

Black and Red Feminism



#2

Featuring works by and about

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The early stages of this project involved a lot of exploratory reading and translating

All works originally appeared in French. Translations by Shawn P. Wilbur, except for "The Human Being," translated by Jonathan Mayo Crane.

FEMINISM IN LYON BEFORE 1848

I. —Feminist Tendencies before 1834. Mme. Niboyet.

When Fourier and, after him, the Saint-Simonians denounced the inequality of the sexes as a denial of justice, they revived a long-interrupted tradition. After Condorcet, the ardent forerunner of feminism, who was concerned with the role of woman? The Revolution, accustomed to find in her an enemy more often than an ally, had neglected to take her part after the assassination of Marat by Charlotte Corday. Napoleon was not the man to make her a part of his plans. She herself seemed disinterested in her own cause. *Enfantin* and Fourier returned her to the consciousness of her rights. The former showed her a new society, where every function would be fulfilled by a couple; the latter claimed to free her, to revise the law of marriage, to remove the anathema pronounced against love by Christianity. Without accepting all these ideas, some women, already distinctly detached from catholic dogma, although all religious sentiment was not dead in them, felt vaguely that a greater share of influence was due them. At Lyon, beginning in the year 1833, their complaints began to be formulated, and their aspirations as well.

L'Echo de la Fabrique, the journal of the workers, did not hesitate to open its columns to them, and to lend them its support. They would insert demands there inspired by Saint-Simonism and Fourierism. "It is to us," wrote one of them, "that belong the greater part of human miseries, of rights distorted and misunderstood; to us also the complaint and the hope for a better future." They had had enough of being "grown-up children, alternately caressed or oppressed;" they waited with impatience for the society promised by Fourier, that triumph of harmony which will be the victory of their right. A collaborator of *l'Écho*¹ advocated in education, in the laws, in the regime of industry, some reforms which he did not specify, but which would allow woman, by assuring her a breadwinner, to escape from dependence on her husband, from the role of "household utensils and living room furniture," and finally receive some benefit from a civilization that is her work.

To many minds, the cause of women is intertwined with that of the people. Is there not for that matter an immense female proletariat, even more wretched than the other, which has the same interests and pursues the same ends? At each attempt of the workers to obtain higher wages, women have addressed to them the testimony of their sympathy.² Finally, in a democratic spirit, Mme. Niboyet, grouping around her some collaborators, strove to give a center to the

¹ Jullien, *Echo de la Fabrique*, June 1833: de la Condition sociale des Femmes au xix^e siècle.

² See the letter cited: *Echo de la Fabrique*, February 23, 1834.

confused tendencies of her sex, and founded at Lyon, in November, 1833, a journal titled: *le Conseiller des Femmes*.

Mme. Eugénie Niboyet deserves to be mentioned among the first workers of the feminist idea, but it is hardly possible, if it is possible at all, to catch a glimpse of her face in the little information that we possess. We know that she was born in Montpellier in 1797. The daughter of pastor Mouchon, she must have been raised in the protestant religion. About her life and role until 1833, the date when she set up residence at Lyon, we have no information. She speaks somewhere of "combining by a fortunate agreement physical and moral strengths," of "finding the law of emulative attraction," so many formulas of Fourierism or Saint-Simonism, and let it be believed that she adhered to one or the other system.³ She was an educator at the same time as a journalist: in the notices, there is talk of her courses, without any more details. She was a journalit at heart, and a tireless one. After the *Conseiller des Femmes*, which ceased to appear in 1834, she published *la Mosaïque*, a literary journal, then, having left Lyon for Paris, she founded *l'Avenir*, a journal of social tendencies.⁴ In 1848, she could be found in the company of Désirée Gay, Pauline Rolland, Adèle Esquiros and especially Jeanne Déroin, at the Club des Femmes of which she was the president.⁵ She founded a new journal, *la Voix des Femmes*; she wrote to Cabet, to congratulate him for having spoken at a meeting in favor of female emancipation, a letter also signed by Jeanne Déroin and Désirée Gay, where she called for equality for all women as well as all men. *La Voix des Femmes* not being able to continue publication, after forty-six issues, she collaborated on *l'Opinion des Femmes*, which her friend Jeanne Déroin had just founded, and which lasted until the month of August, 1849.

