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THE CHICAGO RIOTS

AND

THE CLASS WAR IN THE UNITED STATES.

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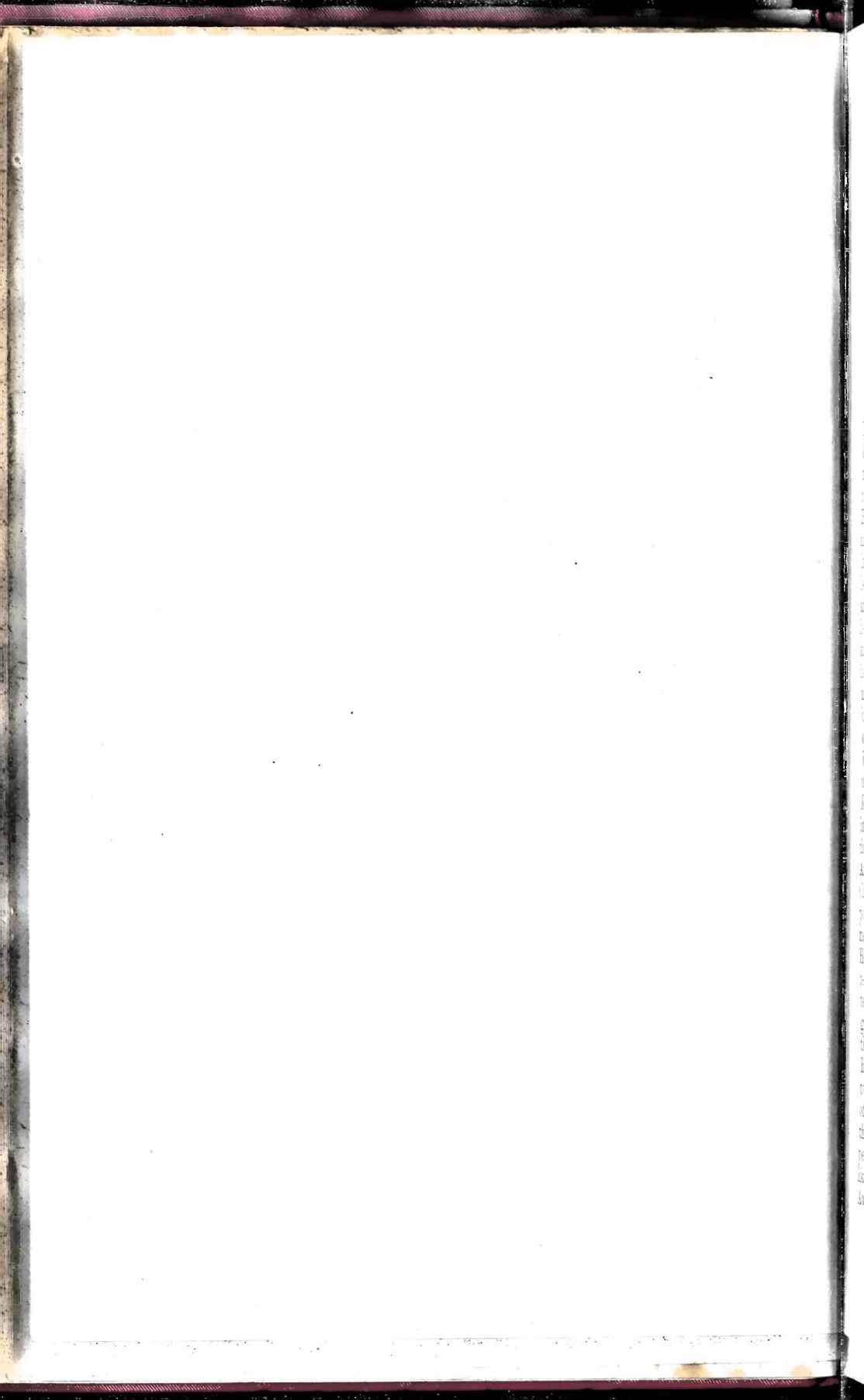
BY

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THE CHICAGO RIOTS AND THE CLASS WAR IN THE UNITED STATES.

THE recent fatal conflict between the Anarchists and the police at Chicago has served to direct public attention, for the moment, to the growing social difficulties in the United States. It is unfortunate that American affairs are not more closely watched by Englishmen of all classes. There is a great deal to be learnt in many ways from the struggle which has begun in earnest between labour and capital on the other side of the Atlantic; and it is at least possible that careful consideration of the manifest antagonism between different classes of men of our own race may help us to a peaceful solution of our own still more complicated and dangerous social problems here at home. Both countries have reached the same stage of economical and social development; in both the traditions of free speech and a free press have been accepted as the most valuable legacy we have received from our forefathers; alike there and here the system of government by party has lasted for several generations, though now being undermined; and, in the United States as in the United Kingdom, conscription is unknown, and the military caste is held in no special esteem. Nor are the contrasts less instructive than the similarities. America is a Republic. England is a Monarchy. Americans have no aristocracy, House of Lords, or Established Church. Englishmen have the misfortune to possess, or be possessed by, all three. Americans have universal suffrage, payment of members, free education in many States, and a wide Home Rule Federation. We are still behindhand in these respects. The United States cover a vast and sparsely-peopled territory; the United Kingdom is a small but densely-populated group of islands. Lastly, the United States support protection; the United Kingdom has for forty years accepted free trade. But beneath the political forms and fiscal arrangements of the two countries, notwithstanding the widely divergent conditions of existence for the two peoples, all are now driven to admit that the same class struggle is going on under the guise of nominal peace and freedom. The bloody encounter in Haymarket Square, like the far less serious rioting in Pall Mall, Piccadilly, and South Audley Street, is a symptom of uneasiness and discontent below

which the governing classes on both sides of the Atlantic must take account of.

