

# FREEDOM

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST SOCIALISM.

VOL. 1.—No. 1.

OCTOBER, 1886.

MONTHLY ; ONE PENNY.

## FREEDOM.

THROUGH the long ages of grinding slavery behind us, Freedom, that unknown goal of human pilgrimage, has hovered, a veiled splendour, upon the horizon of men's hopes. Veiled in the trembling ignorance of mankind, their misty unreasoning terror of all that revealed itself as power, whether it were an apparently incomprehensible and uncontrollable natural force, or the ascendancy of superior strength, ability or cunning in human society. The inward attitude of slavish adoration towards what imposes itself from without as a fact beyond our understanding, that is the veil which hides Freedom from the eyes of men. Sometimes it takes the form of the blind fear of a savage of his "medicine" or his fetish, sometimes of the equally blind reverence of an English workman for the law of his masters, and the semblance of consent to his own economic slavery wormed out of him by the force of representation. But whatever the form the reality is the same, ignorance, superstitious terror, cowardly submission.

What is human progress but the advance of the swelling tide of revolt against this tyranny of the nightmare of ignorant dread, which has held men the slaves of external nature, of one another, and of themselves? Science and the arts, knowledge and all its varied shapes of practical application by ingenuity and skill, the binding and enlightening force of affection and social feeling, the protest of individuals and of peoples by word and deed against religious, economic, political and social oppression, these, one and all, are weapons in the hands of the Rebels against the Powers of Darkness sheltered behind their shield of authority, divine and human. But they are weapons not all equally effective at all times. Each has its period of special utility.

We are living at the close of an era during which the marvellous increase of knowledge left social feeling behind, and enabled the few who monopolised the newly acquired power over nature to create an artificial civilisation, based upon their exclusive claim to retain private, personal possession of the increased wealth produced.

Property—not the claim to use, but to a right to prevent others from using—enables individuals who have appropriated the means of production, to hold in subjection all those who possess nothing but their vital energy, and who must work that they may live. No work is possible without land, materials, and tools or machinery; thus the masters of these things are the masters also of the destitute workers, and can live in idleness upon their labour, paying them in wages only enough of the produce to keep them alive, only employing so many of them as they find profitable and leaving the rest to their fate.

Such a wrong once realised is not to be borne. Knowledge cannot long be monopolised, and social feeling is innate in human nature, and both are fomenting within our hide-bound Society as the yeast in the dough. Our age is on the eve of a revolt against property, in the name of the common claim of all to a common share in the results of the common labour of all.

Therefore, we are Socialists, disbelievers in Property, advocates of the equal claims of each man and woman to work for the community as seems good to him or her—calling no man master, and of the equal claim of each to satisfy as seems good to him, his natural needs from the stock of social wealth he has laboured to produce. We look for this socialisation of wealth, not to restraints imposed by authority upon property, but to the removal, by the direct personal action of the people themselves, of the restraints which secure property against the claims of popular justice. For authority and property both are manifestations of the egoistical spirit of domination, and we do not look to Satan to cast out Satan.

We have no faith in legal methods of reform. Fixed and arbitrary written law is, and has always been, the instrument employed by anti-social individuals to secure their authority, whether delegated or usurped, when the maintenance of that authority by open violence has become dangerous. Social feeling, and the social habits formed and corrected by common experience, are the actual cement of associated life. It is the specious embodiment of a portion of this social custom in law, which has made law tolerable, and even sacred in the eyes of the people it exists to enslave. But in proportion as the oppression of law is removed, the true binding force of the influence of social feeling upon individual responsibility becomes apparent and is increased. We look for the destruction of monopoly, not by the imposition of fresh artificial restraints, but by the abolition of all arbitrary restraints whatever. Without law, property would be impossible, and labour and enjoyment free.

Therefore, we are Anarchists, disbelievers in the government of man

by man in any shape and under any pretext. The human freedom to which our eyes are raised is no negative abstraction of licence for individual egoism, whether it be massed collectively as majority rule or isolated as personal tyranny. We dream of the positive freedom which is essentially one with social feeling; of free scope for the social impulses, now distorted and compressed by Property, and its guardian the Law; of free scope for that individual sense of responsibility, of respect for self and for others, which is vitiated by every form of collective interference, from the enforcing of contracts to the hanging of criminals; of free scope for the spontaneity and individuality of each human being, such as is impossible when one hard and fast line is fitted to all conduct. Science is teaching mankind that such crime as is not the manufacture of our vile economic and legal system, can only be rationally as well as humanely treated by fraternal medical care, for it results from deformity of disease, and a hard and fast rule of conduct enforced by condign punishment is neither guide nor remedy, nothing but a perennial source of injustice amongst men.

