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A bas les chefs !

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Dejacques



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DOWN WITH THE BOSSSES!

AND OTHER WRITINGS [EXPANDED EDITION]

BY JOSEPH DEJACQUE

1859—1861

Authority.—Dictatorship.

aka “Down with the Bosses!”

Le Libertaine, no. 12 (April 7, 1859)

What assurance have I gained?

What conclusion can I draw?

...

The knowledge that I have gained is that there is only one right in the world: IT IS THE RIGHT OF THE STRONGEST.

...

Thus, no more doubt, no more uncertainty, no more equivocation: MIGHT IS RIGHT; THERE IS NO OTHER RIGHT THAN FORCE, for that right is the only one which is inviolable, the only one which carries in itself its own inevitable guarantee and its effective sanction.

If that conclusion is true, “transforming force” is the only object that can suggest itself to the man desiring to remove himself more and more from the state of barbarism.....

But how is it to be transformed?

By applying ourselves, relentlessly and without exception, to taking from the material force all that which it will be possible to withdraw from it, in order to add it to the immaterial force.

I call “material force:” every corporeal power, every numerical power.

I call “immaterial force:” every intellectual power, every scientific power.

I call “material force:” every artificial law, any law for the performance of which the evidence of its necessity does not suffice.

I call “immaterial force:” every natural law, any law for the performance of which the evidence of its necessity suffices.

I call “material force:” the force by which man is like an animal.

I call “immaterial force:” the force by which man is superior to all other animated beings.

...

Wars, conquests, authorities, what are you? You are the right of the strongest, materially, nationally.

Sciences, discoveries, liberty, what are you? You are the right of the strongest, intellectually, individually.

...

Such is my conclusion, and by it I come to make human thought no less inviolable than human life.

A man has no more right to prevent another man from thinking, though he is mentally deformed and infirm, than he has to prevent a man from living, though he is deformed and infirm in body.

Society has no more right against evil thinking than it has against evil conduct.

But how shall we battle evil conduct?

By not proceeding in an allopathic, but a homeopathic manner, proceeding by similarities and not by contraries; by not opposing material force to intellectual force, but by opposing force intellectual force to intellectual force.

Either Right is nothing, or Right is human inviolability: intellectually and corporeally.

When we return from laws to rights, as one goes from the mouth of a river to its source, we recognize that right cannot exist by halves.

What is the right assuring man property in his body and not assuring him property in his mind?

Is the body of a man worth a greater source of value than his mind? Is his mind less sacred than his body?

The right which puts the corporeal value of the man at a price so high, and his intellectual value at a price so low, is a right which closely resembles a human body from which the mind is absent: it is an idiotic right.

And this is the right that of which we boast! And it is this right before which I am supposed to bow my knee in respect! that I should incline my head in superstition! — No.

That right is still barbarism.

Where barbarism has not ceased to reign, man has no more property in his body than he has property in his mind; it is that complete property in himself which constitutes the only right that it would be possible for my reason to recognize distinctly, the INDIVIDUAL RIGHT OF THE STRONGEST “intellectually, scientifically, industrially,” succeeding everywhere the COLLECTIVE RIGHT OF THE STRONGEST “materially, numerically, legally, territorially,” the only Right, finally, which would not be a vain word.

ÉMILE DE GIRARDIN

We are no longer in the fabulous times of Saturn, when the father devoured his children, nor in the times of Herod, when one massacred an entire generation of frail innocents—which, after all, did not prevent Jesus from escaping the massacre, or Jupiter the devouring. We live in an era in which we no longer kill many children, with the sword or the teeth, and it appears natural enough that the young bury the old. Hercules is dead; why seek to resuscitate him? We could at the most only galvanize him. The club is less mighty than saltpeter, saltpeter is less mighty than the electric battery, and the electric battery is less mighty than the idea.

To every idea, present and to come, welcome! Authority had reigned so long over men, it has taken such possession of humanity, that it has left garrisons everywhere in our minds. Even today, it is difficult, other than in thought, to chip it away completely. Each civilized person (*civilizée*)¹ is a fortress for it, which, guarded of prejudices, stands hostile to the passage of that invading Amazon, Liberty. Thus, those who believe themselves revolutionaries and swear

¹ According to the historical scheme of Charles Fourier, the *civilizée* is anyone who lives in the era of Civilization, the very imperfect present age, which will be succeeded by eras of Guarantee and Harmony.

only by liberty, proclaim nonetheless the necessity of dictatorship, as if dictatorship did not exclude liberty, and liberty dictatorship. What big babies there are, if the truth be told, among the revolutionaries!—and big babies who cling to their daddy—for whom the democratic and social Republic is inevitable, doubtless, but with an emperor or a dictator—it's all one—for the governor; people mounted sidesaddle, and faced towards the rump, on their donkey's carcass, who, with eyes fixed on the prospect of progress, move away from it the more they try to approach it,—the feet in this position galloping in the opposite direction ahead of the head. These revolutionaries, bare-necked politickers, have preserved, along with the imprint of the collar, the moral stain of servitude, and the stiff neck of despotism. Alas! They are only too numerous among us. They call themselves republicans, democrats and socialists, but they have fondness, they have love only for authority with an iron grip: more monarchistic in reality than the monarchists, who could nearly pass for anarchists beside them.

Dictatorship, whether it is a hydra with a hundred heads or a hundred tails, whether it is autocratic or demagogic, can certainly do nothing for liberty: it can only perpetuate slavery, morally and physically. It is not by regimenting a nation of helots under a yoke of iron, since there is iron, by confining them in a uniform of proconsular wills, that the people will be made intelligent and free. All that which is not liberty is against liberty. Liberty is not a thing that can be allocated. It does not pertain only at the whim of whatever personage or committee of public safety orders it, and makes a gift of it. Dictatorship can cut off the people's heads, but it cannot make the people increase and multiply; it can transform intelligences into corpses, but it cannot transform cadavers into intelligences; it can make the slaves creep and crawl under its boots, like maggots or caterpillars, flattening them under its heavy tread,—but only Liberty can give them wings. It is only through free labor, intellectual and moral labor, that our generation, civilization or chrysalis, will be metamorphosed into a bright and shiny butterfly, will assume a truly human type and continue its development in Harmony.

Many men, I know, speak of liberty without understanding it; they know neither the science of it, nor even the sentiment. They see in the demolition of reigning Authority nothing but a substitution of names or persons; they don't imagine that a society could function without masters or servants, without chiefs and soldiers; in this they are like those reactionaries who say: "There are always rich and poor, and there always will be. What would become of the poor without the rich? They would die of hunger!" The demagogues do not say exactly that, but they say: "There have always been governors and governed, and there always will. What would become of the people without government? They would rot in bondage!" All these antiquarians, the reds and the whites, are just partners and accomplices; anarchy, libertarianism disrupts their miserable understanding, an understanding encumbered with ignorant prejudices, with asinine vanity, with cretinism. The plagiarists of the past, the retrospective and

retroactive revolutionaries, the dictatorists, those subservient to brute force, all those crimson authoritarians who call for a saving power, will croak all their lives without finding what they desire. Like the frogs who asked for a king, we see them and will always see them exchange their Soliveau for a Grue, the government of July for the government of February, the perpetrators of the massacres of Rouen for those of the massacres of June, Cavaignac for Bonaparte, and tomorrow, if they can, Bonaparte for Blanqui... If one day they cry: "Down with the municipal guard!" it is in order to cry at the next instant: "Long live the guard mobile!" Or they swap the guard mobile for the imperial guard, as they would swap the imperial guard for the revolutionary battalions. Subjects they were; subjects they are; subjects they will be. They neither know what they want nor what they do. They complained yesterday that they did not have the man of their choice; they complain the next day of having too much of him. Finally, at every moment and every turn, they invoke Authority "with its long, sharp beak, helved on its slender neck," and they find it surprising that it bites them, that it kills them!

Whoever calls themselves revolutionary and speaks of dictatorship are only dupes or rogues, imbeciles or traitors. They are imbeciles and dupes if they advocate it as the auxiliary of the social Revolution, as a mode of transition from the past to the future, for this is always to conjugate Authority in the present indicative; rogues and traitors if they only envision it as a means of taking their part of the budget and of playing representative everywhere and at all times.

Indeed, how many little men are there who would like nothing better than to have official stilts: a title, a salary, some representation to pull themselves out of the quagmire where ordinary mortals flounder and give themselves the airs of giants. Will the common people always be stupid enough to provide a pedestal for these pygmies? Will they always be told: "You speak of suppressing those elected by universal suffrage, to throw the national and democratic representation out the windows, but what will you put in its place? For, in the end, something is necessary, and someone must command: a committee of public safety, perhaps? You do not want an emperor, a tyrant. This is understood, but who will replace them: a dictator?... because everyone can not drive, and there must be someone who devotes himself to governing the others..." Well! Gentlemen or citizens, what good is it to suppress it, if it is only in order to replace it? What is needed is to destroy evil and not displace it. What does it matter to me whether it bears one name or another, whether it is here or there, if, under this mask or that appearance, it is still and always in my way.—One removes an enemy; one does not replace it.

Dictatorship, the sovereign magistracy, the monarchy, so to speak,—for to recognize that the Authority which is evil can do good, is this not to declare oneself monarchist, to sanction despotism, to renounce the Revolution?—If one asks them, these absolute partisans of brutal force, these advocates of demagogic and compulsory authority, how they would exercise it, in what

manner they will organize this strong power: some will respond to you, like the late Marat, that they want a dictator in ball and chains, and sentenced by the people to work for the people. First let us distinguish: either the dictator acts by the will of the people, and thus will not really be a dictator, and will only be like a fifth wheel on a carriage; or else he will really be a dictator, will have the leads and whip in his hands, and he will act only according to his own good pleasure, for the exclusive profit of his divine person. To act in the name of the people is to act in the name of everyone, isn't it? And everyone is not scientifically, harmonically, intelligently revolutionary. But I admit, in order to conform to the thought of the blanquists, for example—that tail-end of carbonarism, that ba-be-bou-vist freemasonry, those invisibles of a new species, that society of secret... intelligences, — that there is a people and a people, the people of the initiated brothers, the disciples of the great popular architect, and the uninitiated. These affiliates, these outstanding characters, do they always agree among themselves? Let one decree be issued on property, or the family—or *you-name-it*—some will find it too radical, and others not radical enough. A thousand daggers, for the moment, are raised a thousand times a day against dictatorial slavery. Whoever would accept a similar role would not have two minutes to live. But he would not accept it seriously, he would have his coterie, all the men scrabbling for gain who will squeeze around him, and they would be for him a consecrated battalion of menservants in exchange for the left-overs of his authority, the crumbs of power. Thus, perhaps, he could indeed command *in the name* of the people, I do not deny it, but without fail, *against* the people. He will deport or have shot all those who have libertarian impulses. Like Charlemagne or whatever other king, who measured men by the height of his sword, he would decapitate all the intelligences that surpassed his level, he would forbid all progress which goes beyond him. He will be like all men of public safety, like the politicals of 93, followers of the Jesuits of the Inquisition, and he will propagate the general dumbing-down, he will crush individual initiative, he will make the night of the dawning day, cast shadows on the social idea. He will plunge us back, dead or alive, into the charnel house of Civilization, and will make for the people, instead of intellectual and moral autonomy, an automatism of flesh and bone, a body of brutes. Because, for a political dictator as for a Jesuit director, what is best in man, what is good, is the carcass!...