From this date we lose her track, but there is enough for us to judge what prodigious activity she expended for the cause to which she was committed. *Le Conseiller des Femmes* is the first in date, at least to our knowledge, of the long series of journals that she created, or at least to the editing of which she contributed. She had at her side, in 1833, numerous collaborators, of whom the two most remarkable were Louise Maignaud and Jeanne Dubuisson.

Mme. Niboyet took care to inform us of the goal that she pursued: "We believe," she wrote, "that we labor at a work of organization, in accordance with the will of God and the needs of the era, for if in fact and in right woman is in the natural and numeric order one half of humanity, it seems to us just and necessary that she take her part in the ascending movement impressed on our

³ See Charléty, *Saint-Simonisme*, p. 116, note 1. When the Saints-Simonians, desirous of winning over the workers, created a special system of education for them in the twelve arrondissements of Paris, in the course of the year 1831, a *Mme. Niboyer* figured among the chief Saints-Simonians of the 6th arrondissement. Despite the difference in spelling, isn't it likely that *Mme. Niboyer* et *Mme. Niboyet* were one and the same person?

⁴ See the *Tribune Lyonnaise*, March 1845.

⁵ See the revue: *la Révolution de 1848*, 1908, p. 321, article of Adrien Ranvier on Jeanne Déroin.

civilization.”⁶ The feminist tendencies did not exclude a religious inspiration: Mme. Niboyet further declared “that it will draw all its precepts from the divine books.”⁷ That profession of faith did not prevent *le Conseiller des Femmes* of being the target of the attacks of the Catholics, of whom *le Réparateur* is the organ, which she dismissed eloquently, by invoking with Louise Maignaud the right that every conviction has to be respected.⁸ But what the editors especially took to heart was the education of their sex. They thought to create “a practical journal;” their desire was to contribute, to the extent that they could, to improve the sort of women of every condition.

Without doubt, it would be much lamented here and there that woman, “tributary of the State by taxes and by her children, could not take any part in political or administrative affairs:”⁹ but such complaints were rare; instruction was considered, at least in the present state of things, as the only means of feminine emancipation. Let woman “be able to enter in her turn the careers of science and industry!”¹⁰ The journal abounded with projects for her education. It even published some lesson in grammar for her usage; it followed all the periods of her life, in the course of her daily occupations: a multitude of stories and poems, of which many were the work of Mme. Desbordes-Valmore, then present in Lyon, gave it a literary tone without ever distracting attention from that which was its eternal subject.

The solicitude of the editors was especially aroused by the women of the working class, so numerous in Lyon. Louise Maignaud, Jeanne Dubuisson laid out in long pages the tableau of their misery. Are they not reserved to the fabrication of *étoffes unies*, that is to those labors that are worst remunerated; don't they work fifteen to eighteen hours per day for a pittance? To the claims in favor of the workers, add those particular to the romantic age in favor of the fallen woman: “You, poor women who have found in the world only snares, seductions and injustices, whose passions have overflowed the soul... does one think that for you there will not be love and sympathy in our hearts?” *L'Echo de la Fabrique* reproduced these articles:¹¹ it congratulated the collaborators of Mme. Niboyet for the interest that they brought to the plight of the daughters of the people, they who, placed by their condition far from misery, could divert their thoughts to other objects.

From the month of December 1833, Mme. Niboyet was no longer content to write; she wanted to act in order to make her ideas triumph. She thought to create free schools, two for the boys, and two for the girls of seven to twelve

⁶ *Conseiller des Femmes*, November 1, 1833.

⁷ *Conseiller des Femmes*, prospectus.

⁸ *Conseiller des Femmes*, January 11, 1834: *Un Mot au « Réparateur »*, par Louise Maignaud.

⁹ *Conseiller des Femmes*, December 14, 1833.

¹⁰ *Id.*, November 16, 1833.

¹¹ See the *Echo de la Fabrique*, April 27, 1834, March 25, 1834, and prior to February 2, 1833.

years of age, by appealing to private subscriptions, and asking the city to lend a location for it.¹² The teacher had not abdicated. Imbued with the Fourierist idea of attractive labor, she hoped that children would be employed at small labors the products of which would be turned to their benefit, that instead of imposing a task on them, one would make them ask for it. The project remained a dead letter. She does not seem to have had a great determination to make it succeed: but another took it more to heart.

