SOCIALISM FROM THE COMMONWEALTH.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE 'FRENCH REVOLUTION': THE PROLETARIAN STAGE.

The insurrection of the 10th of August, which culminated in the final downfall of the monarchy and the imprisonment of the king and royal family, was the start of a movement which, organised by a minority of entirely revolutionary, intended to be the expression of the power of the proletariat, the new Commune of Paris, the moving spirit of which was the Jacobin Club. The usual honour awaited him by the Council. Already, before the king had been sent to the Temple, the Girondin Vergniaud, as president, had moved the suspension of the "hereditary representative" and the summoning of a national convention to take the place of the Council of the Commune. A new Court of Criminal Justice was established for the trial of the crimes of August 10th. The members of the Commune, chosen by direct election, and the party qualification of "active and passive citizens" was done away with.

While all this was going on, the movement of the revolutionary armies on France was still afoot; and the furious flame of French national enthusiasm, which a few weeks before had been hushed by the news of the broken flame of her conqueror Napoleon, was lighted by the necessity of the moment—not to be extinguished in days long after his. We mention this here, because, in order to associate what follows, it must be remembered that an armed coalition of the absolutist countries was gathering together, threatening to drown the Revolution in the blood of the French people, and especially of the people of Paris; and that one of its armies, commanded by a friend of Buonaparte, a famous general of Frederick the Great, was already within a few days' march of the city; and that nothing was between Paris and destruction but undisputed military strength and the support of the old régime; while at the same time the famous royalist insurrection had broken out in La Vendée. Every republican in Paris, therefore, had good reason to feel that his own life and the future of his country was hanging by a thread at the hands of those who still cared what became of France and her people so long as the monarchy could be restored.

The Commune demanded a search for arms, which was carried out on August 29th; and the prisons were filled with prisoners suspected of royalist plotting, and many of them surely guilty of it.

Verdan fell on the 2nd September, and the Duke of Brunswick boasted that he had landed in France, and on the same night insurrectionary courts of justice—Lynch-law, as we should call it now—were established in the prisons, and the prisoners were brought before them, and submitted to forced confessions, in which they were turned out of the street with the words, "Let the prisoner be enlarged," or, "Let him be conducted to La Force" or "the Abbaye," according to whether he was at one or the other. He was then immediately cut down and asleep. A body of men waiting for him. If he was acquitted, the word went: "Let him be enlarged," with the cry of "Vive la nation!" and he went free. It should be noted, in order to show the hysterical excitement amidst which all this was done, that the accusers who were greeted with cries of joy, tears, and embraces on the part of the court and its sympathisers. It may be further noted that the watchets, etc., of the slain were brought to the town-hall by the slayers, who charged the officers with the loss it would involve them.

The next day a circular was issued by the Committee of Public Safety, calling the body of the message, signed by Sergeant Paris (Danton's friend), and Marat, with seven others.

The Girondins in the Assembly and elsewhere kept quiet for the time, though they afterwards used the event against the Jacobins. Meanwhile the French army, under Dumouriez, had seized on the woodland hills of the Arques, checked Brunswick, defeated him at Valençay, and Paris was saved.

The Convention met—on the 20th September—and the parties of the Girondins and the Mountain, or extreme revolutionists, were at once formed in it. It is noteworthy that while it declared as its foundation the sovereignty of the people and the abolition of royalty, it also declared that land and property were sacred for ever. Apropos of which, it may here be mentioned that the bookseller Mesenil, having hinted at something like agrarian law, and some faint garb of socialism according to the "ideal" which he clung to, was beheaded.

So far, therefore, we have got no further than the complete triumph of bourgeois republicanism; though, indeed, the possibility of its retaining its position depended, as the event showed, on the support of the people, which it obtained from the conviction that the condition of the workers should be altered for the better by the new régime, and those terms, in the long-run, bourgeois republicanism could not maintain itself.

The Girondins or moderate party in the Convention, began their attack on the Jacobins on the subject of the September massacres, and also by attacking Marat personally (on the 21st September)—which attack was prompted by the Jacobins. The Girondins, as a party, implies, leaned on the support of the provinces, whose respectability was stronger than in Paris, and tried to levy a body-guard for the person of Marat, and the Jacobins—Paris. But the Girondins failed; but they give the decency for it; they could not carry it out. In their resistance of political oppositions, they were also resisted the imposing a general tax on grain, a measure which was necessary caused by the general failure of crops. Whether they shared in the advantages of the Revolution. In short, the Girondins were obviously out of sympathy with the mass of the people—the only party that can effect a revolution. They always stood as posers as supporters of the rights of the people, they were bound to fall.

The trial of the king now came on, and the Girondins in a fresh way; they mostly voted his death, but as if driven to do so from the necessity of being against the programme of the majority, and having no credit for this. The king was beheaded on January 21st, 1793, and as an immediate consequence England and Spain declared war on France.