For this reason, if for no other, it is much to be regretted that nearly the whole of the information which has been suffered to reach the general public in England, with regard to the great labour movement in America, has come from capitalist sources. The cables themselves are in the hands of the very men against whom the workers are combining and striking; the New York newspapers, which are chiefly quoted here, belong, most of them, to the same people, and are supported by the advertisements of the class whose interests are attacked; the correspondents and the telegraph agencies are also connected with, and dependent upon, the dominant class. Thus, whatever the various labour organisations may do against the capitalists, be their action legal or illegal, peaceful or violent, their conduct, as well as the opinions of their leaders, are liable to constant misrepresentation. Men of the educated classes have been brought up to look at the problems of society from a totally different point of view from that at which the workers necessarily take their stand. Knights of Labour, Trade Unionists, Social Democrats, and Anarchists, however deep may be their differences among themselves, are alike in this, that they have no hope of a good word from the cable agencies. The movements in America have, therefore, been presented to the people of England with about as much fairness as if a shopkeeper in Piccadilly had cabled to New York his view of the Social-Democratic Federation and its leaders last February.

Well-to-do Americans, until lately, have tried to shut their eyes to the danger arising from the bitter class antagonism growing up around them, and to persuade themselves that it would all die down if let alone. This has been displayed even with reference to the recent riots, in the anxiety to show that no native-born Americans had anything to do with them. Personally, I am perhaps as strongly opposed to Anarchist tactics as many of the capitalist class themselves, regarding as I do such individual outrages and unorganised outbreaks as aids to reaction, rather than helps to the great organised Social Revolution which Social Democrats strive for. But no one can deny that Parsons and Fielden, the two principal orators on the occasion, are not possessed of German or Bohemian surnames. When, too, I ventured to predict more than five years ago in the *Fortnightly Review* that a conflict between labour and capital would certainly occur in America which might attain to the dimensions of a civil war, the *New York Tribune*, Mr. Jay Gould's own paper, extracted some passages and headed them with the remark, "England sends many fool travellers to the United States, but never before such a fool as this one." Yet it was even then quite clear to an impartial observer that a very bitter feeling existed between the two sections of the community, while drilling and

arming were going on vigorously on both sides in all the great cities.

In the year 1880 Mr. Powderly, now the chief of the Knights of Labour, thus expressed himself about strikes: "I am anxious that each of our lodges should be provided with powder and shot, bullets and Winchester rifles, when we intend to strike. If you strike the troops are called out to put you down. You cannot fight with bare hands. You must consider the matter very seriously, and if we anticipate strikes we must prepare to fight and to use arms against the forces brought against us." This was, at any rate, very plain speaking, by a native-born American citizen, just six years ago; and it is scarcely to be wondered at that men of a hotter temper, such as these fanatics of the *Arbeiter Zeitung* of Chicago and their American allies, took Mr. Powderly at his word, and made ready for the coming conflict, which he so clearly foreshadowed as one to be determined by appeals to force.

The riot in Chicago itself was but the climax to a long series of troubles which have been going on in that city. That the Anarchists went beyond what is reasonable or even sane in their proposals there is no doubt whatever. The journal named above, of which the weekly edition, the *Vorbote*, has a wide circulation outside Chicago, is an important, and in many respects well-edited German newspaper; but it has recommended direct attacks upon individual capitalists, and given directions in its columns how to make dynamite bombs for personal use. It was, indeed, not excluding Johann Most's *Freiheit*, by far the largest and most vigorous Anarchist paper in the world, advocating the propaganda of deed as opposed to the Social-Democratic propaganda of theory and education; and individual resort to force, or attack by groups as against the collective political, or, failing political, forcible action.

There is, however, good reason why Chicago, even more than New York or the other cities of the Atlantic coast, should be the headquarters of a propaganda of this kind. Capitalists in America are by no means the most considerate people in the world, as a rule. When the late W. H. Vanderbilt said, "The public be d—d," he but expressed the general sentiment of his "order," in the same way that his father, the old Commodore, when remonstrated with for treating the passengers on his railways as if they were hogs, answered, "By G—, sir, I wish they *was* hogs." Nowhere, I say, is this feeling of contempt for the general interest, as well as for the mean white who has failed to make money, stronger than in Chicago; in no American city is the division between the working class and the capitalist class more marked, nor, it may be added, does the press anywhere more furiously uphold, to the extremest point, the rights of property. The Chicago *Times* and the Chicago *Tribune*, differ as they may in other respects, agree in maintaining the claims of the employers to the fullest extent.

