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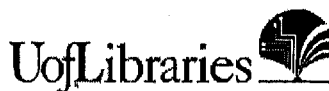
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hereafter, every strike and lockout, every lowering or raising of wages, will be propagated from country to country, as far as the ends of the earth. What passes in China or Japan will affect Europe and America; and the events which take place among ourselves will make part of the history of our autochthones.

Thus, all things lead us back to the larger human question: the shock of navies in the Chinese seas; annexations

of territory consummated by this power or that, to the detriment of the Flower of the Midland; commercial and industrial societies, founded upon the European model, in lands but lately closed to the "barbarian," — all those facts, in short, of contemporary life which in their rapid succession help to confront us with that supreme problem of "bread and justice for all," which each one of us is bound to study for himself.

Elisée Reclus.

PRINCE KROPOTKIN.

THE recent visit of Prince Kropotkin to America has called attention anew to one of the most remarkable men of this generation. The career of perhaps no other man living has been so striking in its contrasts. An aristocrat by birth, he deliberately sacrificed great wealth and high position to become a revolutionist and a refugee, exchanging the favor of the Russian court for a prison cell and perpetual exile. He has won fame in two directions, — as an explorer and a scientist, and as the foremost of the communist Anarchists. From whatever point of view, his personality and his work are an interesting study.

Prince Peter Kropotkin was born in Moscow, December 9, 1842. His family, descended from the house of Rurik, belongs to the older or Moscow aristocracy, and is of a more ancient stock than the reigning dynasty of the Romanoffs. It used to be said by his intimates that Kropotkin had a much better claim to the throne than Alexander II., "who was only a German." Prince Kropotkin's father, General Alexander Kropotkin, held a prominent position in the military service of the Tsar. He was essentially a soldier, with the strength and defects of the military temper. His ambition for his son was a career in

the army; nothing else seemed to him worth while. For the life of the civilian he felt a sort of contempt, and the tastes and accomplishments of the scholar he could not understand. When the prince wished to take lessons in music, his father said roughly that all a man needed to know about music was how to turn the pages for a lady. Skill in horsemanship was better than any amount of knowledge. His mother, who died while he was very young, was of a different disposition. She was a highly educated woman, possessing remarkable intellectual powers and much personal beauty. Her character was so lovable that the serfs of the estate were devoted to her; her unselfishness, her delicate consideration for others, won all hearts. Prince Kropotkin is his mother's son. According to the traditions of the family, he closely resembles his maternal grandfather and uncles. When his father married again, some of the household servants hinted to the newcomer that she should treat the children with special care. As may be imagined, this did not promote domestic peace. Kropotkin was at this time about five and a half years of age, his brother Alexander was a year older, and another brother, Nicholas, and a sister, Helen, were older still.

At the age of eight the prince was enrolled in the school of the pages at St. Petersburg, and at the age of fifteen he became a pupil in the school, which was open only to the sons of nobility. He was a favorite among his comrades and in the court circle. An honorable career in the government service was expected for him by his friends, as a matter of course. His life would very likely resemble that of his first cousin, Prince Dmitri Kropotkin, who was an aide-de-camp to the Emperor, then governor-general of Korao at the age of thirty, and afterward governor-general of Kharkoff. During the four years spent in the school of the pages young Kropotkin distinguished himself in his studies, and his distaste for a military life became pronounced; but he well knew that his father would not permit him to follow his natural bent and enter the university. At this time the early liberal tendencies of Alexander II. were in the ascendant, and the spirit of reform was in the air. Kropotkin, in sympathy with this spirit, believed implicitly that the Tsar was determined to do away with administrative abuses, and give constitutional freedom to his subjects. The more remote parts of the empire offered a wide field to any one who cared to take part in the prosecution of these reforms. When, therefore, the time came for him to decide upon his future, Prince Kropotkin, to the amazement of his friends and the displeasure of his father, enrolled himself as a lieutenant in the Cossacks of the Amur, choosing a service far from brilliant or attractive. General Kropotkin was only partially reconciled to this action of his son when the words of the Emperor to the young prince were reported to him. "Go," said Alexander. "One can be useful anywhere."

