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NOTES ON PASSING EVENTS.

THE democratic side of the new Tory Democracy will be severely tried by the new development of the land-war in Ireland, of which the "battle" of Clonakilty was a dramatic incident. Whether the plan of campaign given in *United Ireland* be carried out or not, we may be at least sure that the resistance to rent will take some definite and organised shape. Under these circumstances the Government will doubtless find the Closure a necessity to them, and Lord Randolph Churchill may well bid a high price for it, and Tories and Whigs of all shades must put up with it.

Or is his lordship really going further on the democratic path? If so here is an opportunity for him. Let him bid the Home Secretary to release the lately imprisoned crofters, and administer a good, snub to the judge for his vindictive and cruel sentence; some of us might be shaken in our views of him then, and suppose him capable of something else than the most barefaced chicanery.

"The quality of mercy is not strained," says Shakespeare, apparently thinking of the jelly-bag. But on this occasion the judge must have strained it very fine indeed, since the jury recommended the convicts to mercy, and the judge admitted that those who had the lighter sentence were little more than lookers-on. Perhaps taught by this judicial champion of common-sense, they will remember a familiar proverb next time, and do something more than look on.

According to the story given of an incident in the Czar's life those who are engaged in defending him run almost as great a risk from his Majesty's hand as those who are plotting his death. This story, though it has been denied, may be true in spite of that, but true or not, it was clearly not thought an impossibility; and even that fact gives us a curious indication of the joys of a tyrant's life, still more curiously emphasised by Mr. Ralston's apology, that it was a true story of the late Czar.

The war cloud meanwhile seems to be gathering and darkening. It may well be that with Russia in such a condition the Czar may think it the best chance of prolonging his dastard's life to stir up Russian Jingoism to the utmost, and that the risk, fearful though it is, must be borne. Whatever may happen, the advance of Socialism is not likely to be retarded. Nay, it is difficult to conceive but that a war must inflict a terrible wound, and probably a fatal one, on one or other of the great reactionary powers. Nevertheless, from the point of view which is presented to us English Socialists, a war is to be deprecated for other reasons than the natural human horror at causeless slaughter and misery. It is rather the miseries of bourgeois peace than those of war which will force on the workers perception of the fact that our commercial system is rotting into a chaos which, but for the steady advance of Socialism, would mean a return to a savagery a thousand-fold worse than that from which mankind has slowly and painfully emerged.

For if Europe were to be at war again many worthy persons would point out that all our misfortunes were due to it, and that peace obtained once more all would be well again. Moreover, the pleasurable excitement of reading every morning stirring news of the hopes and fears of the contest, while we sat safe at home, would arouse our latent Jingoism, and would take people's attention off the really important social matters which they are now forced to consider, and the pressing nature of which is now educating the people surely if slowly.

But that is not all, nor the most important side of the matter. It is a frightful thing to have to say, but a true one, that a war would at first benefit those of the workers who were not immediately concerned in it: it would "give employment" by destroying before they were used some of the commodities made by the workers, not for their own livelihood, but as counters for "making money." The miseries of war would not really be felt till peace came again, the sham peace of our class society, bringing with it once more lack of employment, over-production, over-population, and the rest of it, till men at last, unable to bear the consequences of their own folly any longer, would rise in a body and accept the social revolution, thrusting aside the turnip-lantern boggy of fear so sedulously held up to them by interested fools, scoundrels, and cowards. When they do that they will find no

tremendous difficulty in making what they want for their own use, and using it.

But all that they might come to without the intervention of war and slaughter, and probably the sooner, since, as aforesaid, they will feel the pinch more speedily, and see the only remedy more clearly.

Meanwhile, it is a favourite amusement with the middle-classes to try to prove to the workers that they do not suffer, or that if they do, yet things are getting better in spite of the depression of trade. Lord Derby (who, though an earl, is mentally as complete a specimen of the bourgeois as could be wished) is the latest player in this game. He professes, however, that he is perplexed at the figures that show that our prosperity is increasing while our trade-profits are falling off. It might be suggested to him as a solution of his "perplexity" that the ever-increasing productivity of labour, or, if you please, the increasing cheapness in the processes of manufacture, is telling more and more in favour of the "haves" and against the "have-nots"; that the tendency is for the middle-class, now that it has embraced the aristocracy and made them all traders, to extend downwards, and so to widen the basis of class-robbery or property; so that at first sight Lord Derby has some reason to be reassured as to the stability of the Robber Association, miscalled Society, which it is his sole business to uphold.

