake a general strike, as the
first step toward the Abolition of Wage
Slavery.

San Francisco, Cal, 36 Gary St.
[I would suggest to Comrade Kincheloe to read Kropotkin’s "The Wage
System," which contains much useful interest of the labor checks scheme.
A. 3.]

Works Both Ways.

To all opposed to any form of so-called
scientific medicine (barbarism) I wish to
say that I will send a free sample of this
mission. In China could not have done a sicker job.—T. L. P.

LETTER-BOX.

J. T. Small—Those accept our appreciation and
thanks for your interest and kindness in sending the
market papers.

H. W. Knoebel—The “Reformation” was a most de
cided revolution. To return anything is still to retain
it. How much of the present system do you wish to re
form, that is possible?

Mrs. L. M. J., Afloat. O—Thanks for subscription
and encouraging words. We almost think we can congratulate you as being the oldest American
woman in this country. At least we do not know of any other at the age of 86.

M. C. Fairchild—Yes, we still contend that “equal
freedom” is a ridiculous term. If mankind submit to
white chains, we are equally free, i.e., slaves. In
short, we claim freedom as a general and nothing to
particular, as Comrade James puts it. The phrase, “Do as you please unless you infringe
the equal rights of others,” is also but a metaphorical
term, and means nothing. Everything you may
come legitimate and proper, your neighbor will con
side reasonable. In short, human beings are, as your phrase and take the consequences,” is the cur
rent definition of the philosophy of freedom.

T. W. No Fever which you sent is not worth a
word of attention. It utterly demonstrates that Ab
gard’s action was mere bluff.

T. W. New Bedford, Mass.—The “French Revolu
tion” appears suppressible. You will see the announce
ments in the notes.