

Freedom

C.I.R.A.

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MAY-DAY.

The years roll by, and May-Day has come again—an event that, in the times of “Merrie England,” would have been celebrated by joyous crowds of people who, although far from being free as we understand the word, nevertheless knew the seasons as we do not, and watched for the spring and the harvest as only those can who gain from the land by their own toil the bread for their frugal lives.

How different is it with the wage-slave of to-day. For him the seasons mean the whims and the fancies of a wealthy class whose caprices keep him overworked at one period and throw him, hopeless and hungry, into the ranks of the unemployed at another. The vogues and the fashions of a Lady Bountiful have displaced the harvests of a bountiful Nature; and even the food plain though it was, which in those bygone days came sweet and fresh from Mother Earth, in these disjointed times reaches the toiling masses poisoned with all the nauseating adulterations that profit-mongering invents for its own ends.

May-day of 1899 finds no “Merrie England” eagerly awaiting the festival of spring. What Keats wrote of his day is applicable to the present time:

Glory and loveliness have passed away;
For if we wander out in early morn,
No wreathed incense do we see upborne
Into the east to meet the smiling day:
No crowd of nymphs soft-voiced and young and gay,
In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,
Roses and pinks and violets to adorn
The shrine of Flora in her early May.

Before such idyllic times will be known—not impossible at all, save for the existence of capitalism—many stern matters will have to be discussed and fought out to a definite conclusion. And this brings us to a consideration of the present situation.

May-Day has not been forgotten either in England or on the Continent, but in the present condition of the labor world it was not to be expected that other than the usual manifestations of the international solidarity of labor would be shown. Stirring times are not always with us, and we have to plod through the dull years of reaction with hope born of the knowledge that the old questions unanswered are still fermenting in the minds of men; that the old problems still unsolved loom as large, as formidably as ever, on the horizon of the future, for all the quietness of the times.

The schemes of the capitalist have brought some severe reverses to the forces of labor in recent years, and all movements are feeling the effects of these defeats. In many cases the “leaders” have not been equal to the occasion and the men have not yet developed sufficient initiative to kick over the traces in which self-seeking officialism would always have them run. A new impulse is needed before we shall again revive the spirit of the attacks on the fortress of property and privilege; an impulse which must come from the workers themselves if it is to achieve any substantial results in the direction of their own emancipation. Anarchists have pointed out again and again that the time and money wasted on elections and parliamentary committees could and would work wonders if applied to the reorganisation of the International Labor Movement. It is a tremendous work, but it could be done if the barren road of politics was abandoned.

Next May-Day will be the first celebration in the new century, and we repeat what we have said before: that no more fitting opportunity could be afforded for the inauguration of new methods of attacking the strongholds of the classes who by their tools, the priest, the press and the politician, will continue to outwit Labor on all lines that are not distinctly revolutionary.

THE INTERNATIONAL, ITS PRECURSORS, AND ANARCHISM.

VI.

Robert Owen (1771–1858).

We have seen that so-called labor legislation dates from 1802, and that it was always practised and advised by statesmen, scientific men and political writers as well as by popular agitators, and by the people themselves in their numerous meetings and riots. According to the strange terminology of to-day we might be led to believe that R. Peel, Melbourne, Sadler, Ostler and so many others were Socialists. For Social Democratic members of parliament in all countries try to persuade workmen that the word Socialism means nothing else than regulations about working hours, insurance against accidents, old age pensions, etc.

The bold man who first made use of the terms “Socialism,” “Socialist,” “surplus-value,” “interest of the working class,” had a very different conception of Socialism. At first, statesmen themselves, in introducing different Bills, defined their aim and the motive of their acts clearly. For example, in 1819, at a time of great agitation and popular riots, the Duke of Kent (Queen Victoria’s father) in opening a meeting at which he presided, expressed himself in the following terms: “It may be doubted whether the permanent safety of the British Empire does not depend upon the measures which may be speedily adopted to ameliorate the condition of the working classes.” The Duke called upon Robert Owen to state these immediate measures, and the latter was qualified to speak on these *ameliorations*; for during the whole of his long and noble career as an agitator he helped many and tried by every means to accomplish the smallest act that would benefit the people. But we see what he and his friends thought of these *ameliorations* in the work of his intimate friend, W. Thompson.¹

Thompson makes a very long analysis of different proposed political reforms by means of representative institutions, namely: abolition of corn laws, insurance against accidents while at work, association between worker and employer, and many others. In conclusion he says: “of all these it may without exception be observed, that their tendency is *useful*; useful in alleviating some of the varieties of wretchedness to which the industrious are exposed..... But of them all without exception, it may also be observed, not only that they are mere palliatives, but neither of them directly and designedly attacks the main principle, which, in the present state of human affairs, retards, nay, renders impossible the acquisition of any high state of social and individual happiness.” (39–40) After having stated that the basis of social justice must be the principle of the right of each one to the entire product of his work (surplus-value included), Thompson tells us from whom Socialists of his day expected the solution of the social question: “The Industrious Classes..... whose voice has never been consulted in regulating their destinies, are now learning their own interests and their importance as *rational beings*: they will soon speak out; and thenceforward, they alone will regulate human affairs, essentially their affairs.” (page 4). At a great popular meeting on December 5, 1833, R. Owen’s declaration was as categorical and clear: “The source of wealth, said he, is labor. Wealth will remain in the hands of the workers when they act in concert to this end.”

In spite of R. Owen and his friends having so clear a perception of the palliative and inefficacious character of working-class legislation and of all partial *ameliorations* they not only worked hard for proposed reforms, but in most cases took the initiative of agitation. Free from doctrinaireism, R. Owen was the representative of the practical genius of his nation; he roused public opinion, he promoted union among the workers. We shall presently see what colossal work was done by English Socialists during the first half of our century, but we must recognize that they never mistook legislation, practical trades-unions, or co-operation for Socialism.

Son of a poor Welsh saddler, R. Owen was compelled to earn his living when ten years old. Till the age of nineteen we see him sacrificing his leisure hours to an ardent desire for knowledge. He read, by curtailing hours of sleep, and when twenty-one years of age he was not only very learned but had already made his reputation as a specialist in the improvement of cotton goods. This important branch of industry was then beginning to develop in Manchester. His fame grew apace; he was soon engaged as director in New Lanark, a factory belonging to Dale and Arkwright. He also distinguished himself in Manchester as a manager who treated his workmen as friends. At Dale and Arkwright’s he obtained permission to make what terms he

thought fit with his men. The workers of New Lanark had an evil reputation; the factory brought in little, and yet the men worked, as was customary, fifteen to sixteen hours a day.

Without entering into the details of this first historical demonstration that the productivity of human labor augments with the diminution of the hours of work, and that solidary conditions of economic and social life render human beings solidary, I shall only indicate that at the end of the first year the factory became a model of order; the men worked four hours less a day; they earned more; lived better than in other places, and the company's profits grew.

At first R. Owen met with everybody's opposition save Miss Dale, in whom he found an ardent supporter and whom he married later on. Even the workers were against him, but little by little he gained their confidence, he organized an infants' school and playground, a co-operative society for consumable commodities, a library, popular classes, a fund for mutual help; in a word he organized, *without any precedent*, everything that constitutes the moral and economic basis of the working class movement of our century.

The rumour of these humane reforms spread among the masses, and when in 1800, having become partner in the business, R. Owen introduced a ten hours day² rational education and the administration of the works by the men themselves, New Lanark became a place of pilgrimage. From England and from different continental countries visitors came to see this legendary factory, this infant school and garden, these autonomous workers and their reformer administrator. Writers, politicians, ambassadors, worldly ladies, members of reigning families called there. Each visitor had his personal appreciation of the work, but all understood thoroughly well that they were witnessing a new departure in social life, only they did not foresee that the experiments of R. Owen, once adopted by the people, would become a powerful means of working-class organisation and agitation. Till 1828 New Lanark prospered. Owen attracted Bentham's, Ricardo's, and other remarkable men's sympathy and financial help, and he became intimate with all advanced men of his time.

