

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

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MONTHLY; ONE PENNY.

DESPOTS AS HUMANITARIANS!

In 1896, the young Tsar of Russia warmly thanked "the brave soldiers and their valiant chiefs" for having fought against their Russian brother workers during a peaceful and inoffensive strike. The day after his marriage, the same young Tsar, just a few weeks on the throne, cried out like an epileptic to the representatives of the whole of Russia that their humble petition for the amelioration of the economic, social and administrative conditions of the Russian people was an act of "stupid folly."

To-day the same Tsar, Nicholas II., is proclaimed by the liberal press of the entire world as the greatest friend of humanity and progress. His circular to the Powers on the *reduction* of the permanent army and the diminution of the stupid and colossal expenses of armament is recognised as "the greatest document of the century, which takes high, if not indeed prominent, rank amongst the great documents of the expiring century."*

Politicians and workers,† Freethinkers and the clergy, military men and peace societies have all begun to sing the praises of the despot of all the Russias.

On reading all these declarations and addresses we were struck by the progress in our century of the idea of international solidarity preached by the great initiators of the Socialist movement, and then by the workers' congresses of the time of the International Workingmen's Association.

All these manifestations prove that Europe is worn out by cruel militarism. It is evident that public opinion seeks means of ridding itself of a dishonorable system paralysing the productive forces of nations.

It is very beautiful, and we understand how men of broad humanitarian sympathies could write in respect to the circular of the Tsar: ".....life seems to me to have been worth living when the fondest dreams of our youth become the possibilities or actualities of our advancing age." (Doctor Spence Watson) But we cannot understand the confidence of artless people that despotism, constitutional governments or republics could consent to abolish the permanent army.

What? Could the modern State, based on the exploitation and privileges of classes, abolish militarism, this unique sanction of its existence? Would the ruling classes, the all-powerful bourgeoisie, consent not to have at their disposal the brutal force of the army against workers on strike? It is astonishing, truly; public opinion does not want to understand that during the last fifty years the standing army has been employed not so much against enemies from the outside as against the people themselves. Take any "civilised" country, and you see its government has made use of the army almost exclusively against primitive and inoffensive tribes or against its own *disarmed* and oppressed workers. France and Germany as well as England and Switzerland, but, above all, Russia and Italy employ their armies against their own subjects, especially against the workers and the starved peasants.

It is evident that neither the Tsar so glorified, nor Italy, adhering to his proposition with great eagerness, is guided by humanitarian ideas or by love for the liberty and welfare of its people. Can the Tsar, led by Pobiedonostzev, the Russian Torquemada, and addressing to the troops the thanks mentioned above, really and sincerely desire general disarmament? And can the King of Italy, with his malefactors Crispi, Bava and other shooters of children and women really believe in disarmament?

The shootings at Milan, Naples, Massa Carrara and in Sicily proclaim: No, never!

The most despotic governments, such as Russia, Italy and Spain, are the warmest partisans of disarmament. Do they think that the whole of humanity, that the Russians, the Italians and the Spaniards are capable of forgetting the sanguinary deeds in Milan, in Cuba, in Poland and against the Doukhoborts? No. Neither history nor humanity will ever forget

the abominations committed by them. No one will believe in their humane and liberal dispositions. Despotism, masked or unmasked, will always remain abject and anti-human.

It is not humane sentiment which leads the Russian despot to act against the traditions of his house, against the existing methods of Russian government, composed as it is of men without faith or law like Pobiedonostzev, the Russian Torquemada, and Goremykin, the criminal conspirator against the fundamental laws of the country.‡ It is the ruin of his empire, it is the appalling misery of the Russian people, no longer capable of paying the taxes, it is the incessant famine in whole provinces which forces the Russian despot to give vent to a cry of distress. Similar causes oblige the governments of Italy and Spain to support the Tsar's circular. Yes, it is the dark misery which reigns in these countries; misery created by the governments themselves; because for these past fifty years they have exhausted with their State Taxes the productive power of the nations. They have thrown back the Russian, Italian and Spanish nations into primitive and barbaric conditions; as in the barbarous period, we behold hunger-stricken rioters crying: "Give us bread or death!"

But if the misery of nations exhausted by the State drives the despot to a cry of distress, the same misery with its sufferings and humiliations drives the population not only to the cry of "Bread or Death." There is amongst the famished an active minority who ponder upon the causes of the people's sufferings. This minority sees well that all the progress so far gained by humanity gives nothing to the people. This last, the actual creator of all wealth, is dying of hunger like its primitive ancestor; it remains as ignorant, as deprived of all the rights of man and citizen in spite of all revolutions and wars of independence.

This minority has lost all esteem for, all belief in every form of legislation and political party. Now and again, a man, his rights violated and crushed by suffering, rebels against his oppressors, against their laws, against society, against every human being living above him, better than him. Honest men of every social condition, can you condemn these rebels when they raise their avenging arms and accomplish the most repulsive acts? If there is anyone to condemn it is the State, which has ruined entire nations; it is our moral perversion which permits us to waste the wealth created by the people, while leaving the producer himself to die of misery under the conditions of an ignorant savage; it is all of us, men enlightened by politics, literature and high culture, for we have in no way alleviated the misery and pain of those whose labor has guaranteed to us the agreeable life of social parasites.

The avengers of the people horrify us. Their acts recall to us the barbarous times of history. Our humanitarian sentiments are repulsed. But it is the governments themselves who have thrown back the nations into prehistoric social and economic conditions, "enlightened" society also conspiring with them.

No appeal on the part of despotism to humanitarian sentiments will exempt it from responsibility before history and humanity.

* *Daily Chronicle, Westminster Gazette* and others.

† See address of the Trade Union Congress.

‡ In his position as Minister of the Interior, Goremykin by a *secret circular*, without the consent of the Senate and State Council, proclaimed a state of siege in Russia.

ATHENÆUM HALL, 73 TOTTENHAM COURT RD., W.

On Sunday, October 16, at 3.30,

Louise Michel WILL LECTURE ON
"The Situation in France."

The lecture will be delivered in French, and translated into English immediately after by F. Macpherson.

Doors open at 3 o'clock.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

If ever consternation struck into the heart of Christendom it was upon September 9th, when the rude dagger of Luigi Luccheni pierced the breast of Elizabeth of Austria.

Gone indeed is the divinity that doth hedge in a king when his consort can so lightly be done to death by an alien hand; hideous indeed and bitter the wrongs that can so nerve a man's arm as that it should drop ruthlessly upon a weak and inoffensive woman! We are no apologists for Luccheni. Looking at it from a purely human point of view his act was cruel, and as aimed against a defenceless woman cowardly; no Anarchist having the welfare of humanity at heart, but will admit that deeds of this nature are primarily repellent from their unreasoning ferocity, and certainly deterrent to the progress of Anarchist propaganda. We would advance, and the sight of blood by the wayside sends some backwards, whilst the hardest finds it difficult to breast the torrent of abuse and persecution that is immediately poured upon him and his cherished dream. That dream means peace and goodwill to all, yet something surely stronger than the hand of man seems bent on staining it with blood. Facts are disagreeable things, however, and governments like individual men shrink from looking into them until Fate or the Furies force them to their stubborn knees, place the fact bluntly before them, and say with a cut of their snaky lash; "Behold, ye fools, the work of your own hands—the offspring of your evil-doing! What will you do with it; what will it do with you?" Just now that fact is Anarchism, and the governments rise to their feet and shout: "We will smash it!" But the Furies laugh; they know better. Socialism and Anarchism, these are the twin children of Injustice and Misrule, and their limbs are strong, their arms sturdy—when they are smashed Time also will have smashed the world.