We believe each sane adult human being to possess an equal and indefeasible claim to direct his life from within by the light of his own consciousness, to the sole responsibility of guiding his own action as well as forming his own opinions. Further, we believe that the acknowledgment of this claim is a necessary preliminary to rational voluntary agreement, the only permanent basis of harmonious life in common. Therefore, we reject every method of enforcing assent, as in itself a hindrance to effectual co-operation, and further, a direct incentive to anti-social feeling. We deprecate as a wrong to human nature, individually, and therefore collectively, all use of force for the purpose of coercing others; but we assert the social duty of each to defend, by force if need be, his dignity as a free human being, and the like dignity in others, from every form of insult and oppression.

We claim for each and all the personal right and social obligation to be free. We hold the complete social recognition and acknowledgment of such a claim to be the goal of human progress in the future, as its growth has been the gauge of development of Society in the past, of the advance of man from the blind social impulse of the gregarious animal to the conscious social feeling of the free human being.

Such, in rough outline, is the general aspect of the Anarchist Socialism our paper is intended to set forth, and by the touchstone of this belief we purpose to try the current ideas and modes of action of existing Society.

## THE COMING REVOLUTION.

We are living on the eve of great events. Before the end of this century has come we shall see great revolutionary movements breaking up our social conditions in Europe and probably also in the United States of America.

Social storms cannot be forecast with the same accuracy as those which cross the Atlantic on their way to our shores. But still, there are tokens permitting us to predict the approach of those great disturbances which periodically visit mankind to redress wrongs accumulated by past centuries, to freshen the atmosphere, to blow away monopolies and prejudices.

There is a certain periodicity in these great uprisings of the oppressed. The end of each of the last five centuries has been marked by great movements which have helped Freedom to gain ground in France, in England, in the Netherlands, in Switzerland and in Bohemia. The great German historian of our century, Gervinus, saw in this periodicity a law; while the Italian patriot and philosopher Ferrari, devoting special attention to the phenomena of evolution and revolution, tried to explain its causes. Explained, or not, it has been a fact for five centuries past.

No doubt our century will be no exception to the rule. It is sufficient to look around us, to observe. All those facts which foreshadowed the approach of revolutions in times past, cannot but strike the unprejudiced observer.

The commercial crisis grows worse and worse. Millions of workmen, driven away from the country to the ever-growing cities, are wandering about without work. We boast of our gigantic cities, and unheard-of misery grows up in those centres where all the wealth of the world is spent in an unhealthy luxury, amidst the rags and destitution of the poor.

Nowhere, in no quarter, any prospect of improvement. The crisis

must grow worse. Having its cause in the circumstance that those who produce wealth cannot purchase it; that customers must be sought elsewhere than amidst the producers; that for all such customers in India, in Africa, and everywhere else there are two or three competitors—the crisis cannot be only a temporary one. Some great modification of our system of production must be made, and it must be made at once: the sufferers will wait no longer; they cannot.

The political institutions in which so much faith was put half a century ago, have proved a failure. The huge machinery of the State satisfies nobody and faith in Parliamentary rule, in suffrage, be it limited or universal, is disappearing. Even the democratic institutions of the United States have proved a worse failure than all those of Europe.

"A new departure must be made,"—such is the general outcry.

Meantime a new social force has grown up in our midst—the workman, the producer of wealth. A mere increase of wages, a mere reduction of hours, is no longer the sole demand of the workmen of Europe. They go farther. They perceive how small their share of the immense wealth they have produced of late; how unprotected they are—even the happiest of them—in the ups and downs of our industry; how dependent they are on forces beyond their control, that is, on the needs of customers far away. And they want to produce for themselves the wealth they can produce with the perfected machinery of our times.

Every day increases their longing for equality. The wealth they produce, the higher enjoyments of science and art which now they guarantee to a few—they wish to enjoy these for themselves. They wish no longer to send their children of fifteen or thirteen to the mines, nor see them becoming servants to machines—machines themselves.

