

Freedom

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JUDICIAL ATROCITIES.

WERE we to register here all the moral and physical sufferings, all the cruelties and iniquities which policemen, wardours, magistrates, judges, and that illustrious personage and eminent public official, the hangman, have inflicted during the last few weeks upon a very large number of their fellow-beings—men, women, girls, boys, and even two years' old babies, our sixteen columns would not be sufficient. The awful performances of the "too long rope" at the Liverpool executions, the numberless assaults and perjuries and mistaken identities and slanders and deliberate concoctions of false evidence by the police, the heavy sentences passed upon people guilty of no other offence than being caught whilst fishing by the rising tide and nearly drowned, or treading unknowingly on private ground, or damaging peas (two babies of five and two, the latter appearing in the dock in her mother's arms, were charged with that offence but happily acquitted), or stealing a few cherries—these and a thousand such deeds of injustice would pass before the eyes of the bewildered reader and fill him with amazement and horror.

Such an enormous number of crimes—chiefly falling upon the working and poor classes—are committed now-a-days in the name of "Justice!"

We do not deny that at the same time non-official crime, if we may so express it, has been committed. Men have gone on injuring, stabbing, killing their fellow-beings, sometimes their nearest relatives, out of greed, of hatred, of caprice. But we strongly deny that these crimes are in any way stopped or diminished by judicial atrocities, such as long-drop hangings.

For one would-be murderer who may possibly have confined his anti-social atrocities to less desperate outrages upon his fellows for fear of the rope, there are thousands and hundreds of thousands whose hearts are hardened and their sympathies blunted by the continual recurrence of the public destruction of human life in cold-blood. The horrible details of the mental and physical torture applied to criminals in the name of right and justice, feed the cruel and blood-thirsty instincts of all who witness or read of them for amusement, whilst at the same time they pervert and deaden their instinctive feeling of pain in the sufferings of others. If a man once believes that there are people whom it is right should under certain circumstances be tortured, his mind grows familiar with the idea of inflicting pain, he ceases to be shocked at it, and should time and opportunity tempt him, he will be ready, under the influences of greed or passion or some diseased imagination to inflict torture himself.

To say nothing of the brutalising effect upon all who help to execute them, cruel and barbarous punishments serve to brutalise the minds of the whole community. But can their effect in deterring would-be criminals be shown to be so tremendous as to counterbalance this evil, together with the suffering their execution inflicts on the innocent connections of the guilty persons, on the guilty persons themselves, and too often on innocent persons punished by mistake? Decidedly we repeat No!

So lately as the beginning of this century people were hanged in England for stealing, and many other offences besides murder. When Sir Samuel Romilly and others agitated to do away with the death penalty for these offences, they were told that it was the only effectual deterrent. If it was abolished no man's person or property would be safe. It was abolished and men's persons and possessions were safer than before. So will it be when capital punishment is abolished for murder also. There will not be any more murders, probably there will in time be less.

If the horrors of capital punishment really acted as a deterrent and prevented murder, we might expect to see that after such a ghastly example as the Liverpool execution there would be a marked cessation of murderous assaults, especially as it was accompanied that week by three other executions in different parts of the country. Yet that very week, ending August 22, there were also four murders. The next week an execution and a murder took place on the same day. And the very same suggestive connection was remarked in France at the time when the two young men from Courbevoie were guillotined in Paris.

But if capital punishment be not really a terrible necessity; if it be not an indispensable measure for saving the lives of innocent persons, what is it but sheer slaughter? An act of revenge, only the more bar-

barous and immoral as it is performed in the guise and with all the ceremonial of justice!

Revenge is at the root of our judicial system—blind, reckless, foolish revenge.

Not long ago a condemned murderer in America shot himself in prison; nevertheless the dying man was dragged to the scaffold by two executioners and finished off there. A ghastly brutality not without parallel in England, where a criminal has more than once or twice been carefully nursed in hospital that he might be prevented "cheating the executioner." Take again the barbarous experiments in "Electrocution" lately tried by the State of New York. If the object were merely to destroy life painlessly, what simpler than to put the condemned criminal into a lethal chamber, like the curs at the Dogs' Home in Battersea. But no, the revenge of society upon the unfortunates who have scared it has found an appropriate agent in the equally brutal curiosity of scientists longing to extend their experiments to the vivisection of the human animal. What matter if the miserable victim is subjected to unknown and indescribable agonies? The onlookers and experimenters are agreeably excited, and after all he is a mere criminal, an outcast from the pale of humanity. What is such an attitude as this towards a fellow man but one of hatred and revenge? And yet the truth is that most murderers are, when they commit their crime, in a morbid, overstrained, or diseased condition of mind, which might have been prevented by freer and healthier conditions of life or the brotherly aid and sympathy of their fellow-men, but when it has once come upon them is for the moment incapable of being checked by any rational consideration. They are objects for pity and for the self reproach of those whose indifference or cruelty has allowed them to come to such a pass; but revenge upon them for the evil they have done is mere brutality.

John Conway, the Liverpool convict, almost decapitated by the hangman, made on the morning of his execution the following declaration, which there is every reason to believe true and sincere:—"In confessing my guilt I protest that my motive was not outrage. Such a thought I never in all my life entertained. Drink has been my ruin, not lust. I was impelled to that crime while under the influence of drink, by a fit of murderous mania and a morbid curiosity to observe the process of dying. A moment after the commission of the crime I experienced the deepest sorrow for it, and would have done anything in the world to undo it."

Was not this a case of insanity? The other day a man was arrested in Paris, in a public park whilst actually intending to cut his own flesh and eat it. On his body many such cuttings were found, and the poor man confessed that his real longing was after maiden's flesh, and that he would have killed some girl to satisfy himself. Had he done so, in a fit of his madness, what a howl of execration would have been risen against him! Who would have believed him mad? He would have been prosecuted, sentenced, and executed. A most wanton crime would have been once more registered in the annals of Justice!

Cases in which the murderous mania is so strikingly obvious do not occur every day: but still we have other cases which are no less suggestive. We mean the murders followed by suicides. There are people sane in body and mind but ground down by sorrow and misery. They are mostly husbands or wives of very poor condition: poverty, bad education, ill fortune, do not make good tempers, good manners, and happiness at home. Rich married people, when they do not agree, live, even without a formal divorce, apart from each other; each have their own apartments, their own friends, their own occupations or amusements. They may travel, play at cards, make love, or, as Aurelién Scholl puts it, "*la femme chevauche d'un côté, le mari vélocipède de l'autre.*" But poor people have none of those resources and distractions at hand; they are forced to stay together in the same small, dirty room, to sleep in the same bed, to run against one another at every turn. Then the least disagreement grows into antipathy, words are said which make wounds, and lastly one becomes really sick of his companion. Reason is overcome by bad feeling, a crime meditated and accomplished—even the children sometimes are sacrificed; then—the drama closes with a suicide!

In such a case society can not resuscitate the dead to take its revenge. It must bear the crime and recognise that punishment is no remedy, at least for persons wishing to die. Other and more radical remedies must be looked for, viz., reorganisation of the family, and extinction of pauperism. With this aspect of the question we propose to deal next month.

REVOLUTION OR WAR.

It is often urged against Anarchism that it can only be realised by the use of force, and that consequently any serious attempt to bring it about would lead to considerable loss of life and to a condition of things closely resembling civil war. Of course it has been demonstrated over and over again that the few lives which might be lost in bringing about the Social Revolution would be insignificant compared with the tremendous loss of life, and all that makes life worth living, that is going on now amongst the workers. There is such a thing as a living death, a life of misery which is much harder to bear than the actual cessation of being, and a very great number amongst the workers are enduring this condition at the present time. For them there is no hope, no enjoyment, no life, in the broadest fullest sense of the word; they merely exist as human machines for the production of profit. When they are in use they have little leisure and just enough food to keep them in working order. When they are out of use they are allowed to rust, their enforced leisure is of no value to them, they have lost the capacity for real enjoyment. If they are out of use very long they die or become thieves and prostitutes. Now there are millions of our fellow-creatures in this condition, for whom death should have no terror since life has no charm. To point out these fellow-creatures of ours should be sufficient to silence the timid objector who fears the future and prefers "to reform society gradually," or, in plain English, to leave things as they are. But let us look at the matter from another point of view. Is there no other danger threatening society except the Social Revolution? Is there nothing to fear but a civil war induced by the demands of the workers? Then for what are all these elaborate preparations which are going on all over Europe? Why does the German emperor run about so rapidly from one country to another? Why does the French fleet come over here to Portsmouth to pay us a visit? What is the meaning of all these protestations of friendship going on between those who term themselves the representatives of the nations? The fact is that they are the heralds of a storm which has been brewing for years, and which must bring in its train wholesale destruction and death, the ruin of cities, perhaps the splitting up and extinction of nations. The Social Revolution or War to the Knife is the choice which is presented to Europe, England included.