Nay, last winter, when the tramps throughout the States were more numerous than usual, the former paper, I think it was, suggested, in all seriousness,—it would have been a ghastly joke in any case,—that the farmers who were pestered with those unfortunate and sometimes desperate wayfarers, should poison them with strychnine in the food provided them. Where this sort of talk is indulged in by those who have the wealth and power, the opposite party soon begins to use strong language in turn.

Moreover, Chicago is, to put it mildly, not a moral city. That even the most ardent admirers of its go-aheadness would admit. So notorious is the character of the rich there for good and evil living, for gluttony and debauchery, that is, that when the city was burnt down a few years ago the more sanctimonious, if not more continent, persons dwelling in godly Boston and pious Philadelphia declared, with one voice, that this plague of fire was another judgment from on high upon a modern city of the plain. However that may be, the conflagration did not in this case influence for the better the morals of the inhabitants, who took up their abode in their rapidly-rebuilt dwellings, and continued their enjoyments as before. The wealthy did so, at any rate; and the great number of German workers who believed more or less in Socialism, as well as the ordinary artisans and labourers who can contrive to be bitterly discontented when out of work and starving without, strange as it may seem, the help of any guiding theory, had the satisfaction of seeing men who, but yesterday, were even as they themselves, with no superiority of education, refinement, or intelligence, revelling, as they said, at their expense, in the most wanton debauchery and excess—debauchery veiled by no decency, excess unvarnished with any pretence to taste. Naturally enough, in such a winter of hard times as that which Chicago has felt, like other industrial centres in America and elsewhere, the workers who were thrown out of employment, and had not even the workhouse to fly to, as with us, listened only too readily to the furious incitements to an immediate attack upon the well-to-do which were poured forth by the Spies' Parsons, and their friends.

The poverty-stricken people paraded with their black flags through the city, on many occasions, to no purpose; encounters with the police became more frequent, temper rose on both sides. While, also, the city authorities, headed by the mayor, though not ready to organise relief works for the unemployed, were disinclined, for political reasons, to interfere with the extremists, the police were by no means so considerate as the politicians. It is safe to say that just as the wealthy classes of Chicago are the most self-indulgent in America, so the police is the most brutal. I have myself seen them behave, without provocation, in a manner which in England would provoke a riot. No doubt they have a rough and dangerous population to deal with, but they are

rough and dangerous too. Of the general reasons which tend to make the class conflict in America so readily take the shape of violence I shall speak later; but in justice to the misguided men who are now awaiting their trial, for resisting the demand of the police to disperse with dynamite and revolvers, it should be remembered that in the strikes which had preceded the meeting in Haymarket Square, the police had acted with great cruelty; that in the deputation to M'Cormick's factory and in the attack which followed, they are accused of having clubbed, not only grown men but young girls to death; and that the speech of Fielden, which was the occasion of the arrival of the police and the demand for dispersal, was not more violent in tone towards the upper classes than many speeches which have been delivered in this country of late to large audiences by politicians of recognised standing and undeniable sobriety of conduct.

The mistake which the Anarchists of Chicago made is the same which the Anarchists of every country have so far made. They talk big about their power to do this, that, and the other by main force, when they are really a mere handful of men, and then they allow themselves to be taunted into open fighting by accusations of cowardice. It was absurd to suppose that the insignificant meeting of 1,500 men (the cable despatches said 15,000) could stand against the forces of the State and Federal Government; and still more absurd to imagine that the explosion of dynamite bombs in the face of the advancing police would solve the economical questions at issue. There can be little doubt, indeed, that the tendency of this encounter has been to throw back, for the time being, the general Socialist and Labour Movement in America, by driving into the opposing camp the waverers who would be glad enough to support the workers in an organised and reasoned effort such as that for the Eight Hours Bill. Just, however, as the Anarchists in Germany brought on the anti-Socialist Law, so, in America, by their mad talk and madder rashness, they have checked the advance of Social-Democracy among many thinking men. So manifest is this, that it is impossible not to see that by risking an encounter at that juncture, even supposing it were risked to protect the right of public meeting and free speech, the Anarchist leaders endangered the cause of the people.

But, whatever view may be taken of the Chicago proceedings, and however difficult it may be for non-students of labour questions to distinguish between Anarchists and Social Democrats,—Most is kind enough to denounce the present writer whenever he gets a chance,—it is beyond question that the organisation of the labouring classes in the United States is advancing by leaps and bounds. This is shown even by the latest intelligence which has come across the Atlantic. In city after city the capitalists in different trades have surrendered on the eight hour question.

