

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

VOL. XXVII.—No. 286.

FEBRUARY, 1913.

MONTHLY: ONE PENNY.

NOTES.

Plimsoll's Work Undone.

By the Merchant Shipping Act of 1876, thanks to the heroic efforts of Samuel Plimsoll, a circular disc 12in. in diameter was to be painted amidships of every British ship, with a line drawn through its centre. This line is the maximum load-line in salt water. By an amending Act of 1890 the centre of the disc was to be placed at such a level as may be approved by the Board of Trade. Captains knew that this load-line left little margin for safety in heavy seas, yet in March, 1906, in order to compete with foreign steamers, the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Lloyd George) gave permission for vessels to be loaded 18in. to 30in. deeper. Thus by a stroke of the pen the margin of safety was swept away. There is a Seamen's Union, but it gives banquets to shipowners; there is also a Labour Party in Parliament, but its members are usually found in the same lobby as the shipowners and Lloyd George. In these circumstances this alteration of the load line passed without hardly a protest from those whose work is supposed to be to prevent such scandalous actions. As might be expected, there has been a great increase in the number of vessels and lives lost. We give the figures, showing lives lost for the three years previous to the alteration of the load-line and for the last three years for which figures are available:—

LIVES LOST.			
Years.	By Foundering.	By Missing Vessels.	Total.
1902-1905.....	206	727	933
1908-1911.....	311	897	1208

According to these figures, about 300 seamen have been sacrificed to the greed of the shipowners, one of the wealthiest classes in the community. And yet the man principally responsible for the murder of these men has the audacity to face British audiences and talk maudlin sentiment about the sufferings of the poor.

Caste in Education.

It was recently announced by Lord Haldane that the Government were about to bring forward a great educational scheme, by which even the poorest boy, if capable, could get a University education. But these great vote-catching schemes never turn out so nice as they look on paper. At the present time our educational system is supposed to give opportunities for boys and girls to achieve high positions, if their abilities are above the average; but according to Mr. G. D. Bell, the President of the East London Teachers' Association, every obstacle possible is put in their way. Speaking at the annual meeting of the Association on February 2, he said:—

"No one could deny that social prejudice and caste distinctions pervade the whole educational system of this country. From the elementary school to the University, and from the office of the smallest education authority to the Board of Education itself, there was, and always had been, not only the desire, but the will, and very often the power, to keep the child of the working man to that station in life 'in which it had pleased Providence' to place him. The educational system was manipulated to maintain the ascendancy of the upper and the subjection of the lower classes of the community. The older Universities, like all educational foundations, had become the preserves of the titled and well-to-do classes. The regulations governing the award of London County Council senior scholarships were so framed that no recipient might enter either the legal or the medical profession."

A ruling class will always take steps to safeguard its ascendancy, and it is only those who will not see who imagine otherwise. By controlling the education of the young, our rulers are certain of the passive if not active support of the great majority in their later life.

State Insurance in Being.

Working people in this country are now enjoying the benefits of the National Insurance Act. After all that has been said in its favour, we should expect to hear its praises sung on every hand already; but the recipients of its favours (outside politicians, the official element, and their friends) are not raising their voices in joyful chants. On the contrary, we hear of cases of suffering, and even death, caused by the stupidity which is characteristic of all State administration where the needs and interests of the masses of the people are concerned.

The State passport to employment, or the other thing, has already proved itself to be a convenient instrument in the hands of employers of labour in handling their workpeople. There have been many cases of hardship and restriction even of the very small latitude allowed to the worker in his choice of a master. Thus a workman who is informed that his employer will probably not require his services for an indefinite term is unable to accept an offer of temporary employment elsewhere unless he is prepared to jeopardise his future prospects of work at his original place of employment. To ask for his card is taken practically as a declaration of his intention to cut himself adrift; and though little may be said at the time, he knows that he may save himself the trouble of applying there again.

Taxing the Out-of-Work.

The most monstrous thing about the Act is the tax upon the unemployed. When the supply of food and firing is smaller than at other times, the beneficent State steps in to steal extra pence from the already impoverished person. The longer a man or woman is out of employment, the worse their predicament becomes; and should a man tramp to another town, the evidence of non-payment will stamp him as a "wastrel," to be dealt with by all the penal rigours of the Poor Law. The piece of Pecksniffian cant which pretends that these Acts of Parliament aid the very poor, when in reality they add to their misery and degradation, is supremely disgusting. We note, by the way, that in the trades which are included in the unemployment sections of the Act, 100,000 claims for the dole have been made out of 2,500,000 insured persons. This is an interesting sidelight on the "prosperity" of the people in a time of record trade and—emigration. Of course, all is being arranged nicely and quietly, and, as in the case of the fraudulent Labour Bureaus, the official staff will present some glowing returns at the year's end. The pupils of Pangloss will then display their ability—and the poor will suffer in silence.

The Empire in the Slums.

A few weeks ago, when replying to the complaints that the medical men appointed under the Act are to act on behalf of a set of Government officials, Mr. Lloyd George said that the Empire would now, in consequence of the information supplied to it, step in to help the suffering poor. Well, we know that Empire. For hundreds of years the Empire has "stepped in" through the medium of the information and benefits obtained by other Acts of Parliament. Poor Law officials have been engaged in that business, and although it is claimed that "the duties of the State" towards the poor and destitute are recognised in those Acts, those officials are objects of contempt and derision to all sincere persons who have an intelligent grasp of social problems, and of fear and despair to the bulk of the poor who entertain any respect for themselves. The Poor Law is the scourge of the poor and destitute. What the poor need is the abolition of the State, and not its aid; for it has delivered them bound and helpless into the grip of the land-owning and capitalistic classes. The fact that the State cannot give anything to the people which it does not at first take away from them has become obscured. But we seem to be progressing rapidly to the time when the State and all its works will be suspect in people's eyes.

BERKMAN'S PRISON MEMOIRS.*

It is given to few men to pass fourteen years in prison, and to be able to write a book on their experiences there on returning to the workaday world. Most people would have all their ability to write crushed out of them by such a sentence, but Alexander Berkman seems to have been cast in a sterner mould, and this book is a witness to the tenacity with which he clung to life and sanity throughout his terrible ordeal.

In July, 1892, the lock-out at Carnegie's steel works at Homestead attracted the attention of the workers of all countries. The conspiracy on the part of the Carnegie Company to crush the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers; the selection for the purpose of Henry Clay Frick, whose attitude towards Labour was implacably hostile; his secret military preparations while designedly prolonging negotiations with the Union; the fortification of the Homestead steel works; the erection of a high fence, capped by barbed wire and provided with loopholes for sharpshooters; the hiring of an army of Pinkerton police; the attempt to smuggle them, in the dead of night, into Homestead; and finally, the terrible battle and bloodshed, ending in the defeat and surrender of the Pinkertons—these events caused an outburst of indignation against the Carnegie Company and their manager, Frick. Berkman, who at the time was a member of an Anarchist group in New York, shared in the general feeling, and decided that the time for action had arrived. Taking the train to Pittsburg, he went to the manager's office, and fired at Frick—"bloody Frick of the coke regions," as he was called. After a desperate struggle, Berkman was captured and handed over to the police. At the trial, numerous charges were brought against Berkman, so as to add to the severity of his punishment, and although Frick had been but slightly injured, the judge sentenced his assailant to twenty-two years' imprisonment, fourteen of which he actually served.

