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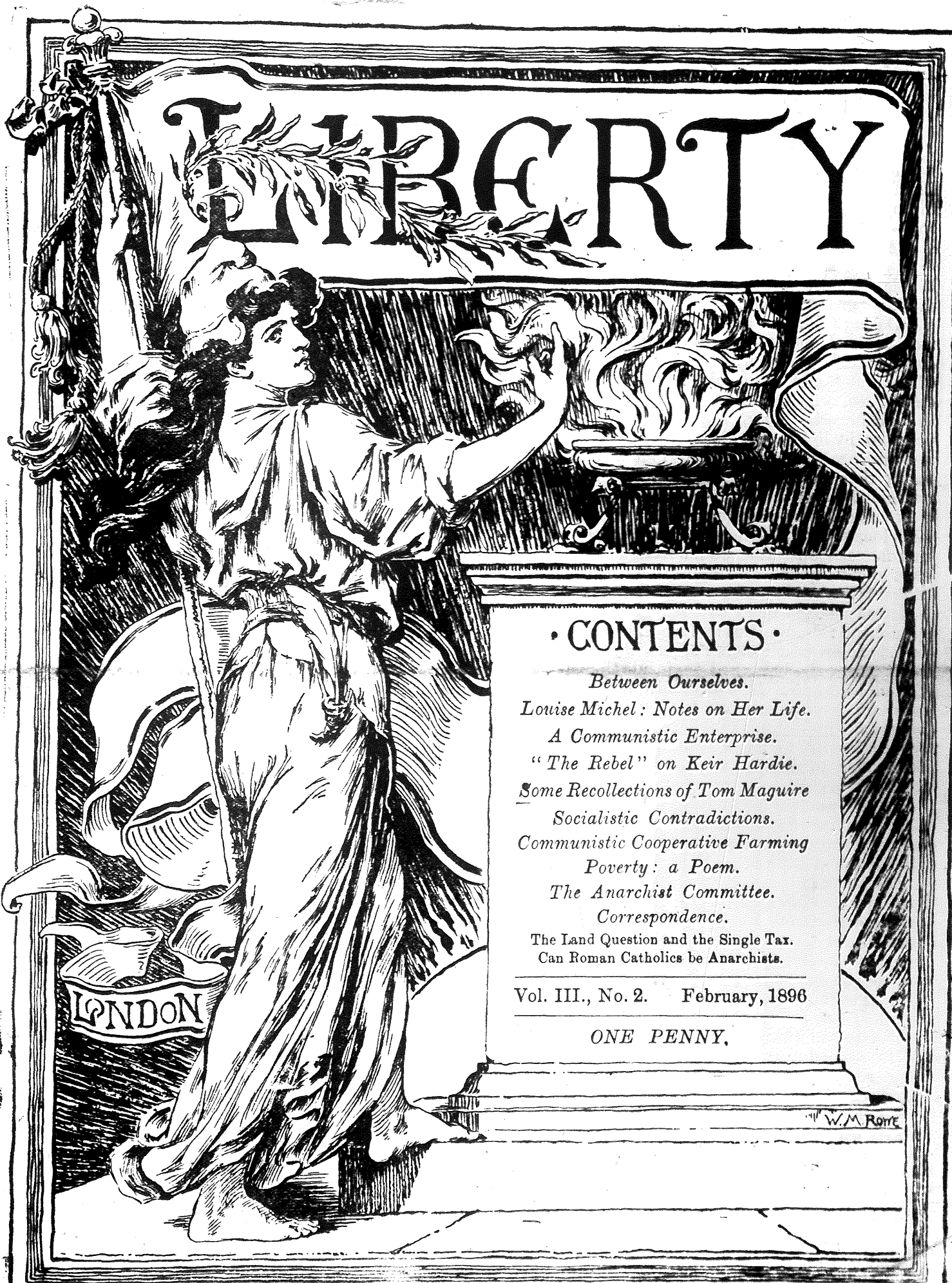

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ONE PENNY.

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LOUISE MICHEL:

NOTES ON HER LIFE.

There is little to say about her early years. Louise lived as free as a bird, vagabondizing through woods and fields, climbing trees like a boy—and this in the little village of Vroncourt, in the Haute-Marne, where she was born in 1836.

At six or seven years old Lammenais' book "Les Parole d'un Croyant" (Words of a Believer) made the little girl cry bitterly, and decided her future.

"Dating from that day (says Louise in her Memoires) I belonged to the people; dating from that day I ascended stage by stage through all changes of thought from Lammenais to anarchy. Is it the end? No, without doubt. Is there not beyond this, and everlastingly, a growth of all kinds of progress in light and liberty, the development of new feelings which are as yet in embryo, and all those that our limited intelligence can scarcely conceive?"

It was also in a village of the Haute-Marne, at Audeloncourt, that she made her debut as teacher in a free school. She would have had to take an oath of fidelity to the Empire to belong to a communal school.

Already looked upon as "red" because she was republican: she was not in favour, but she did not care. In an article of her's, published in a Chaumont paper, she happened to insult the Emperor. Called before the Chief of Police she was threatened with transportation to Cayenne. "As it happens," said the young girl, chaffing him, "I should like to found a school at Cayenne: not being able to afford the journey, it will really be kind of the government to pay my expenses."

It was not to be at Cayenne, but far later at Noumea, that the mocking teacher founded her school; and the journey's expenses were paid by the Republic and not by Napoleon.

Louise Michel went to Paris, attracted by the possibilities that a great city offered to her thirst for knowledge, to her poetical flights, and to her passion for liberty. From the first moment—buoyant and indefatigable—she entered all groups where the future was discussed, and where the struggle against despotism was most intense.

She lived by teaching. In 1865 her mother realized several thousand francs, and the day school of Rue Houdot was founded. If the pupils were numerous the receipts were small. It was not in Louise's nature to harass the parents of the pupils for her monthly pay, on the contrary she generously dressed the poorest, forgetting everything—herself, her most pressing needs—to do a deed of solidarity.

At such a game a Rothschild's fortune would melt like butter on a spit. She would soon have returned those stolen millions to the people: what a world of misery relieved! and how happy Louise would have been!

Events hurried on: the Empire was falling to pieces, and the brave woman took part in all the attacks to undermine the shameful government. When, after the failure at la Villette, the guillotine awaited the bold ones guilty of having tried to upset Napoleon before his time, a protest was signed against the proposed butchery.

Signatures were plentiful. It was Louise and several intrepid comrades who penetrated as far as Trochu's presence, and gave him the voluminous scroll "in the name of the people".

September the 4th came—and the siege.

Louise showed herself active everywhere. She participated in the events of October 31st, and of January 22nd. She was on the Place de l'Hotel de Ville, where a pacific and unarmed crowd remained, when a small noise as of hail came from the windows. It was Chaudey who ordered the people to be shot by his Bretons, who were ignorant of everything, even of the French language.

Re-action henceforth believed itself triumphant, when March 18th baffled its plans—the army raised the butt-ends of their guns in the air, thus securing the victory for the people. Alas, for a little while only! Two months later proletarian blood flowed in streams. Paris was empty of energetic spirits.

During these two months Louise worked incessantly, no longer going to bed—sleeping anywhere for a few hours: now sick nurse, now in uniform; alternately in the breach and at the barricades—the first to arrive and the last to go.

