

THE EUROPEAN TERROR.

THE repression of the conspiracy of the *Mano Nera* in Andalusia, the explosion of bombs charged with dynamite in our peaceful little Belgium, the riots of Monçeau-les-Mines in France, the Nihilistic character which the Irish agrarian movement is taking, and the terrible explosion at Westminster, show that it is clearly time that this movement, which has attained already so wide a development and which is certainly destined to play a most important rôle in the history of Christian and civilized nations, should be studied attentively.

The Socialists of the present day may be divided into two parties or sects; on the one hand there are the Collectivists, on the other the Nihilists or Anarchists. Sometimes these two parties are opposed to each other, as, at the present moment, in France; at others they unite together, as in Spain for the *Mano Nera* conspiracy. This conspiracy is of a pronounced agrarian character, and has been principally recruited from agricultural labourers and small farmers, who were reduced to despair by the *latifundia* and bad harvests. The principles of the Spanish *Mano Nera* are a sort of Communism, as may be judged from the following passage of their programme:—

“Land,” they say, “exists for the common good of mankind, and all have an equal right to its possession; it was made what it is by the active labour of the working classes. The existing social organization is both criminal and absurd. The workers produce, and the rich do nothing but benefit; and not only so, but have a hold on the workers; therefore it is impossible to feel too deep a hatred for political parties, for all are equally despicable. All property acquired by the labour of others, be it revenue or interest, is illegitimate; the only legitimate possessions are those which result directly from personal exertions. Consequently our Society declares that the rich be held to participate no longer in the rights of man to his fellow, and that to combat them, as they deserve, all means are good and necessary, not excepting steel, fire, and even slander.”

Their mode of action is exactly that of the Nihilists in Russia, and that employed also for the agrarian crimes in Ireland. The tenets of the popular or secret tribunal resemble also those of Nihilism. They are headed by the following declaration:—

“Whereas the Government, by its refusal to accept the international law, has prevented a peaceful solution of the social question, it has become necessary to establish a secret revolutionary organization. Victory is still far distant. Sins are daily committed which must be punished, and as all the members of this society are bent on a chastisement being carried out, a popular tribunal is charged with the condemnation and punishment of the crimes of the middle classes. Members of this revolutionary tribunal must belong to the International League and be capable of executing the task they undertake. The middle classes may be chastised in every possible way—by steel, fire, poison or otherwise.”

In the fourteenth century Socialism in England had very similar notions, save the reference to the employment of force. The follow-

ing words are put into the mouth of a priest, John Ball, speaking in the name of the peasantry, by Froissart:—" Good people, things cannot and will not go well in England till all shall be in common; that there be neither lord nor vassal, but we shall be all united. To what good are those we call lords masters over us? Why do they hold us in bondage? And if we be all descended from the same father and mother, Adam and Eve, how can they show themselves better than we, save only in that they spend what we earn? They are clothed in silks and camocas, in velvets and furs, while we wear the poorest cloth. They have their wines, their savoury dishes, good bread and cakes, while we sleep on straw and live on rye-bread and water. They have their manors and palaces, which they enjoy in idle luxury, while we labour in the wind and rain, to earn a scanty nourishment, and yet it is our labour that gives them their plenty."

As early as the close of the thirteenth century the communistic ideas of the orders of the Begging Brothers found an echo in the verses of the Flemish poet, Jakob van Marlant. The following is an extract:—

"Twee worde in die werelt syn:
Dats allene *myn* ende *dyn*,
Mocht men die verdriven
Pays ende vrede bleve fyn.
Het ware al vri, niemen eygyn,
Manne metten wiven.
Het waer gemene tarwe ende wyn."

"Two words exist in the world, *mine* and *thine*. If they could be suppressed peace would reign and all would be free—no serfs, neither men nor women; corn and wine would be in common."

