

Freedom

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WEEDS.

In England, at the present time, we are passing through a social phase that may be best described as the intensive cultivation of weeds. Not that human institutions and social life in the past have not been heavily encumbered with those noxious growths. But with this difference, that in the past man in his ignorance believed, or at least hoped, that fruit might grow from their roots; or, to put it more correctly, his outlook on life gave him no reason to look for the fruit without the weeds. The fruit, such as it was, he accepted with much thankfulness; the weeds, in his ignorance, he regarded as a divine infliction, and bowed his head to the inscrutable wisdom of Providence. There is not that excuse for us to-day. The fierce light that beats upon a throne, a government, a nation in the present age is darkened, it must be admitted, by innumerable lies and exceptions; but enough light penetrates through, if we but open our eyes, to give us ample warning of the mischief that is working behind the veil. Men know but dare not act, and the consequence is that the weeds grow apace for sheer lack of moral courage to root them up and clear the ground for healthier growths.

Some years ago the weed of Jingoism was cultivated with all that care and attention the exploiters know so well how to bestow on the poisonous growths that will help their cause. This promising weed flourished abundantly, and even those who knew its baneful effect openly acclaimed it as a necessary development in social evolution, whilst the vast majority of the English workers willingly, nay cheerfully, followed its lead into a shameful war that they hoped would bring them "good times" and make the "foreigner" suffer. The consequences are now coming home to our doors. If ever a nation calling itself "free" and "civilised" found itself in the valley of humiliation, that nation resembled England to-day. Hardly had the awful echoes of the burning farms and concentration camps died away than the horrors of Chinese slavery burst upon us; and in the midst of it all we are the helpless witnesses of the wholesale murder of Zulus, as wicked a piece of work as even the hired cutthroats of a Christian nation were ever guilty of. And except for Keir Hardie not one of the politicians, no matter what his label, has denounced this in the only terms befitting a man. And this glorious Liberal Government, rotten in the first year of its life, sits like a palsied imbecile without human feeling or human courage to stop the infamies for which it will be held responsible. Worst of all, the British working man hasn't the energy to kick it and shame it into action.

All of this is clear enough to the dullest mind and shameful enough to the least sensitive. But do the workers recognise it and admit it? Very few of them. The great majority are still busy preparing the ground for fresh crops; and with that fatal and blighting faith in a "paternal Government" which prevents their using the true means of deliverance from servitude, they are taxing themselves to support a new growth that will twine itself around the citadel of class rule and give support to an assemblage that stands to-day, as it always has and always will, in the path of the people's progress.

Governmental officialism, then, is to be our social salvation. What the best minds have said of it, what mankind's best friends have suffered from it, what everyday experience teaches us about it—all this will be lost sight of in the infatuation of planting the new species that is to be fostered and trained till it in turn becomes a tangled maze of circumlocution and red tape. And then, blighted as it will be by what Comrade Grave so well calls the "gangrene of power," yet clinging for dear life to all the sweets of office, the workers will begin to ask—having consumed with small relish the sops thrown to them—for some substantial return for all their efforts, for a little fruit from the new species of parliamentary weed. The day of emancipation will hardly be at hand if it should ever happen that the "compact majority" was Labour instead of Liberal, and that is a truth of the first importance for all workers to learn.

And, indeed, there are hopes that a few of the more thoughtful are beginning to realise that the "den of thieves" is hardly the place to send a man to if you want him to remain honest and a comrade. Even the English worker's blind faith in legality and "law and order" will hardly prevent his asking if all is well when such things can be done in Africa, in Egypt, in India, as have happened lately. As to the last-named country, with its 250,000,000 souls who drag out their plague-stricken lives under our rule, that particularly rank specimen of weed life who has taken its destinies under his care—for a consideration—has been descanting on the advantages to these poor people of the luxuriant growth of the weed family in their poverty-stricken land. He once wrote a famous essay on Compromise, proving it to be the

evil parent of unnumbered crimes. Now Compromise and "Continuity" are the twin gods of his perverted mind. He has not breathed the poisoned air in vain!

These human weeds that flourish on the people's misery, what obstacles they are to the smallest instalment of progress or reform! How these platitudes hypnotise! How their very exhalations chloroform the brains of those who approach them!