But this was the moment at which different parties, which, however, soon came to an end. Marat was the great object of attack, and on the 25th February, 1793, he was decapitated, accused on account of some passages in his journal approving of the king's actions, and having taken place in an inn. The son of a foresty Har. On the other hand, on the 10th March, the section Bonsecours demanded the arrest of the prominent Girondin, Chaumette, Danton, then they were trying the two parties, but on April 1st, the Girondins accused him of complicity with Dumouries, who had now fled over the frontier, and so forced him into becoming one of their most energetic enemies. The position of the Girondins was now desperate. On the 24th March, Marat was acquitted and brought back in triumph to the Convention.

The Girondins got appointed a packed committee of twelve in the interest of the Convention as against the Paris factions. As an answer to this a central committee of the sections was formed, which on May 31st dominated the Municipality (not both to be so dealt with) and surrounded the Convention with troops. After an attempt on the life of Girondins to assert their rights, the Convention decreed them accused and they were put under arrest. They died afterwards, some by the guillotine, some even more miserably, within a few months; but the Girondin party is looked to as the most of the Convention from this time to the fall of Robespierre in "Thermidor" was the work of a few revolutionists, each trying to keep himself in power, and each failing in the attempt. In the meantime, the French are free. The law is free if it is to be organised by those who are the masters of the labourers, and the revolutionists of this period were at one too good and too bad to be their masters; therefore, as above said, they could only drift on the current of events.

Robespierre, Danton, and the Hébertists were now what of force was left in the Convention, and doubtless the first of these had made up his mind to get the reins of power into his own hands. Montesin, the "commission of agriculture," which the Committee of Public Safety took from the march of the natural drama of the year, was published, and an attempt was made to establish a new worship founded on the principles of socialism, as all such use it, but Robespierre is the natural growth of it, it was cut down. Chaumette, Hébert and their followers were the leaders in this business, which Robespierre disapproved of, and Danton growing. The Extraordinary Tribunal under Fouquier Tinville was now the Executive in Paris, and backed by the law of suspects, speedily got rid of all obstacles to the Revolution, and of many also who had worked according to their lights for its furtherance. Robespierre, it is hard to say how or why, became, as last practical dictator.

The Hébertists under the name of the "Evangelical" (rabids) were accused at Robespierre's instance, found guilty and executed. Robespierre, giving way it would seem to some impulse towards laziness inherent in his nature, let himself be crushed, and died along with Camille Desmoulins on 31st of March, 1794, and at last Robespierre was both in reality and appearance supreme. On the 10th of June the execution of this new worship by his feast of the Supreme Being, but did not follow it up by any diminution in the number of batches for the guillotine; and ominous disturbances began to be heard. According to a popular story, it got by an incident at a little of this was arrested, among whom he read his own name. On the 26th July, Robespierre was met by unexpected opposition in the Convention. The next day he was deposed, accused of the Convention, and deposed, accused of the Convention. The insurrectionary troops on being appealed to by the Convention, waved and gave way, and Robespierre was arrested. In fact, Robespierre seems to have worn out the tastes of the Convention by his conduct, and was received with an amnesty after his Feast of the Supreme Being, he would have had a much longer lease of power; as it was he and his tail died on the 26th July.

1 A curious exemplification of the change in the speed of the progress of the Revolution is given in the fact that the first news of the fall of Robespierre was transmitted to the Convention three weeks after the event.
There was nothing left to carry on the Revolution after this but a knot of self-seeking men who had made cool and keep the mass going till they were ready for the dictator who could organise for his own purposes people and army, and who came in the shape of Napoleon. The revolutionaries were no longer needed as allies, and usually they were killed on sight. But to get to leaders, they could make no head against the Society which they had shaken indeed, owing to its internal dissensions, but which they were not yet able to defeat.

One event only there remains to be mentioned: the attempt of Balboff and his followers to get a provisional republic recognised; it has been called an insurrection, but it never came to that, being crushed by the police. But the beginning of a party took place; Balboff and his followers were brought to trial in April, 1796. He and Darthes were condemned to death, but killed themselves before the sentence could be executed. Five men were then committed to prison and exile; and so ended the first Socialist propaganda.

It is commonly said that Napoleon crushed the Revolution, but what he really did was to put on it the final seal of law and order. The aristocratic and middle-class struggle has conquered and is supreme from henceforth.

E. BELFORT BAX and WILLIAM MORRIS.

(To be continued).

PROFESSION VERSUS HANDICRAFT.

It is a very common point for anti-Socialists in discussion to cite the case of our leading professional men, and ask will such men be content to hand their control of the labour of the country over to a body whose character is unknown. It may be expected that Socialism should be applied to them—men who now fairly see their thousands a year. At first sight it would seem a strange conception, and that the equalisation of all employments was the call of our eminent professional men command such high salaries only points out that good physicians, surgeons, engineers, architects, etc., are scarce, although, the learned professions are overstocked, and overstocked, to a point which is due to our present commercial system, as I shall now have to prove.