A congenial task awaited him. General Kukel, governor-general of Transbaikalia, a province of Eastern Siberia, received orders from St. Petersburg to

prepare a report on the prisons of the province, and the duty was assigned to Kropotkin, who was an aide to the governor. The horrors that this investigation revealed were appalling. The cruelty and corruption of the prison officials would have convinced him of the hopelessness of reform, had he not had faith in the Tsar. He still thought that when the Emperor knew of these abuses they would cease forever. But this sanguine expectation was doomed to disappointment. Alexander II. was now weary of a liberal policy. General Kukel was removed from office, his successor was opposed to any changes for the better, and the report on the prison system was pigeonholed, and never heard from thereafter. A scheme for local government which Kropotkin had helped to formulate was unceremoniously rejected. Utterly disheartened, he turned away for the time from further attempting to lessen the wretchedness about him. Appointed attaché for Cossacks' affairs to the governor-general of Eastern Siberia, he undertook a series of explorations into the most remote regions of the empire, and even into China. He crossed North Manchuria from Transbaikalia to the Amur by way of Mergen, and in the same year was on board the first steamboat which made its way up the Sungari to Girin. On these and other expeditions he was sometimes shut off for months from communication with the civilized world; but he endured hardships with a cheerful courage which won for him the enthusiastic admiration and affection of his rough companions. He devoted himself, with the trained powers of the man of science, to the painstaking study of the natural features of the regions that he visited. The accounts of these expeditions were published subsequently in the proceedings of the Russian and Siberian Geographical Society. After five years in Siberia he returned to St. Petersburg, with an established reputation as an explorer and

a scientist, although he was but twenty-five years of age. He had given himself unreservedly to the cause of administrative reform, and had discovered that his best efforts had been in vain. He then turned to science for consolation and occupation.

On his arrival at St. Petersburg Prince Kropotkin was warmly received. Although the favor of the Tsar toward him was already waning, he was popular in the court circle. He was made a chamberlain to the Tsarina; decorations were bestowed upon him, and he was made the recipient of many attentions. His brilliant conversation and charming manners won friends for him everywhere. Interesting tales were current of his daring and chivalrous exploits in Siberia. All sorts of romantic adventures were attributed to him. On account of his conspicuous services to science, he was elected a member of the Geographical Society, and later the secretary of the Physical Geography section of the society. He was a student for four years at the University of St. Petersburg, where he won distinction in the mathematical department. His father disapproved strongly of his course in entering the university, and emphasized his disapproval by withholding from that time the least contribution to his support, but there was no formal rupture between father and son. He and his brother Alexander, who was also a student, supported themselves by writing for the press and by teaching. After completing his university course, Prince Kropotkin was sent by the Geographical Society to Finland to investigate certain geological phenomena. It was his ambition at this time to be appointed secretary of the Geographical Society, a position which would give him congenial occupation and assure him a livelihood. He was offered the coveted appointment while in Finland, but the offer came too late; an inward change made its acceptance impossible. The

condition of the Finnish peasantry was most pitiable. Abject poverty and hopeless suffering abounded everywhere. The sight of this misery made an irresistible appeal to the heart of the young prince. What could geology do for the relief of these poor people? Love for his fellow men was stronger in him than love for science, and the stronger love prevailed. At about this time news came of the death of General Kropotkin, and his son became the inheritor of a large fortune in his own right. He decided to accept this inheritance, but to use it only for the good of mankind. The inward command to devote himself to the cause of human liberty had grown, until now its sway over him was absolute and destined to be permanent.

