FERDINAND LASSALLE.

THE FATHER OF MODERN GERMAN SOCIALISM

A Brilliant, Polished Man of the World who Threw Himself with the Cause of the People—Some Notable Incidents of his Career

The following extracts from a volume entitled, "German Socialism and Ferdinand Lassalle" by W. H. Dawson, recently published, will give some highly interesting details of one of the most striking personalities in connection with the great Socialist movement.

It was he who first organized the German workingmen, roused them from their torpor, and gave them a great ideal to work for. Lassalle described himself truly as endowed "with all the culture of his time, and he was certainly the most versatile, brilliant, accomplished, fascinating popular leader Europe ever has had during the present century

DESCRIPTION OF LASSALLE

Lassalle was in the fullest sense of the word a man of the world, but he was not that alone. Had he been the continual round of pleasure which he was able to follow during those early years of Berlin life, he would have satisfied his desires. For he became a central figure in society, and his conquests in the drawing room were many and flattering. He was a man of fascinating appearance, and his keen eagle eyes had a more than magnetic power. When tried at the Dusseldorf Assizes, in 1848, the indictment described him as "five feet high, with brown, curly hair, open forehead, brown eye brows, dark blue eyes, well proportioned nose and mouth, round chin, rather long face, and of slender build." But details of this kind give no idea of the living man, of the true personality, the commanding presence, the proud dignity, the intellectual bearing. One who saw him on a social occasion has recorded that "He looked like pure defiance, but on his forehead was seen such an energy that one would not have wondered if he had worn a throne. Add to all this the gift of brilliant conversational powers, and it is not surprising that Lassalle should have been a drawing-room hero, a lion of society. He was very fond of music, and for years Hans von Bulow, the pianist and composer, was counted among the closest of his friends. A man of cultivated tastes, his house was a model of elegance. He was never strong, and was compelled to travel a great deal. Thus two visits to the east, made while still young, afforded him the opportunity of acquiring many objects of art and *curios*, which were afterwards used in the decoration of his rooms. His dinners and suppers are said to have been the choicest in Berlin, and certain it is that he outdid everybody in novelty, once serving his guests with lyakish. So he lived, admired and petted by the ladies, and the life and soul of a small intellectual circle which gathered its inspiration from him; he was also Byron and Alcibiades at the same time."

LASSALLE TO BISMARCK.

A meeting at Solingen, in September, 1863, was unjustifiably broken up by the mayor of that town, whereupon Lassalle sent a characteristic telegram to Bismarck in Berlin, calling for satisfaction —

"Minister President von Bismarck, Berlin: Progressist Mayor, at the head of ten gendarmes armed with bayonetted rifles, and several policemen with drawn swords, have just dissolved, without legal ground, a workingmen's meeting called by me. Vainly protested, appealing to the law on coalition. The people—the three times restrained with difficulty from acts of violence. Brought by gendarmes and tens of thousands of people, who believed me to have been arrested, to the telegraph office. Banner of the Elberfeld working men confiscated. I beg for most severe and most speedy judicial satisfaction." The appeal to Cæsar was without effect, but Lassalle was a winner by the notoriety the event gave him. The new ardour which he had gained during his retirement in Switzerland had told, and he returned to Berlin in a jubilant mood. He could write to Rodbertus, "I am delighted, and of good cheer, glad, as Plato sings, in the presentiment of mastery, and full of inner assurance."