Others, in their dream of dictatorship, differ somewhat from these, in that they do not want the dictatorship of one alone, of a one-headed Samson, but the jawbones of a hundred or a thousand asses, a dictatorship of the *small wonders* of the Proletariat, deemed intelligent by them because they once reeled off some banalities in prose or verse, because they have scribbled their names on the polling lists or on the registers of some small politico-revolutionary chapel; the dictatorship, in the end, of heads and arms hairy enough to compete with the Ratapoils, and with the mission, as usual, to exterminate the aristocrats or the philistines. They think, like the others, that the evil is not so much in the liberticidal institutions as in the choice of tyrants. Egalitarians in name, they

are for castes in principle. And by putting the workers in power, in the place of the bourgeois, they do not doubt that all will be for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

Put the workers in power! In truth, we need only to think back. Haven't we had Albert in the provisional government? Is it possible to imagine anything more idiotic? What was he, if not a plastron? In the constituent or legislative assembly we have had the delegates from Lyons; if it was necessary to judge the represented by the representatives, that would be a sad specimen of the intelligence of the workers of Lyon. Paris gave us Nadaud, a dull nature, intelligent enough for a porter, who dreamed of transforming his trowel into a presidential scepter,—the imbecile! Then also Corbon, the reverend of the Atelier, and perhaps much the least Jesuitical, for he, at least, was not slow to cast off the mask and to take his place in the midst of, and side by side with, the reactionaries.—As on the steps of the throne the lackeys are more royalist than the king, so in the echelons of official or legal authority the republican workers are more bourgeois than the bourgeoisie. And that is understood: the freed slave who becomes master always exaggerates the vices of the planter who has trained him. He is disposed to abuse his command just to the extent that he has been prone or forced into submission and baseness by his commanders.

A dictatorial committee composed of workers is certainly the thing most inflated with self-importance and nullity imaginable and, consequently, the most anti-revolutionary. If we could take the notion of public safety seriously, it would be a matter of, first and always, of unseating the workers from all governmental authority, and then and always to unseat, as much as possible, governmental authority itself from society. (Better for power to have suspected enemies than doubtful friends.)

Official or legal authority, whatever name one decorates it with, is always false and harmful. Only natural or anarchic authority is true and beneficial.

Who had authority in fact and in law, in 48? Was it the provisional government, the executive commission, Cavaignac or Bonaparte? None of the above. Although they possessed violent force, they were themselves only instruments, the meshed gears of the reaction; they were not motors, but machinery. All governmental authorities, even the most autocratic, are nothing but that. They function at the will of a faction and in the service of that faction, except for chance intrigues, and the explosions of compromised ambition. The true authority in 48, the authority of universal salvation, cannot be in the government, but, as always, outside the government, in individual initiative: Proudhon was its most eminent representative (among the people, I mean, not in the Chamber). It was he who personified the revolutionary agitation of the masses. And for that representation, he had no need of a legal title or mandate. His only title came to him from his work, his science, and his genius. He did not hold his mandate from another, from the arbitrary suffrage of brute force, but from itself alone, from conscience and from the spontaneity of his intellectual power. Natural and anarchic authority had the full share of influence to which it

was entitled. And that is an authority which has no use for praetorians, for it is the dictatorship of the Intelligence: it stirs and it invigorates. Its mission is not to bind or shorten people, but to grow them all the full height of a head, to develop in all of them the expansive force of their mental nature. It does not produce, like the other dictatorships, slaves in the name of public liberty; it destroys slavery in the name of private authority. It does not impose itself on the plebs by walling itself up in a palace, by armoring itself with iron mail, by riding among its archers, like a feudal baron;—it becomes apparent in the people, as stars become apparent in the firmament, by shining on its satellites!!

What greater power would Proudhon have had being a governor? He would not have had more of it, but much less, supposing that he could have preserved his revolutionary passions while in power. His power coming to him from his brain, anything which would have tended to impede the labor of his brain would have been an attack on his power. If he had been a dictator, in boots and spurs, armed from head to toe, invested with the suzerain sash and cockade, he would have lost, politicking with his entourage, all the time that he employed to socialize the masses. He would have created reaction instead of revolution. Think instead of the chatelaine of the Luxembourg, Louis Blanc, perhaps the best-intentioned in all the provisional government, and yet the most perfidious, the one who has delivered the sermonized workers to the armed bourgeois; he has done what all preachers in vestments or authoritarian badges have done, preached Christian charity to the poor in order to save the rich.

The titles and government mandates are only good for those non-entities who, too cowardly to be anything by themselves, want to be seen. They have no reason to be, except reasons of these runts. The strong man, the man of intelligence, the man who is everything by labor and nothing by intrigue, the man who is the son of his works and not the son of his father, of his uncle or of any patron, has nothing to sort out with these carnivalesque attributions; he despises and hates them as a travesty which will sully his dignity, as something obscene and infamous. The weak man, the ignorant man, who still has the feeling for Humanity, must also fear them; he needs for that only a little common sense. For if every harlequinade is ridiculous, it is more horrible when it carries a stick!

Every dictatorial government, whether it be understood in the singular or the plural, every demagogic Power can only delay the coming of the social revolution by substituting its initiative, whatever it may be, its omnipotent reason, its civic and inevitable will to anarchic initiative, to the reasoned will, to the autonomy of each. The social revolution can be made only by all, individually; otherwise it is not the social revolution. What is necessary then, what it must tend towards, is to give each and every person the possibility, the necessity of acting, in order that their movements, communicating with each other, give and receive the impetus of progress and thus increase the force tenfold or a hundredfold. What is necessary in the end, is as many dictators as there are thinking beings, men or women, in society, in order to shake it, to rise

up against it, to pull it from its inertia,—and not a Loyola in a red hat, or a general politics to discipline, to immobilize one another, to settle on chests, on hearts, like a nightmare, in order to suppress their pulsations, and on foreheads, on brains, as a compulsory or catechismal instruction, in order to torment their understanding.

Governmental authority, dictatorship—whether it is called empire or republic, throne or chair, savior of order or committee of public safety; whether it exists today under the name of Bonaparte or tomorrow under the name of Blanqui; whether it comes out of Ham or Belle-Ile; whether it has in its insignia an eagle or a stuffed lion...—dictatorship is only the violation of liberty by a corrupted virility, by the syphilitic; it is a caesarian sickness inoculated with the seeds of reproduction in the intellectual organs of popular generation. It is not a kiss of freedom, a natural and fruitful manifestation of puberty; it is a fornication of virginity with decrepitude, an assault on morals, a crime like the abuse of the tutor towards his pupil. It is humanicide!

There is only one revolutionary dictatorship, only one humanitarian dictatorship: the dictatorship of the intellectual and morals. Is not everyone free to participate there? The desire is sufficient to the deed. There is no need apart from it, and no need, in order to make it recognized, for battalions of lictors nor of trophies of bayonets; it advances escorted only by its free thoughts, and has for scepter only its beam of enlightenment. It does not make the Law, it discovers it; it is not Authority, but it makes it. It exists only by the will of labor and the right of science. He who denies it today will affirm it tomorrow. For it does not command the maneuver by buttoning itself up in inactivity, like the colonel of a regiment, but it orders the movement, teaching by example, and demonstrates the principle of progress by its own progress.

— Everyone marching in step! says one, and it is the dictatorship of brute force, the animal dictatorship.

— Let he who loves me follow me! says the other, it is the dictatorship of force intellectualized, the hominal dictatorship.

One has the support of all the shepherds, all the herders, all those who command or obey in the fold, all those who live in Civilization.

The other has the support of individualities that have become truly human, decivilized intelligences.

One is the last representation of the modern Paganism, the eve of final closure, its farewells to the public.

The other is the debut of a new era, its entry onto the scene, the triumph of Socialism.

One is so old that it has one foot in the grave; the other so young that it has one foot in the cradle.

— Old one! It is the Law, — you must perish!

— It is the law of nature, child! — you will grow!!

New York, April 1859

Exchange.

“Be then frankly an entire anarchist and not a quarter anarchist, an eighth anarchist, or one-sixteenth anarchist, as one is a one-fourth, one-eighth or one-sixteenth partner in trade. Go beyond the abolition of contract to the abolition not only of the sword and of capital, but also of property and of authority in all its forms. Then you will have arrived at the anarchist community; that is to say, the social state where each one is free to produce or consume according to his will or his fancy without controlling, or being controlled by any other person whatever; where the balance of production and consumption is established naturally, no longer by the restrictive laws and arbitrary force of others, but in the free exercise of industry prompted by the needs and desires of each individual. The sea of humanity needs no dikes. Give its tides full sweep and each day they will find their level.”

(*De l'Être-Humain*, Lettre à P.J. Proudhon.)

Exchange, like all things, can be considered from three perspectives: the past, the present, and the future.

In the past, those who would gather the scattered products of industry and agriculture in a bazaar, the merchants who would spread under a portico what they called their *merchandise*, would thus engage, to a certain degree, in exchange. Today, we call this *commerce*, which is to say parasitism, and we are right to do so. For if, relative to the state of places and minds, they had been of some use in their time, in our own time those who keep shops have not the same excuses for continuing to live at the expense of the producers and consumers. The trader is purely and simply a legal thief. In a district of the city, for example, where just one bazaar would be sufficient, and where a few hundred employees could easily provide the service, there exist perhaps a thousand shops and six thousand, or even ten thousand, owners or clerks. To the extent that there are more intermediaries than those hundreds strictly necessary to meet the needs of exchange, there are parasites, thieves. And now, if we consider how much labor these shops have cost, how much manpower and materials have thus been diverted from their true destination, let us judge the quantity of production squandered daily to satisfy the appetites of that rapacious and pedantic bourgeoisie, a caste of monopolists and mercenaries destined by collegiate education and paternal tradition for the noble mission of salesman, civil service brats, practiced from infancy in the handling of coins, raised with a love of plunder. The character of commerce is not debatable: it is organized pillage. It legally robs both those who produce and those who consume.

The shopkeeper—at wholesale, wholesale to the public, or retail—is not the only intermediary between the producer and consumer. That triple usury only fastens itself to their flanks in the last instance.

The producer who does not have in their possession the instruments of labor (and that is the majority, if not the totality), is also exploited by another sort of parasite—the industrialist—the head of the factory and his clerical staff, to say nothing of the banker and his assistants, fed by the manufacturer, and consequently fed by the worker, since nothing productive is done except by the worker's hands, and since everything done by those hands passes under control of the owner. In exchange for the instruments of labor the workers deliver their labor to the master and receive a wage from him. They give the master an apple to eat, so that the master will leave them the seeds. What a curious compensation! What a laughable exchange! It is the same for the peasant with regard to the landlord, for the proletarian with regard to the proprietor. The proletarians have built the house; the masons, carpenters, roofers, joiners, locksmiths, painters, to say nothing of the quarry-workers, lumberjacks, miners, foundry workers and smiths, potters and glass-blowers, all those who work the earth, the sand and stone, the wood and iron have labored there. It is they who have made the house, from the foundations to the roof's peak. Well! To live there, even in the attic, they still must pay an odious, quarterly tribute, house-rent, to the fortunate lazy-bones who holds the property. All these proprietors, these landlords, these factory bosses and their clerical personnel, their superiors, the bankers, and the budgetary bureaucracies, all these are so many swarms of locusts who swoop down on the harvest of the towns and the countryside, and devour the wheat while it is green, the bread before it is cooked. Thieves! Thieves! Thieves!

And yet all these vampires are within the law, these rogues are honest people! Will you rely then on official qualifications?

Such is exchange, as the reactionaries understand it, otherwise known as commerce, or exploitation, or theft. It is exchange in civilization, in its barbarity, in its primitive savagery, exchange in its original arbitrariness, exchange by divine right, commerce in its absolute despotism.

At the present time,—not *in fact*, since commerce, exploitation, and theft always have legal force, but *as an idea*,—exchange is understood differently.

The uselessness of the owner and shopkeeper once recognized, we say to ourselves: everything that is useless is dangerous, and what is dangerous should be suppressed; the intermediary must disappear. Parasitism, like the barren fig tree, is condemned by the masses to be cast in the revolutionary inferno to be destroyed. "That which does not produce is unworthy of life." The idea of justice, growing more prominent in public opinion, has expressed exchange thus: the right to the possession of the instruments of labor, that is, to free credit; and the right to the possession of the fruits of their labor, that is the democratization of property, universal and direct commerce,—a formula for social transition which in the political order corresponds to this: the right to the instruments of government, that is, democratization of government, universal and direct legislation.

Commerce and government thus understood,—commerce, as direct exchange, and government, as direct legislation—is a transitory organization which preserves the tradition of the past, while letting the future begin to speak. As soon as we could apply this organization, that is, as soon as we want it, our society, which declines today in misery and slavery, amidst bundles of sticks and piles of coins, will immediately enter into an ascending phase of wealth and liberty. The mark of authoritarian prejudice, the stain of proprietarianism and legalism will be little by little wiped from the human brain; intellectual and moral exercise will develop the anarchist sentiment in the individual; industrial and legislative exercise will develop the sentiments of social community and individual liberty in society.

In beginning this article, I only wanted to speak of exchange, and I have been led to also speak of government. It was the least that I could do. Indeed, if contract is the law between the laborers, law is the contract between the people. A national or departmental or communal administration should no more make laws than an agricultural or industrial administration should make contracts. It is the business of all the laborers in the group to contract among themselves and with others, as legislation is a matter for all the inhabitants of a commune or nation. The administration, whether agrico-industrial, or communal, or national, does not command, but obeys. The administration is the delegate; the group of laborers or inhabitants is the master—and doesn't the master always have the right to stop the wages and immediately dismiss the agent who fulfills their functions poorly?

Without doubt, conventional right, contract and law, even universally and directly exercised, is not natural right, or justice. It is a compromise between anarchy and authority, and everything that is not completely just is injustice. Direct exchange, that reform introduced into popular thought by Proudhon, is still a halfway measure. It is an addition of capacities, the diversification of the commercial census. However, we require not only the absolute overthrow of commerce that we require, but also the overthrow of constitutional or contractual commerce. We require, with regard to productive and consumptive circulation, the declaration of the individual rights of the HUMAN *being*, and the proclamation of the COMMONWEALTH, the *res publica*, that is, the freedom of production and consumption accorded to every individual with regard to the unity and universality of capital.

Nonetheless, a change similar to that which direct-exchange would produce would be a great social improvement, towards which all laborers should strive today. All their efforts should be directed towards this point, and we will arrive there before long, I hope. But in the end, that point is not the goal, that progress is not justice. It is only a stage on the best route, a step made in the direction of justice. We can relax and refresh ourselves there for a moment; but it would be dangerous to sleep there. In revolution it is necessary to double or triple the stages; we must gain ground on the enemy, if we want to escape their pursuit and instead track them down. The point farthest from the past, passing through

the present, that is the point that we must try to reach. Abandoning commerce to enter into direct-exchange, we must push all the way to natural-exchange, the negation of property; moving from governmental authority to direct legislation, we must push all the way to anarchy, the negation of legalism.

By natural exchange I mean the unlimited liberty of all production and all consumption; the abolition of every sign of property, whether agricultural, industrial, artistic or scientific; the destruction of all individual monopolization of the products of labor; the demonarchization and demonetization of manual and intellectual capital, as well as instrumental, commercial and monumental capital. Every individual capital is usurious. It is a hindrance to circulation; and everything that hinders circulation hinders production and consumption. All of that is to be destroyed, and the representative sign as well: it accounts for the arbitrariness in exchange, as well as in government.

In mechanics, we almost always proceed from the simple to the composite, and then from the composite to the simple. One man discovers the lever, a simple instrument, endowed with a certain power. Others come who take hold of it, and in their turn make of it a more complicated device. They add wheels and gears, and they increase its power tenfold. However, continual frictions occur which are detrimental to the operation of this mechanism. One overloads it with other wheels and gears; one obtains results that appear more satisfactory, but always very imperfect, and above all small in relation to the care and labors spent on the improvement. Then there comes another engineer, free from the spirit of routine and having in his head the idea for a new motor; experiment has shown to him that an old mechanism overloaded with complications will not be repaired; that it must be replaced by simplifying it; and having cast down this malformed thing,—which drags along its blade on the edge of a ditch whose flow, exhausted at its source, no longer feeds it sufficiently,—he reconstructs on entirely new plans a considerably simplified machine, driven by steam or electricity, which functions this time without loss of force and produces a hundred times what was produced by the old apparatus.

It is the same for the social organism. Primitive commerce has been the lever, the simple and artless instrument of circulation; production and consumption have received an initial impetus. Today, it is an old mechanism which disgraces progress, which has, between its gears of metal, ground up enough (more than enough) of the laborers, of whose sweat and blood and tears it is the expression. Innumerable modifications, each more complicated and more monstrous than the others, have been supplied; and still it isn't worth a thousandth part of what it has cost the proletarian. This is ruinous for the producer as well as for the consumer.

Direct-exchange, the possession by the laborer of the products of his labor, will certainly change the face of things and accelerate in considerable proportion the movement of production and consumption, and thus it will increase the amount of individual and social well-being. But numberless upsets

will still take place, and circulation will not always be free, and without the liberty of circulation there is no liberty of production, no liberty of consumption.

Once more there will be progress, but not justice. An evolution is not a revolution.

In principle, should the laborers have the produce of their labor?

I do not hesitate to say: No! although I know that a multitude of workers will cry out.

Look, proletarians, cry out, shout as much as you like, but then listen to me:

No, it is not the product of their labors to which the workers have a right. It is the satisfaction of their needs, whatever the nature of those needs.

To have the *possession* of the product of our labor is not to have possession of that which is proper to us, it is to have *property* in a product made by our hands, and which could be proper to others and not to us. And isn't all property theft?

For example, suppose there is a tailor, or a cobbler. He has produced several garments or several pairs of shoes. He cannot consume them all at once. Perhaps, moreover, they are not in his size or to his taste. Obviously he has only made them because it is his occupation to do so, and with an eye to exchanging them for other products for which he feels the need; and so it is with all the workers. Those garments or shoes are thus not his *possessions*, as he has no personal use for them; but they are *property*, a value that he hoards and which he can dispose of at his own good pleasure, that he can destroy if it pleases him, and which he can at least use or misuse as he wishes; it is, in any case, a weapon for attacking the property of others, in that struggle of divided and antagonistic interests where each is delivered up to all the chances and all the hazards of war.

In addition, is this laborer well justified, in terms of right and justice, in declaring himself the sole producer of the labor accomplished by his hands? Has he created something from nothing? Is he omnipotent? Does he possess the manual and intellectual learning of all eternity? Is his art and craft innate to him? Did the worker come fully equipped from his mother's womb? Is he a self-made man, the son of his own works? Isn't he in part the work of his forebears, and the work of his contemporaries? All those who have shown him how to handle the needle and the scissors, the knife and awl, who have initiated him from apprenticeship to apprenticeship, to the degree of skill that he has attained, don't all these have some right to a part of his product? Haven't the successive innovations of previous generations also played some part in his production? Does he owe nothing to the present generation? Does he owe nothing to future generations? Is it justice to combine thus in his hands the titles of all these accumulated labors, and to appropriate their profits exclusively to him?

If one admits the principle of property in the product for the laborer (and, make no mistake, it really is a *property*, and not a *possession*, as I have just

demonstrated), property becomes, it is true, more accessible to each, without being for that better assured to all. Property is inequality, and inequality is privilege; it is servitude. As any product will be more or less in demand, its producer will be more or less harmed, more or less profited. The property of one can only increase to the detriment of the property of the other, property necessitates exploiters and exploited. With the property of the product of labor, property democratized, there will no longer be the exploitation of the great number by the smallest minority, as with property of labor by capital, property monarchized; but there will still be exploitation of the smaller number by the larger. There will always be iniquity, divided interests, hostile competition, with disasters for some and success for the others. Without doubt these reversals and triumphs will not be at all comparable to the miseries and scandalous fortunes which insult social progress in our time. However, the heart of humanity will still be torn by fratricidal struggles which, for being less terrible, will not be less detrimental to individual well-being, to well-being in general.

Property is not only inequality, it is also immorality. Some producer favored with a lucrative specialty could, in their prosperity, use their daily earnings as an excuse to distract from their work a woman (if he is a man), or a man (if she is a woman), and infect them with the virus of idleness, the contagious germ of physical and moral degradation, the result of prostitution. All the vices, all the depravations, all the pestilential exhalations are contained in that substantive hieroglyphic, a case that is only a coffin, a mummy from ancient civilizations, which has arrived in our time carried by the tides of commerce, by centuries of usury,—PROPERTY!

Thus let us accept direct-exchange, like direct legislation, only conditionally, as an instrument of transition, as a link between the past and the future. It is a question to present, an operation to accomplish; but let that operation be like the welding of a *transpresent* cable with one end touching the continent of the old abuses, but whose other end unwinds towards a new world, the world of free harmony.

Liberty is Liberty: let us be its prophets, all of us who are visionaries. On the day when we will understand that the social organism must not be modified by overloading it with complications, but by simplifying it; the day when it will no longer be a question of demolishing on thing in order to replace it by its fellow, by denominating and multiplying it, on that day we will have destroyed, from top to bottom, the old authoritarian and proprietarian mechanism, and recognized the insufficiency and harmfulness of individual contract as well as the social contract. Natural government and natural exchange,—natural government, which is the government of individuals by individuals, of themselves by themselves, universal individualism, the human self [*moi-humain*] moving freely in the humanitarian whole [*tout-humanité*]; and natural exchange, which is individuals exchanging of themselves with themselves, being at once producers and consumers, co-workers and co-inheritors of social capital, human liberty, infinitely divisible liberty, in the community of goods, in indivisible

property. On that day, I say, of natural government and natural exchange, an organism driven by attraction and solidarity will rise up, majestic and beneficent, in the heart of regenerated humanity. And authoritarian and proprietarian government, authoritarian and proprietarian exchange, machineries overburdened with intermediaries and representative signs, will collapse, solitary and abandoned, in the dried-up course of the flood of ancient arbitrariness.

So let all these Babylonian institutions perish quickly, with their unnatural wheels and gears, and on their ruins let the universal and fraternal solidarization of individual interests, society according to nature, be enthroned forever!

People of the present, it is necessary to choose. Not only is it immoral and cowardly to remain neutral, it is degrading, but still there is peril. It is absolutely necessary to take sides for or against the two great, exclusive principles that the world debates. Your salvation is at stake. Either progress or devolution! Autocracy or anarchy!—For a radically flawed society, radical solutions are required: for large evils, grand remedies!

Choose then:

—Property is the negation of liberty.

—Liberty is the negation of property.

—Social slavery and individual property, this is what authority affirms.

—Individual liberty and social property, that is the affirmation of anarchy.

People of progress, martyred by authority, choose anarchy!

The Servile War.

Property is robbery.
Slavery is murder.

P. J. PROUDHON.

We are Abolitionists from the North, come to take and release your slaves; our organization is large, and must succeed. I suffered much in Kansas, and expect to suffer here, in the cause of human freedom. Slaveholders I regard as robbers and murderers; and I have sworn to abolish slavery and liberate my fellow-men.

JOHN BROWN.

A handful of *free soilers* have just attempted a relief of slaves on the frontiers of Virginia and Maryland. They have not won and they are dead, but they have at least died fighting; they have sown the future victory in the fields of defeat. John Brown, who had previously fought in Kansas, where one of his three sons had been killed by the slave-holders and whose other two sons have just perished at his side. John Brown is the Spartacus who called the modern helots to break their irons, the blacks to take up arms. The attempt has failed. The blacks have not responded in any numbers to the call. The standard of the revolt is sunk in the blood of those who carried it. That standard... it was that of liberty... and I salute it! and I kiss its bloody folds on the pierced bosom of the vanquished, on the battered brow of the martyrs! — Let it sparkle in my eyes, standing or fallen. Let it provoke the slaves, black or white, to revolt: let it unfurl on the barricades of the old continent and the new. Let it serve as a screen to the *soldiers* of the legal order. Let it be pierced by the bullets of the bourgeois assassins of Washington or Paris; trampled under foot by the national guards and *gardes mobiles* of France or America, insulted by the prostitutes of the press of the *model* Republic or of the *honest* and *moderate* Republic; from far or near, whether there is peril or not in approaching it, that flag, it is mine! Everywhere that it appears, I rise to its call. I answer: *Present!* I line up behind it. I proclaim moral complicity, solidarity with all its acts. Whoever touches it, touches me: — VENDETTA!

The insurrection of Harper's Ferry has passed like a flash. The clouds are dark once again, but they contain electricity. After your flashes the thunderbolt will erupt, oh Liberty!...

In France, in '39, another John Brown, Armand Barbès, also made a skirmish. That political riot was one of the precursory flashes of which February was the lightning strike. (June 48, the first exclusive uprising of the Proletariat, commences the series of precursory social flashes of the libertarian Revolution.) The privileged have treated Barbès as a mad assassin, as they treat Brown as an

insane bandit. The one was a bourgeois, the other a white, both enthusiasts for the freedom of slaves. Like Barbès in 39, Brown is a heroic fanatic, an enthusiastic abolitionist who marches to the accomplishment of his designs without seriously considering the causes of success or failure. More a man of feeling than of thinking, given over entirely to the impetuous passion that inflames him, he has judged the moment opportune, the place favorable for action, and he has acted. Certainly, I won't be the one to blame him for it. Every insurrection, be it individual, be it vanquished in advance, is always worthy of the ardent sympathy of revolutionaries, and the more audacious it is, the more worthy it is as well. Those who today disclaim John Brown and his companions, or insult them with their drivel: — the makers of abolitionist banalities who lie tomorrow in their daily spreads, should at least have delicacy about the mouth, for want of the heart that they lack; — the mercenaries of the French empire, these henchmen of the throne, these scribes of the altar, these traitors who daily chant *Te Deum* to the glory of the armies and sprinkle with holy-ink the brave harvesters of laurels, the heroes of the battlefield crowned with the turban of the zouaves or the turcos; those especially should recall that the *free soilers* of Harper's Ferry, these fighters for liberty, have at least on virtue which merits their feigned respect: valor in the face of the enemy! It is then to the soldier of the emperors or kings that they would know how to say: "Honor to the courageous in misfortune"? These insurgents, whom the *soldiers* and volunteers of slavery have murdered with arms or that the bought judges will murder with the law, they have fought one against one hundred, even... and those who have been left for dead and who, like Brown, have survived their wounds, will be hung, it is said... Infamy! That these mercenary pens who hammer away with a cold rage on the bodies of the defeated and distort the features eagerly. Hideous scribblers, they only have only the faces of men; their skulls conceal the instincts of a hyena. It is those or their ilk who, eighteen hundred years ago, before another gallows, cast in the face of Jesus, bloodied Jesus, the bloody muck of their words!!

But let us leave these *daughters* of the press to their abject state. There are insults that honor as there are kisses that sear: these are the insults and the kisses of prostitution!

Let us examine the facts and draw out the lessons.

For a successful insurrection in the slave states, is the initiative of a few fired-up, free, white abolitionists enough? No. The initiative must come from the blacks, from the slaves themselves. The white man is suspect to the black man groaning in helotism and under the whip of the whites, his masters. In the so-called free states, the people of color are regarded like dogs; they are not permitted to go by public carriage, nor to the theater, nor elsewhere, if there is not a spot reserved: they are lepers in a lazaretto. The white aristocracy, the abolitionists of the North hold them at a distance and drive them back with contempt. They cannot take a step without encountering idiotic, absurd, and monstrous prejudices which bar them passage. The ballot box, like the public

coach, the theater and the rest, is refused them. They are deprived of their civil rights, treated always and everywhere as pariahs. The black people of the slave states know this. They know that they are the subject and stake of all sorts of intrigues; that for the masters of the North, the exploiters of the proletariat and the electors, the owners of white slaves, abolitionism means industrial and commercial profits, nominations for political employment, government appointments, piracy and sinecures. They also mistrust some whites, with good reason; so that the good, those who are sincerely fraternal towards them, suffer for the bad. And then, what is that liberty to which we generally invite them? The liberty to die of hunger... the liberty of the proletariat... So they show little urgency to risk their lives to obtain it, though their lives might be most miserable and liberty their greatest desire. Many of the negroes, moreover, are held in such a profound ignorance, such a rigorous captivity, that they hardly know what happens a few miles outside the plantation where they are penned up and they readily take those limits for the limits of the world!... The foray of John Brown is good, in that the story will resound, with echoes upon echoes, to the remotest of shanties, that it will stir the independent streak of the slaves, will dispose them to sedition, and will be a recruiting agent for another insurrectional movement. But the uprising of Harper's Ferry had one fault, and a grave one: it is to have been insanely generous, when he was master of the field; to have spare the lives of the legal criminals; to have been content to take prisoners, to take hostages, instead of putting to death the planters that he had in hand, traffickers in human flesh, and to have thus given hostages to the rebellion. Property in man by man is murder, the most horrible of crimes. In such a circumstance, one does not negotiate with the crime: one suppresses it! When one has recourse, against legal violence, to the force of arms, it is in order to use it: he must not be afraid to shed the blood of the enemy. For slaves and masters, it is a war of extermination. Steel must be brought first, and then, in case of setbacks, flame must be brought to all the Plantations. There must be—if victorious—not one planter,—if vanquished—not one Plantation left standing. The enemy is more logical. He gives no quarter!..

Every producer has a right to the instruments and products of their labor. The Plantations of the South belong by right to the slaves who cultivate them. The masters should be expropriated in the cause of public morality, for the crime of lèse-Humanity. This is what John Brown seems to have recognized in the Provisional Constitution that he wanted to proclaim, an elaboration of ideas barely lucid and full of darkness, but which testify to the need for justice and social reparations with which his valiant heart was animated, and, as a consequence, with which the hearts of the masses, source and seat of his own, is animated. Sooner or later, the drop will become a flood, the spark will become a flame! So demands Progress, natural and enduring Law.

1860 will soon dawn over the world, the daybreak of great revolutionary events.

All Europe is under arms:
It is the last rattle of the kings...

Kings of high and low degree. In America, let the proletarian of the North and the slave of the South outfit themselves for the great war, the proletarian and servile war, the war against "the master, our enemy;" and, then, let the old and the new continent utter with one fraternal voice that cry of social insurrection, that cry of human conscience: — LIBERTY!!!

And you, Martyrs! John Brown, Shields, Aaron C. Stephens, Green, Copie, Copeland, Cook, you will be no more, perhaps! Given over to the executioner, strangled by the cord of the laws, you will have rejoined your companions, fallen before iron and lead... And we, your accomplices in the idea, we will have been powerless to save you... we have even, I say, been the accomplices of your murderers!... by not taking up arms to defend you, by acting only with speech or pen, with sentiments, instead of also acting with the sword and rifle, with the muscles. What! We, your assassins? Alas! yes... It is horrible! Isn't it? — Ah! Let that blood fall back on us and our children... let our consciences and theirs be soaked in it... let it make them overflow with hatred and insurrection against Legal Crime!... — The time of Redemption is near. Captives that we are in the web of civilized institutions, we will redeem then our forced faults, our painful inaction... Martyrs! You will be avenged!...

Oh! Vendetta! Vendetta!!!...

SCANDAL

We live in an era of decadence. The world is peopled only with walking corpses. Everything that moves, moves slowly. A sovereign indolence weighs on nations and individuals alike. However, looking deeply into this human charnel house, we glimpse the subterranean life that stirs, swarms and sometimes ventures to the surface. Our century is a century of transition; under its visible inertia an immense transformation is taking place. This is not yet the complete death of the old social order, but it is already the beginning of the new. The operation, although it is latent, is nonetheless real. Government, property, family, religion, everything that makes up the organism of the civilized societies breaks down and begins to rot. There are no more morals; the morals of the past no longer have any sap; those of the future are still only a sprout. What is good for the one, is evil for the other. Justice has no criterion other than force; success legitimates all crimes. Mind and body are prostituted in the commerce of mercantile interests. Pleasures are no longer possible, if they are not the pleasures of the brute. Dignity, friendship, and love are banished from our mores, lie separated from one another, or perish, strangled, as soon as they want to dawn across this officially bourgeois society. There is no more grace or beauty in this world, no naïve smile or delicate kiss. The feeling for art is replaced by the taste for the disgusting and grotesque. Society, in its decrepitude, resorts to bloody flagellations to over-stimulate its old carcass and sometimes still give itself some dreadful semblance of virility. Atony and gangrene have blunted all its capacities for labor, as well as for pleasure. It can no longer enjoy anything. For it, work is a punishment and pleasure a labor. It does not know what it wants or what it does not want. Everything weighs on it; it stumbles and sinks in all sorts of depravity and cowardice. It wants to escape from that horrible nightmare, to shake off the burden of degradation that suffocates it; it looks forward to waking up; it knows that it only has to stand up on its feet to destroy that oppression, and it is so drained that it does not have the strength to rise, or the courage to conquer its numbness. And yet the idea ferments in it, and enlightens it internally in its sleep, until it is powerful enough to make it open its eyes and shine from its pupils. One side of its life, its robe of flesh, is left in the sepulcher of the past; the other side, its mind or spirit, floats on the winds of the future.

It is up to us, revolutionaries, tatters of humanity whom the breath of progress lifts, social rags that the light of understanding colors with its purple fires, and that it displays above the Civilized like a scarecrow or a flag,—a scarecrow for those who want to remain stationary, and a flag for those who want to press forward,—it is up to us to stimulate the work of decomposition, up to us to try to indicate the stone that holds Humanity in immobility, up to us to open the paths of universal regeneration.

Two manners of acting present themselves to those who want to become propagators of new ideas. One is calm, scientific discussion, without renouncing

anything of principles, to report them, and comment on them with a fine courtesy and firm restraint. This process consists of injecting truth drop by drop into minds that are already prepared, elite intelligences, still beset by error, but animated by good will. Missionaries of Liberty, preachers with smiling faces and caressing voices, (but not hypocrites,) with the honey of their words they pour conviction into the hearts of those who listen to them; they initiate into the knowledge of truth those who have a feeling for it. The other is bitter argument, although scientific as well, but which, standing firm in the principles as in a coat of mail, arms itself with Scandal as with an axe, to strike redoubled blows on the skulls of the prejudiced, and force them to move under their thick covering. For those, there are no words blistering enough, no expressions cutting enough to shatter all these ignorances of hardened steel, that that dark and weighty armor that blinds and deafens the dull masses of the people. All is good to them—the sharp sting and the boiling oil—in order to make these apathetic minds tremble to their heart of hearts, under their tortoise shells, and to make resonate, by tearing at them, these fibers which do not ring out. Aggressive circulators, wandering damned and damnators, they march, bloodthirsty and bleeding, sarcasm on the lips, the idea before them, torch in the hand, across hatreds and hisses, to the accomplishment of their fateful task; they convert as the spirit of hell converts: by bite and fire.

The two approaches are good and useful, depending on the sorts of listeners we encounter along our way. Some require one, and some require the other. For both, it is a matter of temperament, a question of their condition in the current society. They can even be alternately applied, according to the disposition of the mind or the environment in which we find ourselves. Both, if they do not back down from the principles, if they cling firmly to liberty, are *agents provocateurs* [in the sense of *inciting agents*] of the Revolution. However, in our civilized societies, it is the smallest number who are disposed to listen. The greatest number turn a deaf ear, and it is by Scandal that one pierces the eardrum.

How, anyway, not to employ words forged with the tongue of scorn to penetrate into this manure of the world where strut, like some like some poisonous mushrooms, the round, flat faces of the ignominious bourgeoisie. Can one employ anything but the teeth of a pitchfork to speak to these vegetations of legal matters? Does all of that feel? Does all of that think? Can a man with a heart live in such a society? Is he called to live only to drag along his days among that filthy rabble? Is it my fault, it is our fault, who have in our heart the poetry of the future, if nature has given us some disposition to love, an intelligence of the good, enthusiasm for the beautiful, and if we encounter at every step only intellectual and moral deformities? Is it our fault if in such a society we only find hate to dispense, if there we can only revel in disgust?