Under his influence the first working-class papers appeared in Glasgow, Edinburgh and in other cities. Primary schools were opened. When the pedagogue, Lancaster, propounded his method of mutual education, Owen gave him £1,000; he offered the same to a school worked on the system of Bell, but only gave half the sum because the stupid administrators would only receive children of the Anglican creed.

People often think Owen's liberality towards popular education was simply philanthropy. It is a mistake. He had quite an elaborate system of primary education. It was he who inspired Strudge; it was he who elaborated the type of normal school; was by his influence that Prussia adopted compulsory education.

Could he as an essentially practical man and initiator of the Socialist movement act otherwise?

The social wealth of humanity consists of two elements: material and intellectual riches. Socialism claims the right of all to the enjoyment of this wealth created by the whole of humanity. As the "non-producing honorables" of to-day oppose the right of producers to material wealth, so did the "honorables" at the beginning of this century oppose popular education. In destroying the fatal prejudices of oppressors against education, Robert Owen and our fathers have rendered an immense service to social emancipation. Nowadays, everyone can see that the more a nation is educated, the more it prospers; the more education spreads among the people, the more life becomes pleasant and varied. The Russian despot and the crowned assassin in Turkey, boast of being the friends of education. When we succeed in destroying economic, prejudices, when men see the necessity for Communist production and consumption, then again all the world will say they are partisans of Communism; for, even nowadays, with the means of production at our disposal, free, enlightened, solidary humanity would be capable of realising a state of well-being that would surpass the most fantastic dreams. Then all the world will understand the grandeur of the practical-minded initiator who led the economic struggle and destroyed the prejudices of obscurantists. It is a remarkable fact that the most advanced Socialist section of the International worked hard for integral education, and our friends C. Robin and James Guillaume are the representatives of this section.

W. TCHERKESOV.

AMERICAN NOTES.

We have a new American humourist. Not Mr. Dooley, but Sam Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labour. Readers will remember that in the February number of *Freedom* we gave a very brief sketch of the proceedings of the A. F. of L. Convention that was held in Kansas City during December of last year. Gompers wrote a line to the editor of this journal, insinuating that the statements were inaccurate, and as proof positive sent (hold your breath) a copy of a speech delivered by him in 1897 at Nashville, Tenn. The writer of these notes has been a trade unionist for a good many years, and does not take a back seat to any one, Sam Gompers included, in his admiration of those bodies; but when the A. F. of L. sets aside money to be

used for lobbying purposes, which means, in plain English, buying suppers, drinks, cigars, etc., for thieving politicians at Washington, and moves its headquarters to that city in order that its officers may hang on to the coat-tails of such a gang of corrupt scoundrels as infest the White House, then it's time to say "Halt!" There is no use washing the dirty linen of the A. F. of L. or quarrelling with Gompers in *Freedom*, for every Anarchist in the U. S. knows that gentleman's height and weight, so we need say no more about him. The statements made in the February number of *Freedom* may not be palatable, but they are true, and Gompers knows it. To accuse him of wilfully and knowingly sending a copy of a speech delivered by him in 1897 at the *seventeenth* annual convention of the A. F. of L. to combat statements made concerning the *eighteenth* annual convention held in 1898 would be to accuse him of being either a knave or a fool. We will do neither, but be charitable, and say we think he must have been on a committee to settle a brewing dispute the night before he wrote that note, and some one "fixed his liquor."

The tour of our comrade Emma Goldman is awakening interest all along the line, and it is a great pity that we have not more like her. As was stated in February *Freedom*, she began a series of four lectures at Barre, Vermont. This was the first time that our principles have been expounded in that town in the English language, although there is a fine group of Italian comrades there. The meetings were so successful that some of the business men appealed to the chief of police to stop them, but even an American police captain is chary at times of interfering with the right of free speech, especially when the hall is rented and paid for; and as the meetings were very orderly, that conservator of the public peace had recourse to lying and threatening the hall-keeper with losing his license. It had the desired effect, and the fourth meeting was prohibited because the hall-keeper refused to let the hall. The lecture she was to have delivered was "Authority *versus* Liberty," and the comrades immediately printed 5,000 copies of a four-page manifesto, with a lengthy extract of the lecture, and distributed them about the town. Fifteen subscribers for *Free Society* were made, over \$10 worth of pamphlets sold, and several dollars worth of comrade Berkman's photo were sold (Emma has copies of a late photo of him which she is selling, and dividing the proceeds between *Freedom* and *Free Society*); so the ice is broken, and if only followed up a good footing can be gained in this old revolutionary State. On February 8 she began her lectures in Philadelphia, where she delivered ten lectures, and according to Geo. Brown in *Free Society* of March 12, her stay was in every way a success. A blizzard interfered to some extent with the success of the meetings, but on the whole they were very well attended. Here also she made a number of subscribers to *Free Society* and sold considerable literature. She also brought the English comrades in touch with a fine group of Italian comrades of whom they had hitherto known nothing. From Philadelphia she went to Cleveland, where she addressed two very large and enthusiastic meetings; then to Detroit, where she had three rather poorly attended ones. Cincinnati next, with one very successful and two poor meetings. Eight finely attended meetings in St. Louis and two immense gatherings at Mount Olive, a mining town not far from St. Louis; and she is at present in Chicago, where she will remain several weeks, speaking nearly every night (perhaps Jack Turner will remember his visit to that windy city, when he addressed 24 meetings in 21 days). Unfortunately, however, in the latter place most of her lectures are in German. Some of the "comrades," among them two of that famous secret trio, think it more advisable to go out electioneering for Altgeld for the mayoralty than to put forth Anarchist principles.

The St. Louis meetings were more particularly successful, which is most encouraging; for a comrade writing to me a short time ago from there, declared that in all his life he had never been in such a mouldy graveyard before, saying there was no labor movement there and giving two instances to prove it. Yet, in spite of this dark picture, Emma's meetings were very successful; one of the best meetings was held under the auspices of the Bricklayers' Union—a most conservative body.

At Mount Olive the miners were celebrating the eight-hour workday they had gained April 1st 1898. The little town had its holiday dress on, and the men, women and children looked neat and clean, and having forgotten their misery for one day at least, their faces shone with a happy look. Emma chose for her subject: "The Eight-hour Struggle and the condition of the miners of the whole world." Never before was she more eloquent; before she was half through women were weeping and men were in a frenzy with passion and excitement; the climax came when one man leaped to his feet and held his little boy high in the air, shouting: "I have nothing, nothing to give except my only child; but if he can become such a good, noble man as you are a woman, I am ready to give him to the Cause." Mount Olive will be heard from on the morning of the revolution.

Emma has thus far on her tour, in addition to her lectures, sold \$50 (£10) worth of literature, made 70 subscribers for *Free Society* and a number of subscribers for *Freedom*. Good work, did you say? well, rather! St. Louis comrades are now trying to induce Voltairine de Cleyre to make a tour west. May they succeed.

The strike at Pana, Illinois, is still on, and now that the elections are over Governor Tanner shows himself in his true colors. Troops are still on the scene, and it is estimated that it is costing the taxpayers of the state \$52,000 a day to protect the vested interests of the mine owners. The strikers are determined, and as each one is armed with a Winchester rifle and receiving \$4 a week strike benefit the struggle is likely to be a long one.

¹ *Labor Rewarded* (1827). In pages 88-99 he relates how he had become a partisan of autonomous Communism under Owen's influence. In his remarkable work, *Social Science* (1824-27), he was the first to speak of "surplus-value."

² Even nowadays, in Germany the working hours are more than ten.