It is generally admitted and acknowledged by our middle and upper classes—that is, by the class who live on what is commonly called private property, or even partially live on it—that manual labour in the United Kingdom is degrading, although when they are driven, through misfortunes, to go to the colonies, Canada, or the United States, they rapidly change their minds on this subject. The middle-class don't object to their sons being shepherds, providing it is beyond the seas somewhere. The consequence is that those who can afford it put their sons into the "general calling," and in fact one of the questions under the heading of society is, "How the youth intellectually capacify this profession?" or "Is he socially and morally fitted for this work?" No; it is simply a question of money. The only questions that are asked are: "What will it cost to make him a doctor?" or "Can I support him until he gets a practice?" A youth can be made a doctor for so much. Some of our leading engineers will take pupils for three to five hundred a year, and have no hesitation in putting them to the cold without the open door, and a certain formation is necessary to make a good surgeon—there are moral and social faculties which must be taken into account before a man is qualified to attend to the young, the feeble, and the helpless.

But if we are going to employ a person to do the occupation suited to their intellectual, moral, and social characteristics.

It will be now seen why some professional men are so eminently successful. They are doing work that they would do even if they were not for the gentlemen. You have all of you heard of the goose that laid the golden egg. Well, gentlemen, these (turning dramatically to Colonel Makins and his friends on the platform) are the geese.

SONGS FOR THE PEOPLE.

I. THE RISING OF THE LIGHT. (To the air of "The Rising of the Moon.")

Hark! the sound of many voices proclaim the dawn of day,
And in the glow of morning the shadows fade away;
Lo! the trumpet is ringing the death of the beast.
And your masters flee in terror at the coming of the light.
O, the coming of the light! O, the coming of the light!
And the workers' strength shall prove it at the coming of the light.

March! March! Ye swarming myriads, from the alley and the slum,
See, the gods of this world tremble with a fear that strikes them dumb.
Arm! arm! then, and make ready. Ye know that might is right.
And the workers' strength shall prove it at the coming of the light.
O, the coming of the light! O, the coming of the light!
And the workers' strength shall prove it at the coming of the light.

LITERARY NOTICES.

Die Neue Zeit, of Evanston (Ill.), U.S.A., has ceased to exist. Started under what were apparently promising auspices and run with a good deal of energy and enterprise, it has, after a brief career, shared the fate of so many other pioneers and "gone under."

The Irish World, the paper which was honoured by the English Government, with the announcement to its editors that they were "encouraged," is no more. The fact is, that the numerous conflict and racial attack on the Irish National party by its friends, with whom have been adopted the tactics put in force by their opponents, has driven the Irish National party, their policy is now "nationalist only," not only an alert and vigorous foe of English rule in Ireland, but also—takes an advanced stand upon all labour-matters. Its editor and staff, therefore, a pretty thin and a grip of an old and active supporter of clients to see that merely political liberty leaves a lot yet to be striven for. "Hence these tears" on the part of our rulers, who have given to exact the Irish National party policy, without having the ability the one in the wide world forbidden to enter our free and happy land!"

"It is to be regretted that the failings of the other sex so often compel a woman to work merely to support her family," etc., etc.—(Boston) Woman's Journal. It is to be regretted that women offer labour for a lower price in the market and undervail their husbands. It is also to be regretted that the woman's suffrage advocates do not go a little further into the economic causes of woman's position to-day instead of wasting their breath in abusing the male animal.—M. M.

We are sometimes accused of ill-nature when we hint that the disinterested benevolence which prompts some folk to support foreign missions is not quite "all wool," and that besides the advertise in solid papers, there is with a good return for their investments in this direction. In alluding to the above, it is not one of the outlying military posts in Burma, Allen's Indian Mail of 18th inst., says: "It was then ascertained that he was a military pusher of a celebritious

D. N. J. COUL.

WHAT IS MURDER?—"Does murder become sanctified in proportion to its likelihood of resulting in wholesome massacre?" This important question is asked by that highly respectable Conservative organ the Globe, in a more than usually eloquent article on the extradition treaty between England and America. To this one can only reply that entirely depends by whom the murder is committed. If a murder is committed by a dynamite and thereby endanger the personal safety of a Tory minister, we can understand that the action is a very wicked one, and those individuals should be immediately exasperated by the Government. The country has its back, in the shape of spies, policemen, prisons, and so. But when a civilised government sends its agents to murder, and that the agent is with all the power of a military establishment and the wealth and prestige of a great service in establishing commercial relations between the two countries, and the trader will once more be indebted to the missionary as a pioneer. Just so:—

THE CRUSE OF THE BEECHES, by Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar. (3s. 6d.)

"The ordinary Chinese peasant is far better off than the agricultural serf in England. And if some of the Chinaman's home seems queer to hard, they do not glimpse the soil to which he would go if they were good enough for their Christian brothers. In England, too, how often will you see a peasant till his own land? How often will you find a peasant, who has farmed, have no property of any sort, or any notion of right except the right of self-control. The Cruise of the Beeches, by Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar.