

# The Beacon.

DEVOTED TO THE SOLUTION OF THE SOCIAL PROBLEM.

VOL. II.

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NO. 8

*Expediency requires the adoption of the principle of non-aggression in all the relations of man.*—Carl Gleaser.

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## REMINISCENCES OF A RUSSIAN EXILE.

### Types and Sketches of Russian Revolutionary Life.

BY M. SCHACHNAZAROFF.

[The author of these sketches is the translator of "A Russian Massacre." He wrote them on his sick-bed a few weeks before his death. In accordance with a promise made by me in a former issue of THE BEACON, I now give them to the world, being convinced that they will be a lasting monument to the love of Justice and Liberty of M. Schachnazaroff.—ED. BEACON.]

### The "Criminal" Propaganda.

(CONTINUED.)

They guard jealously what they believe to be their rights and above all the standard of wages. Those are in a good year, when heavy crops of wheat have been gathered in, from 6 to 10 roubles a day. For sackcarrying of course not everyone is fit, it takes a very hardy man to stand it. The sackcarriers are as a rule a noisy, turbulent pleasure and drink loving class of people, always ready to spend the last copper, to satisfy their more or less low passions. They never attain a high age in this occupation. The carrying is done in a dead run, without rest, until a certain number of grain cars are emptied; the following short rest is devoted to smoking and swallowing enormous quantities of strong stimulants. With 40 years, and often before that age, the sackcarrier is worn out and disappears for ever from the scene of his former activity. We find him afterwards in the lowest caste of docklaborers—in that of

the coal shovelers. This is the last place of refuge for men, whose existence has been wrecked in the great race, who have foundered on the many hidden rocks in that great, turbulent, merciless ocean, called human life. There they may live or die, uncalled, unmourned and unrecognized by former friends. An utter disregard is shown by this class of people to their outer appearance, uncouth and unwashed, with thick layers of coal dust upon their faces, which occasionally is rubbed, never washed off, with a shaggy beard of many years' growth, the hair hardly ever touched by the barber's scissors; so he appears every day in the year—workday or holyday—no difference. That is the typical Russian proletarian, ragged, dirty, still joyful and lighthearted. Today he is a stoic, taking hunger, thirst and other hardship unflinchingly, to-morrow he is the epicurean, according to ebb or flood tide in his purse.

The coalheavers on account of their contempt for clean clothing, have exclusive tea lodging and public houses, which, once occupied by them, are not frequented any more by other people. The teahouse is the favorite place of entertainment of the common Russian laborer, not the public house or ginmill, as it is generally believed by those, who never come in personal contact with the lower classes. It is only the habitual drunkard, who gives the ginmill the preference, because he gets there a larger glass of whisky for his coppers.

In the teahouse the coalshoveller spends his idle time, here he discusses with his fellow workers the important questions of the trade; here he studies the list of incoming coast vessels, their tonnage, their probable place of anchorage; he reads, writes and displays great interest, when a ship, consigned for this port, comes from a diseased harbor, which circumstance means a long quarantine and loss of work for the time

being. Then he discusses the probable chances of a strike; in short the teahouse is for him a pleasure resort, exchange, meeting and clubhouse at the same time.

This peculiar class of people had been selected by the author and his friend, a college chum of former days, as a field for our propagandistic activity. The dangers of the propaganda had not decreased. On the contrary: Hangings, mysterious disappearances etc, had been as frequent and numerous in the year 188\* as in the historical year 1881. There had taken place numerous assassinations of high and low police and gendarmes officers; the assassins in most of the cases never having been detected afterwards. The police, full of rage and conscious of its inability to find the breeding place of those deeds, arrested and banished again. They little knew that those deeds were planned and carried out by single man and single handed. The Russian government always stupid in all questions requiring a deeper knowledge of human nature, did not know how to act; a seeming relapse in arrests followed for a couple of months, for the purpose of making propagandists and nihilists bolder and more daring. This little trick was duly recognized by the parties concerned; if it did not have the desired effect, that the police expected it would, at least the revolutionists enjoyed the short armistice all the same. Thanks to this shortsightedness of the authorities, the docklaborers and their agitators had for a long time been left entirely unmolested. Nobody expected to find conspirators among such demoralized drunkards, consequently they were not considered dangerous from a political point of view. This state of affairs of course did not make us careless, it gave us only a wider field of action.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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San Francisco, March 28, 1891.

The Tools for the Toiler; the Produce for the Producer.—"Chicago Alarm."

