

plenty. But if, on such a point, it can be proved that the whole world and its legislatures have gone astray, let their error be corrected; only let it not be corrected at the expense of a single class, which is no more responsible for it than the rest. If justice is to be set at nought, on what foundation is the new social system to rest? On the tyrannical self-will of a small number of violent men? It is practically with some such sway as this that Socialist enthusiasm threatens us; for the dream of such reformers as Bakounin and Karl Marx is really a dictatorship, political, social and moral, which would be exercised in the spirit of Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety, though in the special interest, as the projectors fancy, of the working class, a denomination from which, however, are excluded all who work otherwise than with their hands and for daily wages. The first problem, we must repeat, which the Communist has to solve is a political problem. He has to find a government wise, disinterested, impartial, pure, beneficent enough to be entrusted, not only with the functions of a political autocrat, but with those of a universal proprietor and a universal taskmaster; a government qualified to supersede by its paternal action all the existing inducements to labour and the economic laws, through the operation of which, at present, labour receives its wage in the shape of a price for its productions proportioned to their value. "The State," of which Communists talk as if it were a being apart and an earthly substitute for God, is nothing but the government; the government is nothing but the men who compose it; and any one can judge for himself whether government consists, or is likely, under any system of election at present before us, to consist, of men fit to assume the general guidance of humanity. That society is an organism passing through a series of changes predetermined by natural law is a view which, perhaps, has been carried to an extreme by sociologists of the physical school: but it is profoundly true, compared with the notion that the social frame with its motive powers and relations can be modified at will through an authority planted on the outside of it by