"Well, these men, though conscious of this feeling, had no faith in it. Nor was it, for looking around at the big masses of the oppressed classes too much burdened with the misery of their lives, and too much overwhelmed by the selfishness of misery, to be able to form a conception of any escape from it except by the ordinary way prescribed by the system of slavery under which they lived; which was nothing more than a remote chance of climbing out of the oppressed into the oppressing classes."

"eqwad," they knew that the only reasonable aim for those who would be revolutionaries in the world was in the condition of equality, in their impatience and despair they managed to convince themselves that if they could by hook or by crook get the machinery of production and the management of property so altered that the lower classes (so the horrible word ran) might have their slavery somewhat ameliorated, they would be ready to fit into this machinery, and use it for bettering their condition still more and still more, until at last result would be a practical equality, (there were very few of using the word ‘practical’), because ‘the rich’ would be forced to pay so much for keeping ‘the poor’ in a tolerable condition that the condition of riches would be no longer valuable and would gradually die out. Do you follow me?"

"Partly," said I. "Go on."

Said old Hammond: "Well, since you follow me, you will see that this theory was not altogether unreasonable; but practically, it turned out a failure."

"How so?" said I.

"Well, don’t you see," said he, "because it involves the making of a machinery by those who didn’t know what they wanted the machines to do. So far as the masses of the oppressed class furthered this scheme of improvement, they did it to get themselves improved slavations."

And if the classes of the working-men had been incapable of being touched by that instinct which produced the passion for freedom and equality aforesaid, what would have happened. I think this is true: that something of the working class would have been so far improved in condition that they would have approached the condition of the middle rich men; but below them would have been a great class of most miserable slaves, whose slavery would have been far more hopeless than the older class slavery had been."  

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

(This Story began in No. 209, January 11, 1890. A few sets of Rock Numbers can still be had.)

IN FRANCE.

Terrorism has ruled for the last three weeks in France. M. Constantin, Minister of the Interior, is certainly not a man of genius, and is a very clever rascal, has quite well understood how to support the bourgeoisie in an apparently respectable form. He has succeeded in misleading the paltry public, and some men having gone through their talent and education a certain influence over their friends and the mass of the workers. M. Constantin saw that depriving the workers of the right of forming anything by the support of the good laws and with the support of the Anarchists, which had been removed lately from the Rue du Marais. The head printer, Cabot, was arrested; Grave, the manager of the Révolte, was not. The Paris week with week went on in a bourgeois printing office. It is true that Malato, Martinet, Gégoz, Merino, Petaryc, Prodi, and other Anarchists were arrested, and will be tried on the day that they have been distributed pamphlets and manifestoes to students and to the soldiers. Comrade Stoianoff, a Bulgarian student, was also arrested, and was under the protection of comrade Molnari, an Italian Anarchist, and there were found some manifestoes, but the comrade was successful in escaping. It is to be feared that the foreign press will be hand in hand with their respective govern-ments after serving their sentences. Louise Michel and Robsavin were almost arrested, and some other arrests must be kept secret. Tramps frequenting the Boulevard, (which has been cut in custody), but this has been a long time ago, in November, when the crisis and starvation were growing threatening against the possessing classes."

Goods are theirs who enjoy them.—Italy.

With sublime condensation, millionaires’ daughters have been visiting the working-women’s convention this week, and informing poor girls, who work for three and five dollars a week, what wonders economy must be made to accomplish with their incomes. For pure heartlessness and coldness, this “takes the biscuit.”—Boston Daily Globe, April 18.

NOTES.

The Commission on the ill-treatment of the so-called daimyauts in Chatham prison has reported on the subject in the way that might have been expected from a Committee sitting on a very bad case; and that is, to say, that ‘Well, it doesn’t matter.’ The case seems to have been so plain that even the respectable Daily News has had its stomach turned by it, and a line of sense writing in its columns has condemned the finding of the Commission on the above words, but very mildly. Let us say a few plain words on the subject.