We know from other writers' experiences, notably Kropotkin and Oscar Wilde, the brutal and demoralising effects of prisons; but in the Western Penitentiary of Pennsylvania (where Berkman served his sentence) the conditions seem to have been specially vile. Our comrade tells the story of the doings of his fellow prisoners and himself in a most effective way. The Warden of the prison was impressed with the tales usually current of the desperate character of Anarchists, and, in spite of the prison regulations allowing friends to visit the prisoners, years elapsed before Berkman was allowed to see any one he knew. At one time he was kept in solitary confinement for twelve months, and when he demanded to be relieved from the cell, the Warden punished him for his temerity. "I was put in the strait-jacket. They bound my body in canvas, strapped my arms to the bed, and chained my feet to the posts. I was kept that way eight days, unable to move, rotting in my own excrement." Other prisoners who rebelled against the iron discipline, or who were driven mad by the treatment, were beaten with clubs, some dying from the brutality of their guards. Official prison visitors were supposed to be a check on these abuses, but as the visitors had to rely for their information on the guards, who could not be expected to incriminate themselves, these visits were useless.

Berkman's book is hardly an entertaining one, but it is of great value for the light it throws on one of the blackest spots of our social system. To imagine that prisons assist in the prevention of crime is a delusion. Every prison is a forcing-bed of crime. It demoralises both the prisoners and the warders, the latter in many cases being bigger scoundrels than those they guard.

One of the most interesting features of this volume are the letters that Berkman wrote, and which were smuggled out of the prison by some of the warders, who added to their income by the traffic. These letters are an index to the temperament of their writer, being pessimistic and optimistic in turn. In one of them (Dec. 20, 1901) he writes:—

"Often I have wondered in the years gone by, was not wisdom dear at the price of enthusiasm? At 30 one is not so reckless, not so fanatical and one-sided as at 20. With maturity we become more universal; but life is a Shylock that cannot be cheated of his due. For every lesson it teaches us, we have a wound or a scar to show. We grow broader; but too often the heart contracts as the mind expands, and the fires are burning down as we are learning. . . . The splendid naivety of the days that resented as a personal reflection the least misgiving of the future; the enthusiasm that discounted the power of inherent prejudice and predilection! Magnificent was the day of hearts on fire with the hatred of oppression and the love of liberty! Woe indeed to the man or the people whose soul never warmed with the spark of Prometheus,—for it is youth that has climbed the heights. . . . But maturity has clarified the way, and the stupendous task of human regeneration will be accomplished only by the purified vision of hearts that grow not cold."

Berkman says some hard things about John Most, who commented adversely on the attack on Frick. Most may have been wrong in his treatment of the case, but we think that cowardice is a charge that ought never to have been thrown at that sturdy old fighter.

Altogether, Berkman has written a book that should be read by Anarchists and sociologists. It cuts at the roots of our penal institutions—aye, of our whole social system.

* *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist.* By Alexander Berkman. \$1.50. New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association.

WOMAN, THE PHYSICIAN.

There is no department of knowledge from which woman has been more debarred than from medicine. If it was often thought undesirable for man to penetrate the mysteries of the body, for woman it was held almost a sacrilege. The narrow ideal which our imperfect conceptions have shaped for woman—of purity, modesty, love, and grace, which are supposed to constitute her peculiar and sufficient sphere—revolts from the very thought of her engaging in pursuits of presumed so opposite a character. In all ages and nations has the development of woman been crippled and impeded by man's interference. Like the Chinese bandaging, and the Turkish prison-house, does their conventional character at the present day among ourselves confine their natural energies and prevent their expansion. Innocence, purity, chastity, delicacy—let us rather read ignorance, morbidity, disease, and misery: how long shall this semblance of a moral character hang about the neck of woman? Does nature move thus with downcast eye, and sidelong regard, fearing everywhere to encounter objects it is ashamed to meet? No; the front of nature is calm, open, and fearless; her steady gaze penetrates everywhere beneath the sun, and if man or woman would be in harmony with her, they must emulate her fearless deportment. Hence should neither woman nor man shrink from the view of decay and death; they should meet them boldly and by wrestling with them, learn to embrace them too in their sympathies, to know that they are as sublime and beautiful parts of our being as any other. Who can value an existence spent in hiding from the presence of the inevitable, which will meet us in every step through life? By our knowledge of the destructive side of nature, and our acknowledgment of its equal justice and beauty, we are brought into harmony with the whole; while without this knowledge our characters remain most imperfect. This side has ever been assiduously hidden from woman in other things as well as in medicine, and thus has her character suffered infinitely.

No pursuit would have a better effect in restoring the balance of the female character than medicine, in which the destructive processes meet us on the very threshold, and command our most devoted attention. Nothing could be better adapted for unspiritualising woman, as well as man, and for restoring her to the realities of life and of the material universe. Here is the scene of our human joys and sorrows; our real trials and triumphs. Ah! not for woman only, but for all of us, is mother earth our paradise, our everlasting abode, our heavens, and our infinity! It is not by leaving it, and our real humanity behind us, and sighing to be anything but what we are, that man will become ennobled or immortal. Is this our gratitude for all that has been done for us, for the grandeur and sublimity by which our life is surrounded?

But medicine does not rest its claims on woman's reverential study, any more than on man's, merely on the feeble grounds of expediency. It is not the "rights" of woman that are concerned, but her duties. On her as well as on man, the study of her physical part and its laws is enjoined by nature, as a religion and a duty, second to none in its claims. All those who do not study them, as is the case with all women, and nearly all men in the present day, live a life of sin, and are under the ban of nature. Ignorance of the physical laws is in woman no less culpable than in man; and nature has no excuse for the softer sex for any breach of them. Gallantry and cumbrous chivalry enter not into her code towards them; she does not load them with lip-service, and yet deny them access to her heart's recesses. She lies there, open and inviting to the gaze, with one calm and impartial front turned towards both sexes alike.

The consequences of the want of physical reverence and knowledge in woman has been as disastrous, perhaps more so, than in man. The ignorance and carelessness of women, in all things appertaining to their bodily welfare, is proverbial, and the despair of the physician. Men may perhaps, as has been said, be brought to attend to their stomach when death is staring them in the face; but to make woman attend to her bodily state, and reverence the laws of health in her own person, is too often a hopeless endeavour. But in all things, in all matters in life, this want of the feeling of duty to themselves, which is so often erroneously praised under the name of unselfishness, characterises women. They have never deeply thought or felt what it is right for themselves to do: what are the laws of their being, moral or physical, which they must obey. They have taken the will of man for their law, instead of that of nature; and yielded to him with little thought of their own duties. They have sanctioned by their apathy towards all other objects, the fallacious words of the poet, that "man is made for God only, woman for God in him." Does this deserve man's gratitude or approbation? would he then wish to absorb in himself woman's thoughts and allegiance, jealous of the claims of all the rest of nature which demands no less her love, jealous of her attention and reverence for the laws of her own being? Alas! such has been and is too much the case; but this jealousy is a most narrow and mistaken feeling. We cannot be happy unless woman be happy; and it is impossible she can be so if she do not study and reverence her relations to the rest of nature as well as to us. Nature will not be neglected for man; and it demands her love. Can we love nature for woman? can we live her life, bear her penalties for error, die her death for her? If a woman do not herself possess moral and physical knowledge, which are inseparable from a genuine love of nature; if she do not possess them of herself and for herself, will all the knowledge on those subjects

that was ever possessed by man, bear her safely through her life? Nothing can ever come to us from another, everything we have we must owe to ourselves; our own spirit must vitalise it, our own heart must feel it: for we are not passive machines—women, any more than men—who can be lectured, and guided, and moulded this way and that; but living beings, with will, choice, and comprehension, to be exercised for ourselves at every step in life.—*Elements of Social Science.*

BOOK NOTES.

