

FREEDOM

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THE COMMUNE OF PARIS.

THE Commune of March, 1871, was a new departure along an old track. When the workmen of Paris rose against the middle-class assembly at Versailles, they did more than revolt against mere political tyranny, more than revolt against incapacity and treachery in face of a foreign foe. They revolted against property-rule. They revolted to regain an old popular right lost by the people in the evil days which grew up with the growth of government and law, and the rule of the property grabbers—the right of each group of workers, each locality to manage its own business.

It is an old saying: If you want your business done go yourself, if not send some one else. Of late years the people have had plenty of this method of sending some one else. Sending them right away out of sight and hearing almost; there to settle how everybody is to do everything. And when the deputies of the French people handed over Paris to Bismark, the workers of Paris felt they had had enough of it. So they proclaimed the Commune, *i.e.*, the management of the affairs of the town by the people of the town, as had been the way of the free associations of workers federated for mutual help and protection in past ages, when they were fighting against the encroachments of robber barons and churchmen and kings, the spiritual ancestors of our robber landlords and capitalists and kings and parliaments of to-day.

But when Paris, and the other towns of France which followed her example, proclaimed the Commune, they did more than re-assert an old popular right. They took the first active step in realising that new social state towards which the hope of all the workers of the civilised world is strained.

Not that they formally proclaimed the freedom and equality of all men; still less the abolition of property. But that the pressure of their masters, the monopolists of property, being removed, they just began, without thinking of it, to lead amongst themselves that peaceful and orderly social life, which must be free and equal because there is no authority to protect monopoly, and no monopolists of social wealth to divide the workers from the means of production, and to live idly upon the forced labour of others. This sort of free and natural social life has been the real object of every genuine popular movement. It is the spontaneous idea of what social life ought to be amongst the masses of the people.

It is by the forcible suppression of this true social life of the people, that the ruling classes have established their "law and order." It is by the resurrection of this true social life in its new form of International Anarchist-Socialism that they and their law and order will be overthrown.

In 1871 the masses were still hampered by the evil traditions of past ages of slavery. They had burst their chains, but the broken links still hung round their feet and prevented them from moving forward.

They waited, let themselves be persuaded to wait, to elect deputies, to construct a government,—as if a government of any sort were not the very incarnation of the anti-social principle which they had revolted to overthrow.

This feeble shadow of a representative body—which, to do it justice, was very deficient in the tyrannical spirit of a real government—managed nevertheless to fall into a series of blunders worthy of a middle-class parliament. It tried to put itself on a legal and constitutional footing with its rival at Versailles; as if the revolted workers had any fair chance of treating with their angry masters! It issued edicts which no one thought of even trying to obey. It tried to organise an administration *à la bourgeoise* right in front of the enemy's bayonets. It deceived the people as to the state of the war. Worse than all, it checked them not only in fighting, but in seizing upon the Bank of France, the wealth which they had helped to create and the title-deeds of the land which belonged to the whole people of France.

And whilst these well-meaning administrators were discussing, and hesitating, and deliberating, the dismay and confusion of the ruling classes subsided and the first outburst of revolutionary ardour amongst the people died down. The moment for decisive and successful action was irrevocably lost, and nothing remained for the brave workmen of Paris but to die fighting for the hope they had missed.

Do we reproach these men, our brothers who led the forlorn-hope of the Social Revolution? Do we reproach a child who tumbles when he first begins to walk alone? Their errors of judgment committed in the

stress of battle—battle for which they were not prepared—have been washed out in their blood. Their noble courage and devotion to the cause which was theirs and ours remains a shining example for ever.

Nevertheless we owe it to them, as well as to the cause to profit by their bitter experience, that it may not have been suffered in vain.

Let us lay to heart the necessity of being prepared to act, when our opportunity comes to us, as theirs to the workers of Paris in 1871. Prepared, not with the preparation of an army, organised in well-drilled battalions, where every man is part of a machine which will not act until the leaders pull the strings. But prepared like free men, ready each one of us in heart and mind, sure of our principle of action, decided as to our aim.

Agitate, educate, organise! But always in accordance with the new social relations which we look to see universally established. Never forget that the sole end of preparation is that the people shall be ready to rely on their own revolutionary initiative and not be scared from it by the scruples and prejudices or the plausible pretences of leaders, either timid or self-interested.

