

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

VOL. 5.—No. 51.

FEBRUARY, 1891.

MONTHLY; ONE PENNY.

THE WINTER AND THE WORKERS.

WE have to go back a great many years to find a winter as terribly severe as the present one has been up to now. Fog and frost and snow have made the lives of the workers one prolonged misery, and the only wonder is that they have all taken it so quietly. Those of us who are in work know how difficult it is to make both ends meet at such a period as this when fire is an absolute necessity, and the coal merchants knowing our helplessness have raised the price of fuel fifty per cent. or more; for on some days recently coals have reached as high a figure as two shillings per hundredweight; when we must have oil or candles burning nearly all day; when the wear and tear of our clothing is about trebled, and the need of costly extra garments is imperative; when if we would keep ourselves in good health we must eat and drink far more than we do in ordinary times; and when in almost every family at least one is unable to escape from an ailment of some kind and has to spend money at the chemist's or the doctor's. How frightful then must be the position of those who have no work, and therefore no money to meet these extra calls, who sit and shiver all day without a fire or at best only a very scanty one, or who wander about the streets vainly seeking work or food of some sort; whose only hope is a dole from some of those clergymen, city missionaries, evangelists, etc., who act as the agents of the possessing classes in distributing the miserably inadequate sums with which the donors think to keep the people quiet. To understand the misery of being out of work at such a time as this one must experience it personally.

The very weather itself prevents many thousands of men from carrying on their ordinary avocations and the always large army of out-of-workers has been swelled tremendously. Once more the unemployed question has been brought prominently to the front. "Distressed London," "Starvation," "More Misery," "9000 Dockers out of Work," "Further Deaths from Starvation," and such like catch lines, have been displayed in large type on the contents bills of the principal London dailies. The philanthropists, led by Booth and Charrington, have been making strenuous appeals for funds. The State Socialists like Tom Mann, John Burns and Cuninghame Graham, have been urging the immediate establishment of Municipal Workshops, and seriously considering the advisability of commencing a campaign amongst the agricultural labourers with a view to in some way prevent them from flocking into London and swamping the unskilled labour market here. This last is a very good move and we are glad to know that the Executive of the Dockers' Union have quite made up their minds to carry on the work and to organise branches of agricultural labourers, although the programme is of the most ridiculously moderate kind, consisting of three points: (1) Allotments; (2) Small holdings; (3) a Minimum Wage of fifteen shillings per week. The London Trades Council too, have gone so far as to appoint a paid organiser in the person of our old friend and opponent, Bill White, for the purpose of getting up meetings of the unemployed and generally demonstrating the fact of their existence before the powers that be.

Meanwhile the workers have been making some show or rather a number of somewhat small shows. At Wandsworth a band of unemployed marched through the district demanding assistance. But Law and Authority were very soon upon their track; begging, they were plainly told by the nearest magistrate, was against the law, and if they persisted the police would be quite right in running them in. The workhouse, it was hinted, was available; but on going there they were told that no outdoor relief could be given; they must come into the house if they were in want. At Bromley, in Kent, about one hundred and fifty unemployed workers marched to the offices of the local authorities and demanded work, threatening that unless they were relieved they would loot the bakers' shops in the town. At Brighton about a thousand men marched in procession through the town and along the seaside bearing at their head a large banner with the inscription, "Help for Starving Unemployed." There were twelve collectors and the passers by contributed freely. A deputation of the men had an interview with the borough surveyor the same day and obtained a promise from him to provide more work. At Wolverhampton over 250 workers waited on the Mayor at the Town Hall, most of them eventually being set to work at cleaning the streets. At Portsmouth a procession was organised and subscriptions solicited, but at the "suggestion" of the police the men dispersed. Other meetings have been held in Bermondsey, Camberwell, North London and elsewhere and in some cases

the local authorities have provided a little work in the way of clearing away the snow.

But everywhere is noticeable that lamentable spirit of reliance upon others. The unemployed either beg for money individually or in bands, or they beg for work from the authorities. Far be it from us to blame them. The average Englishman cannot be very courageous on an empty stomach. But to no one is the maxim of Danton more suitable, "Dare! Dare! Always dare!" If these masses of unemployed men were only bold and brave; if they demanded from their exploiters not merely a crust of bread or the means of getting it, but access to the land and the tools, machinery and materials necessary to produce the commodities they require to supply their needs; if they refused to allow the Cains of humanity to continue their murderous career, how high and dry the philanthropists, State Socialists and other encouragers of this spirit of dependence in the workers would be left. The mass of the workers to-day are like the children of Israel in the desert. The promised land is quite close, but they will never get there whilst they are engaged in making and worshipping graven images. When once they have learned to rely upon themselves and Liberty, the mountains of difficulty by which they are surrounded will sink into molehills, the mists of doubt and dissension will clear away, and a land flowing with milk and honey will extend the fragrance of its welcome towards them. Because they have no faith either in one another or in themselves the day of emancipation is unfixed.

FREEDOM AND PROPERTY.

"Is property-owning opposed to freedom?" was a pertinent and suggestive question asked by a comrade, last month, in our columns. The immediate answer, we think, depends mainly on the meaning attached to the terms "freedom" and "property-owning"; but the real issue raised is one of the most important that can occupy Anarchists, for it is: What relation of men to things is most conducive to human freedom?

When we speak of human freedom, we speak of a relation between man and man, of that social relation which allows and actively promotes the fullest possible individual self-development; we speak of social co-operation, whereof the principle is: Space and opportunity for the individual initiative, the individual activity of each, by mutual agreement of all. Freedom—the truest, completest freedom—is not merely negative; it is not merely an absence of arbitrary restraints imposed by the will of some upon others. It is also positive; it is active, voluntary co-operation amongst men who have mutually agreed to associate for the common purpose of obtaining for themselves and each other the fullest, widest, intensest life of which their nature is capable. All association is a seeking after this, however blind, however imperfect, however misguided in its methods and partial in its intention. The end of all life is to live, and the end of social life is that man, each individual human being, should live more fully. When social relations are unfree, when they press upon and constrain and crush down the individual, they are a mockery and a failure, doomed, where there is any strong vitality in the men thus ill-associated, to be, sooner or later, broken up and replaced by relations healthier and more fitted to satisfy human needs. Therefore it happens that, in an unfree society like ours, an individual's first and necessary step towards freedom is often to assert his own individuality as against his fellow-men, who, so far from enlarging his possibilities of existence, are pressing upon him unmercifully. He is called by fate to be, as it were, the other half of the man who, prizing any sort of companionship and understanding with the people amongst whom his lot is cast more than his own self, or not knowing that there is such a good as true freedom possible to him, or perhaps simply being afraid to move out of his narrow rut lest he should be crushed quite to death, lets his whole individual nature, his will, his energy, his initiative, his feelings, his thoughts, his actions, be controlled and coerced and limited and restrained till he becomes a mere creature of custom and routine, the slave of other men's will, the tool of their desires. Whilst our existing unsocial social order turns out these slaves by the million, we can be neither surprised nor sorry that it turns out many of their opposites and counterparts, the protestants of liberty, who have been and are as yet only able to take the preliminary step towards freedom, and, conceiving of it more as a social separation than a social relation, go about preaching a gospel of hate, and confront even their most inoffensive neighbours with an aggressive stare and an uncalled-for assertion: I am as good as you, if not better.

Rather, ten thousand times rather, such proof of vitality than the abject submission, the moral death of the slave, who brings to naught the long travail of the ages wherein human individuality has been painfully fashioned and developed. But for all that, individual self-assertion is not freedom, and does not satisfy the self-assertive person himself, unless the social instinct, which is an essential part of his nature, has been withered or warped, or perhaps had little chance to grow. Most persons find the position of an Esau a miserable one, and having once set forth upon the path towards freedom, rest not until they realise that it implies social co-operation and mutual agreement, upon a higher moral level than the irrational and unsatisfying social relations too common to-day.

Now it is very obvious that the answer that any person will give to the question with which we set out, *i.e.*, what relation of men to things is most conducive to human freedom, will depend greatly upon the degree to which he conceives of freedom as a social relation, based on mutual agreement and co-operation, or looks upon it as a state of individual separation and self-assertion. A man in the latter condition of mind can hardly fail to consider private property essential to what he looks upon as freedom; for if a man believes his best method of obtaining the fullest possible life for himself is to remain on terms of armed neutrality with his fellow men, the more things he can acquire and keep to himself the better will be his chances. In a society (if one can call it so) where the universal motto of life is Each for himself and the Devil take the hindmost, if there is to be any peace or security at all, a man must be frankly allowed to keep what he can get and protect it, if he can, as he protects himself.