Nevertheless, this very process of the extension of the class to which his lordship (mentally) belongs, tends also to consolidate the genuine working-class by levelling them; and his lordship increases his perplexity, it may be said in passing, by confusing some of the working with the middle-class. But the great difficulty is now arising for the middle-class, which would increase Lord Derby's perplexity if he could turn his attention to it. The middle-class exists only as an employing class, and their success in cheapening the processes of labour is making it difficult for them to employ their—slaves. And unless they can get over that difficulty the days of class-robbery of our modern sham Society are numbered. Nor can they get over it; because competition will force them to go on cheapening manufacture in the teeth of an ever-increasing "reserve army of labour," which will at last (and surely before long) be forced to employ itself—and where will the middle-class and its economical earls be then?

Will Lord Derby explain a thing which one would think might perplex many people? Optimist economists are apt to show with great glee the advantages of our present working population in the cheapness of living, on account of the low price of necessities and small luxuries; but the very same persons are no less gleeful, and deduce the same lesson of the general rise in the comfort of the people when they are able to show that the prices of commodities are rising. Lord Randolph Churchill, for instance, clearly felt that he was on safe ground at last when he encouraged the Kentish lunatics (beg pardon, Tories) with the good news of the rise in pepper and quicksilver; and a writer in the *Daily News* gets really quite jolly (there is no other word) in recounting the fact that Cheshire cheese is rising beyond all manner of doubt. What does it all mean? Is it good that prices should rise, or that they should fall, or that they should both rise and fall? Here is perplexity for you, surely worthy of Colney Hatch—or Kent!

The Lord Mayor's Show is to change its character somewhat this year; there will be the usual sheriffs' and aldermen's carriages, and the usual company banners, and the usual circus show, and no doubt the usual amount of spectators, or perhaps more; but in addition there is to be a show, organised by the Social Democratic Federation, of the unemployed of London, which is likely to be a curious part of the pageant. Whatever differences of opinion there may be about the general tactics of the Federation as to this matter of the unemployed (and I for one do not agree with them), the demonstration will no doubt show the dominant classes the "difficulty" above mentioned in an impressive manner. Indeed, the mere announcement of the intention to organise the procession has set the whole of bourgeoisdom in a twitter, and has drawn from its press various oburgatory articles which betoken a bad conscience at least; the general tone of them, stripped of their verbiage is really "Can't you let it alone?" The bourgeois is hard to convince that what is on the whole a pleasant world to him is not as good for those whose misery makes his ease; and his peevish anger at any one trying to lift a corner of the curtain for him knows no bounds, unless it is done in a merely dramatic manner, with no hint at ulterior consequences.

Colonel Fraser's letter to the Council of the Federation is not a satisfactory piece; it seems at least possible to read between its lines a threat of letting loose the indifferent rough on the procession. Anyhow, since it is clear that the Federation will do their utmost to make the demonstration go off in an orderly manner, there will be no difficulty in the way of the police ensuring that result if they are in earnest in wanting to do so.

Meantime, the commercial classes are so nervous about the affair, that one gentleman has written to the *Daily News* proposing to withdraw the show this year, which a leader-writer in the same paper, with a strange appreciation of the value of words, calls a *bold* proposal. The truth is that the war of Commerce is getting so fierce, and so many people suffer from it, that the rich and well-to-do must expect to have their follies and pleasures interfered with by the necessities of those sufferers, just as they would be in a time of mere open war, and once more it is a good thing to reach their feelings through the tough hide of use and wont, by any means that will do so without doing damage to the Cause in other ways.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

SOCIALISM FROM THE ROOT UP.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE UTOPISTS: OWEN, SAINT SIMON, AND FOURIER.