True, it has not been a complete victory for the workers; but as the actual returns in the labour papers show, the proportion of successes to failures has been most encouraging to them. Moreover, the simultaneous movement in all parts of the country has taught the workers the force of union, and has given them confidence in themselves which nothing but such experience could have given. When the record of the first fortnight of the great Eight Hours Labour movement comes to be written it will, I think, be quite clear that, in spite of the deplorable occurrence at Chicago, a great step was then taken in the organisation of the workers for the peaceful attainment of an economical victory. The posters issued by the Knights of Labour prior to the struggle, calling upon the troops and the militia not to fire upon the people, showed that this organisation, which has been growing at the rate of a thousand a week during the present year, and which, with all its fanciful trickeries and secrecy, is probably the most powerful working-class organisation in the world, is obliged to recognise that, however peaceful its objects, force will be used by the dominant class against the people, and this force they must either meet or undermine.

But the most formidable weapon yet used by the workers has been boycotting; and the mere fact that arrests should have been made for adopting a method of class warfare which, under the existing law of the United States, is perfectly legal, confirms the reports of the success with which it has been used. That boycotting is liable to abuse is quite obvious, but, once admit the right of combination for any purpose, and it is difficult to see how boycotting itself can be stopped. The process, of course, could not have been effectively carried out without a complete organisation, thorough discipline, and a certain amount of secrecy. Strange to say, Mr. Powderly, the chief of the Knights of Labour, has openly declared against boycotting, as he did against the strike on Jay Gould's railways, and against the Eight Hour movement. But the boycotting has been done by the Knights of Labour all the same. As also it will probably be introduced here as well as on the Continent of Europe, it may not be out of place to describe the course taken, which differs a good deal from the simpler variety of the same process in Ireland.

A capitalist, say an ironmaster, a tobacco manufacturer, a type-founder, or a cotton-spinner, has a dispute with his hands, and refuses to come to terms with them. At once a "boycott" is ordained against him and his goods. First, all the Knights of Labour and working-class organisations in his neighbourhood are instructed to refuse to buy his goods, if they are of a kind which the workers have need of, and to persuade the store-keepers with whom they deal to give up taking them. Next, the newspapers which advertise the goods are called upon, and their managers are informed that if the advertisement is continued, the workers

will be enjoined no longer to buy, or in any way to support, that newspaper. Then those who supply the manufacturer with raw material are interviewed, and efforts are made to induce them to stop dealing with him. In this way, by degrees, a complete cordon is formed round the obnoxious individual or company, for few can afford, especially in cities of the second rank, to offend what is, on the whole, the largest spending class; and gradually he or they are forced to surrender or be ruined.

So powerful has this boycott become, and so well understood is it by the workers, even those who belong to no actual organisation, that the mere threat of its operation has, in numberless instances, gained them the day. The case of the baking establishment belonging to the so-called "Widow Gray," who has, however, another husband, a "boss" plumber, was quite exceptional; and any one who knows, as I do, how the bakeries in New York are managed, or how, for that matter, they are managed here, will have very little sympathy left to spare for the employer, after reflecting upon the fearful overwork of the men, for a pitiful wage. At any rate, the boycott has, as a rule, been successful, and it is very improbable that the Federal or State Government will be able to check it by arrests, unless they go much farther and attempt to suppress labour organisations altogether,—a step which would simply force all champions of the labouring classes into desperate secret conspiracies, and tend eventually to as bloody a struggle as ever devastated a great country.

Whichever way we look, in fact, we can see that the outbreak in Chicago was but a sputter of the hot volcanic lava below. The long, dangerous, bitter strike of the railway men in Missouri against Jay Gould, leading to violence on both sides; the strikes of the tram-car men in New York, and the open encounters with the authorities there; the serious troubles in the Schuylkill and Hocking Valley coal districts; the threatening attitude of the workers in Cincinnati and Milwaukee; the great gatherings of the unemployed in San Francisco and other cities; the armed encounters with reference to the employment of Chinese labour in Seattle and Portland, Oregon; the almost infinite number of smaller strikes and boycotts in all parts of the country, recorded only by the local prints and labour papers, but frequently leading to violence; the open advertisement of Pinkerton's Agency, that its directors are ready to provide capitalists with armed men, in organised bands, to put down strikes, at the rate of seven or eight dollars a day, as well as detectives to get in among the hands—all these and many more facts which I could point to prove beyond dispute that the two sides to the struggle are ranging themselves in battle order from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean; and from the Canadian frontier to the Gulf of Mexico. Even in a new state like Texas some of the bitterest feuds have been

stirred up. To talk of this widespread trouble as due simply to a few foreigners, who do not understand American institutions, or to be stopped by checking immigration, is absurd. At Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and New York the Germans have a good deal of influence no doubt; but even in those cities it will be found that Americans are now taking the lead in the agitation, as turns out to be the case in Chicago. It is true also that few native-born Americans are as yet avowed Socialists; but the ideas of Socialism are in among the trade unions and Knights of Labour to a much greater extent than here, and many of their branches have already been captured by the more advanced party.

Passing, therefore, from the exciting incidents of the moment, and disregarding whether the workers will or will not come victorious in the main out of the present conflict, we may fairly consider the permanent elements involved, and why it is that in the great republic of the United States, where the Radical ideal, as understood in this country, is almost completely realised, the prospect of class warfare should be almost more threatening than in older countries where the danger has long been recognised.

