TO-DAY.

No. 4.—APRIL, 1884.

The Irish Social Problem.

Mr. Trevelyan's statement, in the recent debate upon Mr. Barry's Land Act Amendment Bill, that 111,419 applications to fix fair rents had been lodged since the passage of the Land Act, proves nothing. Twice that number of tenants went into the Land League for a similar motive—to obtain a reduction in rack-rents. The Land Act is neither a final nor a temporary settlement of the Irish agrarian war. It is a mere parley between contending forces, in which the bayonets of the Government are alone the preservers of the peace. Matthew Arnold was right when he declared, that "the Irish Land Bill does not meet the moral grievance of the Irish occupier, at all." Neither does it grapple with the material one, either. The Irish tenant farmer knows as well as any ethical professor could demonstrate what is the true moral doctrine of rent. He knows intuitively, that rent for land which the land does not produce, whether fixed by land court or landlord,—a rent upon that which God has created for human sustenance which is tax upon the labour of the tenant's hands in its cultivation, and not the interest upon any outlay of the landlord's in working the soil,—amounts to robbery, no matter what landlord-and-capitalist-made law may say to the contrary. He is likewise aware that the rents which are

fixed in the Land Courts are placed upon his own improvements. Every one who knows Ireland is also cognisant of the fact, that while our climate is uncertain, while prices fluctuate, and competition with the stock and agricultural produce of other more favoured countries lasts, that which the law of the Land Courts fixes as a "fair rent" today, may from force of circumstances for which the tenant cannot be held responsible, be a rack-rent the next bad season. When to these moral, economic, and material obstacles in the way of the Land Act we have to add the national antipathy which the moral grievance of landlordism, *per se*, will always keep alive in the minds of our people, how can even the most sanguine English statesman look forward to a period when Ireland will become reconciled to a class owner-ship of the land which is responsible for its all but complete social ruin?

Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Trevelyan are, naturally enough, reluctant to admit the inefficiency of the Land Bill of their party for the solution of the Irish social problem. The genius of Whig statesmanship is tentative, and by no means heroic. It is afraid to grapple courageously with even recognised political or social evils. It dealt with the Irish land question when Fenianism in 1870 and Land Leaguism in 1880 compelled legislation, but only with a view of allaying intensified discontent, and not to eradicate the cause of Irish poverty and reproductive disquiet and outrage. This legislative empiricism has brought about the present dead-lock. Farmers, it is alleged, want to purchase their holdings, but cannot or will not. The landlords are frantic to sell, but nobody appears at all anxious to buy. The leaseholders, numerous and politically powerful, are left out in the cold. The Land Act was not passed for them. Contrary to the spirit of the Bill, and the express declaration of Mr. Gladstone, that rent was not to be paid for the tenant's own improvements, the Land Courts have proceeded on the landlord's "length of enjoyment" theory, and have fixed the rent on the basis of commercial value. The discontent which is the

natural result of a purposely mis-interpreted measure, and the stronger national feeling arising from numbers of heartless evictions, all go to show how far Mr. Gladstone's second attempt to settle the Irish land question has fallen short of success. Yet Mr. Trevelyan could say, in his speech on the Land Act Amendment debate, that "It was meant for a land settlement for Ireland, and the character of permanence and immutability which ought to belong to such a settlement the Government are determined, as far as in them lies, to give it." 'Twas ever thus.' A measure which even ministers of the Crown have declared to be defective, and for promising to remedy which Mr. Gladstone's Irish Solicitor General was returned for Londonderry County, is not to have its "character of permanence and immutability" disturbed, although the majority of Irish members, including the supporters of the Government, demand changes and alterations which require a very thorough "disturbance" of some of its chief clauses! In one single sentence Mr. Trevelyan has shown what Westminster rule of Ireland means. An English minister holding an Irish post in the administration of Irish Government declares, that the opinions of the majority of Ireland's representatives are of no account in influencing the legislation of their country. Their demands in the interest of the peace and prosperity of Ireland are ignored on a purely Irish question. Messrs. Parnell, Dickson, Sexton, and Russell do not represent the feelings of the Irish people on the land question at all equal to the extent to which the member for Hawick district represents them. Mr. Trevelyan, in a word, resorts to the traditional policy of English statesmen towards Ireland, of ignoring a timely and moderate demand that is made by those who know the people, when the country is outwardly calm and comparatively free from crime. He mistakes a temporary quiet for a promise of permanent content, and proclaims what ought to be the motto of such a policy, "no disturbance, no remedial legislation—no outrage, no concession." The Whig Govern-

ment has said its last word on the Irish land question. We shall see. I promise Mr. Trevelyan that the Irish people have not said theirs on Irish landlordism.

The proposal to advance the whole of the purchase money to the tenants, and to extend the time of repayment to such a number of years as will make the annual charges approximate to the judicial rents, will be more welcome to the landlords than to any other class in Ireland. Their interests alone are jeopardised by delay. Those of the tenant farmers incur no risks, as the market value of the landlord's property has been falling, steadily, during the land agitation, to the consequent benefit of that of the tenants. The country at large could not be expected to view this depreciation with any other feelings than those of satisfaction. The class which is bound to suffer most ere the Irish social problem is solved is that which has chiefly contributed to the partial ruin of the country. Justice required that some, at least, of the landlords rack-rented plunder should be restored to those from whom it had been legally stolen, and no moral code is being violated in permitting the so-called "economic law of supply and demand" to operate in full force against the unsaleable estates of those who unscrupulously profited by the working of the same law when a mad competition for land had ruined thousands of small farmers in the days of tenancy-at-will.

The pressure which the Government of Mr. Gladstone has been recently wooing from Ireland, to extend the facilities of the purchase clauses of the Land Act, has come from the landlords' and not from the people. On the 19th of July last year a deputation of Irish landlords waited upon Mr. Gladstone in Downing Street, almost begging for Government loans, at low interest, with which to meet their liabilities. The novelty of a class in the community calling upon the State to loan money to pay its debts was not sufficient to induce the Prime Minister to promise any relief. The ex-rackrenters were in despair. They could no longer betake themselves, as in the good old times, to the fleecing of their tenants. A class

which cannot exist unless privileged to plunder the earnings of some other class is in a bad way when equity is made to put a stop to the legal theft. Crippled by the Land League, and bereft of the power of raising rents, the Irish landlords had no credit, and so got no money from the Government, save what came through the operations of the mischievous Arrears Act. Abandoning the loan scheme, but with their eyes still on the Treasury, they are now beseeching the authors of the Land Act, whom they have heretofore denounced as the accomplices of the Land Leaguers, to render the purchase clauses of that measure workable, or irretrievable ruin will overtake their properties. Mr. Plunket, member for Dublin University, and one of the ablest advocates of the Irish landlords, spoke as follows in his speech on the address at the opening of the present session.

"At the present time the interest of the landowners of Ireland is absolutely unsaleable. It is not by reason of any agricultural depression, but by reason of the tenants' interest; and I have it on the authority of persons well acquainted with the subject that in multitudes of instances estates will be absolutely sacrificed by forced sale. The incumbrancers have not pressed for their claims up to the present time, but in the face of a falling market they, of course, cannot be expected to hold out much longer, and unless something is done very shortly numbers of estates will be sold at nominal value. I am glad to think that there is in progress at present a movement amongst the Irish members and Irishmen of different parties with the view of having some steps taken that will enable that part of the Land Act to work fairly; and I trust the Government will consider the case, which is one of the most cruel and undeserved hardships which has fallen upon the landowners of Ireland, without any fault whatever of their own."

Evidently Mr. Plunket in no believer in the workings of "the law of supply and demand" when the market value of a landlord interest is being operated upon. But why should the money of the public be utilised for the purpose of raising the market price of landlord property? What claim upon the aid or generosity of the State have a class of monopolists like the Irish landlords? For generations they have shamelessly robbed a poor and unfortunate tenantry with impunity.

As residents in Ireland they have been merciless, both in their rent exactions and as the administrators of rural justice. They have, as was once truly said by the London *Times*, "enforced their rights with a hand of iron, and neglected their duties with a front of brass." As absentees they have expended outside of Ireland the wealth which no effort of theirs helped to produce, and which, as the sole result of tenant labour and the wants of the community, should have been expended in Ireland. Their general treatment of the agricultural classes, which constitute three millions of our population, has been the chief cause alike of the poverty and discontent of the country. From it has resulted the agrarian crime which has so injured both the name and the peace of Ireland. Having perpetrated their inhuman evictions, "the virtual sentences of death," by aid of the law and the bayonets of England, they have made Englishmen participators in the odium of such acts and co-heirs to the feelings of revenge with which the expatriated victims of Irish landlordism are animated towards the power which ruthlessly drove them from Ireland. Not less than one hundred millions of public taxes have been expended in the last eighty-four years in the administration of exceptional and coercive laws, rendered necessary, in consequence of the tyranny and legal robbery of the Irish landlords; and now after this record of criminal action and criminal neglect, of abuse of power and of opportunity, when the consequences of their long and ruinous social sway in Ireland is reacting upon themselves, the public taxpayer is expected to sanction a scheme by which twice the market price of portions of their estates will be obtained in order to recruit their shattered means of persecution, and give to the disturbing element in Irish social life a longer lease of poverty-inducing and crime-provoking power.

The pressure which the Irish landlords are bringing to bear upon the Government on the purchase question, is easily understood; but that with which the name of Captain

O'Shea, the member for Clare Co., is identified, is not so clear. He is just now the hero of a requisition which has been signed by the majority of the Catholic Hierarchy and of the members of Parliament for Ireland, and can boast that Mr. Gladstone's letter to him was the first indication of a promised statement from the Premier on the purchase clauses of the Land Act. That this requisition was prompted by the Government is quite certain. Captain O'Shea is, towards the Parnell Parliamentary party, what Mr. Errington is at the Vatican, the unofficial ambassador of the Gladstone administration; and when any Governmental policy requires either the neutrality or co-operation of the Irish representatives the member for Clare is the Government medium for diplomatic intrigue. To increase the facilities for purchase at the eager behest of Irish landlords might displease the popular party in Ireland; but if a similar movement could be obtained from persons who might be said to represent the tenant-farmers, the step which the Government had made up its mind to take before Captain O'Shea obtained a single signature to his requisition could then be taken with safety, if not with profit, by Mr. Gladstone. Hence the O'Shea requisition and the Gladstone letter and promise.

The contemplated extension of the purchase clauses of the Land Act involves the most serious consequences to the tenant-farmer class of Ireland. Upon what basis of value will the holdings of would-be peasant proprietors be purchased? If not on the present market price of the landlord's interest, what standard will have to determine the number of years' purchase for a farmer to pay? According to Mr. Brodrick's statement in the recent debate the average price of land in 1872 was 22½ years' purchase, while that of the land which was sold in Ireland in 1882 averaged but 7½. Will the Land Commission or the Landed Estates Court be authorised to sell to the tenants at this figure? Not at all. By extending the period of repayment over fifty years, and lowering the interest on loans so that the annual charges

will approximate to the judicial rents, the farmers will be hoodwinked into bargains by which the impecunious landlords will pocket the Government loans to the tune of 20 or 25 years purchase for their otherwise unsaleable interest. It is true the tenant will be no longer at the mercy of the landlord; but he will have to pay an equivalent sum to the rent to the Government for fifty or sixty years, by the end of which time he will probably realise the felicity of having done something for posterity as well as for the landlord, and discover in this fact a corresponding consolation for having done nothing for himself. With an annual Government charge equal to the judicial rent upon his holding the farmer will find it well nigh impossible to borrow other money should adverse circumstances arise; while without his interest being thus mortgaged he would experience no difficulty in this respect. That these considerations will influence the action of the Irish tenant-farmers in the purchase question goes without saying. They are a shrewd class of men, and, like the peasantry of every other country, are swayed much more by selfish interests than by patriotic principles. They are fully alive to the present unsaleable nature of the landlords' interests. They are also convinced that few if any land jobbers will now be found so reckless as to buy up saleable estates when the power of rack-renting has been, to a great extent, swept away. The teachings of the Land League against "land grabbing" still exercise a potent and salutary influence over the minds and acts of the entire agricultural class of the country, and will continue to do so for years to come, thereby checking that ruinous competition for holdings which encouraged the landlords in past years to carry on their system of rack-renting and clearance. Under these circumstances, and with the opposition of the popular sentiment of the country against any purchase scheme which will contemplate rents that are fixed on tenants' own improvements as the basis of price, there is not much likelihood of anything like a "brisk business" being done in the sale of landlord

property, even when the whole of the purchase money is loaned by the State. Ireland must not be expected to be generous to a class which never knew how to be just.

To propose that tenants who have reclaimed their mountain or bog-land holdings by years of unremitting toil should pay a twenty years purchase of a judicial rent that is fixed upon the property which was created by their toil and sweat, is simply monstrous. As well demand of a depositor in a savings' bank a similar tax ere he could claim the savings of a lifetime as his own. No landlord capital has been expended, no effort outside that of the tenants has been at work to bring a semi-savage soil into a moderate state of cultivation; and yet after the purchase money has been paid over and over again in the rack-renting which has been the rule upon estates made up of this description of holding, Mr. Gladstone is about to propose that the occupiers of these reclaimed lands shall pay the price which the landlords demand before the fruits of the tenants' toil can be called their own. There are probably near 200,000 holdings of this description in Ireland. They are found chiefly along the Western Coast counties from Donegal to Cork and in the mountain and bog-land districts in other parts of the country. They comprise the area of periodical distress and may be said to constitute the chief difficulty in the solution of the Irish social problem. One out of scores of similar cases which came under my notice when making a tour of some of these districts last year will suffice for an illustration of the wrong which purchase will inflict upon the poorest of our farming class. Widow Collins, of Lissheenfro, West Clare, was a tenant of Col. McDonnell's. Her holding consisted of eleven acres of cut-away bog. The Government valuation was £3. The rent which her husband and herself had been paying for thirty years was £11 4s. She went into the Land Court and obtained a reduction of £6 4s., and for having taken this step against the landlord she was evicted for £19 arrears of the old rack-rent, which she was

unable to pay. Taking the judicial rent of £5 as being a fair rent according to a legal tribunal, we see that the sum of £6 4s. more than what was fair was compelled to be paid each year for thirty years by this poor family. A total of £186 was thus extracted over what the landlord was justly entitled to receive, or £86 more than the price of the fee simple, if we reckon that at the figure which the landlords will endeavour to induce the Government to aid them in obtaining, twenty years purchase of the judicial rent; or £126 more than what the fee simple would cost, if the Government valuation be taken as the basis of fair value. Yet had this poor woman not been evicted, as described, she would be required to pay £100 more before she could claim the property which her husband's labour created, and which their rack-rent payments had already really purchased twice over.