And in proportion as the longing for Equality and Freedom grows; in proportion as the workman, becoming more closely acquainted with the rich, perceives that they are made of the same bones, muscles, nerves, and brains as himself; in proportion as the daily press makes him acquainted with the mean passions, the narrow views, and the vices of his rulers, respect for the Great Unknown—the Government—dies away; the last force which kept our decaying institutions standing, veneration, disappears. The grey wig of the lawyer becomes as little impressive as the coronet of the peer and the speech of the Prime Minister.

The spirit of revolt spreads in the masses. The most insignificant circumstance becomes the cause of an outbreak. This has always been the case on the eve of revolutions. A childish game becomes a disturbance, leading to bloodshed; an interference of the police, an armed conflict; meetings become riots, and strikes lead to civil war.

Take all these facts together, analyse their mutual action, and if you know what nations have been on the eve of revolutions, you will doubt no longer the close approach of the Revolution of the nineteenth century.

But few years will elapse before Governments will be overthrown on the Continent. Already in 1848 the insurrection in Italy spread all over the Continent, barricades in Paris were immediately repeated in the barricades at Vienna and Berlin. Now that Europeans are so closely connected by steam and electricity; now that the same ideas inspire the Norwegian workman and the Italian peasant, the rapid spread of the revolution is yet more inevitable. Governments will be overthrown. Republics and Communes will be proclaimed. And upon these Republics and Communes the masses will impose the modification of the present system of production and political organisation on new principles.

Spanish and Russian, German and French, Belgian and Italian peasants will seize the soil of which they have been despoiled. Workmen in towns will seize factories and mills. Acts of expropriation will take place. New forms of life will be submitted to a trial; new departures will be made in the industrial and political life of societies.

Successful, or partially unsuccessful—all revolutions have succeeded in a measure. The Bourbons returned to France, but the feudal institutions did not return with them nor the absolute rule of the king. Partially defeated or not, the coming revolution will give, as it has always given, the watchword to the evolution of the next century.

Will England remain untouched by this movement? The middle classes of England have the reputation of being far-sighted enough to make the necessary concessions in time: will they be able to do this again?

Forty years ago they could say to the workmen in revolt: Be our political equals, and in the industrial field let us go hand in hand to the conquest of the world-market. The situation is no longer the same, nor the points at issue. The promise of continually enriching the country by manufacturing for other people than the workers themselves has not been kept. Were it again repeated, it would be out of date. So also with representative government.

The points of contest also are not the same. As long as Germany and France revolted to gain what was already realised in England, French and German revolutions could have no hold on English minds. But the German and French workmen go farther now. They ask economic equality, they ask for new forms of economic life; their insurrection will be for Socialism, not for political representation; and the ideas of the Continental workmen will find a living echo in England.

Are the English middle classes prepared to take the lead in the new movement, as they did in that for Parliamentary reform? Are their leaders aware of the new tendencies? Do they recognise their justice? No. And the waves of the European revolution will no longer break against the cliffs of England: they will sweep some of them away.

It is no use to sneer, and cry "Why these revolutions?" No use for the sailor to scorn the cyclone and to cry "Why should it approach

my ship?" The gale has originated in times past, in remote regions. Cold mist and hot air have been struggling long before the great rupture of equilibrium—the gale—was born.

So it is with social gales also. Centuries of injustice, ages of oppression and misery, ages of disdain of the subject and poor, have prepared the storm.

We, a handful of men who see the gale coming, and warn the careless, and are pelted with stones for that warning,—we are as unable to prevent the storm as to accelerate its arrival. Its first coming will depend on causes greater than those we take hold of. But we may, and must, show its real causes. We must endeavour to discover and to enunciate in plain words the hopes, the faint, indistinct ideal which sets the masses in motion. The better understood, the more warmly taken to heart, the greater will be the results achieved, and the less numerous the useless victims.

These hopes are hopes of getting rid of capitalist oppression, of abolishing the rule of man by man, of Equality, of Freedom, of Anarchy. And those who fight for these tendencies—deeply rooted in, and cherished by, Humanity—will win in the struggle! Without these principles no society is possible.

## THE TRIUMPH OF CIVILISATION.

On the outskirts of a great city,  
A street of fashionable mansions well withdrawn from all the noise  
and bustle;  
And in the street—the only figure there—in the middle of the road,  
in the bitter wind—  
Red-nosed thin-shawled, with ancles bare and old boots—  
A woman bent and haggard, croaking a dismal song.

And the great windows stare upon her wretchedness, and stare across  
the road upon each other,  
With big fool eyes;  
But not a door is opened, not a face is seen,  
Nor form of life down all the dreary street,  
To certify the existence of humanity,—  
Other than hers.

## NOTES.

Professor Sidgwick has compiled for the British Association a list of permissible exceptions to the principle of *laissez-faire*. There is an opening now for some gentleman to compile a list of permitted exceptions to the other principle: that of interference by armed government. It would be shorter and much less comprehensive than Professor Sidgwick's.

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To understand the Governmental application of *laissez-faire*, learn the two following rules of thumb. 1. When the proprietors molest the proletariat, *laissez-faire*. 2. When the proletariat resist the proprietors, interfere to help the proprietors. There are no exceptions to these rules. For examples of their working, apply to Sir Redvers Buller, Co. Clare, Ireland, any time during the winter.

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Mr. Fisher Unwin has published a book advocating Home Rule with Imperial Federation as the solution of the Irish Question. The author, Mr. J. A. Partridge, describes with all a Nationalist's ardour the state of Ireland during "Grattan's parliament" from 1782 to 1801. On a page headed "Freedom and Prosperity", we read, as overwhelming evidence of that prosperity, "*Irish labour was cheap*, her water power enormous, and the climate eminently suited the cotton manufactory." How nice!

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Grammarians will recoil from the above, convinced that if Mr. Partridge is not cleverer at an Irish question than he is at an English sentence, they are not likely to learn much from his book. It is, however, no worse (grammar excepted) than other nationalist books. They are certainly a simple people, these our Irish brothers in misfortune, to believe that starvation and injustice are peculiar to their country. The Belgians are "a nation", with Home Rule, manufactures, and all that Mr. Partridge demands. Irishmen desirous of appreciating the benefits that these things bring to the workers, had better make a trip to Charleroi, and watch the pitmen and their daughters at work in the mines there. But indeed as much may be learnt without going further than England. If the Irish workers really believe that the English workers are their oppressors instead of their fellow sufferers under the yoke of Proprietorship, they are fighting in the dark, and when they win, will find themselves exactly what they are at present—the slaves of a class.

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Mr. Parnell, having found his Land Bill likely to be defeated on the score of going too far, has whittled it down so that the Government may reject it on the score of its not going far enough to be worth passing. Lord Hartington, as uncrowned king of England, will not permit Lord Randolph to appease the uncrowned king of Ireland. The *Pall Mall Gazette* is doing its best to frighten the English monarch by prophesying murder and moonlight; but the son of a Whig Duke, with

the privileges of property at stake, is not going to be bullied by any editor alive. Just now, whom the gods devote to destruction they first make Whigs.

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Whilst Governments snarl at each others heels, the workers are giving convincing proof that they recognise a common cause throughout the civilised world. The visit of the French delegates, the International Trade Conference at Paris, the speeches at Hull, all are links in the lengthening chain of Internationalism upon which monopolists would do wisely to ponder. Capital is international. Belgian collieries are worked with French gold. French manufactures and Spanish mines flourish on English capital. The recent correspondence in the *Daily Telegraph* on the defeat of English goods in the world market, has shown how capital fulfils the law of competition, and seeks the cheapest labour as the source of the greatest profit. The Workers, it seems, are taking the lesson to heart, and preparing to meet international exploitation by international federation of labour.

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The accomplished President of the Royal Academy has at last unveiled his fresco, "The Arts of Peace," at the South Kensington Museum. After many years spent amid an industrial system which, stained as it is with the blood and sweat of innumerable slaves, is still stupendous and full of promise to the free worker of the future, Sir Frederic Leighton has come to the conclusion that the only essential arts of peace are the arts of the toilet as practised by rich ladies. This is his way of expressing that the Arts of Peace are mere vanity. The pessimism of the nineteenth century philosopher and the devotion of the knightly artist to women and beautiful dresses could not be more delicately reconciled in one work.

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John Burns has been under a cloud for some years past. Being an impulsively good natured and warm hearted man, with much eloquence and humour, he is naturally insubordinate, and has championed the cause of labour so vigorously, that it has become necessary to deprive him of his employment, indict him for sedition, and otherwise decline to *laisser* him *faire*. Yet he has won the heart of polite England at last, not by passionate speech, but by the mute rhetoric of his fist. He has, in short, punched the head of a Frenchman in the capital of France, and would have punched the heads of two others had they not withdrawn somewhat hastily.

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Burns must reflect with some irony on the fact that whilst he strove to raise men up, he was vilified on all hands by the capitalist press, although he displayed exceptional powers of a high class in doing so; whereas now that he has knocked a man down, he is hailed as a hero because the man was a Frenchman, though in every sporting public-house in London there are half-a-dozen pugilists who can knock down an average Frenchman—or Englishman, for that matter—with masterly ease. The moral, however, would seem to be: "Preach forcible suppression of thieving, and you will be despitely used and persecuted: practise it, and you will be respected and supported." The workers might do worse than take the lesson to heart; but they had better remember that they must, like Burns, not only be willing to fight, but know how to win.

## ANARCHISM KILLS INDIVIDUALISM.

"INDIVIDUALIST Anarchism" is a round square, a contradiction in set terms. As a cube is not a ball, so "Individualism" is not Anarchism. *What, then, is Individualism?* It is the chaos of to-day in social and industrial life, which has sprung from the licentious play of self-will. Self-will is the will to be somewhat, and to have hold and sway something in isolation from other such wills, and in opposition to them. Property, dominion, government, law, are embodiments of this self-will.

Individualism is this striving, grabbing, over-reaching, and self-seeking of atoms, that seek to possess human individuality, but go about their quest the wrong way. It calls itself civilisation, progress, fair competition, free trade, and many other fine names. It is, in reality, internecine war and suicide. The kick-and-catch-and-keep-who-can hurly-burly of a Rugby football match is not a picture of true Society. A mob is not Society; its irrational and self-thwarting movements do not constitute social conduct.

How, then, have the jostling particles gone astray and befooled themselves with this futile and painful display of ill-directed energies, called civilisation? Through ignorance or misconception of what individuality is and what it is to be a real individual.

*What, then, is individuality?* Individuality is contrast, speciality, distinction, difference, and not separateness. But individualism cannot distinguish without dividing, and in this separating loses the distinction it seeks after. No dry old stick, no hard straight and stiff rod is more barren than a self, cut off and isolated. It is a bare "I", unproductive and meaningless.

There is no real living and fruitful *I*, apart from *Thou* and *You*. Personality implies communion. The individual implies the commune. These are mutually sustaining and inclusive.

Is it because Anarchists see with both eyes solidly; is it because they are not blind to the two-foldness of the fact of human life in union, that they are sometimes obliged to free themselves from the charge of "individualism"? If so, it is evident that it only requires a rightly distinguishing mind to clear them. They will, to begin with,

contend that individuality is a necessary element of the idea of Anarchism. If society is the possibility of the individual, so equally the individual is the possibility of society.

Each is by itself an abstraction, an incomplete thought, something as yet merely possible. But, *that which is*, the concrete actual fact, is individual men and women living together in free and equal association. Therefore, to destroy individuality is to destroy society. For society is only realised and alive in the individual members.

Society has no motive that does not issue from its individual members, no end that does not centre in them, no mind that is not theirs. "Spirit of the age," "public opinion," "common weal or good," and like phrases have no meaning, if they are thought of as features of something that hovers over or floats between men and women. They name what resides in and proceeds from individuals. Individuality and community, therefore, are equally constitutive of our idea of human life. They may be as the poles asunder, but they are as the poles conjoint. Every stick has two ends. Every axle is two-poled. And upon this bipolar axis revolves Anarchism.

A rigid and extreme Collectivism is as abstract on the other hand. It is, like Individualism, the impossible stick with only one end. Thinking to affirm Communism more vehemently and with more effect, it ignores individuality. Society—with a big "S"—is for its dogma the be-all and end-all. But individuals are at once the parents and children of society, and we have reason to disbelieve in a big notion of society which makes it devour both its progenitors and progeny, and live on in self-contained magnificence. To an evenly-balanced Anarchist mind, thinking things in wholes or as they are in their concrete reality and integrity, there will be nothing grand about this monster, for it will have shown itself to be nothing more than Individualism grown to be emptier and more flatulent and null than ever. In fact, while avoiding Individualism, yet confounding it with individuality, Collectivist thought has fallen into a deeper pit of it on the other side.

This is what always comes of abstract thinking which fails to found and build upon the whole of experience. The economical aspect is not that whole. There is the co-extensive and co-operative inner side. Grasping the total fact of social life, Anarchism recognises and values individuality, which means character, conduct and the springs of conduct, free initiative, creativeness, spontaneity, autonomy. Man made and is making the economies, if the economies made and are making man; and it will take men and women to unmake and remake the economies.

