

Freedom

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Government by Intellectuals.

"Humanity has had for its governors slaughterers, fanatics, robbers, false coiners, bankrupts, madmen, men who have been corrupt, and men who have sown corruption. Immense is the responsibility of these men, who, endowed with authority that they might enlighten and moralise the peoples over whom they were set, have depraved and degraded them by bad laws and a bad example. There are no greater malefactors than the political malefactors who foment divisions and hatreds by their ambition, cupidity, and rivalries. Ordinary evil-doers who are judged by the courts are only guilty of killing or robbing some few individuals; the number of their victims is restricted. Political malefactors, on the contrary, count their victims by the thousand; they corrupt and ruin entire nations."

With these words Louis Proal, an opponent of Anarchism, prefaces his work on "Political Crime." In the list he gives of the governors who have inflicted themselves on humanity, he omits one type—the "intellectuals." The man in France who now struts and frets his brief hour on the stage is the most perfect example the world could give of this type. In him "intellectuality" was the entire expression of his individuality, and it was amidst the most advanced thought and activity of the age that his life-work centred itself.

Thus equipped and imbued with all the traditions that lovers of liberty and social advancement hold dear, we see this man at the helm of the State trying his hand at the science of government, whilst the world—the capitalist world—looks for a moment with apprehension at the amazing spectacle. On the other hand, the workers looked with some hope at this new "friend of the people," wrapped in a little brief authority, and supported by Briand and Viviani. At last, it was imagined, Democracy might realise its ideals through political channels. "Government of the people, by the people, for the people," was in a fair way of being on its trial; and the people, with that faith in politicians which seems ever to rise phoenix-like from the ashes of their disappointments, waited patiently for results.

It was not long before they gathered the fruit. The terrible mining disaster at Courrières, with the trouble that followed, soon proved to the workers on which side "intellect" takes its stand when it has power in its hand, the machinery of the State at its back, and its "conscience" in the grip of the capitalist. The mineowners were the criminals, the miners the victims; and Clemenceau came in the name of "law and order"—that is to say, in the name of capitalism—with the soldiers in the background, to tell the trusting people to keep the peace—and leave the rest to him. In the decimated families of the miners no hope, no justice, no amelioration was brought by all the eloquence of this apostle of "liberty, equality, and fraternity"—in the abstract! Conscience was dead: ambition had taken its place. This was the first step in the trial of government by intellectuals.

All that follows is the logical consequence of what has gone before. It is fatally inevitable, and one might almost say excellent in the lesson it teaches. It destroys the last hope of any popular faith in government in any form. The Governments that may have power in the future will have it in spite of the people's trust and not because of it. They will have it because the people have not yet grasped the new forms of social and economic organisation, which need no government, no authority. The action of the wine-growers of the Midi gives great hope of future developments of an anti-Statist character. They no longer go to the State cap in hand, but with a pistol at its head. The strike against taxation is a weapon that our intellectual coercionists, with their murderous resort to brute force, recognise as the greatest menace to their power. Neither Clemenceau, nor Nicholas II., nor any brute of their kind can rule without the life-blood they draw from the people through taxation. The folly of the wine-growers in

expecting help from the State in their bitter struggle against but one of the evils of the capitalist system may be regretted, but experience will teach them a lesson they will never forget. They will learn that it is the whole system of the capitalist State which reduces them to misery; that the bold use of direct action in formulating their demands would be even better employed in organising for themselves in free co-operative communes the production and distribution not only of the vine, but of the food which is their first necessity. In fact, the possibilities of developments along the lines they have taken are infinite if they do not follow their "leaders" and do not fear Clemenceau.

Let it not be imagined, however, that France stands alone in her bitter experience of the latest—we wish we could say the last!—example of Government by intellectuals. France has her Clemenceau, but India has John Morley. Their relative positions are not quite the same, but the results, so far as progress and the healthy development of a people are concerned, differ but little. The man who wrote the famous essay on "Compromise," which placed conscience before all things, knows when in power how to crush freedom of speech and of the press just as well as did Napoleon the Little. In fact, however much we may admire the man of mind, as part of Government we see him as small, as mean, as contemptible as the blackguard of the *coup d'état*. We see him in his study toying with all the fine principles that have helped humanity to a higher conception of life, and we see him as Minister of State killing, as it were, the children of his own creation. The giant has become a dwarf; the savant becomes an imp, killing and maiming in the name of Government that which he has fostered and nourished in the name of Liberty.

Out of it all, however, arises one great hope for the future, that when the time comes for the great transformation—when the revolution shall have opened the doors to the people for their full economic freedom—they will then set up no more Governments by whatever specious name they may be called. The workers in the past have been betrayed by politicians and self-seekers of all classes—not least by representatives of their own class. All sorts and conditions of men have made fine promises and have ended by governing us. In every case the same tale has to be told. No relief, no advancement, save what the peoples have enforced by their own rebellions. The day is not far distant when the last great revolt shall drive out not only the capitalist with all his forms of exploitation, but once and for all his great ally, the State, with all its forms of coercion.

THE PRIEST IN AUSTRALIA.

Our May Day meeting was a great advertisement for Anarchy owing to the attack of the Roman Catholics, who kept up a continuous howl during the two hours our meeting was being held. I am fully convinced that the Christian God is the great drawback, and therefore should receive our concentrated attack.

You are not dominated by Catholics in England, and have no idea of the priests' evil influence with their dupes. They have used every effort to injure me, breaking my shop windows, sneaking in the shop-door and throwing a stone at my head, calling me a loafer as I pass along the streets, also slandering and misrepresenting Anarchy, which they describe as murder. But I am able to 'down them in debate, so they resort to brute force.

The Anarchist motto, "Neither God nor Master," is good, as I am sure there is no possible hope for freedom while God dwells in men's imagination. God must go or man remain a slave for ever. The Church has stopped the Sunday sale of literature. I have been summoned and fined five shillings for distributing literature on Sundays, the fine to be taken by distress, so I had to submit.

I have a plucky little woman comrade, a Mrs. Jarvis, who assisted me to keep the meeting together last Sunday.

Be sure and tell people not to come to Australia. A few weeks ago a thousand men in Victoria offered to go to Queensland to take up the work the Kanakas have left, so you can understand how people will fare if they come.

J. W. FLEMING.

AGRICULTURAL LABOUR IN THE 19TH CENTURY.

The condition of the agricultural labourer has been different from that of the artisan. Scattered and incapable of combined action with his fellows, bowed down by centuries of oppression, hard usage, and hard words, with, as he believes, every social force against him, the landlord in league with the farmer, and the clergyman in league with both, the latter constantly preaching resignation, and the two former constantly enforcing it, he has lived through evil times. Under the allowance system, he seems to have been guaranteed against starvation, and under the law of parochial settlement he avenged himself on some of his oppressors, though not on the worst, those who, on one pretext or another, quartered him on another parish, employed him on quarter sessions or farmers' vestry assessment wages, and left others to supplement his wages by the allowance, and to support him when they had worn out his body, as they had worn out his spirit long before. There is nothing in the history of civilisation more odious than the meanness of some English landlords, except it be their insolence. They have been abetted by the foolish farmers, who ground down their labourers in order to enrich the landlords, and have finally sacrificed themselves to the rent-rolls of profligates and gamblers. . . .