Upon what principle of fair dealing the landlords are to be helped to screw large sums of purchase-money from these mountain and bog-land tenants is not easy to discover. They have been the most fearfully rack-rented portion of our tenantry. Rents have been levied not upon the capabilities of the reclaimed soil but upon the extraneous sources from which the poor people have been accustomed to receive aid, such as turf-cutting, labour of the head of the family in England and Scotland in the summer months, and remittances from relatives in America. They have first been compelled to pay rent for land which they themselves have reclaimed, and the rent has then been mercilessly adjusted so as to tax the extra labour and sources of income of the unfortunate tenants. They are mostly all housed in one-roomed cabins, built of mud or rubble. More than a million of human beings are thus domiciled in Ireland, and the effect which the purchase scheme now clamoured for by the landlords would have upon the social prospects of these people would be to continue them in their present condition for the remainder of their lives by having to pay an equivalent to a judicial rack-rent for fifty years, in order that the class which has shame-

lessly robbed and oppressed them may receive a liberal price for their infamously administered properties.

It is not the better housing of these one million people, or how extra agricultural industry can be fostered among them, or how the holdings upon which they live can be enlarged; or, failing this, how some of them can be migrated to unoccupied better land, which engages the attention of the Liberal Government. No. That would be going to the root of the social evil of Ireland. It would be commencing where sound social reform should begin, in a regard for the practical amelioration of the condition of the poorer class of workers; but as Whig statesmanship only concerns itself with temporary expedients, oscillating between Tory retrogression and Radical progress, it would be expecting too much to count upon even the semblance of a final remedy for the Irish Land Question from a party that has been bungling over its solution during the past fifteen years. To emigrate the people and compensate the landlords for the working of a system which has reduced our population to less than it was eighty-four years ago, is Mr. Trevelyan's conception of how the Irish Social problem is to be solved. John Stuart Mill has said that "When the inhabitants of a country quit the country *en masse* because the Government will not make it a place fit for them to live in, the Government is judged and condemned." But in the opinion of our Irish Executive, Mr. Tuke is a truer political economist than Mr. Mill. Nevertheless, the people of Ireland will naturally incline to a contrary belief while facts like the following can justify them in doing so. The diagram which follows represents thirty-two squares of one thousand miles each, and will correspond with the area of Ireland, which is 31,874 square miles.

From this diagram it will be seen that but one-fourth of the entire area of the country is under cultivation, while 16,000 square miles of land are under grass. The remaining 8,000 square miles comprise water, bog, and waste land. In 1844 the population per square mile was 270 persons. In

1881 it had diminished to 160, representing in the short space of forty years a loss of 110 persons per square mile, a fact (taking into account the extent of soil capable of sustaining at least 500 people where but 160 are now remaining), without a parallel in the history of any system or scheme for the depopulation of a civilised country. Yet it is a country thus criminally depleted which English Liberal statesmanship proposes to drain still more, in furtherance of what is but a ruthless policy of Celtic expatriation, no matter by what other euphemism of expression, or under what pseudo-philanthropic pretence, it is attempted to be masked.

Cultivated.		Cultivated		Cultivated		Cultivated	
Grass	Grass	Waste	Waste	Waste	Waste	Grass	Grass
Grass	Grass	Waste	Waste	Waste	Waste	Grass	Grass
Grass	Grass	Grass	Grass	Grass	Grass	Grass	Grass

There are 10,000 square miles of Irish land under grass, and semi-waste at the present time, which could be planted with farms and brought under cultivation, while leaving sufficient pasturage land for the grazing purposes of the country. Why should this land be allowed to starve for labour while thousands of labourers and cottiers' families are being emigrated or left starving for the want of its use? Is it not a heartless mockery of the helplessness to which English Statesmanship has reduced Ireland that we are compelled to listen to arguments about "an over-populated country," while we have before our eyes every day millions of acres of fruitful land which no hungry man dare touch? It is the curse of Tantalus inflicted upon a people in pursuance of a policy of political vengeance for their uncompromising

nationality, and if such an inhuman system of rule and ruin begets daily increasing trouble and danger to the Government which is responsible for its continuance, it is but the providential infliction of a just penalty for a course of persistent wrong.

The most significant feature of the present phase of the Irish agrarian struggle is the conversion of the territorial class to the doctrine of peasant proprietary, or, as it is now termed, "occupying proprietary." It is not surprising, on the other hand, that few, if any, landlords, conservative though they are as a class, advocate state or national proprietary. A Conservatism of the masses, which would result from any other system than one that should be in the interests of a class, finds no favour with the landocracy. The stability of society must be contingent upon a monopoly, and this monopoly must be the property of a class. Conservatism is, therefore, the profession of a selfish creed; and that anxiety for the preservation of political and social institutions which a landlord speaker or writer parades with such patriotism when attacking the advocates of reform, is but akin to the celebrated expression of Louis XIV, "L'état, c'est moi." Society, law, order, government, mean the landlords with, in Ireland, the addition of British Empire and loyalty; and if any encroachment is attempted on the part of the community at large upon any unjust privilege attaching to the "sacred rights" of this class, then society, law, order, government, British Empire and loyalty are menaced with the prospect of universal ruin.

The conversion of the Irish landlords to the doctrine of a peasant proprietary is recent. Four years ago such a scheme was either Utopian or insane, when talked of in connection with Ireland, in the opinion of those who are now advocating it as an essential remedy for the existing social evils of the country. Sudden conversions do not invite the credit of honest conviction. This rapid development in the economic education of our landlords needs enquiring

into for an explanation of its motives. Very little investigation will be needed to unmask them. The Land Act of 1881 establishes a dual legal proprietorship in the land of Ireland. Absolute ownership is, however, not destroyed, it is only divided: but the proprietory relationship of the joint landlord and tenant owners is so antagonising that the partnership is only workable by the intervention of the State in the machinery of the Land Court. Under this arrangement, backed by the state of public feeling against land-grabbing, the interest of the farmer threatens to eat up that of the landlord. With the latter the chief difficulty is the intervention of the State, while the farmer has the public voice at his back in favour of the abolition of his little difficulty, which is, of course, the landlord. Finding himself in this situation, it strikes the landlord that his best policy is to get the State to buy him partially out, before his entire interest becomes unsaleable; and he now appeals to the author of the Land Act to render him this necessary aid in order to get out of a daily increasing difficulty of position.

The first anxiety of the Irish landlords is a liberal price for that portion of their dilapidated interest which they are anxious to sell, and this they expect the government to virtually guarantee by reducing the interest on loans to tenants, and extending the period of repayment from 35 to 50 or 60 years: but their next concern is for the gradual formation of a peasant proprietary. Lord George Hamilton, Lord Lansdowne, The O'Connor Don, Lord Castleton, and numerous others of the same fraternity, have written and spoken on the advisability of carrying out such a scheme in Ireland. In this the landlord party is showing consummate judgment. Peasant proprietary will not destroy, it will only extend the absolute ownership of land: *an ownership which will always be in the market for purchase and re-consolidation into large estates.* The sale of some landlords' properties, and of portions of others will not be compulsory, except to the extent of the landlords' pecuniary difficulties: and facilitating the purchase

of what the landlords cannot now sell, will be only extending relief to a portion of that class without contributing in any material way either to the abolition of Irish landlordism or to the final settlement of the Irish land question. Landlordism will still remain as an institution powerful for evil, though shorn of some of its former unjust privileges: and "landlordism in Ireland," no matter by what conditions it may be restricted in its administration of the land, means a continuation, more or less, of those social evils which have been associated with the system since the unpropitious hour when it was first introduced into the country. Peasant proprietary, therefore, is not "the abolition of landlordism," unless as a result of compulsory expropriation, and the accompaniment of a law against consolidation, together with the imposition of a land tax in the interests of the nation—changes which the landlords well know are not contemplated by the present Liberal party. The Irish landlords are quite safe in agitating for a peasant proprietary, and it is only this feeling of security which has caused them to advocate in 1884 what they denounced as communism and the disintegration of society so recently as 1879. In this respect, at least, the landlords of Ireland have learned wisdom. It remains to be seen whether the people have, on their part, profited also to a like extent by the experience of the last five years. For my part I firmly believe they have, and that they will have little or nothing to do with this contemplated purchase scheme, which has for its chief, if not sole, object, the relief of bankrupt Irish landlords at the expense of Irish tenants; which purpose is sought to be masked by offers to some farmers to become the landlords of their own holdings, *in fifty years time—at the selling landlord's own price!*

MICHAEL DAVITT.

Sophia Perovskaia.

EXECUTED 16TH APRIL, 1881.

She would not share the lot of those who make
  The world a nest of ills; she gladly met
  The thorns of that strange crown, their guerdon yet,
Who of Life's bread of freedom dare to break,
And pour Life's wine that after men partake;
  And having laboured to redeem the debt
  The ages owed, aye, not till she had set
A Czar towards death, she died for Life's sweet sake.

Heroes and martyrs love and suffer still:
  As flashes from earth's smithy they are hurled
    About the sky to lighten darkest nights.
This has been so for ever, and ever will,
  When on the anvil of the grief-worn world
    God lays the human mighty Heart and smites.

H. HAVELOCK ELLIS.

Peasant Proprietary in France.

In England, as on the Continent, social questions are forcing their way to the front and are pushing into the back ground all political quackery; as a solution of the problem presented by the land question both in England and Ireland, statesmen, economists, moralists, philosophers, and penny-a-liners of every creed, of high or low degree, while shuddering at the bare thought of nationalising the land without compensation, have not shrunk from proposing the creation of a class of peasant proprietors and have dared to point to France as the Eldorado of the *Paysan Propriétaire*.

Now, inasmuch as French matters are concerned, a Frenchman may perhaps be allowed to have his say and bring forward a few facts that bear upon the question.

In order to a clear view of the subject we must consider property in land, as we find it established in the social system of the bourgeoisie* not as an ideal form that always has existed and always will exist, but as a transitional form that, comparatively recent as it is, is already entering on a new phase. The latest historical theory propounded by Maurer and introduced into England by Sir Henry Maine, shows us how peasant proprietary was evolved out of com-

* In the following pages I shall have to use the word *bourgeoisie* to characterise the social system that superseded feudal society.

This word, so familiar on the continent, has no English equivalent, notwithstanding that, since the repeal of the corn-laws, middle-class rule, the economical and political rule, that is, of manufacturers, traders and money-lenders has been paramount in England.

munal proprietary and is itself the stepping-stone to the modern great estates. In this article, too short for such a subject, I shall endeavour, with a view to determining the value of the land-doctors' panacea, to trace the origin of peasant proprietary in France and to give some notion of the social *milieu* in which it had existence and of its struggles and its sufferings when this social *milieu* changed and was converted into the present social system of the great machine industry and free trade.

I.

The system of land tenure in feudal society may be considered as a kind of peasant ownership; the large estates of the church and of the nobles were portioned out in parcels of which the peasants were the hereditary owners or the life tenants, cultivating the soil much as it is cultivated down to our own times in the more backward parts of France. The obligations of these peasants, serfs as they were, were limited to some compulsory labour (corvée) and to certain *redevances*, whether in kind or in money. By the side of the great landholders there lived a numerous class of peasant proprietors holding their land upon feudal service to the lord of the manor and to the village community. This peasant property had come to be sub-divided so infinitesimally as to cause the despair of the agriculturists of the eighteenth century. "How can we expect," exclaims Du Monceau, "to have artificial pastures in countries where the land is so broken up and sub-divided that most of the parcels have only a few perches in width (a perch is equal to 20 feet.) It costs as much time to turn the plough and to transport it from parcel to parcel as to plough the land." * F. de Neufchateau, President of the Senate, found the land in Burgundy "sub-divided among the inhabitants; few are without some land. . . . It is so absurdly apportioned that a territory *(finage)* of 1250 acres is generally broken up

* Duhamel du Monceau. *Elements d'agriculture* 1762. Vol. II.

into 500 or 600 parcels belonging to 50 or 60 individuals, some of whom own as many as 20 separate lots. This subdivision results partly, if not wholly, from the division of the land, on successions, between brothers and sisters, which cause acting throughout centuries has given an acute form to the complaint."* In another passage he makes mention of a landowner who possessed 455 separate parcels in one commune. This disintegration of the land, the outcome of peasant ownership, renders all scientific agriculture impossible. It exists wherever small property prevails; in the *Pays de Bray*, situated on the borders of the departments of *Seine Inférieure and Oise*, 354,745 acres of agricultural land were, in 1880, divided into 172,361 lots belonging to 26,572 inhabitants. In *la Meuse* 170 proprietors owned 5,893 parcels.

The peasant proprietary met with in the north and centre of France in the eighteenth century, traces back its origin to the old village communities, then in the last stage of decay. In 1844 a peasant community of *Haute Auvergne*, the last of its kind, could show title deeds of property handed down from Karolingian times. The peasant of the eighteenth century, in addition to the bit of land he owned, enjoyed certain rights in common with the other members of the community to which he belonged, and it is these rights alone that enabled him to retain property in land and hold his own throughout so many centuries and such dire political feuds. The two most important of these rights were the right of pasturage on large commons and forest land, and the right of *vaine pâture*, the right, that is, of converting all arable land into common pasture.

The *vaine pâture*, now legally, if not as yet practically, wholly abolished in France, imposed a particular method of culture; arable lands were submitted to triennial rotation (wheat or rye, spring crops, fallow) to admit of the fields,

* F. de Neufchateau. *Voyage agronomique dans la senatorerie de Dijon*. 1806.

after the gathering in of the crops, being thrown into one and converted into pasture-ground for the cattle of the village; the feudal lords "having equal rights to pasture with the labourers and other inhabitants." * These rights were the mainstay of peasant proprietary. They enabled the peasant to have cattle and so provided him with milk, meat, wool and manure. But these rights and in particular that of the *vaine pâture* fettered the development of the large estates and stood in the way of all agricultural improvements. The landowners and agricultural writers of the last century attacked it bitterly. "The right of *vaine pature*," says Ethis de Novéan, "infringes on the rights of property. Any estate burdened with this right becomes common property when the proprietor has removed his crops on the day assigned him. His property in it ceases from that moment, and is made over to the public." † "There is no such thing as absolute property in le Berry. The owner of a wood sees his neighbour's cattle break through the hedges. Any person that encloses his field encroaches on vested rights; the enclosure is destroyed again and again and the field is left open to plunder. A grazing ground laid out at the expense of one man will equally benefit his neighbour and he that sows clover, lucern or grass in a field of his own, that is held to be common property, must expect to get only just so much for his share as his neighbours may feel disposed to leave him." ‡

From the first the rights of the peasant proprietor had been antagonistic to those of the feudal lord. In the Middle Ages this antagonism, existing all over Europe, broke out in the bloody peasant risings. In the last half of the 18th century this antagonism had once again taken an acute form

* La Poix de Freminville. *Traité général de gouvernement des biens des communautés*, 1760.

† E. de Novéan. *Mémoire sur la vaine pâture*, couronné par l'académie de Besancon et publié dans la *Gazette du commerce et des Finances* de 1767.

‡ *Rapport sur les causes de la langueur du Berry*, presentè a l'assemblèe provinciale du Berry, tenue á Bourges en 1783.

and the hour had come for the abolition of the peasant rights and the transformation of feudal property. Manufactures had been developed throughout France, and division of labour had made the greatest progress. The industrial classes, concentrated in towns and no longer producing their own food, as heretofore, when every artisan possessed his bit of land, were dependent upon the agricultural classes.

