

SOCIALISM,¹ CONSIDERED IN ITS ORIGIN AND FIRST
MANIFESTATIONS.

Analyse de la Doctrine De Babeuf. Paris, 1796.

Théorie des Quatre Mouvements. By Charles Fourier. Leipsig (Lyons),
1808.

Some Barriers between Labor and Capital. Cath. World, Nov. 1878.

THE ominous expansion of Socialism during the last few years, not only all over Europe, but, to a certain extent, even in this country, requires that all intelligent men should thoroughly understand its purposes and aims, and the means its leaders intend to adopt for their furtherance. This, until recently, appeared to many persons somewhat indistinct, so that even great political leaders paid little attention to this new sect, and acted as if it had no existence whatever. It was only yesterday, as it were, that Mr. Disraeli, who was not yet known as Lord Beaconsfield, thought proper, for the first time, to say a few words in a public speech on the advent of the monstrous *giant* on the political stage; and it was still more recently that M. de Bismarck condescended to acknowledge it and prepared to fight it out, as he is at present attempting with great energy. In his last manifesto, just before his death, M. Thiers, who ought to have appreciated it better, on account of recent events in France, called it merely *an epidemic*, as if it would be only a momentary scourge, like the yellow fever of last summer in Louisiana.

This long-enduring indifference towards socialism must have in those three influential leaders the effect of wilful blindness, for they could not but be aware that the socialistic idea is much older than they seem to suppose. Its present attitude can scarcely be understood, unless we go back to its origin and first manifestations. This will be the main object of the present paper; although, of necessity, allusion will often be made to occurrences of the day, and people will judge whether it is merely an epidemic, as M. Thiers fondly imagined.

Socialism, which under the euphuistic name of *Sociology*, has lately been made in England a branch of science, has a much more extensive meaning than that formerly assigned to it by lexicographers. They often confound it with communism; but it would be unjust now to do so, although many socialistic systems end in the

¹ A very important paper on Communism in the United States, was published in the July number of 1878. The object of this is altogether different, as the reader can easily recognize, and contains, in fact, a history of Socialism in all European countries.

community of property. The main idea of the thing itself is that of association, with the ultimate purpose of improving the condition of the lower classes, and through them, of all mankind. Thus any religious or philosophical scheme in which the amelioration of human society is considered as the theorizer's main object, can be called a socialist system. In this sense Plato's *Republic*, More's *Utopia*, Campanella's *Civitas Solis*, Fenelon's *Telemachus*, and many other celebrated books of the same kind, can be rightfully designated as innocent attempts at ameliorating man's social condition. In fact, when first published, they were mainly considered as inoffensive descriptions of an impossible state of things on earth, aiming at public good, and thus they were socialistic utopias.

When these speculations are examined from a practical point of view, it is easy to see that a mere philosopher, even of the highest rank, cannot be competent to construct or arrange a social system perfectly faultless, unless he is inspired and has actually received a mission from heaven for the noble purpose he has in view. Any one who has reflected seriously on the subject, must be persuaded that human society could not have started on its career except on the supposition that God himself had assigned laws to it, as well as to everything else. If the physical world imperiously requires physical laws, much more does the moral and social order necessitate moral and social principles. Until the evolutionists furnish us the demonstration that the material creation has made itself, and follows only the blind fatality of its own falling into line without a previous design, sensible men, even if not Christians, will continue firmly to believe that God alone *could* make the world and *has* made it. Then, too, moral and social order is of a far higher character than that which is purely physical, and God is much more needed for its establishment than even for the mighty energy by which the material creation was brought into existence.

What renders many men blind to the acknowledgment of this grand truth is, that God has allowed us to co-operate with Him in the practical workings of social order; and then, too, political institutions, which in great part come from man, and the constant shifting of natural human life in the course of its history, react powerfully on social institutions and can modify them to a great extent. But all these peculiarities cannot weaken the positive fact that God is the sole author of the social order, has given it its original direction, watches with paternal care over the observance of its laws, and alone prevents it from falling into confusion by His ever present action in the moral and social, as He likewise does in the physical world. Man, therefore, undertakes more than he can do when he attempts to frame a social scheme, *de toutes piécés*, as the French say,

irrespective of the divine laws which have presided at the foundation of society and which must constantly regulate its development.

The social system is intimately connected with politics, but is far deeper, as being the necessary *substratum* of all governments. It is entirely interwoven with all the domestic concerns of man, inasmuch as the family is the first and most necessary element of society. It is inseparable also from the teachings of religion, which necessarily forms the basis of any commonwealth on earth. All these considerations are so many proofs that the human social system must have come from God's hands, and that it is the height of presumption on the part of man to think of building it up without having received a mission from heaven.

This is perfectly clear to every intelligent man who has not lost the use of his reason by too long a practice of sophism. It is true, nevertheless, that the great socialistic leaders of the day discard all this, and refuse to admit God's authority in politics, in the family, in the commonwealth, in all the concerns of man. But for this very reason all their social systems are not only untrue, but monstrous and absurd, as we hope to make clearly appear before we have done. We maintain again that no philosopher, as such, can frame for man a social system perfect in all its details, and sure to win the acceptance of all, for the reasons which have just been assigned.

It might not be unprofitable to recite again the various stages which human society has passed through from the beginning down to our own day. The hand of Providence would surely appear in the details which we might recount, and history would teach us better than philosophical speculation what social plan God has designed for man from the primitive ages, and how this plan has been in part thwarted by the follies and errors of man. But this would be beyond our scope; and we are reduced to consider only one of those social stages, the most conspicuous in fact, namely, the establishment of Christianity.

For, the social changes which the Christian religion brought into the world, are so remarkable that no one who merely opens his eyes can gainsay them; and every one is obliged to admit the truth of these words of St. Paul: *Pietas ad omnia utilis est, promissionem habens vitæ quæ nunc est et futuræ*, 1 Tim. iv. 8. This alone, is more than sufficient to prove that God's hand has founded human society, and preserved it from ruin whenever man interfered too violently with His plan. Ancient history, moreover, has been searched into of late years for this very purpose of discovering the early civilization of man, which is another name for God's plan; and if crude theories have been devised, derogatory both to man's dignity and to God's power or goodness, other inquiries have vin-

icated both, and proved the correctness of the biblical account. It is evident that if human society has often been subject to frightful evils, it is mainly because the divine designs have been opposed and resisted in all their elements, political, social, industrial, domestic, and individual. What has been well ascertained of the workings of the Christian religion on human life under all these aspects, demonstrate that it was intended to repair the wrong, and render happiness possible in human society; so that Montesquieu's saying is profoundly true: "It is wonderful indeed that Christianity, whose great object is to prepare man for a happy hereafter, is likewise the best calculated to procure his felicity in this life."