Alas for the patience of the slave-soul! How it submits, endures, waits and hopes while the weeds grow! And yet there have been times when the people have turned to the task of casting out the weeds, and only then has history been able to record any real progress for mankind. But as eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, so eternal watchfulness is needed for the prevention of weeds. Their growth is being encouraged to-day, and they rear their heads with boldness and impunity because the people have not heeded, or have forgotten the lessons of the past. They cannot be reminded too often that "hoeing" is the work which is needed to-day. The ground must be cleared before you can build your house or grow your crop. We want the land both for homes and for food. But the weeds deny us. Well, cast them out as hindrances to human well-being. Then you will gather fruit—the fruit of your own toil.

Don't talk about "one man one vote." Let every man have a hoe, and get "back to the land."

Education under Reactionist Spain.

It is a well-known fact that popular instruction in Spain is sadly neglected, almost as much as in Turkey and Russia. What little is given is poor in quantity as well as in quality, chiefly in the latter respect, as it rests under the control, more or less, of priests and monks, who take care that the modern tendencies are as much ignored as possible by the underpaid, starving schoolmasters, whose will is generally subservient to that of the Church.

A good friend of ours, Professor Francisco Ferrer, who spent several years of his life in Paris as an exile, was in the habit, amongst the circle of friends he made in the French capital, of complaining bitterly of the imperfection of the whole of the Spanish education system, and of telling with much enthusiasm what he would do in the way of public instruction if he had the needed financial support. A wealthy lady who was much impressed with his theories left him a considerable portion of her fortune, and Ferrer at once went to Barcelona and started *La Escuela Moderna* (the Modern School), in praise of which it is enough to say that its success was so marvellous, from the very beginning, that branches had to be established in numerous parts of Spain.

Besides providing good teachers, Ferrer turned his attention to the lack of suitable text-books and reading-books for children in Spain, and provided both by suitable translations and adaptations of French standard works, and by appealing successfully to native talent.

Amongst the works thus published there are, besides translations from Reclus, Kropotkin, Malato, Jean Grave, Letourneau, Paraf-Juval, Engerand, etc., text-books written in Spanish by Buen and Vargas, professors of the Barcelona University by Ramon Cajal, the greatest Spanish naturalist, by our Spanish friends, Anselmo Lorenzo, Nicolas Estervanez, Dr. Lloria, Federico Urales, Mrs. Jacquinet, Pi Arsuaga, etc. Needless to say, all these books are decidedly Rationalist and frankly Revolutionary in tendency—just what is needed to prepare a new generation of free citizens. This precisely explains the hatred and animosity entertained towards Ferrer and his work by the two most potent factors in the Spanish State—the Romish Church and the Army. Their representatives waited only for an opportunity to act, and the opportunity sought came on the occasion of the attempt on the lives of the Spanish sovereigns by Mateo Morral.

Morral, who had rather large private means, enriched the library of *La Escuela Moderna*, and volunteered to act as librarian. After he had committed suicide, his acquaintance with Ferrer was found a sufficient motive for arresting the latter and seizing his fortune, or rather the money left him in trust for a purpose.

Those who are acquainted with the ways of Spanish justice in political matters—as revealed to the world by the Montjuich, Mano-Negra and Alcalá affairs—will not need to be told that the Spanish inquisitors have more than one way of proving guilty any man they want to get rid of.

Several prominent Freethinkers and Revolutionists, as well as all our comrades on the Continent and in England, are now making a vigorous fight on behalf of justice. Press campaigns have already been started by many independent papers in Spain; by the *Tribuna* and *Messaggero* in Italy; by the *Labour Leader* in England; the *Express* in Belgium; by *L'Intransigeant*, *Echo de Paris*, *Action*, *Temps Nouveaux*, *Courrier Européen*, *Petite République*, *Dépêche*, and many others in France.

A first victory has already been gained by this agitation. The Spanish Government, who intended so submit Ferrer to a Court Martial, which in Spain always condemns the accused whether they are guilty or not, has at length decided to remit the affair to a civil tribunal.

Now we must demand a prompt and a fair trial, and compel the Spanish Government to allow the Rationalist schools, which have all been closed throughout Spain, to reopen their doors and to continue without hindrance the work of education and emancipation.

