

# FREEDOM

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MONTHLY ; ONE PENNY.

## THE MATCH GIRLS' STRIKE.

A FEW weeks ago Society was shocked and astonished at the revelations which were made concerning the wages paid to the girls of Bryant and May's factory at Bow. The shock was intensified by the fact that three Members of Parliament and fifty-five clergymen of the Church of England were shareholders of the company and received last year a dividend of 23 per cent, whilst the wages of the adult women employed in the factory averaged (according to the statement of the secretary) 11s. 2d., and those of the girls from 3s. to 9s. a week. The average wage was little enough, but human beings cannot live on averages, and many young women with families to support were carrying home 5s. and 7s. 6d. at the end of a week, during which they had toiled from half-past six in the morning until eight at night. And the wretched wage-rate was further reduced by the exactions of the company. Contrary even to the law of the exploiting classes, deductions were made for fines, 3d. and 6d. for a very little mistake or carelessness, and to buy materials and brushes, and the girls were forced to eat their scanty meals amidst the phosphorous fumes of the factory. The result of the latter was in many cases ulceration of the jaw-bone. Directly a woman appeared with a swollen face, the foreman ordered her to have her teeth drawn on pain of dismissal. One pregnant woman refused, fearing miscarriage from the shock. She was instantly turned adrift.

This shameful system of oppression was exposed by our comrade Annie Besant in her weekly paper the *Link*, and a copy of the statement of these wrongs and what Socialists think of them given to every girl in the factory. At the same time the Fabian Society exerted themselves to enlighten the shareholders of the company by private letters and to induce the public to boycott the matches.

The foremen were instructed to direct the girls to sign a statement that Annie Besant's charges were untrue. In three departments of the factory the women (between 1300 and 1400) refused. "You had spoken up for us, we weren't going back on you," said they after to Mrs. Besant. The foremen tried terrorism. In one department a young girl who supported an invalid mother by her work, was threatened with dismissal; still she and all refused. Next morning she was dismissed on a frivolous pretext, whereupon the whole factory threw down their work and came out on strike. One of the finest examples of spontaneous united action on record; and the first decided revolt amongst the working women of London.

The company gave in in twenty-four hours. The dismissed girl was to be graciously permitted to resume her chains. But no. Success gave the women courage. The girls who had been dismissed for giving information to Mrs. Besant should be re-engaged, the fines and deductions should be stopped, and above all the "pennies" restored. A penny in the shilling, it seems, had been deducted from the wretched wages to pay children to carry trays of matches up and down stairs for the makers. Some time ago the children's help was cut off; the makers must carry their own trays, but the penny was still deducted and went—to swell the dividends.

For two weeks the strike went on. Bryant and May threatened, denied, abused. They were going to prosecute Mrs. Besant, the whole was a tissue of lies, the strike was a causeless interruption of honest profit-getting stirred up by the devilish arts of the Socialists. The middle-class press rang with accusations and counter-accusations. Socialists and sympathisers (afar off) with Socialism have now got so much hold of London newspapers that when they chose to pull the wires they can produce a considerable noise. The facts of the case got pretty well aired despite the efforts of the reactionaries. A strike fund was started and subscribed to by the general public with considerable liberality. Mr. Bryant who is a member of the National Liberal Club, heard of an unpleasant movement amongst the members calling for his resignation. Finally, the inner circle of the aristocracy of labour, the London Trades Council, were induced to take up for the first time in their existence, the cause of unskilled, unorganised labour, and send a deputation to interview the directors of the company. At that interview soft sawder and the mutual compliments of capital and labour were for a moment cast aside, the old fighting spirit of trades unionism showed its teeth once more. The representatives of the company were dumbfounded by a declaration that the skilled and organised workers of London were determined to put a stop to the vile oppression of the matchmakers, even if to do so they had to issue a boycott against Bryant and May's matches in every workshop in England.

Meanwhile the young women stood by one another with the same brave and generous enthusiasm which had animated them from the

first. They marched down to the House of Commons, where a deputation told their grievances and showed their worn, white faces in the lobby. They held a series of meetings out and indoors and listened with interest to Socialist speeches. Their courage, steadfastness and determination drew sympathy from all sides. The tide of public opinion set so decidedly against the company and its big dividends, that they gave in unconditionally. The managers had not known the real state of affairs; they were in truth brimming over with humanity if the girls had only realised it; all fines and deductions were to be abolished (the company could be prosecuted for levying them, and questions were asked about this in the House of Commons); Mr. Bryant out of his great generosity is going to build a dining hall for the women (under the factory acts it is illegal for workpeople to eat in the work room); and the company will graciously permit their white slaves to form a trade union.