Patriotism is a living force, a great prejudice which stands in the path of progress, a colossal delusion which prevents the realisation of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Every patriot desires to see the particular country which has had the honour of giving him birth, take up a paramount position. Hundreds of thousands of men who shrink with horror at the word Anarchy, would gladly sacrifice their own lives and kill as many as possible of their neighbours across the border for the "honour" of "their" country. Here in England patriotism probably takes on a milder form than in continental countries. John Bull has got his position: he desires to maintain it; that is all. Besides which he is above all things practical and doesn't care about fighting unless there is money in it. But in France, for example, patriotism is formidable, a danger menacing Europe. Frenchmen have a grievance, the question of Alsace Lorraine, and they are ready to do anything to get that little bit of country under their control again. The papers are full of it. Illustrated cartoons in which the familiar topic is dealt with, are displayed all over the newspaper kiosks on the boulevards of Paris. Just now the French capital is full of excitement over the Franco-Russian alliance. All over the town the hawkers are selling the Russian National Anthem, and the demand for it seems even greater than was the demand for "the Bogie Man" in London a while ago. It has even been printed (words and music) in many of the daily papers and in every theatre and concert hall it is loudly demanded and encored. And when we consider that it is even duller than "God save the Queen," it seems remarkable that a nation which has produced such a soul-stirring hymn as the Marseillaise should go into such raptures about it. But of course the merit of the thing has nothing at all to do with the enthusiasm. It is simply a matter of patriotism. Then again maps and diagrams are sold at the kiosks which show the relative strength of the French and German armies, and the seat of the next war, with the probable battles indicated, etc. Public meetings are held to increase the enthusiasm. The shopkeepers enter into the spirit of the thing and christen all their goods either "Russian" or "Franco-Russe." No one seems to think about the consequence of all this, about the terrible bloodshed which will result and the possibility of defeat, with all its tremendous results. No one reflects that this Russia whose alliance is so warmly welcomed is the most despotic power in Europe, that the best and bravest sons and daughters of Russia are in prison or in exile for striving to make their country free. In Germany the feeling is possibly not less strong. Recently we have had the spectacle of a Socialist (?) deputy proclaiming his willingness to fight against the French, and doubtless there are very many more like him. At any rate, there, as in France, Italy, Austria, and elsewhere, vast numbers of men are continually employed in the work of preparing for the great throat-cutting campaign which is to come off sooner or later.

There cannot be much doubt that it will come off, and very soon too, despite the feeble utterances of a few peace advocates who hold congresses now and again and issue a few leaflets. And we here in England must not expect that we shall be able to avoid being drawn into it. If it is true as has been rumoured that the English government has undertaken to defend the coasts of Italy in case of a European war, it is equally true that we stand a very good chance of being invaded our-

selves in the near future. Science has made wonderful progress since the time of Napoleon and the project of invading England, which he so warmly cherished, and which doubtless, but for the great mistake he made in going to Russia, he would have attempted, may very soon again be mooted on the continent, and Englishmen may soon have the horrors of war brought home to them in a manner which they do not just now anticipate. It is all very fine to read in the *Telegraph* or the *Times* about the British victories in Burmah or in the Soudan, the destruction of native villages by the English soldiery, and so on; it is quite exciting even to read the accounts of battles in Chili or on the Continent of Europe. But when we get the real thing here at home, in London and in rural England, we shall not find much fun in it. The siege of London or the sacking of London; the burning of villages in Kent; the outraging of the inhabitants: such things seem absurd to us just now. But why should not England have her turn of tasting these horrors of war? It is by no means an impossibility if the European conflagration, so long talked of and so expensively prepared for, should break out.

The fact is, if we are to judge by what is taking place at present, we are on the eve of the greatest war the world has ever seen. There is only one means of averting it—the Social Revolution. If the Revolution proclaiming Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, in the broadest, fullest sense of those words, gets the start of the war, all will be well. The patriots will sink into insignificance when the workers break down the frontiers and refuse to recognise the artificial and unnatural distinctions which the enemies of the human race have made between those born in different countries; when Frenchmen, Germans, and Russians are as closely allied as the men of Kent and the men of Essex (formerly two separate nationalities) are to-day; when the governments and capitalists are forced to fly before the wrath of the millions they are now oppressing, and the distinction of rank as well as the distinction of nationality are consigned to oblivion. Anarchism, the true Socialism, is advancing every day. The ideas of brotherhood, peace, and justice to the worker are becoming more and more popular thanks to the propaganda of the workers themselves. In every country the patriots find that their chief opponents are the International Anarchists. In Paris our comrades denounce the patriotic schemers in the Anarchist organs and make a sturdy opposition at the patriotic meetings, and everywhere Anarchists are urging their fellow-workers to refuse to be led into this wholesale murder-trap which the patriots and their capitalistic allies are preparing. But when the time comes, when war is declared by one or other of the governments, will the advanced section of the workers be strong enough to proclaim universal peace by the inauguration of the Social Revolution. That is what we all hope for, that is what we earnestly desire; that the call to arms on the part of the exploiters of humanity may be responded to by the workers with a General Strike, not only of the Industrial Army, but of the soldiery themselves. Let the patriots and capitalists go and fight themselves if they wish to, but let the workers of all countries join hands and refuse any longer to be under the control of a class. But if this consummation of our hopes is to be realised, if we are to see the workers of the world turning their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, if we are to see the Triple and all other war Alliances brought to an end, we must continue to spread our ideas with the greatest possible speed; we must strengthen ourselves for the time of coming action which is so close upon us. To the work, then, comrades, and let us see to it that when the Governments again ask for the Blood Tax we may be ready to reply "No longer will we shed the blood of those with whom we have no real quarrel, but if you, our real enemies, do not dissolve and your members become workers like ourselves, the fight will be between you and us, and we have no fear for the result."

Slum Life in Edinburgh.*

An anonymous author (T. B. M.) has given us a local edition of "In Darkest * * *" under the above title. To the Londoner who believes slums are found in the southern metropolis only, this book should be an eye-opener, as it describes some of the slums of Edinburgh, though only some. As a medical assistant in one of the dispensaries, I have myself seen Auld Reekie's little hells on earth, and can assure the author of this book that he either has not seen, or does not describe the worst. The book treats mostly of the "moucher" class—those who really don't want to work, but really their life is better than a large section of the working community. A touch of sarcasm is to be found here and there, but if the author wants to find immorality and vice he need not take the trouble to go to Greenside when there are Drumsheugh and other Palace districts in the West end. Being born of one class and having worked amongst the other, it has struck me that neither is more moral than the other, and furthermore that comparatively the slum-dwellers are the more moral of the two classes, as we must take their unhealthy surroundings into consideration. The object of writing the book is not yet plain to me, unless it be to make "profit," for what do the west end people care about east end misery, and what will they really do for it?

Perhaps more "charity." But this is a town of charities (sic), and of municipal "improvement" schemes, and yet! What! People live in dismal dens which the wretched inhabitants and their landlords call "houses," and for which rent of from 1s. 3d. to 2s. 6d. a week is paid. And remember, the slums of Edinburgh are not on the same level as the business parts of the town, but in hollows underneath it. The business town is built on bridges, from whence you can look down forty to sixty feet into the open mouths of "hell made by man." Talking of charity our author rightly says, "It is the impudent beggar who hustles to the front and carries off the lion's share of charity's doles. He never starves. He is too cute." As we are told Parochial boards are Socialism, we ought to be very happy under a system which allows 2s. 6d. for a family of six starving people. Just like State socialism! The book draws attention to one of

* James Thin, Edinburgh publishers, 1s.

the many injustices done to the working classes. They have to pay rent a month in advance, but did you ever hear of a master who paid for the rent of labour power a second in advance? The author lays a lot of sin at the gate of State socialism and charity, for on page 36 we read:—"We leave it to others to explain why it generally falls to the lot of poor men to accumulate large families, contenting themselves with the observation that their improvidence has certainly the support of their affluent fellow-men. By our system of charity we place a premium on . . . irresponsibility. The careless parent regards his increasing family without concern, for he knows that the maintenance of his children will not be pressed upon him . . . They will be educated for nothing (State socialism); odds and ends of clothing given by some charitable society or philanthropic individual will serve to cover their nakedness; and as for food they can rub along pretty well (?) with what they may get at soup kitchens and free breakfasts." (Individualism).

Following shortly upon this are some police court cases, where parents get from fourteen to thirty days' hard labour for ill-treating and neglecting their children, or even for allowing them to sell matches and newspapers! And what of the children? They go to prison too—but their prison is called an industrial school. So society does. Makes men do wrong and punishes them.

The author makes a sad mistake when he writes as if all the ill-doers in society were to be found in common lodging houses. Has he been to Baccarat Croft or Marlborough House, or among Divinity students, has he followed the customers of the prostitute to their homes? If so, he has followed them to the West End and the Grange, even the manses of the clergy; but these are far from being common lodging houses.

Even the submerged tenth prefer freedom to law. One of them, on being asked why he did not go to the model lodging house, said: "There are over many rules and regulations. We haven't got the freedom there that we have here (a lower class place). There are over many men in uniform goin' about for my taste." The author also has the sense to see that poverty is the cause of drink; and has a laugh at the so-called charities of the city, which some optimist has lately been lauding to the skies. I can recommend the book to any who still believe slums are peculiar to London and Paris; and to the man who wants instances of "mutual aid," for the people it describes have the one virtue of fellow-feeling. It is terrible reading after Morris's "News from Nowhere." CYRIL BELL.