The necessary limits of this paper allow us only to furnish here a very short, and consequently imperfect sketch of this most important subject, but it cannot be altogether omitted. Despotic power of the most monstrous kind had replaced in the Roman world the former paternal forms of all *political* institutions. The *social* hierarchy of ranks in the primitive commonwealth had been totally subverted by dividing all men into the mere dualism of the few and the many, the free and the slave, both in the most extreme meaning of the terms; the former enjoying all freedom's privileges, the latter being subjected to all the horrors of the most abject servitude. Slavery had also altogether spoiled the *industrial* system, founded primitively on universal labor according to each individual's capacity. This normal rule, dating from Adam's fall, had been replaced by abject labor imposed on the slave, which rendered free corporations simply impossible. The *domestic* institution was rapidly running to its destruction by the introduction of repeated divorces, which would soon have brought on the degrading custom of promiscuity. Finally, the *individual* abandoned to himself, and free from any other restraint except that of exterior force, appeared to have at last obtained his independence, only to fall under the crushing heel of despotism.

The Christian religion, considered as a human institution—it bears also this aspect—corrected fundamentally all these fatal effects of a universal decline among the nations, and inaugurated the modern, or rather, mediæval social system. Happy, if men had better appreciated it and kept it. The Imperial Roman absolutism was replaced either by the Christian idea of moderate monarchy, or by the aristocratic governments of the mediæval republics, very different from the former Grecian democracies; all these institutions being at the same time under the control of the Pope's mediation, in case of discord among the rulers. The Third Estate soon appeared everywhere to secure the rights of the lower classes, and the great word, freedom, acquired a meaning which it never had in ancient times. This new political society was at once established on

the firmest basis by the great Christian principle that "All power comes from God." The noblest social axioms were embodied in the sublime virtue of charity—*charitas*—which remedied as far as it is possible, the evils necessarily derived from the inequality of rank, of wealth, of knowledge. It was admitted that this inequality is founded on man's nature, and that it would be sheer folly to attempt a levelling of fortunes, of power, of ideas, and that in case this should be done for a moment, it could never last owing to the immense variety of aptitudes and of opportunities which a wise Providence has decreed should entirely rule human affairs. The modern industrial system was introduced step by step, by the gradual abolition of slavery, which had rendered impossible among the ancients what we now call free industry. It was in the monasteries that free labor was first born, and there was then no conflict whatever between it and capital. There would, in fact, never have been any conflict of importance between them even in modern times, such as we witness at this day, if the old corporations and guilds, created by the Church in the Middle Ages, had not been totally destroyed first by the Reformation, and afterwards more completely still by the French Revolution. To have a sufficient idea of this, it is sufficient to consult the *History of the Reformation*, by Cobbett. No one has ever been able to confute the statements of the great English radical on the important subject he has treated. He has indeed completely unveiled the true cause of modern pauperism, which is the last expression of this frightful phenomenon of our day, viz., *the total subjection of labor by capital*. As to the results of the French Revolution, M. Taine's last work, *Origines de la France Contemporaine*, to the same effect as Cobbett's, it is impossible to refute. Finally, there is no need of dwelling on the consideration of the social unit called the family, since every one now admits, except the extreme Socialists, that the Christian ideal of it, with all its consequences, is the only one acceptable to reason and morality. Even non-Christians begin to shudder at the social decomposition produced by the introduction of divorce in marriage, and of independence among unruly children so common in our age.

All these considerations are irrespective of many other ameliorations which Christianity has introduced into human society, such as the principle of association, the smoothing away of international asperities, the introduction of humanity in war, the mildness of modern manners, etc. It is very doubtful, to say the least, if any modern theorists will ever find out a social system preferable to the one which has just been described. And it is remarkable that the immense and universal success attending it has not been confined to the first ages of the Church, when the Blessed Saviour's

doctrine spread so rapidly all over the globe, and produced such radical and beneficial changes in human society, on so large a scale. But even in our day, the same power of the true Christian apostle has exerted a like influence wherever in his zeal for man's welfare he can act without his efforts being opposed and thwarted by inveterate enemies. Thus in Paraguay, as soon as the missionaries of the Church obtained from the Kings of Spain permission to lay the foundation of their "Reductions" (as they were called) without the interference of outsiders, the Christian social idea was realized in such degree as surprised and delighted all unprejudiced minds. The most uncouth and barbarous savages learned in a few years all the arts of civilized life, and lived supremely contented in their miniature republics, happy with innocent festivities, and cheered by the sweetest emotions of religion. The only fault the most captious critics could find, was that the Indians were children, and their religious teachers not bold enough in their theories. The first defect was certainly charming as a novelty in the midst of the cold and surfeited eighteenth century, when they flourished. The second weak side of it rather pleases us as a contrast to the more than cold utopias of modern socialists, of which we shall speak presently.

It is true that in all her social schemes, Christianity assumes that man is a sinner; not a totally depraved creature, as John Calvin pretended, but inclined to evil, and rushing into it unless he effectually uses the means which God places at his disposal, and which we call divine grace. Modern socialism, on the contrary, invariably starts with the assumption that man is a perfect being, always preferring good to evil, and infallibly drawn by a powerful *attraction* towards what is conformable to his best nature. A sad experience has more than proved which is the true view of human nature; and the complete collapse, one after another, of all socialistic systems antagonistic to religion, would be another proof were it needed. After these general considerations on true *Sociology*, it is time to come to the history of Socialism itself, its true origin and first manifestations.

Before the outbreak of the French Revolution, Socialism, as it is now understood and preached, was totally unknown. If Protestantism did not give birth to it, it powerfully disposed men towards it. The social theorists, from the Middle Ages down to the latter part of the last century, were all more or less Christian, such as Roger Bacon, More, Campanella, and Fénelon. The books they wrote were, on the whole, inoffensive romances, and the most timid men could not reasonably have been frightened by the total adoption of their wildest dreams. During the second part of the last century the sect of Economists arose in France, with Turgot at

its head, and in England, Adam Smith, J. Balny, and others elaborated the system of what has been called political economy. A very remarkable feature in both these theories was the total exclusion of Christian ideas which all writers had previously connected more or less with social systems of every kind. Even those who previously had never said a word about Christianity, as Fénelon, in his Republic of Salentum—an episode of Telemachus—were evidently swayed by their Christian belief. But the new considerations on capital and labor, on the production of wealth, etc., which were the main objects of economists in England and France, took no account whatever of Christian principles, and discussed social problems in the simple light of unaided human reason and altogether irrespective of morality. But still most of the axioms on which human society had so far relied for its security, appeared to remain untouched by the new systems; and it required very careful study to detect any danger in those theories, though there certainly was. The step had been made, however, and for the first time social science boldly stalked forth in a form which was altogether independent of Christianity, and outside of every moral consideration.

The French Revolution boldly and avowedly went much further, and a few years after its first explosion, in 1789, the wildest social theories began to assume shape, and were not only *emancipated*, as the word has it, from all religious notions (as were those of the economists) but altogether antagonistic to them. Babeuf was the first to openly proclaim them, in 1796; but they had surely brewed in his mind from the very beginning of this political and social effervescence. Is it possible to point out at this day the true genesis of Babeuf's ideas with which many other men were soon found to coincide? We cannot see any other explanation of it than is found in the pregnant revolutionary motto, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," which, as every one knows, became the sole object of thought and enthusiastic desire for multitudes of Frenchmen during this period of madness. The reader will be better able to judge of this after we shall have briefly commented upon it.