So wretched are the conditions of the masses of working men and women to-day that these scraps and shavings of a compromise with justice look like a great victory. It is but rarely that so much is gained by a strike. The news that the company will declare a dividend of 15 per cent. for this half year, instead of 22½ per cent, fills us with triumph!

The excitement is over; the strikers have won, and society has gone back to its former position, thinking that everything necessary has been done for the employees of Bryant and May. The Members of Parliament will go on making laws for the benefit of themselves and their class, the fifty-five clergymen will preach peace and goodwill towards men, and the match-girls with their starvation-wages will be forgotten. But how much has the condition of the girls materially altered? What has been their reward for their noble devotion and endurance? It is true that the firm has made some concessions; but when we come to consider that their girls still have to work in a poisonous factory for inhumanly long hours, for a wage of from 3s. to 12s. a week, we can scarcely see that they are much benefited. But society is satisfied, and that is all that is desired by the people who are ever ready to hide the effects of the present system.

The strike of the match girls may be forgotten by society, their sufferings may continue, but the moral effect of their action remains. The spontaneous, united action of these unorganised and apparently submissive and helpless women has given a shock to capitalist security. If by their sudden, unpremeditated revolt they have won what they desired, what is to prevent the same thing from happening on a larger scale with equal suddenness and success? If Annie Besant and Herbert Burrows and two or three other Socialists can light such a flame by merely presenting a plain statement of their wrongs to one group of workers, what is likely to be the ultimate result of the Socialist propaganda amongst the masses of the poor and oppressed? If the hope of a little relief from suffering can inspire these down-trodden women with such high courage, what will be the result to the present order of society and the privilege of the rich, when the people have once seen a vivid glimpse of the reign of plenty which will spring from free co-operation without masters or laws?

## COMMUNISM AND THE WAGE SYSTEM.

[Communism implies expropriation and a complete denial of the principle of private ownership, whereas Social Democracy implies only the transfer of the ownership of land and certain portions of capital to the State and by maintaining the wage system maintains the principle of private property and distribution according to deserts.]

### I. EXPROPRIATION.

FEW Socialists doubt that if all owners of land and manufactures, all shareholders of mines and railways emigrated to-morrow to New Guinea to "civilise" the Papuas, railways would run, crops be grown and manufactures of necessities carried on nevertheless. We are agreed as to the possibility of producing all necessities for a community without having the soil, the machinery, the capital in short, in the hands of private owners. We all believe that free organisations of workers would be able to carry on production on the farm and in the factory, as well, and probably much better, than it is conducted now under the individual ownership of the capitalist.

But the same unanimity does not prevail with reference to the question: How would the workers share the produce of their labour? How

would they exchange it? How many yards of cotton would be exchanged for one pair of boots? How many pairs of boots for a quarter of wheat? And so on.

To this question various Socialist schools give such various answers that the workers who are not very much accustomed to the economical slang used by these schools, are often at a loss to understand what is advocated by the different sections of the great Socialist movement. Let us try to throw some light on the question.

First of all let me tell out with full frankness what I believe to be the real cause of these discrepancies of opinion. It seems to me chiefly due to the ambiguous words which Socialists have introduced in order to please too many persons at once, including the capital owners. It is due to a want of frankness in expressing our thoughts and to the ambiguous formulas which we often use.

You often hear Socialists talking about Nationalisation of Land, Nationalisation of Capital, and you know that anything can be understood by these words, invented not distinctly to set forth an idea, but to conceal its real meaning.

Let us drop these words and plainly say what we want, what we expect to obtain. It will be the first step towards understanding one another better.

We Anarchists, we use the word *expropriation*. And by expropriation we mean that as soon as possible—and we hope it will be possible soon—the nation, the territory, or the commune, which have understood the necessity of this action, shall take possession of all the soil, the dwelling-houses, the manufactures, the mines and the means of communication, and organise themselves in order to share in the most equitable way all the riches accumulated within the commune, the region, or the nation by the work of the past and present generations.