The end of the social revolution is not to make men obedient servants of a reorganised state, but to set them free to live the social life which is the spontaneous outcome of their inmost desires.

ROCKS AHEAD.

We have already said that, whatever may be our wishes and desires, the present state of Europe *will* result in revolutions on the Continent, and that these revolutionary disturbances will be echoed in this country. As soon as the trade of the world and the markets of the world are disturbed, the conditions of the workmen of this country will become still more precarious than they are now, and the workers *will* ask for some fundamental changes in the economical conditions of the community. But, as the ruling classes will be unable to satisfy the needs of the workers, and as they will try, on the contrary, to stifle them by force, or by any other more or less cunning means, changes in the political organisation will follow. The circumstances being so bad that long waiting will be impossible, a period of *rapid* changes—a revolutionary period—will be opened, and it will last for some time; the intensity of the interior struggles depending upon the more or less good sense and willingness to submit to the change that will be displayed on that occasion by the privileged classes.

We have also pointed out that, whatever the character of the revolutionary movements in other countries, they necessarily will result in a general disturbance of the World-trade. And the consequences of the disturbance will be most severely felt in the country which chiefly lives on its world-trade, that is Britain. It will mean the stoppage of hundreds of manufactures and workshops, and the impossibility of reopening them. Thousands and thousands of workmen will find no employment. Thousands of middlemen, who constitute so great a percentage of the population of this country, will be also deprived of their present means of subsistence. The present want of employment and misery will be increased tenfold, and the question will then arise, "What to do?"

To this question our answer was plain. The community will be compelled to organise itself so as to first of all *immediately* provide shelter and food for all the thousands who will have none. By the very force of circumstances it will be thus driven into Communism. And our Social-Democrat friends will obviously agree that no central Government—however excellent its intentions—will be capable of managing through its Governmental organs the immense problems which it will have to do with, *viz.*, modify the present relation between labour and capital; supply shelter and food to the mass of the nation; reform industry and agriculture in accordance with the new needs, and so on.

The whole of the nation, in each city, village, hamlet, and workshop, must set to the work with a free hand if they are to succeed in the task of re-organisation. And thus, the fallacy of Providence in a new shape—that of a revolutionary Government—will have to be cast overboard like so many fallacies and prejudices of old. Unavoidably, the Anarchist system of organisation—free local action and free grouping—will come into play.

Now, if each member of the community consumes as much food as he needs for maintaining his life and rearing his children, the stores of foods which exist in this country will soon be exhausted. And we

have already said that it would be childish to rely on the supplies of food, which are now drawn from other countries, in exchange for manufactured goods. Let the slightest economical disturbance occur in Russia, and Russia will export corn no longer. The Russian peasant does not sell a *surplus* of corn. He is compelled to sell his *necessaries* to pay the heavy taxes, and he suffers from a positive want of food for four, six, or eight months every year. The American farmer who exports corn now, will not always find workmen to work for starvation wages on his field, or the railways which transport the Illinois corn for nearly nothing, because they derive their profits from other sources, *e.g.*, speculation in land; and the ryot of India will starve no longer to enrich the zemandars and the English Government, as soon as he learns that the English Government is no longer the terrible force it was before. The imports of foreign corn will decrease.

The exports of manufactured wares will decrease too. The war between France and China has already been a cause of aggravated misery in Lancashire. The disturbed state of the Chinese market resulted in diminished exports of Indian cotton from India to China, and this resulted in a diminished demand for English cottons in India, so intimately are connected now all nations of the world. But, what when *all* markets shall be disturbed in the same way? The demand for manufactured wares will be lessened, and the imports of foreign corn will be reduced. And this is so well understood that there are people who see in this fact, which they foresee, an argument against the possibility of a revolution in England.

In our opinion, it is an argument for its unavoidability. And it gives us also an answer to the question, What to do? Why, manufacture for home consumption, and grow our own food, such will be the answer dictated by the force of circumstances.

Many of our readers would ask, of course, whether England is able to grow sufficient food for all her population? Under the present system of private appropriation of land by landlords, it is obvious that she cannot. Under any system of appropriation of land by peasants having no implements to till the land, no cattle, no means of getting manure in short, under any system of private ownership like the small peasant ownership which we now see in France—she cannot again.