Liberty or freedom did not mean in this motto what it had meant for our ancestors from the beginning of the Middle Ages. Freedom was then thought to be the enjoyment of certain rights consecrated by the existing hierarchy of ranks. These were the rights of the Church and the rights of the king or ruler. There were those, too, of noblemen and of churchmen; those of burghers and of peasants; those of military men, consecrated by the rules of chivalry, and those of civil guilds and trade corporations; those of craftsmen and of students in universities, etc.

Whenever a man was not prevented from enjoying those rights he was said to have the enjoyment of his freedom. If an arbitrary

power of any kind deprived him of any of them, he was regarded as deprived of his freedom. When Magna Charta was extorted from the king in England it was merely the restoration of the rights of the Church, of the nobility, of the common people, which had been taken away or curtailed by a tyrant. But the word, liberty, was understood very differently by the French revolutionists. It was even the very reverse of all this, and became in their estimation complete emancipation from all superior powers; from those of the Church, of the king, of the nobility, of the parliament considered as a corporation, of the civil, religious, and trades' guilds, which still existed, etc. It was, in fact, under the name of liberty, the complete destruction of *freedom* as it had been defined, because the rights of all were sacrificed at once; and there remained nothing but the rabble, to which was granted supreme power, under the name of *sovereignty of the people*. But as no human society can exist without a power of some kind, *all* power was henceforth vested in the state as the executive servant of the people. This is precisely the fundamental principle of socialism, as it is now generally understood.

As to equality, the consequence of it is more glaring still, and it is especially out of this particular hobby that socialism was born. No one had ever imagined before that human society could exist without a well-determined hierarchy of ranks, and an indefinite inequality of functions. The idea of equality before the law is very different. A Christian can have no objection to it, because it is evidently founded on the most elementary principles of the Christian religion. But the new revolutionists in France gave a very different meaning to the notion of equality. According to many of them, at least, a happy social state absolutely *required* that all should have the same rights, the same degrees of enjoyment, the same quantity of property even, or an approach to it, the same means of pushing themselves in the world and reaching posts of honor; nay, the same amount of knowledge, as we will soon have an opportunity to see. This was evidently all derived from Rousseau's principles; and Rousseau's *Contrat Social* was the new gospel. All his doctrine culminated in equality, and by consequence in the suppression of superiority of any kind.

These new theorists—we mean the revolution's most ardent promoters—imagined that by obliging all men to come down to the same level, they would establish on earth a most happy social state, such as the world had never seen before. They seemed to be intimately persuaded that until their time men had been miserable only because some had been rich and others poor; some had ruled and others had obeyed; some had been honored and others unknown; some had led mankind by the loftiness of their thoughts

and others had to follow the lead of their betters. Their avowed object was to remedy the enormous evils under which mankind had grown from centuries, owing to the inequality of condition in which men are born, live, and die. Totally rejecting the Christian view, they thought that man is naturally good, was not born in sin; that he possessed in himself all the elements of happiness; that, were it not for his surroundings, namely, for the trammels of an artificial society, in which he was enslaved, he would have the means of asserting his freedom and enjoying life, unless he first entirely destroyed the universal cause of all his evils, by overturning the social edifice in which he was immured as in a dungeon, and out of which he must first emerge before he could build up the palace which his imagination had created.

It is undeniable that these dreams were openly indulged in by many Frenchmen at that time; and this alone explains the alacrity with which they abolished in a single night all the privileges of the nobility, the nobles themselves taking the lead in the strange process. All social distinctions forthwith were to disappear; all classes were to be reduced to a dead level; thenceforth no one should be able to raise his head above his fellows. Ever since that day, the importance of preserving in society as perfect a social equality as possible, has been the hobby of very many Frenchmen. By public opinion, by legislation, by every means in their power, they have endeavored to give to their nation an aspect which men have had nowhere else. They were certainly working against nature in fulfilling that hard task, for no law is so constantly and visibly active in this world as that of variety and inequality. This is evident everywhere in the universe, but it is seen pre-eminently in man's nature. For his faculties of soul and body, his aspirations and aims, even his unconscious opportunities during life, are all of them most multiform and various, and the progress of time constantly tends to increase these differences, so as to render them truly ineradicable. A large class of socialists of our day pretend that man's nature can change in that respect, by evolution; that it has already been greatly modified, and is destined to undergo modifications of far greater importance. We will come back to the consideration of this subject in another paper.

Those men, indeed, from the beginning, were so blind as not to see their folly; and particularly during the whole period of the revolution, the master spirits among them were endeavoring to bring down the entire nation to the rude state of life known as *sansculottism*, in which no individual could ever think of rising above his fellows, except as regards the bombast of his noisy *patriotism*, always with the proviso that all should be satisfied with iron and bread, *du fer et du pain*. This was especially the theory of St. Just,

the great metaphysician of the party, who can be called without injustice to his memory, one of the coolest monsters that ever existed.

But as nature always vindicates her rights, and eventually triumphs over the folly of men, many distinctions continued to exist, and many more were brought back by Bonaparte when his time came. On this very subject of equality, the two great *montagnards*, Robespierre and Marat, had not exactly the same notions. The first, although he was the bosom friend of St. Just, and though he always used the most endearing expressions when addressing the *poor* people, and commiserating their distress, invariably took good care to distinguish himself from them, at least by his dress, his habits, and his language. The second, Marat, took a sort of pride, not only in expressing pity for his dear *sansculottes*, but dressed, ate, and spoke exactly as they did. This last-named apostle of freedom was altogether consistent in his advocacy of equal rights, the other was not. It is needless to carry the description further; and it must suffice here to say that most of the features of the subsequent socialism were evidently copied from this model, and the communism which naturally followed was destined to be the complete realization of this great doctrine of equality.

Of Fraternity, the last term of the revolutionary triad, less needs be said. It may all be comprised in the remark that the great ostensible object of socialism is to establish a true brotherhood among men, and to realize consequently, the third term of the celebrated motto. Like results, however, befell this socialist *brotherhood*, which was the fate of the revolutionists' *fraternity*. It is well known that it all ended in a universal fight of factions. By a just retribution inflicted on them by Almighty God, the first idea they had as brothers, of clubbing together to trample on the rights of foreign nations, and on those of the superior classes among themselves, which they ferociously hated, terminated in a worse than fratricidal war, in which they seemed to have no other political object than literally to cut each other's throats. Our children will see, in case socialism succeeds in its plans, if its ultimate end will be very different.