Communism will therefore have an ethical doctrine and discipline, as well as an economical doctrine and system. Individuality is indefeasible and cannot be abrogated. Individuals may not disown and depose themselves without ruin of the whole of which they are free living units. Collectivist dominion over things or state property, quite as much as the private property of Individualism, is such self-effacement; centralised representative legislation and administration, as much as any present kind of authority or government, tends to such self-effacement. Individuals must be friendly and reasonable enough to form a commune of their own accord and motion. The communes must be small enough to be free and autonomous. Their federation must be free and spontaneous. Practical unanimity is essential to every movement towards communion, and to every after-movement within the community. There may be no majority-rule, and absolutely no coercion whatever, be it ever so mild, reasonable, and just in seeming. So sacred is individuality, so fundamental and indispensable in the structure of any stable and really human society. The goodwill of each and all to live and use and work and enjoy together is the only sure foundation.

Individualism is independence imbecile and palsied.

Anarchism is universal interdependence.

A hubbub of independent beings like modern civilisation can produce nothing beyond a hubbub. Such a whirling pillar of dust is not the living fruitful tree of the world.

Freedom is not independence. That is our last word to the Individualist of to-day and the so-called "Individualist-Anarchist," with his mutual banking, free money, and other expedients for mitigating the present régime of individualism.

Freedom is not independence, or any other atomism. Its essence is brotherly and human loving-kindness, that binds and yet expands, that flows out and takes fluent shape, whose home is peace and participation, and whose only dwelling-place and embodiment is community in efforts and effects.

To the Collectivist puritan our last word is, that a man, in respect of his nature now, and apart from any question of how such nature has come about, is an individual, a special and particular unity, an integral whole, different and distinct from other men; and that which makes him what he is, enabling him to operate or co-operate, is this individuality. Diminish or obliterate individuality, and you degrade or destroy the differences and distinctions that make the self-identity or unity of society a possible and intelligible reality.

To the Individualist be it said, there is no difference without identity.

To the Collectivist, there is no no identity without difference.

Each man's distinctness or individuality in feeling, willing, acting, is inalienable. And were it not so, then with its ceasing would cease Society.

EDUCATE.—Agitate, of course, for economical revolution—i.e., for an absolute change of front in respect of the methods of production and distribution. Lay down the outer rail; but do not forget the inner. No train runs on one rail: therefore educate and live.

## THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM.

THE spirit of revolt has been the saving grace of humanity. The whole story of our race is full of the resistance of the mass of mankind—(always from the earliest dawn of our knowledge, more or less consciously social animals)—to the anti-social spirit of domination of certain individuals, the strongest, subtlest, and least scrupulous of the community. Without such resistance to the authority usurped by man over man, human Society must have withered away, and human beings become as unsocial as hawks and tigers. That fate has been spared us. On the contrary, the struggle for freedom has continually increased in volume and in intensity. The blind instinct which seems to have prompted its earlier manifestations is slowly passing into a conscious purpose. It has spread into every department of life, and the victories it has won are seen to be but the earnest of those which lie before it.

To those who with sympathetic eyes watch this spirit of revolt seething beneath the thin gloss of our so-called civilisation, the struggle for freedom appears at the present time to fall into three broad currents of tendency. Firstly, the efforts of individuals to assert their human dignity by the social claim to free initiative in thought, word, and deed. Secondly, the attempts of subject races to throw off alien overlordship, and make good their claim to free autonomy and self-organisation. Thirdly, the growing determination of the great masses of the people to free themselves from the rule of their masters, and claim the right to choose and direct their own labour, and to enjoy its fruits. The spirit of these three tendencies is one and the same, its manifestations differ with the diversity of conditions. For the camp of the rebels is as wide as the world, and each land, each community, each individual has special necessities, and alone can judge of them. Strikes, boycotts, riots, workmen's conferences, national and international trades' unionism, Irish outrages; the tithe-war in Wales, and the resistance of Highland crofters to the greed of the land-thieves; outbreaks of prisoners in French jails, and of peasants in Russia; the bomb of Chicago Anarchists, and the free-speech contest of English Socialists; newspaper remonstrances with the injustice of the law and its administration and the passive resistance of the Leicester anti-vaccinators; the abstention from the voting urn of French workmen and the return of political prisoners as members of Parliament by the people of Italy,—these and all such actions of protests against authority, are evidence of the living spirit of revolt abroad in Society, and as such we welcome them. They are clearing the way towards a fuller and more brotherly social life; sometimes roughly, indeed, but the path is rough and choked with rubbish, and the necessity is cruel.