But let us imagine that the land inhabited and rendered habitable by the British nation is proclaimed the property of the British nation as a whole. And immediately organisations will spring up to render it a source of rich crops more than sufficient for providing with plenty of food, not only the thirty million inhabitants of these islands, but twice the same amount. Intensity of culture permits 60 bushels to be grown on an acre, instead of the average 28 bushels we barely succeed in growing now. And, instead of sowing with wheat only 2½ million acres, out of our area of 77 millions, we can cover with golden crops four or five times that amount. "The soil is worth what man himself is worth" the French peasants say; and if only the half million men who now starve under the sweating system, or do nothing useful for the community, started, under the leadership of intelligent agriculturalists, to spend twenty days a year in improving the soil round about the metropolis, the now unproductive fields would quickly become a rich source of all kinds of supplies of food for the community.

The danger is not in the want of food supplies. A few acres are largely sufficient for supporting a family, if only they are properly prepared for the crops and properly cultivated. And what we have to be afraid of is not the want of space for the inhabitants of this country: it is the want of courage in doing away with time-rotten institutions, the want of broader views of the needs of the community, the want of boldness in recognising that the problem before us is not a mere question of wages, but a problem of thorough reform of the whole of our economical and political organisation.

THE BALLAD OF SPLENDID SILENCE.

FERENZ RENYI. HUNGARY, 1848.

This is the story of Renyi;
And when you have heard it through,
Pray God he send no trial like his
To try the faith of you.

And if his doom be upon you,
Then may God grant you this:
To fight as good a fight as he,
And win a crown like his.

He was strong and handsome and happy,
Beloved and loving and young,
With eyes that men set their trust in,
And the fire of his soul on his tongue.

He loved the spirit of Freedom,
He hated his country's wrongs,
He told the patriots' stories,
He sang the patriot's songs.

With mother and sister and sweetheart
His safe glad days went by,
Till Hungary called on her children
To arm to fight and to die.

"Goodbye to mother and sister,
Goodbye to my sweet sweetheart;
I fight for you, you pray for me—
We shall not be apart."

The women prayed in the sunrise,
They prayed when the sky grew dim;
His mother and sister prayed for the
cause,
His sweetheart prayed for him.

For mother and sister and sweetheart,
But most for the true and the right,
He laid down his own life's hopes,
And led his men to fight.

Skirmishing, scouting, and spying,
Night watch, attack, and defeat;
The resolute desperate fighting,
The hopeless, reluctant retreat.

Ruin and death and disaster,
Capture and loss and despair;
And half of his regiment hidden,
And only this man knew where.

Prisoner, fast bound, sore wounded,
They brought him roughly along,
With his body as bruised and broken
As his soul was steadfast and strong,

Before the Austrian general,
"Where are your men?" he heard;
He looked black Death in its ugly face,
And answered never a word.

"Where is your regiment hidden?
Speak! you are pardoned straight.
No? We can find dumb dogs their
tongues,
You rebel reprobate!"

They dragged his mother and sister
Into the open hall:
"Give up your men—if these women
Are dear to your heart at all!"

He turned his eyes on his sister
And spoke to her silently;
She answered his silence with speaking,
And straight from the heart spoke she.

"If you betray your country,
You spit on our father's name:
And what is Life, without honour,
And what is Death, without shame?"

He looked at the mother who bore him,
And her smile was splendid to see;
He hid his face with a bitter cry,
But never a word said he.

"Son of my body, be silent!
My days at the best are few,
And I shall know how to give them,
Son of my heart, for you!"

He shuddered, set teeth, kept silence.
Without a reproach or cry
The women were slain before him,
And he stood, and he saw them die.

Then they brought his lovely beloved,
Desire of his heart and eyes,
"Say where your men are hidden,
Or say that your sweet heart dies."

She flung her arms about him,
She laid her lips to his cheek,
"Speak, for my sake who love you;
Love, for our love's sake speak!"

His eyes are burning and shining
With the fire of immortal disgrace;
Christ! walk with him in the furnace,
And strengthen his soul for a space.

Long he looked at his sweetheart,
And his eyes grew tender and wet;
Long he held her closely,
His lips to her lips were set.