Of course, when we see a peasant who is in possession of just the amount of land he can cultivate, we do not think it reasonable to turn him off his little farm. He exploits nobody, and nobody would have the right to interfere with his work. But if he possesses under the capitalist law more than he can cultivate himself, we consider that we must not give him the right of keeping that soil for himself, leaving it uncultivated when it might be cultivated by others, or of making others cultivate it for his benefit.

Again, when we see a family inhabiting a house which affords them just as much space as under present average conditions of life, are considered necessary for that number of people, why should we interfere with that family and turn them out of their house? But when we see a palace inhabited by a Marquis and a Marchioness, while thousands of honest workers live in slums, we consider that the community has a right to interfere, and to see how far the palace may be rendered habitable for those over-crowded honest workers. Nay, we suppose that when the Marchioness can find no servants to keep her household in a palace, she herself will prefer a workman's house to her ball rooms which would soon be covered with mould and dust in the absence of housemaids.

And finally when we see a Sheffield cutler, or a Leeds clothier working with their own tools or handloom, we see no use in taking the tools or the handloom to give them to another worker. The clothier or cutler exploits nobody. But when we see a factory whose owners claim to keep to themselves the instruments of labour used by 1400 girls, and consequently exact from the labour of these girls the 22½ percent profit of which we have heard of late, we consider that the people of London are fully entitled to take possession of that factory and to let the girls produce matches for themselves and the rest of the community—a most useful product I dare say—and take what they need of house room, food and clothing in return. As to the present owners of the factory, they may be invited each to make—not five gross of boxes a day—that would be too cruel—but, say one or two gross of those boxes.

Such are our ideas, and we suppose that the word expropriation tells all that very plainly, and needs but few commentaries to be understood.

Now, the first question which we must ask our Socialist friends from other schools than ours, is this: Are they prepared to endorse the above ideas of expropriation? And if not, to what extent are they prepared to abolish the private ownership of capital. At least, to what extent do they aim at abolishing it?

What may happen during a revolutionary period I mean during a period when old and rotten institutions are undergoing a rapid remodeling—what *may* happen during such a period? How far the reconstruction *will* go, nobody can foretell. But what we are bound to know is, How far are we ourselves prepared to go? For what shall we strive? For the expropriation on a grand scale of which I have just spoken, or for a few partial measures which may or may not be an approach to that.

We must exactly make up our minds upon that subject, because as long as we have not done so, it is no use to discuss about the remuneration of labour.

If somebody says, for instance, as many collectivists do, that the dwelling-houses must remain the private property of their present owners, then he is bound to advocate also the maintenance of the wage-system in one shape or another. The owner of the house will not permit a worker to dwell in his house unless the worker pays the owner in some kind of money—gold, bank notes, or hours of labour cheques—which the owner may be able to exchange against any commodities he likes: Cape diamonds, Siberian sables, or fresh strawberries in January.

Maintain private ownership in any of the four great departments of necessities without which man cannot work—dwellings, clothes, food, and instruments of labour—and you are compelled to maintain the wage-system. And it would be a sheer loss of time if we Anarchist-Communists were to discuss with you about the advantages of Communism above the wage-system, as long as you think it necessary to maintain

in any form the private ownership of the necessities for production.

With those who advocate the maintenance of private ownership, the discussion must first turn upon the advantages and disadvantages of that ownership. If a Land or Capital Nationaliser says that the organisation of society he will advocate will be the renting of soil, manufactures, and dwelling-houses by the State to private persons, or to associations of workers, then we shall lose our time in discussing how the produce of labour must be shared. The wage-system must be maintained under that system of private ownership and State property.

The second part of Comrade Kropotkin's paper will be published next month.

Another comrade contributes the following remarks, treating the same subject.

## PROPERTY.

Communist Anarchism implies a change in the mental attitude of men towards things as well as towards one another; a change which will necessarily bring with it a change of outward conditions. It implies the disappearance of the idea of ownership.

Property as it exists at present is a claim to the absolute ownership of things put forward by an individual or an association and acknowledged by society. Lately we have seen this claim disputed with regard to land. When Lady Matheson says of her estate in the Highlands, shall I not do what I will with mine own? there is a general and growing feeling that the claim of any individual to hold land in such a fashion is outrageous. This woman is not using the land. She only demands that we shall all help her to prevent any one else from using it, a claim contrary to common sense, when people are starving for want of what she does not need.

But suppose she were using it? Suppose she were speaking not of an estate but of a potatoe field, which she and her family were cultivating; suppose her neighbours wanted her potato field to grow cattle fodder, and she in return said, "Shall I not do what I will with my own?" and demanded that we should all stand by her in her claim to this property. Should we?