Subsequent to Charles I. death upon the scaffold, a political pamphlet appeared entitled *Killing no Murder*. The phrase is pregnant with thought. Murder, pure and simple, the taking of a fellow-creature's life deliberately and in cold blood, is an act so abhorrent to every sentient being that when it occurs it always proves to be that of a man bereft of reason. Otherwise there is always provocation of a more or less acute form, which few, if any, of the judges of the day choose rightly to weigh as they put on the black cap and sentence their victim to death. The question arises, when and where is killing permissible? Our rulers say, anywhere when legalised. When a man wears a red coat with facings, a blue one with nickel buttons or a plain black suit as he fingers a rope or an electric knob, he may (nay, *shall*, say our rulers) slay all that "we, your masters," doom to extermination, and be held blameless. To mow down Arabs fighting for their faith and land; to heap the desert sands with bullet-riddled dead till mounds "like snowdrifts" rise stark beneath the eastern sky; to rain a "hell of shot and shell" on an ill-armed foe so that none may cross the death-zone of 800 yards to hurl one spear head at the usurping host and, dying, feel avenged; *that* is killing legalised. To fire point-blank upon unarmed workmen driven by the injustice of their employers into riotous behaviour—*that*, too, if the dead lie thick, is killing legalised. To rouse a people by force of tyranny into fierce revolt and then to charge upon them with cavalry and Maxims till the gutters run red—*that* also is killing legalised.

Murder is *this*: for a man to net his lordship's hare and when rapped upon the head by his lordship's keeper to hit back till one reckless blow ends all; for a forsaken woman in her hour of terror and despair to slay the starveling babe she cannot nourish; for a man to brood over the enforced degradation and misery of the "disinherited," of whom he is one, and then to raise his sacrilegious hand and aim a blow at triumphant and indifferent Majesty. To glory with our police and soldiers! To the death, you of the *canaille*, who dare to question what we call right, who snarl at law and defy authority! Back into your holes you vapid ranters and brainless mass of bone and muscle, ere we lose our heavenborn patience and hurl you into depths from whence there shall be no uprising! Thus, our masters.

"As for the people and its opinion, that is of no great consequence," said Catherine of Russia calmly as she ate up her slice of Poland. One wonders what she would say now if she opened her blue German eyes and saw how within a hundred years of those words the people and their opinion have become of such exceeding moment that when they speak kings listen, and when they act dynasties tremble. Shortly after, we find this Empress exclaiming with an irony sublime in its unconsciousness: "*The best of possible constitutions is worth nothing when it makes more people unhappy than happy, when brave and honest folk have to drudge, and only the rogues are in clover because their pockets are filled.*" This, remember, is the dictum of as shrewd and unscrupulous a monarch as ever lived; true, the thunders of the French Revolution then echoing throughout Europe may have engendered it, but that is our contention—the acts of the people force monarchs to ponder. One is not the least surprised to find Catherine two years later affirming that "Equality is a monster." Those preaching it were just then cutting off a French queen's head. Catherine died intact, but never was there a pithier or more scathing condemnation of "constitutions" than is contained in her trite remark. She was a clever woman and the words tripped lightly off her tongue; little did she reck that to-day they would be hurled back at the ruler of every State with a bitterness born of another century of oppression. Under each "constitution" there are more people unhappy than happy, only the rich as defined by Catherine are in clover. Crowned heads like uncrowned ones too often forget that great sufferings beget great strength. Many a man lies hid within himself; the tiger and the ape within him crouch side by side;

a chance jibe, an unjust deed, and in a second the mildest of us may be transformed into an unreasoning, insensate animal with but one idea—Revenge. Moses, the gentlest of human beings, slew the Egyptian taskmaster he saw lashing a Hebrew worker—and was called "the friend of God." The God of the Hebrews himself, the God of Love, slew all the innocent firstborn in Egypt before he could win its king to grant his slaves a holiday. All through the pages of history the same story is told of the callous indifference of monarchs and men in authority to the appalling sea of suffering—*remediable* suffering—that laves their palace portals. If they are so impotent, so bound up in red tape and cotton wool, these latter-day sovereigns, that they can no longer take the initiative in inaugurating an era of justice; if they can lead lives of useless splendour or idle pleasure while whole sections of the populace rot around them in an ever-increasing ratio of poverty and misery: then the humblest hind amongst these has the right to mutter, as he does in these days mutter, "What is the use of you at all, kings by the grace of God and the folly of Man—GO!"

"If we will have Peace *without a worm in it*, lay we foundations of Justice and Righteousness," said Oliver Cromwell, and it is precisely because these foundations are lacking in every governing body that the worm of Discontent prompts the arm of such men as Luccheni to strike. Fling every epithet from cowardice to savage brutality at this assassin of an Empress, and still that worm rears its ghastly head in silent questioning. Did Content ever slay its neighbour? Was there no reason for Luccheni's act of vengeance? No traveller who has returned from Italy these past years but has cried shame on the tyranny of its government, the callousness of its officials, the sufferings of its patient people. Again we repeat we are no apologists for Luccheni, but we affirm that Injustice has aroused a spirit of revolt in Italy and *elsewhere* that prompts to acts of reprisal from which it itself recoils; that may be scotched but never will be killed. Anarchists are not bloodthirsty persons. They hate to kill. All that they desire, as Reclus well says, "is justice for all. Villains that we are, we claim for all that shall be born, bread, liberty, and progress." And how answer the governments? They put a bullet into the man who fights through hunger: So! let that loaf fill your empty stomach. They give twelve years solitary confinement to the patriot who struggles for freedom: So! my fine journalist, preach now to stone walls. They rub their official hands and smile at the cry for progress: *Sapristi!* yes, a fine sentiment—but just now that little War Tax. . . And the man with his own or the nation's wrongs seething in his brain sits down and—sharpens a knife. As to the choice of a victim: since governments crush the meanest that defies, why should he pause before the highest? "I did not aim at the woman, I aimed at the crown." The unreasoning ask: Why? Well, Italy under Humbert, an open book, lies before them.

"Madame," says Heine somewhere (and the dead Empress loved the poet), "the good people were not disturbed in their eating, nor did they know that other people, when they have nothing to eat, suddenly begin to drum, and that, too, very queer marches." The music of queer marches is in the air. Let those in high places see to it. The Empress of Austria was killed by Luccheni, but she was murdered by the Italian Government.

Russia, that sleeping giant under a shroud of snow, stirs in its slumber. Once, in 1881, he awoke and frightened the nations; but he was soon drugged back into insensibility and, Prometheus-like, bound with chains while the Police-vulture pecked at his vitals. Whenever you hear that the Russian secret police are on the alert, you know that the giant has turned in his slumber and strives to awake. Travellers of every description leaving or entering the country just now are so closely scrutinised that it is becoming exceedingly difficult for a stranger without high credentials to enter Russia at all. Still there is hopeful news. A Social Democratic party is slowly stealing ground from under the Reactionist and Orthodox foot. It has a press—not at present licensed. Does the average Englishman know that a typewriter or a child's toy printing press may not be used in Russia without a police licence? Primitive Socialists had to inculcate class-hatred before they dared venture an appeal on nobler and broader lines; in a despotic country the question always is how to call a movement into being that shall not both inspire fear and work by fear. How the question will be solved must yet be proved; but Fear as interpreted by a Bureaucracy like Russia is always of a savage and unreasoning character—it is the dread of the official who may lose his salary. So the Russian government sleeps with its eyes open, one eye on the slumbering giant it rules, the other on the restive nations around. Is it Terrorism? Off with its head! So much for the Nihilists! Is it Socialism? There is Siberia or expulsion. So much for—Stay, good Bruin, you have not fathomed Socialism yet. And there is Anarchism to follow. Preach peace to the restive nations, it will give you the more time to whet the sword that you will one day turn against the children now playing in your streets.

