

FREEDOM

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THE LESSONS OF TO-DAY.

THE HYDE PARK DEMONSTRATION.

THERE is something cruel in the part which is assigned to the people in the present political system. Their advice is never asked on a purely and simply defined question. Even the few who are called upon to take part in an election are asked to choose a representative simply as an expression of sympathy and confidence, and if any question at all is put to them, it is so involved in personal and party wranglings that the intrinsic merit of it is quite lost sight of. The usual course, however, is to simply ignore them, and they are only called upon when the time comes for one party to deal an effective blow at another in order to turn it out of office. Then the whole machinery of party is put in motion, all energies are exerted, all resources exhausted, all strategies and devices adopted in order to bring about a great and imposing demonstration, in which the cause of a party may be identified with the cause of the people, or the cause of the people may be exploited in the interests of a party. Handbills are distributed, renowned speakers engaged, class rivalries evoked, passions inflamed, hopes kindled, popular preferences courted. Every helping hand is welcomed, and then, but only then, every allowance is made for differences of opinion; the demonstrating politicians, and the demonstrative people, being for the time allies. At the same time due care is taken that the people, when they have served the purpose for which they were needed, should disperse and depart as quietly as they came, leaving the matter in the hands of the self-constituted political leaders who claim, in and out of Parliament, a right to speak and act for them. The joke is repeated until the point is carried, and the unemployed politicians, once safe in office, may utter the exulting exclamation of the dying Augustus: "Friends, the comedy has been successfully played!"

The comedy is too well known to need description in detail, but mention it we should in order to come to some conclusions of our own which appear to us to be more far-reaching and better worth thought than those with which most people content themselves.

The first conclusion to be drawn from these public performances of political parties is, that as a means to ascertain the sentiments of the people on a given question they are quite worthless. The English masses sympathised with the Irish peasantry long before the late demonstration, while it is not in the least doubtful that many members of the Liberal and Radical Associations which took part in the Hyde Park meeting were only brought over to the side of Home Rule by the watchword of their leader—himself a quite recent convert—and the perhaps more persuasive voices of ambition and self-interest.

On the contrary, and this is a second inference from the same facts, there is not in the present political system, there never will be in any political system which after having centralised the chief interests of millions of people commits them to the arbitrary will of a few, any means to test the feelings of the multitudes, or to enable them to come forward except when exercised by political priests and pontiffs.

Moreover, a popular *sentiment* or *will*, even on matters of great and undoubted general interest, is not made to form itself, as people are, by the centralisation of affairs and their own economical condition (maximum of requirement with minimum of force), together with other secondary influences, kept aloof from public questions, and only called upon to consider them in a very summary manner when the time has come for them to play into the hands of political factions.

Then the only means by which their ascertained will is to be carried into effect is not by a direct appeal to their delegates, not by a request to their servants to do so and so, not even by a humble petition, but only by an indirect moral influence on the deputies, such influence being diluted in the process by the other interests and views of the said deputies, and has to come at last, if at all, to the legislature (we say nothing about the executive, or the officials on whose help the executive depends) in a very unrecognisable garb and at a very reduced expression.

Just think of this, the whole nation rendered incapable of addressing to its so-called representatives any decisive opinion on any subject affecting its welfare or even its existence; this same people convened in huge concocted meetings in order to procure for one of the two rival parties a few more votes at the next election. There must be something rotten in a system which makes the people a mere instrument of Party intrigues, and leaves them victorious or vanquished—slaves still!

LOCAL ACTION.

BEFORE going further, let us sum up the conclusions at which we have arrived in our preceding articles. They are two, and each of them is of importance in enabling us to see what we have to do.

We have established—and if space permitted we might do so with a much greater display of arguments—that we must rely for the accomplishment of the Social Revolution which we feel approaching all over the civilised world, neither on the present parliaments, nor on any representative bodies which might be summoned during a more disturbed period than the present. A mere change of Government would not necessarily be a revolution, even though the overthrow of the Government might be accompanied by acts of violence. European society is in need of a deep, thorough, economical transformation, and this cannot be accomplished by mere decrees. To have any chance of life, any change accomplished in the economical conditions must come from the very depths of the popular life itself—it must result from the popular initiative.

To accomplish an economical revolution is not the function of a body of representatives. All that can be hoped from such a body is that it will not oppose strong resistance to the action of the people, but under due popular pressure give its final sanction to accomplished facts. Never will such a body be capable of taking the initiative, for it is itself a compromise with the past and cannot even claim to be an outpost of the future. The French Convention of 1793—the ideal of so many Jacobinists—did not do more than give its sanction to what the peasants already had accomplished, since they had retaken possession of the communal lands enclosed by the landlords, had ceased to pay the redemption for the feudal taxes, and had burned the charters by which they had formerly been bound. All these things being already done, the Convention—under due pressure of the Paris workmen and clubs—gave its sanction in the form of laws, consecrating the results of the peasants' revolt. It could not do more than that, because a body of representatives is a dead weight attached to the revolution—not the leader of it.