If we did, if we acknowledged her absolute ownership of that potatoe field as long, and only as long, as she was actually using it, we should have modified the idea of property. We should have made some attempt to limit the claims of ownership according to the merits and the needs of the proprietor, instead of leaving each to acquire all he can get without illegal violence or fraud. But we should still be individualists advocating rights of property, just as much as the lawyers who contend to-day for a landlord's absolute right to his estate. We should be advocates of peasant proprietorship of land, of occupying ownership of houses, and so on.

By so doing we should leave the root of the evil untouched. The hard dividing line of mine and thine would remain. The ownership of things would still stand as a bar between man and man, crushing individuality, alienating social feeling.

"Things are in the saddle,  
And ride mankind,"

said Emerson; things and the idea of the individual possession of them, of getting and keeping one's own particular little pile of goods. Things sought and held in this spirit get as it were on our backs and weigh us down like an Old Man of the Sea. They ride our energies and affections, our aspirations and hopes. They put a bit in our mouths and a spur in our side and guide our lives, and the more we get the closer the bondage; until the very rich are almost as much shackled and oppressed by their wealth as the very poor by their poverty. Have we not lately heard that the younger Vanderbilt has gone nearly crazy beneath the burden of his riches? yet the fever of accumulation grows unchecked as long as it is fed by the temptations of private property, and the poor are ground into yet lower depths of misery that the rich may be more and more miserable. But this slavery of men to things is not confined to owners of great possessions. In varying shapes it burdens the life of the peasant proprietor striving and grinding early and late to add to his plot of land, or the thrifty artisan always ready to take bread out of his fellow's mouth by working overtime, so that he may add a few shillings to the little hoard in the savings bank. The subjection of man to the work of his hands is the curse which clings to property, and we look to the destruction of the idea of property, to Communism, for its removal.

Communism is not an arrangement for giving to each person property in what he is using or equal property to all; it is the abolition of the idea of property, of ownership, altogether. Does it seem strange to think of things as ownerless, of the claim of individuals to their use being settled by no abstract rules explained by a lawyer? When you feel inclined to laugh at the idea of masterless things, recollect that not so many hundred years ago our ancestors would have laughed at the idea of a masterless man. Readers of William Morris's 'John Ball' will remember that one of the first questions the poet hears in dream-land is "Whose man art thou?" And when he indignantly replies, "No one's man," the peasant at once says, "Nay, that's not the custom of England," and supposes that he must have come "from heaven down." That is a perfectly true picture of English feeling four or five centuries back, and yet to-day the idea that every one must necessarily belong some one else, who is personally responsible for him, seems ridiculous.

One day it will seem as ridiculous with regard to things. Why must a potatoe field be some one's property? Is there no other and more reasonable way of settling who is to work on it?

The daily experience of Russian peasants or Scotch crofters, settles

the question with regard to land. Where no abstract rights of property are known or enforced, land is cultivated according to an amicable agreement between those whose needs are concerned. But how about other things, how is the use of them to be apportioned fairly unless we admit ownership? Is my neighbour entitled rudely to interfere between me and the things with which I have some personal relation and which are supplying my needs? Is he entitled without any consideration for my feelings to ride the horse I tend, to take possession of the sewing machine I am about to use, to retain my favourite pencil in his pocket, to carry off the tea-pot given me by my grandmother, or insist on employing my comb and brush, to say nothing of intruding himself into my room when I prefer solitude?

If there were no way of securing respect from others for one's relations towards things but an acknowledgement of the rights of property, it would be little use to talk of abolishing those rights, for such respect is an essential part of human happiness. It is the vague idea that this respect for personal relations with things depends on property, that is the real objection to Communism in the eyes of many people. A very real objection if property and a true human relation to things were one and the same. But are they? To be sure of it we must consider, first, if the acknowledgment of abstract rights of property does secure the true human relation of men to things, and secondly, if it could be secured on no better grounds.

First, then, what constitutes a man's real relation to things? Either he has created them, put his own qualities, his own thought into them, shaped them so that they repeat his personality, or he tends, fosters, develops them so that to him they represent a certain portion of his own care, affection and energy. And in either case he loves them with some of the same instinctive love which he feels for himself. Thus the author has a sense of personal relation with his book, the mason with the house he helps to build and decorate, the housewife with the clothing she devises and sews, the gardener with the plot of ground he cultivates, the carter or shepherd with the animals he tends.