T. DEL MARMOL.

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NOTES.

"OLD" AND "NEW" LABOUR MEMBERS.

The *Cape Socialist* for July has the following note:—"We would just as soon vote for Jameson as vote for a 'Labour' candidate if the latter is not a class-conscious Labour man. If he is not, he is simply committed to sundry tinkering reforms that will never emancipate the workers. Wage-slavery demands Social Revolution—not Social Reform. The whole festering bag of tricks has got to go. The old-fashioned 'Labour' men support the vile wage system; the true Labour men would abolish it and establish liberty and equality."

Now we can assure our friends of the *Cape Socialist* we have been watching and waiting patiently for years to discover the "Labour" man who, getting himself elected, goes for the Social Revolution to abolish wage-slavery, and so far this phenomenon has not appeared on the political horizon. "Old" Labour men or "new" Labour men, it is the same thing; once in Parliament they can only talk of "reforms," and very paltry ones at that. The last thing they trouble about is to "abolish wage slavery and establish liberty and equality." Revolutions are not made by "Labour men" in Parliaments, as Russia is teaching us to-day.

UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE IN SPAIN.

While on this subject it will be interesting to quote what Juan Melia has to say in *Wilshire's Magazine* for July on the electoral conditions in Spain. After remarking somewhat contemptuously that Anarchist organisations have "nothing to show for their efforts but defeat," he further on admits that "It is a matter of surprise to all who are not familiar with our electoral system that we have not yet won a single seat in Parliament. In most of the European nations the working class is now fighting for universal suffrage. But here we are fighting to purify politics. The right of suffrage is at present nullified by rascalities. In order to make it possible for some of our candidates to win we must have a few thousand citizens well organised and determined to break the heads of some of the hoodlums, even at the expense of going to prison for it or being crippled. Unfortunately, we have not succeeded so far in getting together those thousands of brave fellows." We have italicised the sentence which to our mind sums up very neatly the electoral system, not only in Spain, but in all countries where it obtains. Politics is the science of rascality, and the vote is the will-o'-the-wisp that misleads the worker. So we devoutly hope when those thousands of brave fellows have been got together they will have the courage and intelligence to crack heads and risk their own liberties for something more solid and substantial than a vote. But is it not passing strange to find men advocating force to conquer electoral power, and deprecating it when used as a *revolutionary means* to win Socialism?

THE MORALS OF THE SMART SET.

That self-advertising has been brought to a fine art in the present age we all know perfectly well, but it must be admitted that for an obscure priest to get himself talked about by pretending to attack the smart set was an idea that might be regarded as almost clever. And it had the advantage of being highly amusing to the smart set, who sit and giggle at the sermons. However, we only refer to all this nauseating stupidity because we see once more that use is being made of the well-worn Christian legend of the woman taken in adultery, and the moral drawn therefrom that it was only those without sin who might be permitted to cast the first stone. This truly Christian way of regarding our moral nature deserves to be hunted down and exposed for what it really is—a desire to bestow upon the "good" the right to judge and to punish the unfortunate. A whole volume might be written upon this, but let it suffice to say here that it is precisely the "good" who have the least claim to judge and condemn their fellows. If the one "without sin" could have been found, he would have been guilty of the blackest of crimes in casting a stone at his erring sister or

brother. Guyau gives a much higher ideal of practice, which most Anarchists, we believe, would accept. "For the narrow and entirely human justice," he says, "which refuses kindness to him who is already unhappy enough to be guilty must be substituted another larger justice, which gives kindness to all—a justice which not only ignores the hand with which it gives, but will not even know the hand which receives it."

REVOLUTION.

It seems the curtain is rising on the last act of the great revolution that is to free Russia from the power of autocracy. Our hearts go out to the Russian people, and especially to those heroes and heroines who will give their blood for liberty. To think that all this sacrifice and suffering must be made because a band of monsters will not relinquish their power over a people who ask only for freedom to develop the nation's life chokes one with indignation and disgust. What a terrible thing is love of power! Would that the Socialists of all countries might learn this great lesson: that it is better to face anything that may happen in our social struggles rather than give man power over his fellow man. How often has history proved this! How many times more must she repeat herself?

JAURÈS AND CLEMENCEAU.