Free Political Institutions: Their Nature, Essence, and Maintenance. An Abridgment and Re-arrangement of Lysander Spooner's "Trial by Jury." Edited by Victor Yarros. 1s. net. London: C. W. Daniel.

This book, which was first published in America in 1890, deals with the undoubted right of citizens to use force in resisting Governments that abuse their power, and it should be carefully studied by Suffragists and Socialists, who expect to check tyranny by changing the personnel of Governments. The author says:—

"The second body of legislators are likely and liable to be just as tyrannical as the first. If it be said that the second body may be chosen for their integrity, the answer is that the first were chosen for that very reason, and yet proved tyrants. The second will be exposed to the same temptations as the first, and will be just as likely to prove tyrannical. Whoever heard that succeeding legislatures were, on the whole, more honest than those that preceded them? What is there in the nature of men or things to make them so? If it be said that the first body were chosen from motives of injustice, that fact proves that there is a portion of society who desire to establish injustice; and if they were powerful or artful enough to procure the election of their instruments to compose the first legislature, they will be likely to succeed equally well with the second. The right of suffrage, therefore, and even a change of legislators, guarantees no change of legislation—certainly no change for the better. Even if a change for the better actually comes, it comes too late, because it comes only after more or less injustice has been irreparably done."

The author says that, short of revolution, the only check has been trial by jury, for the right of revolution "can be exercised with impunity only when it is exercised victoriously."

"The right of revolution, therefore, is a right of no practical value except for those who are stronger than the Government. So long, therefore, as the oppressions of a government are kept within such limits as simply not to exasperate against it a power greater than its own, the right of revolution cannot be appealed to and is inapplicable to the case. This affords a wide field for tyranny; and if a jury cannot intervene here, the oppressed are utterly defenceless."

In times past juries have frequently stood between Governments and their victims; and this has led to the enforcement of Coercion Acts and temporary suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. But then the people knew they were governed by force, and must rely for defence on physical force. No Government likes to admit that it is founded on force; it edicts are usually hidden under such phrases as "The will of the people," etc.

The author rather spoils his case when he shows how Governments have corrupted the original idea of a jury. "At the common law a man was born to the right to sit on juries. By the present statutes he buys the right when he buys his land. And thus this, the greatest of all political rights of an Englishman, has become a mere article of merchandise, a thing that is bought and sold in the market." We all know that when working-class agitators are tried it is always by jurors who pay a certain rental—higher than workmen can afford—thus going contrary to the rule that a man should be tried by a jury of his peers, i.e., equals. Therefore, with the disappearance of the only legal barrier between a tyrannical Government and the people, the latter are left with nothing but physical force to protect themselves. Of course, occasionally judges can be found who will give decisions against the Government of the day; but speaking generally, a Government prosecution means the conviction of the accused. As the author says, change of Governments is no remedy. We can only draw the logical conclusion that abolition of Government will be the way out.

This book, which is nicely bound and printed, should be a welcome addition to any Anarchist's library.

Free Speech for Radicals. By Theodore Schroeder. 25c. *Witchcraft and Obscenity: Twin Superstitions.* By Theodore Schroeder and Havelock Ellis. 5c. New York: Free Speech League, 56 East 59th Street.

We have frequently called attention to the work of the Free Speech League in general, and of Theodore Schroeder in particular. The author has marshalled his facts and arguments in a masterly manner, and if freedom of speech and press rested on reasoning, the enemy would be utterly routed. He is especially severe on the American anti-Anarchist laws, under which, he says, the Government "has established itself as an international police force for the protection of all tyrants." How rudely this shatters our hopes of greater freedom under Republics! Some friends of free speech frequently say that they are opposed to prosecutions except in certain cases; but, as Mr. Schroeder points out, if you leave the door open for some

prosecutions, it is impossible to close it to others. Tyranny grows by what it feeds on.

In *Witchcraft and Obscenity*, the author draws a parallel between belief in witchcraft and belief in obscenity. When people believed in witches, they burnt the witches; "just as our own courts to-day join with the obscenity-hunters to affirm that obscenity is in a book and not in the reading mind, and that therefore the publisher, and not the reader, shall go to gaol for being 'obscene.'" Even the learned Sir William Blackstone said that "to deny the possibility, nay, actual existence of witchcraft and sorcery is at once flatly to contradict the revealed word of God." The belief in witchcraft was almost universal, "and yet when men ceased to believe in witches, witches ceased to be; and so when men shall cease to believe in the 'obscene' they will also cease to find that. Obscenity and witches exists only in the minds and emotions of those who believe in them, and neither dogmatic judicial dictum nor righteous vituperation can ever give to either of them any objective existence."

Other Publications Received.

Razboiul By P. Kropotkin. 20 bani. Bucuresti: Revista Ideei, 35 Strada Turturelor.

Weshalb wir Anarchisten sind. By Xavier Merlino. 10 pfennig. Hamburg: Kampf, Sternstr. 39, Haus 18p.

THE DAY IS COMING

Come hither, lads, and hearken, for a tale there is to tell,
Of the wonderful days a-coming, when all shall be better than well.
And the tale shall be told of a country, a land in the midst of a sea,
And folk shall call it England in the days that are to be.
There more than one in a thousand in the days that are yet to come
Shall have some hope of the morrow, some joy of the ancient home.
For then—laugh not, but listen, to this strange tale of mine—
All folk that are in England shall be better lodged than swine.
Then a man shall work and bethink him, and rejoice in the deeds of
his hand,

Nor yet come home in the even too faint and weary to stand.
Men in that time a-coming shall work and have no fear
For to-morrow's lack of earning and the hunger-wolf a-near.
I tell you this for a wonder, that no man then shall be glad
Of his fellow's fall and mishap to snatch at the work he had.
For that which the worker winneth shall then be his indeed,
Nor shall half be reaped for nothing by him that soweth no seed.
O strange, new, wonderful justice! But for whom shall we gather
the gain?
For ourselves and for each of our fellows, and no hand shall labour in
vain.

Then all Mine and Thine shall be Ours, and no more shall any man crave
For riches that serve for nothing but to fetter a friend for a slave.
And what wealth shall then be left us when none shall gather gold
To buy his friends in the market, and pinch and pine the sold!
Nay, what save the lovely city, and the little house on the hill,
And the wastes and the woodland beauty, and the happy fields we till.
And the home of ancient stories, the tombs of the mighty dead;
And the wise men seeking out marvels, and the poet's teeming head;
And the painter's hand of wonder; and the marvellous fiddle-bow,
And the banded choirs of music; all those that do and know.
For all these shall be ours and all men's, nor shall any lack a share
Of the toil and the gain of living in the days when the world grows fair.
Ah! such are the days that shall be! But what are the deeds of
to-day,

In the days of the years we dwell in, that wear our lives away?
Why, then, and for what are we waiting? There are three words to
speak:

WE WILL IT, and what is the foeman but the dream-strong wakened
and weak?