Again, we each of us have a sense of instinctive attachment to the things which supply our needs in proportion as they satisfy our individual tastes and requirements as they suit our fancy. In this way we get attached to special tools, special workshops, special houses, special furniture, special clothes, special sorts of food, even special knives and pencils. By using these congenial things we can produce better work with less effort and in general enjoy a fuller satisfaction in our life.

Here, then, are two very real sorts of relation between men and things. Are they of the nature that can be assured and confirmed by any code of rules as to abstract rights of property? We continually see on the contrary that the rights of property interfere between men and the things with which they are most intimately and actually connected. Human beings are being separated every day from their own handiwork, and from the things that can best supply their needs, from land, and machinery, houses, food, and clothes, in the name of rights of property. Does the farmer consider his carter's claim to the horses, or the capitalist the workman's claim to the tools or machinery, or the landlord the peasant's claim to the land or the woman's claim to the house or room or furniture? No; abstract rights of mine and thine ride rough-shod over human feeling and human need and violently divorce men and women from things which are to them a part of themselves, thereby causing a frightful amount of suffering, mental and physical.

Is this necessary? If there were no fixed hard and fast rules of mine and thine to settle the claims of men to the use of things, would this suffering be increased or lessened?

If society acknowledged no such rules, if it were Communistic, the relation of men to things would be determined as relations between persons are in most cases settled already, *i.e.*, each case by free choice and on its own merits. There is, there can be no law to prevent another man from coming between me and my brother, my friend or my sweetheart.\* If personal relations clash, we must arrange them according to the circumstances, feelings and needs of the people involved. There are no fixed rules, but on the whole we preserve an attitude of respect for one another's claims. If we did not, society would be impossible and no acknowledgment of abstract legal rights could mend matters.

Now suppose abstract legal rights with regard to things done away with, do not much the same reasons as prevent me from interfering between my neighbour and his friends restrain me also from carrying away his tools, turning him out of his house, driving him from his land, insisting on riding his favourite horse, playing on his violin, using his brush and comb, wearing his coat, or running away with the silver tea pot given him by his grandmother? I do not acknowledge his property in these things, but if I see that he has an actual relationship with any of them, social feeling will instinctively re-train me from violating it. If I am so unsocial a person as to be indifferent to his pain, still I shall remember that I too have no abstract rights of property. As I do unto others so will they probably do unto me, and if I forget this, my neighbours will remind me and resent unfair conduct which is a danger to all of them, and a pain to the social feeling of most.

On the other hand, if I unfairly wish to monopolise things, coats, horses, tools, or what not, when other people are going short, and there are no fixed rules behind which I can by ingenious reasoning shelter myself from the general human obligation to share the fruits of the

common labour, this sort of selfishness will not be easy. If I am imitating the unsocial behaviour of the Marchioness instanced by Comrade Kropotkin and keeping a big house all to myself when other people are unhealthily over-crowded, I shall have no argument to meet the claims of the over-crowded people and the protests of my neighbours against my inhumanity. The house is not mine, and other people have an equal claim with myself to be housed when there is house-room. If my necessities, convenience, associations, or taste lead me to prefer certain rooms, decidedly my neighbours would be unsocial to attempt to oust me, but if I try to keep more rooms than I really need, I shall have no "rights" on which to take my stand as any excuse. I and my needy neighbours must meet as equals with equal claims and settle the matter by mutual agreement or fight. In our century most of us prefer agreement, in cases where we have no imaginary "rights" to back up our obstinacy. Those who have lived in American communities say that it is curious how quickly the idea of property fades from the mind when it is not kept up by a social convention. How soon one begins instinctively to look on wealth as something to be shared according to needs instead of contended for as an individual right.

This is the changed attitude towards things which is dawning as a desirable possibility upon the consciousness of our age, a change which is at once the motive force of the idea of expropriation and a security against the lasting revival of economic slavery after the expropriation is accomplished.

## RICHES.

Since all the riches of this world

May be gifts from the devil and earthly kings,  
I should suspect that I worshipped the devil  
If I thanked my God for worldly things.