Comrade Cantwell writes as follows:—

As illustrating my remarks in last month's *Freedom*, nothing could be more *apropos* than the summary of Jaurès and Clemenceau's speeches published in the *Clarion* of July 6. Jaurès and the other Social Democrats find themselves unable to do anything towards establishing Socialism in France by legislative means, so they try to bully Clemenceau into taking on the job. Clemenceau tells them "they don't know where they are"; in fact, that they are scarcely Radicals in disguise (as we have often told them). So, when he is satisfied that there are no more strikers or other demonstrators to be shot or mutilated by the soldiers—in short, when "order" reigns in France—he (Clemenceau) will begin to think about realising the *Radical* programme—and then the Social Democrats will have no *raison d'être*. In the meantime, if they are good boys and "behave well," some of them may be rewarded by the sweets of office and authority.

P.S.—In the time of Louis XVI. the regiment de Flandre was said to have "behaved well."

THE DIVINE RIGHT OF CAPITAL.

"This is the Divine Right of Capital. Look, the fierce sunshine beats down upon the white sand, or chalk, or hard clay of the railway cutting whose narrow sides focus the heat like a lens. Brawny arms swing the pick and drive the pointed spades into the soil. Clod by clod, inch by inch, the heavy earth is loosened, and the mountain removed by atoms at a time. Aching arms these, weary backs, stiffened limbs—brows black with dirt and perspiration. The glaring chalk blinds the eye with its whiteness; the slippery sand gives way beneath the footstep, or rises with the wind and fills the mouth with grit; the clay clings to the boot, weighing the leg down as lead. The hot sun scorches the back of the neck—the lips grow dry and parched; and—'Look out for yourself, mate!' With a jarring rattle the clumsy trucks come jolting down the incline on their way to the 'shoot'; then beware, for they will sometimes jump the ill-laid track, and crush human limbs like brittle icicles with tons of earth. Or a 'shot' is fired overhead, bellowing as the roar rushes from cliff to cliff as an angry bull, and huge stones and fragments hurtle in deadly shower. Or, worse than all, the treacherous clay slips—bulges, trembles, and thuds in an awful avalanche, burying men alive.

"'But they are paid to do it,' says Comfortable Respectability (which hates everything in the shape of a 'question,' glad to slur it over somehow). They are paid to do it! Go down into the pit yourself, Comfortable Respectability, and try it as I have done, just one hour of a summer's day; then you will know the preciousness of a vulgar pot of beer! Three-and-sixpence a day is the price of these brawny muscles; the price of the rascally sherry you parade before your guests in such pseudo-generous profusion. One guinea a week—that is, one stall at the opera. But why do they do it? Because Hunger and Thirst drive them; these are the fearful scourges, the whips worse than the knout, which lie at the back of Capital and give it its power. Do you suppose these human beings with minds and souls and feelings would not otherwise repose on the sweet sward, and harken to the song-birds as you may do on your lawn at Cedar Villa?

"The 'financier,' 'director,' 'contractor,' whatever his commercial title—perhaps all three, who is floating this line, where is he? Rolling in his carriage right royally as a King of Spades should do, honoured for the benefits he has conferred upon mankind, toasted at banquets, knighted by an appreciative Throne, his lady shining in bright raiment by his side, glorious in silk and scarlet and ermine, smiling as her lord, voluble of speech, pours forth his unctuous harangue. One man whipped with Hunger toils half-naked in the Pit, face to face with death; the other is crowned by his fellows, sitting in state with fine wines and the sound of jubilee. This is the Divine Right of Capital."

—Richard Jefferies.

THE SIN OF SLAVERY.*

A little volume that deserves special notice reaches us from the Liberty Press, Philadelphia. Although containing some statements and conclusions that no Anarchist could accept, it at the same time upholds so courageously the right of rebellion and resistance, and attacks so vigorously the so-called "rights of property," that every Anarchist, indeed every sincere student of sociology, will wish to have it in his library.

The author insists with an emphasis rarely met with in these days that man's submissiveness to law and the brute force of his masters has been the primal cause of his terrible political and economic enslavement. After dealing some well-deserved blows at religion and philosophy, he gives us in his third chapter ("The Origin of Submission") a very clear and striking account of man's fall into servitude:—

"Far back in the hazy beginnings of human society a differentiation of men took place into warriors, and contrivers or producers. The warriors were the most brutal and domineering and less gifted; the contrivers and inventors were they in whom superior qualities of brain were starting. These new excellences of mind were slight and rudimentary, yet they were the beginnings of higher man. Their possessors saw how life might be improved and proceeded to improve it, their interest being rather in work and production than in war, enslaving and killing; they were the intellectuals of the time, the scientists, the inventors, the creators, and among their discoveries was agriculture. They thought and worked. Here the greatest of all errors ever committed by mankind arose. These men, the less violent, brutal, bloodthirsty, and selfish, relaxed their self-protecting vigilance, and permitted a division of labour; they gravitated to the higher and peaceful arts, and gave over the business of war to the baser, duller sort who inherently thirsted for slaughter; they let down their guard, and the result was that the truculent killing breed took command, and they were subjugated. This sealed the subjugation of brains to force for all time, *making brain the errand boy of brute force*. Far from setting intellect free to develop by differentiation and division of labour, as writers teach, it dealt the evolution of brain an irremediable blow. For it raised Power over Brain as its mentor, and made the higher intellect a minion of Might. And this degrading office intelligence has always meekly filled, with dumb mean gratitude for even tolerance to exist."

This idea, it will be remembered, was also given in Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*.

It would be interesting also to quote some passages from the chapter on "Manufacturing the Slavish Instinct," but we find so many excellent things that are worth reproducing that space compels us to make a limited choice. Here, for instance, is a passage worth remembering:—

"And now turning from ants to men to see if there is anything to alter the deduction, we recognise that there is not. A person who consents to be servile to another breaks the highest law of the universe within our ken. That law is *expansion with the greatest celerity upon the highest lines of intelligence*. A slave's or quasi-slave's expansion is curbed by the iron walls of denial and impossibility which crush him down; the very best expansion he can make is a distortion and sham. Let a man first give his supreme attention to making himself and all men free, and he will then begin to know the virtues of higher nature."

And again:—

"Finally, no scheme of obligations, morals, laws, or relations which evolved out of this criminal situation and has overcast modern times, resting upon and assuming servile in any form, is binding upon the servile. If they accept these unwarranted bonds of servility and perform their sham 'duties,' they repeat the original crime of slavery against themselves, they drive a nail to preserve the pestilent edifice, they exercise the worst of all wrongs against the whole society of men. For they estop that career of universal human freedom in which all men's faculties will have full expansion, which for the first time will justify the existence in the world of human life. The liberation will set masters free too, for so long as there is a slave or a quasi-slave, the master is another kind of slave."

In answer to those who preach that force used in the cause of the oppressed is a crime we are given the following scathing reply:—

"'They would have killed us if we had resisted?' You had better have died. You lived and continued to breed cowards. If some of you had died you would have lighted up the spirit of revolt in all, and swiftly annihilated mastership. More of you died vilely as it was than need have died honourably to free you. You died on the battlefield fighting for your masters when not an atom of good from the fighting was to come to you. Why did you not, slaves and serviles on both sides, turn in and fight your masters together? You died of plagues sown, because the conditions of slavery are pestilential. You starved, as now in the twentieth century quasi-slave descendants of yours are

starving, because you were beguiled. You worked in polluted places for your masters, with grim death at your elbow knocking one by one of you into the grave—and was not this killing you? Did you escape death by running away from death? You entailed it on a thousand generations because you dared not strike your tyrants to the dust and be free. You assisted in the spoiling of all the race of men through these thousand generations by your caitiff subservency. A master's life was not worth more than one of yours, not as much. One grand upblazing, or an unquenchable guerilla warfare against them, would have terminated slavery as an institution, and saved all those slavery-slain in the thousand generations of its dragging continuance. Your crime was that you left your masters peace by night or day, and nursed the evil on through squalid ages, *forbidding human progress*."

It seems astonishing that one who sees so clearly the root evils of this system should hope for any liberation of mankind by the use of the vote. Yet such is the fact, notwithstanding that majority rule is *brute force rule*, against which our author has written some powerful passages.

But the book is invaluable in spite of this weak spot.