O why and for what are we waiting? while our brothers droop and die,
And on every wind of the heavens a wasted life goes by.
How long shall they reproach us where crowd on crowd they dwell,
Poor ghosts of the wicked city, the gold-crushed hungry hell?
Through squalid life they laboured, in sordid grief they died,
Those sons of a mighty mother, those props of England's pride.
They are gone; there is none can undo it, nor save our souls from the
curse;

But many a million cometh, and shall they be better or worse?
It is we must answer and hasten, and open wide the door
For the rich man's hurrying terror, and the slow-foot hope of the poor.
Yea, the voiceless wraith of the wretched, and their unlearned dis-
content,

We must give it voice and wisdom till the waiting-tide be spent.
Come, then, since all things call us, the living and the dead,
And o'er the weltering tangle a glimmering light is shed.
Come, then, let us cast off fooling, and put by ease and rest,
For the CAUSE alone is worthy till the good days bring the best.
Come, join in the only battle wherein no man can fail,
Where whoso fadeth and dieth, yet his deed shall still prevail.
Ah! come, cast off all fooling, for this at least we know:
That the Dawn and the Day is coming, and forth the Banners go.

—William Morris.

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Monthly, One Penny; post free, 1½d.; U.S.A., 3 Cents; France, 15 Centimes.

Annual Subscription, post free, 1s. 6d.; U.S.A., 36 Cents; France, 1fr. 80c.
Foreign subscriptions should be sent by International Money Order.

Wholesale price, 1s. 6d. per quire of 26 post-free in the United Kingdom.

All communications, exchanges, &c., to be addressed to

THE MANAGER, 127 Ossulston Street, N.W.

The Editors are not necessarily in agreement with signed articles.

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SYNDICALISM: A WORKING-CLASS CONCEPTION OF SOCIALISM.

II.

The fundamental formulas of French Syndicalism, as we saw before (FREEDOM, November, 1912), affirm the conception of Socialism as expressed by Robert Owen and the Owenists (1832-40), and developed by Proudhon in his "L'Idée Générale de la Révolution." This conception of Socialism rests entirely on the abolition of the exploitation of man by man, society, or State.

Robert Owen and Proudhon were both children of the people, and, till they succeeded with their work, lived the life of the poor. They knew, therefore, by experience that the people's idea of social justice is simply to liberate the producer from legalised or non-legalised robbery by capitalists, State, or Church, and to allow him to dispose freely of his entire produce.

Except Robert Owen and Proudhon, the founders of all other Socialist schools were men belonging to the privileged classes; and in order to demonstrate the possibility of their teachings they were always obliged to have recourse to various political, religious, and philosophical arguments. So Saint-Simon and his school preached the organisation of industry by the State, with, as they called it, Neo-Christian Morality as a guide. Fourier and his followers based their conception of social justice on the historical development of mankind and on human nature. Louis Blanc's project of organisation of production, as well as that of other authoritarian Communists, was founded on the State in the rôle of reformer and benefactor. The same is the case with the present wide-spread doctrines of Social Democracy, which are argued and defended in the name of the interests of the State.

All those Socialist theories, when not conceived by workers themselves, had to find the justification for their proposals in the most abstract, would-be scientific and philosophic reasoning; and some Socialist thinkers—as Marx—elaborated such a complicated mixture of dialectical metaphysics that the party itself is split up into different camps, and, just as it is with Christian theology, each pretends to be the only true orthodox exponent of their teacher.

In order to convince a member of the privileged classes, imbued with the prejudices of his position, of the immorality of appropriating the produce of other people's labour, it was perhaps necessary to enter into an elaborate explanation; but a worker, a peasant without philosophy or political economy, knows perfectly well that in justice the whole produce of work ought to belong to the producer. That is why the Syndicalist formula, the statute of the French Confederation of Labour, expressing this popular idea of social justice, is so short, clear, and convincing. "To organise, outside all political parties, all the workers conscious of the struggle for the abolition of the wage system and employers."

For people with such a fundamental conception of Socialism there is no need to create new doctrines to prove their rights; their whole attention is absorbed by the vital problem how to realise their idea of social justice. Once this question of realisation had arisen, the workers recognised the necessity—(1) To organise production—which means to create a Union or Syndicate of each branch of production; (2) To place the use and destination of the produce entirely under the control of the producing collectivity—the Union; (3) To let the exchange and consumption of the produce of all branches of industries be

controlled by the Confederation of all the Unions of producers themselves.

Once this conception of popular Socialism was formulated, the logical conclusion was drawn: that the contemporary State organisation, with its millions of non-producing officials, must disappear, and give place to the Confederal Delegations of the Syndicates, whether local, provincial, or national, thus realising Proudhon's prophecy, "L'atelier fera disparaître le gouvernement" ("The workshop will triumph over the State").

Our comrades in France during the last fifteen years have worked in this direction; they created a powerful organisation of 600,000 members united on this basis. That is why French Syndicalism has taken the lead in the international working-class movement. Syndicalism itself in reality meant till recent years simple Trade Unionism, and as such the Trade Unions of England and Germany are more powerful, richer, and numerous than those of France; but they never dared to touch the fundamental popular conception of social justice—to keep the whole produce for the producer; they thought that Socialism must and can be realised only by the State and Parliamentary action. But the French Syndicalists dared to affirm the possibility of realising Socialism by the Direct Action of the working classes themselves. By this declaration the French Syndicalist organisation ceased to be a simple Trade Union movement, and became a new independent and truly popular Socialist party.

THE "SLUMP" IN STATE SOCIALISM.

A very welcome sign of the times has been the recent discussion in the *Daily Herald* and elsewhere upon the question raised by Cecil Chesterton as to whether British Socialists still adhere to the orthodox doctrines of Social Democracy, or have drifted away into ideas at variance with their old opinions. Many Socialists have frankly acknowledged that the Labour revolt of the last few years, coupled with the realisation of the worthlessness of the "great political victories" of 1906 and 1910, have compelled them to re-examine their beliefs in the light of experience and the practical potentialities of the economic revolt of Labour. They have seen that "the capture of the political machine" and the practical programme to be achieved by Parliamentary effort may not merely fail to achieve their objects, but actually may result in raising fresh barriers to working class emancipation. Of course, many who remain obstinately blind to the object-lessons which confront them still persist in the declaration that the method (?) which has so signally failed them should be depended upon for stupendous purposes which it has never in past history shown itself capable of undertaking.

Tom Mann's campaign amidst organised and unorganised Labour in this country has probably been far more unwelcome to the Parliamentary and official Labour section than to the capitalists themselves. His teaching of the solidarity of Labour (in practice as well as in theory), and the abolition of capitalism and poverty by *Direct Action*, is so keenly resented by Social Democrats that they officially exclude him from their platforms. Of course, that is necessary in the interests of "discipline"—i.e., all their speakers must say the same thing. What a foretaste of the Social Democratic State—which "will be the community"! But, alas! for our future would-be masters, long before they get even a shadow of power that old awkward tendency of the human mind to concern itself with ideas which do not meet with official and orthodox approval must once more be taken into account. For heresy has spread far and wide through the Socialist and Labour movements, and it appears likely that the Marxian authorities will need to resurrect the Inquisition, and either double the number of prisons under Social Democracy, or imitate the hideous example of General Gallifét in Paris in May, 1871, if discipline and orthodoxy is to be maintained.