The average wages of the agricultural labourer, according to Arthur Young's calculations, had been 7s. 6d. a week from 1767 to 1789; 10s. from 1799 to 1803; and 12s. from 1804 to 1810. In 1811, they were 12s. 9d. They continued at this rate for three years; sunk about 17 per cent. from 1814 to 1818; about 20 per cent. more in 1819-20; about 12 per cent. more in 1821; and 5 per cent. more in 1822. Then they began to rise, and, according to Mr. Villiers' returns in 1861, were 9s. 4d. in 1824; 10s. 4d. in 1837; and 11s. 7d. in 1860. In 1866, Mr. Levi sets them at 13s. It may be doubted, however, whether these several increases of money wages were not, so far as the labourers were concerned, more than counterbalanced by the increase of house rent, the curtailment of allotments and similar indirect aids to labour, to say nothing of the excision of the allowances under the old poor law. In 1837, the cost of maintaining the poor was less than in any year since 1800, and was three millions below what it had been in 1832, though the average price of wheat in the former year was 58s. 8d.; in the latter, 52s. 6d.,—a difference in the ordinary consumption of a labourer's family, as estimated in bread, of about 4d. a week. The rise thus effected in 1837 probably represents the compensation for the loss of the allowances, for some expenses under the new poor law were considerably increased. I may add, that Young argued in 1813 that the wages of the agricultural labourer were below his necessary food, omitting all estimates as to house rent, fuel, clothing, and extras. . . .

I do not remember, in the very extended study which I have given to the history of agricultural labour and wages during the six centuries for which there is recorded and continuous evidence, that, in the worst experiences of the labourer, he was till very recently open to the risk of having his young children of either sex taken from him, and put under the care of a gangmaster, with a view to their labouring in the fields, being housed for the night in barns, without the pretence of decency, not to say comfort, and apart from the obvious degradation of their condition, exposed to the coarse brutalities of the manager of children's labour. But in the Eastern Counties it appears to have been till recently the practice, perhaps still is, for farmers to contract for the services of agricultural gangs, *i.e.*, of crowds of children set to work under an overseer who had hunted them up. The practice, I remember, was defended on the ordinary ground of cheap labour being a necessity for profitable agriculture, which, when it is interpreted, means that tenant farmers are too cowardly to resist rents which they cannot pay, except by the degradation of those whom they employ. That a peasantry, underpaid and underfed, should be constrained to submit their children to such an odious and demoralising slavery, is unhappily intelligible; that the middle-man can be found to undertake the office of such an agency, is a fact to be regretted but expected; that farmers should allow themselves to employ such an expedient, is scandalous; but that they who pretend to consider the condition of the poor, and to be active in the interests of humanity, should be complacent and silent, is a negligence which ought to bring its punishment, or is an acquiescence in ill-doing which I do not care to characterize.

Some twenty or more years ago, Mr. Girdlestone, a clergyman in a country parish in the west of England, and then or subsequently a canon of Bristol, called attention to the miserable condition of agricultural labour in that part of England with which he was familiar. The agricultural labourers of Devon are more than ordinarily numerous, for within the memory of man, a lucrative local industry, cloth weaving, has decayed, and the ordinary population has been swollen by the accession of unemployed weavers. Mr. Girdlestone had the ordinary fate of those who attack the doings of the landed interest. His better behaved opponents denied the accuracy of his statements, and published their own account of the facts. His rougher critics, the farmers, threatened him with violence and the horse-pond. It is not quite clear that his poor clients thought him their kindest friend in letting the world know what was their condition, for employers in country places have many opportunities of letting their workmen feel that discontent or complaint, even if expressed by an advocate, is dangerous. Quarter sessions' justice is very often, apparently, partial, but the tender mercies of farmers to their labourers

are the reverse of gentle. Nor, indeed, is there much good done in calling attention to such facts as Mr. Girdlestone disclosed, unless the remedy is clear and can be applied immediately. Even the activity of the press, now far more searching than it was twenty years ago, and the tenderness of the public conscience, are apt to be transitory. Besides, though modern England is curious and sensitive, we may be certain that much unrecorded wrong is done. The public prints do not know everything, and might find it inconvenient to know everything.

Some years later, Joseph Arch, a Warwickshire peasant, undertook the heroic task of rousing the agricultural labourer from his apathy, of bearding the farmers and the landowners, and of striving to create an agricultural labourers' union. I believe that I was the first person in some position who recognised his labours, by taking the chair at one of his meetings, and I have been able to see how good his judgment has been, how consistent his conduct, and how prodigious are his difficulties. I believe he has done no little service to his own order, but I conclude he has done more for the general interests of labour, if only by showing how universal is the instinct that workmen can better their condition only by joint and united action. And it should be said, that other workmen, trained for a longer period in the experience of labour partnerships, have aided, and that not obscurely, the undertaking in which Arch is engaged.

The difficulties in creating and maintaining a labour partnership of agricultural hands are very great. In the darkest period of their history, artisans, even when their action was proscribed by the law, still clung together, had common purposes, took counsel, though secretly and in peril, and struck against oppressively low wages. But for three centuries at least, agricultural labourers have had no organization whatever on behalf of their class interests. I shall have written in vain if I have not pointed out how effectively the employers of rural labour contrived to enslave and subdue them. It is hard to see how any one could have hoped to move them. But even when they were moved, it was still more difficult to make the units cohere. I remember that an eminent clergyman of my acquaintance, now deceased, told me that when he first took a country living,—some of Arch's kindred were among his domestic servants, and he was entirely friendly to Arch's policy,—nothing struck him more painfully than the evident suspicion with which the labourers in his parish met kindness. He said that he very early despaired of their confidence, for he noticed that invariably any trust he showed in them was distrusted, was supposed to be tendered with the object of overreaching them. I do not comment on the experiences which must have induced this habit of mind on them, but simply say that this was the material with which Arch had to deal.

I am willing enough to admit that my clerical friend's position was more awkward than that of other persons. The landlord, generally non-resident, is, ordinarily speaking, as unknown to the English peasant as if he were a foreign potentate, and I suspect that the Arcadian pictures we now and then get of the peasant-labourer, his wages and his allowances from the great house, are, with rare exceptions, rustic ornaments in the immediate neighbourhood of the country seat, cottages with trim gardens, with honeysuckles trained on the walls, and neat borders of old-fashioned flowers in the little garden by the road, the creations of a benevolent despot, who from some good-nature and more ostentation keeps his poorer neighbours in apparent content. But the peasant who has to do with the tenant-farmer enjoys none of these amenities, and the parson who took the peasant's part would be thwarted in a hundred ways, and perhaps threatened with the horse-pond. I do not doubt that most country clergymen are kindly conscientious, but they are poor hands at arbitrating between employers and labourers; and when the former are farmers and the latter are hinds, I have generally found that the clergy put a personal interpretation on the apostle's advice, and seek to live peaceably with all men.—THOROLD ROGERS, in "Six Centuries of Work and Wages."

