

**MRS. GRUNDY'S MISHAP.***(See Cartoon.)*

AN old lady, in fear of a terrible foe,  
Ran away from her shadow a short time ago—  
Eighth day—second month—and the week-day was Monday;  
And the old woman's surname was said to be Grundy.

What caused the unlucky old lady to quake?  
And why should her shadow have set her a-shake?  
She was doing her best to look sober and solemn,  
As she passed by the base of Trafalgar Square column.

That she had some large parcels to carry is true;  
And a good many people with nothing to do  
Were waiting about on the chance of a job,  
When poor Mrs. Grundy got mixed in the mob.

Now what were the parcels she had in her hand?  
The load that looked largest was labelled the Land,  
And the labourers living there once had been driven  
Elsewhere to find houses—in hell or in heaven.

Another good-sized one was simply her purse,  
Which no wonder she clung to, for better, for worse;  
But the fact that 'twas heavy with other folks' gold  
Made it slightly unsuitable for her to hold.

She had fastened the folds of the gown that she wore  
With her bonds and her bank-notes behind and before;  
But the cloak that she trusted for hiding her gown  
She found to her horror was fast falling down.

Now in bonds and in bank-notes for clothes to be clad  
Might have well made her nervous, except that she had,  
To defend her from danger of drops or of dust,  
A grand old umbrella whereon she could trust.

A grand old umbrella, two-handed and stout—  
This handle was active when that was worn out—  
And each was adorned with the head of a scamp:  
She called the umbrella her Government gamp.

But just at this juncture, to add to her fears,  
An unemployed urchin's voice struck on her ears,  
And not stopping to listen to what he might say,  
She hoisted her gamp up to hunt him away.

That she thus should be troubled she thought it was hard,  
Having bought her a Bobby of tape and of card,  
Whose duty it was in the name of the law  
To protect the possessions she clutched in her claw.

So she hoisted her gamp up, when what did she see?—  
What a terrible curse a bad conscience must be!—  
She saw very plainly, terrific and tall,  
A brutal black bogey 'twixt her and the wall.

That bogey's black arm was uplifted to smite;  
And gruesome was good Mrs. Grundy's affright;  
For enormous and weighty and knotted and black  
Was the bludgeon whose blow took its aim at her back.

She tottered and trembled—for terror turned pale—  
But such sad situations 'tis proper to veil—  
Yet before she got home she abused like a Turk  
That unemployed urchin who asked her for work.

J. L. JOYNES.

**INSURRECTION IN BELGIUM.**

## I.

THE events which have taken place in Belgium since the 18th of March, the anniversary of the Paris Commune, and which still continue, although under slightly altered conditions, certainly deserve that we should endeavour to understand and to explain them, in a manner somewhat different from that which has been done by the papers of the bourgeoisie, the very organs of financial, commercial and industrial feudality.

Belgium is certainly the most extraordinary country in the world; everywhere, in other lands, its liberty, its greatness, its riches are boasted of; all the citizens are equal in the eyes of the law, and all offices alike open to them; liberty of conscience is absolute, and no one can be hindered in any manner whatsoever, from freely expressing his opinion upon all subjects, whether philosophical, political, or economical; its constitution, the palladium of all its liberties, is inviolable and has never been violated; all those privileges which were formerly attached

to birth or wealth, have been abolished; in a word, Belgium, that happiest corner of the earth, envied by the gods, has for more than fifty years existed in joy, comfort and liberty, under the protecting ægis of a king who, having nothing to do at home, devotes his leisure to carrying the benefits and blessings of Belgian civilisation to the unfortunate negro savages of the region of central Africa.