The Democrats of New York are undecided as to whether, if alive, Thomas Jefferson would pay \$1, \$2 or \$10 for a dinner. The Single Taxers claim to be the originators of the idea of holding an annual dinner on the anniversary of the birth of Thomas Jefferson, and for ten years the Manhattan Single Tax Club have held a dinner in Jefferson's honor. This year they had arranged as usual for the dinner to take place on April 13, which is Jefferson's birthday; they invited W.J. Bryan to attend, but he had a prior engagement in the west; the price of their dinner was \$2. The regular Tammany Hall Democrats wanted to give a dinner also, and, while honoring Jefferson, to honor that other great statesman and patriot, Richard Croker; they also invited Bryan, but the latter, in replying to the secretary, Percy H. Belmont, told him that he desired to have nothing to do with his set as they only called themselves Democrats between elections to give more force to their traitorous actions in selling out at election time. Needless to say Percy and Richard are angry, and threaten all sorts of nasty things in 1900. The Croker-Belmont dinner was \$10 a plate. Then the Silver Democrats undertook to arrange a silver dollar dinner and they made their date convenient for Bryan, who was the star of the occasion. This last was the most successful of the three, over 3,000 sitting down to dinner, and judging from the amount of food consumed they had a good "feed": 5,000 pounds of beef, 5,000 pounds of turkey, 2,000 haddocks, 100 gallons of ice cream, 300 loaves of bread, 2,500 rolls, 3,000 half-pints of American champagne and 300 pounds of coffee were consumed, so of course the meeting was enthusiastic. Bryan was received with tremendous applause; the 3,000 diners rising to their feet and cheering him again and again. Bryan reiterated his adherence to the Chicago platform, declared himself opposed to trusts and imperialism, and advocated independence for the Filipinos.

It is a pleasure to relate that although there is a great deal of imperialist feeling abroad, there is a very large and growing feeling against that barbarous emission called *The White Man's Burden*. It is, no doubt, strange to European nations to see the United States at war with another people, and to see, as in the case of the Nebraska regiments in the field in the Philippines, the fathers, mothers, sisters, etc., of the troops petitioning the President that their sons and brothers should be recalled, as when they enlisted they did so to fight Spaniards and to free Cuba, and not to kill and oppress a people struggling for freedom. McKinley, of course, sails with the wind, as he is desirous of a second term; so he instructed General Otis to put the proposition before the troops as to whether they would return or stay and fight for the flag. The capitalist press tells us they decided to stay and butcher the Filipinos, but some of us sceptics don't believe it. The Nebraska State Senate passed a Bill eulogising the bravery of the Nebraska troops, declaring that their heroism in this war has added another page to the glorious history of the U. S. After a long consultation with Bryan, the Governor of Nebraska vetoed the Bill, declaring that this war was a violation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, as we had ever declared our willingness to assist a people struggling for liberty, and in the case of the Filipinos we were trying to oppress them. The Senate passed the Bill over his veto, but as the Lower House did not concur, the resolution did not have any effect.

We are becoming a sceptical and at the same time a hygienic people. The State Senate and State Legislature of New York concurring, and Governor Teddy Roosevelt signing the Bill, it has become unlawful to kiss the Bible in courts of law upon the ground that infectious diseases are contracted in the operation of this ancient and barbarous custom. Who says we are not advancing?

Advancing in one direction and going back in another. The annual epidemic of killing Negroes, on the plea that the honor of their women is in danger, has set in again in the southern States and the ferocity of these white barbarians is beyond description. Press and pulpit in the North are, of course, "up in arms" and fiery articles have been written and speeches delivered, as they have ever since the war; but the killing still goes on and will go on until missionaries of civilisation go amongst those white savages and preach, not the gospel of God, but the gospel of humanity and freedom. It will require courageous men for the work; but it must be done and it will be done before many years, not by the "saviours of society," but by the despised and detested Anarchists and Socialists; and when they have visited those benighted regions savagery at least will cease, and the South will see the dawn of a new era.

It may interest the readers of *Freedom* to know that last month, at the municipal elections in Wichita, Kansas, and a small town in Illinois women were elected mayors, or shall we say mayoresses, and they captured the entire councils in both places. In Wichita the defeated candidate was a wealthy Salvation Army man and among other things in his platform was: that any woman appearing on the street in bloomers should be arrested, all policemen who swore should be discharged from the force, and all persons who expectorated in the street should be fined. This last was too much for the Wichita voter so the Salvation Army man was sent back to save sinners and to dream of a land where there are no streets to spit in.

THE FOOL and the WISE MAN.

(An impossible fable.)

Two men once met.
One said to the other: "Who are you?"

The other replied: "I am a fool, I am called the 'worker.' Tell me now who you are."

"I am," replied the first, "a wise man; men call me 'Master'."

"What is your occupation?" asked the fool.

"My occupation is to teach such fools as you," was the reply.

"Will you teach me?" asked the fool.

"With pleasure," returned the wise man. "Come with me.

The fool went with the wise man, who led him to a pile of bricks and wood.

"Build me a grand palace and a little hut," said the wise man.

The fool built the grand palace and the little hut. When they were finished, the wise man gave him a few coins, and said:

"I will live in the palace; for I have earned it by my brain work. You go and live in the hut, it is best for you; for, being a fool, you would not appreciate the display of art which is in the palace, and your hob-nailed boots would spoil the costly carpets; and, as the hut belongs to me (you made it for me, you know), it is only fair that you should pay me rent for the right to live there."

The fool lived in the little hut and paid the rent, saying: "How wise he is! I would never have thought of building a hut for myself if he had not told me, and could not pay my rent if he did not give me wages!"

The wise man put the fool to digging a mine, saying:

"You dig down into the bowels of the earth and get coal, and after I have burned the coal you can have the cinders to make a fire to warm yourself by."

The fool bored down into the earth for coal, saying:

"This man is not only wise, but good; for he gives me the cinders which he might have thrown away."

"The wise man said to the fool: 'I wish some one to dress me, cook for me, drive me about and suchlike things. Give me some of your children to be my servants.'"

The fool gave the children, saying to himself:

"That is good; he will teach them to be wise, as he does me; they will become gentlemen like him some day."

A few days later the wise man came to the fool and said: "Since taking your children to be my servants, my expenses have increased. You must take less wages, that I may be able to pay your children proper wages."

The fool scratched his head for a moment, and then said: "Ah, yes; my children should be paid. I consent; I will live and let live."

The wise man said to the fool: "Build me two schools, one large and one small, that our children may be educated."

"Why," asked the fool, "must I build one large and the other small?"

The wise man replied: "My children, being wise gentlemen, like myself, they will need a great education to cultivate their intellects in an appropriate manner; that is what the large school is for. Your children, being the children of a fool, will have to work with their physical body like you, and therefore will not need their mental energies cultivated so much. The small school is for them."

"Now," said the wise man, "you cannot expect your children to be educated for nothing, you must pay a weekly wage, or, if you wish them to have free education, pay a tax."

The fool paid both weekly wage and tax, to see which was best. Later on, he stopped paying the wage and paid a little extra tax.

One day the wise man came to the fool with a frown, and said: "You have been thinking?"

"I have," said the fool.

"I will not allow it," roared the wise man; "if you do so again, I will punish you."

"Ha!" cried the fool, throwing down his tools, "you have given yourself away. If you were as wise as you have pretended to be, you would have known that it was impossible for even a fool like me to abstain from thinking sometimes. I know you now. You are a fraud."

The next day the fool made a red flag and, arming himself, proclaimed a Revolution.

Thinking was the commencement of the revolution, which is still going on.

W. ANDERSON.

To the Filipinos.

Brave fighters in a cause forlorn.

The living protest of a race not wholly eaten by corruption.

Against the foul and bloody horde of finance kings and gold bugs seeking wealth e'en in the rotting, starving flesh of woman and of child.

That Mammon's horde whose vile, putrescent lust for that from which human ills have ever sprung,—

Thrice cursed Gold,—

Has made fair earth a blacken'd waste of smoky desolation; has downed strong men, till men they ceased to be and only slaves to cranks and cogs and flying shuttles.

Fight on, brave men!

Better, flushed with the red heat of freedom's battle, to be carried to a warrior's doom,

Than live the dog's life of a modern slave—debarred from love and sunshine, joy and hope,

In falsehood steeped,

And seeking only that he may not die, but keep his craven form to blight the sun.

A. BARTON.

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NOTES.