I think it may be safely affirmed that in France the majority of workmen in the large towns and great centres of industry, in addition to a certain number of agricultural labourers, are already Socialists. According to information, for which I am indebted to the kindness of M. B. Malon, the author of a good history of Socialism, and one of the leaders of the movement in Paris at the present time, the party may be approximatively divided as follows: At the extreme left are the Anarchists or Nihilists, such as Prince Krapotkine and Elisée Reclus. They, to a certain extent, hold Proudhon's ideas of *Anarchy*, but follow more directly Bakounine, who, by the formation of secret societies from the remnants of the International League, has spread notions of Russian Nihilism in almost every Socialist circle. The Anarchists are few in number, but they are exceedingly enthusiastic and fanatic, and the extreme adepts of the party hesitate at nothing—petroleum, fire, bombs, dynamite, and even assassination, as in Spain. Metayer, who died recently in Brussels from the results of the explosion of dynamite concealed on his person, and his companion, Cyvoct, belonged to this dangerous class.

Nihilistic Anarchism does not make much progress in France, because Frenchmen have a preference for fixed ideas for their programmes of reform. The articles of a new social code, to please them, must be clearly drawn up, and all the plans easy to grasp. Collectivism offers all this to a certain extent, and we will now try to analyse its principles. Collectivists are themselves divided into two groups, and more distinctly so since the Socialists' Congress of Saint Etienne, in September, 1882. There are the Collectivists, the followers of Marx, who live in expectancy of a revolutionary movement, like the ancient Jacobins; and the evolutionist-Collectivists, who are beginning to admit the truth announced by science that, in the social order, as in nature, all must change slowly and by evolution. These latter are called "Possibilists," because they recommend the urging of legal claims, and take part in electoral conflicts, not merely as a protest, but that their ideas may gain access to Parliament.¹ In this respect they follow the example of the German Socialists, who have not only succeeded in sending eleven or twelve members to Parliament, but have also induced the German Government to take up the question of social reforms, as doubtless the number of votes obtained by the Socialists in the electioneering total did much to influence this decision.

Among Socialist workmen the evolutionist-Collectivist creed is the most popular, and gains rapid ground against the "Irreconcilables,"—the Anarchists and the Jacobins—who dub their opponents traitors and cowards. In order more clearly to show the notions they hold, I will now quote some of the most important passages of a programme of their's recently published:—

"Whereas the emancipation of the producing classes is that of all human beings, indistinctive of either sex or race; that the producers cannot be truly free until they themselves possess the means of production, and that there exist but two ways of their so possessing them: first, individually, and this has never existed as an established state of things, and industrial progress has rendered it wholly out of the question; and secondly, collectively, and as the very development of capitalist society prepared the elements requisite for collective possession, the French Socialist workmen considering a return to this collective possession of the means of production the great object to be obtained, have decided to take part in elections adopting the following programme. . . . Economic programme.—1st. One day of rest weekly, and the labour of adults reduced to eight hours per day. Prohibition to employ children under fourteen years of age in factories. 2nd. A legal *minimum* of wages, to be fixed every year, according to the local price of provisions. 3rd. Equal wages for the two sexes (their labour being equal). 4th. Complete and scientific and professional instruction for all children at the cost of the State and the Commune. 5th.

(1) In the election which has taken place at Belleville to replace Gambetta, each of these parties had its candidate. The Marxists had selected Jules Guesde, and the Possibilists J. B. Dumay, a mechanist and former mayor of Creusot. Among the chief men of this party may be mentioned Jules Joffrin, town councillor, an enlightened and active workman; John Labusquière, an orator well listened to at meetings; Deynaud, said to be an economist; Paul Brousse, a converted Anarchist; and B. Malon, the theorist and learned man of the party.

Society to provide for old people and invalids. 6th. The master to be held responsible for all accidents. 7th. The workmen to have a voice in the drawing up of any special regulations for their special works or factory. 8th. Revision of all contracts that have alienated public property, banks, railways, mines; and the working of the factories belonging to the State to be entrusted to workmen themselves. 9th. Abolition of indirect taxation, to be replaced by a progressive tax on all incomes which exceed 3,000frs. (£120), suppression of all indirect succession and of all direct succession exceeding 20,000frs. (£800). 10th. Reconstitution of communal property. 11th. The Commune to appropriate all unemployed funds at their disposal to building on the land belonging to them, workmen's cottages and warehouses, and these to be let to workmen without profit to the Commune."