She was fortunate in escaping injury and death more than twenty times, and saw the end of the Commune without having received any other harm from it than a few bullets in her clothes. When all was over and the massacre began she had the luck to escape.

"I always escaped everything", she tells us, "I don't how: at last, those who wished to secure me arrested my mother to shoot her if I were not found. I went to set her free by taking her place. She would not go, the poor dear woman, and I had to tell her many a lie before she made up her mind—she always believed me in the end. I was thus able to secure her return home. The depot for the prisoners was at bastion 37, near the Montmartre railway. Fragments of burned paper were blown across to us from Paris on fire, like black butterflies. Above us floated the aurora of flame like a red veil. We heard the noise of cannon up to the 28th, and till the 28th we said, 'The revolution will have its revenge.'

"We always reckoned without treason, simpletons that we were. At this bastion, in front of the large dusty square, where we were huddled, were the casemates, under an eminence of green grass. There on the arrival of M. de Gallifet, before our very eyes they shot two struggling men who would not die. They had perhaps come out to insult us, had been taken prisoners in the street, and not troubled their heads about it, certain as they were of being set free. M. de Gallifet's speech, the order he gave to shoot into the crowd if anybody moved, had frightened them: they began to run,

seized by a panic. Although we all cried 'We don't know them, they do not belong to us', these wretched men were shot, refusing even to stand up, saying they were business men in Montmartre, but addled as their minds were they were unable to remember their address. We hardly thought to escape. . . .

"Satory! They had told us on arriving in the pouring rain, when the ascent was slippery, 'Come, storm the hill!' And we all went up quick march, the machine guns rumbling up behind us. Satory! They used to call groups of prisoners during the night. They rose from the mud where they lay in the rain and followed the lantern that led the way. They were given a spade and a pickaxe, to dig their hole before being shot. The shooting was carried on in the silence of the night. After saying I should be shot the day after my arrival, they told me it would be in the evening, then again the day after; and I don't understand why it was not done, because I was insolent to my ferocious victors. They sent us (about thirty women) to the Chantier railway station, as all the prisons were full. There we squatted all day long on the floor of a large square room on the first story: at night we stretched as best we could. At the end of a fortnight they gave us a bundle of straw for each two."

It was only on December 16th, 1871, that the executioners decided to call Louise before a military tribunal. Needless to say she came before them holding her head on high. After her examination she pronounced the following words as a speech for the defence:

"What I claim of you, who call yourselves a military tribunal, who make a pretence of judging me, who do not hide yourselves as the Commission des Graces (the Board of Pardons) did, you who are soldiers and who judge straightforwardly, I ask for the field of Satory where our brothers have already fallen. You must cut me off from society, you have been told to do it. The chief of the tribunal is right. As it seems that all hearts that beat for liberty get but a little lead, I claim my share. If you let me live I shall never cease crying for vengeance, and I shall denounce the assassins of the Committee of Pardons to my comrades."

The President: "I cannot allow you to speak if you continue in this strain."

Louise Michel: "I have done: if you are not owards, kill me."

The verdict of the military tribunal was—Transportation to a fortified enclosure.

At last, in August 1873, she and many others, —Rochefort among the number, embarked on the "Virginie", bound for New Caledonia. On board, as everywhere, she found means of lessening the misery that surrounded her. Her spirits encouraged the weak, but she did not limit herself to moral help: she did what she could to be of use. When the "Virginie" floated in Polar regions, when snow covered the deck, Louise—forgetting herself, did not feel the cold that pierced her companions in misery; she distributed all her belongings, only keeping a thin worn out dress through which wind and snow could penetrate. She did not shiver. It warmed her heart to have been generous; the rest mattered little to her.

She lived several years on the Ducos Peninsula, a butt for the insults of the gaolers, who rubbed their hands when they could aggravate the misery of the prisoners. Then Louise was allowed to live at Noumea, where she founded a school and taught the little children to read. It was there the amnesty reached her. Some months later, in the last days of 1881, at that same station where the people acclaimed her the other day, Louise received a most enthusiastic welcome.

No sooner had Louise Michel returned to Paris than she plunged anew into the revolutionary whirlpool, giving her hand to all whose aim was to free humanity from every form of oppression. An anarchist newspaper appeared—the "Social Revolution. Louise wrote for it. This paper has become legendary owing to Andrieux, ex-prefect of police, writing a little romance about it, in which he plays a cunning part. If we are to believe him Louise Michel was the chief editor, and that he knew all about the Anarchists' projects through the "Social Revolution."

As an opportunity offers let us tell the truth about Andrieux' prowess. The journal had appeared already for several months when Louise was called upon to collaborate. She found herself in good company, among others, Crie—since dead, and Emile Gauthier, whom it has not hindered in making his way. He writes to-day in the smartest dailies—the "Figaro" at the head. Oh! but nothing of an anarchist tendency! He and his prose have become sleek. The necessary funds for this paper were in truth provided by Andrieux. His agent, the spy Serreaux, was said to receive the money from a supposed rich lady, who was called upon at her London residence by suspicious comrades. The only slightly serious plot manipulated under Andrieux' influence was an expedition to St. Germain with the object of pulverizing Thiers' statue. A few persons started to place a box of sardines on the pedestal. The fuse burned without exploding, leaving only a black mark.

Andrieux warned by Serreaux wished to secure the guilty ones. He sent some police to await them at the station with an order to arrest them when they alighted from the train. Stupid, as is their wont, the police went to the wrong station, and having stood about all the evening they came back without having caught their game. Andrieux was all the more angry because he could arrest no one on the morrow, as all traces of the attempted outrage would then have disappeared. Was this Prefect of Police as cunning as he pretended when he advanced funds for the "Social Revolution?" The point is debateable. At any rate the one who writes these lines learned many a good anarchist lesson in that paper, and he is certainly not the only one to have profited by the liberty-inspiring

prose printed—thanks to M. Andrieux's generosity. One fine day, Serreaux (unmasked) vanished, and the "Social Revolution" damaged by suspicion came to an end.

In March, 1883, Louise found herself on the Esplanade des Invalides, taking part in a demonstration organised by the joiners' trade union. Several groups, numbering a few thousands—driven from the Esplanade by the police—endeavoured to continue their demonstration in Paris. One of them, in which politics predominated, passed the bridges and marched on the Elysee. Another group, urged forward by the economical character of social crises, marched toward the Faubourg Antoine, carrying a black flag. Louise Michel was with them. On the way three bakers' shops were visited by some of the half starved demonstrators: "pillage", said the law.

Of the thousand arrested that day only two were kept prisoners, and they were indicted as leaders of disorder and organisers for the pillaging of bakers' shops—Mareuil and Pouget. Louise Michel's name was added to their's, by contumace, because she was not arrested. Having reentered Paris Louise took refuge with friends at Vaughans', whence, assuming the disguise of a man, she visited her mother.

The police, always after her, hunted in vain, thanks to their usual want of scent. She had, however, not the slightest intention of escaping. Not recoiling from any responsibility, she yet wished to remain with her mother till the actual trial. As soon as the date was fixed she went unescorted to the police station, walked into the prefect's room, and gave herself up. As usual, at the trial she was bold and dignified. She was sentenced to six years' imprisonment. By way of compensation the prisoner found a sympathetic friend in the sergeant of police in whose charge she was in the waiting room of the Court of Assizes.