ANARCHIST MORALITY.

By P. KROPOTKINE.

I.

THE history of human thought recalls the swinging of a pendulum which takes centuries to swing. After a long period of slumber comes a moment of awakening. Then thought frees herself from the chains with which those interested—rulers, lawyers, clerics—have carefully enwound her.

She shatters the chains. She subjects to severe criticism all that has been taught her, and lays bare the emptiness of the religious, political, legal, and social prejudices amidst which she has vegetated. She starts research in new paths, enriches our knowledge with new discoveries, creates new sciences.

But the inveterate enemies of thought—the government, the law-giver, and the priest—soon recover from their defeat. By degrees they gather together their scattered forces, and remodel their faith and their code of laws to adapt them to the new needs. Then, profiting by the servility of thought and of character, which they themselves have so effectually cultivated, profiting, too, by the momentary disorganisation of society, taking advantage of the laziness of some, the greed of others, the best hopes (above all, the best hopes) of many, they softly creep back to their work by first of all taking possession of childhood through education.

A child's spirit is weak. It is so easy to coerce it by fear. This they do.

They make the child timid, and then they talk to him of the torments of hell. They conjure up before him the sufferings of the condemned, the vengeance of an implacable god. The next minute they will be chattering of the horrors of Revolution, and using some excess of the Revolutionists to make the child "a friend of order." The priest accustoms the child to the idea of law, to make it obey better what he calls the "divine law," and the lawyer prates of divine law, that the civil law may be the better obeyed.

And by that habit of submission, with which we are only too familiar, the thought of the next generation retains this religious twist, which is at once servile and authoritative; for authority and servility walk ever hand in hand.

During these slumbrous interludes, morals are rarely discussed. Religious practices and judicial hypocrisy take their place. Folks do not criticise, they let themselves be drawn by habit, or indifference. They do not put themselves out for or against the established morality. They do their best to make their actions appear to accord with their professions. And the moral level of society sinks lower and lower. Folks reach the morals of Rome in the Decadence, of the *Ancient Régime*, of the end of the supremacy of the middle-classes. All that was good, great, generous or independent in man, little by little becomes moss-grown; rusts like a disused knife. A lie becomes a virtue, a platitude a duty. To enrich oneself, to seize one's opportunities, to exhaust one's intelligence, zeal and energy, no matter how, becomes the watchword of the comfortable classes, as well as of the crowd of poor folk whose ideal is to appear bourgeois. Then the degradation of the rulers and of the judge, of the clergy and of the more or less comfortable classes becomes so revolting that the pendulum begins to swing the other way.

Little by little, youth frees itself. It flings overboard its prejudices, and it begins to criticise. Thought re-awakens, at first among the few; but insensibly the awakening reaches the majority. The impulse is given, the revolution follows.

And each time the question of Morality comes up again. "Why should I follow the principles of this hypocritical morality?" asks

the brain, released from religious terrors. Why should any morality be obligatory?"

Then folks try to account for the moral sentiment that they meet at every turn without having explained it to themselves. And they will never explain it so long as they believe it a privilege of human nature, so long as they do not descend to animals, plants and rocks to understand it. They seek the answer, however, in the science of the hour.

And, if we may venture to say so, the more the basis of conventional morality, or rather of the hypocrisy that fills its place, is sapped, the more the moral plane of society is raised. It is above all at such times, precisely when folks are criticising and denying it, that moral sentiment makes the most progress; it is then that it grows, that it is raised and refined.

This came to pass in the eighteenth century. As long ago as 1723, Mandeville, the anonymous writer who scandalised England with his "Fable of the Bees" and the commentaries he added to it, boldly attacked the social hypocrisy known under the name of morality. He showed how so-called moral customs are only a hypocritical mask, how the passions folks think to master by the current code of morals take, on the contrary, a much worse direction on account of the very restriction of this code. Like Fourier, he asked for the passions that free scope, without which they degenerate into vices; and paying in this wise a tribute to the want of zoological knowledge in his time, that is to say, ignoring the morality of animals, he explained the origin of moral ideas by the interested flattery of parents and governing classes.

We know the vigorous criticism of moral ideas begun later by the Scotch philosophers and the Encyclopedists. We know the Anarchists of 1790, and we know with whom the higher development of moral feeling is to be found: among the law-abiding, the patriots, the Jacobins who babbled of obligation and of the moral sanction of the "Supreme Being," or among the Hébertist atheists who denied, like Guyau, both obligation and moral sanction.

"Why should I be moral?"—this was the question that confronted the rationalists of the XII. century, the philosophers of the XVI. century, the philosophers and revolutionaries of the XVIII. century. Later on this question came back again among the English utilitarians (Bentham and Mill), among the German materialists, such as Büchner, among the Russian Nihilists of 1860—70, and to that young founder of Anarchist ethics (the moral science of societies)—Guyau, dead, alas! too soon. Finally, this is the question which at this hour confronts the young Anarchists of to-day.

Why indeed?

Thirty years ago, the youth of Russia were passionately agitated by this very question. "I will be immoral!" a young Nihilist came and said to his friend, thus translating into action the thoughts that gave him no rest. "I will be immoral, and why should I not? Because the Bible wills it? But the Bible is only a collection of Babylonian and Hebrew traditions, traditions collected and put together like the Homeric poems, or as is being done still with Basque poems and Mongolian legends. Must I then go back to the state of mind of the half civilised peoples of the East?"

"Must I be moral because Kant tells me of a categorical imperative, of a mysterious command which comes to me from the depths of my own being and bids me be moral? But why should this 'categorical imperative' exercise a greater authority over my actions than that other imperative, which at times may command me to get drunk. A word, nothing but a word, like the words 'Providence,' or 'Destiny,' invented to conceal our ignorance."

"Or perhaps I am to be moral to oblige Bentham, who wants me to believe that I shall be happier if I drown to save a passer by, who has fallen into the river, than if I watched him drown?"

"Or perhaps because such has been my education? Because my mother taught me morality, shall I then go and kneel down in a church, honour the Queen, bow before the judge I know for a scoundrel, simply because our mothers, our good ignorant mothers, have taught us such a pack of nonsense?"

"I am prejudiced,—like everyone else, I will try to rid myself of prejudice! Even though immorality be distasteful, I will yet force myself to be immoral, as when I was a boy I forced myself to give up fearing the dark, the churchyard, ghosts and dead people—all of which I had been taught to fear."

"I will be immoral to snap a weapon abused by religion; I will do it, were it only to protest against the hypocrisy imposed on us in the name of a word, to which the name morality has been given!"

Such was the way in which the youth of Russia reasoned when they broke with old-world prejudices, and unfurled this banner of Nihilist or rather of Anarchist philosophy: To bend the knee to no authority whatsoever, however respected, to accept no principle so long as it is unestablished by reason.

Need we add, that after pitching into the waste-paper basket the teaching of their fathers, and burning all systems of morality, the Nihilist youth developed in their midst a nucleus of moral customs, infinitely superior to aught that their fathers had practised under the control of the "Gospel," of the "Conscience," of the "Categorical Imperative," or of the "Recognised Advantage" of the utilitarian. But before answering the question, "Why am I to be moral?" let us see if the question is well put, let us analyse the motives of human action. (To be continued.)

FREEDOM.

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NOTES.

ANOTHER YEAR.

Freedom enters upon its sixth year this month. During the past year its circulation has increased and its size has been doubled; but far better than this, it has had to chronicle month by month the steady growth of the Anarchist movement throughout the country. There are now three Anarchist Communist papers and one Individualist Anarchist paper in England. There are a continually increasing number of groups springing up here and there. Best of all, the movement is decidedly growing in definiteness. Besides the large and increasing number of people who sympathise in a general way with Anarchism, there are more and more able to give a reason for the faith that is in them, and willing to give that reason whenever they have a chance of making known their convictions. The light beams brighter before us, let us leave no stone unturned to make it plain to all eyes. The thoroughness, humanity, and success of the coming revolution depends upon the completeness with which the masses shall have grasped the broad principles of Anarchist Communism when the moment to act arrives.

OUR SOCIAL EVENING.