The word Collectivism is a new one, but the idea forms part of every system of present Radical Socialism. Radical Socialism either wholly suppresses or restricts the right of hereditary succession within very narrow limits, even in the direct line, because the effect of this is to increase inequality, as the heirs are in the enjoyment of possessions which they themselves have not laboured for, and this is in direct violation of the doctrine which says that property should be the reward of personal exertions, and, consequently, contrary to distributive justice. Hereditary succession suppressed or limited, what would become of the lands and other means of production left ownerless? Evidently, as at the present day, when there is no heir, they would go to the State, who would, in some cases, depute the Commune to hold them.

Collectivism may be conceived more or less completely applied, according as the State hold only the soil, and this is the system which is being now so much discussed in England, under the name of *nationalisation of land*, or as the State hold all fixed capital, and in this latter case, all that is reserved to individuals is the enjoyment of what they can purchase with the immediate produce of their labour. The "Saint-Simonians" have gone deeper than any in this problem; for, without stopping to trace any plan of ideal organisation, like Fourier or Cabet, and without referring to or quoting economic principles, as Marx and Lassalle did, and most ably too, they at once, and very directly, attack hereditary succession, on which, in point of fact, all depends. But, to obtain a more precisely defined notion of Collectivism, it is necessary to study the writings of the Belgian Socialist, Colins, and of his disciples. Collectivism, which has become the gospel of contemporary Socialism, sprang, it is true, from the general effect of the equalising movement of which it is, indeed, the enforced conclusion, and not at all from the works of Colins. But it is Colins' theory of Collectivism—especially as condensed by his disciples, Hugentobler, Borda, and Agathon de Potter—which is the most clearly defined and the easiest to grasp.

Colins and his disciples are very proud of their philosophical views, on which they maintain the whole of their system, which they call Rational Socialism, is based; but here the lack of any special study becomes too clearly visible. They admit the immortality of our

spiritual being, which they call by a strange misapplication of the word, "sensibility," and they deny the existence of God. They are most earnest in demonstrating that notions of morality, justice, and equality, as regards rights and privileges, are founded solely on the permanency of human personality, but they do not recognise that the pursuit of a rational order supposes an ideal, an aim and object beyond and above ourselves. They are therefore at the same time Spiritualists and Atheists.

All men are equal, as all are formed by the union of a sensibility to an organism. All men are brothers, as all have the same origin. Man alone, among all created beings, is responsible for his actions, for he alone is conscious, intelligent, and a free agent. As opposed to the order of physics, where all is fatal there exists a moral order of justice and liberty.

Man being a responsible agent, his every action must be infallibly and fatally rewarded or punished, according as it is or is not in accordance with the conscience of the perpetrator. And for this punishment to be inevitable it must take place in an existence posterior to the present one. All irrefutable arguments constitute *impersonal reason*. When this is regarded as prescribing rules and authorizing or forbidding actions, it may be called *sovereignty*.

Originally there only existed man and the planet on which he developed. On the one hand there was labour, on the other, the soil as raw material, without which all labour would have been of course impossible. But the union of the two elements of production created matter of a special kind—the accumulation, so to speak, of labour, changing in its nature, and this matter detached from the planet is called *capital*.

Capital, while fostering production, is an instrument of labour, but in order to become productive it must have something to act upon, and this something is the soil, which is therefore indispensable. According to Colins the following important result arises from the absolute necessity man feels for an object on which to expend his strength. Labour is free when the raw material or the soil belongs to the labourer. Otherwise it is fettered; the workman's labour is then for the benefit of the holder of the soil or the owner of the raw material; he works with his permission, and when a man needs another's authorisation to act, he is not a free agent.

A collective appropriation of the soil would secure to every member of society a permanent proprietorship of the national soil, and for land to become collective property it would be necessary, in the first place, that it should be at the disposal of those who wished to turn it to account; and secondly, that the rent paid by the tenant to society should be employed for the joint benefit of all. According to the Belgian Socialist there exist two forms of property quite distinct the one from the other: the one in vogue at the present day, in which

land belongs to individuals or certain classes of individuals, and labour is fettered; the other, the system of the future, when land will become collective property, and labour will be free.