So far, the State as a "method" has not come up to expectations. Those who expected the most from it have been loudest and most bitter in their lamentations. They declare—still blind to the logic of their own contentions—that the working class party in Parliament has failed in its mission; that it has made no real impression on the governing class, obtained no concessions of any value from them, and is ineffective as a fighting force against Capitalism. They, as a body, never comprehended the fact that the whole of the circumstances of the Parliamentary governing system restrain and stultify any efforts for those purposes. But facts step in with forcefulness where logic makes but small impression, and the steps towards "nationalisation" of everything—the transition stage to the fearful and wonderful Social Democracy—have so far made the most faithful feel doubtful of its aid, and faint, indeed, at present, is the cry for the State management of industry. For the nonce, agricultural and industrial armies, as well as other items of "musty programmes," are at a discount. But, in general, revolutionary ideas are permeating the minds of the active workers in the movement.

Perhaps the general evolution of thought is most vividly typified by the instance of Gaylord Wilshire, who, from the advocacy of the teaching "Let the nation own the Trusts," now looks not only to Syndicalism as the method for destroying the present system of society,

but regards the Industrial Union as the basic unit in the new social economy. There is a widespread recognition of the fact that the economic and social business of future society no more needs the centralisation of all common affairs in the hands of State functionaries, be they ever so "expert," than the capitalist system does at the present time. Indeed, it is amazing that so many social students should be able to ignore the facts, viz., that, as Kropotkin has so often maintained, the social and political machinery is to-day carried on by, and is dependent upon, multifarious voluntary organisations of all kinds, besides an enormous quantity of individual effort. Were it not for the lack of education, the poverty and destitution of the masses, and their habitual reliance upon "leaders" and lawmakers, they must by now have so pressed upon the classes in possession of wealth and power as to be within sight of the overturn of the society which keeps them in misery and subjection. Really the problem we have to deal with is the education of the people around us in these matters. Even the much-talked-of physical force which is on the side of the propertied classes is only part of that problem. Solve that problem, and the present system of society would fall within twenty-four hours, and the necessary organisation and co-operative action generally could be and would be almost as rapidly brought into existence. Best of all, they would be unencumbered with the mass of errors and iniquities of Parliamentary government. We have it in embryo or ready for development even now.

It is significant that with the weakening of faith in the ballot-box delusion many minds have been liberated, at least to some extent, for the consideration of ways and means of making an intelligent and organised attack upon capitalism, and also of practical measures for dispensing with the evil methods of that system of making and sharing wealth. Thus the great principle of Direct Action stimulates practical thought and method in the conduct of affairs at the present, but also compels attention to the necessity of dealing in a like spirit with the probable requirements of a society liberated from the grasp of the rich. It should be noticed that whole-hoggers in the political-action policy now admit, grudgingly it is true, the necessity and advantage of action on the "industrial field." Of course, they will try to make it subordinate to political tactics, but if the friends of Direct Action will persist in their good work it will become plainer every day that this method, which is at once immediate, constant, and effective, as it is also necessary, must always be at variance with and destructive of its anti-type. The principle of Industrial Unionism is part of the present development, and, in varying forms and degrees, is permeating the Trade Unions of this country. The most encouraging feature connected with that movement inside the Unions is the conflict with the authoritarian element, who are, as a rule, fighting against its growth with the strength of despair, and using all the artifices in which the official mind excels.

Even the cherished dogma of "majority rule" has received a shaking. Robert Blatchford has declared in the *Clarion* that mutual agreement is not only desirable in theory, but possible and advantageous in practice. Above all, he is not in favour of coercing the minority; he would have freedom. If a little more progress of this kind continues, the poor people who repeat parrot-like (for they never trouble to state careful and thoughtful reasons for saying so) "that Anarchist-Communism is a contradiction," may soon meet with the general laughter which that stupid assertion deserves.

One misfortune is apparent in the course of the discussion alluded to above, and that is the tendency of those who cannot rid themselves entirely of their belief in political jugglery to indulge in delirious raving and nonsensical advice to the workers who sympathise with social revolt. This is on all fours with the silly talk of "all means from the ballot-box to the bomb" of the Social Democrat. Direct Action in all its forms is not a policy of madness, but an intelligent, persistent, and determined assault upon the political, social, and economic injustice of our present society. It is reconstructive as well as destructive in character. It destroys or modifies but to rebuild. It must be regarded in this light if it is to be of permanent usefulness.

Amidst all the lamentations and excuses for the ballot-box failure it is seldom noted how unreasonable is the demand made upon the Labour politicians. They—whether a minority or a majority is of little consequence—are asked to perform a task of which neither they nor any similar body of men in their position are capable. Even were they able to issue a series of parchments labelled "Acts of Parliament," the power of landlordism and capitalism, with its legal system, would be able to pulverise their pious manifestoes. But a study of practical politics is a certain cure for any sanguine expectations in that direction. The journey of Christian in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" was on a path of roses and the most delightful pleasure jaunt compared to the task of passing a programme of reforms through the Parliamentary machine, even if those reforms are of a most constitutional "Labour" or State Socialist character. Why hesitate to admit the truth? Politics—electioneering, law-making, and administration—is not "a method" either of emancipating Labour or bringing into existence the free commonwealth of the future. Knowledge, ability, association and co-operation, and mutual social arrangements of every kind will always exist outside law factories, law courts, and Government departments. Why depend in any way upon Governmental organisation, when the whole energies of the community lie at hand ready and capable of immediate application to the purpose of realising the common good of humanity, a purpose to which Government has always been a fatal hindrance? G.

THE ILLUSION OF GOVERNMENT.

All government of man by man is wrong; the principle of government is wrong, it is against the nature of man. Government is twice cursed; it curses the governors and the governed. It corrupts the governors, fostering in them the artificial passions of pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy; and blunting their natural sense of justice, love, and truth. It depraves the governed by making them the slaves of corrupted men.

What are the functions of governors and governed? Put in plain language, the function of governors is to find the best methods of keeping the governed in slavery; and the enforced function of the governed is to minister to the idleness, folly, and luxury of the governors. The function of all government is alike; it is the same in Empires and in grocers' shops. The governors always act in their own interests, never in the interests of the governed. Never forget that. Let no prospective parish, district, or city councillor, Member of Parliament, or any other prospective delegate, asking your vote to put him into a position of power, hoodwink you into the belief that it is you he is wishful to serve; it is his own interest he is seeking, not yours. Self-interest is the root-principle of all government, its active ingredient, though covered over with hypocritical arguments and plausible excuses. The idea of master and servant, rulers and ruled, governors and governed, must be abandoned; it is against human nature.

How Governments have arisen among mankind would be a long story. Bullies and ambitious men of low moral nature have been born in all ages; and these have employed all kinds of force and fraud to control and enslave their fellow men. Priests, lawyers, learned men, soldiers, and sailors are their bribed assistants. The priests and teachers pervert the minds of the masses; and when the mental poison fails to effect their slavery, then physical force is brought into play, and the rebels are punished and murdered in order to maintain the rule of ambitious scoundrels.

Those who submit to rulers are always in a majority, and if they were agreed they could throw off the rulers' yoke at any moment. But, owing to their numbers, they cannot easily be brought to one mind, especially in such a complex state of society as the governors have brought into existence.

There is a natural sense of justice, love, and brotherhood inherent in mankind; but, as I have said, priests and teachers in the employ of governors pervert the minds of the masses and thereby prevent the free play of true human nature. The masses cannot lead natural lives until their minds are freed from the false views and ideals imposed upon them by interested and corrupt rulers.