Before leaving this part of our subject, it is proper to say a word on the remarkable hatred of religion during the revolutionary period, and which many socialistic systems of our day seem to have inherited from their ancestors. It is true, some pleasant eulogists of that period in France (where there are still so many admirers of the French Revolution), have thought that nearly all the principles advocated by it were Christian principles. The fact is, however, that the chief endeavor of most of its leaders, was evidently to destroy every kind of religion, even simple theism itself. God's

authority was from the beginning severely excluded from the new social organization. It was much later on that Robespierre tried to introduce his *Etre Suprême*. There was no thought of it when *liberty was founded*. There was consequently no superior being on whom any one depended. Each one was his own master, even in obeying the law, because law, according to Rousseau, was only *the expression of the universal will*, and every individual's own will was included in this; every one obeyed himself in obeying the law. To this point had they carried the folly of emancipation; and it is impossible to see how there could be any religion among them. As to Catholicity, it is well known how they hated it, and what frightful and odious persecution was raised against it. We fear that nothing very different can be expected from socialism if it succeeds, and if the open shedding of blood is not so much to be feared in this century, legislative enactments will be invented and enforced strong enough to suppress every exterior manifestation of the Church's zeal, in the hope that faith itself will die in the heart when it can no longer be outwardly professed.

Babeuf was the true founder of Socialism. In proof of this it suffices to give the main points of his doctrine. There was not, perhaps, much science, as they say, in his projects. These showed, however, a deep foresight of the main difficulties the system would meet in its realization, and remarkably sound judgment in the solution of those difficulties, as far as there can be sound judgment in madness. It has always been to us a matter of wonder that modern Socialists have not, long before this, made a hero of Babeuf, of whom they never speak. He undoubtedly was the clearest and most logical utopist among them all, and died a martyr to the cause, by stabbing himself in open court, on hearing the death sentence passed upon him on account of his anti-social conspiracy.

Before he was arrested, with his chief followers, by orders from the French *Directoire*, the party published, in 1796, an *Analyse de la doctrine de Babeuf*, which spread dismay among the Parisians. A few phrases of it will give a sufficient idea of the system, which evidently contained all the germs of Socialism and Communism, at a time when no one in England or Germany had yet thought of it.

“ Nature has bestowed on every man an equal right to all enjoyments. Human society can have no other object than to secure that equal right, whenever it is assailed by powerful and wicked men, and to increase the sensual gratification of each citizen by the coöperation of all in the same object. Nature imposes on all the obligations of bodily labor, and no one can shrink from it without crime. Labor and enjoyment must be common. There is oppression whenever a man must shorten his life by labor and yet suffers from want, whilst another lives in luxury without working. No one can claim for himself without crime the exclusive possession of any property either real or industrial. In a society rightfully constituted, there must be neither rich nor poor. Wealthy men who refuse to give up their superfluous property in favor of the indigent, are the people's enemies. . . . No one can use his endeavors to deprive another man of the instruction necessary for happiness : instruction must be common.”

The reader will remark how Communism in all its branches was already sketched in this short programme. Enjoyment, real estate, personal property, industry, instruction, everything on which Socialistic treatises comment at length, and rave more or less in Germany, Russia or France, in our day, had been canvassed in the mind of this obscure Frenchman from Picardy, who began life as editor of the *Correspondant Picard* in Amiens, and at the end of it was not far from succeeding in overturning the *Directoire* in France, and establishing the purest Communism on the ruins of order, such as it then was.

But he was not a secondhand dreamer. All these *principles*, it is true, had been advocated by Rousseau, Malby, Condillac, and other theorists of the same school. None of them, however, knew how to give a practical turn to their theories, and to show how all this could be set on foot in a great nation. Babeuf alone among them, worked practically on the theory. Hear how Buonarotti, his most intimate friend, the second best man of the party of "Equals," as its founder named it, resumed the whole plan in a subsequent volume.

"As soon as the French people shall be declared sole proprietor of the national territory, the bodily labor of each individual citizen must become a public function regulated by law. The citizens, partitioned into various classes, will receive each one a task to perform, exactly alike for all. Each one in his turn must submit to go through whatever is less pleasant in physical labor. The social power, represented by officials needed for the purpose, will assign due limits for production all over the country, regulate the interior transportation and foreign trade, and watch over the apportionment of raw material kept in the public stores, so as to give an equal proportion of it to each citizen. The constant effort of legislation must have for its object to bring back popular manners and customs to a primitive simplicity. It was expected that very soon men would remove in great numbers from the too-populous cities created by a surfeit of civilization, distribute themselves more equally over the whole territory, and give birth in general to simple and modest villages."

With regard to public instruction and literature in general, some very curious considerations have been presented by Buonarotti in a *Summary* of the discussions which took place in Babeuf's house, between the heads of the party, when it was just being organized.

"The Committee, convinced that nothing is less important to a nation than the pruriency of shedding a false intellectual light over the world, have made up their minds not to allow the pretended votaries of science to keep aloof from the ordinary duties of citizens, and to look for happiness in another field than the common one of physical labor. They were unanimous in the intention of putting down all theological and philosophical discussions, and felt sure that the total abolition of wages and salaries, which was a part of their system, would soon cure the French from their natural inclination to shine by their wit, and even from writing books. The only knowledge necessary to the citizens, was that which enabled them to serve and defend their country. Learned bodies or corporations would never be permitted to exist. There could not be any longer either moral or intellectual pre-eminence. Genius itself could not assert its rights as against the strict equality of all men. To read, write, cipher, show a good power of reasoning, know the Republic's history and laws, be somewhat acquainted

with its topography and productions; such would be the school programme for all citizens alike. . . . Above all, the press must be strictly prevented from ever attempting to introduce anything not included in the prescribed circle of studies."

This was certainly working on a large scale, since the whole of France was included in the scheme; and one almost regrets that for the instruction of all men, Babeuf was not allowed to realize his theory. The world would have witnessed a strange sight at the expense of a foolish nation. The attempts made subsequently by the Saint-Simonians, with their priests, artists, and *industriels*, and by the Fourierites with their phalansterian system, were but childish performances compared to the universal schemes of Babeuf, could he have succeeded even for a time. It is known that some member of his newly formed party sold the whole plot to the police, and thus enabled the government to nip the bold project in the bud. Had not this taken place, it is very likely that the rash conspirator would have captured, with his well-organized legion of a few hundred desperadoes, both the legislative council and the executive itself; that he would have sent them adrift or cut off their heads, and started his theory on the way to practical realization. Then France, or rather the world, would have witnessed monstrous things. But he failed and forfeited his life, and for many years his ideas remained dormant in a few minds.

They were not dead, however, and the subversive principles detailed above, had taken too strong a hold of many minds, to remain for a very long time altogether inoperative. It was not, however, before 1830, that socialism again woke up in France. Aberlé, in the *Dictionnaire de théologie Catholique (Art. Socialisme)*, attributes this surprising lull of the storm after its first blast, to the wars of the Republic and the Empire, which materially reduced in number the laboring classes in France, on which alone socialism could rely for success. This may have been in part the cause of this strange want of activity in the new doctrine; but a more powerful one in our opinion, was the well-ascertained fact that the *proletarians*, as Aberlé calls them, were still strongly religious in Babeuf's time, and continued to be so until after 1830. With the exception of a small number of workingmen in large cities, and of the rural classes in a radius of twenty leagues around Paris, the lower orders in France remained firmly attached to the old religion, and on this account they hailed with joy the *concordat* between Napoleon and Pius VII. The *bourgeoisie* alone, with a part of the nobility, had lost their faith; the mass of the people was sound to the core. As all the former principles of religious morality were openly set at defiance by the new social scheme, the French in a body could not yet accept it; and it is certain, in our opinion, that had Babeuf succeeded at first, his monstrous project would soon have met with

universal opposition. The reader must not lose sight of the incontrovertible fact that the first socialistic attempt, on the very face of it, embraced the destruction of all Christian principles on which society is founded, and that no aggregation of men desirous of remaining faithful to religion could for a moment entertain the idea of becoming socialists.