O Scandal! Vengeful fury, be my companion as long as the world remains the old world, as long as bourgeois obesity and obscenity ripen on the velour of exploitation, as long as servility and idiocy of the workers will grovel in the rut and under the halter of capital!

Yes, there must be some like me, like us—the cursed, the rebels—to march unbending—in the direction of progress, to move the inert blocks, to face the avalanches of stones and smooth the way for those who have the same goal, but who make the propaganda in less irritating forms, who engage in polemics with more peaceful epithets.

Scandal, avenging fury, to you my pen and my lips!

It is through you that shame enters the hearts of men. It is through you that their minds awaken to enlightenment. It is through you that the wicked tremble, and through you that the good hope.

If there is still, or rather if there is already some modesty in the world, Scandal, avenging fury, great redresser of morals, it is to you that it is owed.

It is you that forces enemies of the new idea to serve this idea by criticizing it. All who speak of socialism, for good or evil, spread socialism by spreading its name. Sooner or later truth emerges from untruth, it gets the better of its detractors in the long run. Only silence is harmful, and it is you, Scandal, who imposes speech on the mute and, whether they like it or not, forces them to make themselves heralds of that which they persecute.

Scandal, anarchic authority, you are more powerful than all the authorities of the official world. The kings and the bourgeois, the emperors and their subjects can only put the gag of death on the mouths of men; you, voice strident, fiber electric, you make even the stones speak!

O Scandal! Great educator of the deaf and mute, revolutionary breath, satanic deity, spread your wings and vibrate over the world; bring forth the idea from all these skulls of granite, like the sibylline sounds from the depths of the grottos.

Scandal, you are the organ that makes the Civilized bow down their heads in their shame, and that their thought raises up the spheres of future harmony.

Bellow and rumble still, provocative storm. Your thunder-bursts are a salutary anthem.

My pen and my lips are yours, Scandal!

The Universal Circulus (1858)

Joseph Déjacque

I

The universal circulus is the destruction of every religion, of all arbitrariness, be it elysian or tartarean, heavenly or infernal. The movement in the infinite is infinite progress. This being the case, the world can no longer be a duality, mind and matter, body and soul. It cannot be a mutable thing and an immutable one, which involves contradiction—movement excluding immobility and vice versa—but must be, on the contrary, an infinite unity of always-mutable and always-mobile substance, which implies perfectibility. It is through eternal and infinite movement that the infinite and eternal substance is constantly and universally transformed. It is by a fermentation at all instants; it is by passing through the filtering sieve of successive metamorphoses, by the progressive emancipation of species, from mineral to vegetable, from vegetable to animal and from instinct to intelligence; it is by an ascending and continuous circulation that it is raised gradually and constantly from the near inertia of the solid to the subtle agility of the fluid, and that, from vaporization to vaporization, it constantly approaches ever purer affinities, always in the midst of a work of purification, in the great crucible of the universal laboratory of the worlds. Thus, movement is not separate from substance; it is identical to it. There is no substance without movement, as there is no movement without substance. What we call matter is raw mind or spirit; what we call mind or spirit is wrought matter.

As it is with the human being, summary of all the terrestrial beings, essence of all the inferior kingdoms, so it is with the universal being, encyclopedia of all the atomic and sidereal beings, infinite sphere of all the finite spheres—the universal being, like the human being, is perfectible. It has never been, is not, and will never be perfect. Perfectibility is the negation of perfection. To limit the infinite is impossible, as it would no longer be infinite. As far as thought can reach, it cannot discover its own limits. It is a sphere of extension which defies all calculations, where the generations of universes and of sidereal multiverses gravitate from evolution to evolution without ever being able to reach the end of the voyage, the ever more remote frontiers of the unknown. The absolute infinity in time and in space is eternal movement, eternal progress. Put a limit to that infinity without limits—a God, any heaven whatsoever—and immediately you limit movement, limit progress. It is like putting it on a chain like the pendulum of a clock, and to saying to it: “When you’re at the end of your swing, stop! You shall go no further.” It is placing the finite in the place of the infinite. Well! Don’t we realize that perfection is always relative, that absolute perfection is immobility, and that consequently immobilized perfection is something absurd and impossible? Only idiots could

dream that up. There is and can be no absolute except perfectibility in the universal infinity. The more a being is perfected, the more it aspires to perfect itself further. Would nature, which has given us infinite aspirations, have lied to us, promising more than it could give? Where has she ever been seen to lie? One must be a Christian and a *civilized person*, which is to say a cretin and a eunuch, to imagine with delight a paradise in which old Jehovah is enthroned. Could you imagine anything more stupid and boring? Could you imagine these blessed ones, these saints cloistered in the clouds as in a convent, all their pleasure consisting of telling their rosaries and ruminating, like brutes, on praises to the reverend father God, that unchanging superior, that pope of popes, that king of kings, having the mother abess Virgin Mary to his left, and to his right the child Jesus, the heir apparent, a great oaf who carries, with the air of a seminarian, his crown of thorns, and who,—in the representation of the mystery of the so-sacrosanct Trinity,—fills—with his immaculate mother cradling in her lap the peacock Holy Spirit, which spreads its tail,—the role of two thieves on the cross, nailed on each side of the greatest of criminals, the supreme and divine creator of all the oppressions and all the servitudes, of all the crimes and all the abjections, the Word and the incarnation of evil! In the earthly convents, at least, men and women can still console themselves for their imperfection, for their deadly tortures, by thinking of a future perfection, of another and immortal life, of celestial bliss. But in heaven every aspiration more elevated is forbidden them: are they not at the apogee of their being? The very high and all-powerful magistrate, the one who judges, in last resort and without appeal, the living and the dead, has given them the maximum of beatitude. From now on, they have taken on the cassock of the elect; they drag, in paradise, in forced idleness, the ball and chain of their days; and they are condemned for all time! There is no appeal for mercy possible; no hope of change, no glimmer of future movement can reach down to them. The hatch of progress is forever sealed above their heads; and, like the conscript-for-life in his hulk, immortal galley slaves, they are forever fastened to the chain of the centuries in the eternal heavenly stay!

The only diversions these poor souls enjoy consists of chanting hymns and prostrating themselves before the sovereign master, that cruel old man who, in the times of Moses, wore a blue robe and curly beard, and who according to the current fashion, must wear today a black coat and a stiff collar, mutton-chop sideburns or an imperial goatee, with spittle in place of his heart, and a rainbow of satin around the neck. The Empress Marie and her divine ladies-in-waiting most certainly have crinolines under their petticoats, and most certainly the saints, in the livery of court, are starched, cravated, pomaded and curled neither more nor less than the diplomats. Their blessed grandesses doubtless bang away at the piano for all of the holy eternity, and their blessed excellencies turn the hand of the organ-of-paradise... What fun they must have! That must be amusing! It is true that I am not rich, but I would certainly still give some few pennies to see such a spectacle—to watch for a moment, you understand, not to

remain there; and only on the condition of paying on the way out, if I was pleased and satisfied. And yet, on reflection, I find it hard to believe that what goes on inside is worth even a trifling sum at the door. Is it not said: "Happy are the poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven *belongs* to them"? That *property* will never delight me. Definitely, at times, the holy Gospels display a naïveté that is... amusing: bestow then some donkey's ears on all the laureates of the faith! These first fathers of the Church must have been mischievous: might as well confess right off that paradise is not worth the four fetters of a... Christian. And to admit that women have been left to take the promises of these Lovelaces of superstition, that they have smiled at all these cretinous seductions, that they have given their love for this anti- and ultra-human paradise! To admit that the men have been taken in like the women, that they have believed all these ignoble ones—nonsense, that they have worshipped them!—Poor human nature!—However, one will admit that it would be difficult to invent anything more detrimental to the happiness of humans who do not already have the pleasure of being absolutely poor in spirit. In truth, I would reckon myself happier to be a convict in prison than one of the chosen in paradise. In prison, I would still live by my hopes. Every progress would not be completely closed to me, and my thoughts, like my physical strength, could attempt an escape from the galleys. And the eternity of the life of a man is not so long as the perpetuity of the life of a saint. The universal movement, by transforming me from life to death, will finally deliver me from my torture. I will be reborn free. While in the case of the heavenly imprisonment it is immobility without end, knees bent, hands clasped, head bowed, brow void of hope—an unprecedented torture, with *body* and *soul*, muscles and fibers put to the question under the inquisitorial eye of God...

When I think that, profiting from the deterioration of my faculties, brought on by age or illness, a priest could come at the hour of my death, and give me, one way or another, the absolution of my sins, of my heresies; that he could deliver to me, a subject suspected or convicted of *lèse-divinité*, a *lettre de cachet* for heaven, and send me to rot in that divine Bastille without a ray of hope of ever leaving it, brrrrrrr!... that gives me shivers. Happily, the expected paradises are like castles in Spain: they only exist in imaginations suffering from mental alienation; or, like houses of cards, the least breath of reason is enough to knock them down. However, I declare it here: On the day when death weighs down on me, let those who can surround me then, if they are my friends, if they respect the wishes of my reason, and not allow my agony to be soiled by a priest and my cadaver sullied by the church. A free thinker, I want to die as I have lived, in rebellion. Living and upright, I protest strongly and in advance against every such profanation of my remains. A particle of humanity, I want even after my death to serve the education and life of humanity; that is why I leave my body to the practitioner who wants to make an autopsy of it and study the organs of a man who did all that he could to be worthy of that name; and that I ask him, if it is possible, to inter the remains as fertilizer in a sown field.

But let us return to our subject, the universal circulus. The unlimited sphericity of the infinite and its absolute movement of rotation and gravitation,—its perfectibility, in short, is demonstrated by all that which strikes our view and our understanding. Everything turns, in us and around us, but never precisely in the same circle. Every rotation tends to raise itself, to approach a purer ideal, a remote utopia which will be realized one day in order to make place for another utopia, and thus progressively from ideal to ideal and from realization to realization.

On the earth, all beings, our subalterns, at whatever degree they are placed in the hierarchy of kingdoms or of species, minerals, vegetables or animals, tend towards the human ideal. As with the infinitely small, so with the infinitely large—our globe and the multitude of globes which follow it at a distance in one single whirl, tend equally, whatever their relative superiority or inferiority, towards their luminous ideal, the sun. And all approach it each day, however insensibly: the man, like the sun, tends in his turn towards some more utopian spheres, by an ascending and continuous gradation; and always thus until the end of ends, or rather without end or terminus.—The mineral pivots imperceptibly on itself and draws to itself all that it can appropriate of the lesser orders; it grows and extends itself, and then it entrusts to some conducting agents a few fragments of its exuberance and feeds the plant.—In its turn, the plant grows, rocking in the breeze and blossoming in the light. The insects gather pollen from it; it offers them its honey and its fibers, everything it has stolen from the bowels of the earth and that it has made to rise to the light of day through the filters of its tissues. The insects and worms then become the prey of the birds. The plant itself is feed for the large animals. Already the mineral has been transformed into flesh and bone, and the sap has become blood; instinct is more prompt, and movement more pronounced. The gravitation continues. Man assimilates the vegetable and the animal, the grass and the grain, the honey and the fruit, the flesh and the blood, the gas and the sap, the breezes and rays. Terrestrial star, he pumps through all his pores the emanations of his inferiors. He raises them drop by drop, bit by bit, to his level and returns to them to knead again that which is still too coarse for him to incarnate within himself. In just the same way, he exhales through thought the aromas too pure to be retained in his calyx, and he scatters them on humanity. Humanity, after having incorporated them, integrates everything that can sympathize with its degree of perfection, and returns for kneading to the instinctive species, to the inferior orders, that which is too coarse for it in these fluids, and exhales that which is too subtle towards the higher humanities of the outer spheres.