Thinking that among women, the little girls are not the only ones to be raised, she considered founding in Lyon a feminine society, a special Athenaeum for women. "All will not be called to be permanent members of this body, but all could attend the courses that will be held there. It will be a moral and intellectual forum open to all women." The ladies of the society would pay a subscription of 20 francs per year; several would be charged with the instruction. There would be courses in grammar, reading, and expression, then courses bearing on the study of social science, political economy, education, history, literature, and morals. An appeal will be made to all the devotions to establish a library and distribute books for free.

By dint of patience, Mme. Niboyet was able to start fulfilling her ideas. On March 8, 1834, her paper congratulated the city of Lyon on being the first to possess a women's Athenaeum. You can read at the head of the statutes of the new society "that in a century of progress women must labor in an active manner at the development of their moral and intellectual faculties,... that it is given to them to do things both good and useful to humanity." But the terrible days of April, which came so soon after, would abruptly the courses that had hardly commenced, and would cause, amidst so many ruins, the ruin of that fragile institution, the hope of the Lyonnais feminists.

Le Conseiller des Femmes however, survived them until the month of September, 1834. The editor had clearly taken the part of the vanquished. She wrote¹³ "that one could, by combining the use of capital, by utilizing all the branches of industry, organize immense workshop where all, as associates, would receive the price of their labor." The women who followed her closely or from afar, would not hide their devotion to the cause of the workers any more than she did. In a letter to a friend, Mme. Desbordes-Valmore called divine wrath down on "the cruel authors of the bloody week."¹⁴ But the feminist impulse was nonetheless broken. *Le Conseiller des Femmes* became entirely literary and insignificant, and little by little died away. Mme. Niboyet herself was not slow to leave Lyon. The feminists would cease to form a distinct group, but, though their number was doubtless very limited, their influence was not nothing, and they would contribute their part to the propaganda and to the success of Fourierism.

¹² *Conseiller des Femmes*, December 21, 1833.

¹³ *Conseiller des Femmes*, April 26, 1834.

¹⁴ Letter to M. Quinebaux, May 6, 1834, Lyon (Collection Herriot).

II. — The Passage of Flora Tristan at Lyon, in 1844.

Ten years after the attempt of Mme. Niboyet, a woman came to Lyon who worked as she had with zeal to spread the feminist ideal. Without doubt, the lectures given in that city by Flora Tristan, addressed to a working-class audience, were not of an exclusively feminist character: far from it, but feminism was at least mingled there. Also, her propaganda was sufficiently linked to the very name of Flora Tristan to justify the place that we grant it in this study.

Many apostles had already come to preach their gospel of social happiness before the Lyonnais when, after their example, in 1844, Flora Tristan arrived at Lyon. She had, the year before, developed in a small book a curious project of a "Workers Union," but she realized that the common people, to whom she addressed herself, didn't know it or could not read: her devotion to their cause gave her strength and faith; she would then teach them fraternity and union herself. "I have understood," she wrote, "that, my book published, I have another work to accomplish, that I must go myself, with my project in hand, from one end of France to the other, to speak to the workers."¹⁵

As an itinerary, she adopted that of the Companions of the Tour de France: she would walk in the footsteps of those she came to help. Leaving Paris in April 1844, after having stopped at Auxerre, Dijon, Châlons and Mâcon, she was in Lyon sometime in the month of May.¹⁶ The Fourierists from Paris with whom she was connected opened doors for her in this city where their system was widespread. Besides, it was not her first appearance there: Benoit reported her involvement with the Société Lyonnaise des Familles, dispersed in 1843: we must then admit that one of her voyages had been prior to that date.¹⁷ In 1844, Victor Considerant put her in contact with the weaver, Joseph Reynier who, in his *Mémoires*, not without some pride, relates her visit. "I aided her with all my power," he said, "and with a great devotion: and I regarded her very highly."¹⁸ Indeed, he introduced her to the Lyonnais Societies of *compagnonnage*, introduced her to the mayor of each *arrondissement*, and organized with her some meetings where she explained her ideas.