LITERARY NOTES.

Anthropophagi; or, The Gatherers of Wealth, and How they Do It. By George Pyburn. Published by the Author, 1011 H Street, Sacramento, California.

This is a very interesting essay, and although necessarily traversing much well-worn ground, it does so in a style and with a method that will certainly appeal to individuals who would be untouched by writing that appealed more to the emotions. For here we have a calm method of reasoning and a clear style of exposition that cannot fail to "come home" to the man who asks for facts. As an instance, here is a good example of explaining to the general reader in a few telling sentences how slavery was imposed on mankind:—

"We learn from travellers that among primitive people—savages as we call them, people of the forest, mountains, plains, and even lakes—who make their living by hunting, fishing, and by gathering edible roots and plucking the spontaneous fruits of trees, there is no such marked distinction between rich and poor as we find in civilisation, although doubtless there are more or less differences in the possessions of individuals—differences which may easily be accounted for by differences of age, of energy and ingenuity shown by the individual members of the tribe. Take notice here in passing that among savage peoples there is no such condition within the tribe as many have imagined,

namely, every man's hand against every other man. On the contrary, there is general if not effusive friendship, or at worst indifference; no one goes hungry while there is food in the camp, and no one attempts to injure his fellows. They hunt and fish together, or separately, as may be agreeable or convenient, and the catch is more or less at the service of the whole. And this, which we are told again and again, may easily be believed, for it is reasonable; only by peace and mutual helpfulness could any group continue to exist. 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' The case is different, however, as between neighbouring tribes. Here there is enmity and war, continuous or intermittent; the cause of these wars we find mainly in the desire for better or more easily procured food, and for this cause they encroach on each other's hunting grounds or fight for their possession, or perhaps it is to get a change of diet, a feast of flesh, the flesh of their enemies; in general terms, in the desire to gather the wealth they have not created, or to appropriate the foundation and source of that wealth. Under civilisation, and especially commercialism, new territory and new markets, instead of new hunting grounds, are the main cause of wars. History teaches us that in war is to be found the first beginning of the gathering of unearned wealth—wealth created by others—the vanquished—and appropriated by the victors. Time was when the victors slew the vanquished and ate them; but in after times they spared the lives of their conquered enemies and made them slaves. War and slavery then we see to be inseparably connected. Under the condition of slavery we see people obliged to work, obliged to make things for their masters—owners—to use and enjoy. A startling conclusion confronts us here: *Slavery is only a commutation of the death sentence pronounced on the vanquished, and is only another and milder form of cannibalism.*

To prove how modern exploitation preserves its power and maintains the essence of slavery, our author shows the methods of the money-lords:—

"But the half has not been said concerning the use of money as an instrument of wealth gathering. Money-mongers manage in one way or another to get hold of, or control, the bulk of the money used by the people, and as it passes through their hands they take toll of it. These money-mongers—well fed, well clothed, well groomed, and well housed—are eminently respectable, and pass under a variety of names: bankers, stock operators and brokers, money lenders, note shavers, and so on; but all alike, they live on dividends, interest—usury—which practice they justify and defend by saying that 'money breeds money.' The potency of money in gathering wealth by means of interest may be illustrated by exhibiting the amount accruing on a loan of one dollar at 5 per cent., compounding only at the end of the year. In one hundred years, the interest thereon amounts to over fifty dollars, and the dollar principal is still owing, and to be added to this. Make what the scientific people call a 'control experiment.' Put a dollar into a box and keep it a hundred years, then see how much it has *bred*—you will find no more than one dollar in the box. The fifty odd dollars of interest has come from the fruits of labour; it is human flesh and blood."

A perusal of this essay leaves no doubt in the mind as to who are the robbers and who are the robbed.

Sesame and Lilies. By John Ruskin. (Unabridged.) A. C. Fifield, 44 Fleet Street. 3d. nett.

To have such an edition of Ruskin for threepence is something to be thankful for. *Sesame and Lilies* is here printed in beautifully clear type, runs to 95 pages, and is neatly bound in a style we admire for its plain unpretentiousness. For the working man's bookshelf it is admirable. As to its contents, there is little that needs to be said. Ruskin's influence on the thought of the nineteenth century is universally acknowledged, and no one denies the power he possessed of inspiring the lives of others. At the same time he displayed a certain antagonism to science, even genuine science—for there is a spurious article abroad—which to our mind gives a certain inconsistency to his philosophy. But the vital truth of his finest thought will always remain. We give two extracts from this work, and hope our readers will obtain it to find others:—

"It happens that I have practically some connection with schools for different classes of youth; and I receive many letters from parents respecting the education of their children. In the mass of these letters, I am always struck by the precedence which the idea of a 'position in life' takes above all other thoughts in the parents'—more especially in the mothers'—minds. 'The education befitting such and such a *station in life*'—this is the phrase, this the object, always. They never seek, as far as I can make out, an education good in itself: the conception of abstract rightness in training rarely seems reached by the writers. But an education 'which shall keep a good coat on my son's back;—which shall enable him to ring with confidence the visitors' bell at double-belled doors; education which shall result ultimately in establishment of a double-belled door to his own house;—in a word, which shall lead to advancement in life.' It never seems to occur to the parents that there may be an education which, in itself, is advancement in life;—that any other than that may perhaps be advancement in Death; and this essential education might be more easily got, or given, than they fancy, if they set about it in the right way; while it is for no price, and by no favour, to be got if they set about it in the wrong."

"When men are rightly occupied, their amusement grows out of

their work, as the colour-petals out of a fruitful flower;—when they are faithfully helpful and compassionate, all their emotions become steady, deep, perpetual, and vivifying to the soul as the natural pulse to the body. But now, having no true business, we pour our whole masculine energy into the false business of money-making; and having no true emotion, we must have false emotions dressed up for us to play with, not innocently, as children with dolls, but guiltily and darkly, as the idolatrous Jews with their pictures on cavern walls, which men had to dig to detect. The justice we do not execute, we mimic in the novel on the stage; for the beauty we destroy in nature, we substitute the metamorphosis of the pantomime, and the human nature of us imperatively requiring awe and sorrow of *some* kind for the noble grief we should have bourn with our fellows, and the pure tears we should have wept with them, we gloat over the pathos of the police-court, and gather the night-dew of the grave."

The Simple Life on Four Acres. By F. A. Morton. 6d. net. A. C. Fifield.

