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The few instances cited above taken at random from innumerable cases of the kind perpetrated under the combination laws from 1800 to 1824 will suffice to show the tendency of repressive legislation, the result of which brought the working class to such a miserable condition that it was felt necessary—even by the legislators—to appoint a committee to enquire into the working of these laws, for, severe as they were, and however unmercifully they were administered, the unions grew at a more rapid rate than ever before even though the books of the societies had to be buried for safety, oaths had to be resorted to in order to secure mutual protection; when to ask for a rise of wages or even to receive an advance when offered, was a violation of the law, even the emigration of artisans was forbidden. It was to inquire into this state of things that the committee was appointed.

The result of the report of this committee was the act of 1824 by which all statutes against combinations of workmen were repealed.

The legislature having changed its policy, and removed those prohibitions to which associations of workmen had formerly been subjected, strikes on a large scale, and obstinately conducted, immediately occurred in various parts of the country, the workmen seemed as it were, to have taken the hint given to them, and to have indulged freely in the exercise of their newly acquired powers. The legislature was seized with a panic, it was terrified at what appeared to be the consequences of its own act; the manufacturers did their best to promote the feeling of uneasiness and terror which had taken hold of them, and hence in the following year the subject was again taken into consideration, another committee was appointed and fresh evidence taken, indeed at first, it seemed as if parliament felt inclined to go back to the policy of former times, and to re-enact the old combination laws. But it had now become more difficult than before; it was not an easy thing to undo the legislation of the previous year; substantial reasons for such a retrogressive step would have to be given and these were not forthcoming.

But, notwithstanding the fact that no evidence could be brought forward, a new law was passed in 1825 practically undoing what had been done the previous year.

Wallace who introduced the bill said he was "No friend to the combination laws, but he wished that the common law as it stood before, should be again brought into force; this he believed would be quite sufficient for the purpose." He was quite right. The common law enabled the prosecution to put in motion the conspiracy laws in every instance where conviction was desired, and all meetings or agreements whatever for the purpose of affecting the wages or hours of work of persons not at the meeting, or parties to the agreement, were conspiracies. So were all agreements for controlling a master in the management of his business, as regards the persons he employed. In fact there was scarcely an act performed by any workman, as a member of a trade union, which was not an act of conspiracy and a misdemeanour. The average number of prosecutions under this act in England and Scotland alone exceeded 11,000 annually.

In the earlier stages of the agitation against the act, the opposition was more directly antagonistic to the mode of administering the law than counter to the law itself.

(To be continued.)

EDWARD BELLAMY.

It is with great sorrow that many will learn of the death of Edward Bellamy, the author of *Looking Backward* and *Equality*. He has died quite young, worn out by overwork. When I was in New York last autumn I was told that he was used up by three years' hard work on his last book, *Equality*, and that he had gone West in the hope of regaining his health.

We have spoken at length of his first work in the *Révolte*, and we have there analysed Bellamy's Utopia. In America alone nearly 500,000 copies of the book have been sold, and it has made a deep impression. Hundreds of thousands of people who had once thought that the Socialist ideal could not be realised have been shown by Bellamy that it is not impossible, and that the obstacles are neither technical difficulties nor the individualistic tendencies of man, but simply inertia, stupidity, indolence and the slavishness of thought. A number of Americans have been inspired by some of Bellamy's ideas and are seriously thinking of establishing a Commune one day in one of the Eastern States on more or less Communistic principles, without adhering literally to his idea.

A fairly prosperous colony already exists on these principles, and their journal is one of the best for general propaganda of Communist and Socialist ideas. There is nothing of the pretentious sect about it. Bellamy himself had none of this pretention, and his adherents do not possess the arrogance of the so-called "scientific."

The principal feature of Bellamy's Utopia was that each inhabitant of the Socialist nation should be credited with a certain sum (about £800 a year). He may spend it as he pleases, by taking in the public shops whatever he chooses—lodging, food, clothing, objects of luxury, according to his taste. If he does not spend all the £800, whatever is left is each year deducted from his credit. There is no way of treasuring up his money.

On the other hand, everyone, from the age of twenty to forty or fifty years, works in any capacity he may choose a certain number of hours agreed upon. Committees estimate the value of the products and their selling price. It is a system of partial Communism. Unfortunately, Bellamy paid a tribute (bravely use it in his own system) to authority

in dreaming, like the Socialists of 1848, of an authoritarian organisation of production.