### Editorial Notes.

The meeting in commemoration of the Paris Commune, held at Union Square Hall, on the evening of the 20. of this month, was well attended. The principal speakers of the evening were Messrs. Henry Weissmann and Paul Grottkau. Mr. Weissmann was not well prepared, but Mr. Grottkau delivered an excellent address in German. The singing by the Socialist Maennerchor was highly creditable to that organization. Mrs. Hecht rendered some excellent music on the zither. The recitations by Messrs. Clausenius and Bachstein were pertinent to the occasion and of a high order. The programme was so lengthy that the last two speakers were cut short and could make but a few general remarks.

It may not be out of place here to express the opinion that it would be more effective for agitation purposes, if the speaking at meetings of that kind was done in the English language exclusively. C. G.

### The Single-Tax Vagary.

Single-Taxers in this city admit that taxation is robbery. But they still retain the ground rent error, declaring it to be a natural law etc. etc. Of course I know the entire formula. That rent value results from land and money monopoly is so evident and plain, that it is surprising, how intelligent people can still cling to that absurdity. If our friends of that persuasion would study the money question, they would see as plainly as I do, how interest has robbed the farmer of his produce and home, drawn him to the city, centralizing all industries in a few spots. Having deprived him of the opportunity of self-employment, he is placed in competi-

tion with his fellow for such work as the rich, the monopolizers, feel inclined to furnish.

First, let us investigate this sixty bushel and forty bushel wheat land idea. Every body of any information should know that wheat contains certain chemical elements, that are taken out of the soil by and through the inherent force of the wheatgerm, the sun and the rain, complemented by human labor, transmuted, changed into wheat. Now, the harvesting of sixty bushels of wheat from an acre of ground depletes the chemical resources of that acre of ground to that extent, and lowers its productivity. The only way the sixty bushel per acre wheat land can be kept in that high state of productivity is by returning to the soil the elements contained in the wheat. If I perform that labor, do I gain any advantage over the person who cultivates the forty bushel per acre wheat land? His work of ploughing is equal to mine, he requires the same amount of seed, but if he only returns the amount of chemical elements taken out in forty bushels of wheat, he performs less work, than I must in replacing the chemical constituents contained in sixty bushels of wheat. Should he perform an equal amount of work with myself, the productivity of his land would increase and become equal to that cultivated by me.

Single-Taxers state that the presence and the character of the population create land values. Suppose that the factors, that centralize large populations at a few points, were removed, would not, with a decentralization of population, a decentralization of land values take place?

Legal tender money at the present time is not a representative of value; it is virtually a command to pay; it represents the taxing power of the state.

The greater the division of labor, the more important becomes the function of the exchange of products.

Suppose the number of vehicles, cars, wagons etc. in this city were limited by law. While people living here were, by their own labor, providing for most of their wants individually, the carrying capacity of the limited number of vehicles would prove quite sufficient. But suppose people discovered that, by each one applying himself to some particular line of industry, the entire result o

would be greatly augmented, what would be the result. The demands made on the vehicles to carry products from one end of the city to the other would increase and prove unequal to the task; those who possessed them, could charge any price for their services. Of necessity some people would wish to borrow those vehicles, promising to pay the price demanded by the owners of them for their use in kind, pledging their land and houses for the fulfillment of the contract. It will be remembered that the borrower is prevented from increasing the number of vehicles, he would have to give up part of the borrowed article for interest; finally the whole vehicle would have been returned to the lender in the form of interest while the principle was still owing. To keep going, he would have to reborrow the vehicle continually. his debt would become larger and larger. He would at last loose all and sink into abject slavery. In the place of vehicle say legal tender money; realize its enslaving tendency; crush it by abolishing government. C. G.

### VIVE LIBERTY.

A way of life, more holy,  
More full, more free,  
When earth shall have no lowly,  
Must sometimes be.  
The gleams of light that dimly  
On prophets fall,  
Shall shine at last sublimely,  
And shine for all.  
Shall martyrs be the leaven,  
To lift the mass  
Up to that coming heaven,  
Where men shall pass  
From glory unto glory;  
When wrong shall be  
Remembered but in story?  
Vive Liberty!

CLARA DIXON DAVIDSON.

### THE PARIS COMMUNE.

[From the S. F. Argonaut.]

The Commune is held up as the personification of misrule and destruction. Communists are represented as that worst element of city life that delights in blood and conflagration, and Paris of 1871 is described as a scene of frightful disorder, submitting to anarchy, pillage and murder.