Thus it is with the planets moving around the sun, and with the sun moving in its turn with all its satellites around another more elevated center, star of that star.

Now, if everything turns first in a spiral, from its need for preservation, and if, turning on itself, everything reaches beneath itself, from its need for

alimentation, and raises itself above itself, from its need for expression; if life is a perpetual revolution, a circle always in movement, each movement of which modifies its nature; if all movement is a progress, and if the more rapid the movement of rotation and gravitation is, the more it accelerates progress in us; can men and women, to whom analogy demonstrates all these things, do less than to bow to the evidence? Can we not desire to be revolutionaries, and, being revolutionaries, not desire to be more revolutionary still? For the human being, to live the life of the mineral, vegetable or animal, to live the life of stones or brutes, is not to live; and to live the life of the *civilized persons* is to live the life of stones and brutes. Humans, let us not stiffen against our destiny, but deliver ourselves with passion to its teachings; let us advance boldly to the discovery of the unknown; reach out to progress in order to accomplish with it humanitarian evolution in the great circle of perfectible beings and societies; let us initiate ourselves fearlessly into the mysteries of the eternal and universal revolution in the infinite. The infinite alone is great, and the revolution only has malice for those who would remain outside its circle. Let us live by movement for movement, by progress and for progress, regardless of whether the grave is close and the cradle far. What is death to us, if it is still movement, and if movement is still progress? If that death is only a regeneration, the dissolution of our crumbling unity, an organism incapable for the moment of moving itself, perfectly in its continuous disaggregation, and, moreover, the re-aggregation of the plurality of our being in younger and more perfectible organisms? If that death, finally, is only the passage from our state of senility to the embryonic state, the mold, the matrix of a more turbulent life, the crucible of a purer existence, a transmutation of our brass into gold and a transfiguration of that gold into a thousand coins, animated and diverse, and all stamped with the effigy of Progress? Death is only frightening for those who bask in their own muck and are transfixed in their porcine husks. For, at the hour of the decomposition of his organs, those will adhere, by their heaviness and vileness, as they adhered during their lives, to all that which is mud and stone, stench and torpor. But those who, instead of growing fat and sinking willingly into their ignominy, burned their fat to produce light; those who acted with their voice and strength, with heart and intelligence which will be invigorated by labor and love, by movement—those, at the hour when the last of their days are used up; when they has no more oil in their lamp nor elasticity in their works; when the largest part of their substance, long since volatilized, journeys already with the fluids; those, I tell you, will be themselves reborn, in conditions made more perfectible to the degree that they had labored at their own perfectibilization. Moreover, does not death have a place in all the instants of the lives of beings? Can the body of a man preserve for a single moment the same molecules? Does not every contact constantly modify it? Can it not breathe, drink, eat, digest, think, feel? Every modification is at once a new death and a new life, more painful and more inferior to the degree that the alimentation and the physical and moral digestion

have been idler or more coarse; easier and superior to the degree that they have been more active or refined.

II.

Just as the human digests the vegetable and animal, assimilates their juice or essence and discharges their skin and excremental detritus as the manure that will give birth to lesser beings; just so humans digest the hominal and the generations of hominals, their juice or essence and discharge their skin and excremental detritus as the manure on which will wallow and pasture the bestial and vegetative societies.

Like the works of a mill, the individual organism of the human being and the organism of humanity grind in their gears the fruit of good and evil, and separate the good from the bad, the bran from the flour. The bran is cast in the trough for the livestock, the flour is gathered by the human being and serves its nutrition. The good is destined to the highest classes of beings, the bad to the lowest. The one is transformed into white bread or into cake and is set on the table on trays of porcelain or silver at the feast of the intelligences; the other remains raw or is transformed into slops, and falls in the feed trough for the farm stock or beasts of burden. The good or bad grain, and each grain of that grain, is treated according to its value, punished or rewarded according to its merit. Each carries within itself its chastisement and its recompense, the human being as much as the grain; its purity or impurity makes its paradise or hell in the present, its hell or heaven in the future.

All labor is an instrument of progress, all idleness is a straw bed for decrepitude. Labor is the universal law; it is the organ of purification for all beings. No one can escape it without committing suicide, for we can be born and grow, form and develop only by labor. It is through labor that the grain sprouts in the furrow, put up its stalk and is crowned with a rich fruit; it is also by labor that the human fetus closes off and encircles itself in the womb of the mother, and, obeying an imperious attraction, appears by escaping from the organ of generation; it is by labor that the child stands on its feet, grows, and that, become an adult, it is crowned with the double fruit of its manual and intellectual faculties; it is also by labor that the individual matures physically and morally before falling under the scythe of Time, that universal and eternal reaper, in order to begin again, in the eternal and universal life, a new work and new destinies.—Being, whatever they may be, are called to labor to the degree that their attractions are lofty; and their sensations are voluptuous to the degree that they are purified by labor.

Happy are those whose productive faculties are overexcited by the love of the good and the beautiful. They will be fruitful in goodness and in beauty, for no labor is fruitless. Unhappy are those whose productive faculties sleep, shrouded in the apathy that the dreadful and evil brings. They will not know the joys that hard-working and generous passions give. All inertia is infertile; all narcissism,

every exclusive adoration of itself is doomed to sterility. Happiness is a fruit that can be picked only on the high summits, and it has a delicious flavor only after having been cultivated. For the idle, the inert, as for the merely cunning, it is too green a fruit: it ripens only for the agile, the laborers. It is not by sequestering it in our being, by isolating our hearts from the hearts of our fellows that we can obtain it; it does not belong to the fratricidal but to the fraternal. Those only can harvest it who do not fear to put arms and heart and head into it, and make a communion of individual efforts.

The human and humanity carry within them the seed of individual and social well-being; it is up to individual and social labor to cultivate it, if they want to savor its fruits.

It is for having *tasted* the fruit of the tree of science that, according to the Jewish and Christian mythologies, we have lost the terrestrial paradise. Ah! If instead of having only a taste, Humanity had tried to eat its fill of it, it would not be difficult to recover that Eden, so narrow and so little regrettable. Then, we could have had it, prodigiously, without limits and replete with felicities of a very different sort than those of the primitive ages. I do not say that with the aid of science we could, like the alleged gods, make something from nothing, but we could regenerate what exists, make the world a better world, transform our societies in the civilized state into a society in the harmonic state, and enter almost without transition from the life of present ages into that of the future.

The religions, as absurd as they are, nonetheless represent the need for an ideal innate in humanity. All the fables of the past and present represent future hopes, the sense of immortality in mortals. Ignorance and superstition have made shapeless monsters of these aspirations; it is up to science, to reason freed from its swaddling clothes, to give them humanitarian forms. The human and humanity, as well-perfected as they will be one day, will nonetheless experience desires which will never find satisfaction in any present time. The future will always be a beacon towards which all their efforts will tend, the object of their constant longings. The call of progress will always resonate in their ears. Perception will always be superior and will always reach further than realization. Human beings sense clearly that all is not closed forever under the lid of the coffin. The idea of progress protests not only against all destruction, but also against all degeneration; and not only against all degeneration, but against all that which is not regeneration and perfectibilization. Ignorance and superstition have imagined the immortality of the soul and the heavenly resurrection. I believe I have demonstrated that there is no soul distinct from the body; and there would be an inadmissible duality unless that soul still obeyed the same laws of decomposition as the body. The absolute soul and absolute paradise would be the negation of progress; and we can no more deny progress than we can movement. God, in the religious as in the philosophical sense, can no longer exist with regard to us, as we ourselves cannot exist as God with regard to the myriads of atoms of which our body is the Great-All. It is not the human body, in its small totality, which creates and directs these

myriads of atoms of which it is composed; it is these atoms, instead, that create it and direct it by moving according to their passional attractions. Far from being their God, the human being is hardly anything but their temple: it is the beehive or anthill animated by these innumerable multitudes of the imperceptible. The universal being would not, any more than the human being, be the creator or the director of the colossal multitudes of worlds of which it is made up; it is these worlds, instead, which create and direct it. Far from being their maker, their producer—their God, as the metaphysicians say—the universal being is hardly anything but the workshop or, at most, the product of the infinity of beings. How then would it be the motor of each, if it is only the machine of which each is the motor? God and the absolute is denied by everything in nature that has life. The progress which is movement and the movement which is progress issue them a certificate of non-existence, characterize them as imposters. If the absolute could exist above us, we would be the absolute for that which is below us, and movement and progress would not exist. Life would be nothingness, and nothingness cannot be conceived. All that we know is that life exists: thus movement exists, thus progress exists, and thus the absolute does not exist. All that we can conclude is that the circulus exists in universality as it exists in individuality. Like every individuality, the universality, however infinite it may be, is itself only a rotation and a spherical gravitation which, moving more and more from the darkness and chaos and approaching more and more light and harmony, perfects itself by working itself ceaselessly, by a mechanism or organism that is constantly more rectified... But all of that absolutely contradicts the idea of a God from which everything emanates and towards which everything returns, the idea that everything has been created, by God, from nothingness, in order to be annihilated in the bosom of the same God—which is to say, something starting from nothing in order to lead to nothing, going beyond the absurd in order to fall back into the absurd. God, source of all things, central point from which everything follows and towards which all returns, is one of these contradictory rationales that one can give to the children of men and to the humanities-in-infancy, because their still-sleeping intelligence cannot yet respond. But it is absolutely absurd. A river cannot flow back towards its source. The source is no more eternal than the river. They both exist only on the condition of movement, which is to say of progress, of birth and of death, of generation and regeneration. Like the river, the source has a cause. It is not everything, this small central point from which gushes the living water which produces the stream. The opening is only an effect, it is not a cause; and, by returning from the effect to the cause, we would find that the cause is still only the effect of another cause, and so forth. God explains nothing. It is a word to cross out of the vocabulary of men, since it serves to quibble with the difficulty without resolving it. God is only a mannequin, the breastplate (or shirtfront) of ignorance, a stick in the wheels of progress, a snuffer on the light, a... rag in a lantern! It is time to cleanse the universal language of it. Excrement of human cretinism, from now on it belongs

to the Domange Academy and the consorts: let it reign in the pits of the Villette, and let it, reduced to powder and cast to the four winds, serve finally as fertilizer to movement, to the eternal and universal and perfectible creation, to the unlimited development of the infinite.

God!... In truth is it possible that two men agree on the meaning that they give to this word? I do not accept that for the needs of the dialectic it should be necessary to resort to it. Let a philosopher employ it in his writings, and, if it is a Catholic who reads them, he would only want to see,—despite whatever cautions the author has given,—the God of his own religion. If he is a Calvinist, a Lutheran, a Israelite, a Muslim, a Hindu, a believing philosopher or a philosophical believer, each would not want and would not be able to see anything but the God of his own imagination. In the end, these three cabalistic letters will represent as many different Gods as there are readers or listeners. I do not see what need the dialectic could have of the word, and I believe that it would do better and more wisely to do without it. New things require new words. I know that there are many other expressions which we use, myself as much as anyone, and which do not have the same meaning for everyone: it is an evil which it is necessary to try to remedy, otherwise we would discuss a long time without understanding each other. GOD being the first cause of all social falsities, the source of all human errors, the capital lie, GOD can no longer be employed in the discussion except as an abusive term, as a spatter spit from our lips or our pen. It is not enough to be an atheist, it is necessary to be a theocide. It is not enough to deny the Absolute; it is necessary to affirm Progress, and to affirm it in everything and everywhere.

