

# Revolutions : Political and Social

BY J. HARRINGTON.

## Fourth Article.

THE priest in "Black Arrow" was no doubt justified in his judgment that "There cometh never any rising from below—so all judicious chroniclers concord in their opinion; but rebellion travelleth ever downward from above; and when Tom, Dick and Harry, take to their hills, look ever narrowly to see what lord is profited thereby."

Perhaps so previous to 1879, for as Engels says: "Thanks to the economical and political development of France since 1789 Paris has for fifty years been in the position, that no revolution could break out without assuming a proletarian character in such wise that the proletariat which had bought the victory with its blood did not put forward immediately afterward its own demands."

These, he continues, might be indefinite and confused. Paris working men were directly linked up with the most stirring period of the great French revolution—the end of the Terror and the rise of the Directory. All the foremost men of the revolution had passed away. Robespierre and Saint Just had followed Danton and Desmoulines to the guillotine, and two years later, 1796 the last insurrection of the Communes was overwhelmed. In this conspiracy "Gracchus" Babeuf was the leader, and his manifestoes reveal a fundamental conception of labour's needs; necessarily of course coupled with nature and nature's laws. His analysis, published by the Society of Equals in preference to the Manifesto of the Equals contains such sentiments as — "Nature has imposed on each person the obligation to work; nobody could without crime, evade his share of common labor. Labor and enjoyments ought to be common. There is oppression wherever one part of society is exhausted by labour and in want of everything, while the other part wallows in abundance without doing any work at all."

Some of the military chiefs upon whom the Babeuvists depended were informing the Directory of every move, especially Grisel and all the leaders were arrested. That these doctrines had permeated the masses we know from Babeuf's conciliatory address to the Directory: "Would you consider it beneath you, citizen directors to treat with me as power with power. You have seen what vast confidence centres in me; you have seen that my party may well balance equally in the scale your own; you have seen its immense ramifications. I am convinced you have trembled at the sight." This could be no empty boast. Babeuf was a man of indomitable courage, and sound common sense. The Directory, refusing to treat with them, sent them before the high court at Vendome where they were condemned to death. Babeuf and Darthe stabbed themselves upon hearing the verdict, in open court. They had maintained an undaunted front and greatly impressed Paris even in those days when invincible courage was as common as speech. The followers made one last desperate effort, but without avail; the troops were faithful to the Directory.

We have reverted to this too obscure episode in order to introduce a man, also too little known but of great historical significance to us, an Italian (or rather a Pisan, because Italy was not yet a nation), who while found guilty with Babeuf and his fellow conspirators was merely banished because he was a foreigner. His name was Michel Buonarroti. Returning to Italy he continued in the revolutionary movement, but with the triumph of Metternich in 1823 he was again on the move and found his way back to Paris. About the time Charles X ascended the throne, he wrote his history of Babeuf's Conspiracy for Equality which Bronterre O'Brien, who translated it into English, says contains the best exposition of his own views. However, we have already seen how startling they were. So that arriving in Paris at a time when all France was in a

ferment, when the last of the Bourbon kings had started upon his career which was to end in revolution directly connected with the great events which closed the 18th century, he had immense influence. When at last Charles the X. sealed his doom by suppressing the press, recompensing the royalists who were ruined by the Revolution, while refusing to admit to the indemnity those of the revolutionary groups who had likewise suffered, and abolishing parliament, Buonarroti was again at the barricades. So much for one phase of the political development. In the struggles of the French people against reaction, a struggle which was peculiar to France and of course England, differing in character from that of the rest of Europe, which assumed a national revolt against foreign interference; the French sought elbow room for development, which was circumscribed by the reactionary Bourbons, vindictive withal, ever with the memory of 1789 before them. The bourgeoisie in their assault upon this reaction constantly appealed to the proletariat.

Let us now turn to the economic development.