But we, who conceive that true freedom necessarily implies active social co-operation for the purpose of obtaining and maintaining it, look at this question of property somewhat differently.

Let us suppose for a moment that the dust of the accumulated legal rubbish of ages is out of our eyes, and that we are free men living in a society of free men. Let us suppose that we have nothing to consult but human nature and the nature of things in themselves. Are there any claims which individuals or groups of individuals might put forward to the personal possession of certain things which, under such circumstances, would appear to us reasonable and socially just?

It seems to the present writer that there are three sorts of claims to personal possession which would all be recognised in a society of free men, because every normally developed human being would feel his own life narrower and less satisfactory if they were denied him. These are the claim of need, the claim of use, the claim of creation.

Let us consider these claims more in detail. In the first place, every one of these three claims is recognised to-day. They are mixed up and confused with the rights of property as sanctioned by law, and we think the real human justice they embody is the saving salt which has enabled legal injustice to poison men's minds, and vitiate their sense of right for so long. But if we try to disentangle them, we shall find that they have existed amongst men before the making of laws; that they have been violently wrested to their own selfish purposes by robbers, and twisted and confused in the interests of exploiting classes by lawyers; but, nevertheless, their existence and development can be traced back through long periods of human evolution. Just now, however, let us confine ourselves to the present aspects of the case.

Certainly the claim of human need is very imperfectly recognised to-day amongst civilised men, less than among some savages. Still it is recognised. A man's need for food and clothing and shelter is acknowledged in England as a sufficient reason why he should have these first necessities of existence; acknowledged in a niggardly, insulting, pitiless fashion by our miserable Poor Law relief system; but still acknowledged. In Paris the claim of a need for shelter is recognised in more humane fashion, and public rooms, with blazing fires, are provided in various parts of the town for any one who likes to use them. Again, we recognise children's need of education as a reason for giving it to them, the need of roads as a reason for making and keeping them up, the need for light as a reason for having lamps in the streets for the public benefit, and so on. As for the tyrannical methods by which this recognition of the claim of need is expressed in our unfree society, we can only say, that they are an evil in themselves. They would never be put up with by the people at all unless there were a strong feeling that need constitutes an actual claim, which ought somehow to be satisfied. If anyone doubts this, let him turn and contemplate the endless private associations, bad, good and indifferent, the end and aim of which is to satisfy some human needs which some people or other cannot rest content to leave unsupplied. It does not matter if the need be that of the irreligious for bibles or of the aged poor for a pension, or of little school children for a dinner, it is recognised by some one as a human need which, just because it is a need, has a claim to be supplied. If a human being really wants a thing very much, it is a reason in favour of his having it, not only in his own mind but in the minds of other people, who are often willing to work hard, and take a smaller share of the good things of this life than they could consume with pleasure to themselves, that the needs of others may be supplied. In small things this disposition to recognise need as a reason for possession, is so common an incident of daily life amongst associates, that we do not remark it, or try to realise what sort of an affair life would be if the claims of need were absolutely ignored in it. Let anyone who doubts this, just keep a pencil and note-book about him for a week, and jot down every occasion in which he lets somebody have something, or they let him have something, merely saying or thinking, "you want it most." For instance, in a family of limited means, is it not continually recognised that the father should have the most strengthening food when he comes in tired

from his work, that the children who go to school should have strongest boots, that the most delicate child should have the warmest clothing, etc., etc.? And all merely because they particularly need this or that. In the smaller needs of life this give and take is a matter of course, of such continual daily occurrence amongst well-meaning people that they are not conscious of it, and we have seen that the public conscience applies it also to fundamental needs; it is therefore extremely probable, is it not, that in a free society need would be recognised as a real and just claim to the possession of the thing needed?

Next month we propose to consider those claims of use and of creation, which, it seems to us, some Communists have insufficiently analysed when classing them under the generic term "needs."

IBSEN'S ANARCHISM.

IBSEN's latest play, *Hedda Gabler*, has appeared simultaneously in Copenhagen, London and New York, in the native language of the author and in English, German, French, Italian and Hungarian translations; a significant indication that the civilised world has learnt to recognise the mighty force which dwells in the utterances of the Norwegian Anarchist, the greatest and most original of modern play writers. Anarchist, we say, though Ibsen, like many another great artist and thinker, is no party man and has never worn, probably never will wear, the label of an "ism" round his neck. Anarchist, because for him the root evil of social life is domination; the domination of one human being by another; the domination of mankind by cliques and classes; the domination of the individual by the mass; the domination of Man by custom and habit and social usage, by superstitions and moral codes and external forms and formulæ; domination of the true self by moral pressure and public opinion without and by passion and cowardice within. Anarchist, because for him the salvation of Man lies within Man himself, in human possibilities, in the fullest self-development, the fullest self-satisfaction, in that individual freedom which it rests with men to claim and obtain from their fellows, which it rests with men to grant or to withhold in their relations with one another. Finally, Ibsen is an Anarchist because he has the courage to carry his convictions to their logical conclusion and to contemplate the existence of society without government as the ideal to which mankind is rapidly tending; the political end to be attained by the coming Social Revolution.

A clear statement of Ibsen's views with regard to the State has lately been brought for the first time before the English public by the translation of a biography* of him, seen and approved by himself. He was deeply interested, it seems, in the great public events which took place between 1863 and 1871. He perceived that the times were rotten, that a new epoch must be at hand. He compared the coming crisis in Europe with the former great moral revolutions in the evolution of mankind. He noted that the ancient civilisation of Rome and the still older civilisation of Egypt had decayed and perished for lack of the full and healthy development of the individual in both; for where the individual human being is continually sacrificed to the fancied interests of the community, there the community itself waxes feeble and dies out.

When the Franco-German war broke out in 1870, Ibsen believed the eagerly expected revolutionary crisis had come. He wrote to his friend Georg Brandes: "Public events absorb a great part of my thoughts. The old, illusory France is broken into fragments. If this new and very real Prussia might also be broken up, at one leap we should find ourselves in an entirely new epoch. Hey! what a row the ideas all about us would make. And high time too! Ah! what we live upon now-a-days is no more than the crumbs fallen from the table of the revolution of the last century and we have chewed those morsels long enough. Those notions demand fresh material and fresh elucidation. Liberty, equality and fraternity have no longer the same meaning as in the days of the late lamented Guillotine. But this is what politicians will not see, and for this I hate them. Men want only partial revolutions, revolutions in externals, in politics. But this is mere trifling. What we really need is a revolution in the spirit of man."

"What Ibsen looked for," continues his biographer, "from the new epoch, was a state of society in which the individual might develop wholly and freely, without being fettered by Society or the State." A few months later he again wrote to Georg Brandes as follows:

"The State is the curse of the individual. What has been the price of Prussia's strength as a State? The absorption of the individual in the political and geographical entity. The waiter is the best soldier. Away with the State! When that revolution is accomplished I will be there. Undermine the notion of the State, let free will and spiritual affinity be the only recognised basis of union, and you will have the beginnings of a liberty worthy of the name."

With such ideas as these, it may well be understood that the Paris Commune was a bitter disappointment to Ibsen; not in the least because it was revolutionary (as the respectable Mr. Gosse tries to make out in his article on Ibsen in "Northern Studies") but because it was not revolutionary enough; because the people of Paris, having something approaching a fair chance of starting upon the new lines, set forth instead upon the old, and immediately set up government when they might have started a free community. "Is it not base," he writes to Brandes, "of the Commune of Paris to give in, and spoil my admirable

* *Life of Henrik Ibsen*, by Henrik Jæger, published by W. Heinemann. Price 6s.

theory of the State—or rather of the No-State? The idea is now nipped and crushed for a long time to come . . . still it has a sound kernel in it, that I plainly see, and it will yet be realised some day without any distortion."

And whilst waiting for this realisation, Ibsen turned his special attention to the shams, prejudices and oppressions of social life, dissecting and laying them bare as no man has done before him. The notion that lies at the foundation of Ibsen's social dramas is, says his biographer, best expressed in the words of the Russian Anarchist Peter Kropotkine, and he quotes the following passage from one of Comrade Kropotkine's articles in the *Nineteenth Century*.

"Our moral maxims say, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'; but if a child should act upon this, and take off his jacket to give to a poor unknown child, his mother would tell him that the saying was not to be thus interpreted; that if he were to live by this rule he would soon go barefoot, and without having relieved the misery about him. This injunction is good to repeat, but not to practise. Our preachers say 'To work is to pray,' but every one does his best to make others work for him. We are told we are not to lie; but politics are one huge lie. And we accustom ourselves and our children to live by this double-faced morality—which is sheer hypocrisy, and to defend the hypocrisy by sophistry."