News filters with difficulty through the Censorial sieve, but we learn that many factory operatives charged with being engaged in Socialist propaganda have been arrested in Poland; that 200 of these are lying in the Citadel of Warsaw and will be exiled by Administrative process, *i.e.* without trial. Meanwhile, the gentle studious Tsar whose tender heart bleeds at thought of war, sits at home pasting the walls of his smoking room with portraits of himself snipped out of illustrated papers by the Tsarina. An august occupation for Emperor and Empress. Nero fiddled while Rome burnt; Marie Antoinette, when the people clamoured for bread beneath her windows, with royal indifference demanded—"but why don't they eat cake?" Nicholas and Alix snip up

newspapers. Now the Russian Imperial family is the richest in the world. The Tsar's private income, apart from his salary, is perhaps two millions a year. Let the people starve and Russia stir—he is rich and happy. Happy? Heaven save the mark! Surely the law of compensation when shaped by the hand of destiny is strangely just. Who would not liefer be the starving *moujik* dying in his hovel, the factory hand imprisoned and exiled for Freedom's sake, than a crowned head of modern Europe with the jibbering hand of Fear for ever on his shoulder? From Berlin we read that all vagrants are to be expelled. In Italy police and king vainly try to suppress a volcanic eruption by placing their mailed hand across the crater. In England, even, the newspaper tale is that the police gave as a reason for raiding a certain house, that they were searching for Anarchist literature. The Anglo-Saxon nature is combative but not hot like that of the Latin races. It will take a great deal of kicking in silence; but if the day arrives when England, infected by Continental panic, cries: "Off with its head!" and, wiping its cutlass on its respectable coat-tails, adds, "So much for Anarchism!" it will be a bad day for—England.

"They do these things better in France," was once the flattering assertion, but the point now seems wanting; for if ever there was a country with things decidedly mixed it is France at the present moment. Three parties, the Ministers of the Republic, the Generals of the Army and the Journalists are playing shuttlecock with *l'affaire Dreyfus*, while the country watching the game with growing and ill-suppressed discontent, vainly seeks a clean path by which to walk to Honor. So weary is it of the strife of words, of Semite and anti-Semite, of the hysterical shrieks of *l'homme militaire* and *messieurs les parlementaires*, that if it only knew a strong man of royal lineage it could trust, it might be that it would sew a star on his breast, haul down the tricolor and shout, *Conspuez la République—Vive le Roi!* Every nation pins its faith on some one of its component parts; Russia on its Tsar, England on its Parliament, America on its Dollars, France on its Army; remove the fiction and the country shakes to its foundations.

There is something at once pitiful and touching in the deep fervour with which the French regard their army. To have its honor tarnished in the face of a laughing world, to have the bitter revelation brought home to them, not suddenly but bit by bit, with proof incontrovertible and evidence that cannot be refuted, that its highest officers are ready to sell their country to a military dictator and that country's secrets when occasion offers to the highest bidder, must be humiliation so deep that a little more of it surely paves the way to Revolution. It cannot be long before the streets of Paris once again run red. Some morning a French Cromwell will march in and a French Parliament march out and the képis and the blouses will face each other and it will be Fraternity or Barricades. Pandering to popular prejudice, the Journalists, those penholders of Government-at-any-Price, have taken the Jew by the throat and crucify him *pro bono publico*. "There is your enemy! Stand by the Generals even if they crush the civil power. The Jew is the Capitalist who sells our beloved France, who starves you workers. To the death with him!" Orleans publishes his little pronouncement, but the people know better—he is not the strong man they need, and it goes off with a theatrical fizzle.

Ah, that strong man, the man of the hour, how many are calling for him to-day! And he comes not. When the German workmen, those once feeble folk, sought trembling to unify and proclaim the right of combination—Lassalle sprang forth and showed the path to victory. When the Anarchists, another feeble folk, with wide aspirations somewhat hindered by "hypothetic nebulosity," were seeking a rallying-point, Bakunin led them to it. But now? Social and economic upheavals fret the universe, the earth palpitates with unrest, the times seem approaching when towards the cauldron of human animosities the angel of Peace draws near, but where are the men who shall win her to their side? They pause. A bullet cannot kill Thought, which, an electric spark, leaps from brain to brain; but it can quiet the eager body, and it hurts even more than it maddens to look out at possible strife across the faces of our dead. There are willing spirits—behind iron bars. Authority in serried ranks confronts the wretched and the oppressed. Advance if you will, it says, with its hand on its gleaming cannon, but look to it when these things cough! And men pause, even in France.

A. D.

THE FREEDOM PRESS.

COMRADES.—We have determined to make an appeal to all friends and sympathisers in the international Anarchist movement on behalf of the "Freedom" Press, the object of which is to place the publication of Anarchist literature in England on a business basis. If £30 can be raised (and surely it can be), we shall be enabled to issue many new works of great interest and importance, besides issuing reprints of others which are badly needed. It would also aid us greatly in reducing the expense of the publication of "Freedom," and so avoid the constant and heavy strain that publishing at a loss necessarily entails on a few comrades who are only wage-slaves themselves. We hope, therefore, all who can help will do so to the best of their ability, and so aid in establishing a Freedom Press that we are all assured will have the deepest and most far-reaching effect on the Anarchist propaganda in England.

The following sums have already been guaranteed.—H. Glasse, 10s.; Rubin £1; E. Masson (per *Clarion*) 4/10; Liberty Club, Norwich, 5s. (received); H. M. Kelly, £1; A. M., £1; Glasgow comrades, £10.

THE SUFFERINGS OF AN OUTRAGED PEOPLE.

(*"From the Daily News."*)

ITALIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS.

When he, Carlo Romussi, and his fellow sufferers, were first imprisoned in the gaol of Finalbarzo they were treated with some show of courtesy and clemency, allowed to write, though what they wrote was read by the director of the prison, and allowed a tolerable amount of indifferent food. This was done whilst public interest was fresh in their destinies; but when it was considered by "authority" that such public interest had subsided, and when the Court of Cassation had rejected the victims' appeal, these political captives were separated, and taken to other penitentiaries, where they are treated as though they were the vilest of murderers or malefactors. He has now been removed alone to the gaol of Milan (his own home being selected by a refinement of cruelty as the scene of his sequestration); he has been clothed in convict's garb, his hair and beard have been shaved; he has been shut up in a solitary cell; he has a little bread and broth (1) or oil twice a day; at night—and the nights are already long in Lombardy—he is left in total darkness; by a derisive act of "mercy" he is allowed to spend 25 centimes (three halfpence English money) on additional food per diem. Now, Sir, this gentleman had nothing whatever proved against him; he was accused of conspiracy, but no conspiracy was proved of any kind; he would have been instantly released by any civil tribunal; he was known to be of Republican principles and of independent opinions, but of any connection with the Milan insurrection there was not the slightest proof against him. He has already suffered five months' imprisonment. He is now condemned to four years of solitary confinement—that most frightful method of breaking down the brain and the nervous system that has ever been devised by the fiendish inventiveness of man. Every one of the political prisoners is thus treated; if I name Signore Romussi in especial it is because I know more of his circumstances, and have been more especially entreated for him by his friends. But the shocking methods I have above described are employed to torture all the political prisoners, whether writers, priests, or deputies; and form a scandal beyond all pardon in a nation where the Houses of Hapsburg-Lorraine and of the Neapolitan Bourbons were once spoken of as beyond the pale of humanity for similar brutalities. Their relatives are convinced that it will be only necessary to acquaint the English public with these facts to re-use such indignation that the English condemnation of its cruelty and tyranny will compel the Italian Government to alter the treatment of the political offenders. I do not share this hope, and I fear it is founded on an illusion, for the English nation cares very little about cruelty nowadays, and greatly enjoys exercising tyranny itself on subject races. But I do what I have been asked to do, and sincerely do I pray that the hearts of many may be touched. *Ten columns of your journal would not suffice to describe the iniquities which have characterised the revenge of the Italian Executive for the rising of May.* But I would entreat in especial your attention to the fact that solitary cellular confinement, united to starvation, are the lot of a literary man whose only crime is that of having persistently and consistently urged those political opinions, which have also been those of some of the ablest thinkers and best men whom the world has seen. Solitary confinement, such as the cruel code framed by Tarnadelli makes the punishment of all offences in Italian penitentiaries, is surely a torture which should be inflicted on no living creature; any kind of death is a thousand times more merciful. It destroys the mind, whilst the hunger with which it is coupled destroys the bodily health. Men may survive such a treatment, but they leave the cells mere wrecks, mental and physical, of themselves. Dreyfus has had the good fortune to arouse the pity of a vast number of persons whose imaginations are fired by the pictures given of the iron bars and the *Ile du Diable*. But he at least has air, sea, light; however frightful his fate, it is better than the Italian political prisoners shut in the city prisons. These prisons are all filled to overflowing; thousands now caged there will rot away into death, or imbecility, or raging madness; many have had no more crime or fault than has Carlo Romussi. One may, I think, under these circumstances be allowed to ask in what possible manner or degree is the existing Italian Government better than was the Austrian of the Spielberg and the Piombi?—I remain, obediently yours

OUIDA.