"See, I am young, I love you!
I am not ready to die!
One word makes us happy for ever
Together, you and I."

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E. NESBIT.

NOTES.

All success to the Anarchist propaganda of our involuntary Tory allies! If they intended Trafalgar Square as a side blow to displace the economic revolt, they have simply succeeded in driving home to the hearts of the people that government and law are mere devices of the rich to blind the eyes of the poor and hold them in moral subjection. If Matthews, Warren, and Co. continue their present policy for five years, they will go far to end all danger of State Socialism in England.

The debate on the right of public meeting was a beautiful illustration of the advantages of law. For over a thousand years central authority has been tinkering at English law, making statutes and giving decisions; with the result that the most eminent lawyers of to-day are uncertain if it is or is not an offence to attend a public meeting! Baron Alderson trying Chartist, said that there is a legal right of public meeting. Mr. Justice Charles, trying Burns and Graham, says there is not. Mr. Bradlaugh cites a case where the right of public meeting was decided to exist on a common even after the other common rights had been sold. The Attorney-General retorts with two legal decisions that there is no such thing as the right of free speech in connection with any common or park. Finally that learned darkener of counsel Sir Charles Russell sums up with the lucid statement that whilst every single person attending an open-air meeting may be indicted for causing wilful obstruction, nevertheless the whole meeting consisting of these persons amenable to the law is not unlawful!

Two evenings of this solemn hair-splitting before the eyes of an admiring nation. And for final outcome what every Anarchist knew to begin with. If the people want to assemble, they must go and do it at their own risk and peril; just as if they want a road they must go that way and break down again and again every fence that may be set up across it, until land-grabbers are tired of erecting barricades. That is the "common law"—*i.e.*, the old custom of England. Our ancient customs were very anarchistic.

When all goes smoothly, law is not wanted; when a crisis occurs, law only confuses the common sense of the affair. And when the quibbling and arguing are done, the matter must be settled by mutual

concession or hard fighting after all. Unfortunately this instrument of law, so useless for all good social ends, is as a flaming sword in the hands of the hirelings of the ruling classes, turning every way at their pleasure to guard the Eden of property.

* * *

If these said hirelings were so alarmed and embarrassed as the Home Secretary confessed by the meetings and processions of a few hundreds of unemployed, we have little to fear from their guns and ammunition when there is a serious rising in London. They will run, and leave their weapons behind them, like the bourgeois government from Paris in '71.

* * *

The Tory attack on free speech will not long divert the London workers from Socialism. The crowded audience who welcomed Burns and Graham cheered loudest of all every allusion to the injustice of wage-slavery and the destruction of property-rule. Political reforms proposed even by Davitt gained the chilliest of applause. The terrors of the rich are not so ill-founded after all.

* * *

Another noticeable feature of last month's demonstrations was the growth of social feeling in the popular movement. Whilst the older men, even Davitt, talked of prisons and punishments for Balfour and Matthews, the Socialist speakers, and especially our brave comrade Burns, denounced the whole system of imprisonment, and carried the hearts of the audience with them when they said, Socialists will want no prisons: when we are happy and free, who will care to punish his fellow men!

OUR DISCUSSION MEETINGS.

THE first Freedom group discussion meeting was both pleasant and interesting. Forty or fifty comrades turned up: some Socialists inclined to Anarchism or doubtful about their politics; some convinced Social Democrats, and one or two Anarchists still in the Proudhonian stage of individualist economics.

The opening paper (read by C. M. Wilson) dwelt upon the necessity for Socialists to consider the political side of social re-organisation. If the revolutionists are not prepared, when the time for action comes, to introduce new political relations corresponding to the new economic relations they desire to establish, the social revolution may well be seriously delayed by the reactionary tendencies of prejudiced or ambitious politicians. The paper then briefly contrasted Democracy, *i.e.*, representation and majority rule, with Anarchism, *i.e.*, free association, decision by unanimity and temporary delegation for definite purposes; and contended that Democracy is the political form of our transition period, and Anarchism that of true Socialism.

Comrade Blackwell (Social Democrat) argued that government of some sort would be necessary in a socialist community. Firstly, to make and enforce laws checking personal violence, thieving, shirking work, etc.; and secondly, to manage those public concerns, *e.g.*, railways, which affect the whole nation. He could see no danger of tyranny from majority-rule if the referendum were employed as a constant check on the people's representatives. Where a free library is now required, for instance, the minority feel it no wrong to have to wait until the majority are convinced of the need for books.