Ibsen has made it his special work to expose this sophistry and vindicate the freedom of the individual in individual social relations, but he has never swerved from his political Anarchism. In 1887 his biographer heard him expatiating upon his favourite idea that the State is the foe of the individual, and must therefore be done away with, with as much zeal and fervour as when he first put it forward; "and it is, in fact," continues Mr. Jæger, who appears himself to have Anarchist leanings, as befits a friend of Ibsen, "one of the pregnant thoughts of our day, destined yet, perhaps, to play a great part in the future." We are inclined to think it probably will!

SOCIETY ON THE MORROW OF THE REVOLUTION.

XI.—DARWINISM AND THE REVOLUTION.

We know that the partisans of Darwin's theory and especially the French commentators claim to draw from the theories of evolution of the celebrated English naturalist arguments in favour of the existing social organisation. Seizing hold of theories on the struggle for existence they pretend it is perfectly natural for society to be divided into two classes, those who consume and those who produce, that seeing the difficulties of existence there must be struggle and consequently conquerors and conquered; that always as a result of this struggle it is inevitable that the conquered must be enslaved by the conquerors and employed in the work of production so as to increase the enjoyment of the latter; that, however regrettable this may be the conditions of existence are such, there not being sufficient of the necessaries of life to satisfy the wants of all. It is a natural law they say, that there should be only this little number of elect for whom is reserved the entire satisfaction of their wants, and this little number of elect by the mere fact that they are conquerors find themselves to be the aptest, the strongest and the best gifted:

Certainly they add, it is regrettable that so many victims disappear in the struggle, undoubtedly society is in need of reform but that should be the product of time and can only be the result of human evolution. Let those who feel themselves sufficiently strong or sufficiently intelligent to make their way and impose themselves upon society do so. This antagonism always was and continues to be one of the causes of human progress.

Malthus was not afraid to write these lines, which have been quoted so many times: "A man who is born into a world already full, if his family is not able to nourish him, or if society does not want his work, this man I say has not the least right to claim any portion of nourishment whatsoever, he is really one too many on the earth, at the grand banquet of nature no cover has been laid for him. Nature orders him to depart and she will not herself delay to put this order into execution. When nature charges herself with the task of governing and punishing it would be a very contemptible ambition to try and take the sceptre from her hands. Let this man then be delivered to the chastisement which nature inflicts upon him to punish him for his poverty!!! He must be taught that the laws of nature doom both him and his family to suffer, and that if he and his family are prevented from dying of hunger they owe it to some compassionate benefactor, who in succouring them disobeys the laws of nature!!!" (Malthus, 'ESSAY ON POPULATION.')

In these lines we see middle-class egoism display itself in all its splendour.

Workers, who starve in your old age, when you have expended your strength on producing the wealth that augments the sum of enjoyment for your exploiters, it is a crime to have come into the world in poverty; you should be very well satisfied that some compassionate protectors have been good enough to employ your services in the production of their capital, which they would not be able to make without you and for which they give you in exchange only sufficient to prevent your dying of hunger.

Here is what, on his part, writes another middle-class author:—"Darwinism is anything rather than socialist. If anyone seeks to attribute to it a political tendency this tendency could only be aristocratic. Does not the theory of selection teach us that in the life of humanity as in that of plants and animals everywhere and always a small privileged minority alone succeeds in living and developing itself, the immense ma-

ajority on the contrary suffers and succumbs more or less prematurely. The cruel struggle for existence is everywhere severe. Only the little elected number of the strongest or the most apt are in a condition to sustain this competition victoriously.

"The great majority of the unhappy competitors must necessarily perish. The selection of the elect is associated with the defeat or loss of the great number of beings who have survived."—Hæckel.

This passage, fellow workers, is not written for the purpose of showing you that the development of the middle-class leads fatally to the loss of the proletariat. Each new enjoyment brought by science to the middle-class corresponds to a new suffering for the workers. In order that the existence of the middle-class may be assured, it must definitely rivet the proletariat under the yoke beneath which it has been put. It is not we who say this. It is M. Hæckel, a middle-class man, who ought to know, seeing that he has studied for the purpose.

Only what we revolt against is this pretension of the middle-class in believing that they are the best, they whose only superiority consists in the banknotes, with which their papas have been careful to stuff their cradles, they whom barely a century of power has been sufficient to reduce almost to impotence. Really when we compare our great men of to-day with the Encyclopedists, with the giants of '89, we are inclined to doubt that these are their descendants. When, above all, men of superior knowledge such as those we have cited, those who have all the means of development of which the worker is deprived, succeed in drawing from the scientific information put at their disposal, and which their education permits them to analyse, such conclusions, we are quite right to ask ourselves what degree of development they would have attained if they had been deprived of the material means which have given them the opportunities to study.

You call yourselves the best, but for a few who really profit by these means of development which wealth or social position procures for them how many are there whose intelligence remains very inferior indeed?

How many among the workers succumb under their misery, worn out by work without rest, who nevertheless, like Chenier marching to the scaffold, would have the right of saying whilst striking their forehead, "However, there is something here."

Belonging to a class whose emancipation is only possible by the employment of force, we are going to lay hold of the arguments supplied by the learned officials themselves to support our demands, and we shall try, at the same time, to show that the present social organisation, far from favoring the cleverest and the best endowed by nature, reserves its enjoyments, on the contrary, for the worn out, exhausted class, and that this want of necessaries which they pretend exists, is only a figment of their imagination; that if the struggle for existence has been one of the causes of the progress of human race evolution, this ought not to be the case any longer; further that science and reason agree in denying the supremacy that certain classes of certain individuals pretend to arrogate over the remainder of humanity, even when they say they are backed up by the majority.

The middle-class, who wish at any cost to support by means of science the exploitation to which they subject the workers, are thrown back upon this theory of the "Struggle for Existence," for showing, according to their belief, that it has caused all human progress, by compelling individuals to keep their faculties on the alert in order to obtain the satisfaction of their wants, by developing them through the necessities of the struggle, by imposing so to speak upon the races a law of continual progression the offenders against which are crushed out. And according to them this ought to continue to be the case, for if individuals find themselves situated in a state of society where they will be sure of obtaining the satisfaction of their wants and where they will all be equal, there will be no more emulation, therefore no more initiative. Such a society, they say, will not be long in falling into decay; whilst in the present society, individuals, being compelled to struggle in order to live, find themselves forced to develop an amount of ability and intelligence which contribute much to the forward march of humanity, and in this way the victory is assured to the ablest, the strongest, and the most intelligent.

To oppose these middle-class theories we have only to quote from the middle-class themselves. "A great inconvenience of the social war, as compared with the simple natural war, is that the influences of the natural law being more or less hindered by the human will and human institutions it is not always the best, the most robust, the best adapted who has the chance of triumphing over his competitor. On the contrary it is rather individual greatness of mind which is habitually sacrificed to personal preferences inspired by social position, race and wealth." (Buchner "Man according to Science," pages 207 and 208.)

In the same way the struggle instead of being the result of natural inequalities is the cause of them; here is what the same writer says on the matter: "All these inequalities, these monstrosities, we must as we have before said, attribute to the social struggle for life, a struggle not yet ruled by reason and justice, and maintained specially by numerous acts of political oppression, violence, spoliation, conquest, which fill the pages of past history and appear in the eyes of the badly enlightened minds of contemporaries an inevitable consequence of the social movement." (Buchner, "Man according to Science," page 222.)

Certainly in far off times, when man was confounded with other animals and possessed as weapons only his instincts, the need of living and of reproduction, a rudimentary brain upon which was impressed very slowly each step of progress made, each new adaptation, it is possible that the struggle for existence may have been one of the causes of progress; and this factor of progress found, it will explain, if necessary, why the first human societies were from their birth a means by which the strongest might exploit the weakest.

(To be continued.)

FREEDOM.

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

MONTHLY, 1d., POST FREE 1½d.

Annual Subscription, post free to all countries, 1s. 6d. Foreign subscriptions should be sent by International Money Order.

Wholesale Price, 1s. 4d. per quire of 27, carriage free.

Back Numbers.—Volume I., October 1886 to September 1887 (No. 2 sold out) price 2s. Volume II., October 1887 to September 1888 (Nos. 16, 17, 18, 19, sold out) price 2s. Volume III., October 1888 to December 1889, price 1s. 6d. Volume IV., January to December 1890, price 1s. Carriage: single volumes, 2d., four volumes, 4½d., throughout the United Kingdom.

