

tion of evidence could have secured conviction. Dark and horrible as all this is the *Independent* and other Northern observers are extracting comfort and hope from the fact that "now, after some delay, the sense of righteousness is asserting itself. The newspapers of the South have begun to speak out strongly, and the Democratic papers of the North have pointed them the way." More hopeful still, perhaps, the ministers of Charleston have plucked up courage and found their voices. Sunday before last, in accordance with a previous understanding, sermons were preached all over the city with special reference to this affair and in denunciation of the vice and lawlessness which are making its people a reproach and an offence in the eyes of the world. This, it is hoped, may prove to be the beginning of a great moral reaction, the influence of which will be felt in all the future.

THE proposal to form a great railroad trust in the United States suggests some very serious and troublesome questions. Such a scheme is, it is believed, actually proposed by people of financial weight and standing, and is supported by some eminent bankers; though, as yet, it has taken no definite shape. The same question arises as in regard to any other national monopoly of a business commodity of absolute necessity to the whole people. One can readily understand how an honest, unselfish trust, if we may imagine such a thing, bringing all the roads in the union under a common management and system, doing away with the enormous waste that characterizes all competition, and operating the whole system with a view to the best accommodation and highest convenience of the public, would be nothing less than a national blessing. But on the other hand the seizure and control of the whole system of railroads for the purposes of a selfish monopoly would place the people, and the property and business interests of the nation, at the mercy of a few capitalists. This would be intolerable, and no people, least of all the people of the United States, would suffer it for a day. The thing is evidently preposterous. But the question which all such schemes suggest to thoughtful minds is, whether there is no escape from the wonderful and deplorable waste of capital and energy that are the inevitable outcome of our present competitive methods, and whether advancing intelligence and a higher civilization may not bring about some state of affairs under which the people will enjoy all the benefits of combination and co-operation, without risk of suffering the evils which are inseparable from monopoly in the hands of greedy and soulless corporations. This is one of the great problems the political science of the future has to solve.

THE CENTENARY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

ONE might say almost anything of the French Revolution, and the greatest paradox that could be uttered would have some truth in it. It is quite intelligible that the crowned heads of Europe should refuse to be represented at the commemoration; for that would be assisting to glorify the overthrow of a monarchy. But, for all that, the Revolution had to take place, although no one could predict its form and results, and the slightest difference in certain circumstances might have given it an entirely different shape.

It would be easy to defend the most pessimistic views of this great convulsion, and there would be no great difficulty in supporting the most optimistic. Nothing could be much worse than some of its features and incidents; but the state of things which brought it on demanded a desperate remedy.

When Arthur Young visited France a short time before the outbreak, he declared that he saw there all the signs which betokened a coming revolution. The administration of justice in a state of paralysis, the upper classes utterly given up to selfish indulgence and neglectful of the interests of their dependents, the agricultural classes ground down by every kind of exaction, the poor in towns uneducated, ill-fed, brutalized, and religious faith almost extinct throughout the country—such was the state of France towards the end of the eighteenth century.

If one were required to put the condition of France before the Revolution into a single phrase, he might say it was the possession of privileges without the corresponding discharge of duties. It is a phrase worth considering alike by the advocates and the assailants of privilege. The revolutionist fancies that he is laying the axe to the root of the tree of evil when he shouts down privilege. The more conservative thinks he is supporting the true organi-

zation of the State when he maintains the principle of authority. Both may be right and both may be wrong. As M. Taine has pointed out in his admirable work on the *Ancien Régime*, privilege is not necessarily bad: it is bad only when divorced from the duties which are involved in its possession.

This statement has been called in question by some of M. Taine's French critics. As long as he denounced the evils which brought about the Revolution, M. Taine was a good republican and a trustworthy historian. As soon as he began to point out the excesses of the Revolution and the miseries which they entailed on France, he was denounced as an aristocrat. But M. Taine was substantially right alike in his denunciation of the old régime and in his condemnation of the doings of the revolutionists. It may be quite true that, all things considered, they could not have acted very differently. It may be quite true that the great convulsion, as Mr. Frederick Harrison says, was an evolution rather than a revolution. But an explanation is not a justification. Unless we are prepared to eliminate the moral element from human history, we are bound, in studying the doings of men, to form a judgment not merely as to the matter of fact, but in the question of right or wrong.

Privileges are necessary if duties are obligatory. Strictly speaking, every endowment which we possess draws after it a certain amount of responsibility; and there can be no duty where there is no power. If, then, certain men are appointed for the discharge of higher duties, they must be invested with higher privileges. No one who understands the meaning of such a proposition can fail to affirm it. But the contrary is equally certain, that, wherever special privileges are afforded, there corresponding obligations are imposed. Were it not that these simple truisms are so often forgotten in their application and neglected in practice, it would not be necessary even to refer to them.

Privileges enjoyed and duties neglected have for their first result the misery of the community, especially of the unprivileged classes, then something like chaos, then explosion, and the extinction of privileges. No class ever enjoyed privileges and neglected the corresponding duties without being stopped of their privileges. Here is the explanation of the practical downfall of the Aristocracy. The old feudal system was, in many ways, a very beautiful one. If the ruling classes had been truly fathers to their dependents, it might have gone on indefinitely. We do not suppose that they behaved worse than other classes have done; but their position and privileges required them to behave better. Many things which they might have done, and could have done, and should have done, they neglected; and their power has passed from them.