Some hundreds of London Anarchists met at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court Road, on September 26, to spend a social evening. The Hammersmith Choir, with their charming children's chorus, conducted by Mr. Munday, kindly sang several times, solos were sung by several friends, and recitations given by Mr. Marshal Steele and Mr. Munday. After the entertainment comrades from various Groups stepped forward to send greetings by Comrade Kropotkin to the Anarchists of America and wish him good speed on his journey. W. Wess said a few words on behalf of the Freedom Group, Cyril Bell of the Young Anarchists, Miss Henry of the International School; and short speeches in French, German and Yiddish, were made by Malatesta, Trunk and Yanovsky. Comrade Kropotkin replied. Things are looking very hopeful for the Anarchist movement he thinks; a few years must see a wide-spread Revolutionary movement. Malatesta has brought most cheering news from Italy; the development of ideas in France is so rapid as to surprise even Reclus. When the workers of Germany see that the success of Social Democracy has brought them nothing, they also will turn towards Anarchism. America is just the country that shows how all the written guarantees in the world for freedom are no protection against tyranny and oppression of the worst sort. There the politician has come to be looked upon as the very scum of society. The peoples of the world are becoming profoundly dissatisfied and are not appeased by the promises of the Social Democrats to patch up the State into a new engine of oppression. The necessity for new lines of social development is a great force working in our favour. The State is merely an old fashioned middle-class machine for oppressing the workers, it cannot be the instrument of their salvation. History does not ask us if we are ready for a revolution, she offers us the moment to act; it is for us to take it. Our Chicago comrades have shown us how to hold high the banner of Anarchy amid death and imprisonment, but we must not spend precious time in looking to the American revolution; we must actively prepare here in Europe by our own efforts for the historical moment which will surely come. After the meeting, dancing, refreshments, and conversation closed a very pleasant evening. The Newcastle Anarchist Communist group wired "Farewell greetings to Kropotkin and fraternal greetings to American comrades. Vive l'Anarchie;" and the "Yarmouth comrades revolutionary greetings to American workers. Remember Chicago. A successful tour. Hurrah for Anarchy. Farewell." The Norwich comrades sent two pretty nosegays, "with Anarchist greetings and every wish for the success of our comrade's tour."

THE TRADE UNION CONGRESS.

The Congress at Newcastle last month was as flat as ditch-water. A large attendance, over 500 delegates, representing about 2,000,000 workers, a good deal of wrangling and personal abuse, an old unionist (Burt) in the chair, instead of the new unionist chairman of last year; such is its record. Nothing done. If the trades unionists can be said to be marking time, it is as much as can be said for them. And yet never have revolutionary Socialistic and Anarchistic ideas spread

faster amongst the workers. There's a screw loose here somewhere. Look to it, comrades.

HEROISM.

News has lately reached our Russian comrades of the death of Sophie Günsberg. She was a girl of 21, condemned to the gallows at the last secret trial of Russian Revolutionists who had conspired against the Tzar's life. In consequence of petitions in Russia and meetings of protest in England and America, her sentence was changed to imprisonment for life in the Schlussemburg fortress. The moral torture of her life there so preyed on her health that she feared lest in delirium she might perhaps betray to the police the name of a comrade which she alone knew, therefore she killed herself with the only weapon she could obtain—a blunt pair of scissors. The girl faced a slow, self-inflicted death of agony, that she might keep faith with her comrades and be true to the cause of freedom; shall we shrink from the task of living for that cause?

THE RUSSIAN FAMINE.

The daily papers are full of the horrors of the famine. They tell how hundreds of thousands of starving peasants are wandering about in search of food, dying by the road-side, existing on grass and leaves and chopped straw. But most of them do not explain that all this indescribable mass of human misery is a direct outcome of the tyranny of the government and the ruling classes. Since 1861, when the government deliberately gave the village communes too little land to live on, that the newly emancipated serfs might be still under the thumb of the gentry, the peasants have had every penny they could make beyond the barest subsistence taken from them in taxes. They have had to mortgage every thing to usurers to get on at all. When a bad year comes, they are helpless. And now the very officials sent to relieve them rob them, and the various government departments issue contradictory orders and paralyze each other's efforts. The government, which insists with such frightful penalties that it alone shall manage everything in Russia, shows itself absolutely incapable of coping with the crisis its tyranny has created. It can summon up plenty of energy to persecute the Jews, dissenters and political reformers, and destroy the last remnants of Finnish liberty; but it cannot prevent inhuman capitalists speculating with the little corn there is left and raising the prices on the starving people. Talk of confusion under Anarchy! There is no such confusion on earth as occurs during a crisis amongst a self-interested, corrupt set of would-be omnipotent rulers and officials and a people who have never been allowed to act for themselves. The Russian government is on the verge of bankruptcy. It is desperate and reckless, caring for nothing but to maintain its power at home and abroad. At this moment the Russian people seem overwhelmed with apathy and despair. Their best and bravest who might have invigorated the nation are in prison, or in exile, or have died upon the scaffold. Their one hope is the speedy fall of the looting despotism which is eating their hearts out.

The Clichy Trial.

On the first of May last, a party of from fifteen to twenty Anarchists marched with a red flag through the village of Clichy, near Paris. They halted at a wine shop and the police tried to force their way in to seize the illegally coloured flag. Our comrades drove them out. The police, re-inforced by some mounted gendarmes, used their weapons, the Anarchists, who were armed, retorted with pistol shots and sword cuts. Six policemen and a by-stander were wounded. Comrades Descamp (a weaver), Dardare, and Léveillé (a blacksmith) were arrested and taken to the station, where the enraged police wreaked their vengeance with kicks and blows upon the handcuffed and wounded prisoners until they were covered with bruises and sores. The doctor stated in his evidence that he found Descamp's head and body covered with contused sores nine days after, though his wound received on the first of May was then healed over.

On the 28th of August, the three Anarchists were tried for wounding the police with deliberate intention to murder them. In proof of which the indictment quoted some blood-thirsty language said to have been used by Descamp at a public meeting on April 25th. The Public Prosecutor demanded the heads of all three. Anarchists are no Socialists, he urged, the Brussels Congress says so! "Those who refused the Anarchists a seat amongst them are men of science, authorised representatives of the Socialist doctrine, men with whom one can discuss, whom one can invite to one's table; whilst the men you have before you are nothing but vulgar assassins."

Descamps in his interrogation stated that his supposed blood-thirsty phrases had been concocted for him by the police reporters. "I am a revolutionist, but a humanitarian. We Anarchists hate neither bourgeois nor police; we hate existing institutions, which are against the law of nature. . . . If we had intended to murder the police, we should have gone unexpectedly to their quarters and killed them. It was they who came to us, and we simply protected ourselves. It was the police, always drunk on demonstration days, who began."

"But why were you armed?"

"I expected insults and brutalities, and I would not let myself be killed like a dog. And, as it happened, I did merely defend my life when it was threatened."

Descamp was condemned to five and Dardare to three years imprisonment, Léveillé was acquitted.

A CONCERT & BALL, for the benefit of the International School, will be given at the ATHENÆUM HALL, 73, Tottenham Court Road, on Monday, October 12, at 8 p.m. Tickets 1s. each, of all London groups.

THE BELGIAN LABOR PARTY AND ITS LATEST ACHIEVEMENTS.

(From a Belgian correspondent.)

THE Belgian Labor Party is an organisation comprising a certain number of Workmen's Unions with a Central Committee, to which are attached Cooperative Associations like the "Maison du Peuple," at Brussels, and "Voruit," in Ghent.

The advantages and drawbacks of such an organisation appear at a first glance. Certainly it groups and holds together, by the ties of interest more than of principle, a rather large number of working people. On the other hand, the same inconveniences which occur in the Social Democratic Party in Germany are also met with here, namely, absolute rule of the leaders, strict discipline enforced in the groups, wholesale expulsions of opponents, sinecures, laxity of conviction and consequently of energy in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, and, finally, an irresistible bias towards parliamentarism. The leaders feel tempted to use the force at their disposal for personal advancement, and reluctant to further any genuine labor movement, for any such movement entails a pecuniary loss to the party, and brings the leaders into collision with the government and perhaps into personal dangers.

A brief survey of recent events will bear out the truth of this statement.

The bulk of the Belgian working population is formed, as everybody knows, by the miners. The situation of these workers differs very much from one district to another; for instance, it is very bad in the Borinage, whilst in the Centre it is considerably better; but, with this qualification, it is everywhere sufficiently bad, and since 1884 has been steadily growing worse. This circumstance accounts for the very frequent strikes in this trade, although a better reason may be that the miners soon get tired of the dullness and uniformity of their existence.

This year the idea of a general strike in all trades was widely spread amongst the rank and file of the Belgian proletariat. It had been formally promised by the socialist leaders to the miners, and the Paris congress had also kindled hopes of international help. The Westphalian miners gave the cue for the outbreak of the strikes. But the socialist leaders, besides their general aversion of which we have spoken above, had this time a special reason against the strike. They had started, in connivance with the bourgeois radicals, a campaign to obtain universal suffrage, or something like it, and so get into parliament. The workmen, still less the peasants, did not understand what was meant by such a nostrum. They were, however, told by socialist speakers, who appeared on public platforms hand in hand with bourgeois politicians, that it meant all sorts of good things: higher wages, less work, cheap food, and no taxes. On this line the propaganda promised well, and the government was inclined to compromise by allowing an occupancy-vote with some qualifications.

Now, to carry out even that reform, the constitution had to be revised and a special parliament charged with the task: and the government, before acceding to the request for the dissolution of the actual Chamber for the purpose of constitutional revision, wanted the agreement of all parties to its own plan of electoral reform, and even some reward for its generosity. It demanded, amongst other things, that the control of the police, now vested in local bodies, should be handed over to the central government.

These conditions, heavy as they were, were practically accepted by the radicals as well as by the socialists; and the revision would have been probably at this hour carried into effect (with no beneficial result for the working classes, no doubt), had it not been for the miners, who compromised the question by striking against the will of the Labor Party leaders. I have forgotten to say that, to avert this danger, the said leaders had convened in Brussels, on the 5th of April, a congress, which they caused to decide against the strike. But the manœuvre was of no avail: the strike broke out just the same.