New roads were opened up by land and water; the bulky agricultural products, stationary hitherto and consumed where grown, now began to be carried hither and thither, from the country to the towns, and from province to province, while their prices went up extraordinarily.*

It was necessary that agriculture to answer the requirements of the times should do away with the old methods of culture which, but slightly modified, continued identical with those described by Virgil and the Latin writers. But all radical change was out of the question so long as there stood in the way the rights of the peasant proprietor. These called for destruction, and the destruction of these rights was the work of the Revolution of 1789—the revolution which, according to Louis Blanc, Michelet, Victor Hugo, and the legion of *démocrates vulgaires*, was made for the peasant.

Encroachments on the property of the peasant communities had begun centuries before; indeed the property of the feudal lord was almost wholly made up of the spoils of the peasant. The bourgeois revolution of 1789, directed ostensibly against the landed aristocracy, in effect legalised all its plunders, and in the name of the bourgeois trinity,—*Liberté*, *Egalité*, *Fraternité*, shamefully stripped the peasant of his rights. It

* As a striking example I give the following extract: "The facilitating of the exportation of corn naturally led to a rise of prices. The liberty of export, made general in 1764, gave a value to corn that it could not have in the absence of markets and buyers."

In 1763 the price of the *setier* of corn was	12	*livres*	12	*sous*.
,, 1765	,,	,,	15	,,	4	,,
,, 1766	,,	,,	20	,,	7	,,

Tableau de la Province de Tourraine de 1762 à 1766, publié d'après le manuscript en 1863.

decreed the division of the commons and the rights of enclosure, and prohibited the pasturing of cattle on other peoples' land; thus dealing a death-blow to peasant proprietary. From the moment that the feudal and the peasant rights were abolished, property in land assumed the bourgeois form. If the feudal lord had rights, they were limited, and he had corresponding duties, whereas the bourgeois proprietor has unlimited rights and no duties at all. The abuse of these rights, conferred upon ignorant peasants and greedy speculators, has wrought ruin and desolation in the land; it has stripped the mountains of their forests, and has caused the rivers to overflow.* The bourgeois revolution in abolishing tithes and compulsory labour (re-established under the disguised and uglier form of Government taxes and the conscription), and in confiscating the lands of the clergy and nobility (bought up wholesale by land-jobbers and resold in small lots to the peasants with enormous profits) made believe that it established peasant proprietary, while in fact it cut away the ground from under it. We shall see how the economic forces of bourgeois society wrested the land from the clutches of the peasant, and flung him penniless among the *Proletariat* of the towns.

II.

In his *Topographie du département du Gers*, 1803, C. Dralet writes: "A peasant proprietor lays out his property in such a way as to have pasture land for cattle, land for corn, wine, vegetables, and wood for fuel. He follows too closely the maxim of Columella: "He is a bad husbandman who buys what he can get his land to supply him with." Some 25 years ago I had occasion to see this maxim put in practice in a wine-growing district, *le Bordelais*. By the side of large properties, laid out as vineyards, were a number of small

* In the French Alps, stripped of their forests since the Revolution, there remain 500,000 acres that require re-planting; "The estimate of costs for the protection of the town of Grenoble against inundation amounts to millions." *Rapport* de M. Roux, *sous-inspector des eaux et forêts à Grenobles*. 1880.

estates of 25 to 45 acres, owned by peasants or by bourgeois living in towns and employing *metayers* (peasants whose wages are a share in the produce) for the cultivation of their land. Irrespective of the size of the estate, the nature of the soil, the profits yielded by wine-growing, these diminutive properties were cut up into small plots, like the squares of a draught-board, for the production of corn, rye, hay, flax, and for wood-land that should supply vine poles, resin, hoops for casks, etc., etc. As wine growing was beginning to yield great profits, one would have thought that the peasant proprietors would have enlarged their vineyards. Not at all. They had no mind to part with the hard cash they possessed (after land their dearest thing in life), for the wheat they wanted for their bread, and the resin they required for their candles; so they left their tiny corn fields and their wee pine-woods intact. How absurd soever this mode of cultivating the land may appear from a commercial or scientific point of view, it is, nevertheless, the only rational one from the stand-point of the peasant proprietor. On no account whatever must he buy or sell in the open market where lurk his deadliest enemies; he is constrained to live on his own land and to find there all he wants. He must grow his corn, bake his bread, breed his sheep, and spin his wool himself; when forced to apply to others, say the weaver or the wheelwright, he must find such assistance close at hand and pay for it in kind and not in money—in corn or in field-labour, as the custom is down to our own days in the Indian village communities.

To these Indian communities we must turn if we would meet with true peasant ownership, but they too (like the Russian agrarian communities) are fast succumbing under the weight of Government taxation and English mis-rule.

In a bourgeois system of society, with its fully developed free trade in land-produce and its great industry, the only possible property in land is the great estate or the small holding of the market gardener. The life of the peasant

proprietor, as it was cut out for him by the bourgeois revolution, is one of misery ended by ejectment for debt. Let him who doubts or denies this study the history of peasant proprietary in France.

Peasant ownership is thrice blessed; by the taxes of the State, the usury of the money-lender and the fees of the lawyer. How few are the peasants holding land free of mortgage! In 1875 such mortgages amounted to upwards of three millions of pounds sterling. The amount of debt on notes of hand is unknown, and the illegal interest of it quite unknowable. In the department of *la Creuse*, the country pre-eminently of small property, loans, according to the Comte d'Esterno, were contracted at 100 per cent. * In this wise the land is held in pawn by the money-lender. The peasant proprietor toils not only to maintain himself but to satisfy the claims of the usurer and the Government. Both Government and usurer have to be paid in money, and not as heretofore in kind. With the produce of his land the peasant must buy money. At all times in sorest need of cash, he is at the mercy of the corn-merchant whose exactions grow with the borrowers' distress. Harvest time is the season for organised plunder on a large scale. "No sooner is the corn housed," says the Comte d'Esterno, "than the corn-dealers, millers and others go their rounds, and call upon the cultivators who, sunk in debt, sued and threatened with eviction, are compelled to make the poorest bargains. So general are these evictions and so numerous are the cultivators involved in debt that the price of corn falls for some three or four months after the harvest. Later on it rises again, but with no beneficial result to either cultivator or consumer, but only to some useless middle-man." †

To console him for the loss of the commons and the *vaine pâture*, the French peasant is now given over to the usury of the money-lender and the sharp practice of the corn merchant.

* Comte d'Esterno. *De la crise agricole et de son remède*, 1866.

† Comte d'Esterno. *De la crise agricole et son remède*, 1860.

While the peasant had the benefit of the commons and the *vaine pâture*, he merely required to eke out his means of existence by tillage of the soil. Deprived of these advantages he is no longer able to keep cattle, and must make up for the profits formerly accruing therefrom by wage labour. So that compulsory labour, so emphatically proclaimed as abolished by the great bourgeois revolution, has been re-established under a new name for the benefit of the large landowners and their farmers, who now find the labourers they want more easily and more plentifully than prior to the revolution.

In the South of France the labour-market is held every Sunday morning under the portals of the churches, great and small proprietors meet there to make contracts of hire for so many days in the week. The peasant goes to church to transact business—not to hear mass. The religious feeling of the French peasant is one of the myths of Catholicism; superstition he has, and to spare, but no religion: the gods of his divinity are his pig and bit of land. But agricultural labour on the property of others proving insufficient to gain them a livelihood, the French peasants have had to supplement it by industrial labour. In Auvergne and in the south they have found employment in the plaiting of straw hats, in glove stitching and lace making; in the Cevennes, the departments round Lyons and in the North, in weaving and spinning.

All such work, executed at their own fire-side, was done to order for town merchants who supplied the raw material. This supplementary labour took also another form; the peasants migrated for a great part of the year and worked for wages at a distance from their homes. No sooner does the snow fall in the Pyrennees than the peasant leaves his mountains to labour in the vine-yards: the peasants of the Cevennes come down in the summer months before their harvest season to cut and thresh the corn in le Languedoc. "In the department of Orme from 9,000 to 10,000 men migrate

annually either to practise some trade in Paris or to ply the surrounding country as mole-catchers, hawkers, etc." *

La Marche et le Limousin supply large numbers of masons. The number of masons supplied by the department of la Creuse alone was estimated in 1856 at 50,000, the total population being 287,000, the contingent thus furnished representing one-sixth or almost the totality of the male and valid population. * In the departments of the centre the peasants were accustomed to work in kilns, glassworks, etc.; in the mining districts of the Loire they worked in the mines and foundries. The country round Marseilles and Aix supplied the towns with the hands required for their soap and oil factories, the hard and unhealthy work in which was objected to by the workmen of the towns. I have not of course the slightest intention of invoking moral principles where economical phenomena are concerned, but I must state as a matter of fact that it is the male portion only of the population which migrates, and that it habitually brings back with it from the towns the filthiest diseases, which but for this migration would have remained unheard of in the country. And so it happens that small property, which is the basis on which rests the peasant family, cannot exist in a bourgeois society without introducing into the homes of the peasants the vices and diseases of civilisation. Throughout France, wherever peasant ownership is met with, one or other of the different forms of compulsory labour is its concomitant, rendered inevitable by the fiscal claims of the State, and the exactions of the money lender.

The industrial labour of the peasant proprietor has, however, been profoundly modified by the progress of modern machinery. Domestic labour is daily losing ground. Hand-spinning is altogether abolished; lace, with but few exceptions for the finest kind of work, is manufactured by machinery; as regards silk-weaving and the manufacture of

* Baudrillart. *Etude économique des populations agricoles en Normandie*, 1880.
† Léonce de Lavergne. *L'agriculture et la population*, 1857.

velvets, the work for the most part is done in large workshops; plain tissues and foulard silks being the only ones still woven in the country. The hand weaving of flax and cotton has almost wholly disappeared, and for woollen tissues the power-loom is everywhere replacing the hand-loom. Periodical peasant migration from the country no longer answers to the requirements of our modern great industry. The working machinery set up on a colossal scale represents an enormous capital and cannot be stopped at given times in the year to suit the convenience of the peasants who have their crops to look to. Every idle day in a factory is a day of heavy pecuniary loss, for the interest on the capital sunk in the machinery falls due whether the machines are set at work or not, and their deterioration is greatest during inaction. The industrial population must cease to be a nomad one; it must remain upon the spot, even when out of work, in order that at all times may be had a full supply of "hands," liable to be wanted at any given moment for the working of the machines. In the mining and industrial districts the population is no longer a fluctuating one, coming and going at stated intervals; there is a settled population exclusively devoted to industrial labour and divorced from all agricultural pursuits.

The great change wrought in the supplementary labour of the peasants to some extent explains the rapid growth of urban agglomeration at the expense of the rural population. The following tables show the rate of progression during the last thirty years:—

PROPORTION OF THE URBAN TO THE RURAL POPULATION FOR EACH 100 INHABITANTS.

	1846	1851	1856	1861	1866	1872	1876
Urb. Pop.	24.42	25.52	27.31	28.86	30.46	31.12	32.44
Rur. Pop.	75.58	74.48	72.69	71.14	69.54	68.88	67.56

After having some thirty years ago formed three-fourths of the total population of France, the rural population in our day forms little more than two-thirds of it.

So long as the commons and his field supplied the

peasant with everything that he required, it mattered little whether he applied spade labour to the land or whether he ploughed it with asses, cows or horses, * it mattered little whether a bushel of corn cost him one day's or a dozen day's labour. All that he needed to make sure of was that the produce of his harvest would suffice to maintain himself and his family all the year round. But as soon as he is compelled to produce exchangeable commodities to buy money with, there is superadded to the three primordial blessings already his, a fourth blessing in the shape of the corn dealer. When, finally, the peasant carries his crops to market, he meets there a new enemy and then comes the tug of war. His bushel of corn competes with the bushel of corn of the great farmer; the price of sale is determined not by the peasant's costs of production but by those of the great farmers, and victory is with him who grows the cheapest.

We have been thus far merely considering the process by which the peasant is cheated out of a portion of his earnings. People there are who still hug the illusion that evils such as these admit of remedy. Yet who shall control this economical fate; the struggle for low prices, the struggle between small and high farming? All things on the contrary tend to intensify the fierceness of the battle to be fought out between science, machinery and capital on the one hand and ignorance, routine and poverty on the other.

Capital is the sinews of high farming and poverty is the constitutional disease of peasant proprietary. And not money alone it is that the French peasant lacks, he lacks also the brains to apply the new processes of agriculture. Full of cunning as he is and able, as Balzac says, on any disputed point to out-Talleyrand all the Talleyrands of diplomacy, the French peasant is, for all that, narrow-minded, obtuse and *routinier*. Moreover he instinctively feels that to meddle with

* "In the neighbourhood of Arles, for the last thirty years, mules have replaced oxen for the purpose of ploughing; asses had previously been employed in many parts of the country." M. Paris, *Economie rurale de l'arrondissement de Tarascon*, 1809.

the established order of things is to indirectly attack his right of property. As a necessary consequence he opposes to the uttermost all new methods of culture, his natural distrust of which has been aggravated by his own experience of failure where such methods have been imperfectly applied. And when in spite of himself he has been driven to make use of foreign seeds, guano and chemical manures, his ignorance has caused him to fall so easy a prey to the fraud and quackery practised upon him by the trade that his dislike of innovations has become inveterate. Liebig said that the cultivator ought to have an "encyklopädische Bildung" whereas in point of fact the class of peasant proprietors is the most ignorant of the nation.

The inferiority of the peasant proprietors' small farming as opposed to high farming is best shown by a comparison of the official tables of wheat production. From 1872 to 1878 the average production of the whole of France was only 15 hectolitres, 6 centilitres per hectare or about 17 bushels per acre.* The production of 31 departments out of the 87 departments of France was above this average: Seine, 28 hectolitres 81 centilitres. Seine et Oise, 23. 69; Nord, 23. 53; Oise, 21. 78; Seine et Marne, 21. 71; Pas de Calais, 21. 27; Aisne, 21. 16; Haut-Rhin, 19. 80; Loiret, 19. 72; Somme, 19. 45; Eure et Loire, 19. 13; Seine Inférieure, 18. 37; Marne, 18. 16; Loir et Cher, 17. 61; Eure, 17. 56; Rhone, 17. 50; Ardennes, 17. 49; Mayenne, 17. 24; Calvados, 17. 08; Allier, 16. 53; Doubs, 16. 48; Côtés-du-Nord, 16. 37; Loire Inférieure, 16. 23; Pyrénnées Orientales, 16. 16; Aube, 16. 03; Maine et Loire, 16. 60, &c. Now a glance at the map will show us that these 31 departments are for the most part situated in the N. E. where are found the great industrial centres. Here small property, except in the neighbourhood of towns, where market gardening is carried on, has generally disappeared, the *metayers* having been replaced by

*The hectare is equal to two acres and a half; the hectolitre to three bushels less one fifth of a bushel.

farmers as in England. If we read the list of the 56 departments which in corn crops are below the average, we shall find that they are wine-growing countries like the *Gironde* (14 hectolitres, 57 centilitres,) *Hérault* (13 hectolitres, 99 centilitres,) *Haute Garonne* (13 hectolitres, 94 centilitres,) &c., where wheat growing is of little importance, or that they are countries of peasant proprietary like *Corse* (14 hectolitres, 26 centilitres,) *Corrèze* (13 hectolitres, 60 centilitres,) *Creuse* (12 hectolitres, 61 centilitres,) Basses Alpes (8 hectolitres, 7 centilitres,) &c.: of these last three departments the reports of the fire insurance companies state: "That only one out of every four houses is slate or tile-covered, the roofs generally being of wood or thatched with straw."