Flora Tristan came to spread a doctrine and found an association. A restless and unhappy life, a voyage to London, in the course of which she had been able to observe in its horror the poverty of the worker, had predisposed her, the grand-daughter of a viceroy of Peru, to take up the defense of two great causes, that of women, who already claimed some rights, and that of the

¹⁵ Preface of the second edition of *l'Union ouvrière*, Paris, 1844.

¹⁶ Eléonore Blanc, *Flora Tristan*, Lyon, 1840, p. 5.

¹⁷ If, however, we refer to Benoit (*Souvenirs d'un Proletaire*) the end of the Société des Familles was on that date in 1843.

¹⁸ *Mémoires de J. Reynier*.

workers, who demanded an improvement of their condition. With the very clear sense of the antagonism of the classes, inherited from the Saint-Simonians or brought back from London, she dreamed of organizing the workers. Let them elect some representatives, let them form a solid union across the borders,¹⁹ let them have in each capital of Europe some committees of correspondence where they will register: these are the words of advice, mixed with strange fantasies, that she did not stop lavishing on them in every town where she passed, and especially in Lyon.

Everywhere she sought members for the great association which, in her thought, must first cover France, and then Europe, and which we can consider as the true draft of the International Association. To make her ideas accessible, she presented them in palpable form; she gave the workers a glimpse of palaces being raised in the administrative center of every department, then in each arrondissement, then in each commune, where the incapacitated workers would be housed and fed, palaces constructed in no time, thanks to an annual assessment of a few francs, contributed by each worker.²⁰ Doubtless she also made an appeal to the women, whom she regarded as the indispensable auxiliaries of every social renovation, and she proclaimed their unrecognized rights. How seductively she propagated her ideas, we know by the testimony of Sébastien Commissaire. He portrays her as he saw her in the course of a meeting of workers in Lyon, a woman of medium height, still young, — she was then thirty-eight years old, — the sympathetic expression on her face framed by black hair, and still possessing the remains of a beauty that her contemporaries all recognized. “She spoke with a great ease,” he said. “Her vibrant, harmonious voice impressed me: I was under the charm.”²¹

Could Flora Tristan freely continue the course of her Conferences? The *Echo de la Fabrique* for May 15 spoke of judiciary proceedings; on the contrary, it emerges from the *Censeur* of July 11 that it was not worried. Perhaps it must be admitted that the prosecutions did not succeed, and that the authorities, once moved, remained quiescent. We know, moreover, that the meetings were secret, that only reliable persons were invited.

But what it is especially important to know is the opinion that the Lyonnais formed of the doctrine. The bourgeois republican party could only be hostile. To the tolerance of the public powers, whether right or wrong, the journalists of the *Censeur*²² opposed severe measures to be taken against the workers, as soon as they attempt to unite. Flora Tristan prompted some gatherings with the very complicated aim of regenerating Society: wouldn't it be better to content oneself with demanding some increase of wages for the workers? Isn't it by an insidious calculation that authority suppresses the workers as soon as they pursue a

¹⁹ See *Union ouvrière*, 1843, p. 74. See also, on the ideas of Flora Tristan, the interesting work of L. Puech, *le Proudhonisme dans l'Internationale*.

²⁰ Commissaire, *Souvenirs*, p. 108, tome I.

²¹ Commissaire, *Souvenirs*, tome I.

²² *Censeur*, July 22 and August 1, 1844.

precise and immediate interest, while it delivered them to all the chimeras, while it left all the makers of systems free to lull them? Mistress of illusion, this is how Flora Tristan appeared to the Republican formalists of the *Censeur*. Perhaps they also, but without admitting it, feared on behalf of the bourgeoisie, whose interpreters they were, the threat of a general association of workers. Always they went as far as demanding the strict application of the laws of September, that they blamed the judiciary power for allowing to lie dormant with regard to the socialist dreamers of both sexes.

The attack was so violent, that Cabet, then present in Lyon, addressed to the *Censeur*, on August 3, 1844, a letter in which he took up the defense of Flora Tristan, although he did not share her ideas.²³ He had read with "a sad astonishment" the articles directed against her. It was important to him that the legality of the meetings she had held was recognized.