POST-OFFICE "ECONOMY."

Our Social Democratic friends had better say no more about our glorious post-office system as an ideal organisation; for if this is to be an example of their future state of affairs, then I can only add: The Lord help them! The following report from the *Morning Leader* of April 25 speaks for itself:

The Reedham mail bag robbery has brought to light an extraordinary piece of postal parsimony says a correspondent of the *Morning Leader*.

The G.E.R. is responsible for the safe carriage of the night mail which arrives between two and three a.m., when their liability ends. A man was willing to get up every night and take the bag to the post-office for 6s. per week, but the generous P.O. officials thought 4s. was enough, and as no man in the village would break his night's rest and turn out in all weathers for this magnificent reward, the P.O. made an economical arrangement under which the signalman, for 1s. per week, was to keep the bag under his eye till the postman called at twenty minutes to seven a.m.

Is it any wonder the bag went astray? This is another instance of P.O. economy at the expense of efficiency."

Well, how do you like this, dear readers, as an example of State Socialism?

J. MULLER.

"LITTLE WHITE SLAVES."

Of these little victims of capitalist exploitation and parental barbarity we are told there are thousands in our Board Schools, and the tale of their sufferings would be enough to make revolutionists of us all even if we had no other reason for so being.

One or two instances of what is still going on will be sufficient to enable us to imagine what remains untold.

In a brickfield (locality not given) a child *under six* is working for 3s.6d. per week, a wage which implies arduous and responsible labor. A little girl *under six* carrying milk round thirty-five hours a week. Another child *under six* engaged as a nurse girl for twenty-nine hours a week, at a wage of 2d. per week and her food. These unfortunate mites are "half-timers" in our Board Schools where they are supposed to be educated, to learn to be good citizens, to love their neighbours (particularly their capitalist neighbours) as themselves, and so on *ad nauseam*.

Let us see, this is the year 1899; and during this century "the cry of the children" has gone up many, many times, and at the end of a hundred years we find the man who exploits much the same kind of beast that he was in the beginning. Like the man-eating tiger, once having tasted of profit (which means human sacrifice in some form or other) he becomes insatiable. Let the Board School teach this fact, that society from top to bottom proves to be true: *the capitalist belongs to the order carnivora*.

THE HOUSE OF CRIME.

Independent evidence is continually cropping up to prove an oft-repeated statement that our prisons are "the universities of crime."

The Rev. J. W. Horsley was for ten years chaplain at Clerkenwell Gaol, and he has written a volume on his experiences in that capacity. The book, "Prisons and Prisoners," does not of course make any attempt to show that society is responsible for its criminals, but it drives home one or two truths that may help to enlighten the average man on the vices of the system employed to punish criminals and indeed the folly and stupidity of punishment in any case.

We are told, for instance, that although there is a "criminal class" it generally manages to keep outside the gaol (is this an allusion to the Hooly gang, or Cecil Rhodes, or the Standard Oil Trust, or to such murderous employers as Bryant and May?) and that quite half the prisoners cannot be described as habitual criminals, for the simple reason that they are only ordinary

persons like ourselves who have yielded to some sudden temptation and brought themselves within the grip of the law.

Centralisation is pointed to as having in our large cities produced an immense amount of crime; and we will just quote one indictment of the present system which we should like to see proclaimed throughout the length and breadth of the land: "Bad landlords, whether of village hovels or city slums, are chiefly responsible for crime."

A VULGAR CROWD.

For downright snobbery and vulgarity is there a nation on earth to beat the English? If so, we haven't heard of it.

Just recently a young girl who happened to be the eldest daughter of Lord Rosebery got married to a man twice her age who happened to have the title of Lord Crewe. Whether or not there was any love between the parties concerned is their affair and not ours. At any rate they were married at Westminster Abbey, and everything as we all know *must* be perfectly moral and proper that is consecrated in that sacred edifice. But the well-dressed crowd of gaping fashionables, with all its ridiculous finery and its disgusting curiosity over the whole business, afforded an opportunity of estimating these well-bred people at their true value. And then the cheers for the "father of the bride"! Who, in the name of common sense, is this person without his wealth and his title? A "smart" politician with Jingo proclivities; willing enough to flatter Democracy so long as class privileges are not endangered. A "friend of the people," of course; but what an expensive friend! For instance, how many starving people might have been fed if the wealth squandered on the wedding had been used to that end.

We regret that the Leeds comrades have suffered the loss of a good comrade, Jack Neville, who died of heart disease on the 21st of April. His loss, due indirectly to the competitive struggle, nerves us to fight the harder for the destruction of capitalism.

We have received copies of *Secret Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century* and *The Story of the Life of Lord Palmerston*, both by Karl Marx, edited by his daughter Eleanor; also *The Third Factor of Production*, by A. J. Ogilvy, J.P., Vice President of the Land Nationalisation Society, published by Swan, Sonnenschein & Co., which will be noticed in our next issue.

CÆSARISM.

By Peter Kropotkin. Translated from *Les Temps Nouveaux*.

II.

We shall probably be told that Rochefort and "Cæsarism" cannot be named in the same breath. Is the name of Rochefort, the valiant revolutionist under the Empire, the overthrower of strong governments, the worker's and rebel's champion, the friend of oppressed nationalities, not alone sufficient guarantee against Cæsarism?

But there are situations more powerful than men; situations which, accepted by an error of judgment, drive men in a very different direction to the one they would have chosen had they kept their liberty of choice.

It is therefore infinitely more to the purpose to consider situations and tendencies of thought than to busy ourselves about men who represent these opinions. Instead of speaking about the editor of the *Intransigent* and explaining the causes that make him act one way or another, it is infinitely more useful to speak of his readers. These alarm us by their desire for a dictator, by their fatal drift toward Cæsarism.

The horror of the situation, the tragical side of modern France, is that during the last seven or eight years the *Intransigent* with its Boulangist dictatorship, its bowing down to Russian despotism, its Anti-Semitism and its defence of a military tribunal as well as of Esterhazy and his associates, has always represented more than a hundred thousand Republicans in Paris and several million Republicans in the provinces.

The danger lies in that mass of Republicans ever ready to acclaim a military *coup d'état* so as to have their revenge; just as they were ready in 1851 to hail a Bonaparte who would find "the solution of the social question."

It is faith in a Saviour, love of a victorious Caesar that agitates us. As to Rochefort, he only follows the current. He may have strengthened it, but he did not create it.

Since the Empire, these Republican bourgeois have learned nothing.

Why did they reproach Napoleon III. when they attacked him? Was it because he was an Emperor? Not the least in the world! They reproached him because he was Napoleon the Little instead of being Napoleon the Great.

If he had solved the social question as he promised! If he had paraded the tricolor flag in Europe and in America! If he had been able to checkmate Prussia after Sadowa, create an empire under a French

protectorate in Mexico, imposing all the while "Treaties of Paris," as he had imposed one on Russia! And if his wife, instead of being a Montijo, had been a German princess, like the one who a little while since made Republicans shed tears at the mere sight of her driving through Paris with her baby!—Then they would have forgiven him anything.

And when the "brave general" offered himself in person as a dictator, how eager they were to forgive him!

All Geneva knew of his visit to Prince Napoleon. We ourselves, who take so little interest in this stepping-stone of Monarchist pretenders, knew the precise date of the visit. But Cæsarian Republicans soon overlooked these peccadilloes.

Who, then, does not know that Boulangist money came from Orleanists and even from Russia? Who, except those who wished to remain ignorant, did not know that in the eyes of the Russian Government Boulanger was the Pretender to dictatorship, and was supported by the Russian Court to prepare the return of Monarchy in France?

Indeed, it was only necessary to read the Russian *Official Messenger* to learn it. But these Republicans wished to know nothing about it. They had found their Cæsar, and they shut their eyes to the rest. They ran after the General's black horse even into the stables of a Prince Napoleon.