Let me indicate some of the false teaching which is given in order to keep the masses in subjection.

Religion; this, as taught by the churches, is a jumble of claptrap and humbug, constituting a sure antidote against reason and common sense wherever it takes hold.

History: records of the lives and actions of kings, courtiers, statesmen, soldiers, and other criminals, whose doings are blazoned as heroic and held up as models to emulate.

Science: mostly engaged in research in connection with the lives of dogs, cats, rats, mice, pigeons, worms, animalculæ, and protoplasm. This much-vaunted Science is simply an amusement for the rich and idle; but to the workers it acts as a red herring, drawing their minds away from the study of their own condition to the acquisition of vain and fruitless knowledge.

Art and Literature: amusements of the rich and idle, and affecting the workers in the same way as Science does.

Wherever there is government there is slavery. No matter whether the governors are hereditary, self-appointed, or chosen by the governed, the result is always the same: the submission of the many to the rule of a few—slavery. Ruling depraves rulers as pitch defiles those who work in it.

We talk of free-born Britons. Free-born, indeed! Ninety per cent of us are born slaves and remain in slavery all our lives. The first thing the great majority of us have to do when we leave school is to find a master, one who will give us work to keep us alive. Is not this slavery? What is a slave? One who is compelled to work for a master. Is not this the position of the working men and women of Great Britain?

You working men agitate and strike for shorter hours and more wages, mere ameliorations of your slavery; but it does not seem to occur to you that the slavery might be altogether abolished. If you get short hours and long wages, you seem quite willing even to forge the chains which bind you. Ironclads, cannon, fortresses, gaols, mansions, opera houses, cathedrals—what are they? What are soldiers, sailors, policemen? Surely you can see these are only weapons to enslave you.

It is astounding that men should submit to this slavery. What a complete perversion of the innate sense of justice and truth must have been brought about in men's minds before this state could be tolerated!

Working men, your slavery can only come to an end when you set before yourselves the ideal of brotherhood and equality. Simplify your lives. Make none of those weapons for your own enslavement, if you can help it; do not become soldiers, sailors, or policemen, if you

can avoid it. Let the very idea of masters and servants, rulers and ruled, governors and governed, be banished from your minds. Strive, not for mastery of your fellow men, but to overcome the temptations to ambition, idleness, vanity, which you know are vile, unsocial passions; and give free scope to your manly natural feelings of justice and love toward your fellows.

Your emancipation from slavery and the attainment of true life—life free, happy, and contented—will be gradual; but if the ideal of brotherhood and equality is kept steadily in view, it is bound to come.

AMOR VINCIT.

Herbert Spencer on the Rights of Children.

The main obstacle to the right conduct of education lies rather in the parent than in the child. It is not that the child is insensible to influences higher than that of force, but that the parent is not virtuous enough to use them. Fathers and mothers who enlarge upon the trouble which filial misbehaviour entails upon them, strangely assume that all the blame is due to the evil propensities of their offspring, and none to their own. Though on their knees they confess to being miserable sinners, yet to hear their complaints of undutiful sons and daughters you might suppose that they were themselves immaculate. They forget that the depravity of their children is a reproduction of their own depravity. They do not recognise in these much-scolded, often-beaten little ones so many looking-glasses wherein they may see reflected their own selfishness. It would astonish them to assert that they behave as improperly to their children as their children do to them. Yet a little candid self-analysis would show them that half their commands are issued more for their own convenience or gratification than for corrective purposes. "I won't have that noise!" exclaims a disturbed father to some group of vociferous juveniles: and the noise ceasing, he claims to have done something towards making his family orderly. Perhaps he has; but how? By exhibiting that same evil disposition which he seeks to check in his children—a determination to sacrifice to his own happiness the happiness of others. Observe, too, the impulse under which a refractory child is punished. Instead of anxiety for the delinquent's welfare, that severe eye and compressed lip denote rather the ire of an offended ruler—express some such inward thought as "You little wretch, we'll soon see who is to be master." Uncover its roots, and the theory of parental authority will be found to grow not out of man's love for his offspring, but out of his love of dominion. Let any one who doubts this listen to that common reprimand, "How dare you disobey me?" and then consider what the emphasis means. No, no; moral-force education is widely practicable even now, if parents were civilised enough to use it.

But of course the obstacle is in a measure reciprocal. Even the best samples of childhood as we now know it will be occasionally unmanageable by suasion: and when inferior natures have to be dealt with, the difficulty of doing without coercion must be proportionably great. Nevertheless patience, self-denial, a sufficient insight into youthful emotions, and a due sympathy with them, added to a little ingenuity in the choice of means, will usually accomplish all that can be wished. Only let a parent's actions and words and manner show that his own feeling is a thoroughly right one, and he will rarely fail to awaken a responsive feeling in the breast of his child.

One further objection remains to be noticed. It will probably be said that if the rights of children are co-extensive with those of adults, it must follow that children are equally entitled with adults to citizenship, and ought to be similarly endowed with political power. This inference looks somewhat alarming; and it is easy to imagine the triumphant air of those who draw it, and the smiles with which they meditate upon the absurdities it suggests. Nevertheless the answer is simple and decisive. There must go two things to originate an incongruity; and, before passing censure, it is needful to say which of the two incongruous things is in fault. In the present case the incongruity is between the institution of government on the one side, and a certain consequence of the law of equal freedom on the other. Which of the two is to be condemned for this? In the above objection it is tacitly assumed that the blame lies with this consequence of the law of equal freedom: whereas the fact is just the other way. It is with the institution of government that the blame lies. Were the institution of government an essentially right one, there would be reason to suppose that our conclusion was fallacious; but being as it is the offspring of immorality, it must be condemned for conflicting with the moral law, and not the moral law for conflicting with it. Were the moral law universally obeyed, government would not exist; and did government not exist, the moral law could not dictate the political enfranchisement of children. Hence the alleged absurdity is traceable to the present evil constitution of society, and not to some defect in our conclusion.

God and the State.

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THE CRY OF THE BULGARIAN AND SERVIAN WORKERS.

For over three months the Balkans have been in a state of war. What the suffering is of the people in whose territory the actual fighting takes place, we can only imagine, as the invading Powers exercise the strictest censorship. Nevertheless, from time to time we get a glimpse of the misery and starvation of the population cowering in their burnt or devastated homes, regularly and systematically searched by the Christian soldiers, who carry off every particle of food and the last piece of bread. What war means for the "happier" people at home, far from the battlefield, the roar of cannons, and the slaughter of thousands, we can see from the letters addressed by the secretaries of the Servian and Bulgarian Trade Unions to the International Secretariate of Trade Unions. These letters are eloquent, not only from the facts mentioned, but from what can be read between the lines. The writers say that they cannot tell the whole truth because "the severest censorship is applied even to private correspondence." From their descriptions it is clear that from the moment the war broke out the Government put its claws on men, buildings and industries, using them and allowing them to exist only as its tools. In view of the resolutions of Socialist Congresses and the proposals of Syndicalists and Anarchists to prevent war, it is especially interesting to read these documents, as they clearly show that if the proletariat wants to prevent a war, it can only do so by swift and revolutionary action.

The secretary of the Servian Trade Unions says in his letter that the Labour headquarters in almost every centre have been taken possession of by the military, the publication of Labour newspapers has been prohibited, and the printing press destroyed; whilst the families of Trade Unionists are in a condition of dire destitution.

