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THE ATTEMPT TO MURDER THE PRESIDENT.

The attempt to murder the President of the United States will create an unmixed feeling of reprobation. It may perhaps have the effect of opening the eyes of people to some extent to the real nature of the anti-social ideas so rife in the world just now. They are by no means new, and although for the last few centuries civilization has had the best of the battle, it would be a sad mistake to believe that the enemy is extirpated. It has a ceaseless hold in the savage tendencies of man. Nor is it wanting in the most highly advanced countries. There it frequently assumes elegant and polished forms. It is served by learning, eloquence and literary ability, so that the superficial are almost deluded into the belief that it is a new phase of civilization on which we are entering. The most dangerous means these cultivated apostles of disorder employ is their pretended philanthropy. They affect enthusiasm for the individual, as a blind for their dislike to social order. The doctrine of equality flatters the vanity and jealousy of mankind, and slander, working on the mean vice of suspicion, affords a plausible justification for every crime. About a year ago a popular lecturer alluded to Lord Leitrim's murder, and in justification of the murderer, related a sensational story, which, if not a lie, showed that the narrator was a participator in the murderer's guilt. This story was received with applause, and the whole was reported in the newspapers, without comment. It is only fair to the lecturer to say, that, either from some remains of moral sense, or the fear that his audience might have what he lacked, he failed to relate that Lord Leitrim's servant, who, it seems, was not guilty of the provocation which was supposed to justify his master's murder, was also assassinated at the same time. Two lives were thus sacrificed to satisfy the revengeful feelings of the barbarian brother of an unvirtuous woman, for that is the true moral of the narrative referred to. We have lately

heard much of the sympathy existing for the Nihilists; and the British House of Commons, by repeated votes, has testified to its sympathy with spoliation. It is idle to draw distinctions between murder and robbery, so as to condemn one, and applaud the other. The difference is only one of degree. It is more odious to murder than to rob, that is all; but an Act of Parliament does not efface the guilt of either, and history will condemn the Irish land bill just as it does the legalized murder of Strafford and the confiscations of Cromwell. The same authority which commands us to do no murder, has also forbidden us to steal, or even to covet what is another's. To tell us that a Czar may be murdered, because the Government of which he is the head is autocratic, and that a President may not, because his Government is democratic, is silly in the extreme. Sound sense condemns all such fallacies, and the laws of social order are as inexorable in protecting the life of the Emperor of Russia, of President Garfield and of the Queen, as they are in protecting the rights of Irish landlords. It cannot enter into our consideration whether the Czar should establish a Parliament at St. Petersburg or not, or whether a landlord should live in one place rather than in another, and if we allow such considerations to guide us, or even to sway our sympathies, we are working against true civilization. At first sight this will appear a heresy to those who are in the habit of looking at material progress as the equivalent of civilization; but it is quite easy to conceive a perfect barbarian swinging in the pivot chair of a drawing-room car, corresponding by telegraph and conversing by telephone. Progress is the general accompaniment of civilization, and it may safely be assumed that without the latter the former will not be enduring, but they are not synonymous. We shall probably hear that Guiteau is insane. The same plea might have been urged for Russakoff and for the virago who shared his crime and his fate. It has often been used on behalf of Mr. Gladstone, whose political changes at convenient seasons, appear to require some special apology. Wide as the definitions of insanity are, there is none that can be made to cover the acts of those social bandits who, ignoring the moral law, seek to shield themselves from responsibility by avowing a political motive for their crimes.