We may be told that these partisans of dictatorship were too simple-minded and suspected nothing; that they were duped. Maybe; it has always been such simple-minded men, half closing their eyes till they only see the plume they wish to run after, who have in all times done the greatest mischief to their country. Men like these are paving the way for fresh misfortunes at the present time.

And let them not tell us either that "it does not matter so long as Boulanger retakes Metz! Should he get troublesome later on, he can be stabbed!" This is humbug—one of those theatrical phrases that kill the true heart of a nation. There was much talk, but it was not so easy to find a Brutus to stab Napoleon III. or the ferocious Thiers.

See, again, Cæsarians at work during the Russian Alliance, the "Cursed Alliance" as it will some day be called by French historians.

Once upon a time, it was said, with much semblance of truth, that this Alliance was Queen Victoria's work. When William II. came over to the Cowes Regatta for the first time, he said to his grandmamma that the armaments imposed on Germany by France were ruining the Empire, and that he had resolved to put an end to it, once and for all, by a new war. The Queen then summoned Lord Salisbury (so they say), and ordered him to write to Alexander III. in her name: that the only way to avoid a disastrous war for Europe was to oppose a Franco-Russian Alliance to the Triple Alliance. She endeavoured to make him conclude such an alliance.

Be this version true or not, be it a legend if you will, it proves one thing: that about ten years ago the necessity of a Franco-Russian Alliance, opposed to the Triple Alliance, was recognised by rulers.

It is true that another way of paralysing the formidable Alliance that threatened the dismemberment of France was by removing Italy from it. But this would not have suited the Jesuits.

What would His Holiness, the Pope, have said to a French alliance with a king whom he looks upon as a thief? And as Clericalism governs France, and Catholics like Drumont and Déroulède are on friendly terms with Cæsarian Republicans, we understand that the latter could not even dream of entertaining a proposal that would separate them from their Cæsarian co-religionists at a stroke. From time to time Rochefort spoke of a Latin Alliance; but he found no echo and thought no more about it. It became, therefore, necessary to turn to Russia.

Russia, menaced by Germany and England, was in great need of a friend. Why, then, were Russians not eager for an alliance with France?

Why, to be sure, because the French Republic has always been the pet aversion of the Tsars of Russia! A Republic in France has always been more detested by them than Englishmen in Constantinople.

When in September 1870, after the proclamation of the Republic, all Russia was unanimous in desiring that this Government should prevent Germany from crushing France, Alexander II. eagerly allowed the armies of Germany to buy furs in Russia for the winter campaign. He was even prodigal in his affection towards the victors. He was stupidly transported with joy on hearing of their victories.

When the Republic was established, he sent to Paris his most intimate friend, a certain Abaza, who remained there till his death, and conspired with the d'Orleans for their return to the throne of France. Besides an official ambassador who was in treaty with the Republic, there was this beloved friend of the Tsar in league with the d'Orleans. We know how much champagne was drunk by Russian Princes on their visits to the d'Orleans.

When, in 1876, Alexander II., with his well-known brutish manners, sent away the Ambassador, General Appert, what did the reptile organs of the Russian Government say? We could hardly credit it had we not read it ourselves in the *Novoie Vremia* that took its orders from official circles:

"We do not need a French Ambassador; any hairdresser would do to represent the Republic. If we allow France to send us an Ambassador, it is only by virtue of her historical past—not in consideration of her present state."

Is this clear enough?

The Tsars of Russia have never for a moment abandoned the idea of re-establishing monarchy in France. The Republic was the obstacle to

an alliance. How, then, was that obstacle removed?

By very simple means. By giving pledges that, in accord with St. Petersburg, they would also work in France for the restoration of Monarchy.

That is the true basis, the only serious basis of the famous Russian agreement.

Far be it from me to think that Rochefort was ever invited to accept this basis, or that Russian diplomatists or their sub-agents would be stupid enough to speak to him about it.—To what end? If he only promised to be silent and to let things take their course; if he only promised to work for the alliance without examining its motives—what more was needed?

Did not the Republican press open its columns to insert reports like those concerning the massacre of our brothers in Yakutsk, and the flogging to death of Madame Schida? And that lying report that there were no longer any political prisoners in Siberia? We read this report in the *Intransigent*.

Did not the same Republican press make ample apology for its Republicanism by sending a wreath to the tomb of that arch-blackguard Katkov, that fatal genius of both Alexanders who drove Alexander II. from reaction to reaction right under the bombs of revolutionists, and who in company with Andrieux—always those same fatal men of Boulangism—insisted, at the Court of Alexander III. who was hesitating and ready to assemble representatives of the people, that the Tsar should do nothing of the sort, but confine himself to bringing police from France, exterminating revolutionists, and proclaiming himself more of an Autocrat than ever?

Did not the Republican press, by becoming Cæsarian, work enough for Monarchy?—"Find a general and we will support you," had been suggested to them from St. Petersburg, which in plain language signified: "Our conditions are that you prepare a Monarchy." And they at once began to shout: "Give us a Cæsar!"

Never will all the harm this Alliance has done to France, nor all the misfortunes it still holds in reserve for her be fathomed. Let us hope there will not be a fresh disaster or a new dismemberment!

—"But our revenge!" They still cry: "It is for our revenge that we make all these sacrifices of ourselves, of our opinions, of our dignity."

Well, then, let us speak of this revenge that serves to hide so many crimes.

A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

The *Labor Leader* deserves all praise for its exposure of Lord Overton's infamous treatment of his employees. This fellow with a title and a big purse, but with no heart and no conscience, has practically sole control of the chemical works of Messrs. J. & J. White, at Shawfield, and here, as described by the *Labor Leader*, are the conditions under which his slaves, we will not say work for him, but literally convert their flesh and bone into profit for this sanctimonious sinner, their master. After describing how the men employed in the production of chrome at the end of a few months find even the cartilage of the nose eaten away by the fumes which they breathe, the *Labor Leader* continues:

But that is not all. At a certain stage in the manufacture of the chrome a black liquid is produced. If by any chance a man has a scratch on his hand or any part of his body, and a single drop of this liquid comes in contact with the broken skin, a "chrome hole" is the result. That is to say, the poison slowly burns its festering way through the flesh until the bone is reached, and then the putrid flesh drops out, leaving a hole so large that a man's thumb won't cover it. These sores are sometimes to be seen all over a man's body, and one case I heard of, but did not see, where the back of a man was furrowed by these holes right down from the shoulders to the hips. In some cases it is the belly which is attacked, and the poison eats its way right through the flesh into the entrails.

And again:

Once every hour the two men who work a furnace have to draw their charge of molten chemicals. At this time a sweet poisonous gas is thrown off, which the men inhale every time they breathe. The charge is put into a small truck, which the men draw with a hook and empty at the appointed place. In some cases this is not more than a few feet from the furnace, and the men have to work with the hot glowing mass at their back and the roaring furnace in front. They have also to wheel the coal and chemicals with which the furnaces are charged. In addition, once every fifteen minutes the contents of the furnace have to be stirred up. Thus with wheeling the raw materials, charging the furnace, stirring the molten contents every fifteen minutes, drawing the charge every hour, the two men are kept constantly at work. And this goes on all the day without a break until six o'clock in the evening—twelve weary, wretched hours.

Food has to be taken in the midst of these abominations just when odd moments afford an opportunity; for there is no time for meals, and, what is more no rest on Sundays. Twelve hours a day for seven days a week is what the mind of an Overton (if he has one) regards as a fair equivalent in labor for a wage of twenty-one shillings per week.

But it would not be fair to speak only of the inhumanities of this person, bad as they are; he is supposed to have some redeeming features: let us give him credit for them. The *Labor Leader* has tabulated them very neatly. Here they are;

"He gives £10,000 a year to charity and religious work.

"He is the leading spirit of the religious life of Scotland.

"He pays John McNeill (a local preacher) £1,000 per annum.

"He is organising a big religious crusade to 'save' Glasgow from its sins."

Let us regard these "virtues" in the cold light of day and see what they amount to.

As to number one, Lord Overtoun, like some other birds of his feather, is giving away in "charity" what does not belong to him.