From Bulgaria, Dimitroff, the secretary, writes: "I am sorry that owing to the severe censorship, which is applied also to my private correspondence, I cannot give you the facts necessary for having a clear and full idea of the situation, nor can I speak of the possible results of the war for the proletariat now with the colours." After telling in detail how all men between the ages of 18 and 46 have been compelled to serve in the Army, and only 500 Trade Unionists out of 10,000 remain at home, he continues:—

"From the first day of the mobilisation all works of production were stopped. Only for the needs of the Army, the tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, and smiths, who were not called up as soldiers, were set to work. At the same time that the order of mobilisation was issued the whole country was declared in a state of siege, and the strictest censorship established, not only of the press, but also of private correspondence, and even of private conversation in public places. All meetings are prohibited. To prevent the Labour papers from harming the patriotic sentiment, which is carefully fostered by the bourgeois press, the authorities suspended the publication of our political and Trade Union papers.

"To the Bulgarian Trade Unions falls the lot of providing for the organised workmen and women, and for those whose husbands, fathers, or sons are driven to the field of battle. The desperate misery in which the workers and their families live is indescribable. Their lot is becoming harder and less bearable because of the extraordinary increase in the price of provisions and the approach of the pitiless winter.

"The war may end as it likes, but it is certain that the working class movement in Bulgaria has been fundamentally shaken and has greatly suffered. In these troublous times, and in the still harder days before us, we have but one consolation and hope, that is the support of the international proletariat."

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

United States.

The New Year has opened in the States under very troubled conditions. The relations between Capital and Labour are such that one might nearly speak of a class war. The strike of waiters at the hotels and restaurants in New York, which is accompanied by attacks of the strikers on the feeding-places of the wealthy, such as the Ritz Hotel; the strike of the blouse-makers of New York, who the other day maintained their right of picketing by using their hatpins against the police; the textile strike at Little Falls, where the police are arresting, beating, and terrorising the strikers, who, like the blouse-makers in New York, are mostly women—these strikes involve about 175,000 workers, and, if we consider their families and dependants, half a million people in the State of New York alone are at present in grips with Capital.

On the other hand, Capital does not forgive those who have dared to revolt and to lead others to revolt. The Lawrence strike has not yet been forgotten. Though Ettor, Giovannitti, and Caruso were acquitted of the charges of murder and incitement to murder, they still have to appear to answer charges of conspiracy and intimidation, for which Haywood, Thompson, and other I.W.W. propagandists will also be tried.

The trial of the president of the Steel and Iron Constructors' Union and a number of other Labour men has ended in the conviction of thirty-three of the accused (including the president), who were

sentenced to terms of imprisonment of from seven years to one year. Since 1905 over a hundred dynamite attacks on private property had been made, the explosion at the Los Angeles *Times* office, for which the brothers McNamara were sentenced, being the most striking, as twenty-two non-Unionists were killed in the affair. It is difficult to know whether to believe the accusation or not, as it rests almost entirely on the confessions of a very doubtful personage. On the other hand, the Union, one of the old-fashioned craft Unions, was one of the aristocratic Labour organisations, and far from sympathetic to revolutionary Syndicalism. But when they found their position threatened, their places taken by blacklegs, they rushed to dynamite in a panic. If they had been in touch with revolutionary Syndicalist methods, they would not have relied on dynamite alone to win an economic struggle; but they probably took a leaf out of the book of the capitalists. All the condemned men have appealed, but their case does not give much hope.

Darrow, the lawyer for the McNamaras, who was acquitted on the charge of bribing jurymen, will again be tried.

Germany.

If a country is at war, even if for the noble purpose of liberation and the spreading of Christian civilisation, the first act of the Government is always to muzzle the Press, on the pretext that military safety requires such a step. In times of peace, however, the free expression of opinion and criticism is just as zealously prevented in the name of law and order. The Bulgarian and Servian workers are silenced under the first pretext, and our German comrades have come under the second sort of prosecution. For an article published in the *Freie Arbeiter*, the responsible editor has been sentenced to two months' imprisonment. The editor of the revolutionary Syndicalist paper *Pionier*, of Berlin, got one month, because the police found that an article, purely theoretical, instigated to disobedience of the law. Comrade Frick, of another revolutionary Syndicalist paper, *Der Kampf*, of Hamburg, is being prosecuted for a similar crime. Berthold Gahn, for his article, "The Idea of the General Strike," in the *Freie Arbeiter*, was rewarded with three months' imprisonment at the end of his trial, which was held with closed doors, the legal authorities undoubtedly being afraid that the terrible "idea" might catch on among the public.

Where are the millions of Social Democratic voters? Are they too busy with high politics and "the conquest of the State" to spare time for such details as freedom of speech and press?

China.

In our last issue we told how, once the yoke of the Manchu régime was shaken off, the workers had very soon shown signs of their determination to better their lot, adopting Western methods of strike and picketing with great success. Now we hear from the Chekkiang province that the peasants there are awakening to the old truth that the land should belong to those who work it. A league of farmers has been formed, and they have taken an oath not to pay rent and to practise the principles of real fraternity and equality amongst themselves. The proprietors, unable to get any rent, appealed to the authorities, who sent soldiers; but these were received with rifle-shots. A pitched battle took place, victims falling on both sides; but the soldiers had to retire in the end. The peasants declare in their latest proclamation:—"We will not give a tael to the owners! The land belongs to us who work it. If they would kill us, well, we are here, men, women, and children, determined to defend our rights!" It seems that the movement has spread already to three other provinces.

In spite of superficial travellers and Jingo poets, who solemnly declare that East and West can never meet, the peasant in China, the muzhik in Russia, and the peasant in France seem remarkably clear about the fact that the land should belong to those that live and labour on it; whilst the workers of Occident and Orient, consciously or unconsciously, strive for an existence worthy of human beings.

Russia.

For the first time since 1905, the "Red Sunday"—when the St. Petersburg people, trying to petition the Tsar, were shot by his order—has been openly commemorated. Rumours of this intention had led the police to make numerous arrests among the students and workers on the eve of the red-letter date, January 22. But nevertheless the 24-hour strike in memory of their massacred brethren was a complete success, and factories and workshops in St. Petersburg were deserted. Manifestations at which over fifty thousand men assisted were held in the streets, the police evidently being unwilling or unable to repeat the scenes of eight years ago.

Generally, a feeling of unrest, manifesting itself in renewed strikes, meetings, and demonstrations, is observable in the whole country. When the fourth Duma assembled, demonstrations were held in St. Petersburg, and a political amnesty was loudly demanded. With regard to an amnesty, something of the kind seems inevitable on the tercentenary of the Romanoff dynasty; but the present Tsar's petty and revengeful character is sure to limit this measure as much as possible, and many of the best fighters for liberty will remain in the hands of their gaolers. We hope that our dear old "Babushka" (Breshkovska) will be allowed to leave her place of banishment in Eastern Siberia, where she is at present kept in a little hut, old, ill,

isolated from all her friends, and watched day and night by six Cossacks.

What the Russian peasant is capable of doing if given a chance and not interfered with by the bureaucracy, that blight of Russian life, was shown by the annual report of the Co-operative Societies of Western Siberia and the Ural Province. They made remarkable progress. Last year 172 new dairies and 82 new shops were established; and at present the number of active members is over 120,000, owning 300,000 cows. Last year they sold butter to the value of £620,000, mostly to England. The year's turnover was £700,000, whilst the cost of administration was only £2,200. This movement started only a few years ago. By some lucky chance the authorities paid no heed, and the peasants could develop their enterprise. As the Russian peasants are accustomed to communal land tenure and administration, their Co-operative Societies flourished at once, and were managed in the simplest and most economical way.