I. The workers are, on the whole, much better educated in America than in Europe, and more readily spend what money they have upon "reading matter." Hence they are more easily informed as to what is going on among their class, and, where they have leisure, they take a more active interest in politics and social matters. The habit of going to lectures and public meetings is also in favour of the spread of an organised agitation. Nothing has been more remarkable than the sudden appearance of labour papers in all parts of the country of late years, where formerly they were almost unknown, and in towns of a size in which in this country they certainly could not be maintained.* All these

* Saginaw Valley Daily Star (K. of L.), advanced.
 Cleveland Chronicle (Labour; commercial speculation).
 Labour Record, Louisville (organ Trades Assembly).
 Paterson Labour Standard (organ Trades Assembly; commercial speculation).
 Cincinnati Unionist (English and German; K. of L.), advanced.
 Baltimore Free Press (K. of L.), moderate.
 Southern Industry, New Orleans (organ Trades Assembly), moderate.
 Labour Advocate, Lewistown (organ Trades Assembly), moderate.
 Houston Labour Echo. Advanced.
 Craftsman, Washington (organ Typographical Union), Advanced.
 Palladium of Labour, Hamilton, Ontario (K. of L.), Socialistic.
 Alarm Chicago. English organ. I.W.P.A. Socialistic and Anarchistic.

Labour Inquirer, Denver (Socialist).
 John Swinton's Paper, New York.
 Workman's Advocate (organ New Haven Trades Assembly), Socialist.
 Detroit Labour Leaf (Typographical organ), Socialist.
 Tocsin, Philadelphia (Typographical organ), advanced.
 Labour Union, New York (commercial speculation), moderate.
 Dayton Workman (K. of L.), advanced.
 Voice of Labour (K. of L.), moderate, commercial speculation.
 St. Joseph Leader (K. of L.), moderate.
 Jersey Knight, Somerville, ———.
 Working Man's Advocate, Creston (K. of L.).
 Pittsburg Labour Tribune, ———.
 Labour Union, Sedalia (Socialistic).
 New Jersey Unionist (K. of L. and organ Trades Assembly), advanced.
 Workman, Durham, N.C.
 Providence, People (K. of L.), advanced.

sheets, however they may begin, tend steadily towards Socialism as they go on; and the English organs quote *Justice* with a persistence which has quite astonished those who, like myself, thought it would take some time for our ideas to make way among the individualist American workers.

II. The facts and figures relating to the trades and industries of the United States are tabulated with very much greater accuracy, and are much more easily accessible to the workers, than they are here or in any European country. Hence the artisans and labourers in any special branch can see clearly what proportion of the total product goes to the labourers in that department, and how much is taken as a return to capital. No dispute as to whether wages are or are not rising, relatively to the cost of living, could be carried on in America in the same blind fashion as is too often the case here. The champions of the working classes can see for themselves how they fare with their employers, and neither side can delude the other as to the main facts.

III. The evidence taken before the Committee of the Senate on the condition of the wage-earning class in the United States proved clearly that when the high rents and other points are taken into the account the workers in America do not get wages which command a standard of life in excess of what can be

Labour Lance, Tewk House (K. of L.), moderate.
 Co-operator, Seattle.
 Memphis Weekly Record (organ Trades Assembly and Typographical).
 Ohio Valley Boycotter (Boycotting specially).
 Independent Citizen, Albany.
 Petersburg Vice Exponent (K. of L.)
 Journal of Industry, Quincey.
 Truth, Rochester.
 Buffalo Sunday Truth. Advanced commercial speculation.
 Labourer, Haverhill.
 Minersville Free Press.
 Richmond (Va.) Herald.
 Pittsburg Herald.
 St. Paul's (Miss.) Herald.
 Louisville Labour Post.
 St. Louis Champion.
 Grand Rapid's Workman. Moderate.
 Labour Siftings, Fort Worth. Advanced.
 Atlanta Working World.
 Portland, Oregon, Ala. Revolutionary.
 Topeka (Kan.) Citizen.

The following form the "Associated Labour Press" :-

Cleveland Chronicle.
 Paterson Labour Standard.
 Cincinnati Unionist.
 Baltimore Free Press.

Southern Industry.
 Leicester Labour Advocate.
 Houston Labour Echo.
 Washington Craftsman.
 Palladium of Labour, Hamilton, Ont.
 Denver Labour Inquirer.
 John Swinton's Paper.
 Philadelphia Tocsin.
 Ohio Valley Boycotter.
 Independent Citizen, Albany.
 Rochester Truth.
 Buffalo Truth.
 Haverhill Labourer.
 Minersville Free Press.
 Richmond (Va.) Herald.
 Pittsburg Herald.
 St. Paul's (Mis.) Herald.
 Louisville Labour Post.
 St. Louis Champion.

German.

Bæcker Zeitung, New York. (Organ of Bakers' Union.)
 Arbeiter Zeitung.
 New York Volkszeitung.
 Der Sozialist. (Organ Socialist Labour Party.)
 Die Parole. (Organ I. W. P. A., St. Louis Groups.)