Every man is not a Thoreau, and Mr. Morton's book has little of the charm that is the saving grace of the accounts written by some of those who have made individual attempts to live the simple life for pure love of Nature. It seems to us, indeed, that little is gained in the interest of the community by these attempts. That certain individuals should succeed in raising poultry under adverse conditions may claim our admiration, but what hope does that bring to the exploited masses, to whom four acres and £117 of capital are as far off as the Promised Land? It is not this form of the simple life that interests us. We wish to see a *social* life, full, free, and complete in all its developments for all mankind; and to our mind the energy wasted in these efforts would be invaluable if used to destroy the capitalist conditions that enslave us all.

The General Confederation of Labour; its History and Constitution, Aims and Means, is a most important pamphlet (at present only published in French), by Paul Delesalle. Added to Pouget's pamphlets on Syndicalism, it forms an excellent means of studying the remarkable growth and development of the French Labour movement since the Unions have accepted the general strike and direct action as their tactics in the future struggles against capitalism. We hope before long to be able to publish them in English, but for those comrades who would care to have the French editions, we give here the titles and the publishing addresses:—

Les Bases du Syndicalism, par Emile Pouget, 10 centimes.

Le Syndicat, par Emile Pouget, 10 centimes.

Le Parti du Travail, par Emile Pouget, 10 centimes.

All the above can be obtained from 33 Rue de la Grange-aux-Belles, Paris.

La Confédération Générale du Travail, par Paul Delesalle, 46 Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, Paris, 15 centimes.

"PUNCH" ON GOVERNMENT IN 1841.

The scene is Windsor Castle. The QUEEN is interviewing a would-be Prime Minister, Sir ROBERT PEELE.

The Queen.—I have heard that the people are wanting bread.

Sir Robert.—Ha, ha! that was from the late Premier, I suppose. He merely forgot an adjective—it is *cheap* bread that the people are clamouring for.

The Queen.—And why can they not have it?

Sir Robert.—Wheat must be lower before bread can be cheaper.

The Queen.—Well!

Sir Robert.—And rents must be less if that is the case, and—

The Queen.—Well!

Sir Robert.—And that the landowners won't agree to.

The Queen.—Then the majority of my subjects are to be rendered miserable for the advantage of the few?

Sir Robert.—That's the principle of all good Governments.

The Queen.—Pray, what do you call such views?

Sir Robert.—Patriotism.

The Queen.— You can take your boxes to Downing Street.

—(*Punch*, September 5, 1841.)

It is curious how the jests of one generation become the truths of another, and how these words written with reference to the Corn Laws dispute of sixty years ago stand firm to-day in all the clearness of involuntary logic.

K. W.

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NOTES.

THE TABLES TURNED.

How often have the respectable parasites who have their beds made and their rooms cleaned by the domestic drudges called servants; who have their food cooked by other drudges who scorch themselves and sweat in kitchens to tickle their palates with delicacies; who have their linen washed by still less fortunate laundrymen who contract consumption to keep these idlers clean; how often have these wealthy drones turned their noses up at the poor street-sweeper, who, if he gains twenty-five or twenty-eight shillings per week, is considered overpaid for his menial labour! It is encouraging to learn that these "menials" have been teaching their superiors in New York a well-deserved lesson. They struck for better conditions, and left the decaying garbage to remind the parasites that even the street-sweeper might be more useful than a bank director if it came to the test. We are not surprised to hear that the wealthy residents are "flying to up-State towns." Later news says the men have won. This is the best that could happen till the day comes when these workers will turn on the ruling classes and tell them to do their own dirty work.

WAR AS A BLESSING.

A cranky person named Barr, with "Sir James" in the front, seems to have the power—not so uncommon now-a-days—of seeing things up-side-down. War to his mind is a fine thing for the health. Or, at any rate, that is the inference one must draw from his remarks. His object, of course, is to play up to the Jingo spirit, and in such work the greater the absurdity the more it is welcomed. If someone would only come forth and preach that facing dum-dum bullets and receiving bayonet thrusts taught us courage and endurance, that breathing lyddite fumes was bracing for the lungs, such a one would be received with open arms by the *Daily Mail* and the organisers of the Union Jack Club. In short, make as big a fool of yourself as you can, but don't dare to breathe the truth of the nation's physique being destroyed by starvation, sweating, factory life, and all the other evils that bring grist to the capitalist mill.

A MISTAKEN IDEA.

Justice—we mean the organ of Social Democracy—has many illusions, but its idea of what Social Democrats could do in Parliament is its greatest. In criticising, very deservedly, the utter futility of the Labour Party, it goes on to tell us what would have happened had those mighty champions of revolution and the class war—the Social Democrats—been in the House. To use a vulgarism, they would have made the Government "sit up"! We rather doubt it. But even if Hyndman or Quelch had been there to catch the Speaker's eye (what a catch!), and had given him a dose of Marx, which, if it did not prove fatal to that worthy, would probably result in their both being sent to the Clock Tower,—if, in short, they had created the devil's own shindy, what would the Government or the capitalists have cared? As a matter of fact, they would rather enjoy it, as they would be upholding the "respect" due to our political institutions in the eyes of an admiring public. When will Social Democrats learn it is not the rows inside the House that Governments dread—they only kill time. It is the agitation outside that they fear. France has just shown us the truth of it.

THE ONLY WAY.

We are delighted to see that a brave blow is being struck against the living-in system by a few plucky shop assistants in Kentish Town. They deserve every encouragement and assistance, for they will prove to be the pioneers of a movement that will not end till the detestable living-in compounds are a thing of the past. The shop assistants must by this time have exhausted their patience in their continuous appeals to Parliament to help them in their trouble. They have now taken the matter in their own hands and acted for themselves. Sooner or later they will win. At any rate, we wish them every success in this their first battle. In bringing these Daniels to judgment they have started their campaign with the sympathy of hundreds and thousands of weary slaves, who, though fearing to take the initiative, will in the future join their ranks.

Manifesto of the French General Confederation of Labour.

The General Confederation of Labour in France has issued the following Manifesto on the action of the Government in the wine-growers' revolt:—

GOVERNMENT OF ASSASSINS!

The Government goes from crime to crime! After the odious persecutions of the working class, after the dismissal of officials, after the shame of the police villainies, after the infamous proceedings at Paris, at Nantes, at Saint-Claude, after these—MASSACRE!

It was the fatal, the inevitable termination:

After corruption.....murder!

Events pass rapidly in the Midi. Following the monster meetings of hundreds of thousands, where the wine-growers voiced their distress, come the strikes of the municipalities and refusal to pay taxes.

The Government has replied by force, by mobilisation! And one of the first victims of the French soldiery has been an active worker of the Bourse du Travail of Narbonne.

The gendarmes and soldiers have fired—it matters little who they may have killed with or without warning: *assassination remains assassination!*

THEY HAVE KILLED!

However, amidst all these horrors we have one consolation: with an awakening of the conscience, one regiment, the 17th of the line, reversed their rifles.