Comrade Sorell (Individualist Anarchist) reminded Blackwell that a "free" library meant taxes levied by force. In the present society, the use of force under the cloak of law and government, manufactured crime instead of preventing it. The Quakers offer a living example of order maintained without coercion. I claim, he added, a right to all I can produce by my own labour and to the ground I stand on. If another man wants to pass that way he must go round me.

The somewhat savage stress laid by Comrade Sorell on individuality, roused comrade Allan (Socialist) to plead that the triumph of social principles was the aim of the revolution, and social feeling its inspiration.

Then Comrade Krapotkin explained how the principle of unanimity really underlies the supposed majority rule when it works amicably, as in Blackwell's instance of the free library. Those who want the library prefer to wait until they can persuade the others to agree. They are not coerced to do so; and it is the same in almost all cases where common interests are at stake—at least when the people concerned are in fairly equal conditions, as all will be in a Socialist community. Where the rule of the majority really acts with coercive force, as in Switzerland, when the referendum is used, the result is very bad. There are endless matters in which one cannot express one's opinions by a distinct yes or no, and so cannot vote at all. Again, when mere numbers alone count, the decision practically rests with the thoughtless, who vote either way for some trifling consideration, the "toads of the marsh," as they were called in the great Revolution. The International Railway system and the International Postal Union, by means of which through communication of the speediest sort is now possible in Europe in spite of the difficulties of distance, different national and local interests, etc., are examples of how affairs of general importance can be managed by mutual agreement without any supreme central authority. As for the difficulties which might occasionally arise—*i.e.*, a stupid commune might decline to permit a new railway to pass through its territory, it is infinitely better to go round such a commune, or, in general, compromise as best you can, than incur the danger and expense, of that perpetual well-spring of social feeling and injustice between man and man, a central government.

The next meeting will be held at 13, Farringdon Road, on Thursday, March 15th. The discussion will be on Communist and Individualist Anarchism, and will be opened by P. Krapotkin, at 8.30.

SOME EFFECTS OF REASON WORSHIP.

IN our last paper we noted the change in men's ideas of the world and their own place in it, which has resulted from the increased mental activity of the last four hundred years; and we saw how the splendid conquests of human thinking-power have led to excessive and superstitious reverence for that one faculty. Excessive, because it contemptuously excludes the rest (the greater part) of men's nature; superstitious, because it erects reason into a sort of internal Mumbo-Jumbo—mysteriously capable of comprehending, moulding, and controlling the will, feeling and action of the whole human being and the whole society.

But what, we may be asked, have the extravagant theories of a few philosophers and scientists to do with the common life of every day? What have they to do with the masses, absorbed with the bitter struggle for bread, with the people who have barely heard the thinkers' names, much less troubled their heads with their theories?

This. The conscious thinkers of every age are but the mouthpieces of its unconscious and half-conscious yearnings, experiences and aspirations. They are bound up with the social life of their time. They are inspired—whether they know it or not—by its needs, its strivings. They only give back, in clear and definite shape, what the many are vaguely feeling and thinking. And the ideas, thus formulated by the most powerful and active minds in the community, not only influence the belief and conduct of the few who come into direct contact with them, but filter back through the whole people to take their place amongst the current coin of popular morality and popular thought. The history of the evolution theory affords a notable illustration. Darwin and Wallace, both at the same time but unknown to one another, were inspired by the general thought tendency to work out the hypothesis of natural selection. And again, it is a matter of common observation, how profoundly the ideas of Darwin and Wallace have coloured the beliefs and influenced the conduct of millions of men and women who have never read a line of their writings.

Thus, not only the minds and conduct of a few philosophers or of the educated minority, but the common thought and common action of Europe have been deeply influenced by reason-worship. There has been a general tendency to believe vaguely that reason is a specially human faculty separating men by a sharp line of division from other animals; that it is closely connected, if not one with the "soul" or "divine" element in man; that individuals are deserving of respect in proportion to their possession of this one special faculty; and that we might deliver ourselves from the evils of life, the pain which nature inflicts on us, the pain which we inflict on ourselves and on each other, if only we all reasoned logically or could be forced to submit to those who do. Hence divers results, both useful and injurious.