Spain.

Though the railway strike was settled, the men have not forgotten how they were got back to work on mere promises which up till now have not brought any appreciable change in their condition. The unrest and dissatisfaction amongst them may break out at any time. In Madrid the workers in the building trade and in the metal factories have just been locked out by their employers. The factories and the buildings in course of construction are deserted, and 30,000 workers are idle. A solution is all the more difficult, as the Government had previously tried to bring about conciliation between the two parties, but was met with a determined refusal from both sides.

The masters' lock-out is likely to be followed by a spreading of the strike movement in the provinces, in which case the railway men, in view of their discontent, might join. The country is again passing through a critical time, and the Government is quite aware that the unrest may at any time assume a revolutionary character. Probably in order to pacify the excitement, the King has had the wisdom to sign a general amnesty for all political prisoners.

FIGHTS FOR FREE PROPAGANDA.

EDINBURGH.

The magistrates of Edinburgh must be sorry that they acted so hastily last July. With a view to "controlling" the meetings on the Mound, they issued a proclamation—under an Act of 1606!—that no speaker would be allowed to address a meeting at that spot without a licence, to be issued by them at their discretion. Our comrade John McAra ignored the proclamation, and on Sunday, July 21, proceeded to address a meeting. He was arrested, and subsequently convicted of a breach of the proclamation; but was only admonished and dismissed.

A committee was formed to fight the case in the Law Courts, and, after a lot of persuasion, McAra allowed the committee to use him as a stalking-horse in suing the magistrates. The case was tried at the Court of Sessions, Edinburgh, on January 28. After arguments had been heard on both sides, the judge (Lord Skerrington) decided that the magistrates had no power to issue the proclamation, therefore McAra was right in ignoring it. In giving his decision, the judge gave the magistrates a roasting. He said that "as far back as the memory of man could carry, the offence prohibited by the 1606 Act was not only practised without being checked, but was no longer considered or dealt with in this country as an offence against the law." The proclamation, if effectual, he said, would dispense with the necessity of both trial and conviction, and would subject a citizen to disabilities "merely because the magistrates in their private room had come to the conclusion that his conduct was calculated to produce obstruction or cause a breach of the peace." He could figure nothing more arbitrary or unconstitutional. "The proclamation rode roughshod over rights and liberties."

As though this was not enough for the poor magistrates, the *Scotsman* also rubbed it in. It said:—"It has never been seriously contended that public speaking at the Mound has resulted either in a breach of the peace or in obstruction to traffic.... The action of the magistrates suggested the methods of Germany, where, it has been said, everything that is not positively permitted is forbidden.... To put restrictions on freedom of speech is to step back into the dark ages."

Although this settles the magistrates and their proclamation for the time being, it must be remembered that freedom of meeting and speech does not depend on judges' decisions, but on the number of public-spirited and determined people who will refuse to be muzzled. The indignation evoked by the magistrates' action had a great deal to do with the judge's decision.

EAST LONDON.

Although the County Council set apart places in the parks where meetings can be held by any person, they refuse to allow the sale of literature at those places without a permit, and collections can only be taken if the proceeds go to a charity. Our comrades in Victoria Park have objected to these restrictions, and on several occasions have been summoned for selling literature without a permit. Just recently they decided to take collections without asking permission of the bigwigs at

Spring Gardens. For this heinous offence, comrades W. Ponder and F. James were summoned at Old Street on January 29, the last-named having several charges to his credit. Both were fined 10s. and costs; but they refused to pay, and were sent to prison—James for seven days, and Ponder for five days.

The East London comrades intend to fight the matter out, and ask London comrades generally to assist at their meetings in Victoria Park on Sunday mornings and afternoons. These petty restrictions could easily be swept away if all propagandist organisations would steadily persist in ignoring the regulations. Deputations from Socialist and Freethought societies have been treated with contempt by the Parks Committee, and it is time some more vigorous methods were adopted.

LIVERPOOL NOTES.

We are at last waking up to the fact that work must be done in Liverpool. The boys have formed a new club at 20 Islington (No. 2 Room). We have it pleasantly lighted, and can accommodate some fifty people. Lectures are given every Sunday, and conversational discussions take place every Tuesday and Thursday at 8 p.m. On February 2, Bessie Ward, of Hanley, lectured on "Authority"; and on February 9 George Murray will lecture on "A Phase of Industrial History." We earnestly hope that comrades who have been criticising our inactivity, and who are at present "doin' nowt," will come along and help us.

In the last number of the *Anarchist* was a cry from Glasgow to the effect that Lancashire and Yorkshire comrades should form a small committee to discuss the Conference. It is appalling the number of times we put things off. The Newcastle boys were keen on the affair the time I met them. In a letter of a later date, they too were appealing for help re forming the Conference. Not a word came from anywhere. One often wonders if we Anarchists, as well as the *Anarchist*, are dead. If the other comrades of the Lancashire and Yorkshire districts care to communicate with this group, we shall be glad to discuss the advisability of holding the conference in either Manchester or Liverpool. I feel sure, however, that London would be the ideal spot this year. Undoubtedly, it is the centre of activities, and I feel sure we provincials could learn a great deal re methods of propaganda, etc. Another point is that the experts on weeklies and publishing are quartered in the Metropolis. Facilities for getting there are abundant. How about our lively group at Hammersmith? Why not there for the next Conference?

DICK JAMES.

MONTHLY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

(January 9—February 6.)

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Notices of Meetings, &c.

SOCIAL EDUCATION SOCIETY, 9 Manette Street (first floor), Charing Cross Road, W.

Lectures to be given on Wednesdays (8.30 sharp) in February.

5th—"Harmony of the Mind," F. Siefke.
12th—"Adulteration," J. Tochatti.
19th—"Marx and his Message," G. A. Aldred.
26th—"Syndicalism and Anarchism," J. Tanner.

Use of Library free to Members.

EAST LONDON ANARCHISTS.

A Social and Dance will take place at the TRIANGLE COFFEE ROOMS, 72 Mare Street, Hackney (opposite Morley Hall), on Saturday, February 22, at 7 p.m. Tickets 6d. each, to be had from W. D. Ponder, 22 Longfield Avenue, Walthamstow, or from Friedman, 11 Lyme Grove, Hackney.

The Ferrer Sunday School meets at the Communist Club, 107 Charlotte Street, W., at 3.30 prompt.

RAYMOND DUNCAN

Will lecture every Thursday in February at the Doré Galleries, 35 New Bond Street, W., at 8 p.m., on the **Complete Revolution** in all phases of life—artistic, scientific, economic. Readers of *FREEDOM* admitted without charge on showing this notice.

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP.

A Series of Lectures dealing with the PHILOSOPHY OF ANARCHISM will be given by G. BARRETT on Sunday afternoons, at 3 p.m., at 74 BUCHANAN STREET.

February 2—Subject, "Theology and Materialism."
" 9 " "Some Elementary Science."
" 16 " "Organisms and Organisations."
" 23 " "Social Development."
March 2 " "The Philosophy of Anarchism."

Tickets for the Course, 1s.

BIRMINGHAM.—Comrades are informed that two Bookstalls for the sale of Anarchist and Socialist literature are now open every Saturday in Smithfield Market.

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