There is no doubt a social science which has not broken loose from Christianity, much less from natural religion, and consequently there is a Christian socialism which at this moment is strongly supported in France, particularly by men of a high degree of intellect. But of this there can be no discussion here, since we are now speaking of the time immediately subsequent to Babeuf's death, when true social science had not yet been born, except as to its principles, which are contained in the great works of the old schoolmen, of St. Thomas Aquinas in particular. It was the remaining strength of those mediæval principles which would have preserved France in 1796 from the socialistic fury, so that most of the agriculturists and workingmen would certainly have opposed Babeuf. At that time, the blatant revolutionists who had upheld the system of terror, were comparatively few in France, though they were noisy and active. Their extraordinary power for mischief was due to the strict discipline of the Jacobin society, which had spread all over France, and had enlisted everywhere a small number of active and energetic men, who carried everything before them by audacity and violence. But this Jacobin society had been utterly destroyed after Robespierre's fall, by a few thousand young men in Paris, armed only with clubs. This seems to us the true reason why there was no development whatever of Babeuf's ideas during a period of more than thirty years. France was still too much attached to the social principles which had obtained for more than ten centuries.

Hence not even the word socialism, or communism, was ever heard or written in France during the whole period of the first Empire, and the Restoration. The memory of the writer still vividly preserves the remembrance of the startling effect produced on all Frenchmen by the bold proclamation of the newly organized society of St. Simonians. At the beginning of August, 1830, directly after Charles Xth's fall, innumerable posters openly announced all over the country their projects and hopes, and called attention to their organization, their new establishments, and the books and periodicals they began to publish for the spread of their ideas. This appeared as new to all as if Babeuf had never existed.

It will not be unprofitable, however, to briefly show that this new outbreak which was to inaugurate a long era of popular conflicts and revolutions all over the world, was fatally opportune, though

unexpected. The way had been opened and smoothed for it by many events which had strongly modified human society, and prepared it for still worse changes. If any one wishes to know the "reason why" of socialism, he has only to seriously reflect on the following considerations.

The Christian religion had established on earth a well-known and sound social state, and this was eminently favorable to the poor, Christ himself having blessed the poor. Many able books have been written, clearly proving the many social advantages derived from Christianity; and a number of men of our own day, most proficient in social science, even of the *collective* school, as it is called in France and Germany (that is, in favor of vesting all property in the community or state, not in individuals; pure socialists, consequently), recognize in the people of the fourteenth century, for instance, a far greater degree of well-being than is now enjoyed by the same classes. There was then no conflict between capital and labor; in general there was a good understanding between them, and the great law of charity softened all the social asperities which now threaten to issue in open civil war. The agriculturists, with their perpetual tenure, and the workingmen in cities with their communal system, corporations and guilds, lived in much greater comfort than they ever did before or since. The convents were always present in their midst, to come to their relief in times of scarcity, sickness, or business depression. This is now admitted by all intelligent men; and it is also certain that there did not exist at that time anything like what we call the proletarian class. It is proper to assign to this its true origin and causes, in order to fully understand the origin and causes of socialism, its "reason why," and when it was invented as a universal remedy against all evils. In a single word, Protestantism began the work, and the French Revolution completed it. This has to be briefly explained.

Both did it, particularly the last, by destroying the corporations, whether religious or civil, which had been founded by Christian tenderness, charity, and consideration for the laboring classes, and leaving them to confront alone and unassisted, a cold, calculating, and crushing money-power. The Religious Corporations, or Orders in the Church, had for many centuries been most effective in protecting and aiding the poor; but the civil associations of every kind were no less productive of most beneficial results. It was the fashion, a few years ago, never to speak of these last; and if the first—the Religious Orders—were alluded to, it was often with a sneer, as if the help they afforded to the people was as degrading as that of the poor laws which have been substituted for them. At the present time a well-informed man would blush to institute such a comparison between Religious Corporations and the poor laws; the

then existing civil associations also are in general perfectly well known and appreciated. It is acknowledged that from them arose 1st, the development of modern industry ; and, 2d, the birth of the "Third Estate," as a political power. Both of them were immense factors in the social organization of Europe during the Middle Ages. Protestantism destroyed a great number of these admirable institutions ; and the French Revolution took a wild pleasure in abolishing them at one stroke, and depriving the people of all the strongest props of their prosperity, of everything, in fact, which could be a protecting power to them.

But the poor could not be destroyed, and, according to the Saviour's declaration, they must forever continue among us. Henceforth the benefactions of the convents and civil institutions were to be replaced by the poor laws ; and, deprived also of the strength they had found in the union fostered by their guilds, the people were left to the shift of agreeing individually for wages with those who had money. Thus two immense dangers to society arose, namely, pauperism, the necessary result of the poor laws, and the struggle of labor against capital, which has become one of the most prominent features of this century.

This ominous social revolution, effected gradually during the last three centuries, and intensified a hundredfold during the last one, has finally added political to social hatred by the extension of the franchise, and *necessitated* the advent of Socialism and Communism. For, as soon as the lower orders were inoculated with the spirit of indifference to religion, or of positive infidelity, no barrier was left standing against the spread of a fearful antagonism between rich and poor ; and the wildest schemes were set afloat to bring back happiness and contentment among mankind by an altogether new social doctrine. This was the origin of Socialism.

There is no denying that human society, such as Protestantism and the Revolution have made it, is groaning under the most intolerable abuses ; and under the superficial varnish of an astonishing civilization, the greatest part of mankind has strong reasons to complain that it is reduced to a state almost worse than slavery by an almost constant lowering of wages, and as constant a rising in price of the necessities of life. The most important question, however, for the laboring classes, is the pregnant one comprised in a short phrase, "Is Socialism the true remedy?" The best way to answer it is to consider what steps have already been taken by the advocates of the new doctrine for ameliorating the condition of the poor, and to revert to the history of that doctrine.

When, in 1830, Saint-Simonism, and soon after Fourierism unveiled their secrets, Europe had received no warning of the coming crisis. The words Socialism and Communism were absolutely un-

known. The germ, however, deposited by Babeuf had not fallen into a barren soil. It had been slowly growing in the minds of a few men; and the little club of these ardent theorists was prepared to receive any number of proselytes, to plant the tree, and foster its growth and expansion.