Pour bourgeois society, that thinks itself so well armed and so powerful! How often those whom it believes to be its best tools connive with those who are boldly undermining it!

Louise served her time at Clermont. She remained there till January 1886. A general amnesty was spoken of. To avoid discussion, the ministers of that period (good radicals) set free those whose liberty was most clamoured for.

Rochefort, nevertheless, brought the question to the front, and the ministers, with their usual bad faith, answered: "Why an amnesty? The political prisons are empty. Is it to give back political rights to those already liberated? If so, it is useless, as Louise Michel is a woman and Kropotkin is Russian." With such proceedure it was a foregone conclusion that the amnesty would be buried. Cyvoct remained in penal servitude, as did alse the Arab insurgents of 1871.

Always active, in nowise depressed, Louise Michel took up her work of propaganda, which had been interrupted by her imprisonment, and lecture followed lecture in rapid succession.

Between times she was sentenced to several months' imprisonment for making inciting speeches. A trifle! Just time to see if St. Lazare was still the same Gehenna.

At the end of 1887, having left the Havre on a lecturing tour, a tragic adventure took place. She was on the platform, when a tall, ungainly, fellow, with a monkey-like head, rose up near her. Without a word, he drew a revolver, pointed it at Louise and aiming point blank at her ear discharged two bullets. A movement of the lecturer—thinking someone was about to contradict her—saved her life: only one of the bullets took effect. Being of a strong constitution the wounded woman was up again in a fortnight. It not having been possible to extract the bullet, Louise has since lived on friendly terms with it.

Her aggressor, Lucas, was a workman addicted to alcohol and very bigoted. Having heard his employers hold forth against the revolutionary Louise it had roused him to action. The victim pleaded the cause of the aggressor, refused to witness against him, asked for his acquittal, and obtained it.

On the eve of May 1st, 1890, Louise lectured in Vienne, with Tennevin and Martin. The next day a riot occurred. A factory was taken by storm, and pieces of cloth were distributed amongst the demonstrators. To make the lectures of the preceding evening responsible for these acts was a settled affair with "law and order." Louise Michel, Tennevin, Martin, and thirty others were imprisoned. Only, while all the other prisoners were tried in a regular way, an exception was made in Louise's case. Constans was minister. He tried the same means he had so successfully used against Boulanger. Boulanger, fearing prison, was menaced with it and fled. With Louise the fear of prison was nil. But having heard her enemies repeatedly villify her as a mad woman, when Constans set her free, with the threat to lock her up as insane, a comprehensible terror seized her, and knowing she could no longer be of any use in France she only found peace after having reached English shores. Constans' trick had succeeded. And it would no doubt have succeeded with anybody. Who would not fear such a threat, knowing how easily asylums for the insane open their gates to receive the victims of power, and, once closed, never reopening them.

In London Louise's activity found vent in education. In the French quarter, with the help of refugees and English comrades, she founded an international school that worked more than a year. Since then, forced by the necessities of life, literary occupations have taken the upper hand. She has published several novels, and is now adding the finishing touches to her "History of the Commune of 1871." She has recently paid a visit to France, and will shortly commence a lecturing tour in the United States, with the object of raising funds for establishing in London a Home for Refugees.

The International Workers' Congress.

ANARCHIST COMMITTEE.

Amongst the English comrades a lively interest is at last being aroused over the matter of the International Congress, and the correspondence initiated by the above committee is provoking considerable discussion. But even now the agitation in this country, for the admission of delegates of all working-men's and working-women's associations—whether they mouth the political shibboleths or not, is in a very backward state when compared with the virgorous propaganda of our continental comrades.

In Holland, for instance, there is a determined opposition being organised against the malignant plotting of the Marxist manipulators on the Organising Committee. The Centrale Raad (Executive Council) of the Socialistenbond (Federation of Socialists) have sent through their secretary, J. Van Praag, a letter to the organisers, which was printed in full in the *Labour Leader* of January 25th. In this they contend, and support their contentions by numerous references to reports and protocols, that the much talked of clause in the invitation—re parliamentary action—was not meant to be a means of excluding non-parliamentarians, but was only intended to be an assertion of the right of the working classes of all countries to use parliaments and political action.

Will Thorne replied to the above by saying that his committee intended to adhere to their version of the resolution—that delegates who do not comply with the same will be excluded, and can appeal to the congress, which is the tribunal to decide as to their admission.

In France a splendid agitation is being worked up, and a large number of trades unions and labour syndicates have signified their intention of sending to the congress delegates pledged to support the free admission of all delegates.

In Germany the matter is receiving great attention. A conference to discuss these things was called at Elberfeld, Westphalia, for January 26th, but god and the emperor ordered

otherwise: the police suppressed the meeting, and the comrades had to do what they could whilst walking about the streets.

From America comes inspiring news of hearty work. C. W. Mowbray, H. M. Kelly, and Pietro Gori will be among the American contingent at the congress.

The manifesto which the London Committee has in hand is being rapidly proceeded with, and in connection with the agitation a number of public meetings are being arranged. On March 2nd there will be a mass meeting at the Imperial Assembly Rooms, Redman's Row, Jubilee Street, Mile End, at 8 p.m., and shortly afterwards one for Jewish workers in the same locality. In the first week in April there is to be a big West End meeting of which there will be given full particulars next month.

In order to help the funds for the above work, a grand vocal and instrumental concert will take place at the Grafton Rooms, Grafton Square, Fitzroy Square, W., on February 19th.

So that no channel of obtaining the necessary money might be neglected, Subscription Sheets have been printed, and comrades can obtain the same on application to the committee.

The list of subscriptions and first balance sheet will be published next month. T. REECE, Assist.-Sec.

Communistic Cooperative Farming.

We have received a copy of the first balance-sheet and report of the Free Communistic and Cooperative Colony, Clousden Hill Farm, Forest Hall, Newcastle. The document, although dealing only with the labour of five months (August to December) is interesting. Prior to the starting the colony was much talked about, and our readers will probably call to mind a letter by Kropotkin on the subject which appeared in these columns. The promoters in their programme admitted indebtedness to the late E. T. Craig, and their desire to copy his successful efforts in cooperative farming at Ralahine: they appear to have been doing their best to work on the lines laid down. The colony at Clousden Hill is much smaller than was that at Ralahine, consisting as it does at present of only four labourers, two of whom are married and have small families.

The following is an extract from the report:

"In taking over the above place on a twenty years' lease, at an annual rental of £60, we took over from the last tenant stock consisting of hay, oats, potatoes, fruit bushes, vegetables, 32 fowls, and various agricultural implements, at the agreed price of £100. Of this sum we have up to the present time paid £75. We have increased our live stock by one cow, one goat, two pigs, 22 hens and chickens, six ducks, 54 geese, eight turkeys, and two pair of rabbits, at a total cost of £38 7s. 1d. The hay and oats we intend, if possible, to reserve for the feeding of the stock, which ought to be considerably increased. The sale of milk, which, during two months alone, amounts to £7 15s. 3½d. convinces us that increase in dairy stock would mean a valuable addition to our income. For intensive culture we have built a glasshouse 100ft. by 15ft., and for forcing purposes we have constructed four frames, besidet which many other improvements have been made. On the whole we are more than satisfied with the results of our efforts, and the same general satisfaction has been expressed by numerous visitors, including Kropotkin. The number of applications for membership we have received clearly shows the desire of workers to return to the land, and demonstrates the necessity of Agricultural Colonies similar to our own."