Number two can only mean that the "religious life of Scotland" is "led" by the most blatant hypocrite under the sun.

Number three proves that he is encouraging John McNeill to receive stolen money in return for lip service.

And number four leaves no hope but that Glasgow may go on sinning till doomsday rather than be "saved" by the tender mercies of Lord Overtoun.

We have given but the briefest possible summary of the case which the *Labour Leader* during April has exposed, and it is worth the while of any one who wants to know what can be done in "civilised" England by a "noble" lord to a "free" people to follow the exposure in that paper. It is somewhat disappointing to find the *Leader* so continuously appealing to the "conscience of the Christian Church," etc., to awaken and call such people as the Overtouns to a sense of duty. Christianity has had a good spell of time to put itself right with the poor and the oppressed, and it has not only failed miserably, but has always stood, and stands now, as a reactionary power in the hands of the State and the privileged classes. The plain fact is these things are economic and not religious questions, and it is from the economic side that they should be for ever and always attacked. Again, it is just as useless to threaten an Overtoun with Parliamentary action as it is to threaten him with the Devil. He cares nothing for either whilst he is secure as master of the Shawfield works. Consequently we are at issue with the writer in the *Leader* when he says: "Lord Overtoun I don't know, and have no personal animus against, and as soon as he puts his works at Shawfield in order on lines which every one will admit to be fair, I will cease from troubling." Now the writer knows perfectly well that there is no putting things in order; there is no such thing as fairness; in a word, there is no hope of ending these and similar infamies until wage-slavery is abolished. By all means expose the Overtouns; leave political action alone, and make the country ring with indignation at the murderous methods of the exploiters. Rouse the workers in season and out of season to a sense of their responsibility in ending the wholesale decimation of their class. Let them strike and strike often, for they will not suffer more in striking than they will in working. Indeed they must strike for their very lives. We are glad to hear the Shawfield works have been struck, and that Lord Overtoun is "getting tired of hearing complaints." He will tire of that much sooner than being reminded of the "Christian spirit." What is wanted in the present day is a crusade against capitalism, for it must be remembered that Lord Overtoun is only one amongst a number. Would it not be better, therefore, to give attention to the real battle which is always being fought in the factories, rather than to the sham battle of political elections? Let the *Labour Leader* hunt up the monsters of the Overtoun type and use them to point the moral of the present system. In all such cases a leaflet could be printed and with the organisation of the I. L. P. be distributed broadcast through the land. The educational effect would be immense, and far more likely to produce some immediate alleviation than a thousand appeals to Parliament. In this direction there is an immense work to be done, and work that will tell. If you go to Westminster you can only become dishonest or be turned out.

Since writing the above, the *Labour Leader*, we are pleased to see, has published its exposure of Lord Overtoun in pamphlet form, which can be had for one penny.

SOCIAL HONOR.

Social honor is narrowly conceived. Waring dies, it is said, in the public service. Society therefore is under special obligation to his family. Seidl passes away and leaves a widow unprovided for. Another fund. A hero is shot down at Santiago. Pension the wife. This is excellent. But it does not go far enough. My shoemaker dies making shoes. Who cares for his bairns? A fireman is crushed under a wall, a motorman is destroyed in a street collision, a mother starves herself in order that she may feed her youngsters. Always public service. What service is not public service? Then pension all. Tax one widow to pension another. I say, protect all or none. Illogical? No. Universal insurance is logically straightforward and sentimentally fine. I see unrewarded public service look where I may. Must a man be killed in battle to prove his public spirit, or die a legislator, or be a distinguished surgeon, or conduct a pulpit, or write books, or be necessarily a much trumpeted person in uniform or broadcloth? May not the hal- lowed deed be done in the background, protected from observation, by men, women, the little children, whose serene love pioneers for the social order a dream of renewal? The thing we call heroism is not rare. It is common. It is universal. If it had less vogue, if it existed only in inspired individuals and special situations, society would disintegrate to-morrow—rather, never could have integrated. It is easier to be heroic in excitement than to sustain a grind. The great masses are destined to this grind. They bear it with fortitude. Fortitude backs up patience. The patience of the people is the immunity of the plutocrat. For which reasons I long to see patience instructed. It has long gone to school to experience but has not yet fully assimilated its lesson. Pension the masses and provide a golden endowment for everybody. You

regard this as nonsense. But it is not nearly so much nonsense as some of the very eminent maxims in political science. And I know the scheme is at present impossible. Consequently I am compelled to point out the picturesque qualities which here and now appeal to the public eye and produce and reproduce pensions, funds, endowments, and their progeny, applied to the worldly furtherance of the few to the worldly detriment of the crowd. There are unearned increments everywhere, and only the Communistic eye can regard a vista altogether flawless. Meantime we observe the tragic humours of the situation and steady the heart for a gradually wider employment of its affections. Go from the battlefield to the sweatshop. Go from the banquet of your political masters to the slavery of the garret. Involve yourself in the social contrasts, so that you may come close upon their abysses and appreciate what they mean to the unfed and the unclothed. Then you will better understand wherein lies the frustrated benignity. Then you will know where the pension belongs—if anywhere. Then you will see social service in servitude and social robbery luxuriating apparitionally in Mediterranean seas. Call the yachtsman home. Call the thousands from their tenements. Revise the pension list. Revise it out of existence. An endowment even when a benefaction is an insult. It has been claimed that when a man of millions presents some tribute to a university he is returning to the people the fruits of a manifest piracy. But the university is a class institution and its benefactors are simply playing a game of class restitution. Endow every child with immense opportunity and continue opportunity to the oldest age. Withdraw immortality from caste endowments. Obliterate all safeguards and privileges—let property flow free and find its level.—H. L. TRAUBEL in *The Conservator*.

A VOICE FROM A FRENCH PRISON.

Now that, after fifteen months of turbulent debate, a little respite comes to us, let us give a passing thought to such comrades as have fallen by the way either to die or be cast into prison; especially let us remember these last—the prisoners. Penned up by the hand of Authority in the convict prisons of Guiana, we remain their sole hope. Some of our best and bravest are amongst those there, awaiting with firm conviction their deliverance by means of a victorious revolution. Let us not forget them.

All Anarchists remember George Etiévant, and many are the Paris comrades who personally knew and loved him. For myself, I saw him only upon that evening when he stood up calm and unmoved before the Seine jury, yet I still retain the vivid impression he made upon me. Overwhelmed by wrongs, driven to desperation by misery, he had the audacity to desire to end his misfortunes in the spirit of one who feels that to revolt is the natural right of the oppressed, and that even if it is by but one single, individual act, it is of use as being a step toward the general emancipation of which we dream.

Thus, upon a dark winter's night, in a lone suburb, he attacked a police patrol. Being alone he was quickly overpowered. That is how I came to see him, his hands bound, seated calmly upon the prisoners' bench under the eye of armed guards.

A true Anarchist submits his actions only to one tribunal—that of his own conscience. Etiévant refused to reply to the legal interrogatories. He was scant of words, cold and precise. "Prove to me," said he, "that a human being possesses the right to judge his fellow-man; until then I cannot answer you." Therein, for him lay the whole question, and nothing could move him from his decision. To defend his action seemed to him the weakness of a small mind. The bourgeois jury, insensible to such an argument, voted for a sentence of death, which the Chief of the State, probably from a dread of retaliatory measures, dared not affirm. Thus Etiévant was sentenced to penal servitude for life.

From that day we were without news of our comrade. But in thought he was often present with us, and full of pity our heart was deeply stirred at his fate. What? this noble apostle of liberty was to die by inches under a broiling sun and the clubs and oaths of odious Corsican guards! Some lines written by Constant Martin in the *Droit de Vivre* returned to our memory: "In a free society, men like Etiévant uniting at once the highest qualities of mind and heart, would be looked upon as a gift of Nature, a gift of value. To-day they are thrown into prison or die on the scaffold. Societies which commit such acts cannot be far from their end."