Comte de St. Simon had been first a soldier. He had fought under Lafayette and Washington in the American war. The French Revolution, in which he took no part, made him foolishly believe that Catholicism was dead, and must be replaced by a better religious organization. This became the dream of his whole life. For a moment, it is true, he thought of grounding all his plans on industry alone, and was on the point of coming at once to the last stage of Socialism, such as it is in our day, when it is mainly an attempt to place labor above capital. But he soon saw that some sort of moral principle was needed for the foundation of human society (a fact which modern Socialists do not perceive, in their blindness). In his bold attempt at replacing Christian principles by larger views, as he thought, he went directly to the extreme of proposing the establishment of a new religion, from which, however, all supernatural notions should be excluded, except in name. This was the origin of his system, in which mankind were to be divided into three categories, viz., priests; artists, or *savants*; and workmen, or *industriels*. It took the shape, therefore, of a new system of castes, in which attraction replaced equality.

He had prepared himself for his task by three years of hard study of various philosophical subjects, and afterwards by several years of travel through Europe. It is remarkable that when he came back to France, his view of England was simply that "in that country there was no new conception worth mentioning on the subject of social science." And of Germany he said that "universal science was yet in its infancy, because everything was made dependent on mystic principles." This was just before 1808. There was, therefore, no Socialism anywhere, and it is certainly in France that the doctrine has originated, since political economy had not yet deserved the name.

There is no need of entering into further details of the views of this dreamer, St. Simon, because they are now altogether forgotten. He died in 1825, fully persuaded that "the kingdom of God was coming, and that all the prophecies would soon be accomplished." His last words to his disciples were: "The fruit is ripe, you shall gather it." His friends and followers thought, in 1830, that the moment had arrived. Their antics became at once so excessive, that in 1832 the government suppressed the new society, and the French people in general applauded the decision against a sect which in their eyes was only ludicrous. That there was, however,

something very serious in it appears from the terms of the sentence pronounced against them. They were condemned to fine and imprisonment for having preached more openly even than the Jacobins the insurrection of the poor against the rich, the abolition of property, of authority, of all the rights and prerogatives of the state. They had besides set forth "that human society, as it was constituted, was either despotic or anarchical, and must be totally destroyed before a better one could be built up." Thus they were steadily walking in Babeuf's steps, but without carrying out his system of equality.

Nobody pitied the St. Simonians in France; but a few years after the suppression of their society, another suddenly loomed up, which took much deeper roots, and spread far beyond France. Fourier was its founder, and from the publication of his books dates the origin of Socialism in the United States and England, preparatory to its introduction into Germany and Russia.

Charles Fourier elaborated his system altogether independently of St. Simon, but at the very same time, since his first book, *Théorie des Quatre Mouvements*, was published at Lyons under the false name of Leipsic, in 1808. No one, at first, paid any attention to his productions, which were in fact the most fanciful the world had ever seen. In 1830 he tried to coalesce with the St. Simonians, only to fall out and quarrel with them. He escaped, consequently, their fate, and in 1832 he began to receive the adhesion of several men of note; and one of them, Victor Considérant, soon attracted a great number of followers to the new system. Considérant made it more palatable to the public taste by throwing into the shade many of the founder's visionary rhapsodies. How could any one, even in France, accept Fourier's conceptions in theology, cosmogony, psychology, socialism even, and industrialism? For he embraced all these branches of science in his utopias. In theology he admitted a pretended Trinity, composed of God, matter, and mathematics or forces. His God was deprived of will, freedom, even of consciousness in a great degree. His matter was eternal and independent of God. His mathematics or forces were nothing but the laws of nature, which he pretended were eternal and self-existing. His cosmology was more ridiculous even than his theology. All the heavenly bodies—stars, comets, planets, etc.—were intelligent beings, able to produce others of the same kind by a process similar to that of animals or plants. This was owing to an aroma which each of them possessed. The earth's aroma had the fragrance of violet and jessamine, etc. The psychology of Fourier was as immoral as his theology and cosmology were absurd. It could all be reduced to the principle that the passions are everything in man, and consequently must not be opposed.

The human soul, according to him, was a fragment of the universal soul by which stars and planets are animated; the passions are simply the soul's attractions for the fulfilment of its destiny. To oppose them would be suicidal. As to the socialism and industrialism of this dreamer, they were merely the application of his psychology. This culminated in the organization of his phalansteries, which were the only part of his system acceptable to men who were not altogether deprived of their senses; and it is by developing in a more rational way the ideas of Fourier on *association* and *attraction* that his most talented disciples succeeded at last in founding some phalansteries in France and America, and presented to the world a practical socialism, which it is proper to consider more attentively.

And, first, the liberty which the new sect enjoyed everywhere of putting their ideas into practice, came from the care Fourier and his followers took not to openly discuss philosophical questions concerning property, the family, government, etc., though their principles were as destructive of human society as were those of Babeuf and St. Simon. Fourier published his first work at the time of Napoleon's greatest power, and he could not in full security have broached his crude theories, had he openly deduced their consequences. The name of Leipsic instead of Lyons on the title-page, would not even have saved him from the acute police of Fouché, had his book produced a sensation. As, however, nobody read it, this was an additional reason for not making any noise about it. Under the Restoration, Fourier and his disciples were not disquieted by the government, because they spoke only of forming associations for industrial purposes. They did not appear to walk in Babeuf's footsteps, and never pretended to form a political party with anti-social principles. This was a remarkable feature in their organization; and the new theory must be first discussed from the single point of view of industrialism, to use a new word most appropriate to the purpose, which brought back Socialism to the former discussions of political economy.

What did it amount to in Fourier's mind? To the project of opening *convents* of men and women living together, having only one object, that of production in all branches of ordinary industry, and following certain rules of their own. They are called here convents, though they were simply lay associations, and the sect never advanced any pretension to the name of a Church, as did the St. Simonian organization, because their establishments were in fact, houses of seclusion, like those of the former monks, from whom they differed chiefly by their objects, which concerned only this life and the principles of industry. Both monks and Fourierites were certainly ruled by the principles of *association* and *at-*

traction, but of a very different kind. The monks had a twofold object; their own eternal salvation, and that of their neighbor. Concurrently with this, their labors secured the well-being of the poor by whom they were surrounded. For these various purposes they formed strict *associations*; and there was a strong *attraction* that knit them together, derived from the threefold precept of faith, hope, and charity, included in the first commandment of the Decalogue. The grace of God was of course the chief source of this attraction, and during the many centuries of their existence, it has continued to give proofs of its strength by their rapid expansion and the great works they undertook and carried on. The Fourierites, on the contrary, had only one ostensible object; to improve the condition of the lower orders in this world by the organization of industry and labor. For this, lay associations were required, and they endeavored to found large establishments for this purpose. Each phalanstery, according to Fourier's plan, was to contain eight hundred inmates, and if the ancient monasteries were often less numerous, it frequently happened, at the beginning chiefly, that they contained several thousand persons. But the peculiarity which mainly requires our attention, is the new *attraction* invented by Fourier in order to bring harmony into the system, and secure its durability by the introduction of laws supposed to be founded on man's nature. This was nothing else than the consecration of human passions, which it was taught by Fourier were infused into all human souls at their birth, for the fulfilment of their destiny. To interfere with those passions, even with the worst of them, yea, to try to soften them, modify them, much more to subdue them, was declared to be contrary to man's nature, and to render the fulfilment of his destiny impossible. This was at once to declare that all the previous ideas of morality were wrong. Man was not inclined to evil; he had not to struggle against that inclination; and there would be a perfect harmony in human society if all the human passions had their full play. Only they must be organized, systematized, combined by groups, from which harmony would arise as it does from accords and discords in a concert. This was in fact the simile used by Fourier, who was, it seems, a great adept in music.