Some Recollections of Tom Maguire.

Tom Maguire's name will be found amongst the twenty-three members of the Provisional Committee who signed the first manifesto of the Socialist League, in 1885, published in No. 1 of *The Commonweal*. He had then been in the field some time as a Socialist agitator, and till the day of his death, March 1895, his work and his life were for the cause.

Even now, when he is no longer amongst us, two small volumes—"Machine-Room Chants," and "Tom Maguire: a Remembrance"—published since his death, have carried on his labours, spreading far and wide the principles which made the manhood of Tom Maguire a glorious thing among men, and at the same time earning an honourable place in the world of letters for a true poet of democracy, a fierce singer of human wrongs. In the latter volume there are three introductory memoirs, by his friends, which tell something of the life of Tom Maguire; a life spent almost entirely in Yorkshire, closely confined to Leeds, and little known to the folk of other cities.

Perhaps in another number of LIBERTY some attempt at an appreciation of his writings may find a place: at present it is the man we desire to speak of, who, though revealed it is true by those very writings to a wider circle of comrades, still remains a strong, fascinatingly strong, personality to the men and women of his closer intercourse.

There is always something about a man who believes, no matter how unreasonable the creed or how fanatical the devotion. It was the belief of Tom Maguire, that explained his character—a belief (to quote his own words) not "hung round the neck" but "inside him"—a living belief that survived temporary failures, disappointments, poverty, and want, and which saw always clear ahead and always within reach

"The Day
When wrong shall have flown for ever away
To be never more known;
When over the land the Cause shall command
(and which heard ever, e'en through "the dull despair that hovers round the watches of the night")
The music of the silvery feet
Of Socialism coming."

It was this same belief that on his death-bed made Tom Maguire decline the weak but well-meant suggestion of a friend that he should send for a priest and seek reconciliation with the church of his baptism. "No, (said Tom) I will stand or fall on the last twelve years of my life, and not on the last five minutes." Brave words! For the saving of others he spent his life, and not to the last would he stoop for personal profit. Besides it was not his to cringe before any god, or any human being: come what might, he was not the man to shrink from responsibilities, or to seek to disavow an act for fear of consequences. Perhaps, to define this belief, it might be summed up in one word—socialism.

Only "socialism" to Tom Maguire was a bigger, nobler thing than the mere S. D. F. programme of industrial economics, or the seating of Labour candidates on public bodies. It stood for a cleaner, healthier society, in which men should no longer be allowed or obliged to prey on each other; it stood for Walt Whitman's Great City "Of the faithfullest friends, Of the cleanness of the sexes, Of the strongest and healthiest men and women." And this socialism, as I have said, was always inside him—always with him. It bridged over the intellectual void between him and many of his comrades, and made him at once the wise counsellor of the unskilled Labourers' Union, and the close friend of his companions in the Labour party. It destroyed imaginary barriers of "superior people," and enabled him to recognise that common humanity, like affection in men and books, and a similar fierce desire for social change, would do for a foundation of friendship even with the children of the Philistines. (At the same time Tom realized to the full that the struggle was mainly a "class war", that the proletariat themselves must accomplish the victory, and that it were preferable to avoid the houses of wealthy sympathizers. I think Tom Maguire could never have been really friends with anyone who was not a Socialist.)

Though an intensely interesting companion, and a most genial comrade at social gatherings, Tom never seemed to seek or to crave friendship. Indeed he never took any pains to conciliate or to retain his friends, at least verbally. He invariably expressed his disapproval of their opinions or tastes if they were displeasing to him, and he did it as one having authority. Yet he was rarely seen alone, and still more rarely was there ever a friend who left him, or who loved him the less for his plain speaking.

I think it was the fineness, the extraordinary delicacy of his sentiment that made him slow at any demonstration of affection. He showed the splendid strength of his sentiment by working incessantly at a time of crisis (like that of the Leeds gas strike in 1892), or by sitting up all night with a friend who was ill. Occasionally Tom would speak enthusiastically of men and women. An appreciative discrimination that plumbed the very depths of all whom he met and talked with, and all that

he read, seemed to guide him instinctively, unerringly, alike in personal friendships and public activities.

In his dealings with women the same delicacy of sentiment was even more apparent, it seemed indeed to become an abnormal unearthly purity. The foul, smutty jokes on sexual matters, which spice the conversation of University men and school boys, of fashionable loafers and over-worked labourers, in the absence of women, were declaredly disagreeable to Tom Maguire. Yet no puritan was he, no ascetic, but a lover of strong drink, a lover of nature, and keenly sensitive to beauty. He did not care for the society of women, and he never expressed any desire to be married. He used to say that he could not talk to women plainly about things—they did not or they would not understand. I only know one woman outside his own home whom he really cared to be with and to talk to, and she understood him. But he never added to the world's sorrow by binding up a woman's lot with his for mutual prey.

What more can I say of Tom Maguire?

These words of mine can give but the coldest picture to those who did not know him. And to his friends, to those who knew Tom Maguire—and it was not an easy thing altogether to know him—there is a boldness challenging resentment even in writing so much. But I have not tried to write a gravestone epitaph. Let us only keep alive the memory of men and comrades in the cause, and, without looking backward to the dead, we do well to remember Tom Maguire. JOE CLAYTON.

SOCIALISTIC CONTRADICTIONS.

It is wonderful into how many absurd contradictions a man or a movement is lured when once a desire to win in politics becomes the ruling passion. Unfortunately the authoritarian would-be Socialist cannot or will not see these contradictions. There are, however, many of them, and without further preface we will give consideration to a few of the more prominent.

Social Democracy, or Socialism that trusts in government, has no faith in reason, and is therefore illogical. It is fair to claim that if it were reasonable, or felt itself reasonable, it would be willing to trust to the force of logic only, and not be constantly appealing to the logic of force, either in the shape of a government soldier or a capitalist Pinkerton. But, no! a socialist government (a contradicton in terms) feels it would need the ballot, the bayonet, and the bullet, and that reason alone would be a trifle inconvenient.

Social Democracy is but discontented tyranny. Hear its supporters rave about majority rule, and the necessity for compelling the minority to submit. Then take a look at Germany, where the majority, through the Kaiser, is laying down the law for the people, and observe how the Social Democratic minority has to submit. Their mouths and their papers are filled with the utmost rebellion against a treatment which is the logical outcome of their very principle of majority compulsion. They say they believe in governmant: they get government and then they grumble. They do not wish to be governed, they wish to govern. They object to tyranny, because it is against them and not by them.

Social Democracy is a malevolent benevolence. Its supporters tell the worker what good things they will do for him. He objects, thinking he can do better for himself. At once they wax indignant, and in the name of his welfare would compel him to have what he thinks is illfare. They do not perceive the extraordinary contradiction there is in compelling sane people to have a thing whether good or not. The thing may be good, but there can be no doubt that the act of compulsion is never anything but evil. Surely these philanthropists are too good. We would advise them, if they are desirous of our everlasting gratitude, not to be too zealous: a very little malevolent benevolence will go a long way—with us.

