

ganized. They want a platform, a leader and rallying cry; they have seen a score of new parties rise like exhalations and fade as quickly; they are unconscious of their own strength. Feeling the pressure of financial and industrial evils, and conscious that the country is receding every year in its politics, society, and business, from the old Republican ideal, they have but a vague, faintly-outlined idea of the remedies. The Red Spectre of the Commune has been materialized and manipulated to good advantage by the party tricksters, and is an excellent bugbear to scare stragglers back into the party ranks. The mad-dog cry of "Communist," like the stigma of "Infidel," has too often proved effective in stifling the expression of free opinion on these topics.

I have noticed the retrogression from the old Republican standards. It is visible on every hand. In legislation, in daily conversation, and in the tone of the press, provided you read between the lines. Massachusetts charges her citizens \$2 for the privilege of voting, an arrangement which every year keeps tens of thousands of poor voters away from the polls. New Hampshire has lately passed a trump Act, by which honest poverty, i. e. poverty which is not necessarily dishonest, is made a crime punishable by heavy penalties. Virginia and Maryland flog petty thieves, male and female, with brutal severity. New York bankers, in defiance of the law, refuse to take the silver dollar at its legal value. The Wall street sharks know that scarcity of money means high interest, and varying currencies afford endless opportunities for exchange and discount swindles. The power of the money and railroad rings at Washington is notorious. They are already intriguing for a third term for Grant, the most facile tool of rogues that ever sat in a Presidential chair, in order for another four years saturnalia of corruption. To judge from the capitalist-owned press of New York the old American passion for liberty and hatred of despots is dead. They systematically denounce the attempts of the struggling peoples of Europe for a larger measure of freedom, and have nothing but adulation for Emperor William, the most rigorous of despots, who has lately inflicted cruel sentences of imprisonment upon hundreds of his subjects for simple expressions of opinion. Time was when the announcement that such a royal ruffian had been struck down by an avenging bullet would have been received, if not with exultation, at any rate with a quiet satisfaction at the turning of the crushed worm. But, now, American journalism, representing the capitalists and not the people, has nothing but effusive sympathy for the tyrant and execration for the assassin. I fail to see that the last word carries with it any larger measure of approbrium in the case of Nobeling than in that of Brutus, Cromwell, the English regicides, or the French executioners of Louis XVI. No assassination is strictly justifiable. If a sense of political oppression and a passion for liberty lend a halo rather than a stigma to the brows of some successful historic regicides, is it the attempt or its failure merely that infamizes their imitators of to-day?

The times are auspicious for a movement that shall rehabilitate American Republicanism; (I do not mean the party, but the idea), a remodelling of the Constitution and the laws to suit the changed circumstances of the day. The fathers were wise in their generation. They framed a Constitution admirably in its adaptation to the prevalent condition. But they could not foresee how completely the relations of citizens would be changed by the railroad and manufacturing system, the immense accumulation of capital, and the creation of a bond-holding class. When they wrote, "all men are born free and equal," they certainly never contemplated a state of affairs in which every citizen should be born with a mortgage on him, and a favoured few born to draw the interest. They were wise. Is it any discredit to their memories to say that they were not omniscient, and prophetic into the bargain? It is a mistake to lay down abstract principles in Government. The *laissez faire* idea was excellent when population was scattered, when there were no millionaires, and few paupers, and land was to be had for the clearing. In the presence of the crowded and pauperizing populations, the grasping corporations, the confused and clashing interests of the day, the best Government is no longer that which governs least. What is now

demanded is a Government "paternal" enough to protect the weak, and repress the strong and unscrupulous, to interfere in every detail of industry, and intercourse where interference is necessary for the purpose, in a word, *Protection* extended and amplified.—"I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word,"—may well be the utterance of oppressed labour to the manufacturer enriched by Government interference. Railroads and telegraph lines must be appropriated by the State. Conservative England was set a precedent in this direction. The great national highway must not be permitted to remain tools in the hands of gamblers, and instruments of extortion. Hours of labour must be regulated by law. The national Treasury, replenished by a graded income tax, which shall check the greed of the capitalist, must be made available for aiding labor by supplying outfits to those willing to take up land. Granted the will and the active interest on the part of the future legislators to solve the great problem, there will be discovered a hundred ways in which the end can be wrought out. It is "utopian" and "impossible" now, because the great majority of legislators have not the interest of the people at heart. Considering the influences under which they were elected, it is impossible they should have.

"There is but one protection," says Buckner, "against the tyranny of any class, and that is to give that class very little power. Whatever the pretensions of any body of men may be, however smooth their language, and however plausible their claims, they are sure to abuse power if much of it is conferred on them. The entire history of the world affords no instance to the contrary." How significant are these words in the light of the last fifteen or twenty years of American legislation! It is time the power which the people have, through carelessness, allowed the capitalist class to usurp were resumed.

Boston. Dec. 22nd, 1878.

#### FROM "THE DARWINS."

BY MRS. ELMINA DRAKE SLENKER.

You Christians are all the time accusing us of negating and objecting, but it is only by 'objecting' to the unreasonable and improbable, and by ceasing to be credulous and gullible, that real truth is ever sifted out from romance, error, legend, fable or myth. How did Protestants ever come out from Catholics but by 'objecting'? How does any science ever perfect itself but by 'objecting' to and eliminating from itself all that is erroneous and unscientific? How was paganism and the mythology of the Greeks and Romans supplanted by Christian mythology but by 'objecting' to their glaring mistakes and false historical accounts.

"How can you hold to your peculiar belief but by objecting to that of every other sect, as well as to the philosophy of Atheism itself? How can anyone believe as he does but by objecting to all that conflicts with his own ideas? It is time this negation and objection business was thrown overboard. We Infidels do not 'object' or 'negate' one iota more than you do. I defy you to prove that I make one more 'objection' to your belief than you do mine. And as to seeing 'both sides,' who is more ready to do this than Infidels? Who is it that objects to giving 'both sides' a hearing in pulpit and press? Who is it makes laws to bind Infidels in bonds lest 'both sides' have a fair show? Who is it that compels Infidels to pay for the making of pious laws and the support of pious law makers? Who confine, imprison, blackmail and misuse, even to the death, noble, true self-sacrificing men, such as those who have been the victims of Anthony and Snek? Who is it that compels Infidels to pay taxes on millions of dollars' worth of church property, where only 'one side' is heard and the other foully and often ignorantly misrepresented? Who is it that wants their God and Jesus in the Constitution, so as to kill, if possible, all sides but their own? We Infidels demand perfect freedom to discuss all questions—Atheistical, religious, social, political and financial; anything that is fit to be is fit to be dis-