our men. In doing this, he expressed a hope that this would be the last of these cases. So we do. But we are bound to point out that such police interference occurred in that case without any evidence that the assaulted person had committed any offence. We have heard of similar meetings being stopped; that the unwritten but very real law which recognises certain spaces as sanctioned for open-air speaking has been broken by the police; that hence all these improvements in the whole affair began at one time or another, by injunctions action on the part of some of the inferior police officials, and their superiors have found themselves committed to the unwisdom of this action and all its consequences, and the law for the benefit of the people by their subordinates, and by setting well severely alone prevent more ill coming. If this ill-advised interference ends, the meeting will at once fall back to their former level of insignificance.

EDWARD AVELYN.

SOCIALISM FROM THE ROOT UP.

CHAPTER IV.—MODERN SOCIETY: EARLY STAGES.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century the centralising, bureaucratic monarchies were fairly established: so, in France at least, they were even showing the birth of modern party-government, which since—carried on, indeed, under the veil of constitutionalism—has been the type of modern government. Richelieu—the man of state and country—begins the series of prime ministers or real temporary kings, who govern in the interest of class society, not much encumbered and a good deal protected by their clerks, the hereditary formal sham kings. In England, on the other hand, the same incomparably ferocious, like Burleigh approached the type. Elizabeth reduced the Tudor monarchy to an absurdity, a very burlesque of monarchy, under which flourished rankly an utterly unprincipled and corrupt struggle for absolutism and aristocracy. The tide was still more rankly, perhaps, under James I., who added more cowardice to all the other vices which are more common to arbitrary high place and power.

As to the condition of the people during the latter years of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, the economical and religious revolution which had taken place had oppressed them terribly, and the "free workman" had to feel the full force of the causes which had pressed him with his "hands to the plowshare;" that part of whose function was the housing and feeding of any part of the workmen temporarily displaced. A Poor Law, therefore, was passed for dealing with this minority, and this law was powerfully maintained for a whole century. It was expected from the way in which the poor had been dealt with up to that time: so much so, indeed, that the utilitarian philanthropists of the beginning of this century felt obliged to deal with it in a very different way from the Poor Law as we now say as cruel—as could well be. Toward the middle of the seventeenth century things began to improve with our working population: the development of manufactures, and the inroads of the gilds, were revived again, though of course under the new system of cultivation for profit. Matters were in fact settling down, and preparing the country by a time of something like prosperity for the new revolution in industrial relations.

The condition of the people was on the whole worse on the Continent than in England. Serfdom was by no means extinct in France and, especially, in Germany, and that serfdom which by side with the exploitation of the market they it had been in the feudal period. Other survivals of the medieval epoch there were also—e.g., in Germany the girls had still some life and power, and the people were not utterly divided from the family and the State. In England, although the predominant competition of the markets prevented whatever good might linger in these half-extinct customs from acting for the benefit of the people. At the same time the populations were crushed by the frightful wars which passed over them—in which religion was the immediate excuse.

The first of this series was the war carried on in Holland against the Spaniards; into whose hands they have been thrown by the family affairs of Charles V. Although noblemen took up the side of the rebels—e.g., Egmont and Horn, executed for so doing—this was in the main a war of the bourgeoisie on behalf of Protestantism, as the feeling of a common interest. England, although the predominant competition of the markets prevented whatever good might linger in these half-extinct customs from acting for the benefit of the people. At the same time the populations were crushed by the frightful wars which passed over them—in which religion was the immediate excuse.

In Germany the struggle known as the "Thirty Years' War" was between the great vessels of the German empire, the shadow of whose former power was used for the aggrandisement of the house of Charles V., and also for the enforcement of Catholicism on the more northern countries. It must be remembered, by the way, that these countries were to the full as absolutist as those which obeyed the bidding of the Bourbons. This miserable war, after inflicting the most inhuman outrages on the unhappy German people, was terminated with far less mercy and consideration than if they had been beasts; after having crushed the rising intelligence of Germany into a condition from which it has only arisen in days of revolution and out of a miserable and aimless manner, leaving the limits of Protestant and Catholic much farther apart than it had found them; but it also left the people quite fearless against the bourgeoisie and its masters.

In France this religious struggle took a very bitter turn, and was far more political than in Germany. The leaders were even prepared to change their creed when driven into a corner—as Henry of Navarre at the time of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. The former, on the other hand, the more popular sympathy was by no means in favour of Protestantism: the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, which inflicted such a terrible blow on the Huguenots, would, on the other hand, have been more popular if it is true that the great Protestant leader, Henry of Navarre, became Huguenot king of France, but his accession did not carry it with a triumph as a consequence. Henry had to abjure Protestantism; a Protestant of the first importance.

The great struggle in England came later, and consequently probably the victory was more decided on the Puritan side. The enthusiasm with which Mary Tudor—"Bloody Mary"—was received, and the Catholic insurrections in the reign of her successor, showed that there was at first some popular feeling on the Catholic side; but by the time of James I., Catholicism was dead in England. The Book of Sports issued by his Government, which encouraged the people to play at play, was such as to make it a much more religious as far. For the rest, the Parliamentary party was on the advance among statesmen as well as politicians and religion, and the King's party was simply reactionary; but the war, as we have seen, was too little of a revolution to reduce the political oligarchy against a nobility inspired by a kind of romantic after-glow of medieval chivalry. The successful outcome of the individual struggle of Cromwell against the Real Whig whatever aspirations towards republicanism were cherished by a few pariahs, as well as the enthusiasm of the wild sectaries whose hopes of a rule of saints on the earth were tinctured by some kind of communist ideas; which were further foreed by the Levellers and their followers, who had been led by Rousseau with a tax-gathering machine by the care and talent with which he fostered the manufactures of France, which just before his time were at a very low ebb, and so that there was no need to touch the revenues of the nobility, who were free to spend their time in dancing attendance on the Court, say, were not free to do otherwise. The century began with the French monarchy triumphant over all its great vessels; it finished by reducing all its vassals, great and small, to the condition of courtiers, with little influence in the country-side, and diminished rents—mere absentee landlords of the worst type, endowed with privileges which could only be exercised at the cost of the starvation of the people and the extermination of a great part of the population. The curate and the tax-gatherer have entered into the Court glory. Everything in France, therefore, foreshadowed political revolution. What the advancing constitutionalism of England fore-shadowed we shall have to speak of in our next chapter.