We propose, therefore, to devote a portion of our space to a few illustrative instances of such passing phases of the great revolt as fall beneath our notice, and of the social conditions which are its proximate cause. And we do so in the belief that from a consideration of the wrongs and the courage, the failures and the triumphs of our brethren throughout the world we may, each and all, derive inspiration, warning, and encouragement, and learn to feel that each petty action, each effort apparently isolated and fruitless, is in reality part of the universal war against oppression in all its forms, in which, consciously or unconsciously, we must all take our share, and fight for human freedom or against it.

### GREAT BRITAIN.

One of the most interesting present phases of the great revolt is the agitation of the Celtic populations, if not for free land, at least for land less heavily burdened for the maintenance of their Teutonic masters. Foreign competition has reduced the value of agricultural produce by something like half. But the non-producing classes, *i.e.*, proprietors and clergy, and farmers in localities where these have been bitten by the idea of degrading themselves from workers into gentlemen,—are struggling to wring the same unearned benefit from the toil of the labourers as before. Amongst the Celtic peoples this attempt to extort the uttermost farthing is aggravated by antagonism of race, by the tradition of conqueror and conquered, by the imposition of an alien law. The tithe war in Wales is a current example. These tithes are an arbitrary charge upon the rent of the land, varying from 6l. to 10s. 4d. an acre. They are reckoned by the average price of corn, whereas Welsh land is mostly pasture, and stock has been depreciated 30 per cent. during the last two years. Grievance number one. They are paid to support the Welsh clergy of the alien Church of England, to which religious body only 300,000 out of a population of 1,500,000 belong. Grievance number two. In view of the bad times the landlords have accepted a reduction of rent, but the majority of the clergy have refused to follow suit. Grievance number three. The farmers, 400 or 500 of them, have resolved to be sold up rather than pay, and on the 7th September at Ruthin fair they formed a North Wales Anti-Tithe League. They have the people with them, miners and farm-labourers alike. Indignant crowds have attended the forced cattle sales, and only been prevented beating and ducking the bailiffs and auctioneer by bodies of 80 or 90 policemen. One obnoxious parson has to be guarded to church by a policeman on each side, and many others have been frightened into offering a reduction. The agitation, partial and narrow as are its present objects, is a valuable practical lesson to the Welsh people in the art of ridding themselves of land leeches.

### FRANCE.

The last few weeks have afforded some good illustrations of three aspects assumed by the spirit of revolt in our times. First, we have the outbreak of sheer despair. The determination to try the unknown since the known was unbearable, of the child prisoners, the wretched little vine-dressers of Porquerolles, and their grown-up companions in misfortune, the convicts at Rheims and La Roquette. Secondly, the strikes, common protests of bands of workers against the miserable fraction of the produce of their labour which their masters dole out to them. There are strikes against reduction of wages amongst the weavers of St. Quentin, the corset makers of Paris, the cabinet makers of Lyons, the miners of Rouchamps, and many others, but the most interesting is that of the agricultural plant makers at Vierzon. Their wages have been reduced 54 per cent. in the last seven years. The masters (a company with neither body to kick

nor soul to damn) have called in two companies of soldiers and a whole posse of police to force the men to accept their terms. In vain. The whole town is with the workmen; the soldiers hate their task and fraternise with the strikers; the strike is being supported by public subscriptions, and the company can induce no black-necks to work for them. Success to the workers who stand by one another in this struggle! But it is a pity, is it not, to spend so much pluck and energy on a contest for a mere shilling or two more per week to lay out in maintaining a slave's existence?

There is a third noticeable fact in France; the conscious, active protest against social arrangements which cause so much misery, on the part of those who have learnt to realise wherein lies the root of their distress. Our comrades at Lyons have just succeeded in re-issuing a newspaper (*La Lutte Sociale*), despite the arrest of its manager Bordat, the ex-prisoner of Clairvaux. They have used the recent elections to the *conseils généraux* to point out to their fellow-workmen the folly of voting, and the number of abstentions has been remarkable. At Lille, a fresh group to spread the ideas of revolutionary Socialism has just been organised. The attentive crowds at Socialist lectures, especially Louise Michel's, have so alarmed the authorities, that they have sent her to prison for six months. Her previous imprisonments have made her so popular, explained the Public Prosecutor!