Address "FREEDOM," New Fellowship Press, 26 Newington Green Road, London, N.

Freedom Pamphlets.—No. I., "The Wage System," by Peter Kropotkin, 1d., post free, 1½d.

NOTES.

A TALK ABOUT COMMUNIST ANARCHISM.

This month we publish the first instalment of a translation of the famous "Talk between Peasants," which Comrade Malatesta wrote in Italian some years ago. The third Italian edition has just come out and the "Talk" has been translated into most European languages, for it is one of the simplest and most vigorous explanations of Communist Anarchism yet written. When it has run through *Freedom* we hope to republish it in pamphlet form.

COLEMAN'S MUSTARD.

The organ of hypocritical capitalists known as the *Star* recently had a tilt at John Burns and Cunningham Graham, from which it is evident that these two are not acting altogether in a way likely to further the cause of the G. O. M. and the growth of the Liberal party. Graham, who pointed out at a meeting of the railway men on strike at Glasgow that the parties represented by Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gladstone had interests diametrically opposed to those of the railway men, and that the final triumph of either of these parties, whether Liberal or Tory, meant the extinction of the rights of labour, is termed a "well-meaning but feather-headed gentleman," and these very mild remarks are designated "incendiary rubbish" and "stuff." Of Burns, the *Star* says: "Mr. Burns means well but he is not indispensable. He seems to think that a strike cannot be successful unless he is the leader of it. That is a mistake. There were successful strikes before Mr. Burns took up the dockers and there will be successful strikes after he has ceased to tell us what a very fine fellow he thinks himself. The men on strike in Scotland are quite able to manage their own affairs without the assistance of Mr. Burns." We don't know what Burns has done to bring down this wrath upon his head, but we congratulate him all the same, for to be abused by the capitalist press is, more often than not, a tribute to the honesty of the individual so abused.

IMPOSSIBLE TO SERVE TWO MASTERS.

Now we know that there were successful strikes before John Burns began to "boss" them, and moreover we believe that without his "bossing" the dockers of London would have made a bigger step than they did in the Labour Evolution, but the writer of the *Star* leaderettes (we hear they were written by Balfour Stuart) did not object to Burns's interference in the Glasgow Strike on the ground of its leading to "a lame and impotent conclusion." In fact the late editor of the *Star*, Mr. Massingham, mild as his socialism is, has been writing a little too strongly in the cause of the people to suit his masters, the directors of the paper, who were always trying to "hark back," on the old liberal trail, save the mark! But they tried it once too often and Mr. Massingham has resigned, having just published, by way of protest, some indignant letters from working men, who did not understand the secrets of the printing-house. The Fabians must water their socialistic doctrine even more than they have done hitherto, if they want it to be accepted by the *Star* in future.

THE HAMPSTEAD TRAGEDY.

The terrible drama in which the woman known as Mrs. Pearcey played the leading rôle has ended since we last went to press. Society has had its revenge and the death of the victim has been speedily followed by the death of the murderer. But is not the latter a victim also, a victim of this terrible society in which we live? It is generally believed that the crime was premeditated and that she knew perfectly well what she was about on that terrible evening. If so, she must have been very largely devoid of human feeling. But is not society to blame for this? Was it not the present order of things which compelled her to go out early in life to seek her living, first in an East End workshop little better than a prison, afterwards by leading a life of shame which hardened her heart and destroyed all feeling of human fellowship within her. And then the reading of the trashy novels, which she indulged in, such as the printing press turns out by hundreds of thousands every week, full of bourgeois morality and principles. All these things evidently played their part in transforming the innocent child into the murderess. With favourable conditions she would probably have become a happy, good-natured woman; with unfavourable conditions she became an unhappy wretch. But there is another side to the matter. It is said that she suffered from epilepsy. Specialists have asserted the possibility of her having committed the crime while in an abnormal

mental condition caused by an epileptic fit, and then so entirely forgetting the whole of the circumstances as to lead her to suppose she was really innocent of the crime. If this is so, the case is still stronger against capitalism, since it removes even the responsibility of will from the murderess and leaves her and her victim a joint sacrifice to the greed of Capitalism through its instrument Government.

WAS IT CAPITALISM?

Capitalism? a scornful reader may ask; do people suffer from epilepsy because of our present industrial system? In many cases certainly they do, when our present industrial system drives them to live in such a manner as to implant and foster the germs of disease. But even where this is not the case, is not our economic condition the main reason why the mental diseases of criminals, whatever the exciting cause, cannot be treated rationally? Even if they wished it, our rulers in the judicial department DARE not treat as humanity bids those affected with mental depravity; if they did the condition of the criminals would be a hundred times better than sane industrious workers can win for themselves under the present system of robbery.

ONE LESS.

A typical enemy of society has passed away in the person of Francis Hastings, known as the Duke of Bedford. This man is best known through his exactions in connection with Covent Garden Market and the district. It is said that the owners of carts who approach no nearer to the market than Trafalgar Square, have to pay a toll of 2s. a day. From such market tolls the Duke realised ten thousand pounds a year. In the parishes of St. Pancras, Bloomsbury and Covent Garden he owned 118½ acres. He also had large estates in the country, including the village of Woburn, where he has made a conspicuous display of his tyrannical power. He appears to have wished to destroy Woburn altogether, for whenever a house fell into his hands he refused to relet it and had it pulled down. In this way the village has begun to sink into decay. Another unpleasantness the inhabitants have had to put up with is the want of a barber, as the Duke would not allow anyone of that calling to live in the place. The death of Hastings reminds us of another instance of the stupid tyranny of landlordism. A visitor to Grantham, Lincs, will notice what a number of inns there are with signs in which the word blue enters, such as "Blue Lion," "Blue Cow," etc. The reason of this is, we are told, that the landlord insisted upon it. This same gentleman, we understand, once threatened to flood the market-place if the people did not fall in with his wishes on some trifling matter. What a people we are to be thus domineered over.

HOME RULE AND ROME RULE.

During the late Kilkenny election, the Roman Catholic priests took the utmost trouble to prove the truth of the parrot cry that Home Rule means or will mean Rome Rule. Not content with using the influence which they undoubtedly possess over the illiterate peasantry, they intimidated by every means any of their "flock" who took the liberty of forming an independent judgment. The altars (in the Diocese of Ossory very few pulpits are to be seen in the churches) which are supposed to be used solely in the service of a "kingdom not of this world" were made the platform for the venting of scurrilous attacks on every one who did not join the clerical throng. To call the language used Sunday after Sunday by those "meek and lowly" followers of the Saviour of the world, Billingsgate, would be gross flattery. The writer was in Kilkenny a few days after the election and heard from the supporters of the clergy and anti-Parnellites of incidents that an ordinary Englishman would think only possible when the Inquisition was in full swing. "If you vote for Parnell it will be a millstone round your neck at the General Judgment." "When you are on your death-bed it is not for Parnell you will send but for me," etc., etc. Poor Ireland! "OSSORIENSIS."

"ONE WAY TO HELP THE POOR"!!!

"At Spalding yesterday some skating matches were organised in which the competition was confined to unemployed joiners and labourers and prizes of bread and meat were freely distributed."—Vide "*Star*," 10th January.

Hungry Tom Tucker,
Put skates on thy feet!
What shall I skate for?
Something to eat.

Why should I eat, Sirs?
What good is my life?
To carry the scraps, Tom,
Home to thy wife.

N. F. D.

STARVING CHILDREN.

One of the most piteous and shameful inhumanities of our present social arrangements is the continual semi-starvation of children. There are many hundred children going to school every morning in London without tasting a morsel of bread before they come out from close, cold rooms into the bitter cold of the streets; hundreds, thousands, of children who, after straining their starved brains to learn and understand all through the hours of morning school, have no dinner to eat before the work of afternoon school begins. That all this wretchedness should fall daily upon the innocent lives of defenceless, helpless children, the coming men and women upon whom the future depends,

and be taken as a matter of course in the wealthiest city in the world, is in itself enough to show that the society which permits it is rotten to the core. Nothing but a revolution involving a complete change of social relations can be an effectual remedy for such evils. But we warmly sympathise with those comrades who, whilst working heart and soul for this radical change, also endeavour on their own initiative, and by means of voluntary co-operation, to give in a fraternal spirit what direct and immediate help they can to the unhappy victims of our miserable social condition. We therefore gladly call our reader's attention to the free dinners for the starving children at the Hughes' Field Board School, Deptford, which our comrade, E. Nesbit (Mrs. Bland), is organising. Anyone able and willing to help may send to Mrs. Bland, 2, Birch Grove, Lee, S.E. Below we publish the appeal she has written to mothers whose children are not starving.