Feeling sure that news of Etiévant would interest everyone, I went the other day to Ivry to see the prisoner's old father in the workhouse there, not having visited him since the fatal morning when I carried him the news of his son's condemnation. It was he, the noble old man, who gave me the letter of our comrade published below in full, as I promised him.

While I read the four pages of large writing, the poor old man was crying. I pressed his hands and murmured words of encouragement. "Patience and hope! George will come out of prison in spite of a life sentence. How many have already come back! And then he will take his old father out of the workhouse. Oh, be sure there are bright days yet in store for you both, days of work and happiness beside your own hearth. Patience! Hope!"

But the old man shook his head. Fierce and obstinate, he no longer believed in happiness.

"George will never return," he answered tremulously, "for there is no such thing as justice. If there were, believe me, he would not be in prison. He never killed anyone—yet they condemned him. Others

have killed, before whom men bow low; there are military assassins who are fêted and feasted. No, no! there is no such thing as justice. There is only bourgeois vengeance against the poor. Oh, but the bourgeois must live in terror of the poor since they forgive them nothing! George killed no one; he was always as kind and gentle as a woman. He thought only of work and meditation: in his workshop all day, in the evening at his books. How he must have been hunted and harried before he came to such a condition of despair and misery! But discharged by every employer in turn owing to the brutality of police spies, condemned to perpetual banishment for one single article in a newspaper, a future before him without home, happiness or bread, he knew there was nothing for him but to die. And it was because he felt he had the right to avenge his unmerited death that he attacked the police, just as an animal at bay will fling itself upon the stronger surrounding dogs."

The old man paused, the tears running down his cheeks. Presently he continued: "It is just seven years since I have been in this workshop and I have only been out once. Oh, that one day of happiness! George had just been liberated from the prison at Poissy after a five year sentence. He came to see me one sunny Sunday in August and we passed the evening at M. Le Baron's country place, his friend and solicitor. George was happy and gay after all his troubles. He had found work; he spoke cheerfully of the future, giving full freedom to his pent-up dreams of steady work and comfort in the little home where we should live together. Alas! what remains of those dreams? Dust and ashes."

I left the old man. Deeply moved, I seemed unable to breathe freely in this workshop. Through the streets of Ivry, a melancholy manufacturing town, I returned slowly musing. The bitter cry of the old man rung with a sinister sound in my ears: *There is no justice!*

And I repeated to myself a thought of Alfieri's, which, full of noble beauty, seemed to have been chosen by Etievant as fit motto for a rebel: *Since we are not permitted to live like men, let us at least die as such!*

(R. Dunois, in the *Tribune*.)

Etievant's letter:

Iles du Salut, Jan. 22, 1899.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I should have been glad for you to have received news of myself sooner, but unluckily letters can only be written between the 20th and 25th of each month and are not sent off until the beginning of the succeeding month. Here, as in St. Martin de Re, we may only write one letter at a time, and as I do not know whether or not our families have to pay the cost of postage, I send my letter to you, believing that you are more able to stand the expense than our poor father. We left St. Martin, as I expected, on Dec. 6th, and reached anchorage before the Iles du Salut the evening of the 27th, after as disagreeable a voyage as possible, although the weather was fine. We stopped one day at Algiers to complete our cargo of unhappy wretches, that is why we only reached our destination after 21 days on board the *Caledonia*, a vessel specially constructed for convict service and not therefore one to ensure their comfort. The climate here is not unhealthy. The island of St. Joseph, where we now are, Royal and the Devil's Islands, which together form the group, are constantly refreshed by the trade-winds which sweep away malarial vapors. The temperature just now is like that of Paris on a fine June day. The sun also does not appear to be higher above the horizon than at that season at Paris. The Isles du Salut are very small; little islets not more than one and a half kilometres round. The vegetation is composed mainly of mangoes, bananas, fig-trees and numberless cocoa-nut palms, which give a tropical seal to the vegetation. The islands emerging above the ocean like baskets of verdure would be a beautiful place for habitation, were it not a prison. We are not allowed the resource of reading here as in the French prisons. We live the life of machines, of beasts of burden, a life that brutalises. Still, by a special permit, some of us are allowed to receive books, writing-paper and the like. At the present moment, my dear brother, I am well, but lost between the sky and the sea, I grow frightfully weary on this rock. I have met many of our comrades here, I regret to say. Try, when answering, to send me a few envelopes; they do not give them to us here. Let our good M. Le Baron and his family hear about me, as I am not permitted to write him as I promised. I trust that you and my poor father keep well. My dear brother, I beg that you will visit him as often as possible. Embrace him for me, as I embrace you—with all my heart.

G. ETIEVANT.

INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE.

To the Editor of FREEDOM.

DEAR SIR,—I purpose, very briefly, to lay before my fellows who are, also those who are not, Anarchists, my ideas as to the possibilities of individual initiative, viewed from a standpoint which has not had so much attention bestowed upon it as (according to my thinking) the importance of the subject merits. We should study seriously the life of the individual, the bearing such lives have towards each other, and what tends most to the production of a race of people mentally fitted to live out in its totality, such a grand ideal that has been dubbed Anarchism. A word here regarding the name. There are a large number of people in our ranks who are mostly concerned about the acceptance or non-acceptance of the word Anarchism. To me it does not matter one whit what is the name: better no name at all; we are greatly hin-

dered by the fact of having a name, and too many of our fellows not acting up to their ideal. What is our ideal? Is it the brotherhood of men, tending to the cultivation of all that is good, pure, and noble in man? If it is, then I assert most positively that there are at all times opportunities of acting out that principle. This, very naturally, raises the query, "How best to act out our ideal?" My opinion is that each individual must cultivate purity of thought. Glancing superficially over the mass of people, as we find them acting to-day, it looks nearly a hopeless task; but men who hold to an ideal such as ours must perforce have great faith in the good that is in all men, hence *nil desperandum*. Let us hesitate for one moment, and just recollect our experiences in this connection. I believe a great many will harmonise with mine when I say that a kind word attracts its like, an angry or sour word its like; this, in the vast majority of cases. It is a common phrase among those whom we are apt to despair of, that by kindness they may be led, but they will not be driven. Now this feeling has, in the individual who expresses it, a root, and when we consider that the tendency of men's minds is to repeat a thing once done, we see in front of us startling possibilities; for each time we think the same thing it becomes easier to act, as the result of the thought, that in time the action, whether good or bad, becomes automatic. We call this habit: you see now the possibilities before alluded to. Think, also, that as we order our minds, the minds of our children will, to some extent, be ordered. The change in society, which we are working to bring about, must first of all have existence in the minds of the people, for all we see around us, at least that which we know man has erected, at one time existed only in thought; and in spite of all some of our friends may say about practical work, I consider thought to be the very essence of construction. It seems to follow from that that by applying all our energy of mind to the enlightenment of our fellows, we are laying the foundation for, and in fact *doing*, the real constructive work; at the same time, from the same fact that all exists in thought first, conscious or unconscious, we are breaking down that which is bad by implanting good. Now let us, in our actions towards one another, stop to think of the consequences of a word spoken in haste, perhaps in heat. Let us cultivate that feeling of fellowship that will make an indelible impression upon the consciousness of all with whom we come in contact. It has been said that the ether is the memory of the universe. With our knowledge of telegraphy we must grant that all our thoughts have a certain definite composition. Thoughts are things, and they are potent for good or evil. Although we have separate consciousness, we are bound up one with another to an extent hardly dreamed of by most of us. There are influences passing through and around us without our cognizance, and to an extent beyond our control; we are part of a great whole, and the doings of one part throb and vibrate through the great organism of the universe, influencing the lives of us, who, all important though we consider ourselves, are but specks upon the ocean of time. Let us so order our lives that we shall keep away from us those influences of a low character, allowing those having affinity with our natures to rest and propagate their like. In conclusion, let us endeavour to act upon the ideas we hold, striving ever upward, remembering that the purer the thought, the better the deed, the greater its influence for good upon those around us.

Yours truly,

AMIGO.

To all Labor organisations: Trade Unions, Socialist groups and clubs, to Revolutionary Communists of all countries.