September 21.

Libertarian Literature.

We have received the following papers and pamphlets:

"I." New monthly, edited by C. L. Swartz, Wellesley, Massachusetts, 5 cents. Its motto, "It is 'I', be not afraid!" should be a comfortable one to Comstockians and that ilk, even though the editor admits he believes in free speech and free press.

L'Enclos, Nos. 26 and 27 of bi-monthly review. J. G. Prodhomme, 7 Rue des Saules. 25 centimes.

Le Pot à Colle, Nos. 1-2. 9 Cité Prost (Faubourg Saint Antoine), Paris. 5 centimes. New bi-monthly journal in the interests of "those unfortunate toilers of the Faubourg and of Charonne, who suffer and die under the scourge of want while their exploiters grow fat. The *Pot à Colle* will mercilessly chastise all such taskmasters." *Salut au Pot à Colle!*

Neues Leben, No. 7. 8 Munz Strasse, Berlin. Anarchist-Socialist weekly.

Der Sozialist, No. 40. Weekly. 66 Elizabethstrasse, Berlin. 10 pf. *Social Democratic Herald*. Weekly, published by the new Social Democratic Party of America, under E. V. Debs' guidance. Room 56, 126 Washington Street, Chicago.

The Eagle and the Serpent, No. 4. 185 Fleet Street, London. 3d. *Die Historische Rolle des Staates*. P. Kropotkin. Office of *Sozialist*, 66 Elizabethstrasse, Berlin. 20 pf.

A Socialist's View of the Reformation. T. B. Benson, *Labor Leader* office, 53 Fleet Street, London.

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THE MANAGER, 127 Ossulston Street, N.W.

The Editors are not necessarily in agreement with signed articles.

NOTES.

WHO IS THE ASSASSIN?

The other day an inquiry was held respecting the death of Louisa Sarah Petersen, daughter of a boot finisher, living in Shoreditch, who was "alleged" to have died from starvation. How did this happen? Well, here is the official report: Police-constable Berrett, coroner's officer, stated that he had made inquiries into the case. He found that the family of four occupied one small room, in which they worked, lived and slept. It was very scantily furnished, but fairly clean. The woman worked as a slipper maker, and was paid 1½d. a pair (Shame). The Coroner: What! Only 1½d. a pair for making slippers?—Witness: Yes, and by working all the week she could earn 4s., out of which 2s. went for rent. They said they had lived on bread and butter, but there was no food in the place when he called." Now although one may feel the deepest indignation against the employer who exploited this poor woman to an extent that even excited the surprise of the coroner, yet it must be remembered that present society is based on exploitation, and therefore society is responsible for the death of this child. Of course it is only one amongst hundreds of such cases, and no one takes much heed of it. But that is just why society is so criminal and contemptible. It is absolutely indifferent to the suffering of its victims, and only becomes indignant when the victims commit outrages against its own precious lives and institutions.

THE IRONY OF EVENTS.

"Life's little Ironies" have often had some striking illustrations in actual life, but seldom has it happened that events have developed them in sharper outlines than at the present moment by the action of the Tzar. It so happens that at the very moment this tyrant is posing before the world as a messenger of peace, some thousands of his victims, the Doukhobortsies,—good, earnest people who worship peace as one of the first principles of their religion,—are being driven from their native land by this hypocrite and the official scoundrels who advise him. And who are those who come with willing hands to devote their energies to helping these unhappy but sincere apostles of peace in their sore need? Why men who are themselves exiled and outlawed by the cursed rule of the Russian autocrat—Tchertkoff, Kropotkin and others. Upon these "enemies of society" falls the work of succouring the victims of the peaceful Tzar. The irony of the situation is complete, and the moral as clear as the midday sun.

ANOTHER VICTIM.

We like to quote from the capitalist press the cases which it reports and comments upon, showing pretty clearly there is "something rotten in the state of Denmark." The facts are not raked up by "violent anarchists" to spread class-hatred—that is sufficiently done by the "cases" themselves—for they are calmly reported, and the capitalist comments generally let society down pretty easily. After these few words of explanation we will let the "Daily News" speak for itself: "Thomas Brown, forty, porter, of no home," was charged with wilful damage. He broke a window and then waited to be given into custody. He made no attempt to deny the charge. "Quite right, sir. I tossed up with a button whether I should go into the Thames or come in here. The Thames lost, so I broke the window." The magistrate was just as laconic. "Fourteen days' hard labour. Perhaps, at the end of that time, you will be in a better frame of mind." And so that little account is settled to the satisfaction of both parties, and in the twinkling of an eye. Yet the "Thomas Brown, forty, porter, no home," and the even chance between the plank bed and the bed of the river, still lingers in the mind. Strange that this enormously wealthy country, to say nothing of "the dependencies thereof in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America," should not yield enough to go round in lodging and three meals a day."

One word further: After poor unfortunate Thomas Brown has served his 14 days what will be his feelings towards society when he finds himself once more "free"? Free to choose once again between prison and the Thames. Not a finger has been raised, not a word has been said to help this man, so barbarously treated by the law. "No work, no home" before; who will employ him now that he has become a "felon"? Such an one might well cry with Shelley "I fall upon the thorns of life: I bleed!"

MRS. PARTINGTON AGAIN.

So Anarchism is to be suppressed by order of the Italian government

in concert with as many of the European powers as it can persuade to take action. Why? Because Anarchism declares war on innocent people and slaughters them by thousands with Maxim guns? No. Because Anarchism steals the land from "inferior" races and sells them into slavery? No. Because Anarchism imposes intolerable taxes on the poor and oppressed, heeding not that they starve so that hungry officials are fed? No, indeed no. All these crimes are perpetrated precisely by the said European governments, and are upheld by them as their special privileges. The only answer that remains is clear: Anarchism must be combated because it tells the people that these crimes always have been and always will be the attributes of all governments, and preaches the reorganisation of society without the authority of the Moloch which devours them. The first word ever breathed for liberty, the first blow ever struck for human freedom lead inevitably to this ultimate conclusion—the abolition of all government. We can assure the Jesuits of Rome and the reactionaries of all nations that they might as well try to prevent the revolution of the earth round the sun (and we all know their views on that subject some centuries ago; and how great was their wrath with those who preached the truth) as to try and stem the tide of human progress, which finds its highest expression in Anarchism.

LIGHT, MORE LIGHT.

"What is the chief lesson of this history of corruption, intrigue and espionage? We know to what a pass Italy was brought by the administrative methods of Crispi, and how Bismarck debauched the Department of Police till, as the Von Tausch revelations showed, forgery became a regular official weapon. France has no monopoly of bureaucratic infamies, but she has made them most flagrant in the eyes of the world. Society has not sufficiently pondered the moral effect of such a system on the classes which are impatient of authority. Anarchism is not wholly dementia. It is nourished by this spectacle of officialdom, which is honeycombed with deceit, rank with injustice, and regardless of elementary honesty, while it discourses upon its 'honor.' What encouragement is this to acquiescence in existing institutions? Anarchy is an impossible ideal, but its preachers draw their inspiration from the ways of Continental bureaucracy. Until the nations clear out their official nests of anti-social fraud, they cannot complain that the beauty of settled government is not appreciated by all mankind."