Under the circumstances, this act could be but a momentary one. But even as such it is a justification of our anti-militarist propaganda: the peasants of the 17th Regiment understood we are right in proclaiming that the bourgeoisie maintain the Army for internal war.

Without staying to consider the causes and the object which have put the Midi in revolt, we recognise this formidable ebullition as announcing the undermining of a society of exploitation and speculation, where the excess of abundance accentuates the misery of the producers.

To this upheaval the Government—although formed of Radical Socialists—has replied as all Governments reply to popular demands—BY SHOOTING!

And Parliament, stricken with fear—this Parliament, which expresses the terror of the bourgeois who control it—has given a blank cheque to the sinister trio who symbolise its power: to Clemenceau-Briand-Viviani.

Then, to mislead the people, the reptiles, secure in their power, call up the spectre of reaction. What more could have been done by Thiers, Dupuy, or Galliffet than was done by Clemenceau and Picquart?

No one is deceived by these lies! The revolt of the Midi is connected with the Syndicalist movement of the working class. The wine-growers, inspired with our form of action, with our methods of carrying on the struggle—which are creating the future—recognise and proclaim their value.

And this common use of means of action should arouse in the working classes the sympathy and solidarity that the victims of Governmental repression deserve.

The General Confederation of Labour, whose active members are suffering this repression, call on the working class, in manifesting its genuine indignation against the crimes of power, not to limit its protests to the case of our own comrades, but to extend them to the peasants of the Midi.

Let us, then, prepare to give to our protests the character that circumstances shall require.

THE FEDERAL COMMITTEE.

THE FRENCH WINE-GROWERS.

It is no good saying: These people don't interest us, they are bourgeois begging for Government aid, they are capitalists who can't get on by themselves and want to get their debts paid by their neighbours.

Yes, but their way of begging is that of direct action, and since they will not obtain the pecuniary aid they ask from a crowd of Deputies, who are afraid of those who can pay (their electors), we shall see some fun.

Already it is taking a promising turn. Not a collector gathers a pennyworth of taxes, not a bailiff makes seizure on the goods of the passive resisters, and even the police are on strike for the very good reason that no wages are being paid them; while the Army, the last prop and supreme hope of Authority, declares, by the mouth of its commander-in-chief, that it will not march against its fellow citizens.

What can the authorities do against such a movement, embracing as it does four departments? They gave a balloon display to the mutineers to calm their nerves.

It was about the best thing they had to do. The first move was the best. Unhappily for them, and happily for us, Clemenceau is wild and proud. He does not like to be laughed at for the thunderbolts he brandishes in his senile hand.

Now he talks of a heap of arrests. Naturally he will not try it on with the revolted masses; they are too much for him.

As usual, a certain number of men will be picked out and declared to be leaders and made to pay for all—if the others allow it.

For there is truly a new spirit in the masses these last few years. Hitherto they would have made complaints to the mayors, to the Deputies, and waited quietly, sniveling at the door for a bit of bread.

Now they demand, they menace, they act. They suppress the existing administration, put up a substitute entirely on their own initiative, and answering simply the needs of the moment.

Stupefaction and hilarity of the bourgeois press!

How can they do without mayors, councillors, budgets and administration? They must be mad!

Not a bit of it. They are simply going to show you by experience what we have been telling you for a long time,—that a regional organisation, much simplified, freely accepted by all, because all feel that it neither more nor less than suffices for actual necessities, guarantees the normal life of society infinitely better than the forced adaptation of society to an organism made by ancient conquerors, and codified by leatherheads badly informed as to the necessities of life, and imbued with the principle of authority.

It is a Paris Commune that is growing down there among those agriculturists, of whom it was said only yesterday: It is a people empty of all feeling of revolt, shut off from all thought of solidarity.

It is a Commune, and with all that that involves.

Those people will become what others would like to see them.

If the people of other regions should discover that they also suffer, that they also have complaints against the laws, against those who make them, against those who administer them, if they join the dance in their turn and before the comrades of the South have finished, then it will go far.

But even if the fire is limited to the region where it is now burning, if it is extinguished, thanks to the help given to the Government by those imbeciles who to-morrow will be ready to relight it for their own ends; even should this happen, it will still remain a page well written in the history of the Social Revolution, a good blow given to Authority, an example—good to meditate on and to follow.

Whatever may happen, let us watch closely and cry stoutly, "Bravo, Southerners!"

—MICHEL PETIT, in the *Temps Nouveaux*.

ANARCHIST-COMMUNIST ANNUAL PICNIC.

BANK HOLIDAY, MONDAY, AUGUST 5.

The Rendezvous will this year be Haddon Hall, Derbyshire; 1½ miles from Rowsley Station, 2 miles from Bakewell. Comrades will meet at Haddon Hall, and not at the Railway Station.

TEA at 4 o'clock prompt, and the usual CONFERENCE will be held immediately after Tea.

Further particulars of A. GORRIE, 2 Brazil Street, Leicester.

LITERATURE AND JOURNALISM.*

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Of all the haters of the canting insincerity and hypocritical pretences of what he rightly termed "day labourism," none has been more consistent, more loyal to the principles of their heterodoxy than Schopenhauer, whose faith in the ultimate triumph of right over wrong, and consequent failure to compromise with the canting respectability of his day, earned for him the title of pessimist. But Schopenhauer did not care for what the world said. It was sufficient for him to know that he was true to himself, and to his own philosophy; to feel that, as man emerged from out of the darkness of theological and economic oppression, the glow-worms of social hypocrisy and religious superstition would cease to be, for failure of a gloom and a despair in which to shine; to have sufficient faith in himself and his principles to await, with patient fortitude, through a lifetime of neglect and disregard, the attentive ear which he felt his posterity would give to his message. And so he struggled on in his unrelenting opposition to all that was deemed respectable, never wavering nor turning aside from the narrow path which he had marked out for himself, and for his disciples of succeeding generations. His steadfastness has been justified by the result—his persistent assertiveness of his right to be heard has been attended by victory. Nor is this all. Others, inspired by his doggedness, have dared to do the same; the sum total of the world's superstition has been decreased, and mankind breathes in a more honest and a purer atmosphere.

The Church still retains its hold over the masses, however; and that hold is none the less to be feared because she has been obliged to modify her dogmas, and alter her methods. The battle has still to be won; and the victory has none the less to be dearly paid for, because—thanks to that prison-martyr, Richard Carlile, his co-workers, and his freedom-loving successors—we have a Press our fathers knew naught of. Indeed, the danger, if anything, is increased, and not diminished thereby; since, in place of the open and avowed antagonism of former times, we have a freedom which robs us of our energy whilst denying us the fulsomeness of true liberty. And we have to gird our loins and see to it that our ardour is not deprived of the earnestness of success through the subtlety of the opposition. It is necessary, therefore, that we should understand their methods in order to appreciate their sentiments. And, seeing that so much space and attention is devoted to the Church, it is proposed in the present essay to give some consideration to the Press.