A WORD FOR THE CHILDREN.

"To warm and clothe and feed any child that is cold or naked or hungry—this is the right of every woman."

OUTSIDE—the world with snow is white,
The fields are dressed in snow ;
But in your homes the fires are bright
With ruddy gleam and glow.
You draw your chairs about the blaze,
And shiveringly descry
Through frosted panes the frosted ways,
And shivering passers-by.
The ice-world gleams, the red fire glows ;
"Thank God, we're warmed and fed!"
Yes, warmed and fed ; and what of those
Who have no fire and bread ?
The patient, uncomplaining poor
Who suffer, starve, and freeze—
Comes no cold air through your closed door
When you remember these ?
Is there no chill in all the heat
Of coal and log a-glow,
When you remember baby feet
Bare on the bitter snow ?
Small feet that pass your shut door by
And seek the cold, cold home,
Where all the things your gold could buy
Have never, never come ?
Who make your raiment, fire, and food ?
Who suffer, starve, and freeze ?
Who buy your leisure with their blood ?
Who toil to give you ease ?
Those men whose children pine and die,
While yours are warmed and fed,
Those the world's wealth is fashioned by,
Their children starve for bread.
Mothers and wives who sit to-day
Warm-clad and curtained warm,
And watch your rosy children play
Safe from all cold and harm,
Think of the mothers' agony
Who, starving, have to hear
Their shivering little children cry :
"We're hungry, mother dear !"
By all the anguish these have borne,
The joys they do not share,
By all that makes their lives forlorn,
By all that makes yours fair,
By the supreme and sacred crown
That every mother wears,
The right to give help is your own,
The right to claim it theirs.
By all your hopes, by all their fears,
By common womanhood,
By all your smiles, by all their tears,
By very motherhood,
Remember you are whole of heart
Because their hearts have bled.
O happy mothers, play your part,
And get their children fed !

E. NESBIT.

ANARCHY AND COMMUNISM.

REPLIES TO COMRADE DAVIS'S ENQUIRY.

COMRADES,—The openness of mind displayed by the enquiry of Comrade H. Davis in January Number of *Freedom* is the redeeming feature of his otherwise confused and puzzling views on the relations of Communism to Anarchy.

I feel it to be a duty and a pleasure to offer my mite in the endeavour to obtain a clear vision on principles so important.

The three points put forward by our comrade for determination all

seem to arise out of a confusion of terms, or at least a use of words without first settling in his own mind what is meant by them. What do we mean by Competition when, as Anarchists, Communists, or Socialists we use the term ? This must be settled before the first point can be cleared. I would define it as the economic struggle of man against man for existence. In no other than an economic sense would I as a Socialist think of using it. How then can Monopoly and Privilege be separated from it ? These taken away and competition left ? Our comrade says he should not be free if he were prohibited from competing with others. In my view he cannot be free till competition with others becomes impossible ; using the word in its economic sense as defined. But we need not quit the first point before considering the second—Property. What do we mean by it ? Not, I apprehend, the bread we eat, the coat we wear, or the house we live in. When we as Anarchists and Communists denounce property and call it robbery, we speak of it from an economic standpoint. We don't wish to declare a man's dinner or his domicile common property. They are part of his needs, his necessities of existence, and we declare his right to them, we wish him to have them : it is the creed of Communism.

But when a man wishes to have more than his needs require, when he wants to have that which he cannot use and thus prevent others from using it ; in short when a man wants to have Property, be it in land, houses or capital, we deny his right. We say Property means robbery. It means denying the rights of others, of having them to be dependent on his will, to work for him. It gives him the power of exploiting their labour. Property means this, Communism is its negation. It declares the common and equal right of all to the means of labour, to the fruits of it. Thus it denies the right of any man to own property, to own land, or capital, or houses, or goods which he cannot use, and which others require to use. Without this there can be no freedom. With this no competition for existence.

Privilege and Monopoly are but other names for Property and Capitalism.

The third point has I think been answered in the other two. Will Communism limit freedom ? To me freedom is only possible through Communism, because Communism is economic freedom.

As to its being compulsory, we are revolutionists. We teach the people that they must take land, capital and goods, and use them as common property, as belonging to the producers, as speedily as they are strong enough to act on the principle. In so far we advocate compulsion. After the Revolution we will not dictate to a man what he should do, how he should associate with his fellows or how supply his wants. He will find it all out best for himself ; and as there will be millions in like condition, with like needs and desires they will find out together and proceed in common to satisfy their wants. One point more which arises out of the enquiry and I stop. Comrade Davis appears to confuse the desire to excel, emulation, with economic competition. The difference between two capitalists fighting for profits, of two workmen struggling for work and the means to buy bread and two artists, musicians, or handicraftsmen trying to produce the best picture, opera score, or carved oaken bookcase will be apparent. The latter is not competition as we understand it ; and under Communism there will be infinitely more of it, and the more so because there will be none of the former.

W. BAILIE.

Manchester.

COMRADES,—Is competition opposed to freedom ? No. Competition is merely the effort of one person to sell cheaper than another. As by so doing the one does not prevent the other selling cheaper than he does—if the other can—competition is not opposed to freedom. Is property-owning opposed to freedom ? Yes. In my opinion the only things worth calling property, and which it is essential should be made common, are land and capital. Since the ownership of these enables the owner to live without working himself on the labour of others, property-owning is opposed to freedom, or rather, to equal freedom. For the person who lives without working, on the labour of others, manifestly is possessed of more freedom than those others. Does communism limit freedom ? No. Communism I would define as the holding of land and capital in common. This is, of course, the only alternative to private ownership. If therefore the answer to the previous question be the correct one communism does not limit freedom, but is on the contrary the system under which alone freedom is to be enjoyed.

Why couple the word Communism with Anarchy ? Under State Socialism, the land and capital being held in common, through the government, State Socialism might be defined as governmental communism. Therefore since we accept the communism but reject the government, it is necessary to describe our position as Anarchist-Communism. This also ought to dispose of the fear so far as Anarchists are concerned of the acceptance of communism being compulsory. The governmental communism of the State Socialists is essentially communism by compulsion, and that not only of the possessing class which does not count, but also of the working class. This ought, I assume, to be sufficient reason for Anarchists to reject State Socialism. A man may not be compelled to accept or to help others to obtain even that which those others may believe to be for the common good.

Newcastle.

C. P.

See also our article on "Freedom and Property."

THE HERALD OF ANARCHY. A monthly exponent of Consistent Individualism. May be obtained from W. REEVES, 185 Fleet St., E.C., or at 26 Newington Green Road, N. price 1d.

A T A L K

ABOUT

ANARCHIST COMMUNISM

BETWEEN TWO WORKERS.

William. Ah, Jack, is that you? I'm glad to meet you. I've been wanting a talk with you for a long time. Oh, Jack! Jack! What have I heard about you! When you lived in the country you were a good lad, quite an example to the young fellows of your age — If your poor father were alive—"

Jack. William, why are you speaking to me like this? What have I done, that you reproach me? And why would my poor father have been dissatisfied with me?

William. Don't be offended at my words, Jack. I am an old man and I speak for your good. And besides I was such friends with old Andrew, your father, that I am as vexed to see you go astray as though you were my own son, especially when I think of the hopes your father had of you, and the sacrifices he made to leave you a good name.

Jack. But, William, what are you talking about? Am I not an honest working man? I've never done any harm to any one, and, excuse me if I say that I've always done as much good as I could; so why should my father have been ashamed of me? I do my best to learn and improve, and my mates and I are trying to hit upon a remedy for the evils which afflict us all; how, then, have I deserved that you should pitch into me like this?

William. Ah, that is just it! I know well enough that you work and help your neighbours. You're a good sort of chap; everybody in the countryside says that of you. But it is none the less true that you have been in prison several times, and people say that you are watched by the police, and that even to be seen with you is enough to get one into trouble. I'm maybe making things awkward for myself this very moment. But I wish you well, and I will speak to you all the same. Jack, listen to the advice of an old man; believe me you had best leave politics to the gentlemen who have nothing to do, and only trouble yourself about working and doing what is right. That is the way to live peaceably and happily; if you don't you will be lost, body and soul. Listen to me and give up your bad company; for it is that, as everyone knows, that leads poor lads astray.