The countless gold of a merry heart,  
The rubies and pearls of a loving eye,  
The idle man never can bring to the mart,  
Nor the cunning hoard up in his treasury.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

## NOTES.

In spite of the ever-present financial difficulties of social rebels, the Anarchist press shows most encouraging vitality. Now and again a paper disappears, but two or three others are continually springing up in its place. This month we publish a list of the Socialist Anarchist papers in Spanish to supplement the Italian list given in our June number. In America during the last few months the German *Libertas* and *Fair Play* have respectively sprung from the Mutualist journals *Liberty* and *Lucifer*. The *Alarm* which was forced to suspend publication as a fortnightly at Chicago, has reappeared as a weekly at New York, and is yet more revolutionary in tone. It supplies a special need in the party by freely opening its columns for the statement of various shades of Anarchist opinion and the discussion of disputed points. At present an interesting debate is going forward on the use of force.

Our Dutch comrades have now an organ in their native tongue, the *Anarchist*. In France, the brave little *Idée Ouvrière* at Havre, for which Louise Michel had been lecturing when she was shot, has been obliged to relinquish the struggle for existence, but the Paris Anarchist groups have brought out their *Ca Ira* (That will go) and a new French fortnightly, *La Critique Sociale*, is published at Geneva. So goes the fight. When wearied hands drop the banner, fresh volunteers rush forward to bear it aloft, and slowly but steadily the new thought forces its way through the opposing ranks of interest and prejudice.

We are glad to see that revolutionary Communism is making its way amongst our Australian comrades. According to the report in the Australian *Radical* of the debate of the Melbourne Anarchist Club on June 3rd, only Comrade Andrade opposed the idea of expropriation, whilst the opener, F. P. Upham, "stood up squarely for Anarchist Communism." The advanced political thinkers of Melbourne and the advanced economic thinkers of Sydney seem to be mutually influencing one another, the Socialists advancing towards Anarchism and the Anarchists towards Communism, much as happened in the European International Working Men's Association.

By the way, why do our comrades associate Communist-Anarchism with individual names? It is not an idea confined to any one man, but for the last twenty years has been the faith of the majority of Socialists in the south of Europe and of the left wing of the Socialist party throughout the world. It is simply the most advanced expression of the great popular movement of our century, and finds an echo wherever the revolt against economic, political and moral domination has begun to deeply stir the minds of men.

On the Portsmouth Road, close to Hind Head, there have been for the last ten or twelve years forty acres of land surrounded by a costly and vicious looking iron fence behind which, at no great distance apart, stand tall notice boards bearing the following inscription: "Notice. Trespassers will be prosecuted according to law. By order. A. J. Balfour, Esq., M.P." The enclosure with its profusion of brambles and weeds suggest a picture in miniature of Ireland after twenty years of

\* During the ages of authority continuous efforts were of course made to secure legal rights of property in wives, with such ill success that the attempt has been to a great extent abandoned. This sort of property was always specially insecure inasmuch as it was liable to steal itself.

resolute government." When Mr. Balfour has pacified Hibernia he will no doubt turn his attention to this little plot which Time has converted into a veritable Tom Tiddler's ground. The crop of gold and silver which is to be reaped when the warnings to trespassers have been replaced by tempting advertisements of building-lots may be calculated to a nicety. Forty acres at £200 per acre. £8000. Not a bad profit on the original investment at £10 per acre, and a beautiful example of unearned increment.

### FREEDOM DISCUSSION MEETINGS.

On July 13th, P. Kropotkin opened the second discussion on work and the distribution of wealth, by pointing out the essential injustice of the wage system as a method of distribution, and showing how even under present economic conditions social feeling has supplemented it by a certain amount of distribution according to needs. The Social Democrats propose to do this to a far larger extent, the Communist-Anarchists to base distribution on needs only. The first part of our comrade's paper will be found in another column.

The discussion which followed was even more discursive than usual, because the Social Democrats animated by the strongest sense of opposition came too late to hear the opening speech and consequently were reduced to the necessity of relieving their feelings by generalities. The most pertinent of these was: As we do not yet see exactly how and when the Social Revolution will come about, it is a waste of energy to discuss the principles on which we desire that society should re-organise itself. There are not one hundred men in London or in England, insisted comrades Mahon and Donald, prepared to band themselves together and fight for Socialism. To which Comrade Kropotkin responded by a significant parallel. A few months before 1789, he said, Camille Desmoulins, certainly not the least sanguine of revolutionists, said: "If there were but twenty real republicans in France!" And yet within three years the last relics of Feudalism and its economic oppression were swept out of the country, and not by the middle class revolutionists who talked in the Convention, but by six successive uprisings of the peasantry themselves.