We are ordering copies of this book, and those desirous of obtaining same should send orders to *Freedom Office*, 127, Ossulston Street, Euston Road, London, N.W. Price 1s. 6d. post free.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

United States.

We learn a curious fact from Tucker's *Liberty* regarding the origin of the wealth of Roosevelt's son-in-law, who with his wife has of late been dined and wined by European royalties and admitted into the innermost sanctums of the British aristocracy and Court. That wealth which secured him his president's daughter in marriage was derived from Josiah Warren—America's first Anarchist pioneer. "While Warren was living in Cincinnati," says *Liberty*, "he obtained from Nicholas Longworth a ninety-nine years' lease on a large tract of land that now comprises the central portion of the business part of that city. Later Warren repudiated so fully the holding of land for speculative purposes that he voluntarily relinquished his holdings, which thus reverted to Mr. Longworth without any compensation being demanded from the latter by Warren. Thus Alice Roosevelt's husband, a descendant of the Longworth mentioned, was made a rich man through the scrupulous honesty and magnanimity of the pioneer of those Anarchists whom her father so roundly abused in his message to Congress!"

Upton Sinclair, *Jungle* hunter, is breathing peace towards Trusts for the moment, and is intent on founding a Socialist "home colony" for the well-to-do professional men. With a family of "peevish children," and no head for business, as he states, the "servant question" has become a nightmare problem to him. Why should not twenty or a hundred families join him in establishing a co-operative colony near New York? His plan seems to be of the Garden City order, with the addition that for all the various departments salaried experts shall be obtained. Each home "would be a place where the family met, to rest and play and sleep." The cooking, the care of the children, the purchasing of provisions, etc., would all be arranged on a Communistic basis, and there would be a common dining hall. All the "help" is to be treated on an equality with the colonists. It remains to be seen whether the *Jungle* man can trap these as cleverly as he did the Beef Trusts, or can cope as well with "salaried experts," who usually have an eye to "profits."

Freedom has freely criticised the all-pervading corruption and brutality of the official classes in the States. As an instance of the latter, a private letter from San Francisco reports among many acts of wanton destruction, pillage, and arbitrary cruelty during the earthquake panic, acts which have not yet seen daylight in the papers, the conversion of a home for incurable children into a lethal chamber. To save the city the expense and trouble of rescuing the unhappy children when once the fire broke out, they were all chloroformed to death. Not the slightest effort was made to remove them to a place of safety—they were only the children of the poor. The fire never reached the hospital, but under a cloak of intended humanity the authorities were rid of the children. A pretty big strike on the water front of the city has been going on since rebuilding began, owing to the refusal of the Steamship Associations to improve the labour conditions of their employees. The work on the steam schooners trading between ocean ports and the inland harbours is so severe, loading and unloading being usually done at high pressure, that the strongest man cannot stand it more than two or three years. The companies refuse the increase of wages demanded and have locked the men out. Not content with that, they have hired "strike-breakers" to "guard" such vessels as they can man, and a posse of these, without so much as a hail, fired point blank recently on a boatload of supposed strikers approaching a steamer, killing one and wounding three men. The arrest of the firing party followed, but no more is likely to be heard of the matter. There is little difference between Russian government and American company government when it is a question of facing strikers.

Germany.

How the Teuton worker, in spite of his huge Socialist vote, enjoys discipline! At Zwickau, a manufacturing city of Saxony, the police have minimised, if not broken, a strike that in their opinion had lasted long enough by simply posting up bills to the effect that they dissolved the strike committee, that every member of this body who was found encouraging the strikers would henceforth be liable to arrest and a fine of £5, while the proprietor of the restaurant in which the committee was accustomed to meet would be fined £7 if another meeting was held on his premises. No protest against this arbitrary treatment appears to have been made. In the Outer Rhine provinces, the seat of the metal industries, there has been much misery for years, which the Socialist Members voiced lately only in the Reichstag. The rule is ten hours' work a day in the large foundries, and often thirteen in the smaller. Factory laws are scouted by the ironmasters, and inspection becomes a farce. Sunday work is the rule, not the exception, and but a fraction of time is allowed for meals; usually food is gulped down in the midst of labour. For ventilation

* *Human Submission*. By Morrison I. Swift. Liberty Press, Philadelphia. Price 25 cents.

there is no thought, and all the sanitary laws are set at defiance. Small wonder that German ironwork is held in low repute. The making of it has broken too many toilers for some of their misery not to have alloyed the metal. The rails bend, the axles split. Good work can only be produced under good conditions in the manual world.