What we have stated above refers to the production of wealth. We will now examine how Rational Socialism arranges for its distribution. When labour is free—and this is the case only when land is accessible to all—every man can live without receiving wages from his fellow. Men then work for others only when offered, as salary, more than they could gain if they worked for their own profit.

When such a state of things exist we say in economic terms that wages are at a *maximum*, the greater share in the profits of labour going to the labourer, and the lesser to capital. When labour is fettered, workmen, to avoid starvation, offer to work for the owners of land and the possessors of capital, and as there is competition, wages fall to what is strictly necessary for the most ordinary requirements of life. If the holders of wealth do not need labourers, the superfluous hands must disappear. Wages then fall to a *minimum*, and the largest share in the profits of labour goes to proprietors and capitalists, the smallest to the labourer. When labour is free, every man's wealth increases in proportion to his own labour. In the opposite case, a man's riches increase as his capital accumulates. Colins deducts the two following consequences from these two dissimilar systems of property in land. When land is owned individually, the riches of the upper classes and the poverty of the lower increase in parallel lines, and in proportion as intellectual power develops in society; while when land is collectively appropriated, the riches of every one increase in proportion to the activity displayed by each, and in accordance with the economic progress made by civilisation. Colins seeks a confirmation of his views in history.

The earliest sovereign is physical strength. The father of the family rules; the strongest of the tribe commands; but if the number of human beings increase, this sort of sovereignty can be but of short duration, for he who is at one time the strongest cannot always remain so. What happens then? In order to continue chief, he changes, says Jean Jacques Rousseau, his strength into a right, and obedience into a duty. To this end he affirms that there exists a being conceived as a very powerful man called God. That God has revealed rules of action, and has appointed king and priest as infallible legislators and interpreters of His revelation. That God has given to every man an immortal soul, and according as man has or has not been obedient to revealed law in this world, so in the world to come will he be either rewarded or punished. But as these doctrines must not be examined or looked into, ignorance is maintained and thought compressed as much as possible. Theocratic sovereignty, or sovereignty by divine right, is thus established, and

society becomes aristocratic and feudal. This is the historical period which rational Socialism names the *period of social ignorance and of compressibility of examination*.

After a term of years, longer or shorter according as the development of intelligence and the discoveries which follow are rapid or the reverse, and as communications with other lands are facilitated, the examination into facts can no longer be wholly suppressed. Then the sovereignty by divine right is contested, and its authority falls to the ground. The government is transformed, and despoiled of its theocratic mask. It becomes merely a sovereignty of strength—that is to say, of the majority of the people. Aristocratic society becomes “bourgeoise,” and the historical *period of ignorance, combined with the incompressibility of examination*, is attained.

Society is then profoundly agitated, and disorganization spreads rapidly. The theories and principles which previously insured the obedience of the great masses of the population lose their power. Everything is doubted and discussed. Denial of the ultra-vital sanction and of an anthropomorphic God ends in the affirmation of materialism. After this, with an ever-growing number of people, personal interest wields a greater sway than notions of order and justice, and a state of society is reached of which Colins speaks as follows: *a period of social ignorance, in which immorality spreads in proportion as intelligence develops*. This is the stage we have now reached.

As pauperism increases in similar proportions, producing revolutions, this “bourgeois” society is but of short duration, and sovereignty by divine right is restored for a time, when new revolutions brings back the “bourgeoisie.” Society cannot tear itself from the dismal circle in which it turns since the earliest origins of humanity. When, as a result of new inventions, of the development of the press, and the impossibility to suppress the universal enlightenment which ensues, all return to a theocratic form of government has become out of the question, humanity has but two alternatives—either to definitely perish in final anarchy, or methodically to reorganize itself according to recognised dictates which reason demonstrates. It is at this point that humanity attains the last period of its historical development—the period of *knowledge*, which will last as long as the life of the human species is possible on the globe. A theocratic administration, says Colins, is order based on despotism; a democratic administration is liberty engendering anarchy; a rational or *logocratic* administration would be productive, at the same time, of both order and freedom.

According to the Belgian Socialist the society of the future will be organized as follows:—All men being by right equal, will occupy equal conditions with regard to labour. Man is a free agent; his labour must then be free also, and to this end matter must be made subordinate to intelligence, and labour must own both land and capital.

Wages would be then always at the highest possible maximum. All men are brothers, for they have a common origin. If, then, any are unable to support themselves, society must care for them and supply their wants. In the intellectual world there must be an equal distribution of knowledge to all, and, in the material world, social appropriation to all of the soil and of the wealth acquired by past generations and transformed into capital.

Society must give theoretical and practical instruction to all minors gratuitously, and children be taught, by physical science, in what manner to act on matter to be able to turn it to the best advantage, and, by moral science, how they must behave to their fellow men. On leaving the establishments for public education on coming of age, young men will be called upon to serve a sort of apprenticeship for active life in the service of the State, thus paying in a measure the debt incurred during childhood. When of age, each member of society will be given a fixed sum as a dowry to establish himself in life, and this sum will be taken from the surplus of the State receipts. Three different careers are now open to the young man—he can either work alone, or associate himself with others to produce in common, or, if he prefer avoiding all personal risks, he can hire himself to another, who will direct and take the responsibility of all operations.

Society offers either land or capital to the first two categories. To this end land is divided into farms larger or smaller according to the locality in which they may be situated, the requirements of the population, and the fertility of the soil. These farms are let to the highest bidder, who is forbidden to sub-let. Society also lends capital, in order to prevent individual capitalists demanding a higher rate of interest than that fixed by law.

Colins suggests also several other measures for assuring the subjection of capital to labour, or, in other words, maintaining wages at as high a rate as possible, and also for stimulating every member of society to labour to the best of his ability.

The first of these measures is the abolishment of perpetual interest, which shall be replaced by the payment of debts as annuities during the life of the creditor; the abolishment of capitalist associations, those for labour being alone sanctioned, and the competition of society itself against individual trading. The second consists in limiting hereditary succession to the direct line, all other successions *ab intestat* returning to society, and in laying a heavy tax upon all wills.

By the enforcement of these several measures the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity would be established; at the same time the turning to account of labour by individual capital would be effectually prevented.

The disciples of Colins maintain that in this system there is perfect harmony between intelligence and property. All have a share in the possession of the soil; all have their leisure, and all

possess the intellectual and material necessities for their earthly happiness. Society based on principles rationally incontrovertible may be freely discussed; being founded on justice there need be no fear for its stability. Being in conformity with reason, and guaranteeing to each of its members a maximum of well-being, according to his personal aptitudes, he who is miserable has but himself to reproach for his misery. Who, then, would dream of overthrowing an administration which injures no one, but gives satisfaction to all?

Colins's Collectivism is applicable to land only. The same ideas have been recently and more forcibly set forth by Henry George in his book entitled *Progress and Liberty*, and by M. A. Russell Wallace in his *Nationalisation of Land*. The idea of Collectivism applied to every branch of production was foreseen as early as 1854 by a French philosopher, François Huet, who published a most able work on social reform, entitled *Le Règne Social du Christianisme*. The aim of this book is to prove that equalising Socialism has its root in the Old Testament and in the gospel.

The first article of all the recently published Socialist programme is general Collectivism, or, as they call it very strangely, *Communisme libertaire*. But the only publication in which the system is clearly defined and scientifically discussed is a short pamphlet entitled, *Quintessenz des Socialismus* (translated into French by M. B. Malon). It consists of extracts from a large work on Sociology—*Bau und Leben des Socialen Körpers* (Constitution and Life of the Social Body), by Dr. Albert Schäffle, formerly financial minister of Austria, and one of the most eminent of Germany's economists.