In addition to twelve months' experience on the editorial staff of a London daily paper, the writer spent close on five years in a sub-editorial capacity in the office of a certain well-known press agency. Now, the cant of the whole system, the stereotyping of opinions involved—which have both, for some time past, oppressed him—have led to an open rupture, and he turns his back upon that journalistic systemisation of prejudices which offers the very antithesis to the spirit of true literature.

A man possesses a little fortune, and being of mediocre talent, and possessed of an overpowering vanity, desires to pose as a "leader of public opinion" in the particular village in which he lives. He accordingly determines to run a local newspaper, and having registered it under as large an array of titles as any compositor can reasonably be expected to set up, he begins to turn his attention to the "copy" side of the journal. Not being in that financial position which would enable him to pay a proper price for local intelligence, and having of necessity to publish more than the paid reports of marriages, etc., he puts himself in communication with one of the London press agencies.

Here we find retailed at a price of 2s. 6d. or less a column, stereotyped columns of "Words of Wisdom," "Science Gleanings," "Wise and Otherwise," "Facts and Fancies," "American Humour," "Hints for the Home," "News of the Churches," "Weekly London Letter," "World of Women," "Business Abroad," etc.—all of these columns being the result of "paste and scissors" operations on the various morning, evening, and weekly journals that find their way into the sub-editorial sanctum. In order, however, that the columns in question may look as original as possible, as much reprint, without acknowledgment of its source, is indulged in as is compatible with a non-infringement of the Copyright Acts. Then there are political leaders—mostly of the Nonconformist conscience order—representative of the editor's opinions, which are written, set

* The present essay was first read as a paper before the Camberwell Branch of the National Secular Society, and after revision was published in the columns of the *Agnostic Journal* for January 13, 1906. I have since revised it for publication in its present form.

up, and stereotyped in London, and sent down to the journal in question all ready for printing. In view, also, of the recent affectionate protestations, the dissenting pietist has conjured up for the Labour movement—a purely secularistic, not to say hypocritical, movement, being of the earth, earthy—a column of “Labour Notes,” by a “Labour M.P.,” is also supplied—the mild views of this gentleman being yet further diluted by the editorial pen of the agency “boss.” Then the special correspondence and other news, retailed by the various London and larger provincial journals, are distilled and condensed, and several columns of plagiarised news offered at the usual half-a-crown per column.

And so one finds in different parts of the country exactly the same paper—with the exception of local advertisements—published under different titles, according to the locality. Yes, there can be no doubt about it. The type is the same, the headlines, the illustrations, the setting, and the views are all the same; the one paper, except the space retained for local advertisements, is an exact facsimile of the other. Count up the price of the columns at half-a-crown each; learn the sale of the journal at a penny a copy; subtract the former cost from the latter amount; add the extent (in equivalent monetary value, if possible) of the editor's satisfied vanity, and you have a mediocre's profit through journalistic exploitation. Consider the ease and small amount of energy exerted in obtaining a fair income by the agency's editorial staff, the dinner and theatrical invitations, and you are in a fair way of appreciating the real meaning of modern journalism; for what is true of the press agency on a larger scale, is true, in a lesser degree, of the ordinary newspaper.

Shakespeare holds that there are but three kinds of greatness: that which is inherited, that which is achieved, and that which is thrust upon its possessor. But there are different degrees of merit attached to the greatness that is achieved. There is the greatness of Bakunin, who, by virtue of his disregard for the traditions of a canting respectability, pressed on to greatness, and so achieved distinction; and there is the greatness of the journalist, who but seeks to learn the nature of the popular prejudices in order to interpret and pander to them correctly. The difference between the two is this—that, whereas the former, by thinking about the various questions he treated of, both on the platform and in the press, did much to hasten the era of increased liberty, the other, thinking (as Schopenhauer would put it) only in order to write for monetary reward, takes his cue from his readers, and seeks to flatter them by confirming the “truth” of their inane and insane prejudices, and so places a premium upon a stereotyped conventionalism as opposed to a liberty-working originality of thought and heterodoxy of expression. And so the market is glutted with books and journals of no ethical or scientific value; the wheel of progress is stayed; the eloquence of a Cicero of unconventionalism passes unheeded, whilst the unoriginal platitudes of a cheap orthodoxy are received with applause.

Of such is the world, particularly the self-congratulatory, spiritually minded section. So be it. It is with thankfulness that I shake from off my feet the dust of daily journalism. And, knowing not what the future may have in store, recall the bidding of Charlotte Murray:—

“Press forward still to higher heights
Than thou didst know of old,
Press forward, though the way be rough
Or filled with bliss untold.”

The highest heights to which ever man can attain are those of liberty of thought, freedom of action, and the service of one's fellows. The successful ascent of these heights alone brings the happiness which makes for human betterment. As yet, they have been climbed only by those who have realised that short of an atheistic basis, and Communistically expressed aspirations after individual freedom, there can be no social progress. And I am such. In my heresy rests my salvation. My happiness is assured. Can the same be said of all my readers' happiness?

GUY A. ALDRED.

* * * Any books on Anarchism, Socialism, or kindred subjects forwarded (if obtainable) on receipt of order and cash. Inquiries answered on receipt of stamped envelope.

VOICE OF LABOUR.

Advocate of Direct Action and the General Strike.

WEEKLY, ONE PENNY.

Office: 127 Ossulston Street, London, N.W.

WHERE WOMEN FAIL.

AN EPISODE.

Imagine a small square room used for lectures. About forty people, men and women, seated listening to an earnest little woman who stands facing them, with bright eyes and flushed cheeks. She is shocking some, and surprising most with her ideas of how women may be free.

“Economic equality with men is necessary, or rather economic freedom for both,” she says, “but that is not all. Look at the Lancashire mill workers. The women among them have economic equality with men. The same pay for equal work. Yet are not the married women among them even greater slaves than those who stay at home and allow their husbands to keep them?”

“The desire for freedom must come from within first, then neither laws nor customs can hold it back. Look again at the mill woman. She works in the mill from 6 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., then does much of her own housework, even sometimes washing and baking. Added to this, she bears the pains and responsibility of motherhood. She is a very slave, and worst of all, a ‘willing slave.’ Why? Not because she would not enjoy freedom, but because she knows not what freedom is. Here, you see, is proof enough that economic equality is not everything.”

“To be really free we women must first of all obtain and maintain our economic freedom, and then refuse to become any man's slave, even in return for his love. We must not give up our independence. My idea of woman's freedom is, in addition to economic equality, to have my own place, with the right to invite anyone, man or woman, whenever I please, to stay as long as I like; no one to impertinently ask what I consider rude and vulgar questions—as to who they were, or what relationship existed between them and myself. Above all, I would claim the right to have a child if I wished, and should not expect anyone to ask who the child's father was.”

At this many eyes grew wide, some with wonder and some with horror, though they all claimed to be “advanced” people.

