

WESTERN CLARION

Official Organ of
THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

A Journal
CURRENT
EVENTS

No. 908

TWENTIETH YEAR.

Twice a Month

VANCOUVER, B.C., FEBRUARY 1, 1924

FIVE CENTS

Revolutions, Social and Political

By J. Harrington

Article Twenty-one.

THE defeat of Austria in 1866 was of course the defeat of France. Napoleon had calculated on a long drawn out war, which would leave him master of Europe. Napoleon and the group of financiers and industrialists who surrounded him and depended upon him for whatever advantages they possessed, were afflicted by that terrible mental malady which, to the average man, furnishes a shelter from the evils of life, into which he may withdraw, but which to the statesman is fatal: the childlike faculty for sincere acting: Deadwood Dick, or the mother of a large family, as the case may be. The average man may withdraw and dream in safety; there is no one to follow him as he dreams, for instance, of capturing at one fell stroke the powers of state, and revolutionizing forthwith the property basis of society. The fact that he has to snoop around back street halls "decked in a dim religious light"; that his ratio to the rest of the population can scarcely be represented by figures, that not one of his associates has the slightest knowledge of warfare, nor the remotest chance of obtaining even the meanest tools of that art nor of even knowing the names or uses of the chief weapons and their ingredients, has but little weight with him. In those masterly maneuvers of the fireside, the opponent's strategy is either foreseen or ignored, and can be with perfect safety. But faced with the facts of life he must somehow continue to produce the means of warfare or depart in pieces. And he must meet real men, not apparitions.

Napoleon and his associates knew that war with Prussia was inevitable. Not the least peculiarity of that peculiar animal man is that he longs for peace and prepares for war, and conducts war eternally to secure it. Prepares and fights on a scale which would furnish him with everything he requires on the most lavish basis, and vastly beyond anything experience has shown he has ever gained by war. We speak, of course, of man in general. However we observe that those who make wars do not fight them, and in case of victory sometimes profit, while those who fight them never make them, and never profit from them.

Such being the fact, statesmen have always prepared by alliances to secure to their country certain advantages in case of an outbreak. The North German Confederation, then, placed France in a more precarious position than ever, and naturally would compel her to extreme action should the Palatinate and Baden bordering on her middle east frontier, and Saxony, Bavaria and Wurtemberg farther back, be joined to Prussia. Napoleon's early days were spent in South Germany. In connection with which a story is told of him and Bismarck. As a compliment to the latter's linguistic gifts Napoleon said, "I have never heard a German speak French like your excellency." "If you will permit me a similar compliment, I have never heard a Frenchman speak French like your majesty," replied Bismarck. Presuming on his German accent that his knowledge of the German people could be measured by his knowledge of their language, he proceeded to form an alliance between South Germany, Austria and France. But upon entering into negotiations with Holland for the acquisition of Luxemburg which, nominally, belonged to the Dutch

though garrisoned by Prussia, he discovered that the wily Bismarck had already a secret treaty with the South German states, which was now published. The French were quite ready to engage in war, but the matter was finally settled by a compromise, through the good offices of the Powers, and Luxemburg became a free city whose neutrality was guaranteed by the Powers. This was resented by the French, and Napoleon was pushed a step nearer war with Prussia. The formidable character of the enemy had been sufficiently emphasized by the six weeks' war with Austria even if the Danish campaign was accounted a mere skirmish. It does not appear that this was properly appreciated by the French, who had not recovered from their war spree of the early days of the century.

Bismarck estimated the task of beating the French, in the light of their history, as a very hazardous one, and spared no pains to secure himself against any alliance which France might form; and against any breach in relations until he was completely ready, and against any possibility of himself having to declare war.

We left Napoleon the proud and happy heir of his great uncle. To round out the story and fully appreciate the last chapter of this thrilling romance it will be necessary to glance at affairs in France. The Crimean War, by which he had with British aid, humiliated Russia and exalted the unspeakable Turk in 1854 and the Italian campaign of 1859 in which he had, with the Italians, defeated the dreaded Austrian Empire, gave to a name hitherto reflecting only the glory of an uncle by law, a father by repute, a lustre of its own. He became Emperor during the infancy of French railway steel and coal enterprises, and fostered these mighty children with every aid a slight and inconsequential man could lend by allowing any charlatan or swindler free access to the game. Lotteries and joint stock companies kept the Frenchmen in hope; and a sufficient number of lucky players, added to the steady growth of industrial life, amassed such fortunes, sometimes literally at a stroke, that every Parisian gamin and every tattered peasant was sizing up the real estate values and tentatively enjoying his assured but future wealth. Monte Cristo was a piker.