Let us follow Dr. Schäffle's analysis, and endeavour to obtain a correct idea of Collectivism applied to both capital and land. We must beware of mixing up this system with Communistic Utopias. The ideal of these latter was a Trappist monastery, common labour, a common life, common enjoyment of produce, without any regard to the work accomplished, just as in family life. Collectivism admits of families living apart, and, by making all remuneration proportionate to the labour effected, it keeps up private interest. With a collective organization, there should be as many co-operative societies as there are principal branches of industry—agricultural societies, transport societies, manufacturing societies of all kinds. Farms, mines, railways, factories, workshops, which, are in principle the collective property of the State, would be handed over to workmen's corporations, who would be charged with their administration, thus replacing the present joint-stock companies. Workmen would be paid in accordance with the quantity and quality of their labour; there would be, therefore, the same stimulant for activity and care as at the present day—at least for the workmen. The only difference would be that, on the one hand, they would be paid the total of what

their work produced, nothing having to be deducted for rent, interest, or profit; and, on the other hand, all, even those now idle, would be forced to work, for the means of production being no longer private property, the income they now bring in to individuals, and which allows of their living in idleness, would have ceased to exist.

In primitive societies, where every man possesses his instrument of labour, land, tools, or implements, the wherewithal to carry on his trade, whatever it may be, the ideal of justice, which consists in each enjoying what he produces, is realised; but, since the introduction of large industries and extensive landed property, the remuneration of labour is reduced to a minimum by the number of applications for land and for labour—that is to say, by the anticipatory claims of land and capital. Collectivism, admitting the co-operative productive system which the employment of machinery enforces, aims at realising the end which would be attained by generalised private property, viz., the securing of the full enjoyment of the produce to the producer. Everything concerning means of transport and circulating medium, money, credit, &c., would become a public service. Dr. Schäffle even supposes the realisation of a general system of exchange and remuneration spoken of by Proudhon and Marx, and which would be as follows. By virtue of the economic theory which holds that all value is derived exclusively from labour, the workman would be paid for each object the *average* number of hours necessary for the manufacture of the said object, and he would be paid in cheques or tickets to be refunded in goods. The wares to be sold would be brought to public or co-operative stores, where cheques would be exchanged for merchandise, and *vice versa*. This mechanism of exchange is ingenious. The great London co-operative stores give some idea of it; but they cannot be said to form an integral part of Collectivism.

The best way to form any accurate notion of the Collectivist system is to imagine that the *Equitable Pioneers* of Rochdale have obtained a complete success, and that all has passed into their hands—lands, houses, shops, warehouses and factories—and that every other locality has imitated Rochdale's example. Collectivism does not wholly abolish hereditary succession, but as all real property would belong to the State, to the Commune, or to corporations, and as again every man would be forced to live on what he gained by his trade or by the function he occupied, it would follow, as a natural consequence, that the accumulation of wealth would be very much restricted, and that, in a general way, all that people could inherit would be furniture, money, and movables.

Dr. Schäffle seems inclined to think that a state of things such as this may exist in the future. Some people go even so far as to imagine that the spirit of renunciation will again have sway, that

there will be life in common, and that many of the wonders that arose in ancient times from this system will be repeated. M. Renan, in his volume on the Apostles, writes the following charming lines on this subject (p. 132) :—

“ We have forgotten that mankind tasted the most perfect joy when life was lived in common. The Psalm, ‘ Behold ! how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity,’ can no longer be applied to us ; but when modern individualism has borne its latest fruit, when depressed and sorrowing humanity shall have become powerless, and shall return to grand old institutions and to severe discipline, when our wretched ‘ bourgeois’ society shall have been chased away by the ideal and heroic portion of humanity, then life in common will be valued at its true worth. Selfishness, an essential law of civil society, will not be sufficient for great minds. The words of Jesus and the ideas held as to poverty in the Middle Ages will be looked upon as containing deep sense. The beautiful ideal traced by the author of the Acts of the Apostles will be inscribed as a prophetic revelation at the entrance of this paradise of humanity. ‘ And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul ; neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common. And all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need. And they continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.’ ” (Acts, iv. 32. ; ii. 44, 45, 46.)