The steam engine, we have already noted, had made an early appearance in France but it was not until the locomotive was demonstrated to be the new haulage power that it captured French industry. Rails over which cars were hauled by horses had been laid for some time when the first steam loco. arrived, in 1832. Then ensued a long period of agitation as to who should control the new system of locomotion. There was a strong sentiment in favor of state ownership, which ended in state assistance. By 1848, 3000 miles were operated.

But France had not yet completed her social revolution; revolutions, insurrections, and attempted counter-revolutions, she had in abundance. The workers, whose energy had forced the Bourbons to exile, were not quiescent to the Orleanists, and Louis Philippe, chosen king to save France from anarchy, had anything but a peaceful reign. There were, added to popular uprising of a political character, many riots over wages and hours of labor, besides the attempts by Bourbon and Napoleonic partisans to restore their houses—and repeated attempts at assassination of the Citizen King, of which Fieschi's was the most elaborate, consisting of twenty-five loaded gun barrels, bound together and discharged by a train of power. It will be readily understood then, what a state the bourgeoisie of France were in; every means of prosperity to hand, and the red specter ever present at the feast.

Parliamentary government, to which they must have recourse if they were to be the dominating factor, became daily more anarchic and impossible. Every difference, no matter, how slight, became the occasion of a trial of strength between the rival contenders for sovereignty. Bourbons by the ancient regime, Orleanists by the bankers, Buonapartists by a motley class of adventurers, and parliamentarists by the industrialists, with the communists and industrialists ever-increasing propaganda among the workers, to add to the interest. The king and his advisors, the various ministries he had formed were under the circumstances compelled to restrict that freedom for the institution of which they had been elevated to power, and in 1846 commenced the "Reform Banquets" at which republican sentiment was freely indulged in. Corrupt elections, bribery of government official, and attempts at absolutism were the main matter. The monarchy must go, was faintly heard. Guizot recounts a conversation which took place after one of these banquets in 1847: "Well really," Pagnerre said, 'I did not expect for our proposals so speedy and complete success. Do those gentlemen see what that may lead to? For my part, I confess I do not see it clearly; but it is not for us radicals to be alarmed about it.' 'You see that tree,' replied Garnier-Pages, 'engrave on its bark a mark in memory of this day;

for what we have just decided upon, is a revolution.'

That very night, as it were, the Romans landed on their coast, with King Coal as leader.

It was, sure enough, to use the almost universal phrase of the time, their right and duty to decide, but other forces were to carry out the decrees, and these same gentlemen who could not see clearly now were to realize clearly later, that their power to usurp the fruits of victory would at least be questioned.

Industrial France was at a standstill. But even while these radicals debated the fruits of their action in that leisurely stroll, one part of the problem was being solved. Coal was struck at the pit being sunk at l'Escarpelle. France had been penalized in the steel industry, through having to use charcoal for smelting or to import coke. And here it might be proper to point out, that notwithstanding the brilliant and fundamental labors performed by the French in creating the science of chemistry, (Lavoisier, Berthollet and others), they had failed to keep pace with England and Germany, precisely for this reason, that raw elements were not found in France.

However, the Reform Banquets were forbidden, and this forced the agitation on to the streets. Guizot, the man who had expelled Marx from Paris, declared that no advance toward reform could be expected from the government. "The maintenance of the unity of the conservative party, the maintenance of the conservative policy and power will be the fixed idea and rule of conduct in the Cabinet."

We are strongly urged at times to formulate a social law upon the universal and age old stubbornness with which governments meet great crisis. But this is not the place, and we merely call attention to these vain words by one who had but to speak to be obeyed, but who was shortly to be hunted like a rat. 1847 brought the panic and the famine; all France was dissatisfied with the government. And so came one of those decisive factors entirely beyond man's control. Factors which cannot be engineered and which, if they could, would long await the man whose humanity was so dead that he would command their appearance. As Guizot says: "The storm was in the air, evident both to those who dreaded it and those who were preparing to make use of it."

The National Guard was called to arms by the government and refused duty. Some of the regular army took part in the Reform demonstration. The King was again and again urged to give way; the cabinet advised against it. Duchatel said: "Con-

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