French.

L'Union Ouvrière, Montreal. French Labour Paper.

obtained in England. This was not what had been anticipated, and the revelation produced a very great effect; for Americans have always been led to believe, and did believe, that the labouring classes were far better paid, worked shorter hours, and altogether had a "good time" as compared with similar workers, male and female, in the old country. The exposure of the bad housing and "sweating" that were too common in all the great cities gave the agitators many texts on which they could preach with great effect, having official testimony behind them.

IV. The increasing difficulty for a man to rise out of the wage-earning class, which I have myself noticed in a casual way at every visit since I landed in San Francisco at the end of 1870, is felt as a distinct grievance by the workers. Men in America, whether native-born or immigrants, all expect to "rise in the world," if they are industrious, thrifty, and sober. They are now finding that this is a less and less easy matter, while the uncertainty of getting any employment at all, even by skilled artisans, has become a great hardship. According to the *North American Review* and trustworthy local statistics no fewer than 2,000,000 of people were out of work a few months ago.

V. There is no personal relation between employer and employed, and the cold pecuniary bargaining appears even in a more unpleasant shape than it does in Europe. Tramps also are treated with great cruelty, and the laws against them in some States are of a character which tends to foster outrages and drive them to desperation.

VI. The capitalist class consists for the most part of men who are merely rich, and who have risen above the level of the workers by operations which are scarcely likely to win respect. They are not absorbed into an old class whose wealth is hereditary, nor is there a large professional or easy class, with their dependents, to shade off the antagonism. Jay Gould, for instance, against whom some of the more desperate of the recent strikes have been aimed, is a man who has qualified for his present position as a "Napoleon of Finance" by a series of transactions which even the laxest moralists denounce as closely akin to fraud. Five-and-twenty years ago he was a needy punter in gold options; to-day he controls railways, telegraphs, news-agencies, legislatures, and the whole existence of the thousands of men who work on his various lines. And he is only a sample of plenty of others who act with the completest disregard to the welfare of the workers, the interests of the public, or the commonest rules of human decency. The feeling against the great corporations and their "bosses," with regard to the wholesale manner in which they have plundered the State of its lands, the trading community of cheap transit in many cases, and the mass of the people of honest representation, is shared by thousands who are not actually wage-earners, and helps on the general movement.

No attempt is made by the capitalists, as already noted, to disguise their contempt for the human counters with which they play their game.

VII. The contrast between the nominal social and political equality and the real disparity which exists between the rich and the poor man—the utter helplessness of the latter, though he is told that he is all-powerful, when he sees himself juggled out of any real influence—increases the bitterness in times of pressure. There is a growing appreciation of the irony of the situation at the very time when, owing to economical causes, the gap between the extremely wealthy and the wretchedly poor is widening every day. What is the use, men say, of being a citizen of the United States, when I can barely keep body and soul together, while these employers and capitalists control the whole machine? The tone of the political literature, from the Declaration of Independence downwards, is one continuous satire upon the economical and social conditions of to-day. Formerly, when all felt they had a chance, this was not so much noticed; now it is felt and commented upon daily.

VIII. The political issues themselves are really played out for the most part. These used to serve in the United States, as they still serve in older countries, to obscure the actual conflict of class interest which underlies them all. That is now at an end. So far as political matters go there is little to choose between the Democratic and Republican parties; and the people begin to lose their interest in the mere grabbing for place, which is thinly venerated over, if venerated it is, by a pretence of patriotism. This, among a nation so intensely political hitherto as the Americans, is in itself a serious matter. The social question rises in an interesting if a threatening shape just as people at large have become wearied of the "bloody shirt," and have wakened to the hollowness of nine-tenths of the political discussions. That the labouring classes are almost entirely unrepresented in the political arena by no means lessens the significance of this point.

IX. Americans are far more ready to resort to arms than we are. Just as it is said that a coward who goes west of the Rocky Mountains comes back a brave man, so any one who goes to the United States learns to look upon the probability of street fighting as by no means small, though perhaps he would find it difficult to give reasons for this feeling. At any rate, now and for some years past the possibility of such a collision has been felt among the workers, and when once bloodshed has begun, as it has in Chicago and St. Louis, it is very difficult to secure a peaceful issue, where those who hold the power fail to recognise that the class which is striving for better conditions of existence, has powers of organisation and secret action which might be used with fearful effect. There is no better preparation for a peaceful settlement than the establishment of mutual respect. This does

not exist between the two classes in America, and both are more or less accustomed to the use of arms.

X. The corruption of the State Legislatures and the Municipalities, the hopelessness of getting any matters attended to which affect the welfare of great masses of men, but which conflict with the interests of the great monopolists, are steadily driving the intelligent workers to the conviction that, if the present attitude is maintained, an appeal to downright force is the only possible solution of the question. Time after time reformers have seen their nominee or nominees bought, as it were, over their heads, after having given the most thorough pledges at the polls. Confidence is thus shaken among the people, not only in this or that party, but in the whole machinery of government; nor can I deny that this has had a tendency to strengthen the Anarchists who declaim against the childishness of all political action.