Stuart Mill also occasionally indulged in these poetic visions ; but Dr. Schaffle keeps on practical ground, and poses well the crucial question, which is this : No social reform can possibly succeed if it fail to recognise the psychological fact on which the present individual system is based, viz. that it is private interest which urges to production. Neither penalties nor appeals to sentiments of duty and honour would guarantee a sufficient amount of zeal and care being displayed by all concerned, to ensure the largest amount possible being produced at the lowest cost, without any waste of either time or raw material. The great difficulty is the efficient directorship of any large industrial enterprise. It is the lack of such directorship that has occasioned the failure of many co-operative societies. Collectivism supposes that workmen’s corporations are capable of working alone, of taking the management of everything into their own hands. When working men’s societies have given proof of this, the triumph of the new organization will be a mere question of time ; but so long as the working classes do not show themselves capable of managing without their masters, all attempts at hastening the coming of a new order of things will terminate in signal defeats.

Anarchism and Nihilism may be very briefly analyzed, as they are mere negations. Proudhon says in his book, *La Révolution Sociale* (p. 255), “ No authority, no government. What society needs is anarchy. The object to be attained is the abolition of authority,

the clearing away of all government organism." The Nihilistic formula traced by Bakounine in the programme of that truly revolutionary association, *l'Alliance Universelle*, which has spread the germs of violent Socialism, ready systematically to employ bombs, daggers, dynamite, and petroleum, all over Europe, is as follows:—

"Our association, the International Brotherhood, wishes for a universal, social, philosophic, economic, and political revolution, in order that of the present social order of things—which is founded on the right of property, on making capital by oppression, on the principle of authority, either religious or metaphysical, 'bourgeoisement,' doctrinal, or even Jacobinly revolutionary—not one stone may be left upon another, in all Europe first, and afterwards in the entire world. To the cry of 'Peace for the workers,' 'Liberty for the oppressed,' we desire the destruction of everything, States and Churches, with all their institutions and their laws—religious, political, judicial, financial, educational, economic, or social—to the end that all these millions of poor human beings, deceived, oppressed, and held in thralldom, delivered at last from their directors and benefactors, official and non-official, may breathe the pure air of liberty."

Do not question a Nihilist as to what the new social organization shall be. He will reply: "We wish for complete Amorphism. It is a crime to foresee a society of the future, for researches of this sort prevent utter destruction and impede the advance of the revolution. Every Utopist is a tyrant, for he urges his plans of reform on all. The watchword of our party is exceedingly simple—Universal destruction; *nihil*, nothing. As in the early ages of humanity, a new organization will spontaneously spring up, and will be just what is best suited to the wants of the delivered people."

It is certain that the devotion and religious fanaticism of the Nihilists, and their diffusion all over our Continent, where they become manifest by acts of fierce violence, as in Russia, at Monçeaules-Mines in France, in Andalusia, and constantly in different parts of Italy, is one of the most curious phenomena of our time. It may be compared to an incandescent lava which from time to time bursts through the stratum which hides it from view. How explain that distinguished and enlightened men, men of noble and human sentiments—Prince Krapotkine, for instance, and the eminent geographer, Elisée Reclus—can allow themselves to be led away by doctrines so monstrous? History gives us the explanation. At certain periods of social transformation, those persons who thirst after the ideal suffer and feel indignant at sight of the evils with which the human race is afflicted. The contrast between the order of equity and justice they aspire to see established and the iniquities of the world is quite intolerable to them. They do not believe that successive progress will suffice to banish these iniquities, and they long for the total destruction of the existing order of things—for a new one to be founded on its ruins. These were exactly the views held by the early Christians. This world was to perish utterly by fire before

the kingdom of God could come. Even the Evangelists describe the signs of the advent of this great calamity. The religious songs of the Middle Ages contain echoes of these eschatological notions.