His last production, *Equality*, is much superior to his Utopia. It is, in the form of a novel and conversation, a decidedly admirable criticism of the capitalist system. Bellamy in this book, which I recommend everyone to read, does not criticise capitalism from the moral, but from the economic point of view. He shows that this is the most absurdly uneconomic system of production. Bellamy does not go into metaphysics as does Marx; neither does he appeal to sentiment. In order to show the evils of capitalism, he takes the point of view of Proudhon, the only one which, in my opinion, was really scientific. That is, he demonstrates that a million of workers who have produced, let us say, all that is necessary for our consumption, from raw materials to manufactured articles, and who have only their salary, cannot buy those same products; for in their selling price they comprise, besides the salary paid, the profit of the master and the capitalist in general. Consequently, each nation produces more than it can purchase with the total sum of its salaries.

From this he deduces all the vices of the capitalistic system, and analyses them so admirably that I know of no other Socialist work on this subject that equals Bellamy's *Equality*.

At the same time the book is interesting, and while I travelled last autumn through Canada and the States, I saw it in every car. The vendors of papers and books in the trains never had enough, so great was the demand for the book. It is certainly not so interesting as *Looking Backward*, but it were well to have a French edition of it at a low price.

What a pity that Bellamy has not lived longer! He would have produced other excellent books. I am positive that were Bellamy to have met an Anarchist who could have explained to him our ideal, he would have accepted it. The authoritarianism which he introduced into his Utopia was useless there and contradictory to the very system. It was simply a survival, a concession, a tribute to the past. Those who have known Bellamy speak of him with great sympathy. Of a very retiring and timid disposition, he did not seek to impose his personality, much less to become the head of a school. He was the first to be astonished by the success of his first book.—P. K. in *Temps Nouveaux*.

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN.

A small book in a scarlet cover stamped with a picture of three children in fetters, one of whom raises imploring hands skyward as if, mayhap, help should be there. There are but 75 pages proper to the book and the print is large, the language simple—such as Roger Ascham bids us use when he tells us to think like wise men but to talk like the common people. The book presumably is written to make others think; the author himself suggests nothing, offers no remedy for the deplorable things he depicts. It is a plain, unvarnished tale, with Truth as spokesman. Not a new tale either to some of us, only the scenes as here drawn stand out so vividly in the sharp cold outlines of clear type and simple diction that they seem to bite into one's being like aquafortis and there to burn, past all rubbing out. Only recently one exclaimed, "Not one of Dante's hells contains such inconceivable horrors as are to be daily seen in the heart of this city in these days of our boasted civilisation." The speaker had not read this book, but his eyes were open and he had seen. Without any preface, Frank Hird takes us by the hand and leads us straight into the East End and says, "Behold!" And we see the children at work; the children whose toil, whose tears, whose blood go to fashion the fabric of the comfort and commerce of the mighty nation called England.

"There are whole districts whose inhabitants work in their own homes for the great factories and warehouses round about, and in every house the children are forced to work in order to add a pitiful amount to an already pitiful wage. . . . A child at eleven years of age is free to become a regular and recognised wage-earner but in the majority of families the girls, more particularly, are little better than slaves from the moment that their tiny fingers are able to use a needle or paste wood and paper together. . . . This child-labor is one of the bitterest and greatest tragedies of the age. It is a blood offering of little hands, of weary little heads, of frail little bodies, of desperate and despairing little hearts upon the altar of Mammon."

And then follow the pictures. Here is one in a sackmaking district: "There were about forty two-storeyed houses upon one side of this alley, which ran between two thoroughfares, and on the other was a high brick wall. . . . stained by all manner of dirt. On each side of every doorway were children sewing sacks, sometimes two little mites working upon one; and all along the blank wall enormous lengths of sail-cloth were fixed to ropes and laying flat along the brickwork, at which both women and children were sewing without interruption. Facing every doorway and standing against this wall was a bucket or a dustbin, nearly all the latter lacking covers, filled with the refuse from the houses and giving forth an insupportable stench of decaying fish and vegetables. . . . A little girl of eight was laboriously stitching at a sack, which a younger brother of seven was holding at the proper tension from the hook. She pushed the needle through the thick jute very slowly, very carefully, and then pulled the twine as tightly as she could, smoothing down the edge with her left hand, her little forehead puckered into a serious frown: 'Where do you go to play?' she was asked. 'Plye?' she answered, in a tone of scorn and amazement: 'Plye? Oh, I never have no time to plye.' And, as she stopped her work to make this answer, she unconsciously showed her left hand. It was