We are glad that the *Chronicle* can admit so much; but if it would apply the same logic still further, it would surely conclude that so far from there being any "dementia" in the position taken by the Anarchist, he is really the one who takes the trouble to look seriously into the cause of these abominations, and the "dementia" is certainly with those who expect anything good to grow from this mass of corruption.

KROPOTKIN ON THE GENEVA TRAGEDY.

We think it opportune and interesting to insert the following letter which Kropotkin has written to Georg Brandes, the eminent Danish critic, on the Geneva tragedy, in answer to a personal attack upon him in a Danish paper. This letter has been published by Brandes in the "Politiken" with a preface. After a few words of a personal character, Kropotkin writes:

Like you, like everyone else, I felt my heart aching when I learned of the death of that new victim of the social struggle—the Empress of Austria. An old lady, whose life was unhappy long before she had lost her son, is especially phased to appeal to pity in the eyes of those who knew the intimate history of her life. Women and children, at least, ought to be spared in the terrible struggle amidst which we live, and in those struggles, still more terrible, which we see coming.

If it were sufficient to give my life to spare even a very small portion of the victims which I saw falling round us during the last thirty years in the streets and on the scaffolds, I would have done it without hesitation. Scores of our friends would have done the same. But that would not be sufficient. Men must be compelled to reason.

Analyse Luccheni. Born on a seat of a Paris boulevard, he has known neither mother nor father. He was brought up in a "foundling house," at Paris first and next at Parma. At the age of ten he was thrown out into the streets, where he had neither parents nor friends, but had to find his food (here it is that my heart bleeds even more, when I think of this child and of so many thousands of others who are suffering the same). When he was twenty-one years old, he was taken to a barrack, and there he was taught to kill: to kill numbers of people, without pity; to kill father and mother, to kill women and children the day that he would be told that he must kill for the salvation of the country. In such case, he was taught, human life must not count for anything. Then he was sent to kill in Africa. Later on, he was a valet to a cavalry officer—is it there that he could learn respect for women? And finally, in Switzerland, living amidst fugitives coming from Italy after—

the revolt in Milan of the famine stricken people and the wholesale killing of peasants—what did he hear? That starving peasants had been massacred, more or less, all over the country; that at Milan the shooting down of the people went on for three days, and workmen were killed by the hundred; that grapeshot was discharged in the streets, without inquiring whether the women and their children who would fall pierced with the bullets were in any way responsible for the insurrection, nor upon what the children would live when their fathers had been killed; that the moment one shot was fired from a house, the order was given to shoot at all windows in the house, killing the inmates—women and children; that the rich ladies of Milan distributed flowers to the soldiers and petted them, saying: "Free us, rid us of those mobs; strike hard, aim straight!"

Well, dear Brandes, imagine *our* children grown in such surroundings, receiving *those* impressions, and tell me if they, too, would not have run the risk of losing the very instinct of pity, if they too would not breathe hatred against all those who are rich and never think of the misery out of which the riches are made?

It has often been said that our present society dances upon a volcano; and that is quite true. They do not realise the hatred which grows up in the hearts of the disinherited ones. I know it; it is terrible! And, with that hatred growing up, have we not quite a recognised teaching, judiciary and military, to whisper in their ears, every day, through nearly every newspaper: "Don't talk of human life! Down with sentimentalism! If it were necessary, some day or another, to execute a hundred men and women in one batch and kill a hundred-thousand men in the streets, in order to maintain society by terrorising the rebels—it must be done, without hesitation."?

And people are astonished to discover, after that, that there are poor who return the argument and say that if it were necessary to kill a hundred men or women in the street, and exterminate a hundred-thousand middle-class people, that must be done!!

To believe in the magic force of executions—but that is the first, corner-stone article of the modern confession of faith.

Politicians, clergymen, philosophers profess it. And they would like that the poor should come, by intuition, to broader and higher views; that they should cease to believe in executions; that they should not say, like Luccheni: "Strike no matter whom of the rich ones: that will make them think about social injustice!" To ask the poor to come to that higher conception of social life which hitherto remains inaccessible to the educated ones?—But this is simply absurd.

During those very days when the Empress of Austria was so much spoken of, four attempts to wreck trains were made, on four successive days, in England in the neighbourhood of Northampton. Big blocks of stone and logs of wood were laid upon lines belonging to different railway companies, with the intention of wrecking express trains. It would have been far more horrible than the death of one person. Women and children, and fathers of working-class families would have been killed if an express train had run full speed upon those stones and sleepers laid on the rails. Who has done it? Surely not Socialists or Anarchists; but, in all probability, some man in whose heart misery must have kindled a pitiless hatred against all society, and who will have said to himself: "Strike anywhere; that will make them think of our misery."—There is the volcano upon which society is dancing.

To strike a woman in the heart, exclusively because that heart has never beaten for the sufferers of mankind—surely it is terrible. But so long as there will be such massacres as those which we have had the other day in Italy; so long as contempt for human life shall be taught to men; and so long as they will be told that it is good to kill for what one believes to be beneficial for mankind—new and newer victims will be added, even though the rulers should guillotine all those who take side with the poor, who study the psychology of poverty and courageously tell what they have learned of that psychology.

CUTTINGS AND COMMENTS.

"In truth, the theory of Anarchism does not bear arguing, since government could not possibly have arisen in the world until Anarchy had been tried and found wanting. What a strange aberration of thought it is on the part of Tolstoi and other 'thinkers' of his school to imagine that policemen were invented before there were thieves to catch, and prisons built before there were felons to shut up in them."

"And when we ask what to do with our Anarchists, the fate of the Thugs supplies the most convincing answer."

"I should like to make the game one that would not be worth the candle. Voilà tout. Let the mere profession of Anarchism be made a

punishable offence in all the countries of Europe and the trick is done."—OUR HANDBOOK, *Referee*, Sept. 18.

"The method that common sense suggests is to revive the infliction of torture."—DAGONET, *Referee*, Sept. 18.

I find it hard to believe in the sincerity of these men who applaud thieving assassin Kitchener, who, under pretence of a quarrel between the Egyptian government and the Dervishes, goes with fire and sword to steal the land from both peoples on behalf of the Shylocks composing the British government. They must know, if they read their newspaper, that the governments of Europe have tried their prescriptions over and over again, and failed. Castillo, in Spain, repeatedly tried torture. Crispi, in Italy, tried torture, assassinations in prison, wholesale arrests and deportation. Russia has tried all these methods. Austria, France and Germany have resorted to unlimited petty persecutions, wholesale arrests, imprisonments and shootings; and it is in consequence of the way they have familiarised the people with brutal outrages that some men have been impelled to strike at those whom they considered responsible.

Governments have always set the example of brutality. I think it was only last year that a regiment of Cossacks shot and speared and hacked till they were tired a number of the sect known as Doukhoborts, who refuse military service. About the same time, a number of Bohemian miners, whose poverty contributed to the luxury—and even the charity—of the Emperor and Empress of Austria, were shot because they ventured to strike for better conditions. But the Empress was *not* shocked, neither was Dagonet, nor the Handbooker. T. C.

THE PROPAGANDA.

NOTTINGHAM.