Another conclusion which we arrived at was, that the free action of the people towards the abolition of the existing monopolies on land, dwellings, railways, and capital will, in every way, be favoured by the movements which will necessarily break out all over Europe before this century has come to an end. The immediate cause of these movements cannot be foreseen, and there is no need to know it beforehand. All we can and must know is, that thousands of causes contribute towards creating a revolutionary situation in Europe, and that there being such a situation, any cause may be the signal of widely spread revolts. The mass outbreaks which we have witnessed during the last few years are unmistakable tokens of the approach of the disturbed period.

These two conclusions being kept in mind, we may proceed further, and add now a third conclusion to the above.

Although no revolutionary movement can break out in Europe—be it in France, Germany, Austria, or Russia—without being closely followed by like outbreaks in other countries of Europe, we must be prepared to see these outbreaks taking very different characters in different countries. Germany most probably will try to overthrow the Monarchy and to introduce a Republican form of Government; and it is most probable that attempts at substituting the present private ownership of land and great industrial concerns by State ownership will be made in the same country. But State ownership and State help to associations of workmen would not find much echo in this country, and still less in France, or in Spain. In France, the revolution will almost undoubtedly proceed by proclaiming independent communes which communes will endeavour to accomplish the economical transformation within their walls, or rather within their respective surroundings. And in Spain, the whole history of the country is an unceasing struggle for the independence of provinces and municipalities—a struggle which has its causes deeply rooted both in the former history and in the present wide differences of economical conditions in different parts of that country. State ownership and State's rule find no support even from the present political parties of Spain, still less will they find it in the new economical conditions. Add to these another example; while in this country we see the middle-classes seeking the support of working men in order to break down the power of the landed aristocracy, no such coalition is possible any longer in France. There the upper middle-classes stand in open and direct conflict with the Socialist working-men—a circumstance which obviously will impart, as it

already has in 1848 and 1871, new and quite different features to the movement.

To dream that the next revolution may follow *one* single programme all over Europe, is thus a fallacy.

But again, to imagine that in each separate State, all the nation will rise at a given moment as one man, with one uniform practical programme, would be also to cherish an illusive and dangerous dream. Of course, all that is possible will be done by Socialists to awaken everywhere, in their respective countries, the consciousness of the masses; to enlighten them as to the bad effects of the present monopolisation of land and capital. When general interest in public affairs will be more awakened by great events, these ideas will spread still speedier than they spread now. But, nevertheless, there still will be wide differences in the views held in different parts of each country as to how far, and at what a speed, the abolition of monopolies must go, and to what measures most urgently need to be taken in hand at once. A nation is a complex being, and to expect uniformity where multi-formity reigns would be to take an utterly erroneous view of public affairs.

One of the deputies of the Scotch miners to the last Miners' Congress loudly proclaimed the other day that whatever the palliative measures they might discuss at their Congresses, the Scotch miners consider that justice will be only done to their claims when they come to be in possession of the mines they are now working in.

Suppose that after a serious discussion of the whole question in their small clubs and in their local congresses, the Scotch miners come to the conclusion that the time has arrived to take possession of the Scotch mines, and elaborate some scheme as to the working out of these mines, sharing the produce of their labour with none of the land-grabbers, nor profit-grabbers. And suppose that the Northumbrian, or the Welsh miners, the Sheffield cutlers, and the Manchester weavers, cannot yet be brought to the same views. Must the Scotch miners wait until the whole of the British nation be converted to their ideas? Must they wait until a representative body, composed of heterogeneous elements mostly looking towards the past, happens to elaborate some scheme for the transfer of the mines into the miners' hands? Is it not preferable that they should act for themselves, make a new start, lay down the basis of a new organisation, and preach by example? And is it not most probable that they really will do so? All human progress has been realized in this way. A practical application of new principles is the only possible means of convincing most people of their applicability, showing at once their advantages and their possible defects.