Social Democracy is the divine right to do wrong. Social Democrats think they can commit no error in protecting that mystery—the community. You (they say) are but an individual, and therefore to them nothing in comparison with that vast conglomeration—a community. If the community is suffering, they would immediately endeavour to balance matters by making some unfortunate individual suffer also. In fact, the individuals separately will be called upon to suffer for the supposed welfare of the individuals collectively. In other words, everybody will have to make himself miserable in order to bring about the happiness of the rest. Here a puzzle arises, for when all are miserable where are the happy ones?

The Social Democrat is the ungovernable governor. Doubtless you have often spent an hour listening to these acute logicians. Notice the following. Man (they say) is an ignorant, stupid brute, who can by no means look after himself; he has never tried to think for himself—has never been taught by others to do so. This applies to all men; for if it did not then some could do these things themselves, and so, in their case, the truth of the anarchist position would have to be admitted. But it is impossible that they should admit this. They will tell you that all men are unable to govern themselves. No man, they repeat ad nauseum, can govern himself, therefore they add, with a fine sense of logic, let us elect him into parliament to govern others. Such a decision requires no comment.

Their actions are as contradictory as their logic. Today they make use of the weapon that has forever been used by reformers, namely, the art of persuasion. But tomorrow they intend to abandon persuasion and resort to bloody brutal force. Firstly, they will use what argument they can till they get their majority, and then, in flat contradiction to their own developement, they will endeavour to suppress the minority by militaryisms—written national citizen forces. To get the majority will be hard work; they will use the tongue; then to get the minority it ought not to be so hard, so accordingly they should go on with the voice and pen in a friendly social manner. But no, they will prefer to resort to the beneficent instruments of a William the Conqueror, or a Captain Kidd: they will prefer to make enemies of the minority by attempting to coerce them into good fellowship. Such good fellowship can be discovered any day in the gaol at Wormwood Scrubbs. or within a hundred miles of Dartmoor.

These are the people who will get rid of monopoly by the use of the great monopoly of officialism. If one were to take at their supposed value the spluttering candles of Social Democracy one might fancy that monoply would fade away before their luminous presence, as the hanging mists are dissipated by the rising sun. But, alas! the slightest investigation of the words used by most of the advocates of Social Democracy soon annihilates any hope born of their monotonous vapourings and illimitable promises. They would take the world out of the tightening clutch of its ten thousand owners today, only to put it into the more deadly grip of seven hundred elected right men (who, be it remembered, have all been picked out by the wrong ones—it being part of their plan for the "wrong 'uns" to pick out the "right 'uns"). Here they will hasten to inform you that this 700 is the people, regardless of the mathematical fact that in these islands at any rate 700 can by no stretch of the imagination be converted into 50,000,000. No, they will say these men will be controlled by the vote, regardless of the historical fact that it is men of position, wealth, power, and privilege who control the vote—always have and always will so long as landlordism and money exist. No, they will exclaim, it is not these who will make the laws, but the people, regardless of the logical fact that the people cannot make laws, but are compelled to accept laws—a very different matter. To make a loaf and to accept a loaf are actions of a very different nature. The position would therefore remain much as before, except that the monopoly would be more concentrated, and to all who love liberty would be more unendurable than ever.

But there is one monopolywhich I think no Social Democrat will have the temerity to say he does not believe in, and that is the monopoly of power and legislation. He wants all the power and all the legislation. No Tory need make the laws: Social Democracy will relieve him of all the cares of the state. No Anarchist may care for his own body: Social Democracy permits of no partitioning of legislation. Where now is the claim of Social Democracy that it will sweep away monopoly? Truly the Social Democrats are a spectacle to all who ponder critically over their words their actions and their position.

The foregoing are but a few of the many absurdities thrown in the way of progress by the advocates of Social Democracy, and he who investigates them can hardly fail to repudiate them, and hasten to adopt principles that will at last have the virtue of consistency. C. T. QUINN.

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

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LIBERTY,

LONDON, FEBRUARY, 1896.

BETWEEN OURSELVES.

We should very much like to see the arrangements for the forthcoming International Congress of Workers progressing on broader and more amicable lines than is now the case. This Congress should afford an opportunity for doing more and better socialist work than any of its predecessors. This however will not be the result if its deliberations are to be handicapped by paltry restrictions that will bring discredit to their promoters and to the cause at large. We hope it is not yet too late to ask each and all concerned to again consider the bases on which they are proposing to take action.

The worshippers of Mammon have been very busy lately: bank, railway, and mine shareholders have literally gloated over their increased dividends, arising (as they say) from "better trade"; or (as we should say) from a more stringent application of their basely acquired monopolistic forces. When is the money king—the most fiendish tyrant the world has ever tolerated—to be dethroned?

The day of reckoning ought to be very near, for the influence of money is today producing more misery and more monstrous absurdity than it has ever done. Take the work of the recent Act relating to death duties. View it from whatever point we may, the way in which Government "takes" a big lump of the wealth of the rich deceased ones is as near robbery—using the word in its ordinary sense—as can be. It may of course be described as taking from a man what he has stolen from others. Just so; but if a Government sets up a precedent of this sort today, why should not the people act on a similar principle tomorrow?

Must it for ever be assumed that all the honour, justice, all the "love your neighbour" sort of thing must be displayed by the masses, and the classes excused from burdening themselves with such very ordinary virtues? If taking what you need from those who have more than they need can be made "legal" for advantage and benefit of the few, why should not similar action be "right" when made on behalf of the many? If it is lawful to take a share of a man's wealth, when he is dead and cannot even enter a protest, would it be "wrong" to prevent—by a process which hardly needs description—men from heaping up riches? Where would the thieving, robbery, etc., come in?

Where also does the "wrong" of using force to get what one needs begin? As a nation we have used force to capture Prempeh and annex his territory. Jamieson brought force into play in trying to oust the Boers' authority from their own land. The British Government is about to spend some millions on war vessels, not to protect these islands from invasion, but for the purpose of finding an outlet for the peculiar energies of our Rhodes-Balfour-Barnato, etc., fraternity. But the masses must not use "force", must not become active revolutionists, not even to save themselves from the condition of starvation into which so many of them are forced. If they attempt a little unarmed boycotting, or peaceful picketting, they are at once condemned by their so-called superiors in the morality business as so many dangerous desperadoes. They may go on talking, talking (if they speak in low tones) about the coming reign of justice; indeed this is exactly what the classes hope they will continue to do. Seriously, however, is it not almost time to cut short the palaver and come to action? Does not the activity displayed in all directions by the enemy clearly justify such a course of proceedure?

The audacity of "The Catholic League" in claiming that non-sectarian ratepayers shall be taxed to pay the cost of teaching any religion whatsoever, may be said in slang phraseology to "take the cake". And John Burns, M.P., actually sanctions such audacity. Is he really going over to the side of the "angels" (of darkness)? Anarchists should make their mark on this education question. Let the creedists teach their children just what they please, but don't let them take by force any portion of the expense out of the pockets of people who have no faith in creeds and dogmas. If they do nothing more Anarchists might at least raise the cry of "Stop thief!"