Much more the little woman said, and called upon the women, if they were earnest, and really desired freedom, to take that which was theirs already, if only they would be brave enough to face the gossip and scandal of their neighbours. They would suffer some annoyance, but that would be more than balanced by the joy of freedom.

When the paper, questions, and discussion were finished, the audience broke up into little excited groups around the room. Some gathered round the essayist. One girl, of rather a gipsy type, pressed closer and closer to the speaker, looking admiringly into her face, and when all had left the room, said timidly, “May I walk home with you?” “Certainly, my dear,” she replied, looking kindly and with interest at the dark-eyed girl; “come, we'll go now.” As they walked along the girl told the woman how pleased she had been with her essay; how her own thoughts and feelings had been expressed. By the time they arrived at the parting of the ways the woman was impressed by the girl's apparent sincerity and courage. “That girl has the makings of a fine woman,” she mused as she mounted to her room, “and I can help her.” Many times they met after that, for they were both members of the club at which the paper had been given. They grew more and more friendly, the woman feeling she was a help to the girl in her development. Indeed, she taught her much, and all would have been well if the woman had not been so Quixotic.

The girl had a lover, who was also of the woman's opinion regarding marriage, believing only in free sex relationship. Of the truth and goodness of these ideas the girl, too, was convinced. But she could not summon up courage to give herself to her lover, as he and her own heart desired. So she came to her woman for strength. Feeling that it was useless to advise a certain action which would require great strength of moral character to support, unless she could show the girl that she would not be alone, the woman told her of her own love affair. For several reasons the relationship must be kept quiet. But to give the girl strength and courage the woman gave her secret.

That night the girl kissed the woman, saying, “You are good. You have made me so happy.” And the woman was also happy because she had been able to help.

Two months later the woman found that her love affair was common talk. It was the scandal and gossip of the club, of all who knew her, and of many who did not. She was betrayed!

RED ROSE.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

Russia.

The land question and the peasantry on the one hand, on the other the hopes of the Russian townfolk in their Zemstvos and self-government on a democratic basis, with universal suffrage—these give the keynote of the Russian revolution and the dissolution of the Duma. The peasantry, which forms 82 per cent. of the whole population, claims the land without redemption, since they contend the land should belong to those who work upon it; and until the agrarian question is resolved on the line of the people's aspirations, certainly the revolution will not come to an end, and all the efforts of the politicians will have no result. Even the most extreme measures, such as wholesale executions by courts-martial, cannot check the ascendancy of the revolutionary movement. The governing classes and the bureaucracy understand perfectly that the true danger lies in the peasantry. The nobility, the high aristocracy, and the Court party, together with the clergy, try by every means in their power to capture the Zemstvos on the one hand, and on the other by palliatives and land reform to deceive the nation.

The nobility, frightened by agrarian disorders, formed a union, and its central committee, elected from the most reactionary elements, has great influence over the Tsar and Ministry. Every change in the Constitution this year was done under their pressure, and the reactionary demagogues forming the Black and other gangs are financed by the central Government offices under the influence of this same nobility, instigated by the higher clergy. Under this same malign influence the Tsar identifies himself openly with the Black Gang and the promoters of pogroms. But all their combined efforts to stamp out the revolution have up to now been wholly unsuccessful. On the contrary, general discontent is not only increasing, but popular indignation is no longer concentrating itself against the bureaucracy alone, but against the nobility, the Tsar, and the Imperial Family, and it will not be at all astonishing if the sudden curtailing of electoral rights provokes another outbreak of Terrorist action. Nor will such an outbreak be directed from Geneva, Paris, or London, as the Yellow Press of Europe would like its readers to suppose. Without exaggeration, it may be said that there is not a departmental town—not even a district town—in which a local revolutionary organisation may not be found; while there exist not only Social-Democratic, Social Revolutionary, or Anarchist Revolutionary Committees, but also of formerly moderate Constitutionalists and of peasantry.

Field courts-martial came to an end last April by the Duma's decision; but although they were hideously bloodthirsty—over 1,400 executions taking place under them—nevertheless the retaliatory attacks upon Government officials and establishments (especially upon the minor class of each, as being in closer touch with the workers) steadily increased, as did agrarian disorders. If you ask organised revolutionary parties: "Are these acts committed by members of local organisations?" they will always answer quite frankly: "No, such had no hand in them." "Who, then, are the authors?" "Everybody!" will be the answer. That is the difference between to-day and two years ago. Two years ago there were only conspirators and organised parties in action; to-day the entire working class, the younger generation of the peasants, and even schoolboys are "in it."

The Anarchist idea is spreading, especially among the students and best organised workers, and everywhere one finds sympathisers and friends. During the last 18 months there has been a kind of press toleration in the country, and the best works of foreign Anarchists have been translated, such as those by Bakunin, Kropotkin, Reclus, Malatesta, Nieuwenhuis, Sebastian Faure, Malato, etc., not excepting the anti-Marxist pamphlets of Tcherkesoff—all circulating in many editions. It is true the majority of this literature was prohibited three months ago, and the police tried to sequester the works; but it was too late, and they reaped but a poor harvest. Under the influence of this literature Anarchist groups were formed in many places. The Syndicalist movement on French lines, with their motto of Direct Action, is also spreading rapidly. A few months ago there was a congress of Syndicalists: 152 delegates met from all parts of Russia, and decided not to follow legal Parliamentary tactics, but those founded on the revolutionary and economic basis of Direct Action. Certainly the Syndicalists cannot be considered as purely Anarchist, but they do not hide their sympathy with Anarchism. Not only revolutionists, but the workers themselves state that the revolution has imposed Anarchist tactics upon them—no other will work under the pressure of Government oppression. Even panegyrists of centralisation—such as the Social Democrats—even these are now obliged to recognise the autonomy of groups and federations and the General Strike.

As regards the clergy in Russia, it is well to remember they form a State establishment, having a revenue from the State of 28,000,000 roubles a year, in addition to their own tremendous riches in land, monasteries, church and other buildings, while the thousands of monks form a regular "Black" bureaucracy. The latter, in fact, are the moving spirit of Pobidonostseff's organisation, the clerical secret police and inquisitors who work under the name of missionaries. It is doubtful if even in mediæval times the clergy had such power in Western Europe as they wield in Russia to-day. The oppression in Russian social and political life may be formulated as a union of monks, spies, and executioners.

A national petition from Georgia with thousands of signatures has

been presented by an English committee of sympathisers to the 250 members of the Hague Peace Conference. The petition is in reality a sweeping indictment of Russian oppression and barbarity in the Caucasus, especially in Georgia. The little nation, with its ancient civilisation, is not a conquered province of Russia, but has a treaty with the Empire which guarantees national autonomous government, further endorsed by "our imperial word" of the Tsars. But the *parole d'honneur* of Russian Tsars seems made of the proverbial pie-crust. Instead of Georgian national administration, there is a reign of terror and devastation under the iron heel of Cossacks and police, with military tribunals, destruction of villages, plunder, and the ill-treatment of women and children. The delegates to the Hague Conference cannot discuss the petition, but at least the whole of Europe will hear of its presentation, and Georgia will receive the sympathy of humanity.