A paper ordinarily rather indifferent to social ideas, the *Kaléidoscope*, gave the opinion of the merchants and industrialists. Antony Luyard, whose name appeared at the bottom of the article,²⁴ was more moderate than the journalist from the *Censeur*. He recognized the necessity of an organization of labor, but the thoughts of Flora Tristan frightened him. He did not want to admit that the working class needed a legal representation; but above all he could not stand the idea of a compact and solid union of the workers. Let them content themselves "with an association of efforts," he said in vague terms, "though it only be temporary."

The Republicans of the *Censeur*, and the industrialists of the *Kaléidoscope* agreed then to reject the project of the workers' union, and that agreement was not astonishing. Did Flora Tristan have, on the other hand, the approval of the working class, the only one which matters?

It would not seem so, to read the *Echo de la Fabrique*. Even before Flora Tristan was in Lyon, Marius Chastaing had critiqued her book,²⁵ and on several points, it must be said, the critique was penetrating. The projected association, supposing that the government allowed it to survive — which could not happen — would be a veritable state within the State; it would result in the division of France into two camps, and "as two armies facing one another will not be able to delay coming to blows," it would lead to an unholy war. Finally, a democrat such as Chastaing could not allow the principle of equality to be undermined, even if it profited the most numerous class. He did not applaud the idea of raising palaces, or of creating an education which would be the privilege of the workers. Let education be common to all, he demanded; let us take nothing to heart as much as inculcating in the children "the spirit of equality." Also, as soon as he learned of the arrival of Flora Tristan,²⁶ he strove to protect the workers

²³ *Censeur*, August 6, 1844.

²⁴ *Le Kaléidoscope du Commerce*, July 13, 1844: *de la Classe ouvrière*, by Antony Luyard.

²⁵ *Echo de la Fabrique*, February 15, 1844.

²⁶ *Echo de la Fabrique*, May 15, 1844.

against her doctrine: "let them not fool themselves, and let themselves be taken in, by listening to such reveries. By wishing to put it into practice, they compromise the future of the cause of progress, far from hastening its coming."

Did the Lyonnais workers listen to that advice, partake in this regard of the theories of the *Union*, and the disdain of the editor of the *Echo*? Chastaing himself declared that by taking sides against Flora Tristan, he separated himself from a great number of his friends.²⁷ Commissaire and Reynier attest to the success won among the workers by the ardent socialist. Many doubtless rallied to her plan, not because it fit their own ideas, but solely because it was an attempt to improve their condition, and, as Commissaire wrote, "to shake off the drowsiness of the masses."²⁸ Others had to accept it without reservation: it was for them, it seems, that there appeared in Lyon the third edition of *The Workers' Union*. When Flora Tristan left the city, she went with many subscriptions, and even more numerous sympathies. She was linked, during her short stay, with one woman, Eléonore Blanc, doubtless a Lyonnaise,²⁹ who had been converted to her ideas, and who has passed on to us the memory of a friendship that was very strong, but very short.

Some months after her departure from Lyon, on November 14, 1844, Flora Tristan died at Bordeaux, Flora Tristan, crushed by the severe task that she had been given, and with her disappeared that project of Universal Association, which later, taken up again by foreign hands, would succeed. Eléonore Blanc was able to carry to her the farewells of the Lyonnais workers. All lamented her early death. "I have always regretted it," wrote Reynier, and Commissaire acknowledged "that the workers have lost an ardent and devoted friend." When it was a question of raising a monument to Flora Tristan at Bordeaux, a folder from the Croix-Rousse, Lardet,³⁰ was charged with collecting subscriptions, along with the faithful Eléonore Blanc, who in 1845 published in Lyon a little book on his departed friend, exhorting the workers, in mystical terms, to accept the legacy of labor left to them, to be "the worthy brothers, the worthy sons" of she who, such a short time before, had charmed them with such lovely words of assurance.

Maximilien BUFFENOIR.

Revue d'histoire de Lyon, Volume 7 (1908), 348-358.

²⁷ *Echo de la Fabrique*, October 31, 1844.

²⁸ Commissaire, I.

²⁹ She lived in Lyon, on the Rue Luizerne, *Echo de la Fabrique*, December 15, 1844.

³⁰ *Echo de la Fabrique*, December 15, 1844.