Jack. Believe me, William, my companions are first-rate fellows; the bread they eat is watered with their sweat and sometimes with their tears. Leave the masters to speak ill of them; men who would like to suck the last drop of our blood, and then treat us as blackguards and jail-birds if we try to better ourselves and escape from their tyranny. My companions and I have been in prison, it is true, but it was for a good cause; we shall go again, and perhaps something worse may befall us, but it will be for the good of all, and because we wish to destroy injustice and misery. You who have toiled all your life and suffered like us from hunger—you who perhaps will have to go into a workhouse to die when you can toil no longer—you, at least, ought not to put yourself on the side of the gentlefolks and the government, and fall upon those who try to improve the lot of the poor.

William. My dear boy, I know that the world goes on very badly, but to try to change it is like trying to straighten the legs of a bandy-legged dog. So let us take things as they are, and pray God that at least we may never be in want of a crust of bread. There have always been rich and poor, and we, who are born to labour, ought to work and be contented with what God sends us, otherwise we disturb the public peace and injure our own character.

Jack. Our character! Look at these gentlefolks, as you call them. First of all, they take everything from us, and make us toil like beasts of burden to earn a crust of bread, whilst they are living luxuriously and idly on the sweat of our brow, and then, if we don't submit cheerfully to see them growing fat at our expense, they say we are a bad, dishonest lot, the policeman comes and drags us to prison and the clergyman sends us to hell. I tell you what, William, the real rascals and bad characters are those who live by oppression, those who have taken possession of everything under the sun and have ground down the workers until they are like a flock of sheep, quietly allowing themselves to be shorn and slaughtered. And you, who have never sucked the life-blood out of your fellow-men, do you take the part of people who do such things, do you turn upon us? Isn't it enough for them to have the Government to back them up? Government is made by the rich for the benefit of the rich and is bound to be on their side, but must the workers, our own brothers turn against us just because we want them to have bread and freedom? Ah! if it weren't that I remember all the long ages of misery and servitude and degraded habits the poor have suffered, I should say that the worst people of all, those who have the least of the dignity of man, are the poor who let themselves be made the tools of the oppressors of humanity. As for us, at least we are risking the bit of bread and shred of liberty we have that we may bring about a state of things in which all may be happy.

William. Well, all that sounds very fine; but you know, my lad, that without the fear of God no good thing is possible and we must all submit to His will.

Jack. Now, William, if we are going to talk reasonably, do let us

leave God out of the question, because the name of God is used as a pretext and justification by all those who are trying to deceive and oppress their fellow men. Kings pretend that God has given them the right to reign, and when two kings dispute about the crown of a country, they both pretend to hold their commission from God. Nevertheless God gives the victory to him who has most soldiers or the best arms. The proprietor, the exploiter, the monopolist, all speak of God. The Catholic priest, the Protestant, the Jewish, the Turkish, all alike call themselves the representatives of God, and it is in the name of God that they make war upon one another and try to bring grist each one to his own mill. They all seem to think that God has given everything to them and condemned us all to misery and grinding toil. They are to have Paradise in this world and the next too; but we are to have Hell in this life, and only to have Paradise in the next if here we are obedient slaves. Now if you come and tell me that any God has really willed and desired such an arrangement as this, I can only say that he is a very wicked one. Let every one believe as he thinks right, but when we are discussing the state of things in this world, let us stick to what we know something about and see if it isn't possible to get a little happiness in this life for ourselves and our fellowmen; for you know that the parson himself says that all men are God's children and therefore brothers.

William. 'Pon my word, young man, since you've been to the town and taken to reading and writing, you've got a way of speaking that would puzzle a lawyer. But now tell me, is it really true, as they say, that you want to steal all the property of any one who has got any?

Jack. Good! Now at last we've come to the point. No, that is not true, we don't want to steal anything whatever. What we do wish is that the People should take the property of the rich and make it common, for the benefit of all. That would not be stealing. The People would simply be taking again what is their own.

William. What! Do you mean to say that the gentlefolks' property is ours?

Jack. Certainly; it is our property; it is everybody's property. Who gave it to the rich people? How have they earned it? What right had they to seize upon it and what right have they to keep it?

William. But their ancestors have left it to them.

Jack. And who gave it to their ancestors? Look here now; the strongest and the luckiest took advantage of their strength or their luck to take possession of everything and so forced the others to work for them; and not satisfied with living in idleness themselves, oppressing and starving the greater part of their contemporaries, they must needs leave their sons and grandsons the fortune they have usurped, thus condemning future generations to be the slaves of their descendants; though now these descendants have become so enfeebled by indolence and the long exercise of power, that they could never do to-day what their forefathers did long ago. Does all this seem to you just?

William. Well, no; not if they got their wealth by force. But the gentlefolks say that they got their wealth from labour, and it does not seem fair to me to take away from any man what he has worked for.

Jack. Always the same old story! People who do not work and never have worked, are for ever speaking in the name of labour! But tell me; Who produced the earth, metals, coal, stone and so forth, by his labour? or how did these things come to exist? Isn't it a fact that we all find them when we come into the world, that therefore we all ought to be able to make use of them? What would you say if the rich people thought fit to take possession of the air for their own use, and only to give us a little, and that the most impure, making us pay them for the use of it with our toil? Now the only difference between the earth and the air is that they have been able to lay hold of and divide the earth, while they could not do this with the air, but believe me that, if the thing were possible, they would deal with the air just as they do with the land.

William. True; that's right enough. The land and all the things that nobody has made ought to belong to all. But there are things that have not come of themselves.

Jack. Certainly, there are things that are made by man's work, and the land itself would be worth very little if it were not cleared by the hand of man. But in common fairness these things should belong to those who produce them. By what miracle does it happen that they are in the possession of exactly those people who are doing nothing and have never done anything?

William. But the gentlefolks state that their fathers have worked and made savings.

Jack. And they ought to say, on the contrary, that their fathers have made other people work without paying them, just as is done to-day. History teaches us that the lot of the worker has continually been wretched and that he who has honestly laboured without taking advantage of his neighbour has never been able to lay by any considerable savings. Generally he has not been able to get enough to keep him from need. Look at what is going on before your eyes. Does not all that the workers produce go into the hands of the masters? A man spends a few pounds on an uncultivated bit of marshy ground, puts some men there to work and gives them scarcely enough to live on, whilst he stays quietly in town and does nothing. A few years after, this bit of waste land is a garden, with a hundred times its original value. The sons of the proprietor will inherit this fortune and say they are enjoying the fruits of their father's labour; whilst the sons of the men who really toiled and suffered there will continue to toil and suffer. What do you think of that?

(To be continued.)

THE TRIAL OF THE VIENNE ANARCHISTS.*

VIENNE is a considerable manufacturing town, in the Department of Isère, on the eastern side of France. On May 1st all the factory hands in the place turned out on strike, with the exception of those in three factories. Early in the morning, the various trade societies held a mass meeting in the Theatre to formulate their demands; the weavers, by the way, demanded a general expropriation. The Mayor, who is also deputy for Vienne, came on the platform to persuade the people to go home, but they hustled him out, and struck a smart blow or two at the Police Commissioner, who came to his assistance and tried to arrest some of them. They then marched off, waving red and black flags, to fetch the hands out of the three rat factories and, on the road, one detachment broke into the warehouse of a certain Brocard, dragged out a piece of cloth and angrily tore it up.

This Brocard is the best hated man in the town. Under the Empire he posed as a zealous Republican and friend of liberty, and later, to get himself elected Town Councillor, largely subscribed to charities and trade societies and professed the warmest sympathy with the workers and desire to better their condition. And yet, in 1879, when the employers insisted on a 15 per cent. reduction and the hands struck, Brocard espoused the cause of the masters and was the hardest and harshest of any of them, even dragging his hands before the courts to exact damages from them. After this he had to retire for ten years from public life, and, in 1889, when he attempted to return as deputy, even Anarchists went to the poll to aid in his crushing defeat.

After tearing up Brocard's cloth, the strikers fetched out the rat hands and, a sharp shower coming on, dispersed and went home. On the 6th the strike ended by the workers obtaining—not a general expropriation certainly—but most of their smaller demands. Meanwhile about 60, who had shown themselves most active in organising the strike, were arrested; amongst them were many Vienne Anarchists and Comrades Louise Michel and Tinnevin, who were there on a lecturing tour from Paris.