"But Lassalle grew to like persecutions and trials. The prisoner's dock was a tribune whence he could address an entire nation. There, at least, he counted on free speech, and had it, even if against the will of his prosecutors, and perhaps, of his judges as well; or, may be, that his vanity was fed by his court fame, but the success of his agitation always weighed most with him, and that benefited incontrovertibly by the notoriety which prosecution gave to his person and principles." But, above all, the atmosphere of the court room was congenial to his stormy spirit. "Never, perhaps, was he more in his element than when badgering judges, browbeating Crown solicitors, and bring *bourgeois* juries to their wits' end. He was never in perplexity. If the prosecution advanced one argument against him, he had immediately ten ready wherewith to answer it. He might not always succeed in overcoming his enemies, but he was content himself with the thought that if he had failed it was not owing to his fault, or to the weakness of his cause, but to the obtuseness or injustice of the law administrators. Yet the battle was worth his fighting for itself, and his defence was its own reward. No wonder that Lassalle attributed so much importance to the trials in which he was the centre figure. He always appeared in court dressed as for the dancing room. His speeches were prepared with the utmost care, and he ostentatiously ranged round him all the legal works to which it might be necessary to refer in support of his own arguments or in opposition to those of others. Never once did he show the white flag, even when his chances of success were the faintest. On one occasion the Bench had withdrawn for deliberation, and his friends, in view of certain conviction, besought him with tears from the spectators' benches, to leave the court, and it was easy to take flight. Lassalle turned round and answered with dignity, "That is not becoming.

BISMARCK ON LASSALLE

"He was one of the most intellectual and gifted men with whom I have ever had intercourse, a man who was ambitious in high style, but who was by no means a Republican. He had very decided national and monarchical sympathies, and the idea which he strove to release was the German Empire, and therein we had a point of contact. Lassalle was extremely ambitious, and it was perhaps a matter of doubt to him whether the German empire would close with the Hohenzollern dynasty or the Lassalle dynasty, but he was monarchical through and through. Lassalle was an energetic and very intellectual man, to talk with whom was very instructive. Our conversations lasted hours, and I was always sorry when they came to an end. There was no talk of negotiations, for in our conversation I could scarcely get a word in. He bore the cost of the conversation alone, but he did so in a pleasant and amiable manner; everyone who knew him will allow that my description is correct. I would have been glad to have had a man of his genius, and of such an intellectual nature as a neighboring landlord in the country

A SPECIMEN OF LASSALLE'S ORATORY

"You German workingmen are curious people. French and English workingmen have to be shown how their miserable condition may be improved, but you have first to be shown that you are in a miserable condition. So long as you have a piece of bad sausage and a glass of beer, you do not observe that you want anything. That is a result of your accustomed absence of needs . . . Ask all political economists what is the greatest misfortune for a nation? The absence of wants. For these are the spurs of its development and civilization. The Neapolitan lazzaroni are so far behind in civilization, because they have no wants, because they stretch themselves out contentedly and warm themselves in the sun when they have accurada handful of maccaroni. Why is the Russian Cossack so backward in civilization? Because he eats tallow candles and is happy when he can fuddle on bad liquor. To have as many needs as possible, but to satisfy them in a respectable way, that is the virtue of the present, of the economic age! And so long as you do not understand and follow that truth I shall preach in vain."

SOCIALIST NOTES.

THE Socialist Labor party of New York will hold a State Convention in Albany on May 16.

THE Nationalists of Massachusetts have demanded that $700,000 of direct tax money be expended for establishing industrial training schools.

IN Sheboygan, Wis., twenty per cent of the total vote is now Socialist. In 1889, the Socialists of that place cast 197 votes, last year 212, and at the spring election this year 491.

OUT of sixty American reviews and magazines twenty five had articles on Socialism and socialistic propositions last month. There are few clubs or societies, not to speak of churches, newspapers, legislative bodies, universities and other agencies by which opinions are expressed, where Socialism has not become a chief topic. Of course the discussion will constantly enlarge until capitalism is abolished

THE Socialist Labor Party has progressed at a great rate in the United States during the past few months. In December last the party had over seventy sections. The strongest organizations were and are still those of New York and Brooklyn, subdivided into several branches according to nationality or languages. Since December new sections have been organized in the twenty-eight places.

THE leading candidate on the State ticket of the Rhode Island Nationalists received 472 votes. This result, while certainly small from the point of view of the two old parties, is considered by Nationalists to be decidedly encouraging. The Nationalist ticket was an idea developed only upon the eve of election. There was nothing in the nature of an organized campaign: the nominees were men only known locally, and the entire campaign fund was $25.

H. G. WILSHIRE, who, as a Nationalist candidate for Congress last fall in the Los Angeles district, California, polled nearly 1,000 votes, has come to New York to live and has taken a place as a leader of the Socialists. "Nationalism is Socialism," Mr. Wilshire is credited with saying. Mr. Wilshire is an American, 30 years of age; is a man of means; was graduated at Harvard; is an editorial and experienced debater, and has dedicated his life to the cause of Socialism. He is at present delivering occasional lectures in New York and near by cities and has organized a school of oratory.

THE Bishop of Liverpool has sounded a timely and salutary warning note to the "classes" in a letter addressed to the Church Pastoral Aid Society. He refers to the "perilous times through which the upper ten are passing. Ultra democratic and socialistic ideas are abroad, says his lordship, and it behoves the rich to awaken to a sense of the danger that is involved in such a propaganda, and to combat it by a performance of duty. The moneyed class "must exhibit more sympathy with the masses, and do more to promote their temporal comfort, and to improve their moral and spiritual condition," or says this outspoken prelate, "there will be a social convulsion one day in this country which will change the history of the world."

THE COMMONPLACES OF A STRIKE

A GROUP of workmen waited expectantly at the gate that opened into the factory yard. There had been a strike that morning and they were waiting for the return of the committee which had been sent to the owner of the factory. It was early on Monday morning, the first week in January, and the air was still cold with the frost of the night before.

"But time for them to get back, Mike, ain't it?" questioned one of the men, who, thinly clad, was getting impatient waiting in the cold.

Mike, who was the fortunate possessor of a watch, replied that it was eight o'clock. The committee had started at seven and had therefore been gone an hour. The men were growing impatient when the committee was seen approaching in the distance. A few of the hands that had been waiting ran forward to hear the news. The men who had been chosen to go and ask for the raise wore a disappointed look. Their demands were not granted.

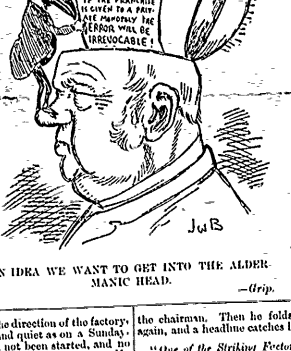
"What did he say?" asked one of the men.

"He said he wouldn't raise the pay a cent, and that he'll turn out the ringleaders of the strike. The rest of you will be locked out unless you get to work inside of half an hour," replied one of the committee.

By this time they had reached the gate, and when the crowd heard this, angry exclamations filled the air, and they collected into groups to discuss the situation. They were resolved not to go back under the present rate of pay. They had agreed to that at the meeting the preceeding Saturday. It was no use trying to support a family on a dollar or so a day. After much talking the crowd gradually dispersed.

"Well, Tom, what are you going to do for a living now?" asked one striker of another, as they walked home

"Don't know," replied the one addressed as Tom. "It strikes me pretty hard. I've been working in that shop for fifteen years and I haven't got a cent saved. Children seen sick, and it takes a good deal of money to pay doctors' bills I don't know what to do. There's no work in town, now that the factory's shut down, and I ain't got money enough to go anywhere else."



AN IDEA WE WANT TO GET INTO THE ALDERMANIC HEAD.

—Grip.

He gazed in the direction of the factory, which was still and quiet as on a Sunday. The engines had not been started, and no smoke wound out of the tall chimneys. He shook his fist at the buildings as though they were the cause of his dismissal, as the other replied:

"The old robber's probably eating his fine breakfast now, and I'll bet you it's better than I've got for dinner."

He opened his dinner pail and disclosed a few slices of buttered bread and some cold coffee, and smiled ironically as he said, "Bread and water is good enough for workingmen."

Thus they chatted until they reached Tom's home, where they parted, and Tom sadly ascended the stairs to the three rooms where he lived with his wife and six children.

"Mary" he cried to his wife as soon as he entered the door, "we've been discharged, and the factory's closed down for two months."