At this crisis the leaders of the Labor Party exhibited their abilities in the most striking light. The strike once broken out, it would have been foolish to oppose it. The whole working population of Belgium would have risen against the Labor Party Committee, and they would have ignominiously fallen. So they conceived a plan, than which it would be difficult to conceive anything more cunning. They rallied to the strikers and went indeed so far as to promise that all trades would follow the example of the miners. At the same time they declared that, although the strike owed its origin exclusively to economical causes, especially to diminution of wages and deliberate vexations by the company's agents, yet the workmen would be satisfied if only the revision of the Constitution were acceded to. They let the government and their bourgeois friends understand that something should be done to quiet the workmen, who were very much exasperated at that moment; and the government caused the Parliamentary Committee charged with the revision affair to meet and appoint a reporter. No sooner was this done than the socialist leaders shouted triumph, organised public rejoicings, illuminations, etc., and proclaimed that, as the great end was almost attained, and the new era for the working class was dawning, it was the strictest duty of all workmen to resume their daily work and trust entirely to their leaders.

The miners did not submit to this advice; but from that day they were abandoned by their brothers of the other trades, and so their cause was lost.

The socialist leaders now went on preparing themselves for the coming elections: but the government suddenly refrained from any further move in the direction of the revision. The appointed reporter staunchly refused to present his report; and persevered two months and a half in this attitude, notwithstanding the sarcasm with which he was gratified by certain newspapers, one of which used to publish daily comic verses

upon this non-reporting reporter. At last, on the eve of the close of the session, the report was produced; and further proceedings in the matter postponed until November.

In consequence of this pitiful failure, the Labor Party has lost very much of its hold upon the working classes, especially in the mining districts of Liège and Charleroi. You already know the favorable reception which our Anarchist paper, "L'Homme Libre," has met with in Socialist groups, in spite of the excommunication pronounced against it by the socialist (?) leaders.

There is good reason to hope that the Anarchist movement will reach quite an unprecedented degree of development in the near future in Belgium.

THE BRUSSELS CONGRESS.

A SUGGESTION.

Comrades,—I hope that your excellent article in last month's *FREEDOM* on the Brussels Congress will not only be widely read by Anarchists, but that our comrades all over the country will do their best to read the same before their fellow workers on every possible occasion, at the club, the union, debating society, etc., etc.

The events connected with the late Brussels Congress are to us of a far too serious nature to allow of their passing without any further notice. The cowardly behaviour of the Social Democratic leaders, their shirking of free discussion, should serve as a timely warning to the workers all over the globe as to the game these NEW PRETENDERS, called Social Democratic Leaders, are up to; and, at the same time, Anarchists should take up the very concrete and striking lesson, which the Brussels manœuvre offers them, as to the best and most effective methods they have to adopt in future for their propaganda, so as to avoid reaction entering the ranks of labor and thereby staving off the progress of the Social Revolution.

In the history of the evolution of the human race it is remarkable to notice the great similarity of tendencies that appear both in the strife for political domination and the economic exploitation. The end of the last century heralded the downfall of monarchy, on the political side, with the collapse of the masterdom of the nobles, on the economic, and it had brought us in their stead representative government and middle-class exploitation respectively. The wage-slave, as worshipper of the bourgeois *laissez faire*, appears side by side with that dupe of an elector, bowing and cringing before his Parliamentary Leader.

During the last years, in the economical world, owing to the fierceness of competition and consequent inability to fleece the workers single-handed, we see the tendency in vogue to form Joint Stock Companies, Rings, Syndicates, bogus Cooperations, etc., etc.; while in the political world we also see a like tendency to form Joint Intrigue Companies, Cliques of Marxists or Possibilists, Party Leaders, etc., each trying to take over the BOSSING of the labor movement COLLECTIVELY, since there is no chance for a SINGLE BOSS. This is evident to every disinterested observer; but on no occasion is this tendency so strikingly exhibited as during such congresses. No wonder then these cliques fear the advent of Anarchism, which will make an end to political place-hunting and bossing as well as to economic exploitation. There are, certainly, some to be found among these gentry whose honesty and integrity are unquestionable; but they are merely dupes and tools. Our task then as Anarchists is to sound the warning to the workers all over the world against these NEW PRETENDERS.

But besides this there is another thing to be learnt from the Congress, which I hope our comrades will take to heart. It is a matter we have all too much neglected. We must turn our attention far more than we have done to labor unions and adopt a more sympathetic and fraternal attitude towards them. It came out clearly at Brussels that while our Anarchist comrades of Spain, Italy, and Belgium are fully alive to the situation, and are constantly working for the cause side by side with their fellow workers, the trade unionists, and so have saved the latter from becoming the rendezvous of political misleaders and wire-pullers, and have given their labor organisations a thoroughly Anarchist and Revolutionary character,—we here in England have unfortunately been content with leaving the whole of the labor movement to the mercy of short-sighted Social Democrats and would-be M.P.'s, County Councillors, Beloved Commissioners, and what not. It is not enough to call oneself an Anarchist and let the practical every-day-life of the workers slide past, whilst one is spinning theories of a happy future or cursing exploiters and rulers. The best way for a worker to spread Anarchism amongst his fellow workers is not by secluding himself from the daily interests and immediate aims of his mates, but to enter into those interests with them and agitate amongst them—always, of course, from his own point of view. Our Anarchism is worth very little if it is not the practical inspiration of our every-day conduct. We ought not only to belong to unions and clubs, but as avowed Anarchists to take an active part in the work connected with them.

It may be said that there is the danger of some comrades accepting offices in such unions, and thereby getting spoiled and corrupted, and lost for the Revolutionary cause; but this is a thing that depends entirely on the personal character and conviction of such comrades. Moreover, even if it were only for Anarchists showing themselves here and there, the Social Democrats would not dare to take up such reactionary lines as they do now. I need not and cannot determine here exactly what position each comrade has to take up in respect to his trade union, to his workmen's club, etc.; but would it not be worth while for our comrades in London as elsewhere to meet in conference to discuss this matter and come to some understanding on it? I hope it is.

Yours in the cause of Anarchy,

A WORKER.

ANARCHY.

BY ENRICO MALATESTA.

(Continued from previous number.)

We have said that Anarchy is society without government. But is the suppression of government possible, desirable, or wise? Let us see.

What is the government? There is a disease of the human mind called the metaphysical tendency, causing man, after he has by a logical process abstracted the quality from an object, to be subject to a kind of hallucination which makes him take the abstraction for the real thing. This metaphysical tendency, in spite of the blows of positive science, has still strong root in the minds of the majority of our contemporary fellow-men. It has such influence that many consider government as an actual entity, with certain given attributes of reason, justice, equity, independently of the people who compose the government.

For those who think in this way, government, or the state, is the abstract social power, and it represents, always in the abstract, the general interest. It is the expression of the right of all, and considered as limited by the rights of each. This way of understanding government is supported by those interested, to whom it is an urgent necessity that the principle of authority should be maintained, and should always survive the faults and errors of the persons who succeed to the exercise of power.

For us, the government is the aggregate of the governors, and the governors—kings, presidents, ministers, members of parliament, and what not—are those who have the power to make laws, to regulate the relations between men, and to force obedience to these laws. They are those who decide upon and claim the taxes, enforce military service, judge and punish transgressors of the laws. They subject men to regulations, and supervise and sanction private contracts. They monopolise certain branches of production and public services, or, if they wish, all production and public service. They promote or hinder the exchange of goods. They make war or peace with the governments of other countries. They concede or withhold free-trade and many things else. In short, the governors are those who have the power, in a greater or lesser degree, to make use of the collective force of society, that is, of the physical, intellectual, and economic force of all, to oblige each to do the said governors' wish. And this power constitutes, in our opinion, the very principle of government, the principle of authority.

But what reason is there for the existence of government?

Why abdicate one's own liberty, one's own initiative in favor of other individuals? Why give them the power to be the masters, with or contrary to the wish of each, to dispose of the forces of all in their own way? Are the governors such very exceptionally gifted men as to enable them, with some show of reason, to represent the masses, and act in the interests of all men better than all men would be able to do for themselves? Are they so infallible and incorruptible that one can confide to them, with any semblance of prudence, the fate of each and all, trusting to their knowledge and their goodness?

And even if there existed men of infinite goodness and knowledge, even if we assume what has never been verified in history, and what we believe it would be impossible to verify, namely, that the government might devolve upon the ablest and best, would the possession of governmental power add anything to their beneficent influence? Would it not rather paralyze or destroy it? For those who govern find it necessary to occupy themselves with things which they do not understand, and, above all, to waste the greater part of their energy in keeping themselves in power, striving to satisfy their friends, holding the discontented in check, and mastering the rebellious.