COMRADES,—The last international congresses, Paris 1889, Brussels 1891, Zurich 1893, and, above all, the incidents which characterised the Congress held in London in 1896, have aroused a feeling of discontent in the revolutionary circles of several countries.

Social Democracy, which tends toward the conquest of public power, pretends to represent the whole of Socialism and to subordinate the whole working-class movement to its electoral aims. It has thus abandoned the revolutionary spirit of the International, of which it has lost any claim to be the continuation. Under its influence the above-mentioned congresses occupied themselves rather with legislative measures than with the propaganda of Socialism.

The intolerance of certain groups at Zurich and at London excluded from access to the congress whole sections of International Socialism, and from the forthcoming congress will exclude every trade union or other organisation which does not expressly recognise the necessity of legislative and parliamentary action.

There is need, then, from our point of view to convene an international congress Labor Groups, Revolutionary Socialists and Anarchist Communists in order to discuss ways and means of combating the economic and political tyranny of the present system of society and of destroying the capitalistic regime.

After consulting several revolutionary Labor organisations, as well as many Communists in different countries, both in Europe and America, we have taken the initiative in convoking

AN INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY LABOR CONGRESS, and we consider that it would conduce to a larger attendance of delegates were it held in Paris during the Exhibition of 1900. A Trade

Union Congress will take place at the same period, and partly to save expense to the delegates and partly in order not to trouble the proceedings of this Congress, we shall fix ours to begin immediately after.

The Organising Committee comprises members of Labor organisations in France and abroad, Revolutionary Socialists and Anarchist Communists.

For the Organising Committee:

F. DOMELA NIEUWENHUIS, F. PELLOUTIER,
E. POUGET.

Communications should be addressed to L. Remy, 71 rue de Buffon, Paris.

PLENARY AMNESTY GROUP.

Comrades will be interested to learn that a group under the above title, with Louise Michel as Secretary, and having for its aim the plenary amnesty of all Anarchists and political prisoners, is about to be formed. It has seemed to the promoters impossible that without this act of clemency and justice a true and lasting peace can reign, or that as regards France the great International Exhibition of 1900 can mark, as it should do, an epoch indicative of the growing nobility, strength and equity of the French nation. On behalf, therefore, of this work undertaken in the cause of Liberty and Humanity, the Plenary Amnesty Group appeals for the sympathy and support of the English comrades.

We shall have more to say on this subject in our next issue, when the idea will have been discussed and, we hope, developed sufficiently to have become an international movement. In the meantime we heartily applaud the group's endeavours in this direction, and feel sure that every Anarchist will do his best to aid a good and noble work.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

This time last year—the first week in May—are there many who remember it and what it meant to the workers around Milan—death for life, lead for bread, prison for home? Life is so complex, the bread (without the butter) question so grimly all-absorbing that men soon forget what goes on around them, no matter how deeply moved they may have been at the moment of some impressive calamity or occurrence. In part, a wise provision of Nature; for, after all, the least sensitive of us is a feeling animal and, if we did not forget, the world would become a vast lunatic asylum. It does not do to brood. Man is a rational being; against the inevitable he knows it is useless to dash his head, and over our neighbour's wrongs just as useless, the cynical will say, to break one's heart. Perhaps so; yet there are some wrongs which it is a crime to forget, and surely May, 1898, with its inhuman butchery of innocent Italian men and women, is a date which every worker should bear in mind, as one more debt with which to debit a government's account, a debt that rightly speaking no amnesty should be able to wipe out but blood alone. Ethically that would be justice—but a justice only meted out in sensational novels. The worker to-day, let his heart throb never so fiercely under his own or his neighbour's wrongs, feels that he is helpless when it comes to a question of physical force. It is his brother in a soldier's or a policeman's coat whom he will kill if not killed first by him; it is his brother, his sister, his father who will be cast into prison or the grave with him; how reach that Government to wring its neck when his own aching back is the pedestal on which it rears not one but a dozen heads for ever beyond his reach; how throw off that vicious octopus grip, when every limb is in a vice—hands, knees, feet impotent to so much as make one successful effort at self-defence or defiance? Helpless, despairing, he flings himself to the ground in bitterest despondency, and the priest comes to him: "My child, it is God's will that the poor cook the soup and the rich eat it; that the poor be governed and the rich govern. Be content—do as I bid you and you shall have soup when I let you into heaven." But a mess of present pottage is more to starving Esau than a sea of prospective Bovril. He fixes his hunger-stricken eyes on this Job's comforter, he points to his shackled limbs, to his lean wife and famished children: "But I cannot move—and we have to live on this earth now; we want bread, freedom, now, now, now!" The priestly Levite moves away. Starving eyes have a glare in them which none of the ruling class care to look at long. "Satan is in these workers," he says; "the more you offer them the more they want." And he returns to his comfortable home to forget the problem in a snore.

Comrades, it is a problem; but there is a way to solve it, and that is by *Combination*. Only when the workers stand side by side the world over, aiding, abetting each other in their common strife against the oppression of governments, redressing each other's wrongs and fighting each other's battles with something stronger than words—then, and then only will men be free. The French Revolution was fired in Paris, but it was not till all France rose that the cleansing flames blazed up, that the rulers of the earth were taught a lesson and the world for ever flung away the rusty chains of tradition. And here a question arises to which the answer is somewhat dubious. Suppose a similar hour in the world's history were on the point of striking; suppose the Social Revolution for which men hunger was actually to come within visible distance—would Englishmen awake from their lethargy and join in the march of the Rebels? One drop of Celtic blood is enough to fire the man who has it; injustice, oppression, is to him the lash on the racer's back—he will go to perdition before in his resentment he can be stopped. But the Anglo-Saxon, what will he do? He has a heart—wrapped up in the cliffs of Dover; a head—firmly pillowed on the ballot-box. He

grunts forth disapprobation (not too loudly) at foreign massacres and tortures through his Socialist and Fabian mouthpieces; but, so far, that grunt suffices. The Englishman proper in these days when all Europe quivers with suppressed hunger and discontent, reminds one of a mesmerised hen. It is very easy to mesmerise a hen. You set it on the ground, chalk a straight line down its beak, press this upon a chalked spot, and draw a circle round the bird. The sorcery is complete. That hen will neither lift its head nor stir until forcibly removed from the magic circle. Just so is the Englishman mesmerised into a stolid, immovable, selfish and beruled biped by the magic whisper: *Law! Order!* If it requires a surgical operation to make a Scotchman see a joke (which is a libel), what is to be done to lead English workers into a fuller and deeper sympathy with their Continental comrades in these days of coercion and persecution?

From Caprera comes the story that during his late visit there, as King Humbert stood before Garibaldi's tomb, Teresita, his daughter, said to the king: "Your Majesty, I hope this tomb will inspire you to an act of clemency in favor of the political prisoners. This is what I dare to ask in memory of my father." The King answered: "My heart does not deny such an act of clemency, and I will not miss an opportune occasion to accord it." How like a king! A wrong is done; redress it instantly? admit an injustice—a mistake? Never! Our regal honor before all things! Our heart breaks for our suffering political prisoners, but we must await an opportune moment for delivering them. What would be the use of prisons if we did not keep them well filled—excellent refrigerators that they are for cooling journalists fiery pens and workmen's hot heads!

Our dear William of Germany is also credited with desiring to release his political prisoners on the day the Peace Conference is opened. Actuated thereto by a sense of justice or pity? Not so; but to soothe "the excited feeling in St. Petersburg against Germany by publicly showing what kind of opinion he entertains concerning the greathearted movement of the Tsar." Unfortunately, Berlin reminds us that Germany has no political prisoners at present. Poor Socialists—not one single martyr in prison? We do not hear that the Tsar has any intention of opening the gates of Siberia for the egress of his politicals—the hundreds of women and men who are eating out their hearts in enforced seclusion and misery. Do not let us forget these prisoners—do not let us forget that of all governments there is none at once so cunning, so plausible, so revoltingly cruel and pitiless as that of Russia.

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