IXE.

Switzerland.

Free speech seems practically under a ban throughout the Republic so far as Anarchists are concerned. Comrade Bertonni was to have taken part in a debate lately at Montreux upon "Autonomy in Workmen's Organisations," but was stopped by the police on his way to the meeting, and informed the authorities had forbidden it. On his reaching the hall, where the audience was already gathering, the proprietor appeared, police officers behind him, and verified their statement. The reason given by the Press when mentioning the incident was the presence of the King of Siam (!), and it further declared that arbitrary action against Anarchists should never be condemned. Meetings of protest in Lausanne against the extradition of the Russian Kilachitsky were also suppressed by the communal authorities. Bertonni's lecture was simply in relation to the separation movement now going on in nearly all the Swiss Masons' Unions, the hodmen objecting to be controlled by a central committee in the matter of strikes. Thus no violent language would have disturbed the peace of Montreux, but an Anarchist was to have lectured, and that was enough.

Germany.

Of the two great strikes in Berlin, that of the bakers was carried out with such energy and determination that on the fourth day of their strike most of the masters accepted the men's conditions, so that practically an all-round victory was gained. The masons still hold out though the general strike in the building trade is over, the masters' ending their lock-out and agreeing to take back all their men on an eight and a half hour day. The "leaders" appear to have done their utmost to prevent a strike at all, and finally induced the men to come to terms, and be contented with something short of the eight hour day.

The Socialist Press is full of glee at the large increase in subscribers since the loss of 39 seats in the Reichstag. They claim to have gained some 200,000! But the most hopeful sign is that the more intelligent among the Socialists, new and old, are frankly dissatisfied with the little their huge vote has accomplished, and are inclined to be less hidebound by Marxism. Hitherto, meekly following their arch-priests and condemning Anarchism without even a study of it, they have known nothing of its theory or increasing influence. Only lately a noted Socialist making an independent investigation into its merits and demerits, exclaimed: "But I never knew that was Anarchism!" And being one of the discontented with his own 'ism, it is not impossible he may revert to ours. Nor (good sign!) is this an isolated case.

Anti-militarism is not likely to permeate Germany quickly, but even now there is more of it in that country than in England. In a recent number of *La Guerre Sociale*, Comrade Dave writes an interesting article on the subject. It appears that Dr. Karl Liebknecht has written an important work upon it, and will probably be arraigned before a Leipzig Court for doing so. There are sixty-four Socialist dailies (with some hundred thousand subscribers) each of which is anti-militarist in the sense that it would dispense with a standing army while not averse to a militia system. Large numbers of leaflets circulate among the soldiers secretly, though every effort is being made by the military authorities in the various garrisons to stop the supply. Heavy punishment awaits the young soldier found reading an anti-militarist pamphlet—but that in itself should drive the point further home, and doubtless does.

Argentine Republic.

On June 2, at 12 o'clock in the morning, one of the most, if not the most magnificent of strikes concluded. The railway traffic of the whole Republic was almost paralysed, and it was a strike of pure solidarity on the part of all the railways but one.

The Argentine Great Western, which runs about eighty leagues from Mendoza in the Andes to the City of San Luis, refused to accede to the demands of the engine drivers. So they struck, and as the Government and the other railway companies helped that one every way they could, the engine drivers of all the others struck work at 12 o'clock at night on May 28, and brought the manager of the Great Western to his senses. Prices went up in the city of Buenos Ayres enormously. Meat and bread were already very scarce, when the men's committee agreed to accept arbitration on a very favourable basis. There is a very extensive web of rails in this country (19 railways).

THE CONFESSIONAL.*

[SPAIN.]

It is a lie—their Priests, their Pope,
Their Saints, their . . . all they fear or hope
Are lies, and lies—there! through my door
And ceiling, there! and walls and floor,
There, lies, they lie—shall still be hurled
Till spite of them I reach the world!

You think Priests just and holy men!
Before they put me in this den
I was a human creature too,
With flesh and blood like one of you.
A girl that laughed in beauty's pride
Like lilies in your world outside.

I had a lover—shame avaunt!
This poor wrenched body, grim and gaunt,
Was kissed all over till it burned,
By lips the truest, love e'er turned
His heart's own tint: one night they kissed
My soul out in a burning mist.

So, next day when the accustomed train
Of things grew round my sense again,
"That is a sin," I said: and slow
With downcast eyes to church I go,
And pass to the confession-chair,
And tell the old mild father there.

But when I falter Beltran's name,
"Ha?" quoth the father; "much I blame
The sin; yet wherefore idly grieve?
Despair not—strenuously retrieve!
Nay, I will turn this love of thine
To lawful love, almost divine:

"For he is young, and led astray,
This Beltran, and he schemes, men say,
To change the laws of church and state:
So, thine shall be an angel's fate,
Who, ere the thunder breaks, should roll
Its cloud away and save his soul.

"For, when he lies upon thy breast,
Thou mayest demand and be possessed
Of all his plans, and next day steal
To me, and all those plans reveal,
That I and every priest, to purge
His soul, may fast and use the scourge."

That father's beard was long and white,
With love and truth his brow seemed bright;
I went back, all on fire with joy,
And, that same evening, bade the boy
Tell me, as lovers should, heart-free,
Something to prove his love of me.

He told me what he would not tell
For hope of heaven or fear of hell;
And I lay listening in such pride!
And, soon as he had left my side,
Tripped to the church by morning light
To save his soul in his despite.

I told the father all his schemes,
Who were his comrades, what their dreams;
"And now make haste," I said, "to pray
The one spot from his soul away;
To-night he comes, but not the same
"Will look!" At night he never came.

Nor next night: on the after-morn,
I went forth with a strength new-born.
The church was empty; something drew
My steps into the street; I knew
It led me to the market place:
Where, lo, on high, the father's face!

That horrible black scaffold dressed,
That stapled block . . . God sink the rest!
That head strapped back, that blinding vest,
Those knotted hands and naked breast,
Till near one busy hangman pressed,
And on the neck these arms caressed . . .

No part in aught they hope or fear!
No heaven with them, no hell!—and here,
No earth, not so much space as pens
My body in their worst of dens
But shall bear God and man my cry,
Lies—lies, again—and still, they lie!

Robert Browning.

* We have no poets in England to-day to lash the Spanish priest for his diabolical attempt to destroy Ferrer, so we reprint this fine poem of Browning's to express our hatred.

MEETINGS.

Plaistow Anarchist Communist Group.

Every Sunday at 11.30 we hold meetings at Barking Town. Big crowds assemble every week, and there is a good sale of literature. Comrades who can speak and will give their help will be heartily welcome.—F. GOULDING.

Newcastle-on-Tyne Anarchist Communist Group.

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