XI. The constitution of the United States is built up upon the principles of the most complete individual liberty for all free men. This, of course, has not been fully maintained in practice, but these are the principles to which appeal is always made in cases of difficulty. No provisions, however, were made or contemplated against the tremendous power over others which this unlimited freedom might give to individuals in the field of industry and trade. Thus, though protection is kept up against foreign goods, protection by the State, or organised community, of the native workers seems unconstitutional as well as grandmotherly. Twenty, thirty, fifty years ago the danger had scarcely arisen. Now that it has Americans, who are essentially lawyers and constitutionalists, find no precedents which will hold water for direct interference. This at least has been urged as a reason for non-intervention, and there seems a sound basis for the contention. Nevertheless, as I observed five years ago:—"Full individual freedom leads in present economical conditions to monopoly; that monopoly speedily develops into oppression and tyranny; and then the common sense of society, as a whole, has to step in to correct the mischief which has been allowed to spring up." It is upon the capacity of American statesmen, politicians, and publicists to grasp this truth and to modify their political constitution so that it may deal vigorously and firmly with social abuses, that the probability of a peaceful solution of the class struggle rests in the United States.

Happily signs are not wanting that, notwithstanding the raving of the capitalist press against the workers and their organisations, a change is taking place in the mind of influential men which may have a great effect in the direction which all must hope for. That the main question in the recent conflict should be the reduction of the working day to eight hours—a concession which the workers in our Australian Colonies have already secured—

gives a reasonable look to the demands of the labourers, seeing that nobody can work a horse eight hours a day without killing him very soon. The tone of President Cleveland's message, in which he attributes the difficulties of the situation to the grasping rapacity of capitalists, rather than to the undue demands of the labourers, is the more significant when we remember that as Governor of the State of New York, Mr. Cleveland actually vetoed a Bill, which had passed both Houses of the Legislature, in favour of a great reduction of the hours of labour on tramways. Clearly the facts brought before him since his election as President have considerably modified his opinions, or pressure has been brought to bear upon him—which is perhaps more likely, for he is not a man of great ability or foresight—by stronger men than himself.

The position of the Democratic Party, whose man President Cleveland is, with reference to the Labour question, is indeed worthy of brief consideration. The Republican Party is essentially, and of its nature, the party of the *bourgeoisie*. The Democratic Party has always claimed to be, though it must be confessed with very little reason, the party of the people. Now it has a chance of justifying its name and its claim, and the wiser heads are anxious that an attempt should at once be made in this direction. Hence the President's favourable message just before the Chicago outbreak. On the other hand, there are worse influences at work in the direction of the monopolists. Mr. Whitney, the Secretary of the Navy, has, it is said, great weight with Mr. Cleveland, and he has married the only daughter of Senator Payne, of Ohio, who is the head of the notorious Standard Oil Company. It is to be noted, therefore, that Senator Payne was the only Democratic Senator who voted in favour of the increase of the United States army and its employment in the suppression of strikes.

Personal considerations are, as a rule, hardly to be taken into account in a matter of such wide importance as this, which will long outlive Presidents and Cabinets, politicians and wire-pullers. But Mr. Cleveland and the Democratic Party—of which, by the way, Mr. Henry George is an active member—stand in a very peculiar position with reference to the transition period which America has entered upon. Having attained office after an exclusion of a quarter of a century the Democrats are at once brought face to face with an internal contest, in comparison with which, unless great care is taken, the Civil War between North and South may yet seem mere child's play. It is scarcely too much to say that, accordingly as the present executive shows judgment and capacity, inasmuch as it sees that the interests of a people should be considered before those of a class, just in so far will the immediate future of the United States be a history of beneficial development or anarchical disturbance. Hence the influences which bend Mr. Cleveland in a capitalist direction are

wholly harmful to the interests of the Great Republic at the present juncture ; and the worst service of all the bad services the Standard Oil Company has done the American community, would be that its chief should indirectly twist the principal officers of the Federal Government against the legitimate demands of the working people.

The better class of Republicans also, men who but yesterday were protesting against the corruption of their own party, and were largely instrumental in bringing about Cleveland's election, are beginning to see that buying cheap and selling dear is not the ideal of human existence. Mr. Henry Ward Beecher, essentially a man of the times, has found it advisable to abandon his old denunciations of the labouring classes, and to advocate something better for the people than to remain at the absolute disposal of owners of property. Mr. Newton, Professor Ely, the Chaplain of the House of Assembly, and many more, have been trying hard to reconcile Socialism and Christianity, rivalling even the Social Democrats in their denunciations of the unscrupulous money-getting, which has hitherto been the main consideration of the well-to-do classes in the United States. The agitation for Land Nationalisation, which Mr. Henry George has carried on with so much vigour and self-sacrificing persistence, has necessarily spread ideas of collective management far and wide ; the growing determination to limit the power of the railway kings and great corporations, has a direct tendency to help on still wider proposals ; while even the Free Trade discussion, like the Fair Trade agitation here, has drawn attention to economical and social as distinguished from mere political issues.