In 1851, according to the official census, France had the misfortune to boast of a population of 7,846,000 landed proprietors. Of this number 3,000,000 paid no personal contributions on account of their acknowledged poverty and 600,000 paid contributions amounting to five centimes! (one half-penny.) There remained therefore 4,246,000 great or small landowners properly so called.

These 3,600,000 landowners paying no taxes or contributing the sum of five centimes are in the truest sense of the word rural *prolétaires*. Their strip of land is but a chain to bind them to the country in order that the great landed proprietor may find labourers, when he wants them, for the tillage of his fields. Léonce de Lavergne who was fairly well acquainted with the condition of the agricultural labourer in France and in Great Britain, says: "Although the French labourer is frequently proprietor of the land and thus adds a little profit to his wages, he does not live as well as the English farm-labourer. He is not as well fed, not as well clothed, is less comfortably lodged; he eats more bread but it is generally made of rye with the addition of maize, buck-wheat and even chesnuts. . . he rarely eats meat. Alas! I am acquainted with part of France where the people live on 70 centimes (7d.) a-day."*

†Léonce de Lavergne. *Economie rurale de l'Angleterre, de l'Ecosse et de l'Irlande*, 1852.

The horrible disease—*la pellagra*—the disease of agricultural countries, that for the last century has decimated the field-labourers of Lombardy, at the terrible rate of 80 out of 1,000, has now likewise begun to ravage the richest countries of the South of France. In some parts of the Gironde there are found as many as 200 *pellagrosi* for every 6,000, inhabitants * most of whom are small landowners. La pellagra is the disease of persons overworked and underfed and fed on unwholesome food.

Now let us see what has become of the 4,246,000 landowners existing in 1851. French official statistics are unique! While giving for each department the exact number of geese, ducks and capons it contains, they would seem to be drawn up with a view to mislead as to the true condition of property. "In the absence of official data that the Government alone can furnish," writes B. Lavergne, "I shall describe what I have seen around me. As the causes are not local, as they spring from a common organisation, I fear that in writing the history of that part of the country in which I live, I shall write the history of the greater part of the country, if not of the country at large. I have been in a position to study five adjoining communes of the department of Tarn, having an area of 21,011 hectares and containing 8,311 inhabitants, These five communes contain 304 estates of which 197 were, 50 years ago, in the hands of peasant cultivators. At this day only 81 out of these 197 remain in the family of the old proprietors; 116 estates have been sold. Out of these 116 estates, 71 have been bought up by bourgeois who farm them, the remaining 45 have been sold to peasants and subdivided to infinity." † Thus by a slow but sure process does property pass out of the peasant's hands and go to swell the estates of the great landowner, while the land that remains in the possession of the peasant is so absurdly subdivided as to render the cultivation of it more and more laborious and unprofitable.

**La Pellagra in Italia* Annali di Agricultura. Published by the minister of Agriculture and Commerce. Rome, 1880.

†B. Lavergne. *L'Enquête—les Souffrances de l'Agriculture.* 1866.

The process observed by B. Lavergne has been going on with varying degrees of intensity all over France, as can be demonstrated notwithstanding the intentional confusion of French statistics. In order that I may not be charged with making the figures say what I want them to say, I will take my facts from the *République Française*, the official organ of the late M. Gambetta, the professed friend of the French peasant. The philanthropic money-lenders of Paris, patronised by the opportunist patriot, being anxious to extend their speculations to the remotest rural districts, proposed to confer upon the peasants the blessing of agricultural banks and of the *Crédit Mobilier*. To get at a knowledge of the number of small proprietors to whom credit was to be accorded they consulted the statistics and so found that in 1874 there existed in France 2,826,000 landowners offering guarantees entitling them to share in the benefit of the "Golden Shower."—(*La République Française*, 21 Août, 1879.) So that from 1851 to 1874 the number of landowners properly so-called had dwindled from 4,246,000 to 2,826,000, a reduction of 1,420,000! This credit was to be graciously if not gratituously given in the name of the "République Démocratique," because, said the *République Française*, "everything that stands in the way of the extension of the class of peasant proprietors fetters the development of national wealth." And what must be the upshot of this financial boon? To curb the peasants under the grinding domination of the great credit institutions of Paris and to accelerate the process, now slowly going on, of their expropriation; for with a view to granting this credit the money-lenders demand "the simplification and curtailment of the legal processes of ejectment."*

It would be an error to believe that poverty and disastrous agricultural enterprise are the sole causes of this diminution in the number of landed proprietors in France. "Many peasant proprietors," wrote the *République Française*, "stimu-

*Lettre de M. Damourette, directeur de la Banque de France, publié dans le *Journal d'Agriculture pratique* du 20 Mars, 1879.

lated by the hope of gain, better acquainted than heretofore with the centres of activity, have sold their lands and taken the road to the towns." The peasant proprietor, grown a wiser, if a sadder man, has lost his love of land; he has become a bourgeois; he no longer hesitates between the industrial and financial profits that allure him and the dangers and difficulties of agricultural enterprise that ruin him. Instead of hoarding their half-crowns in queer money-boxes for the purchase of land, "all our small cultivators," writes Viscomte d'Anthenaise, "hurry off to the railway stations to invest their savings in railway shares or Government funds yielding 4½ per cent. without risk or trouble, which money sunk in the soil would not give such interest."*

The conclusion that must inevitably be drawn from the history of peasant property in France, is that a peasant proprietary—except under certain special conditions—can exist only in a feudal system of society, but that in the social system of the bourgeoisie it forms (save in the environs of towns) an anachronism that all the forces of capitalist production are tending to wipe away. Large landed proprietors and men of science await the event impatiently; the former because the destruction of small property will enable him to swell his acres; the latter in order that scientific agriculture may be more generally introduced. It is with a view to hurry on the inevitable event that many great proprietors and most professors of agriculture openly demand free trade in agricultural products. Nor do they mince matters. M. Hamon, a large landed proprietor in the Calvados, writes in the *Journal d'Agriculture Pratique* of 8th May, 1879:—"The intelligent cultivator, in good average circumstances, and having at his disposal the necessary capital, has nothing to fear from American competition . . . Small farmers cannot struggle with it, because they cannot produce as cheap, being unable to use agricultural machinery and to give the earth the

* *Journal d' Agriculture Pratique*, 12 Juin, 1879.

manure that the crops require." The Comte d'Esterno adds: "If some cultivators are ruined and forced to sell, we have the consolation of knowing that the instruments of national production have been taken out of unskilled hands and been put into stronger and more judicious ones." And with those cultivators who fail to feel any joy in the beauty of a vigorous national production in other hands than their own, M. Bidarol, Professor of Agriculture, argues: "That in order to compete with American corn it is necessary to increase the national production, and to replace the scandalous crops of 10, 12, 14 hectolitres per hectare by crops of 30 and 35 hectolitres, like those of the Departement du Nord (*Journal d'Agriculture Pratique*, 7th August, 1879). "But," retorts M. Lemoine, in the following number, "if we produced 30 hectolitres per hectare, we should have an average production of 200,000,000 hectolitres, and France requires for her own consumption only 100,000,000. After having found the means to grow, we should have to find the ways to sell." *

Small property in France is driven into a corner, and all the moral and political twaddle in the world will not avail to help it out thereof. For, note the dilemma: the competition of the great landowners of France and of the United States compels the peasant proprietor, in the face of overwhelming difficulties, to improve his method of culture; by improving these he increases the national production, swamps the market, and intensifies the agricultural competition.

The philanthropists who, in utter disregard of economical phenomena, propose to bridge over the gulf that yawns between the labouring and the propertied classes by a class of small proprietors that shall, in times of revolution, form a bulwark for the ruling classes, give evidence of very good intentions and of much kind solicitude for the interests of their superiors, but at the same time lay bare their ignorance and

*Contrary to the belief of the benighted Malthusians, the dread of the producer in our capitalist society is not a dearth of the means of consumption, but a dearth of consumers.

incapacity to solve the problem. What they propose to do, although they know it not, would be to raise up against the landlords their worst of enemies. Through the length and breadth of France the peasant proprietor nurses an inveterate hatred against the large landed proprietor and his farmers: they are the men that undersell his products.

Looking round on the broad acres of the great landowner, he points to the small farms that have one by one been sucked into the hungry maw of the great property, and he foresees the time when his own miserable patch of ground shall be swallowed up in its turn! The peasant was a Bonapartist in the past because Napoleon, to him, symbolised the revolution that had crushed the aristocracy and clergy; to-day he is a Republican because the great landowners are Bonapartists, Legitimists, Orleanists, and priest-ridden.

Socialist propaganda is barely beginning to reach our peasants, but once it shall have penetrated into their homes, in the perplexed mind of the peasant proprietor, harassed by economical difficulties, and embittered by his hatred of the great landowner, the Socialist, like the revolutionist of old, will find a kindly soil, made ready to his hand, wherein to sow the seeds of communism.

PAUL LAFARGUE.

Our Military System.

Among the many "Cries" which have assailed the ears of the country during the past twelve months, not the least bitter has been the wail of alarm over the condition of the Army. The vacancies created by the discharge of men whose time of service has expired, or who in pursuance of the new system, are drafted into the reserve, remain in large numbers vacant, or are only filled by boys, physically unfit to undergo the hardships and exposure to which in the event of war they must necessarily be subjected. Tory and Liberal journals alike lament the defenceless condition into which the country is falling, and suggest various remedies to cure or at least mitigate the evil and ward off the consequent danger. In common they ignore, or, if not ignorant, they refuse to admit, that it is the economical conditions of society which are responsible for the wasting away of the body of the Army of which they complain. Advocates of the old, the new, and of yet untried systems have aired their views and theories *ad libitum*, I may even say *ad nauseam*, and the Conservative pot has blamed the Liberal and Radical kettle because of the desperate condition of the Military Service. In truth the fault lies specially with neither but with both. The decay of the Army is only one of the many symptoms of the general mortification which is gradually eating into the body politic, from which it can only be delivered at the cost of great sacrifices and the exercise of the highest patriotism, or by—revolution.

What was the truth as to the state of the army at the moment it was decided to send troops to Egypt in the Midsummer of 1882? Why, that after all the boasting of the wonderful efficiency of our military system, an organised Corps d'Armée nowhere existed, and that Sir Garnet Wolseley was sent out at the head of a hastily improvised force, scrambled together from every variety of source. A proportion of the reserves, which it is generally understood were meant only to be called on in cases of great national emergency, was summoned to the colours; and appeals were made to battalions remaining at home to supply volunteers for those sent abroad in order to raise them to the war complement. The Mediterranean garrisons were depleted to furnish battalions for Egypt, and lastly India was called on to supply a contingent to bring the force under Sir Garnet Wolseley to its required strength. Only those behind the scenes at the War Office know what a struggle there was in that realm of red tape, to put on a good appearance and lead the British public, and for the matter of that, the rest of the world, to think and believe that all was going on for the best in that best possible of departments. But the testimony borne by eye-witnesses in Egypt to the inefficiency of the whole organisation demonstrates beyond doubt that the wonderful success so loudly claimed for our Army out there was mainly due to the absence of the most ordinary military qualities on the part of the Egyptian Army and its leaders. Never were the rewards showered on an army so exaggerated and out of all proportion to services performed in the field. All the gush of the reception in London which followed the return of the troops to England; the hail of medals, stars and crosses, promotions and a peerage, failed however to stimulate recruiting. Somehow the public instinct understood that the whole display was got up for effect, and not in honour of the military operations which were contemptible as war goes now-a-days, but because a Liberal-Radical Cabinet had been saved. The hearts of the classes who hitherto have furnished the

rank and file, the body of the Army, were not stirred by all the claptrap of the occasion, and the music hall Jingo and the Masher evince no disposition to enact deeds of valour or imperil their precious lives for the admiration of a remote posterity.

From the point of view of the great capitalist-landlord combination which under the masks of Tory, Whig and sham Radical alternately conduct the government of the country, the prospect is sufficiently alarming. With a navy, neither a gun nor a ship too many, and not a few of the latter utterly useless for all purposes of serious warfare; with an army wanting in numbers, organisation and mobility, there must need be a sentiment of insecurity of securities and a sinking in the capitalist chest unpleasant to feel. "Appeal to the patriotism of the masses" cries one party. "More money, more money," says another. But there is no response. "It's all a matter of sixpence a day" suggests one. "Very well," says the other, "but what will the taxpayers say?" Is it very difficult, seeing things are as they are, to divine what the real taxpayers, the producers of the wealth of the country, will say to it? I think not. Ordinary recruiting agencies having failed to procure the needed "food for powder," the post-office is utilised as a medium through which to advertise the great benefit which will accrue to the man out of work who is prepared to shoulder a rifle and risk his own life or take that of another man, in order that the great landholders or capitalists may enjoy their unearned increments of wealth in ease and security. In addition also to their ordinary duties, that of enlisting likely lads is imposed on the police. As yet it is only tried experimentally, but this power placed in such hands comes perilously near tampering with the liberty of the subject. But here in this "land of freedom" we are gradually being trained to look on liberty as a mere fad and that a few restrictions more or less are of little consequence. The word conscription has not yet been uttered in English, but when

the jew-baiting chaplain of the Prussian Court did us the honour to visit us recently, he recommended it as a highly desirable addition to the institutions we are so proud of. Now on this question of the failure of recruits for the army and the general unpopularity of the military service, the truth must be told, and will be acknowledged by any one not wilfully blind to it, viz. :—that the classes from which the rank and file have hitherto been drawn have at last begun to open their eyes to the fact that they at least have little or nothing left in life worth fighting for. And in the second place, thanks to the landlord system with which the country is cursed and the misgovernment of Ireland combined, the rural population is fast approaching extinction, or in the case of Ireland has an undying hatred to that uniform which was once so attractive. Where nowadays are to be found the materials out of which the regiments of thirty years ago were composed? Where indeed? Why, driven from the country side which their forefathers for centuries made fertile and productive by the sweat of their brows at the pleasure of a selfish and unpatriotic capitalist aristocracy and landed proprietary, into the great cities where their wolf-like competition for subsistence enables the capitalist and his hangers on to amass fortunes out of the wealth they create. Is it out of the degraded mass which surplus labour sinks into that an army animated by the fire of patriotism or inspired by a noble sense of duty can be created? Hardly. Is the skulking rough or the unfortunate wretch driven to enlist as a last desperate alternative to starvation likely to make the kind of soldier a military chief aspiring to a peerage would care to lead in battle as a matter of choice? There ought to be no difficulty in ascertaining Lord Wolseley's mind on this point. The men who are really responsible for the condition of the army are to be found, not at the War Office nor at the Horse Guards, Augean stables though they are, but in the great aristocratic and plutocratic classes, who in their insensate pursuit of ease, luxury and wealth, have well nigh