In the first place, much of the blind faith that was once pinned to supposed revelations from on high has been transferred to logical abstractions spun out from our own brains, as a spider spins a web from its body. If the original material is an impression arising from some genuine piece of human experience, and the spinning process is without a flaw, then it is too often supposed that the web of abstract theory must represent human relations and conditions in general as they really exist, and can therefore be forthwith applied wholesale in practical life. Whereas, as a matter of fact, each generalisation covers such a tiny portion of reality that it can be useful only as a practical guide to thought and conduct in a small part of that small part of our life that is conscious, and then only for those special minds to which it commends itself.

And yet the rashest and most partial of such generalisations are continually being forced upon society as universal solutions of practical difficulties. In morals, in economics, in politics, in the administration of justice, in social affairs generally, the fanatical believers in logical abstraction are prepared to govern the functions and treat the diseases of the body politic in callous disregard of all that lies outside the narrow limits of their pet theories. Just as Harvey's earliest disciples, under the influence of their enthusiasm for his theory of the circulation of the blood, were prepared to treat all human diseases as the disarrangement of a hydraulic machine! What matters if the heart and flesh of living men cry out against being crushed into the theoretical dolls' house! The theorist will persist if he can; and, as far as his power extends, ruthlessly cripple the lives of his fellow mortals in the name of "the greatest good of the greatest number," or whatever else is the formula of his sect.

Take the Charity Organization Society as a small instance of such attempts to enforce a cut and dried theory in social relations. The society was formed by humane and earnest men and women to relieve the poverty of their poorer brethren on logical principles. The theory was based on some most valuable generalisations from experience—*i.e.*, the extreme importance to the individual of forethought, self-restraint, self-reliance, and self-respect, and the injury to social relations of all that weakens these virtues. Armed with the power of the property owner over the propertyless worker, these "practical" theorists crushed down the warmer promptings of their own human feelings, and set out with the honest intention of effectually relieving our social wretchedness with their "scientific charity." And now they stand aghast to find the social wretchedness as before, and themselves a hissing and a by-word to the very people they most hoped to benefit. The flimsy unity of their narrow theory has been burst by the pressure of the vast realities of the great world beyond. And still some of the theorists are ready to despair rather of men and nature than of their own reasoning!

The same sour fruit of abstract reasoning is plucked in our big orphanages and public schools, where boys and girls are brought up on

"scientific" principles "as numbered mechanisms. Their minds crammed with information, their hearts starved and perverted, their wills weakened or crushed, their impulses and instincts undeveloped and untrained.

Or, again, in our model prisons, where with the theoretical intention to provide the most healthy necessary conditions of life for the "average man" (the average man is a non-existent abstraction, and, moreover, a criminal is almost always a specially abnormal man), the theorists who meant to place the erring in the most favourable physical conditions for repentance and amendment, have done nothing but subject men and women to a system of barbarous petty torture.

The same is true of our whole penal system, of our legal system, of the whole series of arbitrary arrangements, which in the name of abstract right and logical necessity, ride roughshod over human nature, and permit individuals or groups to experiment on the luckless humans in their power as a gardener on his plants.

The disproportionate reverence for reason which checks men in revolting against the tyranny of theories and theory-mongers, leads also to a disproportionate respect for brain work as compared with muscular work. Brain-workers have withdrawn themselves into a class apart. They have considered the every-day necessary toil of other men as beneath their notice, and despised the doers of it. They have held themselves rightful lords of the "ignorant multitude," and ranked their brethren as beasts of burden, fit only to labour beneath the control of the enlightened. Reason worship has been the intellectual side of capitalism. The exaggerated proportion assigned to intellect in estimating the human being, has given a sort of moral justification to the rule of the men who have shown most ability in making use of the command over natural forces obtained by discoveries and inventions to extract wealth for themselves by means of the labour of their fellows; the men who have shown most skill in turning other peoples' needs and other peoples' capacities to their own private advantage. Even now one constantly hears the argument, He has got on by his own ability, and has a right to keep to himself what he has made. Just as if mere superior sharpness could justly entitle a man to climb on the backs of his fellows and sit there at his ease, weighing them down like another Old Man of the Sea. And yet the superstition of reason worship forbids the victim to throw him off. He is only taking the rent of his ability, say the economists. That is the latest excuse invented by the hired defenders of things as they are for the man who demands two puddings for dinner instead of one (the second made from other peoples' rations), because he is so clever! Idle landlords and shareholders they are constrained to throw over, but still they arm themselves with logic to defend the last fortress of privilege, the right of brain monopoly to exploit.