Till within the last two or three years, however, the reply of sober Americans to all who called attention to the dangers arising from the growing disaffection of the working class in the great cities was to point to their great agricultural population, and the increasing number of independent farmers as the backbone of the nation certain to oppose all subversory attempts. The figures of the last census are indeed astonishing, showing, as they do, that whereas in 1870 there were 5,922,471 persons engaged in agriculture in the United States, of whom 2,889,605 were dependents of some sort ; in 1880 there were 7,670,493 thus engaged—an increase of 1,700,000 in the ten years—and of these but 3,326,982 were dependents. Thus the independent farmers had increased from 3,033,866 in 1870 to 4,343,511 in 1880, and the number has grown since then considerably. Here then is what, in all ordinary circumstances, would be a strongly conservative element, opposing a dead resistance to the agitation of the great cities, similar to, but even more formidable than, that offered by the French small proprietors to the Radicals and Socialists of Paris, Lyons, etc. But economical causes have stirred the agriculturists

too, farmers and labourers together. The great fall in the price of all agricultural produce, the impossibility, it may be said, of disposing of their grain at a profit, has literally crushed many of the farmers, while the foreclosure on mortgages, or the increase of debt, has brought home the pressure of capitalism even to the most industrious and thrifty. The outcry against the railways by the employés finds, therefore, an echo among the farmers who cry out for lower than the already low rates; such combinations as the "Grangers" denounce railway monopoly and landgrabbing with almost the same vehemence as the more extreme men in the cities. At the same time those dependent upon the farmers, find more difficulty in getting work, and have to accept in many instances lower wages. Thus, though the agriculturists may take a somewhat different line from the city workers, they also are at the present time by no means as a whole in a contented frame of mind, or likely to play the reactionary part which was but now assigned to them.

Speaking generally, the tendency in the United States, as it is here, is for the workers who are better educated, more apt to combine, more ready to see the antagonism between their interests and that of the capitalists, to be asked to accept a lower standard of life, just when they have made up their minds that they are entitled to demand a higher. Can this be enforced? I say most distinctly, No. To see this it is not necessary to be a Social Democrat. Mr. Jefferson Davis, an old and presumably cool observer, practically says "No," too. He notes, as all unprejudiced men must note, that not only do the workers not share proportionately in the relative improvement of society, due to the improved methods of production of wealth, but that they are being educated to ask why this should be. Yet, even as I write, an official report reaches this country from the United States, which shows that the condition of the "sweaters' hacks," and of others of the lower grades of labour, is perhaps worse than it is in England with regard to food, clothing, and lodging accommodation. I do not deny that there is more general well-being in the United States than in England, but I am also convinced that the relative superiority now scarcely affects the working classes, and that the tendency is ever downwards in their lot. This, while the big fortunes are growing constantly bigger, and luxury is carried to a higher pitch than ever before.

Thus then the Chicago Riots, the unprovoked shooting at St. Louis, the other smaller outbreaks of which we hear little of, are symptoms of a deep discontent throughout the United States, which it will need the highest ability and coolness of her statesmen to deal with. We are now apparently at the beginning of a rising cycle of trade in that great country. Now, therefore, is the time to act. To wait until "bad times" come again before steps are taken to deal with the great social problem, means,

sooner or later, civil war. The respect for law, which De Tocqueville and other writers have remarked upon as so obvious a trait in the American character, will not long survive a state of society in which the law is used to protect a vast system of social oppression. Moderate as are the demands of the Knights of Labour, the Federated Trades, and similar organisations, the idea of collective action is, as I have shown, already growing among them ; and Socialism has taken root to such an extent that it can never again be neglected in any calculations as to the future action of the workers in the United States. A great opportunity lies before the men now in power. They can either bitterly exacerbate, and therefore render dangerous to peace the natural desire of the producing class for a rapid improvement of their lot ; or they can give it a gradual and beneficial outlet by an organised endeavour to meet their demands in a calm and equitable spirit. All men, even Anarchists, would prefer a peaceful solution ; sober observers know that violence is apt to breed reaction. But in America, as in England and on the continent of Europe, the question of the immediate future is, How are the workers to obtain control over production without a cataclysm which will sweep all before it ?

The seventh industrial crisis of the century is slowly passing away on the other side of the Atlantic. Will the eighth find the governing classes as incapable of grasping the causes or dealing with the effects of these periods of social anarchy as they are to-day ? Upon the answer to that question it is not too much to say depends the future of the American Republic.

NOTE.—Since the above paper was in type, direct evidence has been received that the great meeting and procession of Socialists and Anarchists on May 1st, attended by fully 20,000 men, was perfectly quiet and orderly ; that the numbers present on the occasion when the actual conflict took place did not exceed 1,500 instead of 15,000 ; and that the police had no legal right whatever, under the State Law, to call upon the people to disperse. This, of course, does not justify the throwing of the dynamite bomb ; but, taken in connection with the clubbing of girls to death and the shooting of men when the crowd went to M'Connell's factory, it puts a very different complexion on the matter to that given it by the capitalist press.

H. M. H.

May 24th.