I was present in the city of Paris during the entire period that the Commune held sway. I was there from the day of

the entry of the Germans till the army of Versailles destroyed the Commune, and the experiment of communal government was wiped out of existence by the death of forty thousand citizens, who fell in battle in the streets of the capital of France.

I saw that great city of central Europe held for five weeks by the men of Vilette, Montmartre and the Faubourg St. Antoine, by the artisans and laborers, who for the first time in seventeen years had the opportunity to bear arms. There was the Bank of France with its hoarded wealth of coin, the House of Rothschild, the Bank of the Hopes of Amsterdam; there were the great magazines and storehouses filled with costly fabrics; shops with jewels of untold value; palaces with costliest gems of art; pictures and marbles of inestimable price. There was a vast population which had for months endured privation, hunger and distress. The gendarmerie had been driven out, and there was no other government than that of the Commune.

And yet during five weeks—weeks of menace from without and suffering within—I saw and heard of no single act of pillage or murder.

For five weeks the great forts of the *enciente* sent their destructive missiles to the heart of the city. From the Trocadero of a Sunday afternoon to the Pere la Chaise, the Commune soldiers contended against the Versailles troops. From barricade to barricade, from one open space to another, fighting inch by inch, in desperation, the soldiers of the Commune, with their wives fighting by their sides, sullenly disputing every stone, block and curbstone, retreated to the cemetery, and there amid the graves of the dead, the last of the Communists laid down their lives in hopeless desperate valor.

They may have been wrong and misguided, but that they were thieves, murderers and incendiaries I most indignantly deny.

During five weeks I saw no act of vandalism; I saw no plunder. I saw organization and order.

During the week of government victory I saw scenes of unparalleled brutality. I saw a hundred inexcusable bloody acts. I saw a well dressed matron stabbed to death in the back and flung like a dead beast into an open port cochere in the boulevard Haussman, because she

lagged behind in the train of prisoners. I saw five little girls lying dead in a heap near the Palace d'Industrie, with their little petticoats thrown over their faces, shot as petroleuses by Versailles soldiers. I saw a man torn from his carriage and killed by a hundred deadly bayonet thrusts. I saw hundreds and hundreds of Communists fusiladed and burned in a trench near the river Seine. I saw every sub-lieutenant of the army of France armed with the power to arrest, try and execute citizens, and this after the fight was over. I have read the death decrees and the decrees of exile that for five years followed this communal uprising.

I do not believe that the Communists either burned or attempted to burn Paris. I believe that the whole petroleum story comes from an absurd scare.

The war of the Commune was to the *great revolution* what the mad raid of John Brown was to our civil war. It was the first electric burst from the overcharged clouds. *It will ultimate in the adoption of all the great principles for which the Commune contended.*

The Commune was composed of the scholars and thinkers of France. It was a band of patriots. If it had in it the mad element of fanaticism, it may be excused. If oppressed labor classes looked to it for relief, it was but natural. If fanaticism and disorder enrolled themselves to fight under its banner, it was the first and only flag where they might enlist. If poverty, distress and desperation looked to it for a change, it was but rational.

The history of the Commune is written by its enemies. Like all lost causes it will be misrepresented. What there was of good in it will be suppressed. What there was of bad in it will be exaggerated.

The effort of an eye-witness, at this late time and in these columns, is but a feeble effort at stemming the tide and current of opprobrium running against the Communists of Paris. Nearly all the press of America and England, nearly every pulpit in christendom, has denounced the Commune. The press has thundered its anathemas against it, and the throne of God has bombarded it from every Catholic and Protestant priest and preachers' desk with unstinted censure.

Why the Roman church should do so

I may guess. Why the Protestant should I do not understand.

This little fragmentary scrap of observation may be gathered up for history, and may help to swell the protest that in the interest of truth may some time be made.

To the facts of which I speak I bear the testimony of a living witness. Of the Commune I was a part. I helped to build the barricade at the Place de l'Opera. It was begun by a woman in a purple frock, and a lad of perhaps fourteen years of age. The rule was that every passerby should add a stone from the Belgian pavement of which the boulevard was made. I made occasion to pass often. From my window in the Hotel de Hollande, rue de la Paix, I saw the bloody fight of the Place de l'Opera. At this barricade I saw this woman bring water, load the guns, and bear away the empty ones, and when the soldiers of the Commune were beaten off, I saw this purple-gowned amazon, with disheveled hair and bloody arms, alone defend the ramparts that she had aided to raise, till she was stabbed to death with bloody bayonets.