And there are "Socialists" who argue that the enemy may be left in possession!

Thus the superstition of reason worship, i.e., the isolation of reason from the rest of the faculties and capacities of man, and the exaggerated and narrow estimate of its relative importance, has, like all superstitions, become a sanction for the oppression of man by man. A sanction that has replaced the old consecration by a supposed divine mandate of the might that makes right.

On the other hand, the good, the higher possibility of development, that has come to us with our recognition of our own intellectual force, is beyond all measure. Even the undue stress that has not been without its uses. But of this more next time.

THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM.

IRELAND.

The struggle in Ireland has been victorious in several instances during the past month. Landlords, magistrates and Chief Secretary have yielded to the steady pressure of combination.

O'Callaghan, of Bodyke infamy, who a few months back refused his tenants an abatement of twenty per cent, has surrendered nearly fifty per cent, and has moreover reinstated the thirty-one evicted families. On the Kingston estate (Mitchelstown) a truce has been proclaimed too. Twenty per cent is to be allowed off all rents, evicted tenants are to be reinstated, all law costs to be borne by the landlord and half a year's rent to be taken in lieu of arrears. All over the country abatements are being offered, some acceptable, others the reverse. Even Clanricarde has offered terms. In the Land Courts the tenants' appeals for the fixing of fair rents have been met with some extraordinary reductions, e.g., from £72 to £22.

So much for what the people have done for themselves. On the other hand, let us see what has been done for them by our paternal Government. Within four weeks 274 men, women, and children, have been imprisoned, viz.:—For welcoming released prisoners, 132 (fifty-five in honour of Wm. O'Brien alone); for speech making, 11; unlawful assembly, 22; boycotting, 60; stopping a hunt, 16; resisting bailiffs, 19; hooting Anti-nationalists, 12 (four of these boys, one only ten years old); laughing at a policeman, 2.

The number actually prosecuted was much greater, but in many cases the "Patent Convicts" could not find a shred of excuse for conviction. In some cases the prosecutions were withdrawn, as in that of the two newsvendors; and what is the more noteworthy is that the withdrawal took place on the very day that Balfour was protesting in the Talking-house he would and should have newsvendors punished if they vended matter he did not approve. Sullivan, the blacksmith, who had been sentenced to a month for refusing to work for a Mrs. Curtin, appealed to a higher court, where the Lord Chief Baron declared there was not a tittle of evidence for conviction and forthwith ordered Sullivan's release. At the conclusion of Mr. Blunt's action for assault against Mr. Byrne, R.M., this same Chief Baron gave the Government another facer by using these memorable words in his charge to the jury, "The public have a right to advocate even remedies which others might deem unreasonable or revolutionary." These words might well be taken to heart this side of St. George's Channel.

SPAIN.