Several comrades, who have been working for some years in the movement, dwelt on the extraordinary advance of Socialistic ideas in England. Four or five years ago arguments in favour of land nationalisation were met by exactly the same objections as Social Democrats were now opposing to Communist Anarchism. John Burns (S. D. F.) said that three years ago if he had spoken about Free Communism his hearers would have probably been two or three street Arabs and a nursery maid, and yet now we get, even in the height of summer, a crowded room full of workmen to discuss this "impracticable" and "visionary" subject. In an earnest and vigorous speech he declared that if we accept Free Communism as an ideal to-day, we shall try to realise it to-morrow, and that Social Democratic tactics are only useful as they make for Communism. If Socialists are elected to the Vestry or the Parliament, they will be confronted there with the Communist question just as Socialists with no political position are confronted with it to-day. He only differs with Communist-Anarchists in looking upon Social Democracy as a stepping-stone to Communism. He would go into Parliament as a means of propaganda, just as he would stand on his head if that would make converts to the principles of Socialism.

Comrade Marsh inquired what would be the value of converts gained by such means, and combatted the stepping-stone policy. Its advocates often in their caution take a step backward instead of forward or advance so slowly and obtain such miserable results as to dash hope and enthusiasm together and leave the people to drop once more into apathy.

As some comrades will be working overtime in August to make up for want of employment in winter, and others taking a holiday, the next discussion on "Work and the distribution of Wealth," will take place in September. It will be opened by Alfred Marsh with a paper on "Work and Social Utility." Date and place will be announced in our next number.

## THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM.

### IRELAND

July has been an exciting month. The most striking incident is the death of John Mandeville, who for the crime of having helped Wm. O'Brien to save the Kingston tenantry from ruin was imprisoned in Tullamore Jail during Nov. and December last year. He died on the 8th ult., and a coroner's jury has returned a verdict of "Killed through the brutal and unjustifiable treatment received while in Tullamore Jail." The inquest brought to light many shameful things which the Government no doubt intended to have kept dark, and the horror of it all was accentuated by the suicide of one of the prison doctors, who had been subpoenaed as a witness. Dr. Rolley shrank from the judgment of his fellow-men for reasons best known to himself and to Mr. Balfour with whom he had had interview a few days previous to the cutting of his throat.

One thing poor Mandeville's death has already done is to render the authorities of the jail, wherein John Dillon lies, doubly circumspect in the treatment of their precious charge. Balfour, it is reported, was "considerably annoyed" by the receipt of a telegram during a debate in the House of Commons, from the men of Wexford, saying that "such was the solicitude of the entire Irish race for the health and circumstance of John Dillon, that he would have to render a strict account of that valuable life," and praying that before the expiration of Dillon's imprisonment that he (Balfour) and his party might be hurled from power. So say all of us!

Week after week discloses something more infamous and more ridiculous on the part of the Administration in Ireland. The exposure of the attempts at bribery in the Secret Inquiry Courts has caused such consternation that it has not been

found convenient to produce notes of the evidence when demanded by the counsel for the accused, and repeated adjournments are applied for by the Crown.

In the superior Courts, where sit judges who have some claim to education and legal training, contempt for Balfour's Removable Magistrates is openly expressed, their judgments causing much wonder and some merriment. On hearing the appeal concerning the lost depositions of William O'Brien's recent trial, Baron Dowse suggested that the Removables should bear in mind that even "men brought up under Balfour's Coercion Act have rights" and proposed that when one of these gentlemen who knew how to do his business could be found, he should be sent to the British Museum.

In other cases where the Removables had refused to state a case for appeal, the judges of the Queen's Bench over-ruled their decision, Judge Morris sending word to the Solicitor General that he declined to be a party to any "hugger-mugger," and Baron Dowse proposing that that functionary's nickname should be changed from "Pether the Packer" to "Pether the Plausible."

Balfour himself has been rapped over the knuckles in a lower court and by one of his Removables, inadvertently of course. Judge Kelly anent the Ennis meeting reproved Colonel Turner for having arrested the poor and obscure and allowed the leaders to escape. Turner humbly replied he would know what to do next time.

The Hibernian Bank still declines to submit its books for inspection to the Secret Commissioners, so Balfour has not yet laid fingers on the rents banked under the Plan of Campaign.