Or, suppose again, the inhabitants of Paris, discussing the dwelling question with all the eagerness it deserves, come to this conclusion—that the houses of Paris cannot continue to belong to their present owners, not having been built by them, and deriving their immense value, *not* from the improvements the present owners have made in these houses but from the labour which has been expended on Paris by generations past and present, as well as from the very presence of two million of people at Paris. Suppose they arrive at the conclusion that these houses must become like the streets the common property of all the inhabitants—and the probabilities are that they soon *will*—must they wait until thirty-five millions of Frenchmen arrive at the same conclusion? Or, having proclaimed their independent commune, will they not act much more wisely if they organize themselves in order to take possession of these houses and for making use of them in the most equitable way for the greatest benefit of all the community?

People may write as much as they like about discipline; they may dream as much as they like about uniformity. Practical life takes another course. The inhabitants of Paris *will* take possession of the Paris houses, whatever be the course taken by the inhabitants of Bordeaux; and they will organize themselves for the best use of the houses; and if the above-mentioned ideas grow with the Scotch miners, it is most probable that they will act in that direction. Separate cities, mining basins, and industrial regions will make independent starts, and then—but only then—they will enter into agreements with their neighbours, for deriving from their local action, the best possible advantages for the whole of the commonwealth.

We might multiply the examples; we might go further on into this study; but what has already been said will probably convince most of our readers that during the next great movements separate cities and separate regions will make attempts at abolishing within their own spheres the monopolies of land and capital which are now so many obstacles in the way towards freedom and equality. The abolition of these monopolies will not be done by acts of national parliaments: it will be done, first, by the people of each locality; and the agreement between different localities will be the result of the accomplished facts.

As to the aims and the character which these movements may assume and ought to assume, they will form the subject of our next article.

“Command and obedience are but unfortunate necessities of human life: society in equality is its normal state. Already in modern life, and more and more as it progressively improves, command and obedience become exceptional facts in life, equal association its general rule. The morality of the first ages rested on the obligation to submit to power; that of the ages next following, on the right of the weak to the forbearance and protection of the strong. How much longer is one form of society and life to content itself with the morality made for another? We have had the morality of submission, and the morality of chivalry and generosity; the time is now come for the morality of justice. Whenever in former ages any approach has been made to society in equality, justice has asserted its claims as the foundation of virtue.”—*J. S. Mill.*

NOTES ON COERCION.

FROM an Anarchist point of view, the present outcry against Coercion is amusing. The gentlemen whose blood is now running cold at the Act (which will probably make the blood of many persons—not gentlemen—across St. George's Channel run warm), have themselves, when in office, passed Coercion Acts quite as immoral, if not quite so impudent as the “Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887.”

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These same gentlemen delight to exhibit the election addresses of their opponents, and reproach them with their broken vows. But is it quite judicious to allude to this sort of inconstancy in a House with such traditions as those of our British Commons? A negro preacher once addressed a camp meeting of notorious chicken-stealers with such fervour that they were more moved than the House of Commons has ever been by Mr. Gladstone's grandest efforts. But a simple-minded English visitor asked him afterwards, “Why didn't you say something about the chickens?” “No, sah,” replied the coloured apostle with dignity: “dat would have cast a damp on de meetin'.”

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If there is any earthly subject calculated to cast a damp on a meeting at St. Stephen's, it must surely be that of violated election addresses.

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Again, it is urged that “the country” voted against Coercion at the last election. But it also voted against Home Rule, which every sane person on the registers knew to be the only possible alternative to Coercion. The mandate from the constituencies was, in short, “Disregard the wishes of the Irish people; and uphold the Union in spite of them; but don't make a scandal by demanding special powers.”

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The Conservative Government now replies, in effect, “We have tried to do it without special powers; and we find we can't. Therefore we must create special powers.” Whereupon the blood of ex-coercionists out of office runs cold as aforesaid; and the constituencies prepare to repudiate the obvious, direct, and inevitable consequences of their own vote.

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Two things are especially worth noting about this Bill. In the first place, it is at the same time a strictly constitutional and a strictly terrorist measure, proving conclusively that constitutional methods may be as violent, as wicked, as murderous, as dishonest, as reckless of the known wishes of the majority, as the methods supposed by the proprietary classes to be specially characteristic of Anarchism. In the second place, not ten per cent of the worthy people who tramped to Hyde Park on Easter Monday to demonstrate against the Bill knew what its provisions were. The few speakers who grasped this, and took the trouble to explain what they were denouncing, were greeted with cries of “Shame!” and looks of indignant astonishment.

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The Bill, in fact, is so monstrous that it has been wrapped up in as many words as possible. But its purport is that any person who does or says anything whatever disagreeable to the authorities can be summarily sentenced to six months' hard labour by two magistrates, only one of whom need be a person “of the sufficiency of whose legal knowledge the Lord Lieutenant shall be satisfied,” and both of whom be, and are almost certain to be, Conservative landlords. In cases may where six months' hard labour is too slight a vengeance to appease the Castle's wrath, the offender may be committed for trial; and the High Court can grant the Attorney General the right to have the case tried wherever in England or Ireland a hostile jury can be most easily packed. The prisoner has the right of appeal against the Attorney General's arrangements; and the High Court has the power to refuse his appeal.