People who cry out against the employment of foreign workmen in this country should not ignore what is going on abroad between foreign (English) capitalists and native working-men. In Spain most mines are owned by English companies, and the shares thereof are largely dealt in by speculators on our own Stock Exchange. At one of those mines at Rio Tinto the company used to cause the calcination to be made in the open air; a practice which actually cost the lives of many workmen, injured the health of a still greater number, and often caused the stoppage of work altogether. This grievance, brought for a long time without result before the directors of the company and even the Municipal Council (Ajuntamiento) of Rio Tinto, most of whose members were paid by the company, finally, on Feb. 2, led to a strike, which soon became general. The strikers numbered twelve or fourteen thousand persons, and as the local police force was unable to cope with them, it is stated that "it behaved with the utmost regard for the strikers." Nor was the attitude of the latter other than pacific; they filed indeed a petition to the Municipal Council, calling once more for its interference in the interest of public health, and organised a demonstration, to support their petition, which was to be forwarded by a deputation chosen by themselves. Meanwhile the Governor of the province, instructed by telegraph of the events, came on with a force of soldiers, arriving at the place just when the people were awaiting the answer to their deputation. Even, however, in presence of the forces the people remained quite pacific; they even cheered the Prefect, when he appeared upon a balcony of the municipal palace. But all of a sudden the soldiers, as if obeying a preconcerted signal, formed in a square and fired at the people. A horrible scene ensued, the men flying in all directions, shrieking and stumbling over each other in despair. Even after a certain time had elapsed after the massacre, the few men who dared to return to the place in search of their missing friends and relatives, were fired at by officers with revolvers. The number of dead which was officially stated at 13 or 15 men, has been found later to be as high as 300. None amongst the soldiers. Amongst the dead were several women and children; one woman was feeding her baby when a ball struck her on the breast and she fell backwards. The child was trampled by the flying crowd. It is superfluous to add that, although even the bourgeois correspondents who witnessed the tragedy have written in terms of high indignation against the gratuitous and premeditated butchery of peaceful and unarmed workmen, the Government has entirely approved the conduct of the Governor and of the colonel in command of the troops; nay, arrests have been made amongst the workmen, and condemnations will doubtless follow. History repeats itself.

GERMANY.

In Germany the Government of the agents provocateurs has caused the acquittal in Magdeburg of Drichel, the informer against comrade Neve, and the conviction of 13 more Socialists at Posen, sentenced to imprisonment from 33 months downwards, on the accusation of having held during the two years 1885-1887 secret meetings in Germany and correspondence with Socialist refugees in Paris and elsewhere. The proof for the accusation rested entirely on the assertion of another agent provocateur, Naporra by name.

ITALY.

Our comrade Castellani, who was but recently released at the Venice assizes, after being charged with conspiracy with the Mantuan peasants, and whose health was seriously impaired by 16 months of previous imprisonment, has been again arrested. He edited the Anarchist paper *L'Ottantanove*, already twice seized by the police. Lately some police agents went to the publishing office, insulted him and then dragged him to prison, pretending to have been insulted themselves. *L'Ottantanove*, however, has since continued to appear. It is moreover announced from Naples that *Humanitas* will shortly reappear as a clandestine paper.

IN HYDE PARK FEBRUARY 13, 1888.

"Justice! Justice! One penny. Shows you how to get rid of all landlords and capitalists!" was the appropriate cry that fell upon one's ear when joining the huge crowd assembling round the platform erected beneath the Reformer's Tree for the reception of T. D. Sullivan and Edward Harrington, two of Balfour's criminals. In spite of the nipping east wind and threatening snow-clouds, their London sympathisers poured into the park in vast numbers, and when those attending the procession came up there must have been at least fifty thousand good men and true.

The chance words heard whilst waiting for the heroes of the hour were instructive and portentous. To the right stood a sturdy workman propounding the doctrine of Socialism as it seemed unto him. Some high church dignitary was his text, and he strove to make clear to his auditors the iniquity of a man who pocketed £10,000 a year minus a paltry £90 which went to pay a "miserable curate" for doing the work the bishop ought to do, but didn't. "Ay, Ay," chimed in a comrade, they're a bad lot. You may be sure you're in the right, whenever the clergy are again' you." Then another took up the parable in a lighter vein, entertaining his hearers with his views concerning the royal squabble over the payment, or rather non-payment of certain Jubilee travelling expenses, and the meanness of German personages who had to come to England to get a square meal, etc., etc. At last the noise of fife and drum was heard in the distance, and the long procession of vehicles and banners slowly drew up to the meeting-place and encircled the vast crowd. Cheers of recognition greeted each well-known man as he appeared on the platform, winding up with a perfect salvo of applause when T. D. Sullivan came in sight. An address of welcome and sympathy having been read, and two or three speakers having expressed similar feelings, Sullivan began to speak, his clear, sonorous voice being heard distinctly by every one present. It was a speech worth remembering, if but for one point. Having thanked in glowing terms the English working-men for thus demonstrating their sympathy with Ireland's oppressed peasantry, he pledged his nation to stand by the English working-classes in the approaching day of their great social struggle. This was what we went out to hear: this solemn pledge of union between the people's of England and Ireland, a union to be formed by their common resistance to class oppression, which may be calculated to outlast that paper one, which has hitherto been the only tie between the two nations.

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