The mother stopped from her work of getting the children ready for school, and sat down and cried. It was the only way she could express her feelings. Tom had been a good husband to her, and never went drinking in the saloons or got drunk, like some of the other men. He had never been out of work before, and the poor woman, already saw starvation staring her in the face. It took all he earned to supply their wants, and so when misfortune overtook them they had nothing to fall back on

Tom searched around for a week, but could find no work. He was rapidly growing discouraged, for he knew that his wife and children had scarcely enough to eat, and the rent would soon be due. He felt tempted to steal, but his natural honesty protected him. No, he would rather starve first. He could apply to the city mission, but he was too proud to beg. "I do not want you to give it to me, I want to earn it," was the way he felt.

Thus things went on for a couple of weeks, during which time he happened to earn a few dollars chopping wood and do odd jobs. He took the money home promptly, and it helped keep the wolf from the door a while longer.

Still another week crept on—then he took to drink. He hated to go home without any money, yet it was too cold to stay on the streets; so he began to hang around the saloons. Sometimes he met a comrade workman a little better off than himself, who treated him; and once or twice he spent a few of the odd dimes that he earned. One night he got drunk, and as he was staggering home he passed a large grocery, outside of which various articles were piled. The sight of the food made him think of his wife and children, and he seized as much as he could carry. The lights were burning brightly on the street, and his act was plainly seen, but he was too drunk to know or care what he did. A policeman saw the act and arrested him, and soon he was being carted to the police station.

After being placed in the cell, he cried and moaned in his drunken delirium. He imagined all sorts of shapes and figures hovering in the dark corners of his cell. He saw his wife and children begging him for something to eat, and his employer offering them bread, and just when they were about to touch it taking it away again. Thus his delirium continued, but the prison officers never minded; they were used to such things. About two o'clock in the morning he quieted down, and the turnkey on guard said to himself, "Guess he's going to sleep—tired himself out roaring." The corridor was quiet now save for the tread of the guard as he passed up and down. The night wore on and dawn came. The voices from the cells proclaimed that the prisoners were rising, and already early morning arrests were being brought in.

"Go and see if No. 8 is all right," ordered one of the officers, "he had the tremens last night."

A turnkey went to Tom's cell and opened the door. A cry of horror escaped his lips, for he saw the prisoner hanging lifeless from one of the beams of the cell.

He had hanged himself during the night to a cross-beam.

What will his wife and children do!

* * * *

The proprietor of the great factory reclined at his ease in a soft armchair by the side of an open grate. He was reading the newspaper and breakfasting at the same time. Complacently he reads his own name in a long list of contributors to a missionary fund. Then he turns the paper over and reads about the temperance meeting of the night before, where he was the chairman. Then he folds the paper again, and a headline catches his eye.

"One of the Striking Factory Hands Commits Suicide."

"What a wretch he must have been!" is all he thinks.

Then he reads about the strikers; how famine is spreading—how men are stealing in order not to starve.

"They will soon have to give in," is all he thinks.

And he is right.

They will soon have to give in. Even now a committee is waiting in the hall. They are willing to go back on any terms.

"Really!" he says, "I hardly know whether to open the mill yet. You may take it into your heads to strike again."

No they will not strike. No danger. They assure him of that, and he agrees to take them back, all except the ringleaders of the strike; but—the wages must be reduced because the market is not as good as it was.

They agree to everything

* * * *

The strike is over, and again the factory chimneys belch forth smoke. One more link has been added to the chain that binds the workers, but their limbs are growing callous to the chafing of the chain; they care not how heavy it may be; they think they cannot have unless thus bound; they are afraid of the dark days of famine, when there is no work, so they chain themselves to a master in order that he may care for them as a master does for slaves—feed them while they are able to work.—*George Forrest in Twentieth Century.*

The first installation of electric traction in France is soon to take place at Marseilles, where a street railway company is about to introduce the overhead system.

It has been concluded that with a balloon 330 feet long, with a maximum diameter of fifty-five feet, a speed of twenty-five to thirty miles an hour can be attained. At the same time it is thought that the problem of flight is more likely to be solved by means of an aeroplane than with the balloon.

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