destroyed the very material on which alone they could depend for the defence of the wealth they enjoy. "You help us to keep our land and we will help you to keep your beer," was the bargain proposed to be struck by the heir of the Cecils between himself and his father's hinds on the occasion of his coming of age. The most unreflecting mind might be struck with the singular inequality of the terms, yet this young noble is one day perhaps to be imposed on the country as a leader and law maker by right of birth and inheritance. What a spectacle have we here presented to us! A class misterming itself "aristocratic" existing by the aid of a beer-sodden peasantry. Is it really from this body that we are to take the leaders of our army, among it we are to look for men of chivalry and knightly daring? Peep into the daily letter-bag of the two departments of our military administration and what does it disclose? Let us have the truth. Is not the mass of the correspondence one ceaseless stream of applications for place, preferment, reward or increased emolument. Ask any man behind the scenes who they are that obtain all these things. Let Isandlwana, Majuba Hill and other fields of defeat and disgrace yield up their mournful testimony. Nepotism and sycophancy are to-day the path along which the aspirant to fame must travel, press notoriety and mutual laudation secure the coveted prizes. A corrupt and iniquitously unequal social system has prepared the way for the military decadence of the nation. In the reversal of this system only can national safety and honour be found. Commercialism for the mere sake of profit adulterates and poisons our food; the very clothes we wear are no longer of original material; under it, art is debased; religion degraded; and compromise, that adulteration of manliness and honesty, permeates the whole daily political and social life of the people. How then in a state of society fundamentally corrupted can the chivalric spirit flourish? The wonder is a spark of it yet remains. The prejudice which we well know prevailed of old among the

aristocratic and upper classes against sending their sons into counting-houses or entering into matrimonial alliances with trading families would seem to have been based on a sound and healthy instinct. But the glitter of wealth was too powerful. Beginning by despising they were allured by its seductiveness, and have finally ended by being engulfed in the foul maelstrom of competitive commerce. The manhood of the nation has been emasculated by the greed of gain—by superfluity of luxury on the one hand, defective physical sustenance on the other.

Having so far exposed what I believe to be the main causes of the decay of the warlike spirit which undoubtedly distinguished the people of this country at one time, let me state as briefly as possible what are the conclusions I have arrived at as to the change immediately called for in our military system under our existing state of society. The first step clearly should be the complete separation of the Indian and Colonial from the Home system, by the abolition of a standing army of any kind in the United Kingdom, and the re-organization of the present army into a force solely for the garrison of India and our other possessions where troops have to be kept. The defensive force at home should be a national localised militia, maintained in its county or military district and not liable to be moved beyond its limits except on an occasion of national danger, or for special training purposes, and then only under special enactment of Parliament. The army for India and the Colonies would of necessity be composed of men enrolled voluntarily, and for long service, which might be divided into two or three periods, with option of re-enlistment and liability to serve in any part of the British Dominions beyond the sea. No depots of a permanent character or containing any large number of men should be allowed to be formed at home, but with as little delay as possible newly enrolled recruits should be sent to their corps abroad. As a matter of convenience, the existing military colleges for the training and

educating of officers both for the Colonial Army and the National Militia might be maintained, with a special school of practical instruction in military engineering. The present army in Ireland should be withdrawn, and the defence of that country, like every other right, placed in the hands of the people of Ireland themselves.

Such in brief are the main details of the revolution I consider to be necessary if the country is to hold its own against combinations with which it may be threatened. As at present constituted and organised the British Army is of no value in case of a war with any of the European powers, and could not serve even to help an ally with any effect. Its present *raison d'être* seems apparently to be to afford comfortable positions and patronage to Royal Dukes and their hangers-on, to wage bondholders wars and to obtain scientific frontiers. In the army as in the other institutions of our *bourgeois* society, there is a proletariat, a middle class, and an aristocracy. The private soldiers and regimental officers without high connections, "interest," or money, are those who eat the sour bread, drink the filthy water, and bivouac on the sand of the desert or in the mud in the campaigns; who spend wearisome years of an objectless life in distant garrisons in every variety of climate, and find themselves at the end of their service too frequently without resource or means of livelihood. At the top are the men who, through family relationship, the friendship of high personages, gained too often by doubtful means, or the high position of their friends or families in the plutocratic world, have entered into the circle of the initiate. It is among this class that are to be found the professional medal hunters and knights of London society drawing rooms, who, on the first symptom of some trouble abroad are heard of leaving metropolitan stations by special trains and hurrying across Europe or the high seas as the case may be, to snatch the prizes of the profession from the hands of the men who have borne the burden and heat of the day. Between the two classes I have

described are to be found the men who, in the scramble have managed to emerge out of the ranks of the military proletariat, and form that middle class, who like their parallel in civil life, are quite satisfied with their lot, deeming that heaven has ordained those above them to occupy the position they do, and therefore, with the submission of discipline and loyalty bow to its ruling.

Lord Wolseley may whistle to keep up his own spirit and that of the country if he so prefers; the army, in spite of all he or anyone else may say is entirely inadequate for the duties it may be called on to perform, and in the event of a great European war is of no value whatever. The sooner the country faces this question the better, for with the combinations forming on the Continent and the fact that owing to the domineering policy of our buy-cheap-and-sell-dear governments we have not an ally in the world, we may be called on to engage in a struggle for existence for which we are entirely unprepared, and the like of which this country has never known.

Looking at the question from a Socialist point of view, there is nothing to regret in the decay of our *bourgeois* military system; and the sooner it, with all the other corrupt institutions of the day are broken up the better, the sooner the reorganization of our whole society on the basis of the welfare of all will be effected. It is but fitting that this great change should come to England first among the nations, seeing that it is here the shop-keeping instinct has attained its highest development. And then, having freed themselves from the degradation of class domination, the peoples of these islands may lift up their heads before the world as the champions of the oppressed; the days of Afghan and Zulu wars and the slaughter of miserable Fellaheen and Soudanees will have gone by, and the arms of England be only raised against the oppressor and tyrant wherever found in aid of all struggling for equal rights and liberty.

C. L. FITZGERALD.

An Unsocial Socialist.

Chapter III.

One of the professors at Alton College at this time was a Mrs. Miller, an old-fashioned schoolmistress who did not believe in Miss Wilson's system of government by moral force, and carried it out under protest. Though not ill-natured, she was narrow-minded enough to be in some degree contemptible, and was consequently prone to suspect others of despising her. She suspected Agatha in particular, and in such intercourse as they had—it was fortunately little—treated her with disdainful curtness. Agatha was not hurt by this; for Mrs. Miller was an unsympathetic woman, who made no friends among the girls, and satisfied her affectionate impulses by petting a large cat named Gracchus, but generally called Bacchus by an endearing modification of the harsh initial consonant.

One evening Mrs. Miller, seated with Miss Wilson in the study, correcting examination papers, thought she heard in the distance a cry like that of a cat in distress. She ran to the door and listened. Presently there arose a prolonged wail, which slurred up through two octaves, and subsided again. It was a true feline screech, impossible to localize; but it was interrupted by a sob, a snarl, a fierce spitting, and a scuffling which came unmistakeably from a room on the floor beneath, in which, at that hour, the older girls assembled for study.

"My poor Gracchy!" exclaimed Mrs. Miller, running down stairs as fast as she could. She found the room

unusually quiet. Every girl was deep in study except Mis Carpenter, who was pretending to pick up a fallen book, and was purple with suppressed laughter and the congestion caused by stooping.

"Where is Miss Ward?" demanded Mrs. Miller, looking anxiously about for her pet.

"Miss Ward has gone for some astronomical diagrams in which we are interested," said Agatha, looking up gravely. Just then, Miss Ward, diagrams in hand, entered.

"Has that cat been in here?" she said, not perceiving that Mrs. Miller was present, and speaking in a tone expressive of strong antipathy to Gracchus.

Agatha started, and drew up her ancles as if fearful of having them bitten. Then, after looking apprehensively under the desk, she replied, "There is no cat here, Miss Ward."

"There is one somewhere: I heard it," said Miss Ward carelessly, unrolling her diagrams, which she began to explain without further parley. Mrs. Miller, anxious for her pet, hastened to seek it elsewhere. In the hall she met one of the housemaids.

"Susan," she said, "have you seen Gracchus? Where is he, and what is the matter with him?"

"He's asleep on the hearthrug in your room, ma'am. I have just seen him there."

"But I heard him crying down here a moment ago. I feel sure that another cat has got in, and that they are fighting."

Susan smiled compassionately. "Lord bless you ma'am," she said, "that was Miss Wylie. It's a sort of play-acting that she goes through. There is the bee on the window-pane, and the soldier up the chimley, and the cat under the dresser. She does them all like life."

"The soldier in the chimney!" repeated Mrs. Miller, shocked.

"Yes, ma'am. Like as it were a follower that had hid there when he heard the mistress coming."

Mrs. Miller, with a determined expression, returned to the study and related what had just occurred, adding some sarcastic comments on the efficacy of moral force in maintaining collegiate discipline. Miss Wilson looked grave; considered for some time; and at last said, "I must think over this. Would you mind leaving it in my hands for the present?"

Mrs. Miller said that she did not care in whose hands it remained provided her own were washed of it, and resumed her work at the papers. Miss Wilson then, wishing to be alone, went into the empty class-room at the other side of the landing. She took the Fault Book from its shelf, and sat down before it. Its record closed with the announcement, in Agatha's handwriting,

> Miss Wilson has called me impertinent, and has written to my uncle that I have refused to obey the rules. I was not impertinent; and I never refused to obey the rules. So much for Moral Force!

Miss Wilson rose vigorously, exclaiming, "I will soon let her know whether —." She checked herself, and looked round hastily, superstitiously fancying that Agatha might have stolen into the room unobserved. When she was satisfied that she was alone, she composed herself for an examination of her conscience as to whether she had done wrong in calling Agatha impertinent, justifying herself by the reflection that Agatha had, in fact, been impertinent. Yet she recollected that she had refused to admit this justification on a recent occasion when Jane Carpenter had advanced it in extenuation of having called a fellow-student a liar. Had she then been unjust to Jane, or inconsiderate to Agatha?

Her casuistry was interrupted by some one softly whistling a theme from the overture to Masaniello, popular at the college in the form of an arrangement for six pianofortes and twelve hands. There was only one student unladylike and musical enough to whistle, and Miss Wilson was ashamed to find herself growing nervous at the prospect of an encounter with Agatha, who entered whistling sweetly, but with a

lugubrious countenance. When she saw in whose presence she stood, she begged pardon politely, and was about to withdraw, when Miss Wilson, summoning all her judgment and tact, and hoping that they would respond to the summons—which they did not always do—said,

"Agatha, come here. I want to speak to you."

Agatha set her lips, drew in a long breath through her nostrils, and marched to within a few feet of Miss Wilson, where she halted with her hands clasped before her.

"Sit down."

Agatha sat down with a single movement, like a doll.

"I don't understand that, Agatha," said Miss Wilson, pointing to the entry in the Recording Angel. "What does it mean?"

"I am unfairly treated," said Agatha, with signs of agitation.

"In what way?"

"In *every* way. I am expected to be something more than mortal. Everyone else is encouraged to complain, and to be weak and silly. But I must have no feeling. I must be always in the right. Everyone else may be home-sick, or huffed, or in low spirits. I must have no nerves, and must keep others laughing all day long. Everyone else may sulk when a word of reproach is addressed to them, and may make the professors afraid to find fault with them. I have to bear with the insults of teachers who have less self-control than I, a girl of seventeen! and must coax them out of the difficulties into which their own ill temper leads them."

"But, Agatha,—"

"Oh, I know I am talking nonsense, Miss Wilson; but can you expect me to be always sensible?—to be infallible?"

"Yes, Agatha; I do not think it is too much to expect you to be always sensible, and —"

"Then you have neither sense nor sympathy yourself," said Agatha.

There was an awful pause. Neither could have told how

long it lasted. Then Agatha, feeling that she must do or say something desperate, or else fly, made a distracted gesture, and ran out of the room.

She rejoined her companions in the great hall of the mansion, where they were assembled after study for "recreation," a noisy process which always set in spontaneously when the professors withdrew. She usually sat with her two favourite associates on a high window seat near the hearth. Her place was now occupied by a little girl with flaxen hair, whom Agatha, regardless of moral force, lifted by the shoulders and deposited on the floor. Then she sat down and said,

"Oh, *such* a piece of news!"

Miss Carpenter opened her eyes eagerly. Gertrude Lindsay affected indifference.

"Someone is going to be expelled," said Agatha.

"Oh! who?"

"You will know soon enough, Jane," replied Agatha, suddenly grave. "It is someone who made an impudent entry in the Recording Angel."

Fear stole upon Jane, and she became very red. "Agatha," she said, "it was you who told me what to write. You know you did, and you can't deny it."

"I can't deny it, can't I?" said Agatha coolly. "I am ready to *swear* that I never dictated a word to you in my life."

"Gertrude knows you did," exclaimed Jane, appalled, and almost in tears.

"There," said Agatha, petting her as if she were a vast baby, "It shall not be expelled, so it shan't. Have you seen the Recording Angel lately, either of you?"

"Not since our last entry," said Gertrude.

"Chips," said Agatha, calling to the flaxen haired child, "go upstairs to No. 6, and fetch me the Recording Angel."

The little girl grumbled inarticulately, and did not stir.

"Chips," resumed Agatha, "did you ever wish that yo had never been born?"

"Why don't you go yourself?" said the child pettishly, but evidently alarmed.

"Because," continued Agatha, ignoring the question, "you shall wish yourself dead and buried under the blackest flag in the coal cellar if you don't bring me the book before I can count sixteen. One—two—"

"Go at once and do as you are told, you disagreeable little thing," said Gertrude sharply. "How dare you be so disobliging?"

"—nine—ten—eleven—" pursued Agatha.

The child quailed, went out, and presently returned hugging the Recording Angel in her arms.

"You are a good little darling—when your better qualities are brought out by a judicious application of moral force," said Agatha, good humouredly. "Remind me to save the raisins out of my pudding for you to-morrow. Now, Jane, you shall see the entry for which the best hearted girl in the college is to be expelled. *Voilà*!"

The two girls read, and were awestruck: Jane opening her mouth and gasping; Gertrude closing hers and looking very serious.

"Do you mean to say that you had the dreadful cheek to let the Lady Abbess see that?" said Jane, when she recovered her powers of utterance.

"Pooh! she would have forgiven that. You should have heard what I said to her! She fainted three times."

"That's a story," said Gertrude, gravely.

"I beg your pardon?" said Agatha, swiftly grasping Gertrude's knee.

"Nothing," cried Gertrude flinching hysterically. "Dont, Agatha."