Defects in logic are what mislead the greatest thinkers, what carry perturbation to the mass of intelligences. It is because we are not in agreement with ourselves that often we cannot come to agreement with others. All of us who affirm the movement in the infinite and consequently infinite progress, the single and solidary universality, affirm equally the movement in ourselves and consequently progress, the single and solidary individuality. Let us deny duality in the finite as we deny it in the infinite. Let us reject that absurd hypothesis of the immortality of the soul, of the absolute in the finite, when we have the proof in the body that every finite thing is perishable, divisible and multipliable, which is to say progressively perfectible. Matter is not one thing and spirit another, but one same and single thing which movement constantly diversifies. The spiritual is only the result of the corporeal; this is not a matter of spirituality but of spirituousity. The soul or, to put it better, thought is to the human being what alcohol is to wine. When we speak of the spirit of wine, we speak of an entirely material thing. Why should it be otherwise when it is a question of the spirit of a human being! Do you still believe then that the earth is flat, that the heavens are a cupola to serve it as a dome, and that the sun and stars are candles lit by the creator God in honor of Adam and Eve and their descendants? And if you no longer believe in these supposed revelations, in these charlataneries or in this aberration of the faith, and if you believe in what

science and the genius of observation teaches you, in virtue of what reason would you want spirit to be distinct from matter? And, even being distinct, that the one be the movement and the other inertia, and that precisely the one to which you attribute movement was never-changing in its individuality? Inexplicable paradox! Well, observation tells you, through my testimony, that all that which has been vapor or dust and is grouped and has taken finished, definite form, will come away grain by grain, drop by drop, molecule by molecule and will scatter into the undefined, in order to assume, not another form, but a multiplicity of other forms, and will leave these multiple forms anew in order to divide again and multiply and progress eternally in the infinite. In order to be convinced of it, there is no need of having studied Greek or Latin; it is only necessary to examine the analogy, to infer and to deduce.

I have established that all that which is inferior to human beings tends to gravitate towards them. The human being is the summary of terrestrial creation. The Earth is a being, animated like all beings and endowed with various organs proper to life. Humanity is its brain, or rather it is that part of it which, in the human brain, we have called the *gray matter*, the eminently intelligent part; for the animal and the vegetal, and the mineral even—in a certain proportion—also live under the terrestrial skull and form the ensemble of its brain. Alone,—of all the atoms which live obscurely in the innards of the planetary body or rest, vegetate, crawl, walk or fly by the light between the soil and the atmosphere,—humans are a perfectible species. They possess some faculties which are unknown to other beings or which are hardly sensible among them: that of memory, for example, or calculation; that of the emission and transmission of idea. Unlike the mineral, vegetable and animal, the hominal generations succeed and do not resemble one another; they always progress and do not know the limit of their perfectibility. Eh! well, that which exists for the earth obviously exists for human beings. The human being is another globe, a small world which also has in it its privileged race, its humanity in miniature, the ideal of all the atomic species that people and form its body. That humanity is called the brain. It is towards it that gravitate all the kingdoms or all the molecular species of the human body. These molecules,—the most revolting as well as what we might call the most inert,—all tend to rise from their beds and their lower natures to that type of superiority which lives under the human skull. And, as humanity, the intelligent part of the brain of the terrestrial body, is perfectible, the *cervellity*, or intelligent part of the brain, which is the humanity of the human body, is also perfectible. While outside of the brain, the lower molecules only act mechanically, so to speak, and with more inertia the lower they are place on the scale of the progression of the kingdoms or species; in the brain, on the contrary, capstone of hominal creation, the movement is rapid and intelligent. The brain of the human being, like the brain of the planet, also has its three, or rather its four gradations which corresponds to the four kingdoms: the mineral, the vegetable, the animal and the hominal. The cretin, for example, who in the human race is the being most dispossessed of intelligence,

has, in the brain, in the state of development, only matter recumbent and vegetative, that which corresponds to the mineral and vegetable, but where the mineral prevails in volume over the vegetable. The imbecile is the one in whose brain the vegetable prevails over the mineral, and where there can be found a little of the animal, which is to say of matter of a creeping and somewhat instinctive sort. In the *civilized* person, all three kingdoms are developed in the brain, but the animal kingdom prevails over the other two. That which corresponds to the hominal, which is to say to intelligent matter, is still in a state of infancy or savagery, and dispersed under the skull, amid the virgin forests of the vegetal system, between the blocks of rock of the mineral system and exposed in its weakness and nudity to the ferocity of the animal system.—It is then the industrial and scientific labors of these generations of perfectible atoms, moving between our two temples as between two poles; it is their joys and their pains, their science or their ignorance, their individual and social struggles which constitute our thought. Depending on whether these infinitesimals are more or less in the harmonic state; whether they obey among themselves the natural law of liberty—to anarchy, to autonomy—or the artificial law of authority—to monarchy, to tyranny; whether they are under the empire of superstition or they are freed from it; whether their populations are more or less given over to pauperism and aristocracy, or rich with equality and fraternity; whether these small diminutives of humans are more or less penned up between national barriers and the fences of private property, or circulate more or less easily from one passional height, home or homeland, to another, and from one craneological continent to another; finally, according to whether they are more or less free or more or less enslaved, and also whether we ourselves are more or less dignified or more or less close to slavery or liberty.—The cervelain being, like the human being, takes in as food everything that is below it, discharges from the lower organs that which is too coarse, assimilates that which is perfectible enough to become incarnate in it, and exhales outside, on the wings of human thought, that which is too subtile to remain captive in it. Thus we incorrectly classify mind and matter as being two distinct things, the one mobile and immutable, the other mutable and immobile, the one invisible and impalpable, the other palpable and visible. Everything that is mobile is mutable, and everything that is mutable is mobile. That which is palpable and visible for the human being, the infinitely large, is invisible and impalpable for the cervelain being, the infinitely small. That which is impalpable and invisible for the human being is visible and palpable for the being placed higher in the hierarchy of beings, the humanitarian beings or the terrestrial being. For the beings infinitely more perfected than us,—the humanities of the astral spheres, I suppose,—what we will regard as a fluid, they will consider as solid; and what they will regard as fluid will be regarded as solid by the humanities still more elevated in superiority. The most subtile, here, for the one, is, there, for the other, what becomes the coarsest. Everything depends on the point of view and the condition in which the being is placed. The last word of the cervelain being is

certainly not the skull, as the last word of the human being is certainly not the terrestrial skull. The human being is not the absolute of the one, and humanity is not the absolute of the other. Without doubt, the cervellity gives birth to generations which, like the human generations, produce and transmit ideas, and accumulate in the memory of the man of gigantic labors. Without doubt also, humanity piles generations on generations and progress on progress. The better, the good, and the best, all increase as a result of the efforts of each. But the planets, like human beings, are born, grow and die. At the death of humans or globes, the purified humanities or cervellities rise by whatever fluid character they have towards spheres in formation or in expansion and of a more perfectible nature. The progress is eternal and infinite, after one step another step, after one life another life, and still and always.

Any being whatsoever, a human being, or the superior or the inferior that being, is like a sack of grain or of molecules of all the sorts, which movement, that is to say life and death, fills and empties without ceasing. These grains, come from the field of production, returns to the field of production or, according to their degree of perfectibility, they produce rye or wheat. The content of the sack procreates a multitude of stalks, and on each stalk each of grains subdivides and multiplies in the ear. Nothing of that which is can preserve for one minute its full individuality. Life is a perpetual exchange to the profit of each. The richest in perfectibility are the most lavish, the ones who venture the most of their being in circulation: the more the laborer sows and harvests! The poorest are the stingiest, those who have their gaze turned inward, who stack molecule on molecule in the hollows of their being, who seal themselves in their innermost selves, and waste, in a stupid private contemplation, a capital of faculties, troves of sensations that external contact would have made bear fruit.

What I want to make well understood, and what I strive to generalize at the risk of repeating myself, is that the religions, the artificial or deceitful moralities have had their day, and that they are nothing more today than immorality or irreligion; it is that there is a morality, a natural religion to inaugurate on the rubble of the old superstitions, and that that morality or that religion can be found only in the science of man and of humanity, of humanity and of universality; it is that the human like the universe, is one and not double: not matter and spirit, nor body and soul (matter or inert body, spirit or immaterial soul), but animated and passional substance, susceptible of thousands and thousands of metamorphoses and constrained by its animation and its passionality, by its attractions, to a perpetual upward movement.—What it is important to note in order to destroy all of the secular theologies, and with them the authoritarian system which still serves as the basis of the organization of contemporary societies and postpones the fraternal communion of humans, is that with movement the absolute cannot exist; it is that the individuality of the human and of humanity, like the individuality of all the atomic and sidereal beings, cannot preserve for one single instant their absolute

personality, it is that the movement revolutionizes them without ceasing and constantly adds something and takes away something from them; it is that we all, minerals, vegetables, animals, humans, and stars, would not know how to live in ourselves and by ourselves; that there is no life without movement, and that movement is an infinite transformation of the finite thing; it is that we live only on the condition of taking part in the lives of others, and that the life in us is more fruitful the more we sow it outside the plots, plots which returns to us in ripe and abundant crops; and more lively as we give it more external elements, as we put passions in combustion on its hearth. Finally, it is that the more we give off light and caloric, the more we expend intelligence and love, the more we raise ourselves with swiftness from apotheosis to apotheosis in regions more and more elevated, more and more ethereal.

Everything is solidary in universality. Everything is composed, decomposed and recomposed according to its reciprocal and progressive attractions, the atom like the human, the human like the stars, and the stars like the universes. The universes are atoms in universality, as the atom is itself a universe in its individuality. The infinite exists at the two antipodes of creation, for divisibility on a small scale as for multiplicity on a grand scale. The short view of the human, its weak understanding cannot sound its incommensurable depths. The finite cannot embrace the infinite, but can only sense it. But what the thinkers, supplied in the powerful instrument that we call analogy, can touch and make thought touch, what they must proclaim by strokes of logic on all the public places and in all the public papers, is that the individual being is not the consequence of the universal being, but that the being universal is the consequence of individual beings; it is the infinitely large group of which the infinitely small are the constitutive members. God, the soul, and the spirit are myths that Humanity, approaching the age of reason, must toss without regret into the rag basket like some dolls from our youth. Science, from now on, and no longer superstition, must occupy our thoughts. Let us not forget that humanity is a daughter and fiancée of progress. The polichinelles, the good gods and the devils, all the Guignols and the puppets armed with sticks, are of childishness unworthy of it, today, as its minority comes to its end. It is time, high time, that it thinks of its emancipation; that it girds its forehead with the intellectual banner; that it finally prepares itself for its social destinies, if it does not want to serve forever as laughingstock for the Humanities of other globes.

To sum up, I say:

Movement, which is to say progress, being proven, the absolute can no more exist in the finite than in the infinite, and thus the absolute does not exist.

As a consequence, God, universal or absolute soul of the infinite, does not exist.

And as a further consequence, the soul, the absolute of the human, individuality one and indivisible, eternally finished form, does not exist.

Matter is all. Movement is the attribute of matter, and progress the attribute of movement.

Like matter and movement, progress is eternal and infinite.

The universal circulus does not lead to absolute perfection. It conducts to infinite perfectibility, to unlimited progress, the consequence of eternal and universal movement.

Thus, absolute perfection does not exist, and cannot exist. If it existed, progress would not exist.

Absolute perfection is against all evidence, and absurd.

Movement is, obviously, truth.

No transaction is possible between these two terms: it is necessary either to believe in God and in his diminutives and deny movement, or to affirm movement and invalidate God.

—God is the negation of Progress.

—Progress is the negation of God.