But what was to be done? He had made trial of administrative reform and found it impossible. He must have some positive programme, some definite scheme of social reconstruction. The Paris Commune of 1871 had an influence on the revolutionary movement in Russia and in other countries. To Kropotkin, the Commune, despite its overthrow, seemed to demonstrate the ability of the people to cast off the yoke of oppression, and to assert their own sovereignty. In the spring of 1872 he visited Belgium and Switzerland, and came into contact with the International Workingmen's Association. It will be recalled that there were two parties in this famous revolutionary organization, each of which was struggling for supremacy: the Socialist party, led by Karl Marx, and the Anarchist party, led by Bakunin. Kropotkin was at first inclined toward the Socialists, but soon found his faith and work with the Anarchists. This was not a case of sudden conversion,—an aristocrat and a scholar one day becoming the next day a democrat and a revolutionist. When Kropotkin embraced the Anarchist doctrine, he simply took the final step in a process which began in his youth. It is not

difficult to understand why Anarchism should have attracted him rather than Socialism. The Russian government was the embodiment of the principle of centralized authority; since under this government the people were oppressed, and reform was impossible, the only effectual remedy was to sweep away government altogether. But the Socialists under Marx proposed to establish the Socialist régime and maintain it through a Socialist state; they clung to the principle of centralization, and carried it to its furthest limit. That programme, as Kropotkin regarded it, meant the breaking of old fetters only to substitute new ones.

He could now devote himself to a definite propaganda. He returned to St. Petersburg, and was admitted to membership in the revolutionary party known as the Tchaikovsky. He drew up the plan of organization and the programme of the party, but he was not at this time, nor ever in his life, connected with any conspiracy. Indeed, the revolutionists had not yet been driven to engage in the policy of terrorism sometimes called the "propaganda of the deed." It was a campaign of education upon which Kropotkin entered. His gift of popular speech fitted him for effective work of this kind. Under the assumed name of Borodin, he began to lecture to workmen upon the history of the International Association and the principles of the revolutionary movement. They listened to him with the greatest interest, and spread the news of the agitation among their fellows in the Alexander-Nevsky district of the city. The only crime Kropotkin committed was to have radical convictions regarding the cause of and the cure for social injustice, and to utter his convictions freely. The despotism, however, with perfect consistency, recognized free speech as its most formidable foe. Borodin was, of course, a seditious character, and it was not long before he discovered that the police were on his track; but he was able to

evade them until the lectures were finished. He was then about to go into the country in the disguise of an itinerant artist, to continue the agitation among the peasants, when he was pointed out to a policeman on the street, one day, by a workman who had been bribed to betray him. Borodin at first refused to disclose his real name, but his landlady was the innocent means of revealing to the authorities that their captive was Prince Kropotkin. His arrest occurred in March, 1874, when he was thirty-two years old. He was never tried, but was imprisoned in the bastille of St. Petersburg, the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, where he remained for more than two years. The news that one of the most eminent scientific men and best known noblemen in the empire was a political prisoner caused a great sensation. The Tsar himself was profoundly moved. The most subtle and persistent persuasions were used by persons of the highest rank, who visited Kropotkin in his confinement, to induce him to abandon his errors, but without effect. His cell, which was in a casemate, was badly lighted, imperfectly ventilated, and never free from dampness. The food was almost intolerable. Little wonder that he fell ill, and that his health became permanently impaired. To the day of his death, he will never be free from the terrible effects of that imprisonment.

In addition to his bodily suffering, Prince Kropotkin was racked with anxiety concerning the fate of his brother Alexander, who was in Switzerland at the time of the arrest. On hearing what had happened, Alexander Kropotkin hastened home. Knowing that it was idle to work for the release of his brother, he strove to secure some mitigation of the hardships of his situation. His request that books and writing material be given to the prisoner was seconded by the Geographical Society, and was finally granted. Thus it came about that a large part of Kropotkin's great

est scientific work, a treatise on the Glacial Period, — subsequently published in the proceedings of the Geographical Society, — was written within prison walls. Alexander Kropotkin was not sparing in his denunciation of the government for its treatment of his brother. A letter which he wrote fell into the hands of the police. No other incriminating papers were found, and there was no other evidence against him. Yet he was arrested, tried, and sentenced to exile in Siberia. While in prison word was brought him that one of his children was dying. He asked permission to go to the child and bid it a last farewell: he would promise, as a man of honor, to come back; they might send with him as large a guard as they pleased. But his request was refused. After twelve years of exile, Alexander Kropotkin sought the only relief possible to him, and took his own life.