Many persons believed this, and from that time on, the idea began to prevail among many students of social science, that morality, virtue, and even truth, constantly changes, and that rules altogether different from those which hitherto had prevailed, must be now adopted for the good of human society, because, as they pretend, it is proved by the theory of evolution that even man's nature is perpetually subject to radical alterations. This perversion of good sense is at this moment very prevalent in a large

school of German socialists. We shall have occasion to speak of it at length in a future paper. It is sufficient here to trace its origin to Fourier's system.

Fourierism has now forever passed away, and it is needless to discuss it any longer. After a few years of sickly existence in France, England, and the United States, it died, and the impracticability of the whole scheme must be accepted by all. But it was necessary to speak of it because that system forms a link between the wild plans of Babeuf and of St. Simon on the one side, and the socialistic systems of our own day on the other, which seem to be brought back to the main notions of former economists of the Manchester school, as it is called, adding to them political aspirations and anti-social maxims, constantly growing bolder. In giving pre-eminence to the industrial element in his scheme, Fourier had struck the right key in an age which is given to production and commerce. Babeuf had scarcely spoken of it, except as a function of the state, and St. Simon had placed industrialism in the last and lowest place of his system of castes. From the time of Fourier to the present, socialism is intimately connected with the political economy of the Adam Smith school, only the principles which ought to regulate labor, capital, production, consumption, the distribution of wealth, the circulation of products, the enjoyment of the fruits of industry, etc., are altogether different from those of the first fathers of the new social science, namely, Adam Smith, John B. Say and others in England, as well as Turgot, Quesnay, Mirabeau, and the economists in France, as well as from their successors, the Manchester economists. The previous axioms are generally repudiated as favorable only to capital, and the new ones, in England and Germany, particularly, are more than ever opposed to religion, morality, and the former social principles. But this point cannot be discussed in this paper. The only thing that remains to be done is to contrast the results so far achieved by the first manifestations of socialism as we have studied it, with the state of society created by Christian ideas in previous ages. The question is a pregnant one, and we find it clearly stated in a New York paper of November 25th, 1878. "Have not the developments of society under the application of economical principles, subjected many millions of the people in European countries generally to a condition practically as bad as it was in feudal times, and for which political alleviations afford no equivalent?"

The only exception we would take to this way of stating the question, is the supposition, on the part of the writer, that the people's condition in feudal times was as bad as it is at this moment, and that there have been in our age "political alleviations" of any kind, though in the writer's opinion they do not afford an equiva-

lent. The view here taken of the social state, "in feudal times," is still considered by many as a correct one; but several authors of note in France, and also in England, have lately proved that it is all a mistake. We will not, however, here discuss this point, which has already been touched upon, though very slightly. The only matter of importance at this moment, is the actual situation of the lower classes, after all the efforts of Socialists and Economists, during a whole century, to improve their condition. We could not, if we would, describe it better than we find it stated in a short paper published in the *New York Catholic World*, of the month of November, 1878, and under the title of "Some Barriers between Labor and Capital." There is not, it is true, any discussion in it of the situation in Europe; and it is well known that the United States so far have suffered much less from Socialistic agitation than any European nation. Still, the wretched situation of the people in this country, as will be described, is due mainly to the same causes, because the industrial system of this country is only the reflex of that which prevails on the old continent, and even supposing that there was not in the United States a single man in favor of Socialism, the doings of the sect in Europe would produce here the same baneful effects, though not perhaps on so large a scale.

"What do we see in our own land, blessed by Heaven above others in the extent, variety, and fertility of her agricultural soil, her internal and external natural channels of intercourse, her marvellous mineral wealth, her wholesome climate, and her free government? Our fields have just yielded a harvest unequalled in quantity; our barns and storehouses are bursting with grain; the entire production of the country, it is estimated, will not be less than 600,000,000 bushels of wheat, and 1,200,000,000 bushels of corn; countless herds of cattle graze in our pastures, or are driven across our prairies; abundance so great that figures fail to give an idea of it, and that even the most moderate description of it seems an extravagance, prevails on every hand; and yet men, women and children are actually in want in the midst of this incredible plenty; beggars throng our cities, and armies of sturdy 'tramps' infest our country lanes. We build miles of new dwellings; in Philadelphia alone, a recent statement showed that there were 15,000 houses in that city without occupants; and yet thousands of men, women and children are houseless. We manufacture each year shoes enough to supply one-third of the whole human race; but there are hosts of people at our doors going barefoot. We make clothing enough to attire in decency and comfort not only our own population, but that of England and Germany besides; and yet many of our people have scarcely rags to cover their nakedness. The whirring wheels of industry and trade revolve unceasingly, production doubles, trebles, and quadruples itself; distribution is carried on with surprising facility and rapidity by a vast system of railways and steamboats; labor-saving machines decrease the cost and increase the supply of manufactured articles in a constantly-augmenting ratio; the gold and silver mines of the Pacific Slope add to the actual supply of the precious metals an annual sum of from ninety to one hundred millions of dollars; and yet not only do the poor grow more numerous and poorer, and the rich fewer and richer, but a feeling of estrangement between the two classes—a sense of bitterness, anger and oppression on one hand, and of contempt, carelessness, indifference, selfishness and pride on the other—is growing up and manifesting itself in forms that threaten the greatest disasters. *What is wrong?*"

A little further on the same writer describes the inward feelings

of discontent which begin to prevail in the United States among the *toilers* who think they are unjustly dealt with by society, and his picture is far from being exaggerated. Unable to give the whole of it, we confine ourselves to the last part of this sketch.

“If we go a little further down, and peer into the hearts of the actual hewers of wood and drawers of water—the men who dig our sewers, pave our streets, carry hods, hew stones, drive our horse-cars, labor on our docks, toil hard all day long, and sometimes all night long, for wages that barely give them and their families what are now considered by our increased and quickened wants, necessities of life—we shall find a keen and by no means a dumb spirit of discontent and unrest. The writer has talked with these men at their noonday meal, when they were eating their hard-earned dinner, with a lime-splashed plank for their seat and their table, and their bruised and begrimed hands for knives and forks; he has seen them in their poor homes, where comfort was unknown, health a miracle, and domestic privacy impossible. They feel that their lot is harder than it need be; what is the cause of it they scarcely know; but they listen earnestly to every one who proposes a remedy, however wild or chimerical. These are they who have listened so eagerly to the appeals of fools or knaves—these who, in a popular commotion, would be most easily led to the commission of acts of violence, while those who instigated them would stand aloof to see how the matter might end.”