Another dastardly attack on the acquired privileges of the common people by those parasites of society, the police, occurred on Sunday, September 25, in the Great Market Place, Nottingham. Several attempts have been made lately to suppress the right of public assemblage in the Market Place after nine o'clock. This insidious attack by the police is an attempt to suppress public speaking in the Great Market Place at the behest of a few snobocratic shopocrats, who prate about the liberty of the people—before being elected,—and are the first to endeavor to curtail them after they have successfully achieved their desires. This crusade of the police originated a few months ago by compelling little groups of debaters to leave the Market Place at nine o'clock. No vigorous protest being made against this arbitrary action, the police grew bolder and compelled properly constituted meetings to disperse at that time. The Latter-day Saints were the first ordered away, and they passively obeyed; the outcome of this meekness and humility being that they have been denied the use of the market place altogether. The religionists headed by the vociferous and valiant soldier of Christ, James Dupe, recognising the temporal power of the police to be greater than the spiritual power of Christ, silently slunk away demonstrating thereby that they were afraid to stand up for Jesus after nine o'clock on a Sunday night. It was left for those despised reformers, the Socialists and Anarchists, to resist the action of the police and insist on the right of public assemblage—regardless of the hour denoted by the great clock that overlooks the market place.

After dispersing every other group, the police came at last to the crowd addressed by Malfew Wilkes of this city. When told to discontinue and dismiss the meeting, the speaker refused to comply; for a moment the situation was interesting, the crowd seemed for an instant to be infused with a rebellious spirit, and had the police showed any domineering attitude we might have seen a tangible proof of the liberty-loving nature of the white slaves of the nineteenth century who are not altogether crushed and tamed by christianised and legalised machinery. The speaker's name and address was taken, this being the second time in a few weeks for the same offence. The meeting was not molested further by the police, and the meeting was continued till nearly ten o'clock. One good result of this protest was that small groups could be seen till nearly twelve o'clock discussing the incident—an unusual sight lately in the market place since the edict of the Watch Committee was inaugurated.

This rendezvous for reformers, the Great Market Place, must not be permitted to be closed to the public for open-air debate; a vigorous resistance should be kept up, for the action of the police is clearly illegal—so says constitutional and common law as well as common sense. Why, even Sir Samuel George Johnson, the Town Clerk of Nottingham, when approached by a committee *re* this matter, admitted there was nothing that he knew that would uphold this lawless position of the police.

A mass meeting was held in the market-place, on October 2nd, without any interference; it began at 8.30 and finished at 9.45, and another meeting was announced for Sunday the 9th.

LEEDS.

Things commence to look up a little in Leeds. We have formed a fairly strong group of energetic comrades who seem determined to make things hum. One comrade has a fairly extensive printing plant. We intend to issue on January 1 an Anarchist magazine. Another comrade, who combines art with coal mining, has drawn us an attractive design for the cover, and Stockton is going to cut us it in brass. The publishing of this, with leaflets and the sale of Anarchist and libertarian literature, we expect to take a good deal of our energies.

Our outdoor propaganda has not been neglected. Drake and Sollett have kept the ball rolling on the moors and in the parks. On the 11th September, MacQueen spoke at two meetings in Holbeck Feast; and, on the 18th, Drake and MacQueen held a joint meeting with the I.L.P. in Armley Park.

We hope to be able to report much more next time.

E. K.

LIVERPOOL.

What we can gather from the remarks, questions and opposition is that Liverpool audiences are developing a deep interest and admiration for our principles.

The three or four years' propaganda has not been in vain. We seldom close our meetings without questions or opposition of some kind. The apathy of the Liverpool people is making way for timidity.

Sunday, August 28, we began a novel way of selling literature. Announcing the title of *Freedom* or pamphlets, comrade Despres would offer one for sale; the result being that if one bought others would follow. In this way we sold literature to the extent of 5/4. On Sunday, September 4, we sold 4s. worth by the same method. Sunday, September 11, comrade Welsh from Manchester paid us a visit; we held two good meetings and sold 4s. worth of literature. Sunday, September 18, when we started our meeting one part of the audience demanded us off the rostrum; another part offered us protection. We were accused of the death of the empress, and one person threatened to pull comrade Despres off the monument; Despres pugnaciously defied him, and—well, we managed to escape being flayed alive. We sailed clear and sold 4s. worth of literature; we undoubtedly would have sold more but for the rain.

THE FUTURE OF TRADE UNIONISM.

It is on record that, a little over a hundred years ago, "From Savannah to Portsmouth, you will seldom meet a beggar. In the larger towns, indeed, they *sometimes* present themselves. These are usually foreigners who have never obtained a settlement in any parish. A native American was never seen begging in the streets or highways. A subsistence is easily gained here; and if, by misfortunes, they are thrown on the charities of the world, these provided by their own country are so comfortable, and so certain, that they never think of relinquishing them to become strolling beggars. Their situation, too, when sick, in the family of a farmer, where every member is anxious to do them kind offices, where they are visited by all the neighbours, who bring them little varieties which their sickly appetites may crave, and who take by rotation the nightly watch over them when their condition requires it, is, without comparison, better than in any hospital."

This was the social condition of the people immediately preceding and following the revolt which threw off the yoke of the government of George the Third.

What is it now, after a hundred years of legislation which was *intended* to give fuller life, greater freedom and true happiness to all? The legislators in their greed—not by open violence at first—but by sophistry, cunning and fraud have succeeded in monopolising the great bulk of the wealth of the country. Less than two per cent of the population own seventy per cent of the total wealth. Fifty-five per cent of the wealth of the United States is in the hands of one per cent of the population. On the other hand, the dispossessed are becoming more numerous, and their condition more and more intolerable. A hundred years ago a subsistence was easily gained; to-day millions are workless, therefore cold, hungry and downtrodden. A hundred years ago there were no beggars; to-day there are so many that it has been made a crime to beg.

Although violence was not resorted to in the beginning, the rulers do not hesitate to use it now. Think of McCormacks in Chicago, Carnegie in Homestead, and the miners who were shot by the sheriffs at Hazleton.

This is probably the only country in the world where the government grants licences to assassins—for the Pinkertons can have no other name.

"The American Republic, instead of realising the ideal of its founders, is a specimen of plutocratic despotism without parallel in the world. Free competition in business has practically ceased to exist. From being a land of opportunities, America has become the land of monopolies. Every week, every day, sees some new branch of industry or commerce, formerly open to individual enterprise, captured by a combination of capitalists and turned into an entrenched camp of monopoly."

If this is the outcome of so fair a prospect as that set forth in the "Declaration of Independence," how can the same methods produce different results in the future?

In recent disputes between capitalists and laborers, attempts have been made to settle their differences by boards of conciliation in the first instance, and, when an open rupture has taken place, a demand has been made for a board of arbitration.

It must not be forgotten that strikes and lock-outs are the results of the antagonism of interests between the parties; and to speak of conciliation, until one or other of the antagonists has tried his strength, is futile.

It is true these have been tried, as in the sliding scale of the miners, and with what deplorable results the recent struggle of the South Wales miners to get rid of it is ample proof.

Arbitration in these disputes is quite as unsatisfactory. All past experience shows that one if not both combatants are dissatisfied with the award. It would be difficult to cite a single instance where satisfaction had been given to both parties; but innumerable instances might be cited where one if not both were disappointed, thus leaving the cause of discontent to be nourished until a favorable opportunity occurred for either side to renew hostilities.

The present Lord Mayor has very aptly illustrated the method of working of boards of arbitration in his story of the two Americans who were telling impossible tales. One said, "I have just seen a serpent thirty yards long;" the other replied, "That is nothing, I have an uncle thirty yards high;" thereupon they drew out their pistols to settle the matter. A third party came upon the scene and suggested arbitration; whereupon the second combatant said to the first, "If you will take a few yards off your serpent, I will see what I can do with my uncle." This is pretty much what occurs in cases of arbitration. The arbitrator would say to the men: "Take off half the number of hours or shillings you demand;" and to the employers: "Grant the men half of what they consider their due;" thus leaving both parties to such an agreement just as dissatisfied as before the award was made. Attempts have been made by the government to bring about a settlement of recent disputes; but they have all been failures, fortunately, because whenever the legislature attempts to regulate the differences between employer and employed its counsellors are always the masters. But, whether disputes are prevented by conciliation, or ended by arbitration, with or without the aid of the State, it must be borne in mind that they deal with the symptom—the strike,—and not with its cause—the antagonism of interests. They cannot, therefore, be regarded as efficient remedies for strikes. The chief, nay, the only aim must be the abolition of the cause of strife.