It is now necessary for us to turn for a while from the political progress of Socialism, to note the school of thinkers who preceded the birth of modern scientific or revolutionary Socialism. These men thought it possible to regenerate Society by laying before it its shortcomings, follies, and injustice, and by teaching through precept and example certain schemes of reconstruction built up from the aspirations and insight of the teachers themselves. They had not learned to recognise the sequence of events which *forces* social changes on mankind whether they are conscious of its force or not, but believed that their schemes would win their way to general adoption by men's perception of their inherent reasonableness. They hoped to convert people to Socialism, to accepting it consciously and formally, by showing them the contrast between the confusion and misery of existing civilisation, and the order and happiness of the world which they foresaw.

From the elaborate and detailed schemes of future Society which they built up they have been called the Utopists; the representatives of the different phases of their school are three most remarkable men, born within a few years of each other, whose aspirations and insight have done a very great deal to further the progress of Socialism, in spite of the incompleteness of their views.

Robert Owen was born at Newtown, Montgomeryshire, in 1771, of a lower middle-class family; he became a successful manufacturer through his own industry and quick-wittedness in the beginning of the rise of the Great Machine Industries, when "manufacturing" was advancing "by leaps and bounds." He was a born philanthropist in the better sense of the word, and from the first showed in all matters unbounded generosity and magnanimity. In the year 1800, when he was not yet thirty, he became the manager of the New Lanark Mills, and set to work on his first great experiment, which was briefly the conversion of a miserable, stupid, and vicious set of people into a happy, industrious, and orderly community, acting on the theory that man is the creature of his surroundings, and that by diligent attention to the development of his nature he can be brought to perfection. In this experiment he was entirely successful, but it was not in him to stop there, as the plain words he said of his success showed clearly enough: "Yet these men were my slaves."¹ He took part in all kinds of projects of a philanthropical nature, still founding all his action on his theory of the perfectibility of man by the amelioration of his surroundings, and became the first great champion of co-operation, although he did not suppose, as the co-operators of the present day do, that anything short of universal co-operation would solve the social question. In 1815, he pressed a meeting of Glasgow manufacturers to petition Parliament to shorten the hours of labour in the cotton mills, and the change which he experienced from the approbation of the governing classes to their reprobation, may well date from that proceeding of his, as a bourgeois biographer of his hints. But he still kept his position of a popular philanthropist, even after his declaration in favour of co-operation, until he at last cut himself off from respectability by openly attacking Society through its received religions (August 21, 1816), from which date onward he was scouted by all that "Society," of which he was now the declared enemy. But he was in nowise daunted. In 1823, he proposed Communistic villages as a remedy for the distress in Ireland; he established, in 1832, an exchange in Gray's Inn Road, in which labour was equitably exchanged against labour; and in 1825 he bought New Harmony from a community already established there (the Rappites), and made his great experiment in living in common; and late in life he published his 'Book of the New Moral World,' which contains the exposition of his doctrine.

It will be thus seen that he was unwearied in practical experiments. His shortcoming was the necessary one of the utopist, a total disregard of the political side of progress; he failed to see that his experiments, useful as they were from that point of view, could never develop out of the experimental stage as long as the governors of

Society forcibly uphold the so-called "rights of property," and he ignored the antagonism of classes necessarily existing under this system, and which in the long run must bring about the Socialism which he, the most generous and best of men, spent his whole life in attempting to realise. He died in 1858.

Saint Simon was born of a noble family at Paris in 1760. He acquired and ran through a fortune, deliberately experimenting in the various forms of "life" from extravagance to abject poverty. There was in him none of that tendency to practical experiment in quasi-Socialistic schemes which characterised Robert Owen. His philosophy was mingled with a mysticism which had a tendency to increase, a tendency to form a new religion rather than to realise a new condition of life, and which was carried into the absurdities of a kind of worship by his immediate followers, more or less imitated by the Positivists of our own day, whose founder, Auguste Comte, was his most cherished disciple. His Socialism was of a vague kind, and admitted the existence of classes of talent as expressed by the motto of Saint Simonism, "From each according to his capacity, to each according to his deeds." In spite, however, of the tendency to mysticism, he showed singular flashes of insight in matters historical and economic, and intellectually was certainly ahead of Robert Owen. He may be said to have set himself the task of learning all life by whatever means and at whatever expense, in order to devote himself to the new religion, "whose great aim is the swiftest possible amelioration of the moral and physical condition of the poorest and most numerous class."