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A statesman who attempts to secure license of this kind against the ascertained will of the people concerned is, even according to the current morality, as false to his duty as the judge who takes a bribe or the soldier who deserts on the eve of a battle. He outlaws himself; and if the people do not at once depose him they share his guilt. Our attitude towards him is much milder. From an Anarchist point of view he is just what, under the circumstances, might be expected: nothing more and nothing less.

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The truth is that there has always been coercion in Ireland by the landlords. When the people resisted, the Government never failed to come to the rescue of Property with a Coercion Bill. When the people were crushed, and submitted tamely to the landlords, the Bill was let drop; and coercion was said to have ceased. The slave again went to his toil without being actually driven; and the landlords said, “He goes voluntarily: he is free. Free, because government has restored Order. Order is the mother of Freedom. God save the Queen!”

MODERN CIVILISATION.—The chief source of the evils that affect man is man himself: *Man to man is wolf.* Whoever keeps this fact in view, beholds the world as a hell, worse than Dante's in this, that one man is the devil of another. How man deals with man is shown by negro slavery, the final end of which is sugar and coffee. But we need not go so far: at five to enter a cotton or other factory, and thenceforth to sit there daily, ten, twelve, or fourteen hours, performing the same mechanical labour, is to purchase dearly the satisfaction of drawing breath. But this is the fate of millions, and that of millions more is analagous.—*Schopenhauer.*

FORERUNNERS OF ANARCHISM.

ROUSSEAU.

ROUSSEAU was not a Socialist in any scientific and definite way, simply because he was not a political economist. Yet there was in himself and to a great extent in his works also, all the emotional material of Socialism. And, inasmuch as the Anarchist faith and formula distinguish themselves from general Socialism, in that they affirm entire equality and freedom in association, not merely saying of the members of society that each is for the whole, but adding with the same emphasis that the whole is for each one, and that he, in and through the whole in which he lives and moves and has his being, is an end to himself and never merely a means to any alien end or good that does not include him and is not his very own: this being Anarchism in its distinction, Rousseau may be rightly claimed as our precursor and herald, whether we have regard to his manner of stating the problem of politics or social life, or to the leading features of his solution.

For the question is put by him in this fashion ('Contrat Social,' I. 6) "To find a form of association which guards each associate with the whole combined power, and in virtue of which each individual, while placing himself at one with all, yet obeys himself only, and is as free as before."

The conditions which he considers requisite for the constitution of such a society, of such a thoroughly individualised social whole, an organic unity, organic alive and free in all its parts or members, are these: "Each of us must throw into the common fund himself and all his powers under the supreme guidance of the general (unanimous) will; each member being accepted as an *individual* part of the whole. . . . There is then a collective moral (human) body, compounded of as many members as there are voices in the meeting, which body gets from this act its unity, its corporate self, its life, and its will." The unanimous assembly does not set up a sovereign or ruling power, but is itself "the sovereign people," and so continues ever after, so long as it is of one mind and will. It is while thus settled in unanimity, a law unto itself; yet there are no self-imposed laws or rules of joint conduct which may not be cancelled at once by the universal consent and will.

The polity or commune is formed only of the individuals that freely unite to constitute it, and, therefore, can have no other interest than what is theirs. The man or woman entering into the comradeship of such a free society, becomes there and then free in the true sense of human freedom, for the first time. He at once acquires *rights* and *duties*, without which correlatives there is no true human freedom. For rights, whims, impulses, appetites, and self-seeking desires—in a word, for the propensities and pleasures of the sub-human animal, which he renounces in the act of association, he acquires the substantial and permanent delights and satisfactions of that genuine human freedom, which is the loyal observance of self-imposed regulations for the common good. In such service and obedience alone is perfect freedom and real "independence." All true human independence is in reality interdependence.

In such community, "Ought to," which was before confounded with, and was indeed all the same with a mere "Must," has now realised in each breast its own true clear and distinct significance and force. The practical reason of each person is now consciously the author of the law which each obeys with joy and benefaction. This entirely disinterested conscience of each and all is what Rousseau evidently means by the "volonté générale."

Another anarchist feature of Rousseau's political doctrine is its denial of the theory of "representative government." The sovereignty of each and all "can never be alienated." "The sovereign . . . can only be represented by himself." Lasting and perfect, or even substantially practical agreement of representative and represented persons, is, he says, impossible. Putting this point another way, he says the general will is obviously "indivisible."

Further in the direction of an Anarchist polity, is his insistence upon frequent meetings, that the initial unanimity may not get out of joint, or the sovereignty of the unanimous assemblage of persons may not fall into abeyance ('Contrat Social,' III. 18). Without such meetings and conferrings there can be no "general will" in act, and so no real freedom. He tells the English they vainly suppose themselves free, except, perhaps, at "general election" times! For once the members of the Commons are duly elected, the people lapse into their customary bondage! (III. 15). The British Anarchist will endorse this satire, which is only the truth, and all the keener on that account, with all his heart and full understanding. It is especially noteworthy that Rousseau's condition and criterion of the "generality" disinterestedness and goodness of the popular "will," is *Unanimity*. The "citizens" are those who agree; others are "strangers." But he expects that unanimity will be attained by each thinking of the common good and interest rather than of private ends, and by a certain amount of just and amiable yielding and modesty. "Long wranglings show that private interests are in the ascendant." The good-will of each is what he trusts in to put these particular and contentious ends in the background, and keep them there. But all this suppression and renunciation must be *voluntary*; for full and free consent is the only possible human ground of obligation and obedience.

Now, it cannot be supposed that Rousseau was so foolish as to think he was describing an historical transaction in his account of the *contrat social*, or social covenant. He, equally with Hooker, Grotius, Hobbes, Locke, and Spinoza, knew perfectly well what he was about. He was proposing an ideal, and laying down the conditions, or presuppositions and implications, of a really human society, state, or commune. From a mere historical standpoint, what all these political philosophers tell

us of, is pure fiction. But this is not the defect of their theory, when understood aright, and according to the intention of the propounders. Their purpose was to answer a question as to *right*, not as to *fact*. What was the only possible *justification* of societies as they found them constituted? That was the question. The answer was, there is no semblance of justification to be discovered unless the states or societies we find existing be taken and considered *as if* they had been founded in agreement.

The flaw of all these theories of social pact or contract is their assumption of rights, liberties, persons, or humanities apart from and before society.

Cleared of this error, and taken rightly as an ideal, or as a statement of the universal ground implied in any society that can claim to be *human* and to confer rights, duties, freedom, and satisfaction, the theory of Rousseau is a presentment of Anarchist doctrine. The adaptive and plastic unanimity which he demands can only be realised in small communities. His principles justify rebellion in any civilised state of his time or ours. His conditions of conjoint humane life can only find their fulfilment in a federation of home-ruling communes.

Somewhere in his 'Discours sur l'Inégalité' he has said that if there were angels we might accept rulers; *but there being none*— Any reader can finish the sentence.

A DUTCH SOCIALIST MEETING.

I WAS at the Hague, casually drifting for a few days' holiday through Holland. I had seen Paul Potter's Bull, and Rembrandt's "Anatomy"; all the Princes of Orange, and the prison where De Witt was torn to pieces by the mob. I was a little tired of the sleepy beauty of the Hague, and was languidly scanning the advertisement bills, in choice for the evening's entertainment between a Dutch tragedy and a Parisian operette. Suddenly my eyes rested on the announcement of a Socialist lecture, and my indecision and langour came to an end.

I had some trouble in finding Westerbaenstraat 154, where the "Walhalla," the Socialist meeting hall is situated, and I place on record that it is marked as "Westerlaanstraat" on Baedeker's plan. The hall was a bare room behind a row of workman's houses, which (like everything at the Hague) are exceedingly clean, airy and spacious. There were only two or three benches seating a score of people, and the audience of 200 to 300 stood during the whole meeting. The walls were bare, except for a diagram and a large and good representation in sepia of the Laokoon, which spoke well for the intelligence and artistic knowledge of the frequenters.

The diagram represented the Marxian view of capitalism in a graphic manner, and is well worth reproduction. It depicted the separation of surplus-value from wages, and then its division into rent, interest, and taxes among the several sharers, who were thereby enabled to accumulate the "great capital."

The audience, who had all paid 5 cents for admission, consisted chiefly of artisans, with a few wives and daughters, and a sprinkling of clerks and small traders. I cannot give any adequate idea of the patient attention with which these people *stood* in the close room, to listen in absolute stillness to the long oration of the speaker.

I am sorry to be unable to record the name of this orator. On the platform was a circular wooden pulpit, breast high, exactly similar to those in old English and Dutch churches, and from this pulpit he read for an hour and a half, with perfect elocution, as eloquent a lecture as I have ever heard. I am unable to give any idea of this discourse, which was loudly applauded. The orator referred to the decorations at that moment adorning the streets of Amsterdam in honour of the king, as the hosannas of capitalism, which would be turned into abuse if the king ever had the idea of taking up the cause of the people. After a rapid sketch of the existing evils of industrial life, he referred to the attempts made by English co-operative enthusiasts to mend these evils, and explained how these failed to reach the masses, who had become mere parts of the great industrial machine over which they had no control. The working of this machine in speculations, crises and panics, was then explained, and the destructive result of this action and reaction on the proletariat was demonstrated. The influence of machinery was then dwelt upon, and it was explained in what way invention could become the friend instead of the enemy of the wage-worker. An eloquent invocation of Socialism as the only hope and refuge for the worker, and the only remedy for social evils, closed this impressive discourse. Discussion followed, the speakers speaking from the body of the standing crowd, and as I could not hear them clearly enough to understand their Dutch, I came away, after examining the literature stall, which contained some tracts by Marx and Engels, and pamphlets by and photographs of Dutch Socialists.

Here we have a curious mixture of likeness and unlikeness to English Socialism. Is it possible yet to lay anything beyond the foundation of an international party? The social consciousness of the ordinary worker does not at present comprehend the world beyond his own narrow valley, and until the international organism is conscious of itself, it can never consciously unite. We are apt to exaggerate the spread of that wide cosmopolitanism which makes of no account those national cleavages still separating the world. Friends we may find in foreign cities, but hardly acquaintances; and for several generations yet the world must advance mainly in sections according to the particular circumstances of each national group.

Nevertheless, since science is universal, and nowadays also, capitalism, we find, from these two arising, Socialism also universal. S. W.

LAW AND ORDER IN IRELAND.

VII.—“VI ET ARMIS.”

AFTER the death of Henry VIII., the “amiable persuasions of law and reason” were no longer visible even in the State papers. Coercion pure and simple again came to the fore to continue the policy of the English Government towards Ireland from 1550 to 1887. The sword, the gallows, famine, pestilence, and expatriation each and all were tried, and found most effective when used in combination.

The Parliamentary farce was not played during the reign of Edward VI. Dublin officials found the progress hoped for from the administration of the Common law too slow. Martial law was substituted, and “sundry persons” were authorised by the Lord Deputy to execute it where and whenever it seemed best unto them. The warrant for this proceeding is difficult to find. Not even the attempts to thrust a new form of worship upon the people had stirred them into anything like revolt. The chiefs enriched by the plunder of the monasteries had taken the oath of supremacy with characteristic suppleness. To the majority of them prayers read in English sounded as mystic as if they had been in Latin. So that it was not the charge of heresy which sharpened the swords of the English Executive. The “rough handling” to which some of the chiefs were subjected by Sir Edward Bellingham at last induced a rebellion that was only lulled by the withdrawal of the garrisons (through lack of means of support). The next step of the government was to try the system of “plantation” which had been rejected over and over again by Henry VIII. as the one of all others most fatal to the policy of conciliation that he had initiated and striven to carry out. Lord Sussex, entrusted with plenary powers by Mary Tudor, forcibly depopulated the territories of Seix and Offally (the land of the O’Connors now known as King’s and Queen’s County). The land was divided amongst English settlers, and it was hoped that the rents of the farms so made would add £500 per annum to the English revenues. But the dispossessed tribesmen naturally seized every opportunity of retaking their lands that presented itself. A guerrilla warfare was waged for nine years, when the Government under good Queen Bess once more interfered and effected the plantation thoroughly by the complete extermination of the recalcitrant natives. Without variation during the whole of Elizabeth’s long reign the policy was treachery, murder, wholesale massacre, and deliberately created famine. But for the distractions in the shape of revolution at home, and menaces from Scotland, France, and Spain, which left but little money and few men for purposes of destruction in Ireland, the pacification of that unlucky island would doubtless have been gloriously completed under the sway of the “most unspotted lily.” Shortness of money Elizabeth strove to obviate by quartering on the people the soldiers she sent to slay them. She grudged every shilling spent on Ireland, and continually demanded schemes from her deputies for making the Irish Government self-supporting. Lord Sussex had tried the appointing of a president to each province, supported by a small standing army principally composed of native contingents and maintained by “coyne and livery.” This scheme failed through the determined resistance of those lords whose lands suffered for the maintenance of the soldiers.

It was found, too, that whenever the standard of revolt was raised, the Irish who had enlisted in the Queen’s service, having become drilled and disciplined, used to desert carrying their arms with them to the armies of their native chiefs. There were three great revolts in Elizabeth’s time, which were suppressed by cruelty outrivalling Alba’s in the Netherlands. The first was under Shane O’Neil, in Ulster, and so well was he supported and so poor was the Executive, that a treaty was entered into with him by which Lord Sussex thought he could keep the Ulster men quiet until a more convenient season. Shane observed his share of the treaty rigorously, keeping well within his borders, expelling the Scotch settlers, ruling with a rough justice and encouraging “all kinds of husbandry and the growing of wheat.” Sussex first tried to remove Shane by the knife of a hired assassin, who was to be rewarded with land to the value of 100 marks. This failing he sent him a present of poisoned wine, which almost succeeded. Finally, Sir Henry Sidney superseding Sussex, the treaty was openly broken. O’Neil’s rivals were encouraged to attack him within his borders, the English army advanced from the Pale, and Shane bereft of his Scottish adherents by the policy of Sussex, was attacked on all sides. His army after a gallant fight was cut to pieces, and he himself slaughtered by some of the Scotch he had insulted to flatter the English deputy. Sidney followed up his victory by an indiscriminate slaughter of men, women, and children, seeking out even those who dwelt peaceably in the isles along the northern coast. In the island of Rathlin alone the English soldiers slaughtered women and children to the number of a hundred and fifty. A feeling of uneasiness sprang up amongst even the least patriotic of the chiefs. They felt that no amount of loyal professions could ensure them from treachery. The King of Spain’s offers of assistance was accepted, and in the south, where men and arms were expected to arrive from Spain, Earl Desmond prepared to receive them and gave his name to the movement. At that time the Spanish scare was gaining strength in England.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM.

GREAT BRITAIN.

One remark more on these Irish affairs. All that is required to vote *clôture*, to vote coercion, is only a bare majority of 10 votes or even of one vote, in the House of Commons. But now were you to demand a change of another kind in the political constitution—say the abolition of the regal sinecure—you would be dealt with as a seditious man proposing to overthrow the very basis of the constitution. Is coercion a less grave alteration in the constitution of a country than the dismissal of a useless but well-paid servant of the people? or the abolition of majority and class rule and the introduction of a better mode of administration of public affairs, than parliamentary humbug and government by cabinet?

The distress was terrible in Northumberland. Starvation-wages, short hours during the last few years, all contributed to increase it. There is now one cause more—the strike to which the miners were compelled by the coal-owners’ attempt of still reducing the wages. The miners resist, notwithstanding the terrible privations they suffer from, and the proposed reduction may be avoided for ‘his time. As to the misery which prevails in the district, it may be judged upon from the numbers of miners’ wives and children who are compelled to wander in quest of alms. Those who produce all riches must beg pennies from the idlers. The strike has had another serious consequence. Socialism found fervent followers among the miners. Their demonstration on Easter Monday at Horton was a decided success. The Democratic Federation and the Socialist League joined together in the demonstration. The resolutions carried are revolutionary; the cheers of the miners were for the Social Revolution.

ITALY.

Italians may thank God—they have at last got a ministry! Its composition, indeed, has been a surprise to such ingenuous people as believed in the sincerity of the attacks made until a few days ago by Mon. Crispi or Mon. Depretis; but then the number of such antediluvian persons becomes every day more imperceptible. The combination Crispi-Depretis would have been celebrated sooner if there were not a certain secret treaty to be concluded beforehand and presented to the new ministry as a *fatto conquisito* (achieved feat). However we boast of freedom and people’s sovereignty, we are governed by means of *achieved feats*, and our contemporary history is nothing else than a sequel of such feats secretly planned and executed by the four or five masters who dictate the law to the world.

AUSTRIA.

The thirteen Anarchists of Vienna who have been brought before a packed court under the accusation of having made a plot for burning several timber-yards in the capital and of killing during the confusion several high functionaries of the Empire, have been condemned to hard labour from one to twenty years each, making thus an aggregate of a hundred and twenty-four years for all thirteen. The heaviest condemnations are: Kratochwil for 20 years, Kaspari to 16, Hoeffmaier, Schwechla, and Wawrunek to 15 years each.

PORTUGAL.

Serious riots took place at Oporto during the last week. Nearly twenty thousand workmen of all trades gathered on a public square to protest against the recent measures taken by Government with regard to the tobacco-workshops. The meeting loudly protested against the monopolists and nominated deputies to bring its complaints before the governor of the city. As the deputies, followed by the manifestation, proceeded to the palace of the governor, they were attacked by mounted municipal guards. They resisted, but soon were divided into several small groups, which scattered in different streets, resisting there, until late in the afternoon, against repeated attacks of cavalry. Windows were broken in a few shops. There are wounded on both sides.

RUSSIA.