Seven hundred women applied for one situation, that of a nursery governess. As might be expected, such a glaring demonstration of the rotten state of present-day social life has drawn forth a few expressions of mild sympathy with the unemployed. One of the dailies goes so far as to admit as "plain truth" the ever increasing difficulty all workers have in obtaining the bare means of existence. The admission made, the sympathy shown, and the outcome—what? Parliament reappoints a committee of well-fed men to inquire into and report upon the condition of the starving unemployed. The absurdity of giving a stone to a starving dog is not in the running with such benevolently "practical" legislation!

Here's another instance of "how not to do it."

If Miss Lanchester's incarceration in an asylum proved one thing more clearly than another, it was the necessity for the entire abolition of the lunacy laws. Anything so revolutionary was, of course, not to be expected from the "powers that be." Out of a certain groove they will not work. The consequence is, that instead of abolishing laws which in their very essence are inhuman, and framing others (must we have laws ?) on principles of humanity and common sense, an attempt is to be made by the Lord Chancellor to "extend and improve" the present wretchedly abortive Acts.

A man has died recently whose main business while alive was the production of "penny horribles." He has left a fortune of over £70,000, and also a few men of his class who are by a like process piling up shekels. No wonder that really natural boys and girls are becoming scarce.

Who believes there will be a thorough inquiry into the circumstances that led to the Jamieson invasion of the Boers' territory? We don't. In this case the thieves will not continue their quarrel long enough for honest men to get at all the truth. Africa is doomed to exploitation. The dogs of capitalism may do a little snarling, but they won't fight much—there are too many "meaty" bones within their easy reach.

"We have little to hope from our politicians of anything good or wise or patriotic," said, the other day, a Unitarian minister in Philadelphia. When is the British parson coming along who will dare to utter as much truth in as few words?

Thirty thousand acres of land in Nottinghamshire are to be given up to a company of colliery proprietors. This means a lessening of the natural sources of food for men and beasts. The Duke of Newcastle—one of the "old nobility" whose origin stinks in the nostrils of decent men—owns this land, and he and the shareholders of the company are about to steal the hidden wealth it contains and divide the plunder amongst them. They will "work not, neither will they spin," and all the miners, who will risk life and limb in making the treasure marketable, will get will be a living wage. And this because the workers generally are fools, and lack the courage to claim their proper share of the spoil.

In the matter of land—its ownership and its plunder—we must congratulate one of members of the *Referee* on his opinions, and all the more so because since the death of its founder the journal in question has never expressed a sound straightforward opinion on "burning" questions.

"When you come to think of it, it is not a little strange that a territorial magnate should mark off a large tract of the earth's surface as his own and, without doing a stroke of work himself, levy a heavy tax in the shape of rent upon those who cultivate it. He did not make the land: he is a pure interloper. . . The position of the tiller of the soil is that he is paying a large sum of money every year out of the land to some one who has not earned it. . . To levy it (rent) upon land is pretty much the same as levying it upon air or sunshine or sea-water."

Not so bad for a journalist of the Jingo school. He might, however, have carried his argument a little farther, and pointed out how house owners today do limit the supply of air and sunshine to the tenants of small houses. The man who can pay £50 a year as rent gets per £ more cubic space, and consequently a larger supply of air and sunshine, than the man who can only pay £15.

"There is no doubt whatever that the British navy is magnificent, but it has not nearly the facilities for being so effective as our own. Yet all these years we have gone on neglecting this important arm of the service. If we begin to do better let us resolve that Carnagie shall make no more armour plates. We might as well surrender to the enemy at once."

Thus does a New York journal comment on the state of affairs as between this country and the United States. Carnagie's comment on the same subject is of a very practical capitalistic nature—it consists of a plan to enlarge his iron works to double their present size. He evidently calculates on big orders, and it is ten to one he gets them. It is the crafty capitalist who generally benefits when great wars are on: the befooled taxpayer finds the money, and the idiots who think they are men do the fighting to order.

Comrade Merlino having so far satisfied the demands of Italian "law and order" has been set at liberty. For a time at least he will remain in his native land, but later on will probably pay a visit to his friends in London. Signor Crispi has increased the number of his bodyguard of detectives, and is doing his best to hide the deplorable position into which he has dragged the Italian nation.

Comrade Pouget has committed the unpardonable sin—he has libelled a capitalist. Imprisoment follows, of course. When the French government have wasted some £30,000 in Czar worship at Moscow—as they propose doing, they also should be imprisoned and kept from further misdeeds. Will Nemesis wait upon them?

Liebknecht, it is reported, is shortly coming to this country on a lecturing tour. He will thus defer the four months' imprisonment to which he was recently sentenced. After his labours in the Reichstag delivering lectures will be preferable to confinement in a German prison.

INTERNATIONAL WORK.

The international work that we pursue is, above all, a work of peace—peace between nations, peace in society, and peace in the family. How can we succeed in proclaiming peace among the peoples? By opposing to the military tendencies so fatal in our day, arbitration, disarmament, and international federation. How can we succeed in establishing peace in society? By rendering interests firmly united. And how, finally, can we establish peace in the family? By destroying the old prejudices which made woman the inferior of man and almost his slave. The family is the organised cell of society. In its turn the commune is nothing else than the union of families, and the association of communes—cantons, provinces, countries—can and ought to be adopted and consolidated into a compact alliance which is called federation.

This is the international work.

This word "federation" can no longer frighten anybody, since we find in our own organism the type of the system. The human organism is made up of organs which fulfil functions, yet these functions are subordinate to a centre, which is the brain. Give to each of the social organs their autonomy, let them fulfil their functions freely, and, whilst maintaining this harmony, you will avoid disasters, troubles, and civil wars. It is through federation that you will get at the most perfect representation of minorities, that you will contribute to the solution of the social problem, that we shall avoid wars, that we shall proclaim an ideal of justice and peace among men. Everywhere today this new idea is shining forth, in America as well as in Australia and in Europe. In Italy, England, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Spain, Portugal—everywhere you will find the germs of federalism.

In going through the Spanish provinces, what strikes one at first sight are the profound and radical differences which divide and separate them. Catalonia has a dialect of its own, and so have Galicia, Andalusia, Valencia, Castile, and the Basque Provinces. The manners, tendencies, and even the songs and dances vary in the several provinces. Andalusia and Galicia are more like Portugal than the rest of Spain. One would think Barcelona was a French town. By tradition, race, and geographical position the Iberian peninsula is meant for a federation. Portugal still keeps its primitive autonomy. As it is today, such it would be under a federation. This federation would have as allies the republics of South America, whose origins are Spanish, and Brazil—whose origin is Portugese. On the day when France has behind her twenty-two millions republicans (such is the actual population of the peninsula) politics in Europe will change completely. The Iberian peninsula would be a starting place for the future European federation.

In Brazil the federalist system has worked wonders, whilst remaining a guarantee for the Republic. The development of the States is enormous, and increases every day. It is true that parliamentarianism is unknown there. Party politics are discredited everywhere, precisely because they are dominated by interest and organised for interest. The politician is a produet of centralizatiou, and you will not get rid of him unless you take the commune as the only rational basis for working from, and as the only means of delivering the different countries from the pestilential influence of parties, politicians, and political and financial syndicates.