"How many times did Miss Wilson faint?"

"Three times. I will scream, Agatha, I will indeed."

"Three times, as you say. And I wonder that a girl brought up as you have been, by moral force, should be capable of repeating such a falsehood. But we had an awful

row, really and truly. She lost her temper. Fortunately, I never lose mine."

"Well, I'm blowed!" exclaimed Jane incredulously. "I like that."

"(For a girl of county family, you are inexcusably vulgar, Jane). I don't know what I said, but she will never forgive me for profaning her pet book. I shall be expelled as certainly as I am sitting here."

"And do you mean to say that you are going away?" said Jane, faltering as she began to realize the consequences.

"I do. And what is to become of you when I am not here to get you out of your scrapes, or of Gertrude without me to check her inveterate nobbishness, is more than I can foresee."

"I am not nobbish," said Gertrude, "although I do not choose to make friends with everyone. But I never objected to you, Agatha."

"No, I should like to catch you at it. Hallo, Jane!" (who had suddenly burst into tears,) "what's the matter? I trust you are not permitting yourself to take the liberty of crying for me."

"Indeed," sobbed Jane indignantly, "I know that I am a f—fool for my pains. You have no heart."

"You certainly are a f—fool, as you aptly express it," said Agatha, passing her arm round Jane, and disregarding an angry attempt to shake it off; "but, if I had any heart, it would be touched by this proof of your attachment."

"I never said you had no heart," protested Jane; "but I hate when you speak like a book."

"You hate when I speak like a book, do you? Well, you certainly avoid giving a literary turn to your own expressions. I am very fond of hearing you talk. My dear silly old Jane! I shall miss you greatly."

"Yes, I dare say," said Jane, with tearful sarcasm. "At least my snoring will never keep you awake again."

"You credulous girl, you don't snore. We have been in a

conspiracy to make you believe that you do, that's all. Isn't it good of me to tell you?"

Jane was overcome by this revelation. After a long pause she said with deep conviction, "I always *knew* that I didn't. Oh, the way you kept it up! I solemnly declare that from this time forth I will believe nobody."

"Well, and what do you think of it all?" said Agatha, transferring her attention to Gertrude, who was looking very grave.

"I think—I am now speaking seriously, Agatha—I think you are in the wrong."

"How do you know that, pray?" demanded Agatha, a little roused.

"You must be, or Miss Wilson would not be angry with you. Of course, according to your own account, you are always in the right, and everyone else is always wrong; but you shouldn't have written that in the book. I think it was scandalous, and you know I speak as your friend."

"And pray what does your wretched little soul know of my motives and feelings?"

"It is easy enough to understand you," retorted Gertrude, nettled, "Self-conceit is not so uncommon that one need be at a loss to recognise it. And mind, Agatha Wylie," she continued, as if goaded by some intolerable reminiscence, "if you are really going, I don't care whether we part friends or not. I have not forgotten the day when you called me a spiteful cat."

"I have repented," said Agatha, unmoved. "One day I sat down and watched Bacchus seated on the hearthrug, with his moony eyes mastering space, reflecting deeply, yet waiting patiently; and I apologised for comparing you to him. If I were to call him a spiteful cat he would simply not believe me."

"Because he *is* a cat," said Jane, with the giggle which was seldom far behind her tears.

"No: but because he is not spiteful. Gertrude keeps

a recording angel inside her little head, and it is so full of other people's faults, written in large hand and read through a magnifying glass, that there is no room to enter her own."

"You are very poetic," said Gertrude; "but I understand what you mean, and shall not forget it."

"You ungrateful wretch," exclaimed Agatha, turning upon her so suddenly and imperiously that she involuntarily shrank aside; "how often, when you have tried to be insolent and false with me, have I not driven away your bad angel—by tickling you? Had you a friend in the college, except half-a-dozen toadies, until I came? And now, because I have sometimes, for your own good, shown you your faults, you bear malice against me, and say that you don't care whether we part friends or not!"

"I didn't say so."

"Oh, Gertrude, you know you did," said Jane.

"You seem to think that I have no conscience," said Gertrude querulously.

"I wish you hadn't," said Agatha. "Look at me! I have no conscience; and see how much pleasanter I am!"

"You care for no one but yourself," said Gertrude. "You never think that other people have feelings too. No one ever considers me."

"Oh! I like to hear you talk," cried Jane ironically. "You are considered a great deal more than is good for you; and the more you are considered the more you want to be considered."

"As if," Agatha declaimed theatrically, "increase of appetite did grow by what it fed on. Shakspere."

"Bother Shakspere," said Jane, impetuously; "—old fool who expects credit for saying things that everybody knows! But if you complain of not being considered, Gertrude, how would you like to be me, whom everybody sets down as a fool? But I am not such a fool as—"

"As you look," interposed Agatha. "I have told you so scores of times, Jane; and I am glad that you have adopted

my opinion at last. Which would you rather *be* a greater fool than y—"

"Oh, shut up," said Jane, impatiently; "you have asked me that twice this week already."

The three were silent for some seconds after this; Agatha meditating; Gertrude moody; and Jane vacant and restless. At last Agatha said,

"And are you two also smarting under a sense of the inconsiderateness and selfishness of the rest of the world?—both misunderstood?—everything expected from you, and no allowances made for you?"

"I don't know what you mean by *both* of us," said Gertrude, coldly.

"Neither do I," said Jane, angrily. "That is just the way people treat me. You may laugh, Agatha; and she may turn up her nose as much as she likes: you know it's true. But the idea of Gertrude wanting to make out that she isn't considered, is nothing but sentimentality, and vanity, and nonsense."

"You are exceedingly rude, Miss Carpenter," said Gertrude, with an assumption of dignity.

"My manners are as good as yours, and perhaps better," retorted Jane. "My family is as good, anyhow."

"Children, children," said Agatha, admonitorily; "do not forget that you are sworn friends."

"We didn't swear," said Jane. "We were to have been three sworn friends, and Gertrude and I were willing; but you wouldn't swear, and so the bargain was cried off."

"Just so," said Agatha, "and the result is that I spend all my time in keeping the peace between you. And now, to go back to our subject, may I ask whether it has ever occurred to you that no one ever considers *me*?"

"Very funny," sneered Jane.

"I am quite in earnest," said Agatha.

"You take good care to make yourself considered," grumbled Jane.

"You cannot say that I do not consider you," said Gertrude reproachfully.

"Not when I tickle you, dear."

"I consider you, and I am not ticklesome," said Jane, tenderly.

"Indeed! Let me try," said Agatha, slipping her arm about Jane's ample waist, and eliciting a piercing combination of laugh and scream from her.

"Sh—sh," whispered Gertrude, quickly. "Don't you see the Lady Abbess?"

Miss Wilson had just entered the room. Agatha, without appearing to be aware of her presence, stealthily released Jane, and said aloud,

"How *can* you make such a noise, Jane? You will disturb the whole house."

Jane reddened with indignation, but had to remain silent; for the eyes of the principal were upon her. Miss Wilson had her bonnet on. She announced that she was going to walk to Lyvern, the nearest village. Did any of the sixth form young ladies wish to accompany her?

Agatha jumped from her seat at once, and Jane smothered a laugh.

"Miss Wilson said the *sixth* form, Miss Wylie," said Miss Ward, who had entered also. "You are not in the sixth form."

"No," said Agatha, sweetly: "but I want to go, if I may."

Miss Wilson looked round. The sixth form consisted of four studious young ladies, whose goal in life for the present was an examination by one of the Universities, or, as the college phrase was, "the Cambridge Local." None of them responded.

"Fifth form, then," said Miss Wilson.

Jane, Gertrude, and two others, rose and stood with Agatha.

"Very well," said Miss Wilson, "do not be long dressing."

They left the room quietly, and did not rush until they were well out of sight. Agatha, though destitute of emulation for the Cambridge Local, always competed with ardour for the honor of being first up or down stairs.

They soon returned, clad for walking, and left the college in procession, two by two; Jane and Agatha leading; Gertrude and Miss Wilson coming last. The road to Lyvern lay through acres of pasture land which had once been arable, but was now abandoned to cattle, because they made more money for the landlord than the men whom they had displaced. Miss Wilson's young ladies were taught, in their political economy lessons, to regard this state of things as highly satisfactory; but in practice they found it somewhat dangerous and dull; for it involved a great many cows, which made them afraid to cross the fields; a great many tramps, who made them afraid to walk the roads; and a scarcity of gentlemen subjects for the maiden art of fascination.

The sky was cloudy. Agatha, reckless of the cleanliness of her stockings, waded through heaps of fallen leaves with the delight of a child paddling in the sea. Gertrude picked her steps carefully, and the rest tramped along chatting subduedly, occasionally making some scientific or philosophical remark in a louder tone in order that Miss Wilson might overhear, and give them due credit. They met no one, save a herdsman who seemed to have caught something of the nature and expression of the beasts he tended, until they approached the village, where masculine humanity appeared on the brow of an acclivity in the shape of two curates: one tall, thin, close shaven, with an umbrella under his arm, and his neck craned forward: the other middle-sized, robust, upright, and aggressive, with short black whiskers, and an air of protest against such notions as that a clergyman should not marry, hunt, play cricket, or share any of the sports of honest laymen. The shaven one was Mr. Josephs: his companion, Mr. Fairholme. Obvious

scriptural perversions of this brace of names had been introduced by Agatha.

"Here come Pharaoh and Joseph," she said to Jane. "Joseph will blush when you look at him. Pharaoh won't blush until he passes Gertrude, so we shall lose that."

"Josephs, indeed!" said Jane, scornfully.

"He loves you, Jane. Thin persons like a fine armful of a woman. Pharaoh, who is a cad, likes blue blood on the same principle of the attraction of opposites, and is captivated by Gertrude's aristocratic air."

"If he only knew how she despises him!"

"He is too vain to suspect it. Besides, Gertrude despises everyone, even us. Or rather she doesn't despise anyone in particular, but is contemptuous by nature, just as you are stout."

"Humph! I had rather be stout than stuck-up. Ought we to bow?"

"I will, certainly. I want to make Pharaoh blush, if I can."

The two parsons had been simulating an interest in the cloudy firmament as an excuse for not looking at the girls until they were close at hand. Jane sent a flash from her eyes at Josephs with a skill which proved her favourite assertion that she was not so stupid as people thought. He blushed, and took off his soft, low-crowned felt hat. Fairholme saluted very solemnly; for Agatha bowed to him with marked seriousness. But when his gravity and his stiff silk hat were at their highest point, she darted a mocking smile at him; and he, too, blushed; all the deeper because he was enraged with himself for doing so.

"Did you ever see such a pair of fools?" whispered Jane, giggling.

"They cannot help their sex. They say women are fools, and so they are; but, thank Heaven, they are not quite so bad as men. I should like to look back and see Pharaoh passing Gertrude; but if he saw me he would think I was

admiring him, and he is conceited enough already without that."

The two curates became redder and redder as they passed the column of young ladies. Miss Lindsay would not look to their side of the road; and Miss Wilson's nod and smile were not quite sincere. She never spoke to curates, and kept up no more intercourse with the vicar than she could not avoid. He suspected her of being an infidel, though neither he nor any other mortal in Lyvern had ever heard a word from her on the subject of her religious opinions. But he shook his head doubtfully; for he knew that "moral science" was taught secularly at the college, and he felt that where morals were made a department of science, the demand for religion must fall off proportionately.

"What a life to lead! and what a place to live in!" exclaimed Agatha. "We meet two creatures, more like suits of black than men; and that is an incident—a startling incident, in our existence!"

"I think they're awful fun," said Jane, "except that Josephs has such large ears."

They now came to a place where the road dipped through a plantation of sombre sycamore and horse chestnut trees. As they passed down into it, a little wind sprang up; the fallen leaves stirred; and the branches heaved a long rustling sigh.

"I hate this bit of road," said Jane, hurrying on. "It's just the sort of place that people get robbed and murdered in."

"It is not such a bad place to shelter from the rain in, if we are caught in it, as I expect we shall be before we get back," said Agatha, feeling the fitful breeze strike ominously on her cheek. "A nice pickle I shall be in with these light shoes on! I wish I had put on my strong boots. If it rains much I will go into the old chalet."

"Miss Wilson wont let you. It's trespassing."

"What matter! Nobody lives in it; and the gate is off its

hinges. I only want to stand under the veranda—not to break into the wretched place. Besides, the landlord knows Miss Wilson, and he won't mind. There's a drop."

Miss Carpenter looked up, and immediately received a heavy raindrop in her eye.

"Oh!" she cried. "It's pouring! We shall be drenched."

Agatha stopped, and the column broke into a group about her.

"Miss Wilson," she said, "it is going to rain in torrents, and Jane and I have only our shoes on."

Miss Wilson paused to consider the situation. Someone suggested that they might reach Lyvern before the rain came down if they hurried on.

"More than a mile," said Agatha scornfully, "and the rain coming down already!"

Someone else suggested returning to the college.

"More than two miles," said Agatha. "We should be drowned."

"There is nothing for it but to wait here under the trees," said Miss Wilson.

"The branches are very bare," said Gertrude anxiously. "If it comes down heavily, they will drip worse than the rain itself."

"Much worse," said Agatha. "I think we had better get under the veranda of the old chalet. It is not half a minute's walk from here."

"But we have no right—" Here the sky darkened threateningly. Miss Wilson checked herself and said, "I suppose it is still empty."

"Of course," replied Agatha, impatient to be moving. "It is almost a ruin."

"Then let us go there, by all means," said Miss Wilson, who was not disposed to stand on trifles at the risk of a bad cold.

They hurried on, and came presently to a green hill by the

wayside, on the slope of which was a dilapidated Swiss cottage, covered with weatherstains and traces of gaudy paint, and surrounded by a veranda supported by slender wooden pillars about which clung a few withes of withered creeper, their stray ends still swinging with the impulse of the recent wind, which was now momentarily hushed, as if it were listening for the approach of the rain. Access from the roadway was provided for by a rough wooden gate in the hedge. To the surprise of Agatha, who had last seen this gate off its hinges and only attached to the post by a rusty chain and padlock, it was now rehung and fastened by a new hasp. But, the weather admitting of no delay to consider these repairs, she opened the gate and hastened up the slope, followed by the troop of girls. Their ascent ended with a rush; for the rain suddenly came down in torrents.

When they were safe under the veranda, and had finished panting, laughing, grumbling, or congratulating themselves on having been so close to a place of shelter, Miss Wilson observed, with some uneasiness, a spade sticking upright in a patch of ground which someone had evidently been digging lately. The spade, like the hasp of the gate, was new. Before she had time to comment on this sign of habitation, the door of the chalet was flung open; Jane screamed; and a man darted out, seized the spade, and was about to carry it in out of the wet, when he perceived the company under the veranda, and stood still in amazement. He was a laboring man, whose age might have been doubtfully guessed as twenty-six, with a reddish brown beard of a week's growth. He wore corduroy trousers, and a corduroy vest with linen sleeves, both, like the hasp and spade, new. A coarse blue shirt without a collar, and a red and orange neckerchief of vulgar pattern, also new, completed his dress; and he shielded himself from the rain by a silk umbrella with a silver-mounted ebony handle, which he seemed unlikely to have come by honestly. Miss Wilson felt like a boy caught robbing an orchard; but she put a bold face on the matter, and said,

"Will you allow us to take shelter here until the rain is over?"