### BELGIUM.

Nearly three hundred working-men and women have been sentenced since last March to terms of imprisonment varying from eight days to five years, on suspicion of taking part in the spring riots. On suspicion merely, for in the majority of cases the charge was unsubstantiated. The more active and energetic insurgents got from ten to twenty years of hard labour. Yet what have these men done but take the only effectual means in their power to bring to light, and to end a life for themselves and their fellows, which the official report truly describes as "a circle of Hell"? Terrified by their outbreak, the middle-class have at last troubled to enquire what kind of existence is led by the men and women who labour to bring them wealth. No wonder Belgian coal and iron masters make large fortunes, and Belgian iron undersells English, when Belgian miners are paid at the outside £2 10s. a month, and the minimum sum (according to the Liège Commission of Enquiry) upon which a family can exist is £4 8s. 4d., when young girls are working from 14 to 17 hours a day for 1s. 7d., some standing knee deep in water. The men who revolt against such conditions deserve the thanks of humanity; but the editor of the *Foruit* has been imprisoned for six months for merely suggesting to soldier's wives to beg their husbands not to fire upon the rebel victims of greed. Now, however, the fury of the ruling classes has had time to cool, and they have become more politic in their fear. They are trying the old dodge, which has been so successful in fooling the workers in England and elsewhere, the blind which during this century has been the main obstacle to an economic revolution. Agitate for political rights, there lies the way of salvation, they say to the starving worker, when his common sense leads him to lay hands on the implements of labour and the wealth he has created. And thus they secure a little longer their luxuries and their power. So the Government provides cheap trains for the demonstrators in favour of universal suffrage, whilst the democratic leaders are thanking the police for their courtesy, and all goes merry as a marriage bell. But what of bread and a decent home for the workers? Across the frontier, where every Frenchman has a vote, are they more free or less miserable?

### AMERICA.

The United States can boast the possession of republican institutions, manhood suffrage, trial by jury, police and military nominally servants of the People's will, all the programme of political liberty in fact. Nevertheless there is no country in the world where the toiling masses are met by more arbitrary and brutal ferocity when they show any decided intention to free themselves from the control of the possessors of wealth. Take the current year, during which the workers have made a push for closer union, higher wages and the eight hours' day. In all cases they have begun by peaceful resistance to their master's tyranny. How have they been met? In spring, firing upon unionists on strike and wholesale evictions of strikers' families. All through the summer, severe sentences upon working-class boycotting, though employers are permitted to boycott unionists at their pleasure. Finally, in August, seven men condemned to death, simply because they hold and proclaim the duty of every honest man to resist oppression by every means in his power. A bomb has been flung, by some person unknown, amongst the police preparing to charge a peaceable meeting at Chicago; preparing to shoot and beat down the people, men, women and children, as they had done the day before. The property owners are terrified at the energy of the protest against their authority, and clamour for some vengeance which may strike terror into the rebels. Hence the mock trial of the eight Anarchists before a packed jury and prejudiced judge, and their condemnation to death in defiance of the evidence. It is by proceedings such as these that the ruling classes are aiding the emancipation of the enslaved from the superstitious reverence for authority. And in this knowledge our brave comrades go gladly to meet their fate.

### ITALY.

In spite of their hard won "political liberty," the Italian people are falling a prey to the grinding slavery of the capitalist system, and especially to its most pitiless form, the commercial company. They protest against this oppression by a succession of strikes for higher wages or shorter hours, and there is a rapid increase of Socialistic feeling amongst the workers, met by the rulers by the most arbitrary measures of repression. Expression of opinion is a crime; men are kept in prison for months without trial, or transported at the pleasure of the police. The Workmen's Party, a Moderate Socialist organisation which attempted to keep strenuously within the law, has lately been dissolved. This fate is common to all workmen's associations which do not lend themselves to party leaders for their own political purposes. Anarchists, who refuse to be bought or silenced, and who attempt to unite the workers in the struggle for economic freedom, are continually arrested, and their trials, following one another in rapid succession, are excellent means of spreading their ideas. The effect is seen in their invariably acquittal when the Government have ventured to bring them before a jury instead of hired magistrates, and in the honorary election and re-election of the condemned as members of the Italian Parliament.

## Notices.

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FREEDOM can be bought at W. Reeves, 138 Fleet Street; Free Thought, Publishing Company, 63 Fleet Street.

### "FREEDOM" FUND.

(For expenses of publication.)

RECEIVED.—E. C., £5; N. P., £2; M., £2, 11s. 9d.; C. S., 10s.