Faithful to the true principles of federalism, my friend Dr. Jaguarde, a struggler after and a valiant apostle for our ideal, has founded at St. Paul a daily paper, "Le Municipe," in which he is fighting the good fight of the deliverer and the emancipator. By his system the commune would remain the only electoral basis, and then, by administrative steps, they would come to elect deputies. In this way any dictatorship would become impossible. At the present time nearly every nation is passing through a crisis—oscillating between Cæsarism and Jacobinism, and for this reason, that centralization holds them between these two extreme poles. On the day when communal liberty shall be understood and practised, then will the people indeed be free.

Notice what is going on now. The country is depopulated. Its inhabitants are going away. Some to the industrial centres, others to tempt fortune in far-off lands. The whole life of the country is becoming concentrated in cities and big towns. Political competition, as fatal as economic competition, develops as a result of this crushing competition—crushing alike to the intellect and the heart.

But give expansion to the commune and a new life will begin in the province and on the country-side. It is nature herself who invites us to imitate her. And how shall we bring this about? We must make propaganda—strong propaganda. Let us place ourselves above the feelings of envy and selfish interests, which are now unhappily the curse of society. We must make use of all the scientific and literary forces in order to propagate our principles and our ideas. Let us have conferences, and international congresses. Reason will triumph in the end. And reason and justice are on our side.—"Magazine International."

Can Roman Catholics be Anarchists?

To the Editor.

The above question (which I asked in the November number of LIBERTY) has elicited replies, which if not as thorough as one could have wished, I accept as the best the writers could furnish. The direct and indirect admissions made by Oscar Baker and John S. Howell do not indicate any appreciation—shall I say understanding—of the true meaning of the word "liberty". They are Roman Catholics—appareutly enthusiastic converts, whose idea of perfect freedom is nothing more than "permission" to worship the so-called "Head" of the Roman Catholic church. I do not say they are insincere in asking for a definition of "liberty" by an Anarchist: because the very fact of their making such a request is unmistakable evidence of their inability to comprehend the word in its true meaning. Anarchists attach no special, as opposed to the real, meaning of the word. It would be a waste of time, therefore, to enter into a controversy as to the meaning of "liberty" as defined by Roman Catholics or by any other body of men acting under the influence of very limited ideas. What I wished to ascertain, when I put my question, was—Whether Catholics, who with great plausibility claim to be the particular friends of the oppressed and down-trodden, were sufficiently sincere in their professions to induce them to place the claims of humanity before the dictations of a creed, and to step courageonsly to the front and stand shoulder to shoulder with Anarchists or any others who are fighting for liberty—freedom. Messrs. Baker and Howell have spoken for Roman Catholics, and their reply is in the negative. There, so far as I am concerned, the subject may rest

D. B.

"A SUPERHUMAN VIEW OF MANKIND" is the title of a satire in ryhme, by "R. G."—a signature not unknown to the readers of LIBERTY. The writer describes an Universal Science Congress of apes, held in Central Africa—in "a forest glade, with sunny spots, and trees enough for shade." Strange words are uttered and strange events transpire at this said congress. "Amomg the papers read was one on Man," and the ancient gorilla, the author of the paper. discoursed thusly:

The great majority of men are poor
And scarce the means of living can secure.
A few have seized the wealth-producing land,
Who dole its gifts with slow and niggard hand,
While to their selfishness they add a sting
By claiming it as heaven's ordering.
They make the laws, and frame them to prevent
Rebellion 'gainst such godlike government.

A COMMUNISTIC ENTERPRISE:

THE FRENCH WORKING-MEN'S GLASS WORKS.

The trade union movement in France, though much younger and naturally poorer than in this country has one enormous advantage over English trade unionism. Coming into existence later, when the economic problem was more developed and better understood, it is based on socialist conceptions. It aims at the complete control of labour by the organised labourers themselves; its socialism is therefore economic as well as revolutionary in spirit.

At this moment the united socialist French trade unionists are undertaking an enterprise thoroughly communistic in character. They are attempting to establish works for the manufacture of glass articles, which will give employment to the 380 glassblowers thrown out of work by the recent strike at Carmaux. Once established this factory will be a bulwark of defence in the case of future strikes in the glass trade. Employers will naturally hesitate before forcing strikes when they have to compete with a factory owned and managed by working men; while the fact of the existence of such works will undoubtedly lead to the establishment on similar principles of other works.

But more than this will be gained by the success of the communistic effort at Carmaux—for the works will belong to the French socialist working classes, as one of the conditions on which the scheme is promoted is, that the profits shall be devoted to assisting the socialist labour movement. The glassblowers will be paid the standard wage, and the goods will not be sold under market value.

This is a communistic effort of its class on a larger scale than has ever yet been attempted, and must influence the whole socialist movement in the direction of independent action on economic lines as opposed to political action.

From the trades unionists generally forty-five members have been chosen as an excutive committee, and French cooperators are giving the project all the assistance in their power. The productive and distributive societies are alike participating in the enterprise, and the latter will secure a sufficient demand of the glass wares to keep the new factory well employed. This will at the same time mean a withdrawal of customers from the capitalists' factories in the trade.

But all these results, which cannot be measured in their probable far-reaching effects on the socialist movement, depend on the successful working of the undertaking.

It is, of course, the first step which is the most difficult. The site is chosen, and the executive committee are earnestly engaged in organising the means to obtain the necessary capital. This is no easy matter. Surely this action on the part of the organised French working men calls urgently upon the sympathy and aid of our anarchist-communist party. And all the more so when we consider that it is anti-political, purely economic in action, a sure source of strength to independent socialism, besides being an example sure to be imitated, and the more frequently so the more powerfully will it assist in the downfall of capitalism.

The executive committee have adopted two methods by which to collect the necessary funds. One, a lottery—the prizes to be drawn on the 30th June next, towards which gifts in kind or money will be thankfully accepted. The other method, the issuing of tickets at 2d. each, to be sold to groups or individuals who will dispose of them in packets of 50. In France these tickets will entitle their buyers to admission at meetings or entertainments on behalf of the factory. Similar tickets might be used in this country if comrades would utilise the idea, or small committees might be formed for the purpose. Entertainments are popular, and they could be made an occasion for active propaganda. As Anarchists we might use the opportunity to prove our sympathy with a genuine communistic-socialist effort, and also to give effect to the principle of internationalism that we profess and uphold.

Applications for packets of tickets are to be made to V. Jaclard, 110, Rue Vieille-du-Temple, Paris. All enquiries concerning the proposed factory to be made to E. Guerard, at the same address.

A. HENRY.

"THE REBEL" ON KEIR HARDIE.

Keir Hardie said in a recent interview that when he told the Western Populists that their political agitation would not cure their economic ills, and asked them what they would try next, their answer was always a signiffcant gesture towards their Winchester rifles. But, says Keir Hardie, I believe in the schoolmaster: I am an evolutionist not a revolutionist.