The Theory of Infinitesimal Humanities or System of Four Gradations

If my ignorance of many sciences is not an insurmountable obstacle to what I contemplate, I will attempt some day to develop more completely a theory which is only in germ in the preceding article (and which is not without analogy to the "Series" of Fourier and the "Triad" of Leroux, but more rational, I think.) It is the theory of "Infinitesimal Humanities" or the application, to all the beings in universality and to the universality of all beings, of the system of the three kingdoms (mineral, vegetable, animal), crowned by the fourth, the hominal, or perfectible essence of every organism, conducting agent which makes the transit from a body of an inferior species to another body of a superior species, a sort of intermediary which puts them in direct communication, and establishes exchange between them: the body of the lower species delivering what is most "hominalized" in it to the body of the higher species and receiving in compensation what is least hominalized in the other, or, to put it another way, the most "mineralized." – Any physical or moral sensation is the result of a contact — a shock or kiss that places what is most pure in the lower into relation with what is most impure in the higher — circulation thus propagating from organism to organism and from sphere to sphere, from attraction to attraction, via the four gradations, variously and universally manifested. This system must be given a geometrical figure that I would represent in the form of a cubed triangle whose three points on the base correspond, one to minerality, the other to vegetality, and the third to animality, and the culmination, the peak of the pyramid, to hominality.

If the discovery of this law is true in relation to humans, as everything demonstrates to me, the law must be universal and be found again in the infinitely small as in the infinitely great. It is applicable to all that exists. It is an instrument that can be used to penetrate deeper into the immensities of the Unknown. Undoubtedly, this is not all; it is a key, and there is more than one door to open, more than one mystery to explore. But the key can put us on the road, it can clear the way to sudden clarities, and within the darkness, bring light!

... Yes, but what would I make of this key by myself, with my crippled intelligence, afflicted with paralysis and blindness, I who can do nothing except by trembling, by groping? ... The key ... The darkness ... Ah! Always the mantle of Alexander over the eyes of Diogenes, always a cloud between Poverty and Science, always Privilege!...

Ignorance! Ignorance! ... get out of my sun! ! !

Source: *Le Libertaine* (New York), 10 janvier 1859.

The Revolutionary Question

(excerpts)

Of the Revolution

Principles :

Liberty, equality, fraternity

Consequences:

Abolition of government in all its forms, monarchic or republican, the supremacy of one alone or of majorities;

But anarchy, individual sovereignty, complete, unlimited, absolute liberty of everyone to do everything which is in the nature of the human being.

Abolition of Religion, whether catholic or Israelite, protestant or any other sort. Abolition of the clergy and the altar, of the priest, -curate or pope, minister or rabbi;-of the Divinity, idol in one or three persons, universal autocracy or oligarchy;

But the human being,-at once creature and creator,-no longer having anything but nature for God, science for priest, and humanity for altar.

Abolition of private property, property in the soil, in buildings, in the workshop, in the shop, property in everything which is an instrument of labor, production or consumption;

But collective property, unified and indivisible, possession in common.

Abolition of the family, the family based on marriage, on paternal and marital authority, on heredity;

But the great human family, the family united and indivisible like property.

The enfranchisement of women, the emancipation of children.

Finally, the abolition authority, privilege, and antagonism;

But liberty, equality, fraternity incarnated in humanity;

But all the consequences of the triple formula, passed from theoretical abstraction into practical reality, into positivism.

That is to say Harmony, that oasis of our dreams, no longer fleeing like a mirage before the caravan of the generations and delivering to each and all, under the shade of fraternity and in universal unity, the sources of happiness, the fruits of liberty: a life of delights, finally, after an agony of more than eighteen centuries in the sandy desert of Civilization!

[...]

Conclusion

Thus, as solution, liberty, equality and fraternity.

Liberty of thought,

Liberty of love,

Liberty of labor,

Liberty of action :

Liberty in everything and for everyone.

Equality of rights, equality of duties: social equality.

Fraternity, that is social character impressed by the simultaneous action of liberty and equality on the page of humanity; vignette which follows from the text; last syllable which concludes the formula according to the spelling-out of two others; qualifier of solidarity and unity.

And, as means of operation, as transitional means, direct legislation.

And let no one repeat that the people are too ignorant; that it is to put into their hands an instrument of which they will no know how to make use; that they must wait, and wait for those who have the science to govern them. No, I would respond to these leather-breeches of the revolution, to these Decembraillards of the dictatorship. It is only by working at the forge that one learns to be a blacksmith; it is only by making law that the people will learn to make them well. I know well that the apprentice blacksmith strikes himself more than once on the fingers before knowing to forge well. That teaches him to pay more attention to what he does, and, as they say, "to make the trade enter the fingers." The people, apprentice legislators, will also sometimes strike themselves by legislating, which will teach them to examine more closely the propositions and better manage their vote. And if, one day, it makes bad laws, the next day, it will be done with them, and put them on the scrap heap, to forge and pound out better ones.

But, before arriving there, there is one material obstacle to overcome, – it is the empire; another means of operation to employ, – it is insurrection. Despite his seven or eight million votes, the emperor is enthroned on a crater. The lava bubbles in the bottom of the pit. The torment of June 48 and the fruitless agitations which preceded or followed have in part, it is true, exhausted the enthusiasm, quelled the insurrectionary energies of the generation which passes; – but the younger generation rises; the social idea boils in their brains and will soon attain its degree of upward force. If Bonaparte does not himself make some larges vents to reduce the pressure and allow the passage of socialism, it will be done for him: one day or another, he will be swept away by a volcanic eruption. The earth trembles under the flowering of the reaction, and the old society, like another Pompeii, will soon be swallowed up by the incandescent flood of the revolution.

To work then! For it is not a question of sitting back and waiting for the day of atonement. We must prepare. Each day, women and proletarians, and in the measure of our strength and convictions, in the household, in the workshop, on deserted street-corners, starting today, at every hour, and at every instant, we must act, rise up, and make revolution.

To the work! And let those who are hungry and want to eat;

Let those who are thirsty and want to drink;

Let those who are naked and want to be clothed;

Let those who are cold in body and soul, and want to warm themselves with the caloric of the brazier of with love;

Let those who carry in their hands and on their face the furrows plowed by a homicidal labor and no longer want to plow their flesh to fatten some idlers;

Let those who feel themselves withering under the fog of physical privations and want to fast and clear their lungs in the climate of less deleterious institutions;

Let those who incubate in their bosom the consumption of moral sorrows and want to cure it;

Let all those who suffer and want to enjoy;

Finally! Let all those who have palms and crowns of misery, rise!... and let their number and their rebellion chill will terror the spectators, organizers and executors of their martyrdom!

Stand up everyone!

And by the arm and the heart,

By speech and by the pen,

By dagger and rifle,

By irony and imprecation,

By pillage and adulteration,ⁱ

By poisoning and fire,ⁱⁱ

Let us make, - on the highway of principles or in the corner of individual rights, - by insurrection or by assassination, - war to society!... war to civilization!...ⁱⁱⁱ

Stand up! - And if, by some misfortune, there are some who fall into the hand of governmental authority, - let each of us, - accused at the bar, condemned under the rod, in the dungeons or on the block of detentions or executions, - let each of the new believers confess, - before humanity and taking nature as witness, - that they have acted only by virtue of their right and in order to obey the religion of their conscience...^{iv}

Stand up, proletarians, everyone stand! - And, unfurl the flag of social war! Stand up! And, - like the fanatics of the Koran, - in the thick of the insurrectionary fray, where those who are slain die to be reborn in the future society - let us repeat that cry of anathema and extermination for religion and the family, for capital and government; that cry of hate and love, - of hatred for privilege, love for legality; - that vengeful cry, that cry of our faith:

- the REVOLUTION is the REVOLUTION, and LIBERTY, - today vilified, in order to be hounded, hunted, but tomorrow victorious and powerful and always immortal, - LIBERTY is its PROPHET!...

Jersey, 1852-53.

¹ By adultery, which is to say, by making the greatest possible disorganization in the household. Let no husband be able to say: "I am the father of that child." And, finding in marriage only fatigue and disgust, an insupportable existence, let him be constrained, in order to escape it, to demand amorous liberty himself, and give up his authority.—In all things, let the good be born from the excess of evil, since, by their résistance to progress, the criminals in power require it thus

¹¹ Let every revolutionary choose, among those among whom they believe they can count the most, one or two other proletarians like themselves. And let all,—in groups of three or four, being unconnected and functioning in isolations, so that the discovery of one of the groups does not lead to the arrest of the other,—act with the common aim of destroying the old society, and putting the privileged in peril so well and at so many moments of the day, that they will be obliged, in order to escape ruin and death, to make common cause with the proletarians to demand equality; let it be for them so that they can see salvation only in the destruction of their privilege, and let their interest, finally, legislate for them a desire to return to the realm of common right.

Let, for example, each group proceed in this way: if, of the three or four members of the group, there is a construction worker, let him take the imprint of the keyholes of the apartments of the wealthy where he should be called to labor, and let him inspect the exits well, let him skillfully question the domestics, in order to have all the indispensable information, and then, having taken these measures, let him inform the other members of his group,—his accomplices, if you like,—and at the moment determined, let them enter by night the apartment of these rich folks, stabbing or strangling the master or masters, forcing, breaking or opening with the aid of false keys the furniture where silverware, jewelry and coin can be found; let them carry all they can, and when they go let them put fire to the house. But above all let them not use the product of their plunder to improve their condition. That would be their downfall: a change in their position would betray them by alerting the police. Let them kill and loot in order to destroy. Only let them bury underground all the gold that they have been able to gather, so that if they or one of their fellows comes to be suspected or discovered, that gold can serve their escape. Let the group which, with the product of these night conquests among the rich, could obtain a clandestine printing house, do so, and let bulletins, proclaiming the aim and means of action of the terrible society, reveal each day to the public that all the murders, thefts, poisonings, and arsons which are committed in the city and the country are the work of the revolutionaries, of the new Jacques, and that they will go on so long as equality has not dethroned privilege.

In another group where there is a confectioner worker, the worker should make every effort to be employed in one of the big houses which furnish the aristocracy, and on New Year's Eve, I suppose, or the day before, let them poison on, or ten, or twenty bowls of bonbons, as many as they can, and on that next day let a hundred or a thousand aristocrats cease to live. Let the secret society, through its clandestine printers, then claim the responsibility for it, and let the stoic poisoner vanish, fleeing to escape an arrest.

Let the perfumer do likewise. If they can, let them also poison champagne, the fine wines, the linens, the cakes, the ices and sorbets. In the country, let them burn the crops of the rich, along with their houses, and the churches; in the cities, let them do likewise with the houses, churches, ministries, town halls, and all the offices of commerce and government. Let the sword of Damocles be constantly suspended over the heads of the privileged; let the serpents of terror, like those of Nemesis, hiss day and night in their

ears and make the tremble for their gold and their lives; let their position no longer be bearable and let them, weary from so much anguish, be forced to fall their knees and ask for mercy and beg the proletariat to grant them their lives in exchange for their privilege, and common happiness in exchange for general misfortune.

ⁱⁱⁱ Civilization, being now a synonym of barbarism, is to be destroyed, like the barbarism that opened the era of Civilization. Humanity, which has grown, rejects it today like a garment which is too tight, in order to enter into a new phase of progress called harmony.

^{iv} Let the individual or group appearing before the assizes hold their heads high, let them stand there not as defendants, but as enemies, and as always formidable enemies anyway, or potentially so, prisoner or free, dead or living, for the principled individual vanquished in struggle is never entirely dead and that is their consolation and strength, their fellows surviving them.—Let them say then to those who are there to condemn them: “Tomorrow, if you do not acquit me, you will be dead. I call in a loud voice to you, the daggers of the secret societies of which I am a member, and that invocation, know it well, is for all of them an order!... And now strike me, if you dare!” And the next day, if that revolutionary is condemned, let the secret societies make perish, at any price and whatever peril there is in doing it, the judges and juries who have handed in the sentence. — Ah! Gentlemen of the family and property, of religion and government, you want privilege, well! Suffer the consequences... Do you think that your life, your world, your worm-eaten society hold on long against such revolutionary means? What do you say, children of Malthus? But, unfortunately, the energies are weak, today, and it is probably only on the day after some other, still stifled revolution, after some new days of June, that this idea could bear its fruits. Meanwhile, I sow the seed in the hearts of all the suffering, and, come on! you will not escape this new jacquerie. May it begin without delay!



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