Our readers know the shameful trick whereby the French government have rid themselves of Louise Michel; how doctors were found to declare her mad, how, on that pretext the judge refused to try her with her comrades, and how she is obliged to take refuge in England to avoid the death in life of a French lunatic asylum. The other prisoners were shamefully treated, confined singly, on short rations, in the wet, dark dungeons constructed by the Romans at Vienne sixteen hundred years ago, and forbidden to see their relatives. The wife of Comrade Cellard, hearing that her husband was ill, as indeed were many of the prisoners in consequence of ill-treatment, made attempt after attempt to persuade the "juge d'instruction" to let her see him. After the last and most brutal refusal, she was carried home fainting, and died a few hours later, worn out by grief and anxiety. Finally, 30 "rioters" were brought before the magistrates and sentenced to short terms of imprisonment, and 21 others brought up for trial, on August 12, at the Grenoble assizes, amongst them 8 women. Of those who were tried Comrades Buisson, a weaver of Vienne, and Tinnevin, a clerk from Paris, were condemned to one year's and two years' imprisonment respectively, and Peter Martin to five years; the rest were acquitted.

The man thus picked out for the special vengeance of the law is a weaver of Vienne, poor, hump-backed, but one of the most energetic and devoted Anarchists in France. Eight years ago, when he was 26, Martin was tried at Lyons, with Peter Kropotkin and 56 others, for the crime of belonging to an (imaginary) International Working Men's Association, and got four years. In Clairvaux his kindly, loving disposition and glowing enthusiasm won him the respect and affection of all his mates, and since the amnesty, in January 1885, when he returned to his weaving at Vienne, he has been an undaunted propagandist. His pale, earnest face, lighted up with the love of humanity, his life without fear and without reproach, are in themselves an appeal to all that is best in others. Therefore, of course, the first aim of the prosecution was to blacken his character. They tried to prove that he received money for expounding his views, that he partly lived by agitating.

Before entering upon his defence, Martin alluded to these miserable accusations and triumphantly refuted them by an array of facts showing that he lived entirely by his own labour. "Let them arrest us, let them condemn us," he concluded, "let them imprison us; we can bear it, since we are the vanquished; but we will not submit to being maligned—No, never!"

SPEECH OF MARTIN BEFORE THE COURT.

"Gentlemen of the jury, I have to speak to you of the First of May at Vienne, the causes which provoked it, what it was, the consequences it may have had.

First of all, it must be recognised that it was not in this town alone that the First of May was a day signalised by the demands of the workers. The movement of revolt, which took place at this date, was more general in its character than has been seen for a long time. Since

the great organisation of the International, between 1868 and the Commune of Paris in 1871, there has been no such unanimous demonstration on the part of the wage workers; since the Revolution of 1848, no such breath of equality has swept over the world. And even in '48 the liberal tendencies, the ideas of social renovation, were understood and defended only by what we may call the "fairly comfortable class," that lower middle class composed of small traders, clerks, employés, who represent a higher level in society, though not an aristocratic one. But last May Day it was not merely a higher level of our society that was stirred, it was the deepest depths that trembled; this time it was the masses, the actual masses. It was the wage-workers as a whole, uniting on the ground of their work, without distinction of nationality, without caring about the political systems under which they were ruled in their various localities. Everywhere there seemed solidarity amongst the workers, solidarity of action in asserting a determination to be free of the yoke of capital. Looked at from the social point of view it may incontestably be called one of the greatest historical phenomena of our century. . . . It was the misery of every nation rising up before our civilisation; it was the whole suffering portion of humanity showing its desire to be emancipated. . . . In a word, it was Labour standing up before Capital to ask if capital was in the possession of those who have created it. The cry was not, as fifty years ago, 'The Charter,' 'Parliamentary Reform,' 'Universal Suffrage,' 'The Republic.' No! It was 'Better paid work,' 'Shorter hours,' 'Work by which one can live.' It was the formidable cry of the Social Question."

Here the presiding judge interrupted Peter Martin and told him he was not defending himself.

"Why should I defend myself?" exclaimed Martin. "On the contrary, I accept the full responsibility for my actions; I have not to clear myself of what I have said, of what I have done. What am I accused of? Of having excited revolt? of having openly proclaimed that the workers did right to pillage? Well, I say it again; they did well, they acted rightly in all they did on May Day. No, I have not to defend myself; I have only to show that my conduct was justifiable, and to lay claim to all the charges which belong to me.

I continue: At Vienne, gentlemen, the conditions that have been created for working men and working women are so miserable, that the population saw in the First of May a fresh occasion to formulate their complaints and make good their legitimate demands. These exploited wretches wished to be no longer treated worse than beasts; they resolved to show that they, as well as their employers, belonged to the human race. For long they had been muttering that it was impossible to live so, and, beside, the hand weavers felt a decrease of wages was hanging over them. Two manufacturers had given out piece-work at a truly ridiculous rate and this was giving the others an excuse for saying that the competition would oblige them also to lower the tariff. Over and over again attempts had been made to resist by means of a strike, but always the workers were defeated. The cessation of work had been only partial; what some refused to do was done by others. If the weavers' own looms were not at work, the looms in the factory were, and when these latter stopped the weavers went to work again. Other trade societies fared yet worse."

Here Martin went on to give instances of the miserable condition of the Vienne workers. He described how there were children of from 12 to 14, working from 12 to 14 hours a day, and occasionally 18 hours, in close work-rooms, walking miles and miles in their weary following of the monotonous movement of the machines. In winter the rooms are miserably warmed and the wretched children shiver with cold; in summer there are places where not one window even is opened and the children are almost suffocated. In these conditions they get stupid with misery and are continually injuring themselves seriously. In the first week in May one scalded his foot and another smashed his head. And amidst this physical wretchedness, the poor children are kept up to their work by rough rebukes, foul words and insults, sometimes even with blows.

Then the women, the unhappy carders; mothers of families, young girls, with dirty faces, covered with grease, hands stained with dye, ragged dresses saturated with oil and covered with fluff, running like creatures possessed round two, three or even four carding machines from six o'clock in the morning till seven in the evening, when the night shift comes to take their place. And this in rooms where the air is so foul that any one coming from outside can scarcely breathe it, and, while the machines are working, is filled with a fine corrosive dust from the chemicals used to burn the vegetable portions of the waste. The machines must be cleaned several times daily and it is illegal to do this whilst they are in motion; nevertheless if a woman insists on stopping her machine to clean it, she is treated as a lazy brute by the overseer and made to understand that it is as much as her place is worth. In consequence of this and the narrow space between the machines, the number of accidents is frightful, and so is the number of maimed women, whom one sees in the streets, struggling to make some sort of a living as hawkers. As for the insurance fund, to which the carders pay an annual premium, that too is made a means of profit by middlemen and middle-women. For instance, a certain Madam Pascal has made a fortune by collecting the workers' premiums and, after paying a small sum to an insurance company on their account, keeping the balance. Until the first of May the unhappy carders had no dinner hour, but ate their morsels of bread on a greasy bench in the work-room, without being able even to wash their hands; as for the night shift they had no time allowed for food at all. "What I tell you, gentlemen, I have seen myself, since I was a boy and went after school

* The Vienne Anarchists have lately published an account of this trial, from which we take the above particulars. "Procès des Anarchistes de Vienne devant la Cour d'assises de l'Isère." Price 5d.

to eat in the work-room, where my mother is still toiling. . . . And now, if we raise our consideration to the general point of view, surely we must declare that these human beings, who are thus exploited, thrust down, who have so much to suffer to gain a morsel of bread, deserve our sympathy; and that those who exploit them, who refuse them the right to exist who enrich themselves by their sweat, can deserve nothing but our contempt. When people talk to us of the disorganisation of the family; the decline of public health; the lowering of morality, we must say: Come and seek the causes of all these evils in these industrial prisons, where the mother is torn from her family, sometimes by night, sometimes by day, where excessive, exhausting toil is exacted in workshops in which the most elementary hygiene is absolutely neglected; where human beings of both sexes are treated like a herd of beasts. Come and realise what is done in these stinking factories, where the life of the unfortunate is a consideration left out of count. Come and see what is the respect there accorded to the mother, to the young girl, to the little child; and then you will say, as we do: This is where the social evil comes from.

"And you would wish that we Anarchists, knowing all this, that we should not march beside these victims of oppression when they claim their rights? Ah! it would have been a shame to our party not to have done what we did! We should have failed in our duty as rebels!

"I know that we shall be told that our complaints are just, that the social discomfort is real, but that this is not a sufficient reason to excuse the violent actions we committed; that after all—as the Public Prosecutor has remarked this morning—the Republican government has already done much for the workers; that certainly there are plenty of reforms to be made, but we must be patient and wait until these reforms are practicable. We boldly assert that nothing has really been done to ameliorate the material situation of the workers."