I wish Keir did believe in the schoolmaster, it might then be worth while to explain to him that the theory of evolution or development was in its time a most revolutionary and atheistic doctrine. The good old doctrine was that God had made the world to run like an 8-day clock—that if things happened in a certain way it was because he had built the machine that way and no other. The evolutionists on the other hand held that the world had really never been created at all, but was constantly changing—that the world we see today is a growth from a vastly different world of the past, and is itself but a momentary phase of a mighty and universal growth toward a world to be. Of course, this doctrine which was considered so atheistic, immoral, and revolutionary by the orthodox of yesterday is trotted out by the Keir Hardie of today as a defence against the revolutionists. The trouble is that these would-be evolutionists have never evolved beyond the "god-almighty" stage. The old creationists answered all questions as to the why or wherefore of things by asserting that God has made things as they were for his own good

pleasure: the new set have substituted evolution for creation, and "natural law" for "god's will". That's all the difference there is: but where the natural law comes from, or how they come to be so cocksure as to its operations they will not condescend to explain. Fortunately we can laugh at them. As a simple and obvious fact no one can know anything about it. The natural phenomena that make for change in order to transform the world into its present state may have operated through countless æons at a rate very much too slow for our minds to grasp, or they may have operated at times and in places with inconceivable speed. One thing only is certain, that exact science does not as yet afford us data for even an intelligent, to say nothing of exact knowledge.

Now if Keir Hardie, who is really an intelligent fellow, will drop this flatulent talk about evolution, he will see that every form of society yet tried by men has created a special class who were its special beneficiaries, or that every society was created by a special class for its own benefit, and that these special beneficiaries have always represented and probably believed their own class privileges to be the very keystone of the social arch. He will search history in vain for a case where an aristocracy has voluntarily given up its privileges and come down to fellowship and equality. The Populists are very backward brethren, "they want but little here below," but their instincts are perfectly sound, and lead them to regard their Winchesters as the only means of getting the little they do want.

J. H. E.

The Land Question and the Single Tax.

To the *Editor* of LIBERTY.

In your December number William J. Robins thinks he has completely undermined the single tax. But all single taxers do not "assume that all men have equal rights to use the earth." That assumption is not at all necessary, in fact it weakens the single tax position. Equal freedom, not equal rights, is the true basis for all single tax arguments.

Let us admit Mr. Robins' claim that "equal rights is a figment of the imagination," and that "in a state of nature the rights of men are measured by their might, and whatever men have the might to do they have the right to do." What then? Why this: when I deny that any person has, has had, or ever can have, any right—other than that of might—to exclude any person from any portion of the earth at any time, Mr. Robins is, by his own logic, forced to admit my denial as correct. Then, no one has any right to occupy and use, to the exclusion of any other, any portion of the earth at any time. How then is the "right of contract" to supersede the "right of might"? Clearly, only through all men being equally free to contract. "The right of contract, or voluntary agreement" must rest on equal freedom. That is, equal freedom must be a precedent condition. Contracts made under any other conditions than that of equal freedom are, perforce, not voluntary. They are therefore made under the reign of might. Suppose such a condition of equal freedom, with Mr. Robins and I both desiring to occupy and use the same portion of the earth at the same time. What matters it who got there first? Can the last comer be equally free with the first to contract regarding the use of that portion of the earth unless he has as much say as to who shall or shall not be permitted to occupy and use to the exclusion of others? Evidently not. How are we to decide which of us shall occupy and use it and at the same time not infringe the equal freedom of each other? I say that there is but one way. That way is for one to pay the other a certain amount of the results of his labour for the privilege of excluding the other; for the other to accept, or make a counter offer; and for them to continue this plan until they come to a mutual agreement whereby the excluded is compensated and the other is secured in exclusion.

Now suppose that Mr. Plipson appears on the scene and desires to occupy that same portion of the earth at the same time. Does not the law of equal freedom apply equally to him? Is not the condition of equal freedom (to contract) as necessary as before? Then the privilege—for none have the right—of exclusive possession is worth more than before because it carries with it the power to exclude more—more desiring to occupy and use that location. Is not the logical conclusion this—that each of us three must have an equal voice in the disposition of that location, or else violate the condition of equal freedom and force a contract upon the others? Extend the principle, multiply the population—does not the logic apply equally as well? Can Mr. Robins show any other way whereby the principle of equal freedom to contract can be held inviolate and yet exclusive possession of any portion of the earth be maintained?

If I mistake not, all Anarchists hold that the exercise of force is, or may be, necessary to secure "equal liberty". Is not equal freedom in the use of the earth the first "equal liberty" necessary to beings who can live only on and from the earth? Can equal freedom in the use of the earth be secured by any other means than that which balances the privilege of exclusive possession with compensation to the excluded? If any one will not voluntarily do this, does he not by his refusal to do so assume the "right of might"—assume greater freedom than he accords to others? Is it not evident, then, so long as there are any such persons, that equal freedom in the use of the earth—the freedom upon which all other freedom necessarily rests—can only be secured by force? Is not this the place where "might" naturally precedes "contract"—the place where, without such exercise of might, freedom to contract is impossible? If, then, the majority delegate to an organisation—call it government, state, or what not—the power to enforce the conditions of equal freedom in the use of the earth, have they not done the wisest thing possible? Can Mr. Robins show a better way? When he can, then—and not till then—will be the time for him to say that he has shown that the single tax "has no basis in fact or logic."

Fairhope, Baldwin County, Alabama, January 14, 1896. W. E. BROKAW.

POVERTY.

There is a spectre gloomy, that doth our hearthstone haunt,
An ever present shadow—heavy, dark, and gaunt;
He broods above our homes, he mocks us in our sleep,
He's near in pain, near in toil, near us when we weep.

Our lives are long-drawn struggles to exorcise this ghost,
Whene'er we delve the deepest we feel his presence most;
Dare we but welcome pleasure, or love, or happiness
His shadow falls to turn us back to all our old distress.

He hath no right, no title here—Nature never planned
Her domain to include him; her kind and gen'rous hand
Spread out the earth for man, to use, to love, to bless,
Not to be darkened by a shade so fashioned to oppress.

He lurketh near great mansions, he hides near wealth untold,
He is the shadow cast by heaps of glittering gold;
He is the ghost evoked because of power and greed,
Of mighty riches gathered up at cost of others' need.

There are no magic words, no necromance, no spell,
No "Presto, change!" to banish him back to his native hell.
Naught but the enlightened brains, the strength, the sturdy will
Of the united masses can bid this wraith be still.

Be strong! Be brave! Oh, workmen! fear not this haunting shade,
Face him! Stand firm! Declare it must be laid.
When the wealth that you've created shall be your own again,
There'll be naught to cast this shadow which darkens homes of men.

LIZZIE M. HOLMES.

COMING EVENTS.

On Sunday evening, Feb. 16, F. Ebb will lecture on "Anarchism and Christianity," in the Club Room, Smith's Coffee Tavern, Deptford Bridge (near Broadway), at 7.30. On the following Sunday evenings there will also be lectures.

On Monday, Feb. 24, at 8 p.m., P. Kropotkin will lecture on "What man can obtain from the land," at the Working Lads' Institute, 137, Whitechapel Road.

Sunday Evening Lectures in Liverpool have, Comrade Kavanagh informs us, been arranged for at 4, Mount Vernon Street, to which friends and opponents are cordially invited.

The Deptford Group Prize Draw Winning Numbers are as follows: 55, 60, 64, 72, 81, 86, 151, 162, 180, 186, 187, 189, 191, 203, 229, 231. Address Secretary, Smith's Coffee Tavern, Deptford Bridge, S.E.

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