I rode to two midnight sorties with Dombrowski, and I breakfasted with Ockelowitz in the Place Vendome—for the Americans had the universal pass with the officers and soldiers of the Commune. I treated a regiment of Vilette to half a cask of red wine. It was cheap, and I was paid in hearing them cheer the toast I gave them in very bad French—"The Two Republics—the Republic of France and the grand Republic of America."

I shall live to see its realization.

I rode in an open voiture at midnight to the heights of the Butte de Montmartre to witness the artillery duel between it and Valerian. I met with polite attention; I was not robbed.

Let London, or New York, or San Francisco fall under the control of its worst citizens, and we should see scenes of pillage, rapine, violence, drunkenness, theft and murder. Yet in this great, rich city of Paris, given over to the Commune for five weeks, with all its wealth and wine, I saw order, sobriety and respect to persons and property.

Hence I feel it my duty to say that Communism does not mean a forcible and unlawful distribution of property, nor is the word Communist a synonym for every crime. FRANK M. PIXLEY.



## To Labor Editors!

I desire information in regard to labor papers of the U. S., especially the anarchistic and socialistic papers. If editors will send a sample copy, and any information as to date of founding and history since, the favor will be highly appreciated. I especially desire to know of the earlier papers, now dead.

ERNEST R. HOLMES.  
Kearney, Nebraska.

## BOOKS WORTH READING.

**ANARCHISM, ITS PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENTIFIC BASIS.** As defined by some of its apostles. By ALBERT R. PARSONS. Containing extracts from the speeches of the condemned Anarchists before Judge Gary; also from P. Krapotkin, E. Reclus, C. L. James, Lucy E. Parsons, Dyer D. Lum and others. This book was written while awaiting death on the scaffold for his advocacy of the cause of labor. 200 pages. Price, paper cover, 50 cents; in cloth and gilt, \$1.00. Address FREEDOM, Avondale, Chicago, Ill.

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*Egoism*, P. O. box 1678, San Francisco, Calif. 50c per year.

*Freethought*, 838 Howard Street, San Francisco, Cal. \$2 a year.

*The Reasoner*, 20 University Place, New York, N. Y. 60c per year.

*Chicago Liberal*, 402 West Madison St. Chicago, Ill. 25c per year.

*Freedom*, C. M. Wilson, 57 Chancery Lane, W. C. London, Eng.; \$1 per year.

*The Anarchist Labor Leaf*, H. Mackenzie, 12 Basing Place, Kingsland Road, London, N. E. England. \$2 per 1,000 copies.

*The Commonwealth*, Frank Kitz, 24 Great Queen St., Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, M. C., England. \$1 a year.

*Freiheit*, P. O. Box 3135, New York, N. Y. \$2 a year.

*Der Anarchist*, Claus Timmermann, P. O. Box 758, St. Louis, Mo. \$1 a year.

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*El Perseguido*, Buenos Ayres, Argentine, S. A. Free.

## DISCUSSIONS.

[Secretaries of Associations discussing the social problem at regular meetings, will please inform this office of such instances, that they may be inserted free of charge.]

The Peoples' Lyceum, every Sunday afternoon, at 2 o'clock, at 909½ Market St.

Pacific Nationalist Club, every Sunday evening, at 8 o'clock, at 909½ Market Street.

Single Tax Club, every Thursday and Saturday evenings, at 8 o'clock, at 841 Market Street, Room 9.

San Francisco Section Socialistic Labor Party, every Wednesday evening, at 8 o'clock, at 1159 Mission St.

Freethought Society, every Sunday evening, at 8 o'clock, at Union Square Hall, 421 Post street.

German-American Nationalist Club, (German speaking), every second and fourth Wednesday evening, at 8 o'clock, at 909½ Market St.

## Co-Operation Wanted.

I want a true and intelligent woman to assist me in establishing a Free Intelligence Office and an Equitable Produce and Labor Exchange and in managing business in the same institutions in accordance with methods enunciated in my "Catechism on the Science of a Universal Religion." Please, apply in this Office or send application in care of the Editor of this paper.

NOTE 1. Every lady subscriber to THE BEACON may, on application to the editor, obtain a copy of Wacht's Catechism free of charge; and any other lady or gentleman who desires it may order a copy from the author to read and to be returned after being read, unless it is then preferred to remit price for privilege of retaining it. Price per copy, in paper covers 25c; bound in cloth, 35c.

NOTE 2. The author claims that in his Catechism it is explained how we can most speedily abolish all existing unjust governments, and institute in their stead a government for promoting, with impartial justice, the best welfare of each and every human being.

GABRIEL Z. WACHT.

Don't fail to go to the People's Lyceum next Sunday afternoon.