The prison system of this country is, and is meant to be, a system of torture applied by Society to those whom it considers its enemies; but this fact is kept in the dark as much as possible, lest ordinary good-natured people, who do not want to torture persons unless fear is necessary, should see what is being done, and should be forced to go away—or at least altered. The ordinary middle class man, till within the last few years, had no idea of what went on in a prison; and even now, after some light has been thrown on it by the imprisonment of a German Anarchist in Ireland and the Chatham inquiry, he can not much as he can. Keeping things dark is the necessary rule in a prison.

Now it is clear that no one could accept the office of habitually torturing his fellow-creatures unless he were a specially callous and degraded man, and were probably also driven to it by hard need; it follows as a matter of course that the officials of a prison must be chosen from the off-scorings of the earth. Surely the evidence of such people should be taken with great reserve by men not interested in suppressing anything.

But the ruling classes are, as we have seen, deeply interested in proving that the prisons are in certain respects a fine institution. The facts will dispel that idea, and show that it is a system of hideous and wanton cruelty. Can we expect, therefore, that any enquiry into the treatment of men considered as the special enemies of Society will be a fair investigation, a just report? It should be, as that highly respectable, the Daily News, has found out.

I appeal to all honest and generous-minded men, whatever their opinions may be, to consider what this extra torment and insult means applied to men already tortured by the mere cast-iron system up to the limits of humanity. Society, filled with the idea that a prisoner so over-burdened with misery already, so helpless as he is, is such a dastardly and abominable crime, that any crime committed by the prisoners in a jail sinks by comparison into insignificance. You men of the comfortable middle-classes, so kind and unselfish in family life, so scrupulous in business—so respectable, in a word—think of what you are doing vicariously by means of the dreadful tools you have made necessary to you! Think of it—if you dare!

Amongst this Commission of Evasion we read the names of Mr. Drummond and Mr. George Shipston. These gentlemen were, no doubt, put there because our rulers thought, or pretended to think, that they represented the working-classes. I appeal, not to Socialists, but to the working-men in general to say whether it is not about time to let the said rulers understand clearly that this humbug can be stood no longer, and that these gentlemen and others like them must not represent the working-classes, or any section of them. W. M.

Hunger pierceeth stone walls.

Eighty destitute men are receiving food and shelter at the old Immigration Depot, Bristol (March 15).

Henry George says he believes in nothing half-way.” Then why, asks the Bulletin, is he not a land-nationalisationist or a Socialist.

The boy question is not yet (March 15) settled among the Charter Towers unions. At the nine where men were working for boy’s pay, the manage-ment, out of pithful spirit, discharged all the lads employed, and a small minority of the miners, fathers of the lads, are attacking the management as if they were the cause of their children’s poverty. It appears to a “white” man, coming in for plenty of abuse. The large majority recognise the union only did its duty when it shut down on men receiving boy’s wages.

ALL WE LIKE SHEEP.—Tobacco, a newspaper published in the interests of the cigar and tobacco manufacturers, gives in a recent issue the curses sent out to manufacturers in this line of industry by a committee who are opposing the clauses in the Tariff Bill affecting tobacco imports. The curses include the term of petition for all convicts engaged on the installations to employers in the trade are as follows: “We would advise that you copy the following in duplicate, have the petition signed by every employe in your factory,” etc. Judging by the number of signatures Labour, the cool assumption in the passage we italicised, that the em-ployees, as a matter of course, would sign their names, and hand it to the employers and have it to the petitions they shall sign. Unfortunately, the despotico language of the circular only reflects the actual conditions of matters in many establishments where we are not only subordinated to the dictates of their masters in their political movements. But we cannot help thinking that the framers of this circular might at least have prevented some effect. Let the employers be compelled to put some other ground than the mere will of the employer. It would have looked better and been more politic. We commend this instance to those who are so terribly solicitations that the “individuality” of the citizen will be sacrificed by labour reform.