The report of his brother's arrest reached Prince Kropotkin, but all information as to his fate was denied him. After he had spent more than two years in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, his illness became so serious that, most fortunately, he was transferred to the military hospital. Forthwith he began to devise plans for escape. He feigned the greatest weakness, so as to lessen the watchfulness of the officers, and he established communication by ingenious methods with friends on the outside. Every day he was permitted to walk in the court-yard, and then, if at all, was his opportunity for escape. At this time of year the winter's supply of wood was being taken in, and the gate was open. He worked out with thorough care the chances of being shot by the sentinel at the critical instant, and he concluded that they were in favor of escape. He determined by a delicate calculation the point in the march of the sentinel most timely for his making the rush to the gate. Friends without were to have a carriage in waiting, and the signal was

to be given by sending up a red air-ball. The appointed day came, but, when too late to make any change in details, it was ascertained that a red air-ball could not be obtained at any toy-shop in the city. The second attempt was successful. A room was hired in an upper story of a building overlooking the hospital, and a friend kept watch from the window. At the right moment he was to play upon a violin, ceasing when danger appeared. Once more the time agreed upon arrived. When circumstances seemed most propitious, the prisoner dashed for the gate; but he was so feeble that the sentinel almost overtook him, and barely missed thrusting him through with his bayonet. His friends hurried the fugitive into the carriage, and he was safe. When the alarm was sounded in the hospital, the officer in charge was panic-stricken, and did not recover self-possession until successful pursuit was hopeless. Kropotkin was smuggled out of the country, in the disguise of a military officer. He passed through Sweden and Norway, crossed over to Hull, and thence went to Edinburgh. His property, of course, had been confiscated by the government, and he earned a precarious subsistence in Edinburgh and London by writing for *Nature* and the *Times*. Expecting to return to Russia at some time in the near future, he concealed his identity, and this gave rise to an amusing circumstance. He was asked by the editor of the *Times* to write a review of his own book on the *Orography of Eastern Siberia*! This dilemma forced him to tell his real name; but the editor promised to keep the secret, and thought it not improper that the author should review himself.

One who had endured so much for his convictions could not easily forget them. After remaining a short time in Great Britain, Prince Kropotkin went to Switzerland, which was the centre of the revolutionary movement outside of Russia. There the Russian police began

a systematic espionage upon his movements, which has not ceased up to the present time, and this compelled him to abandon all thought of returning home. He has not visited his native land since 1876. As an escaped prisoner he is excluded from the amnesty granted to some of the other political offenders, and there is probably no man whom the Russian government would more gladly get within its power. The following incident shows the eagerness of the secret police to seize him. A friend of his, in high official position in Russia, conveyed to him the particulars of a plot by which he was to be kidnapped. Police sent from Russia into Switzerland in disguise were to waylay him in some solitary place, and he was simply to disappear. The names of persons involved in the plot and all details were given. Kropotkin, on the advice of a friend, placed in the hands of a prominent representative of the London Times a full account of the affair, and then informed the plotters what he had done; stating that if any harm befell him the Times would publish the inner history of the matter, with the names of the persons concerned in it. That put an end to the plot.

During the three or four years that he remained in Switzerland, Kropotkin carried on a vigorous propaganda of Anarchist ideas by means of lectures, conferences, and writing for the press. He began at Geneva the publication of a journal called *Le Révolté*, in which he set forth the evils of the present social system, and appealed with intense earnestness to all who cared for justice to abolish these evils by abolishing law and government. A series of papers entitled *Les Paroles d'un Révolté* were published in this journal, and afterward collected and issued in book form. Kropotkin was now recognized by Anarchists everywhere as their intellectual leader. March 13, 1881, Alexander II. was killed by a dynamite bomb. There was not only no evidence to implicate any