Frederick Engels well says of him: "As early as his 'Letters from Geneva,' Saint Simon laid down that all men ought to work, and that the Reign of Terror had been the reign of the non-possessing masses. To face the fact in 1802 that the French Revolution was a struggle between the noblesse, the bourgeoisie, and the non-possessing classes was a discovery of genius. In 1816 he asserted that politics were but the science of production, and predicted their absorption by economy. The knowledge that economic conditions serve as the base of political institutions only shows itself here in the germ; nevertheless, this proposition contains clearly the conversion of the political government of men into an administration of things and a direction of the process of production; that is to say, the abolition of the State, of which such a noise has since been made."

Internationalism also was clearly enunciated by Saint Simon. We quote Engels again: "With an equal superiority over the views of his contemporaries, he declared in 1814, immediately after the entry of the allies into Paris, and again in 1815 during the war of the hundred days, that the sole guarantee of the peace and prosperous development of Europe, was an alliance between France and England, and of those two countries with Germany. Certainly it needed a courage by no means common to preach to the French of 1815 alliance with the victors at Waterloo."

It is worth noting that one of the schemes of the Saint Simonians, which was most ridiculed at the time, was the cutting of the Isthmuses of Suez and Panama, and that M. de Lesseps was a Saint Simonian.

Saint Simon died in great poverty in 1825, with words of hope for the future of the party on his lips.

Charles Fourier was born in 1772 at Lyons; his father was a draper. He lost his property in the Revolution, and afterwards went into business as a broker. Amidst his dealings with Society, he was early struck by the shortcomings and injustices of individualism and competition. In his first book, 'The Theory of the Four Movements,' he elaborates the proposition that human nature is perfectible through the free play of the appetites and passions, and asserts that misery and vice spring from the restraints imposed by Society. His criticism of modern Society is most valuable as anticipating that of scientific Socialism; unlike his contemporaries he has an insight into the historical growth of Society: "He divides it into four periods of development, Savagery, Barbarism, Patriarchalism, and Civilisation, meaning by the latter the Bourgeois Civilisation."¹ His saying, "In civilisation poverty is born even of superabundance," may well be noted in these days, and compared with Robert Owen's in 1816, "Our best customer, the war, is dead."

As a basis of the reconstruction of Society, Fourier advocated Industrial Co-operation; but here his Utopianism led him to the trap of formulating dogmatically an electorate scheme of life in all its details, a scheme which could never be carried out, however good the principle on which it was based might be. His scheme arranges for phalanxteries as the unit of co-operation, in which all life and all industry, agricultural and other, should be carried on, and all details are carried out by him most minutely, the number of each phalanxtery being settled at 1600 souls. His most valuable idea was the possibility and necessity of apportioning due labour to each capacity, and thereby assuring that it should be always pleasurable, and his dictum that children, who generally like making dirt-pies and getting into a mess, should do the dirty work of the community, may at least be looked on as an illustration of this idea, though laid down as a formal law. His system was not one of pure equality, but admitted distinctions between rich and (comparatively) poor; and advocated a fantastic division of wealth between labour, capital, and talent. The abolition of marriage was a tenet of his doctrine.

In 1812, Fourier's mother died and left him some property, and he retired into the country to write his 'Treatise on the Association of Domesticity and Agriculture.' Afterwards he came to Paris again, became a clerk in an American firm, and wrote in 1830, his 'New In-

¹ Yet in 1806, when owing to the rise in cotton he could not continue manufacturing, he stopped the mills and paid his people their full wages till he could go on again in four months' time, a proceeding which cost him £7000.

¹ Frederick Engels in 'Socialisme Utopique,' and 'Socialisme Scientifique,' as also the quotations above.