Again, be the governors good or bad, wise or ignorant, who is it that appoints them to their office? Do they impose themselves by right of war, conquest, or revolution? Then, what guarantees have the public that their rulers have the general good at heart? In this case it is simply a question of usurpation, and if the subjects are discontented nothing is left to them but to throw off the yoke, by an appeal to arms. Are the governors chosen from a certain class or party? Then certainly the ideas and interest of that class or party will triumph, and the wishes and interests of the others will be sacrificed. Are they elected by universal suffrage? Now numbers are the sole criterion, and numbers are certainly no proof of reason, justice or capacity. Under universal suffrage the elected are those who know best how to take in the masses. The minority, which may happen to be half minus one, is sacrificed. And that without considering that there is another thing to take into account.

Experience has shown it is impossible to hit upon an electoral system which really ensures election by the actual majority.

Many and various are the theories by which men have sought to justify the existence of government. All, however, are founded, confessedly or not, on the assumption that the individuals of a society have contrary interests, and that an external superior power is necessary to oblige some to respect the interests of others, by prescribing and imposing a rule of conduct, according to which the interests at strife may be harmonised as much as possible, and according to which each obtains the maximum of satisfaction with the minimum of sacrifice. If, say the theorists of the authoritarian school, the interests, tendencies, and desires of an individual are in opposition to those of another individual, or mayhap all society, who

will have the right and the power to oblige the one to respect the interests of the other or others? Who will be able to prevent the individual citizen from offending the general will? The liberty of each, say they, has for its limit the liberty of others; but who will establish those limits, and who will cause them to be respected? The natural antagonism of interests and passions creates the necessity for government, and justifies authority. Authority intervenes as moderator of the social strife, and defines the limits of the rights and duties of each.

This is the theory; but the theory to be sound ought to be based upon facts and explain them. We know well how in social economy theories are too often invented to justify facts, that is, to defend privilege and cause it to be accepted tranquilly by those who are its victims. Let us here look at the facts themselves.

In all the course of history, as at the present epoch, government is either the brutal, violent, arbitrary domination of the few over the many, or it is an instrument ordained to secure domination and privilege to those who, by force, or cunning, or inheritance, have taken to themselves all the means of life, and first and foremost the soil, whereby they hold the people in servitude, making them work for their advantage.

Governments oppress mankind in two ways, either directly by brute force, that is physical violence, or indirectly by depriving them of the means of subsistence and thus reducing them to helplessness at discretion. Political power originated in the first method; economic privilege arose from the second. Governments can also oppress man by acting on his emotional nature, and in this way constitute religious authority. But as spirit cannot exist independently, so bodies constituted for the propagation of lies have no ground for existence, except in so far as they are the consequences of political and economic privileges, and are a means of defending and consolidating them.

In primitive society, when the world was not so densely populated as now, and social relations were less complicated, when any circumstance prevented the formation of habits and customs of solidarity, or destroyed those which already existed, and established the domination of man over man, the two powers, the political and the economical, were united in the same hands—and often also in those of one single individual. Those who had by force conquered and impoverished the others, constrained them to become their servants, and perform all things for them according to their caprice. The victors were at once proprietors, legislators, kings, judges, and executioners.

But with the increase of population, with the growth of needs, with the complication of social relationships, the prolonged continuance of such despotism became impossible. For their own security the rulers, often much against their will, were obliged to depend upon a privileged class, that is, a certain number of co-interested individuals, and were also obliged to let each of these individuals provide for his own sustenance. Nevertheless they reserved to themselves the supreme or ultimate control. In other words, the rulers reserved to themselves the right to exploit all at their own convenience, and so to satisfy their kingly vanity. Thus private wealth was developed under the shadow of the ruling power, for its protection and—often unconsciously—as its accomplice. Thus the class of proprietors arose. And they, concentrating little by little the means of wealth in their own hands, all the means of production, the very fountains of life—agriculture, industry, and exchange—ended by becoming a power in themselves. This power, by the superiority of its means of action, and the great mass of interests it embraces, always ends by more or less openly subjugating the political power, that is, the government, which it makes its policeman.

This phenomenon has been reproduced often in history. Every time that, by invasion or any military enterprise whatever, physical brute force has taken the upperhand in society, the conquerors have shown the tendency to concentrate government and property in their own hands. In every case, however, as the government cannot attend to the production of wealth, and overlook and direct everything, it finds it needful to conciliate a powerful class, and private property is again established. With it comes the division of the two sorts of power, that of the persons who control the collective force of society, and that of the proprietors, upon whom these governors become essentially dependent, because the proprietors command the sources of the said collective force.

But never has this state of things been so accentuated as in modern times. The development of production, the immense extension of commerce, the extensive power that money has acquired, and all the economic results flowing from the discovery of America, the invention of machinery, etc., have secured such supremacy to the capitalist class that it is no longer content to trust to the support of the government, and has come to wish that the government shall emanate from itself; a government composed of members from its own class, continually under its control and specially organised to defend its class against the possible revenge of the disinherited. Hence the origin of the modern parliamentary system.

To-day the government is composed of proprietors, or people of their class so entirely under their influence that the richest of them do not find it necessary to take an active part in it themselves. Rothschild, for instance, does not need to be either M.P. or minister, it is enough for him to keep M.P.'s and ministers dependent upon himself.

(To be continued.)

THE PRESENT CRISIS IN SOCIALISM.

CONTEMPORARY Socialism is certainly German in character and origin. The German Social Democrats have given the word of command to the Socialists and workers of the world. In Belgium the Workmen's Party was founded by Socialists returned from Germany. In Italy M. Costa—the late M. Costa we might say—invoked the example of the Socialists of Germany when he wished to enter Parliament. In England it was the disciples of Marx who started the S. D. F., and those amongst the English Social Democrats of to-day who are not Marxists, are Jevonites; that is humble devotees of orthodox Political Economy. Finally, in France the popularisers of Marx are at the head of the Socialist movement.

It is a curious thing that the scientific adversaries of Marx follow none the less Marxist tactics. Who does not know Adler's book* in refutation of "Capital"? Well, Adler is for labor legislation and parliamentary action! It is true he accuses Marx of self-contradiction, and not unreasonably. But if he had thoroughly entered into the spirit of the Marxist system, he would have seen that the contradiction is in the system itself, and that, at bottom, labor legislation, as we shall presently see, flows directly from the doctrine of "Capital."

Another foe of Marxism is M. Malon. He and his fellow contributors to the "Revue Socialiste" have written long articles, not free indeed from a tinge of jingoism, but fundamentally directed against German Socialism and its servile imitation in France and elsewhere. Yet this has not hindered them from voting with the Marxist leaders at the Brussels Congress and almost at their dictation.

Finally, in Italy, the leading spirits of the Milanese Socialist League, after noisily announcing in their proposed program that they repudiated politico-Radical reforms, have faced right about upon the publication of the proposals for a new program by the German Social Democrats. Yet these are intelligent men, and it is astonishing that the spectacle of the "big battalions" and sham victories of Messrs. Liebknecht and Bebel should have such an effect upon them.

But what is more curious still is to see in Germany even the Opposition, for example the "Young" Berlin Party, not knowing how to find better weapons to combat the chiefs of the "Old Party" than the theories of Marx. Truly Marxism has entered into the soul of the workers! To such an extent are their heads bewildered with theories about equivalents, surplus value, fixed and variable capital and other word-puzzles!

It must be owned that Marx in his life-time was more revolutionary than all his disciples of to-day (witness his damning accusation against the hybrid Gotha program), and that his theory lends itself admirably to refute the parliamentary tactics of the present leaders.

Indeed when the "Young Party" wish to combat these tactics, they have only to recall what Marx has written of the causes of the exploitation of the worker, the cause of causes being the capitalist system, the wage-system, the separation of the workers from the instruments of labor. If they recall this, they have only to conclude with Marx that without the abolition of capital and wage-system, without putting the instruments of labor into collective possession, no serious and general improvement in the lot of the workers is possible.

And this is what they do say at their meetings. This is what Marx taught and what the Parliamentary Marxists of to-day wish to be silent about, while they lull the workers with the hope of seeing their situation gradually improved by means of petty laws regulating the duration of work and other details of capitalist exploitation.

But it is none the less true that, by a contradiction, which, as we have said, is a part of his system, Marx looked forward to labor legislation, though within certain limits and rather against the grain. So that the "Old Party" have only to say to the "Young Party" who oppose them with quotations from Marx: "Turn the page!"

The cause of the contradiction into which Marx fell, his chief error, is the importance he gave to the methods and details of capitalist exploitation.

Marx supposed the labor contract to be just in its origin, because founded on the laws of exchange. The worker sells his labor-force. The capitalist buys it at its fair price and pays for it. Here is nothing to object to. The exploitation comes after. The capitalist, says Marx in plain terms, acts as he has a right to act. He pushes his exploitation to the last extremity. He prolongs the working-day, he intensifies labor by machinery and other expedients, extracting more produce from the workers while he reduces their cost of maintenance. He is still within his rights, and all said and done there is nothing to reproach him with.† But see how in this fashion capital, wealth accumulate on one side and poverty on the other; an overthrow is inevitable. Thanks to the concentration of capital, the embryo as it were of a Collectivist society is forming in the midst of the capitalist society, absorbing nourishment from it. The time will come when, force, that is the

Revolution, aiding, the capitalist envelope will break, and the Collectivist society will come forth ready formed from the womb of the present.