Meanwhile some more of the generation of vipers warned of the wrath to come have made terms with their tenants. One of them going so far as to admit, when undergoing an examination as to the working of the Plan on his estate, that he had received his rent in bulk on his tenants' terms, and considered himself indebted to their priest for having brought about the settlement. Here was a piece of testimony which the Commissioners might have wished unspoken!

The majority of those dragged before this tribunal preserve an exasperating silence, or when they do speak they do not always "give evidence to please the magistrates," as was the case with an old man of 75, who went to prison for eight days for no other offence.

On the other hand the voluntary evidence for the most part reads like extracts from 'Nupkins Awakened.' Fancy a sub-sheriff solemnly deposing that he had been asked by a rude Nationalist "Was the sun up?" and another official characterising as "horrible" resolutions passed at a meeting of the Curragh tenantry such as, "Stick to the Plan in spite of Balfour and the Peelers," and "In the event of more evictions be prepared to give the sheriff and bailiffs a hearty reception."

Horrible as the latter sentiment may be it is being very generally carried into effect. At the Vandeleur evictions (Kilrush) each homestead has been desolated with considerable difficulty, and only by means of a huge battering-ram backed by an unusually large host of bailiffs, police and military. To the threatening rifles, tumbling walls, the rush of armed men and the dragging forth of struggling wounded peasants has been added the newer feature of bailiffs scrambling on to the roofs and blocking the chimneys with lumps of thatching or big stones so as to smoke the inmates out.

Another feature at the recent evictions has been the strict exclusion of all sympathisers whether priests, M.P.'s or reporters. Balfour is not going to be bothered any more by those awkward questions put to him in the House *appropos* of too truthful newspaper paragraphs concerning dying men and women and helpless babes.

His prison list has been a tolerably full one since June; 117 locked up, 17 allowed bail, 69 or so remanded, against 46 dismissed for lack of evidence. For unlawful assembly 30 went to jail (13 were sowing seed for a neighbour); rioting, 27; refusing evidence, 17; helping to barriade, 12 (four of them being hired carpenters); posting threatening notices, 2; refusing goods to emergency-men, 3; cheering, 2; assault and intimidation, 6 (one a boy of 15 who struck another aged 11 during a game of marbles, not sent to prison this time but bound over to keep the peace under a section of the Coercion Act); allowing cattle to trespass, 1 (3 months hard labour); inciting unknown persons to assemble unlawfully by wearing League card in hat-band, 1; inciting to same by other means, 5; speech-making, 3; resisting bailiffs or police, 6; groaning police, 4; reproaching a neighbour for associating with members of the R.I.C., 1 (14 days h. l.); retaking possession of hovels, 2 (one an old woman over a hundred, kindly permitted by police to take her shroud into prison); carrying arms, 1.

The cost of collecting the Whelehan blood-tax in Co. Clare has absorbed the whole amount, and the collection round about Mitchelstown for Constable Leahy is, we are glad to say, faring no better.

### GERMANY AND AUSTRIA.

In consequence of the recent renewal of the minor state of siege in Leipzig and its neighbourhood, 110 persons have been expelled from the place.

In Vienna a carpenter, Joseph Krahl, who was in 1886 expelled from Breslau as an Anarchist, has shot a police-agent by name Potter.

### ITALY.

Italian workmen appear to grow impatient of bearing the yoke. As they experience that strikes, when kept within the bounds of legality, are a failure, they now resort to illegal means in order to force their masters to hear and comply with their demands. At Miaghiano (near Biella) the spinners have revolted against their overseer and inflicted on him a severe lesson. A similar energetic attitude was displayed by the workmen of the Sugar Refining Company at Rivarolo, when they saw their demands for better pay rejected with contempt by the master of the factory. The same in many other places; insurrection amongst factory slaves is the order of the day.

### SPAIN.

The Anarchist press has been enriched by two new organs, *La Bandiera Roja* of Madrid, and *Tierra y Libertad* at Barcelona.

In order that our readers may appreciate the spread of Anarchism in Southern Europe, we supplement our June list of Italian Anarchist journals by the subjoined catalogue of those at present published in the Spanish tongue:—

*El Productor* (the Producer), *Aeracia* (A-cratia, or no-power), *Tierra y Libertad* (Land and Freedom), all three at Barcelona; *El Productor* (the Producer) Havana (Island of Cuba); *El Socialismo*, Cadiz; *La Bandiera Roja*, Madrid; *Tierra y Libertad* (Land and Freedom), Gracia; *La Bandiera Roja* (the red Banner) Coruna.

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