The first step towards the attainment of this end must necessarily be a federation of all unions—not for aggressive purposes; because that would only be following the mad policy of states in increasing armaments for purposes of destruction. It would be an admission that the employers had discovered a gun powerful enough to pierce their armour, and that they in turn were compelled to devise stronger defences, thus making the war still more costly and bitter.

Ruskin, in a lecture delivered in Bradford, bearing on this phase of the question, says:

"You have at present in England only one art of any consequence: that is iron working. You know thoroughly well how to cast and hammer iron. Now, do you think, in those masses of lava which you build volcanic cones to melt, and which you forge at the mouths of the infernos you have created; do you think on those iron plates your courage and endurance are not written for ever—not merely with an iron pen, but on iron parchment? And take also your great English vice—European vice—vice of all the world—vice of all other worlds that roll or shine in heaven, bearing with them yet the atmosphere of hell—the vice of jealousy, which brings competition into your commerce, treachery into your councils, and dishonor into your wars—that vice which has rendered for you, and for your next neighbouring nation, the daily occupations of existence no longer possible but with the mail upon your breasts and the sword loose in its sheath; so that at last you have realised for all the multitudes of the two great peoples who lead the so-called civilisation of the earth,—you have realised for them all, I say, in person and in policy, what was once only true of the rough Border riders of your Cheviot Hills—

*'They carved at the meal with gloves of steel.
And they drank the red wine through the helmet barr'd.'*

do you think that this national shame and dastardliness of heart are not written as legibly on every rivet of your iron armour as the strength of the right hands that forged it?

"Friends, I know not whether this thing be the more ludicrous or the more melancholy. It is quite unspeakably both. Suppose, instead of being sent for by you I had been sent for by some private gentleman, living in a suburban house, with his garden separated only by a fruit wall from his next door neighbour's; and he had called me to consult with him on the furnishing of his drawing room. I begin looking about me, and find the walls rather bare; I think such and such a paper might be desirable—perhaps a little fresco here and there on the ceiling,—a damask curtain or so at the windows. 'Ah,' says my employer, 'damask curtains indeed! that's all very fine, but you know I can't afford that kind of thing just now!' 'Yet the world credits you with a splendid income.' 'Ah, yes,' says my friend, 'but do you know, at present I am obliged to spend it nearly all in steel traps?' 'Steel traps! for whom?' 'Why, for that fellow on the other side the wall, you know; we're very good friends, capital friends, but we are obliged to keep our traps set on both sides of the wall; we could not possibly keep on friendly terms without them, and our spring guns. The worst of it is, we are both clever fellows enough; and there's never a day passes that we don't find out a new trap, or a new gun barrel, or something; we spend about fifteen millions a year each in our traps, take it altogether; and I don't see how we're to do with less.' A highly comic state of things for two private gentlemen; but for two nations it seems to me not wholly comic. Bedlam would be comic, perhaps, if there were only one madman in it; and your Christmas pantomime is comic when there is only one clown in it; but when the whole world turns clown, and paints itself red with its own heart's blood instead of vermillion, it is something else than comic I think."

This extract requires no comment; it is a faithful delineation of the madness of States, and not only of states, but of the classes in the same state.

(To be continued.)

THE INTERNATIONAL,

ITS PRECURSORS, AND ANARCHISM.

I. (Continued.)

Declaration of Principles in 1860.

The statutes we quoted caused a great stir. Enlightened men, workers and Socialists of all schools welcomed the Geneva Congress and applauded the soundly humanitarian and truly Socialistic principles. In a few weeks the statutes of the International were known in all countries. Everyone perceived that something great had happened which would make a new departure in the world's history. A year before, during the preliminary conference in 1865, after the reading of the preambles and the rough draft of the statutes, perspicacious men understood the importance of the work in hand. Among others, the historian Henri Martin wrote on October 14, 1865:

"We have just read what has happened in London with deep emotion.

"We have a presentiment that something great has begun in the world... the elevation of sentiments... the broadening of views, and the lofty moral, economical and political opinions that governed the choice of questions composing the programme... will seize all friends of progress, justice and liberty in Europe with a common sympathy.

"We well knew that the deathlike cold spread on the surface of society had not reached the depths, nor frozen the popular soul, and that

the sources of life were not dried up. . . . Our ears were no longer used to such words, they thrilled us to our hearts."¹

"A remarkable progress has taken place since our agitation for social reforms of twenty years ago," wrote Corbon the same year. "In those days. . . the general tendency of Socialist workmen was to consider the State as their visible Providence, and to expect it to redeem the lower classes. Now a new generation declares that 'the emancipation of the workers must be brought about by the workers themselves!!'"

If the International had such a sympathetic welcome from Liberals and Radicals, the enthusiasm it raised among Socialists of all shades and countries is easily understood. In our days of military and clerical reaction, we find the enthusiastic language of those days more than strange. Here, for example, are the terms in which the public prosecutor of the Bâle Republic, member of local sections, welcomed the fourth congress held at Bâle:

"I hail you therefore, you who prepare the great day of emancipation. . . . Already the first steps have been taken, the tyranny of the aristocracy, the tyranny of priests have been overthrown. . . . Now the bourgeois privilege must disappear like the others; all must work. *The free society we dream of will be able to co-operatively exploit all work; this society being composed of only workers, will know how to support and govern itself.* . . . Brother workers, do I dream? Then you dream with me. Am I mad in speaking thus and should I be locked up in an asylum? No! What proves to me that I do not dream. . . . is the existence of the International Association itself. . . ."

"Wherever harm has been done to workers, it has been done to our Association. Whether in the Borinage or on the Loire, blows dealt to the workers have struck us. . . . but we can also say that the movement stirring the workers is our movement, and wherever the oppressed are united, our spirit soars among them."²

It is especially the defenders of political and social oppression and slavery who furnish us with the best proof of the joy raised by the millions of adhesions to these fundamental principles. The most rabid enemy of the Great Association, Oscar Testut,³ advocate of the Imperial Court of Lyons, testified, on May 10th 1870, to the rapid development of a kind to frighten all men who reflect about the danger incurred by the bourgeois social order at the hands of so powerful an association.

He also testified to the spirit of union animating its members; with what prodigious rapidity it had successively enlarged its circle of influence, not only in France, but also in part of Germany, in America, Italy, Belgium, Poland, Russia, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, England and even in Spain.

Yes, great was the International's declaration of principles, rapid was their propagation, and it was by millions they counted their adherents.⁴

To what may this success be attributed?

On the one hand, to the state of popular spirit at the time; and, on the other hand, even more so to the fidelity with which the statutes reflected the ideas common to the three Socialist systems of Saint Simon, Fourier and Robert Owen, and to the tactics of warfare practised by French and English workers who were the most advanced and united at that time.

As a rule, too little attention is bestowed on social and political events in the midst of which the International arose. Nevertheless, the period from 1859 to 1865 remains one of the most remarkable in modern history. The reaction that crushed Enrope after the revolutions of 1848 was forced to make concessions to popular claims and to the discoveries and generalisations of inductive sciences that upset all our supernatural and metaphysical beliefs and prejudices. Italy, that cradle of the Renaissance and flourishing republics, was fighting for independence, and this heroic struggle, that an Englishman called "the very poetry of politics," was animated and led by men of such blameless character as Garibaldi, Mazzini, Pisacane and others, and caused enthusiastic youth from all civilised countries to flock to Garibaldi's flag. In Russia despotism was obliged to abolish serfdom, to undertake liberal reforms. Tchernychevsky was not yet arrested. Herten was at his height as a revolutionary publisher, and Polish patriots were preparing the democratic revolution that broke out in 1863, and attracted no less sympathy than that of Italy.