While far behind the phenomenal development of Prussia, France could not miss the general prosperity which steam and its progeny rained down upon Europe. But alas for the morning after! It is but a few generations since our vermin feeding, hunger driven ancestors gazed longingly at the last morsel of their scanty meal, and a couple of centuries are all too brief to develop a gastronomy capable of consuming Gargantuan feasts of capitalism. He who would hitch his wagon to a star should have regard to the banana peel on the pavement.

In the mad race for profits, railroads and industries pushed ahead of consumption, and France suffered from her gorge. The dreams that nations dream do not come true; the gamin and the peasant returned to their hopeless squalor, and turning their disillusioned eyes to the real world envisioned Napoleon and his court,—an example we can follow with profit.

Napoleon was well aware that the glamor of his conquests had gone; bold spirits were stating in bald language unpleasant facts; so bold had these

wolves become that the fold itself was invaded, an exaggerated life of Napoleon's wife was sold, to the pleasing subtitle, "Portrait and virtues of the Empress, the whole for two sou."

At this time Napoleon conceived the romantic notion of establishing an Empire in Mexico. The United States was busy preserving the Union, later described as freeing the slaves. He sought to have Europe recognise and aid the Southern States, and then by the honorable process exercised by the democratic country to our left he seized Mexico for delinquent debts, and after much deliberation, in which the fruits of the Great Napoleon's sparse leisure moments snatched from the absorbing task of conquering the world were much discussed, Maximilian, brother of Franz Joseph, was chosen to occupy the throne of Montezuma. The brothers, half brothers, cousins or whatever their illegitimate excellencies were, declined the honor. Napoleon had promised to maintain twenty-five thousand men as his new Emperor's bodyguard. But when your Uncle Samuel had settled his little trouble in the south he suggested to the Frenchmen that Paris might look good to them after so long a sojourn in foreign lands. Napoleon, perhaps with fond recollections of his uncles' army in Santo Domingo, perhaps in respect to the endearing young charms of Grant's and Stonewall Jackson's Army of the Lord, sort of regarded the suggestion seriously, and accordingly in 1867, Maximilian, left to the tender mercy of the Indian Jaurez, was shot like a dog before the walls of Queretaro, just three months after Napoleon's guard was withdrawn. It is usual at this point to moralize upon the dastardly conduct of trying an Emperor by drumhead court martial and shooting him at sunrise next day, but we exhausted our tearducts upon the sad occasion of the Czar of all the Russias' departure, and are unequal to the present task. But while it leaves us dry eyed its effect on France was tremendous, and aside from the added resentment to the Luxemburg affair, was the unwitting cause of Napoleon's eyes being put out, figuratively speaking.

Hyrviox, an extremely efficient secret service chief, whose duty it was to report truthfully what the French people said, in making his report on the feeling aroused by the betrayal of Maximilian referred to the feeling against the Austrian woman, Marie Antoinette, during the reign of Louis XVI. and said, "Now they blame it on the Spanish woman." The Empress, who was a Spaniard, came into the room at this moment and in a terrible rage expressed the desire to show them what a Spanish woman really could do. This was limited, happily for the French nation, to the removal of Hyrviox. The next chief was careful to make the truth palatable, again we might infer happily for the French. There are a number of such stories told, some richer in humor, but hardly tellable in a respectable family journal like ours, whereby the Empire was deprived of its most needed men.

Meanwhile Bismarck was ensnaring his victim in a net of diplomacy. Roon was yearly adding to his great and efficient army, and Moltke was from his army of spies planning the strategy of the war. Napoleon, dreaming of war, was indulging in adventures more to his fancy in the forest of Campiegne. Here he indulged the French taste of fetes

(Continued on page 8)