of the Russian refugees in this affair, but it was impossible, in the nature of the case, that they should have had any connection with it. As Stepniak has shown, no persons outside of Russia could direct or even have previous knowledge of Nihilist undertakings. Such terrible secrets could not be communicated by post or telegraph; orders could not be given or received except in person and on the ground. Kropotkin believed and said that the death of the Tsar was an inevitable result of his reactionary and oppressive policy, and that in this sense his fate was deserved. In the panic which followed this event the Russian government remembered Kropotkin, always a prominent object of suspicion and hatred, and Switzerland was informed that it would be very acceptable to Russia if he were invited to leave the country. The Swiss authorities could not disregard such a request, and the prince was compelled to depart. After a brief visit to England, he returned to the Continent and took up his abode in France, at Thonon, near the Swiss border, continuing his propaganda among French workingmen. He advocated, as before, a social revolution which should sweep away the organized state, and abolish the right of private property and all external authority. "Do what you like," said Kropotkin. Such was his confidence in human nature that he believed that if the individual were freed from all restraint, peace and good will would prevail universally among men; the Golden Rule would become the unconscious and natural law of life. With unwearied energy he urged the adoption of these ideas, in public addresses and in print. The journal which was suppressed at Geneva was revived at Paris under the name *La Révolte*. Again suppressed, it was once more revived as *Les Temps Nouveaux*, the publication of which is still continued at Paris. This paper is edited with much ability, and is the leading organ of the Anarchists. It is issued

publishers ceased to exist. The book had been upon the market only a short time, when it vanished suddenly; not a single copy could be purchased. The author himself advertised in order to secure one, offering a considerable premium above the publishers' price, but to no purpose. This book is in the Boston Public Library, but it is rarely found even in the best libraries, and probably a copy could not now be obtained at any price. What is the meaning of this mysterious disappearance? The only plausible explanation is that, as the book gave a truthful account of Russian prisons, it was bought up and destroyed by agents of the Russian government.

Kropotkin has written extensively upon Anarchism, and is considered by Anarchists everywhere as the leading expositor of their ideas. His two books upon this subject, written in French and published in Paris, are *Les Paroles d'un Révolté* and *La Conquête du Pain*. The first of these is directed against the present social order, and is an appeal to the people to throw off the fetters of government, and to inaugurate a new and better era. *La Conquête du Pain*, with a preface by Elisée Reclus, has been called by Zola *un vrai poème*. It has been translated into German, Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese, and a Norwegian translation has recently appeared, which contains a preface by Georg

Brandes. This book is constructive; it gives a picture of society under the Anarchist régime, when "everything is everybody's," and brotherly consideration of each for all others prevails. In addition to these two books, he has written constantly for the Anarchist press, and many pamphlets and tracts, which sell at a low price and have a large circulation, have come from his hand. Of one of these pamphlets, *An Appeal to the Young*, more than one hundred thousand copies have been distributed. It is characteristic of the man that he should find time to write without compensation for obscure Anarchist journals, when all that he can produce with his pen on scientific subjects finds a ready market, and he is frequently forced to decline remunerative offers for review articles.

Kropotkin's range of knowledge is very wide. He is more or less conversant with upwards of twenty languages, and in several of these is entirely at home; he is an accomplished mathematician; he draws and paints skillfully, and is something of a musician. His industry and versatility are amazing. Yet one does not wish to turn away from the consideration of such a man with reference merely to his attainments. Rather, one would like to dwell upon his unselfishness, his faith in humanity, his intuitive and unflinching devotion to the most exalted moral ideals.

Robert Erskine Ely.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A REVOLUTIONIST.

I.

Moscow is a city of slow historical growth, and down to the present time its different parts have wonderfully well retained the features which have been stamped upon them in the slow course of history. The Trans-Moskva River dis-

trict, with its broad, sleepy streets and its monotonous gray-painted, low-roofed houses, of which the entrance-gates remain securely bolted day and night, has always been the secluded abode of the merchant class, and the stronghold of the outwardly austere, formalistic, and despotic Nonconformists of the "Old Faith."