In America the war of Abolition (1861-1865) showed to old Monarchist Europe what an autonomous people, animated by a great and generous idea, is capable of; and the worker-president, Abraham Lincoln, "Uncle Abe," gave the exceptional example that you can remain modest, simple and honest while president,⁵ which is contrary to French republican custom. England was animated by the most liberal spirit. Trades unions, Lord Shaftesbury, Kingsley, Dickens, John Stuart Mill and so many others asked for reforms. English society supported Mazzini and Garibaldi; an English minister, Stansfeld, placed his house at the disposal of the conspirator, Mazzini; and when, in 1864, Garibaldi arrived in London, the people organised such a demonstration of sympathy that there has never been one like it, not even in honor of their national heroes.

Germany at that time was also moved by the energetic and passionate agitation of Lassalle, the popular orator who united in his brilliant personality the qualities of an audacious revolutionist and of a scientific man of the first rank. Liberal and Democratic Germany admired him, the German workers organised themselves beneath the banner of social reform unfurled by the talented agitator.

Such was the epoch when the French workers conceived the idea of the Great Association. The movement was not a Socialist one. Nevertheless, these wars of independence, the agitation in favor of emancipation, of enfranchisement and social reforms, roused public opinion. The workers of large towns were ready for united action; thus, when the Association, that "child born in Paris workshops, was put out to nurse in England," it was not only Englishmen who lavished enthusiastic cares on it.

W. TCHERKESOV.

WHAT THE UNCOMMERCIAL TRAVELLER SAW.

LEAD-POISONED.

I had been looking, yesternight, through the famous "Dance of Death," and to-day the grim old woodcuts arose in my mind with the new significance of a ghastly monotony not to be found in the original. The weird skeleton rattled along the streets before me, and struck fiercely; but it was never at the pains of assuming a disguise. It played on no dulcimer here, was crowned with no flowers, waived no plume, minced in no flowing robe or train, lifted no wine-cup, sat at no feast, cast no dice, counted no gold. It was simply a bare, gaunt, famished skeleton, slaying his way along.

The borders of Ratcliff and Stepney, eastward of London, and giving on the impure river, were the scene of this uncompromising dance of death, upon a drizzling November day. A squalid maze of streets, courts, and alleys of miserable houses let out in single rooms. A wilderness of dirt, rags, and hunger. A mud desert, chiefly inhabited by a tribe from whom employment has departed, or to whom it comes but fitfully and rarely. They are not skilled mechanics in anywise. They are but labourers,—dock labourers, water-side labourers, coal-porters, ballast-heavers, such like hewers of wood, and drawers of water. But they have come into existence, and they propagate their wretched race.

One grizzly joke alone, methought, the skeleton seemed to play off here. It had stuck election bills on the walls, which the wind and rain had deteriorated into suitable rags. It had even summed up the state of the poll, in chalk, on the shutters of one ruined house. It adjured the free and independent starvers to vote for Thisman and vote for Thatman; not to plump as they valued the state of parties and the national prosperity (both of great importance to them, I think); but, by returning Thisman and Thatman, each nought without the other, to compound a glorious and immortal whole. Surely the skeleton is nowhere more cruelly ironical in the original monkish ideas.

Pondering in my mind the far-seeing schemes of Thisman and Thatman, and of the public blessing called Party, for staying the degeneracy, physical and moral, of many thousands (who shall say how many?) of the English race; for devising employment useful to the community for those who want but to work and live; for equalising rates, cultivating waste lands, facilitating emigration, and, above all things, saving and utilising the on-coming generations, and thereby changing ever-growing national weakness into strength: pondering in my mind, I say, these hopeful exertions, I turned down a narrow street to look into a hoise or two.

It was a dark street, with a dead wall on one side. Nearly all the outer doors of the houses stood open. I took the first entry, and knocked at a parlour door. Might I come in? I might, if I plased, sur.

The woman of the room (Irish) had picked up some long strips of wood, about some wharf or barge; and they had just now been thrust into the otherwise empty grate to make two empty pots boil. There was some fish in one, and there were some potatoes in the other. The flare of the burning wood enabled me to see a table and a broken chair or so, and some old cheap crockery ornaments about the chimney-piece. It was not until I had spoken with the woman a few minutes that I saw a horrible brown heap on the floor in a corner, which, but for previous experience in this dismal wise, I might not have suspected to be "the bed." There was something thrown upon it; and I asked what that was.

"'Tis the poor craythur that stays here, sur; and 'tis very bad she is, and 'tis very bad she's been this long time, and 'tis better she'll never be, and 'tis slape she does all day, and 'tis wake she does all night, and 'tis the lead, sur."

"The what?"

"The lead, sur. Sure 'tis the lead-mills, where the women gets took on at eighteen-pence a day, sur, when they makes application early enough, and is lucky and wanted; and 'tis lead-poisoned she is, and some of them gets lead-pisoned soon, and some of them gets lead-pisoned later, and some, but not many, niver; and 'tis all according to the constitooshun, sur, and some constitooshuns is strong, and some is weak; and her constitooshun is lead-pisoned, bad as can be, sur; and her brain is coming out at her ear, and it hurts her dreadful; and that's what it is, and niver no more, and niver no less, sur."

¹ Quoted by Fribourg.

² Account of the fourth International Congress held at Bâle (Brussels, 1869).

³ *The International and Jacobinism*, Paris, 1871; *International Association*, Lyons, 1870; *The Blue-book of the Association*, Paris 1871.

⁴ At the Bâle Congress the United States delegate, Cameron, represented 800,000 members of the National Labor Union.

⁵ A contrast to our political parvenus. A diplomat once surprised Lincoln holding in his hand some accounts written on very dirty paper. Questioned as to the nature of these documents, the President replied that those were the accounts of his friend Sam (a negro waiter in a tavern) who had asked him to verify them.

The sick young woman moaning here, the speaker bent over her, took a bandage from her head, and threw open a back-door to let in the daylight upon it, from the smallest and most miserable back-yard I ever saw.

"That's what cooms from her, sur, being lead-pisoned; and it cooms from her night and day, the poor, sick craythur; and the pain of it is dreadful; and God he knows that my husband has walked the sthreeets these four days, being a laborer, and is walking them now, and is ready to work, and no work for him, and no fire and no food but the bit in the pot, and no more than ten shillings in a fortnight; God be good to us! and it is poor we are, and dark it is and could it is indeed."

Knowing that I could compensate myself thereafter for self-denial, if I saw fit, I had resolved that I would give nothing in the course of these visits. I did this to try the people. I may state at once that my closest observation could not detect any indication whatever of an expectation that I would give money: they were grateful to be talked to about their miserable affairs, and sympathy was plainly a comfort to them; but they neither asked for money in any case, nor showed the least trace of surprise or disappointment or resentment at my giving none.

The woman's married daughter had by this time come down, from her room on the floor above, to join in the conversation. She herself had been to the lead-mills very early that morning to be "took on," but had not succeeded. She had four children; and her husband, also a water-side labourer, and then out seeking work, seemed in no better case as to finding it than her father. She was English, and by nature of a buxom figure and cheerful. Both in her poor dress and in her mother's there was an effort to keep up some appearance of neatness. She knew all about the sufferings of the unfortunate invalid, and all about the lead-poisoning, and how the symptoms came on, and how they grew,—having often seen them. The very smell, when you stood inside the door of the works, was enough to knock you down, she said; yet she was going back again to get "took on." What could she do? Better be ulcerated and paralysed for eighteen-pence a day, while it lasted, than see the children starve.

A dark and squalid cupboard in this room, touching the back-door and all manner of offence, had been for some time the sleeping-place of the sick young woman. But the nights being now wintry, and the blankets and coverlets "gone to the leaving shop," she lay all night where she lay all day, and was lying then. The woman of the room, her husband, this most miserable patient, and two others, lay on the one brown heap together for warmth.

"God bless you, sir, and thank you!" were the parting words from these people,—gratefully spoken too,—with which I left this place.

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