The reader knows that in Europe things have progressed still much farther than this, and that the Socialistic outbreaks in France particularly, during the republic of 1848, and, worse still, during the Commune risings of 1871, have actually threatened society with destruction; and this is the result of all the fine projects which have been set on foot during more than a century for improving the condition of the lower orders! Was not one of the fullest Socialistic programmes adopted by the government in France during the whole year 1849? The result was that a despot was required to keep the country in order, and Napoleon III. improved his opportunity and stepped upon the political stage as an emperor.

A contrast has been promised, and it is necessary to briefly state what was the people's condition in Europe centuries before the modern Social theories were advocated. The description we could make of the real comfort in which even the peasants lived, and of the abundance enjoyed by burghers and working men would, of course, be controverted by many who have not yet seen the incontrovertible proofs that might be adduced. It is impossible to give here a detailed account of them. But there is at least one point which all must admit, and this is sufficient for our purpose. No one can deny that the details just given in regard to the people's actual condition are true, and also that none of those details are applicable to the lower classes in “feudal times.” At least one immense evil which has been particularly insisted upon, namely, that of a great number of men, women, and children suffering from want in the midst of plenty, was then totally unknown. If anything is proved by the chronicles of these times, it is the fact that, in mediæval

times, in years of plenty, all, poor and rich, received their proper share; and if in years of scarcity the poor suffered, the rich also had to bear their part of the burden by the curtailment, at least, of their superfluity. Thus all felt that they were treated alike, and there was not, there could not be, anything like the present estrangement of one class from the other, leading to hatred and strife. Never before was the myth of Tantalus realized in human life; for it was only in Tartarus that the guilty man was supposed to suffer from thirst in the midst of a river, and from hunger when surrounded with luscious fruits.

The remarkable difference of situation between ancient and modern times came from a principle which was formerly prevalent everywhere in Europe from the first establishment of Christianity, and which Bossuet has tersely expressed, in his *Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle* (Part III., ch. 3), *La Vraie Fin de la Politique est de rendre la vie Commode et les Peuples Heureux*. This had been the doctrine of all the Fathers of the Church in regard to the state; and in speaking of a "comfortable life" and of "happy people," they excluded no class; or rather, the poor were regarded as the privileged class, and on them more than on the others was the state to bestow its care. Political economy has changed all this. Iron rules have been laid down by it respecting the production of wealth and its distribution, respecting supply and demand, etc., and if any one suffers from those rules, nobody is bound to, or even can apply a remedy, because the rules are too sacred and absolute to be touched. In presence of these rigid axioms morality itself is dumb; and J. B. Say, one of the less exaggerated among the promoters of the new science, did not hesitate to say that "the best moral lessons which can be given to a nation are those of political economy." To give a very simple and clear example of it: Every sensible man must admit that the use a man makes of his wealth comes within the province of morality, and that wealth can be applied so as to do good or to do evil, for which the doer is responsible. Xenophon, himself a Pagan, acknowledged this law when he said that "wealth is useful only to him who makes a good use of it." But the new social science, even in its most inoffensive forms, takes no account of the moral aspect of any question. It is known, too, that, in the eyes of more recent Socialists, the old rules of morality have to be entirely discarded, and the more directly and persistently one goes counter to them the better.

In Christian times this could not be, and on this account chiefly was the lot of the poor in that epoch infinitely preferable to what it is to-day; for then the moral code spoke in their favor. It is true that society was then constituted very differently from the shape it has assumed during the last three hundred years. The

same contributor to the *Catholic World*, from whom two remarkable passages have just been quoted, speaks in particular of a "law," which now operates in directions absolutely unknown in "feudal times." He calls it, "for want of a better name, the law of aggregation," and he shows that it works in nationalities as well as in individuals. The first—nationalities—are always tending to grow larger, and the second—individuals—invariably also become richer among a few, and poorer in the mass. This undoubtedly necessitates different economical laws as to the exterior working of the machine. But moral principles must rule in modern times as they did in the past, and we maintain that the existing evils come mainly from having discarded those principles which are absolutely indispensable at all times, in every form of human society, because human nature remains always the same, and moral axioms are also unchangeable.

As to the remedy the writer proposes, namely, to give to the state the full control of those immense industrial and commercial establishments which give to modern times their special character, this very important question must be left to a future paper. The remark, however, may be made, that this omnipotence of the state over industry and trade, is precisely the point on the adoption of which the German Socialists most strongly insist as the fundamental principle of their theory. They expect, no doubt, to have shortly in their hands the direction of the world, and they wish to prepare for their own advent into power a state of affairs that will leave them masters of the situation. It is not, undoubtedly, from love for M. de Bismarck that the German Socialists of the day insist so much on the principle of state omnipotence; they fondly imagine that after the great Chancellor shall have had his way during the period of his administration, their own turn will speedily arrive; and they wish to have a clear field before them. As to the supposition indulged in by the able contributor to the *Catholic World*, that things would be much better managed if the government had in its hands not only the post-office, but likewise the railroads, steamboat lines, telegraphic communication, nay, the wholesale manufacture of our shoes, clothing, household goods, besides trade in all its branches, it is indeed a dream which many recent facts and occurrences are strongly calculated to dispel from the minds of all sensible men. It is certainly preferable by far to leave in the hands of the Federal Government the carriage of our letters, and the transfer of small amounts of money by Post-office orders, than to intrust the same to private companies; although even for this there is actually in the country Express Companies, as useful in their way as the Government could be. But to deprive at once all the citizens of a great nation of the power of employing their in-

dustry and means in manufacturing and commercial transactions, would be, to say the least, extremely imprudent. Not only would the state become at once despotic, but the citizens would be directly on the way to idiocy.

The present aspect of Socialism in all its branches, will be the subject of another communication.

A REVIEW OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

THE Literature of England is to us, of course, the most interesting, because it belongs as it were to ourselves—we are part of it, and can gather its wealth into the storehouses of our minds without effort and without the intervention of a medium. For there are comparatively few who can become so completely inoculated with a foreign language as to be able to appreciate the beauties of its literature as thoroughly as one to the “manor born;” and, therefore, by the majority the treasures of an alien tongue can be but indifferently comprehended through the assistance of a translation, which, if literal, must be bald, cold, and *bizarre*; while on the other hand, if an attempt is made to bring before the reader's mind the lingual beauties of the original, the result is a weakening of the idea, or the employment of words which, though beautiful and elegant, and conveying the intended meaning, yet are not the author's own, but rather, those which strike the translator as the best for his purpose.

For this reason I have chosen a ground often trodden perhaps, yet so rich in every growth of mental grandeur, beauty, and grace, as to be inexhaustible. Like the figures of a kaleidoscope, the same coloring and the same forms, yet infinite in the variety of their combinations; like a garden of flowers in which, each day, one comes upon some blossom which had escaped discovery on the previous visit, so are the labors of those mighty minds which have enriched the fields of our research.

In studying the literature of a people we read as it were between the lines, the origin and growth of that people from their first, chaotic state, through barbarism and incipient civilization, up to the full refulgence of the intellectual light of the present day. National life is not counted by years, but by centuries; and since Macaulay's *New Zealander* of the future has appropriated London Bridge, we can take *our* stand in this present age, to contemplate