We do not know whether after the events which have so suddenly broken out in this earthly paradise, the buffoons who make it their mission to form public opinion in other countries, will still think and write in their journals that little Belgium is the model of a constitutional country; but we believe that for our part we shall find but little difficulty in proving that in Belgium liberty is a bitter irony, that its greatness only resembles a soap-bubble which a mere breath is sufficient to burst; and that its riches are entirely absorbed by an oligarchy composed of an exceedingly small number of people, who, to the great detriment of the large mass of the nation, are living by theft, fraud, rapine and exaction. There is no country in the world where equality between the citizens exists less than in Belgium; where privileges are more scandalously accumulated in the hands of the few; where the social problem presents itself more formidably and where, unless all the symptoms are deceptive, revolution will break out sooner than anywhere else.

Corruption is the greatest fomentor of revolution; and it may safely be said that in Belgium the governing, aristocratic and middle-classes are all absolutely corrupted. Power, politics, the magistracy, the political press, both great and small, finance, commerce, industry, literature and science—everything is bought and sold, everything is bartered.

Power is for the highest bidder; this régime of political intrigue and constitutional corruption has so deteriorated the character and the heart, that moral and social decomposition exists there without remedy, and will finish by carrying away everything.

The invasion of political functions by financiers of all sorts, has produced there such confusion that one no longer knows whether he has to do with honest but stupid legislators, or with vulgar stock-jobbers. For more than half a century the Belgian bourgeoisie have plunged themselves up to the neck in the mire of finance, in gambling on the exchange; and there is scarcely a minister, a representative or political man whose name has not been stained by some doubtful association, whose fame has not suffered from his being mixed up in some equivocal transaction. The aristocracy of birth, having shaken off its old prejudices, joins hands with the aristocracy of fortune, and both by mixing politics with finance, government with business, have contrived to cover the country with an inextricable net-work of companies, joint-stock, insurance, banking, agricultural and industrial; with coal and iron and stone, and even mud and dirt companies of all kinds, all set on foot by a "Company of General Improvements," which sustains the political power and is sustained by it. Intrigue, stock-jobbing, trading, speculation, are organised from the top to the bottom of the governmental ladder; the Exchange is the antechamber of the Ministry, and the Ministry is the vestibule of the Bank! Thanks to this system, ambitious people destitute of energy or talent, cynical flatterers and shameless courtiers, divide between themselves places, offices, and "honours," and emulate each other in devouring all who are not traffickers like themselves. The magistracy, the press, literature and science, are at the service of these people and complaisantly cajole their improper combinations. No dignity, no shame, nothing but the immoderate love of money. Science is on the same level as civic intelligence; it only exists in order to invent new ways and means of making business. Literature is a sink where all the vices, whether coarse or attractive, are by turns exhibited for the amusement of that gangrened society which is no longer capable of taking strong, healthy and substantial nourishment. The Belgian bourgeoisie is simply a mob, without ideas and without a conscience; it inspires the heart with disgust, not even with indignation.

A society which has arrived at such a degree of moral and social corruption, cannot exist long, and therefore, also, nothing can prevail against the new society which is organising itself slowly but surely. From time to time, one of these formidable revolts, like the one which has just raged in Belgium, comes to interrupt the tranquillity of the bourgeoisie; these signs are the harbingers of the social tempest, the "Mene, Tekel, Upharsin" of modern times, and will break out again here and there, with more or less force, until one day, the cup of iniquity being full, the destruction will be complete and final.

VICTOR DAVE.

*(To be continued.)*

One of the saddest things in the terrible struggle for life at the present day is the eagerness with which any "employment" however miserable, is clutched at; so that when the Bourgeois conscience awakes to the fact that some occupation or other is so disgracefully carried on that something must be done to amend it, the victims of the abuse themselves are often among the first to cry out against the interference. The case of the pit-brow women is an example of this: they are prepared to fight tooth and nail in defence of their wretched work, and are being helped in their battle by philanthropists and fine ladies whose imaginations are not strong enough to master the picture of their daughters or themselves working day in day out on such terms. When will the workers at least come to understand the meaning of employing women and children to do work which men can do better, which is simply the reduction of the wages paid to the adult male at the expense of the over-work and degradation of the weaker members of the household; a price not too high to pay for cheap labour, thinks the capitalist, since I don't pay it.

W. M.