Here Martin enumerated the feeble attempts of the Republic to deal with the social question; the Commission of Forty-four, about as productive of result as our English Sweating Commission; the heartless and idle debate in the Chamber last April about a Law to regulate labour, when the Manchester idea of "free" contract was ridden to death; the refusal of the Minister of the Interior and many provincial mayors to interfere in matters of wages, when petitioned by working-class delegates; the declaration of the late Buyat, a candidate at the election for Isère in 1885, "It is absolutely certain that the Republic is not more capable than any other government of securing the lot of the workers. It is for them to come to a general understanding and seek the needful means to secure their own future; to promise anything else would be to deceive you."

"Well, gentlemen," continued Martin, "do you understand why we did our utmost to prevent people going to petition the public authorities on May the First? After the explanations and quotations I have given you, is it not clear, even from the avowals of those who rule and administer the country, that the State can do nothing for the people? Consequently, it is with the employers that we must struggle for our interests."

Here the judge again stopped Martin and told him he was wandering from the point.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. President," replied Martin, "what I just said was extremely important to show the real intentions of the demonstrators. I repeat, gentlemen, that our determination was to see our employers, to show them our demands, and know what reply they would give us."

He then described how the procession formed and set forth, and was charged by the mounted police with drawn swords; how the workers resisted and saved their flags, and, jumping over a truck someone had put across the little street, went on, singing the "Carmagnole"; how Brocard's warehouse came to be attacked—Brocard, the betrayer of the workers of Vienne. "Ah! gentlemen of the jury, you think perhaps that these acts were fierce? We think them very just. When a man gains the confidence of the people and deceives them, causes them suffering by paring down their wages, taking away their bread, the people are right to revolt, to make themselves emissaries of justice and strike down the evil beast which devours them."

"In conclusion, I repeat that I have never thought of refusing the responsibility for my conduct. It was inspired by deep love for the people, by the sight of the misery they endure, which I have witnessed since my earliest childhood. . . . The demonstration of May Day has had one happy result: it has shown that the workers will obtain nothing until they know how to take it by main force; for if the carders have at last secured an hour for dinner, they owe it to their brave and energetic conduct. Little enough, you may say; but at least it is an encouragement to achieve more."

"Judge me according to your conscience; whatever your verdict may be, I accept it. If you condemn me, perhaps, after a while,—when the echo of these disputes is at rest, when silence comes after all this noise, when you are amongst your work and your families, perhaps you will say to yourselves: 'These men had strange theories, very extraordinary ideas of the future, but they were sincere, they thoroughly believed in what they said.' And what harm will the prison do us? Shall we not be sufficiently repaid for the suffering which perhaps awaits us when the work-women of Vienne, our sisters in toil, sit down amongst their families to enjoy their simple meal, and say to themselves, 'Down yonder the brave and devoted men who helped us to get this hour of family life are suffering for us.' And the remembrance of our sisters will reach us behind our prison bars, and give us courage to bravely bear our penalty without a complaint, without a regret."

THE RAILWAY STRIKE.

THE great strike of Scotch railway men against long hours of work, even if it does not win for the men the small concessions they are asking, will have made the position of the slave-drivers less tenable. The case of the men is so strong as even to induce such a man as Sir William Harcourt to denounce the railway directors and defend trade unionism in the sacred precincts of the House of Commons itself, and to secure no less than one hundred and twenty-four votes of the members of that august body in favour of a resolution protesting against the long hours worked by railway servants generally and demanding an increase in the number of workers employed. The railway interest, however, proved too strong, and the resolution was lost by seventeen votes.

John Burns has also become quite his old self whilst among the workers of the north. Here is an extract from one of his speeches at Glasgow: "The men on strike were told they must be respectable in their conduct. The curse of Scotland was that respectability was degrading the manhood, the mental and the moral fibre of the men. They were too respectable. They cared too much for law. They must have less respect for manufactured law and manipulated opinions. They were rebels, because society as represented by Walkers and Thompsons, was outlawing them. They must therefore take up the position of the outlaws and be nineteenth century Rob Roys, each of them a garrison in himself. Every one of them must be a Jenny Geddes, ready with a stool to knock on the head the cant and humbug that was being preached to them for not having given notice and for having inconvenienced the public." A Dundee Anarchist, William Cameron, explains Burns' warm words in a letter to the *Courier* by saying, "I think Burns' speeches are due to the chemical or atmospheric action of heat and cold. The cold atmosphere of Scotland seems to have contracted his respect for law and order. When he goes back to the warm atmosphere of the London County Council, and hears Lord Roseberry calling him 'my honored colleague and esteemed friend John Burns,' his respect for law and order will again expand to its former dimensions and in doing so he will show that he is following out the teachings of Robert Owen who said that man is the creature of circumstances."

It is, however, perfectly true, as Burns says, that the strikers care too much for law and, if they are defeated, it is to that that they will owe their defeat. And it is owing to the boldness displayed by a few in resisting the evictors and otherwise making things unpleasant for the enemy that the strike has lasted so long as it has. The workers of Scotland have still to learn the lesson of solidarity and audacity, but we are glad to see that the good cause is progressing rapidly in the midst of all this tumult. The new ideas are being disseminated, the general strike is being whispered abroad and even finds its way occasionally into the capitalist press. A correspondent in a Dundee paper which has reached us puts the case for a general strike very well and we hope his example will be followed by all comrades who can get letters or short articles into their local papers. This is an excellent method of propaganda.

The value of shares in the Scotch railways must be decreasing in consequence of this lengthy strike and it seems somewhat remarkable that the managers should be so particularly obstinate in their refusals to treat with the representatives of the men or to grant any concession until the men resume work. Is there some secret scheming beneath it all? We know something about the methods by which railway kings and financial speculators make their money, we know how a strike depreciates the value of shares in the company concerned and therefore makes it easy for large gains to be made by those who buy for the rise. Is it possible that some financial shark is at the bottom of this, trying to make a "little bit" out of it for himself? This is an age of gambling and it is quite possible some such secret spring may be at the bottom of the situation. The mass of the workers never even dream what puppets they are in the hands of the skilful money kings.

THE PROPAGANDA.

REPORTS.

East London Group.—H. Davis, of this group, lectured for the "Federation of all Trades and Industries," on Friday, January 16, at the Morley Coffee Tavern, Mare Street, Hackney, on "Is Government the Cause of Slavery?" the lecturer taking the affirmative. Owing to the severity of the weather, the audience was small; but great interest was evinced in the question. Our comrade dealt with the following points: (1) The Origin of Government; (2) The Rise and Growth of Legislation; (3) Chattel and Wage Slavery; and in concluding, made a demand for freedom—the Anarchist ideal. The chairman, a Republican, offered a spirited opposition, contending for coercion as a necessary evil, which was exhaustively replied to by the lecturer.

A meeting was held, January 10, at the I.W.M.C., 40, Berner Street, for the women workers of East London. Comrades Wess, Davis, and Dryhurst, spoke on behalf of the Women's Educational Union, a society recently formed for the promotion of unity and organisation among the female workers. This society, to quote the circular of the Union, is "to help to enlighten the women, and to develop in them a feeling of friendly relationship which can be best advanced by means of their (a) organising themselves in their several industries and callings, which would help them in the struggle against miserable surroundings, but more especially against grinding sweaters; (b) by discussion meetings, lectures, the forming of classes for study, and a library; (c) by personal attentions in cases of sickness or accidents, and mutual assistance in times of need." We hope the English working women of the neighbourhood will help to swell the numbers of this Union.

Newcastle-on-Tyne.—We are very glad to hear that a Newcastle Communist Anarchist group has been formed. Since the middle of December, they have begun to hold weekly meetings, and over 3,000 leaflets have been distributed. On Sunday, December 28th, Comrade Hall, of Sheffield, addressed a large workmen's meeting on the Quay, and in the evening spoke against Parliamentary action.

NOTICES.

East London Communist-Anarchistic Groups.—The Saturday evening meetings I.W.M.C., 40, Berners Street, are generally addressed by Anarchists. The *Knights of Liberty* hold propaganda meetings every Friday evening at the "Sugar Loaf," Hanbury Street, E. As further numbers of the *Anarchist Labour Leaf* cannot be printed, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, the only copies extant, have been put in pamphlet form and can be had from H. Davis, 97, Boston Street, Hackney Road, N.E., at the rate of 8d. per quire of 24, or single copies, one halfpenny each, by post, 1d.

Dublin.—Dublin Socialist Union, 87, Marlboro' Street, every Thursday at 8 p.m. Free discussion on all social and political subjects.

Received.—"Freedom" publication fund: C. P., 7s. 6d.; St. Pancras C. A. Group, £4, 4s. 6d. Publication of the "Talk on Communist Anarchism," H. G., £1.

Printed and published for the proprietors by C. M. Wilson, at the New Fellowship Press, 26 Newington Green Road, N.