Such, in brief, is the theory of Marx. An incomplete, defective, narrow theory, anti-scientific, despite the erudition with which its author has surrounded it. A theory which led Socialism into the blind-alley where it finds itself to-day, by causing it to fall back upon the track of trades-unionism and middle-class radicalism.

For whatever Marx thought and wrote about it, the workers have said to themselves that, as the labor-contract is considered just and conformable to the law of exchange, there may be perhaps means of remedying the most crying excesses of capitalist exploitation by good laws. Reduce the hours of labour, limit the employment of women and children in factories, make the lives of laboring men more secure, and you have already a curb, say the workers educated in the school of Marx, upon capitalist exploitation. Why wait to see a change in society, till wealth accumulates more and more in the hands of a few privileged persons, and poverty spreads amongst the toiling masses? Can we not at once begin to make the capitalists hear reason, and to curtail their power of exploitation? And if this curtailment should make it impossible for them to continue their business and force them to shut up shop, certes, it would be none the worse!

Thus reason the workers, and this is why, starting with Marx's theories, they have arrived at labor legislation and parliamentary action. And from their own point of view they do not reason badly. If the whole evil consisted in the expedients pointed out by Marx as those whereby the capitalist appropriates a larger and larger slice of the produce of labor, if there were nothing but the prolongation of the working-day, the introduction of machinery, the factory system, etc., the workers might, perhaps, save themselves, were it merely by the institution of co-operative societies, and by handing over to begin with, as has been proposed, public works and supplies to working co-operative associations.

But the evil is far greater. The system of the exploitation of the worker is something vaster. It is as vast as the whole social organisation. Property, commerce, politics, codes of law, officialism, taxes, morals, the family system, all enter into it, all contribute to it. Capitalism is only a form, a modality, a phase of the exploitation of the worker. That exploitation existed before capitalism, and, if all other institutions remained, would even exist after it. Laws protecting the worker would modify the incidence of exploitation, the way in which it oppresses; but a thousand influences of the commercial and political system would react against them and neutralise their effect. There, indeed, lies the crux of the question.

Marxism is a petty Socialism, a one-sided Socialism reduced to the question of the labor-contract, a conventional Socialism for the fleeting moment of capitalist efflorescence. The time has come when it behoves us to go out from the straitened chamber wherein the mighty claims of the proletariat are stifled, to widen our horizon, to enlarge our views.

CORRESPONDENCE.

DEAR COMRADES,—Reading the interesting discussions on Communism in *Freedom* has disposed me to pen a few remarks expressive of my view of the subject.

Communism is just and desirable because it is the most beneficial economic system. It is undeniable that more and better work can be done, and more easily done, by men co-operating than by men isolated, and experience teaches that the most effective motive that can actuate co-operation is community of interest, the hope of sharing in common the results of the work done in common. In Communism, moreover, will be found the best security from the anxious uncertainties which overshadow the lives of most persons to-day. Most men are liable to reverses of fortune and the position of the producer who depends for his livelihood upon his own exertions is always precarious. If, in an agricultural district the crops fail, have the cultivators of that locality the right to have their needs supplied out of their neighbours' superfluity, or may they only put themselves at their mercy and appeal for charity? In the latter case the only freedom left to the unfortunate is that of accepting the terms offered by the others as the price of their assistance, or of starving—just the same "liberty" which is admitted by the existing order of capitalistic exploitation. When once this execrable order is fairly upset by the Social Revolution, the only way in which we can guard against its re-establishment is to recognise Communism fully and with all its consequences.

Whatever is best for man is morally right; this is the only reasonable basis on which to ground morality, and thus the question of Individualism versus Communism may be put concisely thus: Is it best

self." And he concludes his remarks by stating that capitalist and workman "work together to their mutual advantage for the common weal and in the interest of all." And again: "The owner of the money has paid the value of a day's labor-power; his, therefore, is the use of it for a day; a day's labor-power belongs to him. The circumstance that, on the one hand, the daily sustenance of labor-power costs only half a day's labor, while on the other hand, the very same labor-power can work during a whole day, that consequently the value which its use during one day creates is double what he pays for that use, this circumstance is, without doubt, a piece of good luck for the buyer, but by no means an injury to the seller."

* "Die Grundlagen der Karl Marx Kritik," etc. Georg Adler, Leipsic, 1887.

† These are the actual words in Marx's *Capital*: "In the contract of Labor rule Freedom, Equality, Property, and . . . Bentham. Freedom, because both buyer and seller of . . . labor-power are constrained only by their own free will. They contract as free agents, and the agreement they come to is but the form in which they give legal expression to their common will. Equality, because each enters into relation with the other as with a simple owner of commodities, and they exchange equivalent for equivalent. Property, because each disposes only of what is his own; and Bentham because each looks only to him-

and therefore right that a man should work for himself alone, or both for himself and others? If the former, then society should not merely be revolutionised but abolished, "every one for himself" should become our motto, and man should strive to divest himself of his instincts as a social, and shape his evolution towards the more appropriate state of a solitary animal. If on the other hand our social instincts are part and parcel of our better nature, let us act consistently with them and make our society a true one of equals and brethren.

Faternally yours,

HENRY GLASSE.

THE PROPAGANDA. REPORTS.

LONDON—

Regent's Park has been the main centre of operations. Anarchist meetings have been addressed there every Sunday morning and afternoon, by members of the Freedom, Commonweal, and Young Anarchist Groups and other comrades, and many interesting conversations have been held with the by-standers. Our ranks have recently been reinforced by Comrades Barlas and Cyril Bell, of Edinburgh.

Socialist Co-operative Stores.—Lectures delivered by Touzeau Parris on Anarchy, and J. Turner on Co-operation and Labour.

Berner Street Club.—Excellent Anarchist meetings have taken place every Saturday evening; speakers Yanovsky, Weinberg, Ruttenberg, Wess, &c.; also a meeting to discuss the Russian Famine.

PROVINCES—

Newcastle-on-Tyne.—Sunday morning meetings on Quay Side, speakers James and Pearson. Monday evenings, discussions at Lockhart's Cocoa Rooms, opened by Pearson, Porter, Kapper and James. Wednesdays, 7.30 p.m., meetings at the Cattle Market.

Edinburgh.—On Sept. 13, T. Pearson (Newcastle An. Com. Group) addressed meetings in Leith and Edinburgh on Anarchist Communism. Large audiences, who received Anarchist ideas with applause and asked many questions, which were replied to by the lecturer. There seems a great field for Anarchist propaganda in Scotland.

Norwich.—The New Anarchist Club and Lecture Hall was opened on August 24, with a tea and public meeting. Louise Michel was prevented by illness from being present, but the meeting was addressed by Mowbray, Coulon, Mollett, Headley, Poyntz, etc. On September 27 Louise Michel and Merline visited Norwich and addressed an enthusiastic meeting at the Club. Full report next month.

Manchester.—The Manchester comrades have been active throughout the last month, preaching the gospel of discontent. Good meetings have been held, when weather permitted, at Gorton, Stevenson Square and the New Cross. At the latter place we made a new departure a few Sundays ago, when Comrade Theobald started the meeting with singing "Workers of England" almost drowning the howls of the teetotal dervishes round the corner with its stirring strains, and securing us the largest audience we have ever had. Since then the plan has been tried with the same success to ourselves, and the same discomfort to our opponents. Meetings have been attended at the Knott Mill Hall and the Manchester Liberty Club—an individualist organisation—and the principles of Anarchy v. Revolution discussed with our antagonists. Comrade Kropotkin was here on the 20th, and addressed a large audience at the New Islington Hall, on "Mutual Aid as a Law of Nature," and a good deal of literature was disposed of by the comrades.

Leicester.—Since our last account of ourselves we have not been idle. Our great difficulty has been in securing speakers. London has furnished us with A. J. Smith and H. B. Tarleton of Hammersmith, H. Snell of Woolwich, and our old friend Mowbray. From Manchester we have had W. Bailie and A. Barton. From Sheffield, John Bingham and the redoubtable Dr. Creaghe. From Derby and Nottingham, Purcell and Peacock. When unable to get speakers from other parts, our local speakers—Taylor, Barclay, Stanley, and Clara Warner have shown good form. A certain speech of Barclay's, in which he undertook to prove the practicability of Socialism, and recommended the 20,000 able-bodied workers of Leicester to assemble, take possession of stores and factories, and distribute food, clothing, and furniture to all who needed them, has much offended the managers and little manufacturers. The Sheffield speakers seem smitten with Bakouninism. They introduce Theology, and discuss topics that appear to us others to be as unconnected with Socialism as are Conic Sections and the undulatory theory of light. Of the other speakers, Barton of Manchester appears to have surprised a great number among our audiences. For a youth of 23, his eloquence is indeed remarkable. In no other cause, probably, than that of Socialism, could be found speakers so young and yet so earnest and capable. Peacock's visit was signalled by a set debate with a Parson, at Gallowtree-gate chapel, Peacock backing Socialism with great force and success. We must not omit our encounter with "Law an' Order." July 5th Comrade Warner was threatened by the police for bringing our dray into Humberstone Gate, and in a day or two, received a printed warning, which he ignored. On the 12th, Gorrie insisted on lugging out the offending vehicle. Accosted by the police, he refused point blank to give name, address, or any satisfaction whatever. The police were puzzled by this unexpected action, and eventually abandoned the contest. John Bingham, who was our speaker on this occasion, very seriously lacerated the sensitive feelings of the police Inspector by vigorously expressing his opinion of the "force" in language the reverse of complimentary. During the week the police were mean enough to intimidate the widow-woman from whom we hired the dray; and we have had to seek fresh fields for one. On the 19th, Barclay brought up another dray and exposed and defied the Police. The case got wind, so the Hosiery Union, Trades Council officials, and even members of the Salvation Army, came on our platform to defend the right of public meeting. We have the entire sympathy of everybody, and have not since then been interfered with. Barclay has spoken several times at Derby; and with Clara Warner and others at Ansty, a large village 5 miles distant from here, where the inhabitants, like the noble Bereans of old, receive the true doctrine with intelligence and gratitude.