Another attempt seems to have been made to kill Alexander III. Two young men have been arrested again on the Morskaya, a few minutes before the passage of the iron-clad carriage of the Tsar, and the rumour is that they had with them bombs. The news comes from reliable sources, but is contradicted by the Russian agents. What trust can be laid in these contradictions of these last is best seen from the following: Some time ago the London press announced that an attempt against the Tsar was made in the Province of the Cossacks of the Don. The news was contradicted from official sources. Now, the Don Cossacks themselves in a letter of congratulation to the Tsar mention this attempt. Numberless arrests are made everywhere in all classes of society. Among the officers the members of a secret society for mutual instruction are very numerous. Great numbers of officers already have been sent to the most remote parts of Siberia—of course without any simulacrum of judgment, by mere orders of the Administrative.

UNITED STATES.

The middle-class Republic has committed a new vile action in addition to all those committed during the last few years with regard to the Socialists. The rulers of this supposed free country have signed a treaty of extradition with Russia, according to which treaty any political offender accused of having participated either *directly* or *indirectly* in killing some crowned burglar, or some of his family, may be extradited to Russia by the United States. We know what extradition to Russia means. Netchaieff was extradited in 1872 by the Swiss authorities, under the solemn promise of the Emperor’s flunkies of treating him as a common-law criminal. But he was *not* treated as a common-law prisoner. The promise was a lie. Since 1873 Netchaieff has disappeared, and only in 1881 the revolutionists learned that he was kept in an *oubliette* of the St. Petersburg fortress. Later on, the rumour was afloat that his jailers killed him in 1882. Do the Americans know about all that? And, if they know, how is it possible that the treaty does not raise a unanimous outcry in the United States?

The affair of our eight comrades condemned to death at Chicago for having *not* thrown a bomb, came again before a Court. Three counsels of the condemned, and three counsels of the middle-classes, were heard by the people whom they call judges. One of the prosecutors made a remarkable avowal. “There is no indication,” he said, “for bringing the accused into connexion with the bomb thrown at Haymarket. But they are guilty of a *general conspiracy* for overthrowing the existing order of things” (i.e., for putting an end to the spoliation of the workers by the monopolists). Another explained that all Internationalists are guilty of the same conspiracy, and the third went on to say that our comrades must be executed, because Anarchy as a whole is on the trial and must be condemned as such by the Court. The decision of the Court will not be known before three months if the former verdict is not confirmed, and in September next if legal assassination is maintained.

AN ANARCHIST COMMUNITY.

(From a Correspondent.)

So strong and so widespread are the pretensions of “governments” to-day, that it is difficult for any civilised community to remain anarchistic without being interfered with or “annexed” by one or the other of them. It is therefore interesting to discover from the ‘Colonial Office List’ (Harrison & Sons) that the British empire includes at least one successful anarchist commune. Judging from the following account it is in no need of the so-called indispensable “laws” of majority rule. We hope it may be long before busybody philanthropy imposes any such chains upon it.

Tristan d’Acunha and Gough Island are the principal of a group of islands lying in lat. 37 deg. 6 min. S. and long. 12 deg. 2 min. W. It was taken possession of by a military force during the residence of Napoleon at St. Helena. Upon his death the garrison was withdrawn, with the exception of three men, who, with certain shipwrecked sailors, became the founders of the present settlement. For a long time only one of the settlers had a wife, but subsequently the others contracted with a sea captain to bring them wives from St. Helena. The population has since increased to about a hundred, and remains practically stationary, as the younger and more ambitious settlers migrate in batches to the Cape. The inhabitants practically enjoy their possessions in common, and there is no strong drink on the island, and no crime. It was at one time proposed to give them laws and a regular government, but this was found unnecessary for the above reasons, and they remain under the moral rule of their oldest inhabitant, Governor Green, successor to Governor Glass, Corporal in the Royal Artillery, and founder of the settlement. The inhabitants are spoken of as long-lived, healthy, moral, religious, and hospitable to strangers. A supply of stores and provisions was provided out of a grant voted by Parliament, and sent out by a man-of-war in 1886, nearly all the able-bodied men having been drowned while attempting to board a vessel in December 1885. There are 300 cattle and 200 sheep on the islands, and crops of potatoes are raised.”

The English Government has recently published a Bluebook of correspondence about this settlement (C 4959) from which we learn that its flourishing condition continues, in spite of the recent loss of life. The 97 inhabitants were found to have a year’s food in store, besides 600 bushels of seed potatoes and 500 head of cattle and sheep. We are glad to see that the Treasury has forbidden any more grants being made to them. They are better without our interference, and why should the English worker at home be taxed for these prosperous and independent islanders?

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