“Dies iræ, Dies illa,
Solvat sæclum in favilla.”¹

As the destruction of the universe failed to take place, those who were the most impatient for a reign of justice withdrew, in the first instance to the desert, and later on to monasteries. It was this same sentiment which inspired Rousseau in the eighteenth century: Civil institutions consecrate propriety and inequality, whence arises the servitude and misery of the multitude; reformation is impossible; there must be a return to primitive existence, or, as Voltaire puts it, in mockery of poor J. J. Rousseau, we must go off into the forests and there walk on four legs. The brigand, Karl Moor, in Schiller's famous piece, who rises in insurrection against all social laws, is a type of the Nihilists of the present day. It may be recollected he says—

“Happy the man who is the fiercest to burn everything, and the most relentless to kill.” (Act I., scene 2.)

The same reasoning which led to a belief in the end of the world, and to a desire to return to a primitive state of society, leads also to Nihilism; only, as Nihilists look for nothing from divine justice, the existence of which they deny, it is not fire sent from heaven, but the avenging flame of petroleum that is destined to destroy the present social order. The Utopian schemes of Owen, Fourier, Cabet, and Louis Blanc all failed; the difficulty of carrying out economic reform has been proved by science and by facts; must we then wait till the gradual spread of education and of equality improve, by slow degrees, the present situation? In that case there are still centuries to be passed with things as they are. No, it is too much! A curse on

(1) The idea of the destruction of the world springs from the great problem of evil and from the aspirations of man for a better order of things. God cannot allow iniquity to continue for ever. He will come and re-establish justice. Job discusses the terrible problem. All Eastern religions believed in the existence of a better world, and Virgil admirably sums up this belief in his fourth Eclogue, *Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo*, &c. In one of the songs of the Edda, *Voluspá*, the end of the world is described in a similar manner as in the New Testament. “The sun is darkened, and the brilliant stars disappear from the sky, and smoke surrounds the destructive fire which is to destroy the world. Gigantic flames rise to heaven. Vala sees springing up from the midst of the ocean a new earth, covered with admirable verdure. The fields produce without being planted. All sin and suffering disappear. Baldur will return with Hadur to inhabit the sacred abode of the gods. The people will be in the enjoyment of eternal peace; and then will come from above, to preside at the great judgment the All-powerful One, the ruler of the universe. All dissensions and discords will be calmed, and He will give an inviolable table of laws to be established for ever.” Is not this exactly the kingdom of Heaven as foretold by the Prophets and in the New Testament?

society! Away with its institutions and its laws! We will overthrow all and re-establish things in their natural and primitive condition, as Rousseau proposed.

If we examine closely the present social situation we cannot feel any surprise at these sentiments: civilised States at war, either open or secret, one with the other, draining their populations by unlimited armaments and retaining for military service the flower of the nation's youth; crushing debts everywhere, national, provincial, and communal, in all about £6,000,000,000, bringing in a revenue of about £300,000,000 to £350,000,000, taken from the necessitous, and serving to allow an ever-increasing number of people to live on their income and do nothing; everywhere enormous budgets, quite out of proportion with the advantages which accrue thence to the people; the cultivators of the soil reduced to live on bread and water, on potatoes, as in Ireland, and on *pellagra*-engendering maize, as in Italy; the working man's condition a trifle ameliorated, it is true, but not at all in proportion to the increase in production; in the upper classes luxury overflowing and becoming daily more refined and more wanton; parliamentary administration, which was to have brought with it salvation, incapable of carrying out any great social reforms, either under a constitutional monarch or a republic; and if at times a minister is met with who, like Prince Bismarck, desires to take steps in this direction, the satisfied middle classes raising objections to such a policy, with the watchword of *laissez faire*.

Anarchism and Nihilism, in spite of the growing number and the despairing energy of their adherents, are, at present, wholly powerless to jeopardize the safety of the present social order if all goes as usual; but suppose one of those crises when there is a collapse of power were to take place—a great defeat, a middle-class revolution, or, for instance, an attempt at a restoration in France—then it is much to be feared that the terrible scenes of the Commune of 1871 would be repeated with even more terrific features. In the last volume of *Paris et ses Organes*, M. Maxime du Camp casts a melancholy glance at the beautiful city, reflecting that it will be one day the prey of fire. Let us hope that this sad fate will not befall our capitals, and that a transformation of the social order will take place, without the aid of petroleum and dynamite.

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