Great Yarmouth.—"Still it moves." Owing to inclement weather, no open-air meetings were held on Sept. 6th in Yarmouth. Several comrades met in the Club-room in the evening, when there was an interesting discussion on "Revolutionary Methods for realising Freedom." On the 13th, Comrades Ceiley, Poyntz and Headley offered opposition to some vegetarian advocates, and showed although the individual might benefit himself by eating beans instead of beef, etc., society would not benefit thereby. In the afternoon Comrades Saunders, Poyntz, and Headley visited Burgh and Bradwell with large bundles of old *Freedom*s, *Commonweal*s, and *Workers Cry* for free distribution. In the evening a large meeting on the Hall Quay was addressed by Poyntz and Headley. Great interest taken in both speakers. Sept. 20th, in the evening, in the Club-room, Comrade Paul Pry read "A Parable of Misfits," and "God," out of the *Sheffield Anarchist* of that week. Comrade Paul Pry has also held two meetings in the country and once was threatened with a swim in the river. A young man who used to attend our meetings regularly, but who was not a member, has been discharged by his employer for doing so. This is freedom of contract, glorious civilisation, but Britons ever shall be slaves, unless they themselves break their chains. Comrade Ceiley has been compelled to leave the town owing to the

boycott of the local capitalists. Good sale of *Freedom*, *Commonweal*, *Sheffield Anarchist*, and pamphlets, but poor collections, considering the large audiences we have had. On the 22nd, Comrade Baker attended a political meeting in the Gladstone Hall and sold several papers of the current issue. We are on the look-out for another shop to enable us to increase our sale of revolutionary literature. We are trying a new method of propaganda and advertisement for papers, i.e., posting front page of *Freedom*, *Commonweal*, and *Sheffield Anarchist*, that we have left on hand, on the walls and hoardings of the town; we find it answers well.

Hull.—Many comrades will be aware that for the last ten years we have had a good Anarchist group and club in Hull. Although the club does not consist of Anarchists only, the Anarchists predominate; all work together harmoniously for the common cause. The first eight years of our propaganda work was chiefly amongst the German population in Hull, and also the foreign seamen frequenting this important port. We have distributed English literature in the town, and sent a large amount of revolutionary literature to the Continent (at some considerable danger to many of our comrades), where such mental food was prohibited by the ruling class, although required and desired by the workers. The last two years we have carried on a vigorous English propaganda, and as a proof of it we are able to say that as a club we are bitterly hated by all capitalistic oppressors, but admired by large numbers of the working class for our endeavours to rouse them from inactivity and the onslaught we have made on many local sweaters. We have organised trade-unions, carried on strikes, held large indoor and outdoor meetings on the labor question, and spread large quantities of Socialist and Anarchist literature among all those taking an interest in the labor agitation; our club has been the centre of all this work. In spite of the existing prejudice against "foreigners" we have gone out to spread the "Gospel of Discontent," and taught our English brothers that the same evil system which produces such disastrous results to the workers exists in all countries; that the only "foreigners" were the landocracy and moneyocracy, "foreign" as much to the German as to the English workers, "foreign" in mode of living, habits, appearance, and aspirations. We have thus been helping to bring about greater international unity amongst the workers born in different countries. Very gratifying results have followed our endeavours in this respect. As a rule, the German group have only been able to supply the sinews of war—cash—while our English comrades, who rallied round from all quarters, did the actual work of propaganda. Comrades from London, Sheffield, Leeds, Chesterfield, and other places have greatly assisted us. At times we have made such a stir in Hull that the local Press could not afford to ignore us. Good reports appeared of our 11th of November Chicago martyrs' meeting, when we had comrade T. Pearson from London specially for the occasion; and our Commune demonstration on the 22nd of March. But we obtained the greatest publicity for our movement by the May 3rd demonstration, when we fought for the right of public meeting on the Corporation Field. Our local Trades Council, in spite of the reactionary machinations of its head officials, had determined to hold an 8-hours' meeting there, but the Municipal Property Committee denied them the use of the field, although they had "labour representation" in the shape of their president upon the Municipal Council. The Trades Council bowed to their decision and abandoned the meeting. We immediately called a meeting at the Drypool Green, and ordered a rally on to the Corporation field. At our meeting we passed a resolution for adjourning to the Corporation field, and headed by our banner (which bears the motto "Is Liberty Worth Fighting For?") marched nearly a thousand strong to the field. We expected to find a body of police there ready to create a riot—the blows wouldn't have been all on one side—but to our surprise only five "bobbies" were there. The Hull branch of the N. S. S. had meanwhile been speaking from our rally, and on our arrival the two meetings amalgamated and we used the platform "in common." Messrs. N. B. Billany, Comrades G. E. C. Newiger, T. Robinson, J. Sketchley, C. Reynolds, A. Hall, and G. Smith were the speakers. The local and district newspapers were full of it the next day. Some had more than four columns containing the speeches alone—speeches strongly inciting to resistance and contempt for the decrees of "Authority." The names and addresses of all the speakers had been taken, but although some newspapers called loudly for it no prosecution was entered against them. Meetings have been held there every Sunday since by the N. S. S., and we are always ready to assist when necessary. We always preach the principles of Anarchism as well as teaching revolt. Comrade G. Cores has been with us for some weeks and held good outdoor meetings. We do not intend to be idle in the coming autumn and winter seasons. Already several of our comrades are engaged to lecture for the Sunday Association and the National Secular Society on "Socialism" and "Anarchism," and we shall organise indoor lectures of our own in addition to other educational work. The cause is "marching on" in Hull and we shall not rest until the present miserable and unjust society has been destroyed, to make room for one based upon the better foundation of justice and freedom for all.—GUSTAVE SMITH, Club Liberty, 7, Blanket Row.

Aberdeen.—Propaganda goes on here with increasing success, says our correspondent. Our meetings are larger every week, Comrades Duncan and Addie still bearing the brunt of the open-air work. Saturday Aug. 29th, we went to a Land Nationalisation Demonstration organised by the Aberdeen Socialist Society, and were the cause of a "kick-up." The revolutionary banners and mottoes displayed by our comrades on the marshalling ground, together with an effigy of Capitalism hanging upon a gibbet erected upon a cart, gave much offence to the "Socialists" and Trade Unionists. Mr. Leatham demanded that the pious wishes expressed concerning the soul of capitalism, etc., should be removed from the cart before the procession started, and fetched "two boys in blue" to enforce his demand. Our comrades left the ground, but afterwards rejoined the procession with the intention of seizing any opportunity that might come of exposing the hollowness of Parliamentary Socialism in Aberdeen. The procession, was, in our correspondent's opinion, a most miserable failure. Oct. 4th, Dr. Creaghe of Sheffield, will start the indoor work by lecturing in the large Oddfellows Hall.

Dublin.—At Socialist Union, Sept. 3, in the absence of the appointed lecturer, O'Gorman read Kropotkin's article on "Domestic Slavery" from *Freedom*. A very lively debate ensued, several of the speakers (one of whom named Brownrigg is brother of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Ossory, entirely approves of existing domestic institution) fell foul of our comrade's opinions. Fitzpatrick, King, and Toomey upheld the Socialist view. Thursday Oct. 1st, T. Hamilton lectures on "Charles Bradlaugh's Objections to Socialism Considered."

NOTICES.

LONDON—Anarchist meetings every Sunday, Regent's Park, 11.30 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. Hyde Park and Victoria Park, 3.30 p.m.

Young Anarchist Group meets at Autonomie Club, 6 Windmill Street, Wednesdays, 8 p.m.

Socialist Co-operative Federation, 7 Lamb's Conduit Street.—Lecture and Social evening every Sunday at 8 p.m.

Newcastle-on-Tyne.—Sunday mornings, meeting on the Quay. Monday, at 8.30 p.m., Discussion at Lockhart's Cocoa Rooms, Bigg Market. Wednesday, Cattle Market, 7.30 p.m. Oct. 11, N.S.S., 2 Clayton Street, T. Pearson, "Eternal Damnation."

Sheffield.—Socialist Club, 47 West Bar Green. Discussion, Thursday, 8 p.m.

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