"For certain, your ladyship," he replied, respectfully applying the spade handle to his hair, which was combed down to his eyebrows. "Your ladyship does me proud to take refuge from the onclemency of the yallowments beneath my 'umble roof." As he spoke, he came in among them for shelter, and propped his spade against the wall of the chalet, kicking the soil from his hobnailed blucher boots, which were new.

"I come out, honored lady," he resumed, much at his ease, "to house my spade, whereby I earn my living. What the pen is to the poet, such is the spade to the working man." He took the kerchief from his neck, wiped his brow as if the sweat of honest toil were there, and calmly tied it on again. His accent was barbarous, and he seemed, like a low comedian, to relish its vulgarity.

"If you'll excuse a remark from a common man," he observed, presently, "your ladyship has a fine family of daughters."

"They are not my daughters," said Miss Wilson, rather shortly.

"Sisters, mebbe?"

"No."

"I thought they mout be, acause I have a sister myself. Not that I would make bold for to dror comparisons, even in my own mind; for she's only a common woman—as common a one as ever you see! But few women rise above the common. Last Sunday, in yon village church, I heard the minister read out that one man in a thousand had he found; but one woman in all these, he says, have I not found, and I thinks to myself, 'Right you are!' But I warrant he never met your ladyship."

A laugh, thinly disguised as a cough, escaped from Miss Carpenter.

"Young lady a ketchin' cold, I'm afeerd," he said, with respectful solicitude.

"Do you think the rain will last long?" said Agatha politely.

The man examined the sky attentively for some moments, and apparently made an exact forecast. Then he turned to Agatha and replied, "The Lord only knows, Miss."

Silence ensued, during which Agatha, furtively scrutinizing the tenant of the chalet, noticed that his face and neck were cleaner and less sunburnt than those of the ordinary toilers of Lyvern. His hands were encased in large gardening gloves, stained with coal dust. Lyvern laborers, as a rule, had little objection to soil their hands, and they never wore gloves. Still, she thought, there was no reason why an eccentric workman, insufferably talkative, and capable of an allusion to the pen of the poet, should not indulge himself with cheap gloves. But then the silk, silver-mounted umbrella—

"The young lady's hi," he said suddenly, holding out the umbrella, "is fixed on this here. I am well aware that it is not for the lowest of the low to carry a gentleman's brolly, and I ask your ladyship's pardon for the liberty. I came by it accidental-like, and should be glad of a reasonable offer from any gentleman in want of a honest article."

As he spoke, two gentlemen, much in want of the article, as their clinging wet black coats shewed, ran through the gate, and made for the chalet. Fairholme arrived first, exclaiming, "Fearful shower!" and briskly turned his back to the ladies in order to stand at the edge of the veranda and shake the water out of his hat. Josephs came next, shrinking from the damp contact of his own garments. He cringed to Miss Wilson, and hoped that she had escaped a wetting.

"So far I have," she replied. "The question is, how are we to get home?"

"Oh, it's only a shower," said Josephs, looking up cheerfully at the unbroken curtain of cloud. "It will clear up presently."

"It aint for a common man to set up his opinion agen a

gentleman wot have profesh'nal knowledge of the heavens, as one may say," said the man; "but I would 'umbly offer to bet my umbrellar to his widawake that it dont cease raining this side of seven o'clock."

"That man lives here," whispered Miss Wilson; "and I suppose he wants to get rid of us."

"Humph!" said Fairholme. Turning to the strange laborer with the air and loud tone of a person who was not to be trifled with, he added, "You live here, do you, my man?"

"I do, sir, by your good leave, if I may make so bold."

"What s your name?"

"Jeff Smilash, sir, at your service."

"Where do you come from?"

"Brixtonbury, sir."

"Brixtonbury! Where's that?"

"Well, sir, I dont rightly know. If a gentleman like you, knowing jography and such, can't tell, how can I?"

"You ought to know where you were born, man. Haven't you got common sense?"

"Where would such a one as me get common sense, sir? Besides, I was only a foundling. Mebbe I warnt born at all."

"Did I see you at church last Sunday?"

"No, sir. I only come o' Wensday."

"Well, let me see you there next Sunday," said Fairholme shortly, turning away from him.

Miss Wilson looked at the weather, at Josephs, who was conversing with Jane, and finally at Smilash, who knuckled his forehead without waiting to be addressed.

"Have you a boy whom you can send to Lyvern to get us a conveyance—a carriage? I will give him a shilling for his trouble."

"A shilling!" said Smilash, joyfully. "Your ladyship is a noble lady. Two four-wheeled cabs. There's eight on you."

"There is only one cab in Lyvern," said Miss Wilson.

"Take this card to Mr. Marsh, the jobmaster, and tell him the predicament we are in. He will send vehicles."

Smilash took the card, and read it at a glance. He then went into the chalet, and, reappearing presently in a sou'wester and oilskins, ran off through the rain and vaulted over the gate with ridiculous elegance. No sooner had he vanished than, as often happens to remarkable men, he became the subject of conversation.

"A decent workman," said Josephs. "A well mannered man, considering his class."

"A born fool, though," said Fairholme.

"A rogue!" said Agatha, emphatically, dashing into the conversation with a glitter of her eyes and teeth, whilst her schoolfellows stood stiffly dumb, and rather disapproved of her freedom. "He told Miss Wilson that he had a sister, and that he had been to church last Sunday; and he has just told you that he is a foundling and that he only came last Wednesday. His accent is put on; and he can read; and I dont believe he is a workman at all. Perhaps he is a burglar, come down after the college plate."

"Agatha," said Miss Wilson gravely, addressing her for the first time since their private interview, "You should be very careful how you say things of that kind."

"But it is so obvious. His explanation about the umbrella was made up to disarm suspicion. He handled it and leaned on it in a way that showed how much more familiar it was to him than that new spade that he was so anxious about. And all his clothes are new."

"True," said Fairholme; "but there is not much in all that. Workmen nowadays ape gentlemen in everything. However, I will keep my eye on him."

"Oh, thank you so much," said Agatha.

Fairholme, suspecting mockery, frowned; and Miss Wilson looked severely at the mocker. Little more was said, except as to the chances—manifestly small—of the rain ceasing, until the tops of a cab and of a brougham resembling

a decayed mourning coach, and the dripping hats of three men, were seen over the hedge. Smilash sat on the box of the brougham, beside the driver. When it stopped, he alighted, re-entered the chalet without speaking, came out with the umbrella, spread it above Miss Wilson's head, and said,

"Now, if your ladyship will come with me, I will see you dry into the shay, and then I'll bring your honored nieces one by one."

"I come last," said Miss Wilson, rejecting Smilash's arrangement, and secretly irritated by his assumption that the party was a family one. "Gertrude, you had better go first."

"Allow me," said Fairholme, stepping forward, and attempting to take the umbrella.

"Thank you: I shall not trouble you," she said frostily, and tripped away over the oozing field with Smilash, who held the umbrella over her with ostentatious solicitude. In the same manner he led the rest to the vehicles, in which they packed themselves with some difficulty. Agatha, who came last but one, gave him threepence.

"You have a noble 'art, and an expressive hi, Miss," he said, apparently much moved. "Blessings on both! Blessings on both!"

He went back for Jane, who slipped on the wet grass, and fell. He helped her to rise with some difficulty.

"Hope you aint sopped up much of the rainfall, Miss," he said. "You are a fine young lady for your age. Nigh on twelve stone, I should think."

Jane reddened and hurried to the cab, where Agatha was. But it was full; and she, much against her will, had to get into the coach, considerably diminishing the space left for Miss Wilson, to whom Smilash had now returned.

"Now, Miss," he said, "take care you dont slip. Come along."

Miss Wilson, ignoring the invitation, pulled out her purse and produced a shilling.

"No, lady," said Smilash, with a virtuous air. "I am an honest man and have never seen the inside of a jail except four times, and only twice for stealing. Your youngest daughter—her with the expressive hi—have paid me far beyond what is proper."

"I have told you that these young ladies are not my daughters," said Miss Wilson, sharply. "Why do you not listen to what is said to you?"

"Don't be too hard on a common man, lady," said Smilash, submissively. "The young lady have just given me three 'arf-crowns."

"Three half-crowns!" exclaimed Miss Wilson, angered at this extravagance.

"Bless her innocence, she don't know what is proper to give to a low sort like me! But I will not rob the young lady. 'Arf-a-crown is no more nor is fair for the job, and 'arf-a-crown will I keep, if agreeable to your noble ladyship. But I give you back the five bob in trust for her. Have you ever noticed her expressive hi?"

"Nonsense, sir. You had better keep the money now that you have got it."

"Wot! Sell the high opinion your ladyship has of me for five bob! Far be the thought from me! My father's very last words to me was—"

"You said just now that you were a foundling, my good fellow," said Fairholme. "What are we to believe? Eh?"

"So I were, sir; but by my mother's side alone. Her ladyship will please to take back the money; for keep it I will not. I am of the lower orders, and therefore not a man of my word; but when I do stick to it, I stick like wax."

"Take it," said Fairholme. "Take it, of course. Seven and sixpence is a ridiculous sum to give him for what he has done. It would only set him drinking."

"His reverence says true, lady. The one 'arf crown will keep me comfortably tight until Sunday morning, and more I do not desire."

"Just a little less of your tongue, my man," said Fairholme, taking the two half crowns from him, and handing them to Miss Wilson, who took them, bade the clergyman good afternoon, and went to the coach under the umbrella.

"If your ladyship should want a handy man to do an odd job up at the college, I hope you will remember me," Smilash said, as they went down the slope.

"Oh, you know who I am, do you?" said Miss Wilson drily.

"All the country knows you, Miss, and worships you. If you should require a medal struck to give away for good behaviour or the like, I have few equals as a coiner, and could, I am sure, strike one to your satisfaction. And if your ladyship should want a trifle of smuggled lace——"

"You had better be careful, or you will get into trouble, I think," said Miss Wilson sternly. "Tell him to drive on."

The vehicles started, and Smilash took the liberty of waving his hat after them. Then he returned to the chalet, left the umbrella within, came out again, locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and walked off through the rain across the hill without taking the least notice of the astonished parsons.

In the meantime, Miss Wilson, unable to contain her annoyance at Agatha's extravagance, had spoken of it to the girls who shared the coach with her, and had snubbed Jane for contradicting her by an assertion that Agatha only possessed threepence in the world, and therefore could not possibly have given the man thirty times that amount. But when they reached the college, and Agatha was confronted with Miss Wilson, she opened her eyes in wonder, and exclaimed, laughing, "I only gave him threepence. He has sent me a present of four and ninepence!"

Record of the International Popular Movement.

FRANCE.

The Anzin strike is not yet over, and the brave miners seem more resolved to hold out than ever. Despite the universal distress of the workers, they are making strenuous efforts throughout France to support the miners in their struggle

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The reports of the different "syndicates" on the condition of the working classes are full of interest. They disclose a state of affairs simply appalling. Yet in the face of these terrible revelations bourgeois economists and the corrupt bourgeois press affirm with a light heart, that things are for the best, and that if only working-men would "eat less" (this is literal) and be more thrifty, there need be no distress. Eat less! Why the people are literally starving, and starving, as Lafargue says, in order that their exploiters may die of indigestion.

Notwithstanding all this misery—or because of it?—the anniversary of the Commune has been celebrated with greater enthusiasm than ever. Meetings and banquets were held everywhere, and these, as the Falstaffian Meyer Oppert (Falstaffian in courage, not in wit), who calls himself Von Blowitz, and other penny-a-liners tell us, "passed off without any disturbance."

All the revolutionary organs devoted special articles and "études" to the subject. The two Socialist papers *Le Travailleur* and *La Défense des Travailleurs* were printed on red paper. Both these excellent little journals contain most interesting articles on the Commune, that of Gabriel Deville being especially noteworthy. In it he compares the revolutionary rising of Lyons in 1831, of Paris in June, 1848, and of the Commune, and he shows how in each case not only the repression had grown in ferocity, but how "the idea" of the combatants had become enlarged. "Each time," says Deville, "the repression has become more implacable, the number of killed, arrested, condemned, has increased. But the repression has not progressed alone. Its gradations correspond with the continual development of the forces and aspirations of the proletariat. Compare the number of combatants, and you will see it was far greater in 1848 than in 1831, far greater in 1871 than in 1848." And to-day, concludes Deville, the 'parti ouvrier' has a stronger position than ever, because its demands are no longer founded on a vague sense of something being wrong, but on a scientific basis, and this scientific basis is a guarantee for the success of the labourers in their great struggle against class despotism.

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I have spoken of the monument about to be erected to the memory of the martyrs of 1871. The Paris Municipal Council by the immense majority of 35 votes against 5 has decided to allow the erection of this monument. M. Poubelle the Prefect—a very remarkable man who has achieved the well-nigh impossible task of making himself even more obnoxious than his predecessor Andrieux—M. Poubelle has declared against the project, but he will probably have to give way. One thing is certain, whether a memorial stone is erected or not, the people will not forget the men who died for them in that terrible May week of 1871.

———

French Socialists at the Roubaix Congress will give the

English delegates Ernest Belfort Bax and H. Quelch, an especially kindly reception, and listen to all they say with the greatest interest. The Possibilists have, with the help of the bourgeois press, repeated so often that Mr. Broadhurst is the true representative of the English working man, that most French working men have begun to believe them. It is high time they were undeceived.

The Congress opens on the 29th March, and closes on the 7th April. There will be public and private meetings, when many important questions will be discussed. Not the least important will be that on "International Labour Legislation."

GERMANY.

The news from Germany is very encouraging. Our army of Social Democrats grows daily, and the Government acknowledges their services by demanding a prolongation of the "Socialist Law." The reasons advanced for this demand deserve to be recorded. "The Socialist law has attained its object" and must therefore be renewed. "The Socialist law has *not* shattered the organisation of the Socialist party"—and must, therefore, be renewed. And a third reason is the Viennese "outrages." It is perfectly well known that the Social Democrats have no more to do with these childish and wicked attempts than with Messrs. Wolf and Bondurand's "conspiracy;" but reasons are as plentiful as blackberries with the police-government of Germany. There is no doubt whatever that these repressive laws will be renewed; but they can no more "suppress Socialism" than Bismarck can suppress his neuralgia and his temper by drinking "Schnapps."

No doubt this Socialist law makes it difficult for our friends to do their good work, and numbers of our men are always in prison, but our party has never been so flourishing

as at this moment. Wherever bye-elections, or municipal elections have taken place, our numbers have more than doubled; and that despite the fact that Socialists may not print hand-bills, placards, or pamphlets, and that all their meetings are prohibited.

DENMARK.