Is not the same lesson taught by the assaults upon the rights of property in the present day. The socialist declares that the modern plutocrat is no better, but is sometimes much worse, than the ancient aristocrat. If property does its duty, it will be honoured and protected. If it neglects to do its duty, society will endeavour, by ingenious legislation, to constrain it to do its duty. If neither voluntarily nor under legal compulsion property can be got to do its duty, then it will certainly be destroyed. Pr udhon's saying in that case will be true: *La propriété, c'est le vol* (property is theft). This is not a matter of opinion, possibility, speculation. It is a law, and we may as well think to abolish the law of gravitation as to escape the operation of this law of social, national, human life.

This is the moral of the French Revolution. The royal power was almost absolute. The king had everything in his own hands. When those were the hands of Louis XIV., the machine of the State at least went on. A man with such gigantic power of work was able to keep an eye upon all the departments of government. One cannot say that the system was a good one. It was a very bad one and it brought unnumbered woes upon France. It destroyed its higher and nobler mind. Literature withered under this blighting autocracy; even religion became degraded and finally almost extinguished. But when the machine came into the hands of a weak man, like Louis XV., then everything went to pieces. Whatever government there was, was almost entirely bad; and it went from bad to worse. Louis XVI. was quite disposed to do better; but he did not know how, and apparently no one could tell him; and when by chance he was rightly directed, he could not be sure that this was the case; and, when he was sure, he had not the decision to act upon his convictions; and we know the result.

As regards the nobility, they were, on the whole more neglectful of their duties than the kings. The brilliant Court at Versailles drew to itself the leading gentry of France, who thought nothing of their property or their tenantry, except as sources from which they could draw supplies for the support of their luxury, their splendour, their ostentation at Versailles and in Paris. The condition of the lower classes in the provinces was pitiable, frightful. Multitudes perished of sheer starvation; multitudes more lived on its very verge. Such sowing must bring after it a terrible reaping; and awful as was the reign of terror—especially as it involved the innocent in the ruin of the guilty—perhaps a righteous judgment might decide that the harvest was not out of proportion to the seed-time.

The certainty of the law which we are illustrating is brought out in a remarkable manner by comparing the fate of the aristocracy of France with that of the same class in England. The English aristocracy had many faults, neglected many duties, committed many errors; and they have suffered accordingly. Their feudal privileges are gone, and they will never return. But they never separated themselves from their tenantry. They lived among the people from whom they drew their revenues. They were never, as a class, selfish and hard-hearted. They cared for their people, were kind to them, and were loved by them. And the result of all this remains. The English aristocracy are still a high and powerful class, greatly honoured and even beloved, although the form of their power has changed, and might now, perhaps, be better described by that subtle word, influence.

As we have seen, it is quite different in France. It is hardly possible, at this time of day, to believe in the brutal selfishness of the French nobility as a class. Doubtless there were exceptions, and very beautiful exceptions. But the simple facts in regard to the condition of the people leave us in no doubt as to the conduct of the vast majority, and the inevitable result has come. The French noblesse has ceased to exist. There is now no landed class in France. And people say there is no Day of Judgment!

We have noted that some have preferred to speak of the French Revolution as an evolution. We have no objection whatever to this mode of representation, provided the word is used in such a sense as not to exclude the voluntary action of those who were the agents of the Revolution. Only we cannot accept the term as implying that there was any absolute necessity for the catastrophe taking place in that form and no other. If the bronze-visaged officer who put an end to the Revolution with a "whiff of grape shot" had been present at the Tuilleries when the Swiss Guard were slaughtered, not as a spectator, but in command of those brave men, the whole subsequent course of the Revolution might have been different—whether for better or for worse. Certainly we can imagine a much happier series of occurrences—whether ultimately more beneficial to poor France, God only knows.

Dr. Arnold remarked most truly that it was the misery of France that she had so utterly broken with her past that she could not connect her present and future history with it; but her past had been so bad that no other course was possible. There is an immense amount of truth in these sayings; yet it would be easy to show that there is also a good amount of truth in a representation quite the reverse of this. No community breaks entirely with its past, any more than an individual can at any moment begin his life anew. It is, perhaps, the misfortune of France that she cannot break with her past. But her future is, in any case, most uncertain. Her rulers seem to be without capacity. Those who are attempting fresh revolution, whether Boulangists or others, can hardly be credited with patriotism. Even when a man of real ability arises—like Gambetta,—he is set up by the motley crowd only to be pulled down again. No one can predict the future, except by saying that the unforeseen is the thing which will happen. We dull Anglo-Saxons are incapable of the dramatic revolutions which convulse the world. We make our changes in a solid, practical, shop-keeper fashion; but we know better what we want, and we keep pretty fairly what we have got.

We may learn two lessons from the French Revolution first, that the best friends of the community are neither the radicals nor the obstructives, but the reformers, who removed what is evil and retained what is good—something like our old respectable and calumniated Whigs; and, secondly, that the opponents of all change are the real authors of revolution.

M. A.

THE late Oliver Ditson left \$15,000 for the founding of a home for poor singers. But the sum is appallingly inadequate. Fifteen millions wouldn't house half of them.