Belgium.

Here, as now in France, a law enforcing the closing of shops has just been passed. As usual, it is so encumbered with exceptions that few of the hardest worked will profit by it. Needless to say, the shopkeepers in many instances are determined to retaliate by lowering wages, in others; no doubt, they will raise the price of their goods. All Belgian workers are poorly paid. Hairdressers in Brussels, for example, get half-a-crown a day only in the best establishments, and the day is usually one of thirteen hours; they are forced, like the waiters, to rely mainly on the customers' tips. The joiners and cabinet makers of Bruges are just now on strike for shorter hours and increased wages. Their day is also a thirteen-hour one, and every effort to get ameliorations from the employers has been futile.

Russia.

Switzerland fought for its liberties and rights, and yet no European government is to-day harder on those avowed apostles of autonomy or Republicanism, the Russian students, than is Switzerland. The Swiss police, aided of course by Russian agents, never weary of harassing the mildest and most innocent of the young men and women who, unable to gain education at home, too poor to purchase it at Paris, combine to live *en famille* and study in the Swiss universities where the fees at least are the lowest of any. To cite one of many instances, at Montreux, the other day, a student was arrested on the demand of the Russian agents, who stated he was the executioner of a certain councillor of the prefecture of Poltava who made an involuntary exit from life last January. There was absolute proof that their captive, a consumptive, had been an inmate of a Davos sanatorium since the preceding autumn, and had only lately left it. In spite of protest and proof, and ill as he was, he was placed in a prison cell, to remain there until the Swiss and Russian police come to an agreement on his ultimate fate, which will probably mean expulsion, for no reason except that he was the wrong man and a Russian. From the interior of his country a courier writes: "Through whatever town one passes the hotels and streets are gorging with police and patrols, for it is now revolution in every sense, down to even the old ideas; these have vanished, morality itself is no longer understood. The patience of the people under the yoke of the troops and their assistant 'black gangs' is pitiful. Happily the regulars detest the Cossacks as heartily as does the man in the street, and refuse to co-operate with them in police duty. I have just been watching a regiment start for F., where the artillery, sappers and engineers have threatened to train their guns on the Cossack barracks and official buildings if the military authorities disarm them as threatened owing to their revolutionary tendencies. The peasants are fast waking into life. Just here when the Duma elections began the reactionist party treated and lodged the country voters in the best hotel, after which (and bribes) with true peasant humour they went in a body and voted for a hot revolutionist." That the present system will be overthrown is now but a matter of time. Autocracy fights hard for life, but pacifically through a Duma or drowned in a sea of blood, it is doomed to disappear. If Nicholas chooses a sea of blood, he will go with his system—the casting vote is his. As to what may follow, we quote from a watcher of events:—"The revolutionists are, with all their energy, but the ferment in the brew, not a body of organic strength; the Nationalists seem of smaller importance than was supposed, the Poles also, for in that country the Socialism of the masses of industrial workers keeps the bourgeois Nationalists back, as they prefer Russia to the workers' rule. Thus Russia will remain a huge country with very little hope for Federalists. A popular victory will lead to administrative reform; the peasants will get land for indemnity, and once they get it they will not care to pay rent for it; yet this will be enforced no doubt when the new reformed government gets firmly established. The town workers will get labour reforms and plenty of laws, which will be carried out if they look after them. An infinite number of well-meaning persons will find their place in educational work, and Socialists will be a parliamentary party as everywhere else, and Anarchists, finally, will be hunted down as everywhere else. Thus it may end—or begin. Russia will become a modern, middle-class ruled country; the elements for more advanced developments at present seem too scarce to promise speedy fulfilment of nobler ideals. When we see England, after her Labour victories, tarnishing her name with inconceivable barbarities abroad, what can we expect from Russia? Yet even then why should one be disappointed? Progress of any kind is always a slow, an agonising process, and often breathes when we think it dead." Our friend, the writer of these remarks, has been so curiously correct in all his prophecies regarding the Russian situation and its changes, that his forecast for its future is not without interest.

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