A friend tells me that the Socialist party is especially well organised in Denmark. The fact that the Danish *Sozial Democrat* sells 1,200 copies *daily*, sufficiently proves this. The party moreover is strong not only in Copenhagen, but in the whole country.

RUSSIA.

There is but little reliable news from Russia, as a well-informed Russian friend has just told me. What news there is cannot at present be made public, but I am asked to tell all Socialist friends to believe nothing that appears in the reactionary press. All the details given so far about the Sudeikin execution, are more or less incorrect. A full and accurate account will shortly appear in the *Will of the People*. Meantime, Degaieff is in safety. The part played by him in this affair is most extraordinary. The Executive Committee, I hear, will shortly give all particulars in their organ which is still, despite the police, appearing at St. Petersburg.

There is one point of especial interest for us in the latest phase of the so-called "Nihilist" movement—the part taken by the working class. Till now, the Nihilists were almost entirely confined to the "upper classes." This is no longer the case. Truly the seed is sown "even in the bosom of the North."

ENGLAND.

The "dynamiters" have caused not a little panic within the last few weeks. It is almost needless to point out that

with such "attempts" as those at Victoria, Ludgate Hill, &c. Socialists have no sympathy. Such isolated and foolish acts do us all harm, and *can* do no good. But why the men who from a mistaken sense of duty risk their lives for what they believe a good cause, should be called "dastardly wretches" and "cowards," while General Graham and his butchers are called "heroes," it is somewhat difficult to understand. In dealing with these Irish "dynamiters" there is one thing we are all too apt to overlook, and that is the treatment to which many of these men were subjected in English and Irish gaols. Few men can, like Michael Davitt, pass through such a hell and come out the purer, the nobler, and the stronger. Weaker and coarser natures *must* be brutalized by such sufferings as these men underwent. For thirty-five days O'Donovan Rossa for a trivial "offence" to a warder, had his hands chained behind his back; for month after month he was tortured. The prison régime drove him mad, and if his madness takes the form of dynamite what right have his English torturers to complain?

On Sunday 16th March between five and six thousand people assembled outside Highgate Cemetery. They had met to celebrate the anniversary of the proclamation of the Paris Commune, and it was felt that there could be no fitter place of meeting than by the grave of him who died on the 14th of March last year, of him whose whole life was devoted to the cause of the people, and who in a time of danger and reaction had dared defend the insurgents of 1871 as he had defended those of 1848—by the grave of Karl Marx.

The Commune of Paris was something more than even the revolution of 1848. *That* at most was national in character, while the Commune was INTERNATIONAL. The heroic working men and women of Paris died for the working men of all countries, even as working men of all countries gave up their life for the Commune. We know alas! but too well what were the faults of the Commune, but if we still remember them

it is only that they may serve us as a lesson in the future. If to-day we can see where lay the weakness of the Communists, we none the less feel the profoundest reverence, the deepest gratitude to those who fought and died for us all. And it is well that the Socialists of England should have united with those of France, Germany, Italy, Russia, the United States in commemorating the anniversary of the greatest class-struggle we have yet seen.

The Highgate Cemetery Company had the gates closed, and "defended" by a force of 500 police. The request that at least the women bearing wreaths should be admitted was refused, and a request that I might be allowed to go alone and take these crowns and flowers to my father's grave shared the same fate. So we were obliged to leave our flowers in the hands of the police (I may here say for the information of friends that all have been duly placed on the grave,) and we adjoined to the top of the hill at Dartmouth Park, to hold our meeting. The first speaker was Dr. Edward Aveling whose splendid speech touched the hearts of all his hearers—who, thanks to his lungs, were many. He said they had assembled to celebrate the memory of a dead man, and for the sake of a living cause—the cause which that man had laboured for all his life, and whose triumphs his clear eyes had foreseen. That cause nothing could prevent from triumphing, but its speedy triumph depended upon us—upon the workers of all countries, upon our solidarity, our energy, our self-sacrifice.

After Dr. Aveling, Frohme, the representative of the German Social Democrats, spoke—and spoke admirably. Frohme is one of our deputies in the Reichstag — he represents Frankfort—and is one of our best speakers. He has since told me that he spoke the more easily because surrounded by police and forbidden to enter the cemetery he felt as if he had never left the dear Fatherland. Frohme was followed by a French working man, Lavache, who called on all proletarians to forget their nationalities, and unite in the

great fight against Capitalism. After the speeches the meeting quietly dispersed.

The "Agglomeration Parisienne" sent greetings, and expressed its sympathy with our demonstration. Russian friends expressed themselves in the same sense. From Holland we had news that the Dutch Socialists would be "with us in spirit," and the Poles sent us the following telegram: "Le comité du prolétariat de Varsovie s'unit aux délégués socialistes, réunis ce jour à l'occasion de l'anniversaire de la mort de Karl Marx dans les sentiments de regrets que leur inspire la mémoire de l'illustre lutteur pour l'affranchissement des travailleurs. Pour le Comité. . . ."

All this is very hopegiving. English Socialists will work the better for this meeting and for the feeling of their solidarity with the working men of all countries. It is not only in memory of the 35,000 martyrs of the horrible "semaine sanglante"—but because it contains a promise and a hope for the future that we cry

Vive la Commune.

ELEANOR MARX.

Reviews.

THE HISTORICAL BASIS OF SOCIALISM IN ENGLAND. By H. M. Hyndman. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, & Co., 1, Paternoster Square. 1883.

The present work is the first attempt to illustrate the historical theory of modern Socialism at length in the concrete. The task Mr. Hyndman has set himself is the elaborate one of tracing the growth and development of our present commercial system and of the class which embodies it from its rise on the disruption of feudalism downwards. Whether an exposition of this sort does not suffer from being limited to one country is a point we should be disposed to answer in the affirmative. But conceding this drawback there can be no two opinions among those competent to judge as to the general thoroughness and excellence with which Mr. Hyndman has done his work.

The chapter on "labour and surplus value" we think is peculiarly adapted to bring home to the not too pellucid intellect of the average Anglo-Saxon the economic basis of our current society, although many of us will miss the beautiful formulæ and philosophical analysis of Marx. That on the rise of the middle class is also admirable as a condensed epitome of the successive stages by which the "third estate" rose to the all but supreme power political and social which it has attained in the 19th century. The essentially social character of modern production is clearly explained in a few terse sentences on p.p. 74, 75. The observation on

p. 138 to the effect that "in England the revolution at the end of the last century was industrial, whilst that of France was in the main political, and that of Germany philosophical" only illustrates the disadvantages attending the national treatment of a subject in its nature international. We could have wished for an exposition from the pen which has given us so readable an account of the growth of the middle class of the interaction of these several factors in the phase the revolution has now reached.

We fancy had such an exposition been undertaken the racial predilictions indicated on p. 433 could hardly have been entertained. "How many generations" asks Mr. Hyndman "calculated *according to the past rate of progress* separate semi-asiatic Russia . . . . from England with its enormous city proletariat." The passage italicised by us seems to ignore the fact at other times so justly insisted upon, that the *grande industrie*, steam, electricity, &c., have entirely metamorphosed previous conditions. We see the capitalist civilisation of England spreading on all sides to the remotest ends of the earth. Even in "semi-asiatic Russia" wherever two or three communes are welded together into a township there is the factory system in the midst of them. Again is Mr. Hyndman justified in basing priority in the constructive movement on the mere fact of present pre-eminence in industrial development, leaving out of account the intellectual and political factors? It is quite true in the Anglo-Saxon race the industrial evolution has reached its highest point, but it is none the less true that the Anglo-Saxon race possesses less political initiative than the Latin, and less intellectual plasticity as a race than either the Latin, the pure Teuton, or the Slav, possibly owing to the very fact of its industrial advance. We contend that any generalisation is one-sided and vitiated which leaves out of account such important factors as these. Yet it is to countries with a predominant Anglo-Saxon element that Mr. Hyndman points under the head of Celto-teutonic peoples.

But after all, important though it is, it is a secondary matter which particular race (or whether any single race at all) is to take the lead in the new construction. So far as the essentials of Socialism are concerned Mr. Hyndman's book is a mine of accurate and sound information. The chapter on "international labour movements" will be particularly useful to English readers. The English trades-unions are justly gibbeted as an "aristocracy of labour, representing but a small fraction of the workers of the country." This chapter of course contains a sketch of the "International." The split between collectivists and anarchists is well brought out as corresponding in the new religion of Socialism to the Petrine and Pauline division in the early Christian Church. Every world-historic idea contains within it an immanent contradiction which becomes explicit in the early stages of its progress toward realisation. The socialist idea has a constructive and conservative, and a destructive and revolutionary side. The separation of these two sides and their appearance in mutual opposition leads to the mere abstract *form* of the process of change from the old to the new being erected into an end in itself. An antagonism is thus evoked in which we have on the one side an anarchism, *ie.* the apotheosis of destruction, and on the other a *Parliamentarian* Collectivism, with a tendency to eliminate altogether the revolutionary element which is essential to the concrete realisation of the idea. The true Collectivism recognises, as Marx has it, that force is the midwife of progress, though not an end, yet an essential means.

Very necessary is Mr. Hyndman's protest against the "great man" theory of history—the theory which gives the whole credit of an invention or discovery to its nominal originator, forgetting what he owed to the society into which he was born. We wish that space permitted our quoting the paragraphs on pp. 280, 281, in which the hollowness of our present political machinery is characterised. The arrangement of chapters is peculiar, but we think on the whole good, as each chapter,

being complete in itself, can be read without reference to the others, which may possibly facilitate the perusal of the book with some persons. One drawback however is that the same ground is gone over more than once; thus much in Chapters I. and II. is repeated substantially in Chapter III. So me of us may incline to think "the golden age" too highly coloured, but this is of course a matter of opinion. In conclusion, we do not hesitate to say that the book is one which ought to be in the hands, not only of every English Socialist, but of every one interested in social questions. It would be well if his electors made every Radical candidate professing to represent working-class interests pass an examination in the facts it contains before returning him.

THE HISTORY OF THE IRISH PEOPLE. By W. A. O'Conor, B.A. Manchester, Heywood; London, Simpkin Marshall, 2 vols.

A history not of Ireland but of the Irish people, dedicated to Prof. F. Newman on the twofold ground that "the Irish difficulty must be settled by the English party of progress," and that the lever which all politicians are so eager to guide according to their own views "must be planted on a secular fulcrum" is a startling novelty. Of Irish history as it is generally written the world is heartily sick. It has been treated in a way that makes it absolutely forbidding. Some have made it one long unskilful indictment against England, enlivened in the old days by selfish clan-quarrels and in modern times by the no less selfish and yet more petty party disputes which have taken their place; others, like Mr. Froude, while telling with tolerable fairness the grim tale of mis-government, try to prove that the fault is in the Irish character, that nothing but mis-government is possible for such a people. There is therefore something very taking in Mr. O'Conor's title, followed as it is by the repeated assertion that "the struggle of Ireland has always been human rather than national," and that the people (as distinct from

the successive invaders) of Ireland have been all along fighting for that truth which Englishmen are at last beginning to recognise that "God made the land to grow food and not merely to produce rent." Of course Mr. O'Conor is in one sense disappointing. You can't write the history of any people apart from the record of its accidents; and so he is obliged, after all, to hurry through the weary round of foreign aggression and internal struggle and revolt made abortive by treachery. The difference between him and others is that he does hurry through it, and that he keeps before the reader the often forgotten truth that distinct from all this welter there was always the Irish people, taking part in it only on compulsion, working up steadily towards that freedom, which, whether its early possession of it be a dream or a reality, has always been its cherished ideal. This grand past, of which Mr. O'Conor so truly says "fancied memories are hopes," is in his view something very different from that of song writer and legendary annalist. It has nothing to do with conquest and war; it is a reign of righteousness, and those who have come nearest to realising it are the Irish Saints to whom the mediæval world owed so much. But, though one of his most eloquent passages (and it is really eloquent) tells the glories of Columbanus and Virgilius and the rest, Mr. O'Conor, is no hagiologist. He praises his country's saints, not because they were saints, but because they were pioneers of free thought, grand self-denying workers for humanity. He points out that they were scientists, accused of heterodoxy, because unable to stomach "the darkening terminology of theologians," and sticklers for their own forms just because "they shrank from making a surrender which would imply that the unity of the Church rested on externals." Among them he boldly ranks Pelagius and Celestius, "Irish reformers to whose blameless lives and calm reasonings the lavish abuse of St. Jerome and the genius of Augustine were but feeble opponents." And these saints, like those other workers who of old made Irish metal and stone work and illumination and

woollen-weaving so famous, belonged not to any conquering race but to the people.

Of conquest in every form Mr. O'Conor has a righteous abhorrence. It can do nothing (he thinks) but hinder development, if it does not (as in the case of Ireland) wholly put a stop to it. "All the troubles and distractions of the Irish people, whose natural bent is towards union and peace, have come from without." Hence he includes in the same condemnation each sucessive race of invaders, beginning with those Scots or "Milesians" who are the heroes of native poet and historian. For an O' or a Mac who chose to live by violence he has no more sympathy than for a brutal Norman like de Lacy or an inhuman Elizabethan like Carew or Coote. And his theory is that these Scoti, forcible conquerors like Danes and Normans, were like them of Norse blood, and imposed their rule on a population in the main Basque, which, fed by constant additions as each foregoing horde of invaders was driven down into its ranks, still forms the bulk of the Irish people. To some extent, of course, Mr. O'Conor has ethnology on his side; it has long been seen that the difference between Celt and Saxon, so dear to newspaper editors hopelessly puzzled to account for the Irish difficulty, is only the difference between an earlier and a later wave of the self-same tide. But I don't want people to go to Mr. O'Conor for a solution of race-questions; I want to bring before the notice of thoughtful Englishmen a book which seems to me singularly timely, because it will help them to gauge the inmost feelings of that nation with whom all thoughtful Englishmen are anxious to be at one. Mr. O'Conor shows that in its ideals the Irish people agrees with the people everywhere. It has never believed in the divine right of landlords. He pours well-deserved scorn on the miserable sham of Irish official Protestantism, at the same time that he shrinks not from smiling at "the hackneyed thunders of the Vatican." He points out that Irish Catholicism is something wholly different from what the English people rejected. He is strongly in favour

of a Union, but it must be a real union of living loving equality. He shows that one great evil of the connection with England has been the character of these whom she successively sent over: "all the beggared profligacy and fermenting social refuse which England has periodically thrown off," and which forsooth with its coarseness and its violence has been, by the English world, mistaken for the Irish gentry whom it supplanted. And he does all this without a word of bitterness. He is calm and scholarly even in dealing with the rash assertions of Mr. Froude; nay there is something humourous in his way of successively traversing that historian's sucessive misstatements. His object is not to train up in hatred, but to show why there has been hatred where there ought to be (and henceforth must be) nothing but love. These things ought to be told because Englishmen know so little about them; and they have never been told with more freshness and fuller sympathy with what is right not only for the Irish people but for the people everywhere than in Mr. O'Conor's pages.

[We are requested by the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam to state that he does not admit Dr. Aveling's inference as to his disbelief in a personal immortality.—EDITORS OF TO-DAY.]