PAULE MINK

Poor Old Man!

Panting, along the gray road, which lost itself in the distance in a damp autumn fog, an old man walked, doubled over.

Feet bare in worn-out shoes, trousers ragged and dirty, dressed in a thin shirt of blue cloth which covered him without protecting him from the bitter north wind that blew, a cheap cap pulled down over his eyes, an empty beggar's bag on his back, and in his hand a gnarled stick with which he supported his tottering only with great difficulty: his whole aspect inspired a distressing sadness.

He stopped sometimes, breathless, passed his hand over his damp and wrinkled forehead, sighed and set off again unsteadily.

Those who encountered him regarded him with compassion: "Poor old man!" they said, "To roam the roads at that age, to vagabond through the cold. If that is not a pity!"

Vagabond!... Yes, father Etienne was that, though not by choice, most certainly... He was not one of those who take to the roads for pleasure and who gain a strange and precarious support by tramping constantly, looking for handouts, preferring the bread of charity and their fierce independence to the bread of labor, rudely gained by slogging away and by alienating a bit of their liberty to preserve their human dignity.

No, the old vagabond was not one of those. All his life he had worked hard and resolutely, producing much and hardly earning enough to feed himself and his wife—to look after the machine, as he said—and to feed the little ones.

Active, sober, inured to pain, stubbornly resistant to fatigue, Etienne had always fought against poverty, always wary lest hunger enter his household. But if the young ones had become big and healthy, sustained by the paternal love which neglected nothing in order to make them strong for the struggle for life—so hard and cruel to those who possess nothing!—the father had worn himself down for his children. He had given them his all—his present and his future—and choosing not to think of his own old age, had never been able to put aside the least bit of savings. To raise five children, to make adults of them is a severe task. The vital forces of the father were exhausted in accomplishing it. With old age, they had disappeared completely.

— In God's name! thought Etienne, the blow of the hammer was no longer what it once was, and the work of fitting ached now!

In the workshop, some murmured about him: — It was, however, true that he no longer worked as he once had! He was well aware of that.

The bosses—wealthy industrialists—were solemn; the foremen, newcomers and young for the most part, bullied him, not understanding why this old man, who was no longer good for anything, was still kept at his workbench.

The masters, however, retained a shred of decency. Etienne had worked for them so long. They had seen him so often before the forge, his honest face set ablaze by the incandescent glow of the fire, or hardy, active, dauntless, multiplying himself, moving in every direction at once, bravely adjusting a machine with all the ardor of a lover; then making it work, monitoring it, proudly contemplating his work, like a father with his child. Ah! The hammer blows rang out briskly and merrily then!...

He was fifty-six years old—old already for a worker—when someone made bitter reproaches to him on the subject of a badly tightened nut, and he was permanently dismissed.

Etienne did not complain:—His bosses owed him nothing, after all, he thought sadly. They had always paid him his wages promptly; it was not their fault is he was a worker and not a boss, is, during forty years of ceaseless labor, he had only been able to earn enough to let his family live poorly, while those they had enriched, had, from the profits of their industry, increased their wealth and today possessed factories, lands and manors. No, it was not the fault of the masters, he thought, if he had been born poor and must always remain so. Money goes to money, like water in a river; capital generates income. Too bad for the unfortunate who has nothing! But such is society.

And he, honest worker, after having labored his whole life, increased the fortune of his bosses and his country, aided in the development of the nation's wealth and the well-being, he, poor wretch, had no right to anything at the end of his days. His masters and society did not concern themselves with him, had nothing to do for him, and owed him nothing, nothing!... That did not concern them. And like the rind of a lemon from which all the juice has been pressed, old father Etienne was cast into the street without anyone worrying about what would become of him!...

For some months more he stayed in the region where he had lived, loved and worked. As long as he had furniture to sell, old clothes to pawn, he did not leave the neighborhood of the factory, at the door of which he came to lurk, envying the younger comrades who could still labor.

And each day he became paler, sadder, and more tremulous.

And seeing this wizened old man who regarded them with an envious eye, the new workers, the young, who did not know him, thought he was a beggar and offered him some pennies.

Old Etienne set them right:

— Me, he said, shaking, Me, beg! Never!

And he appeared no more at the door of the workshops, where he was still greeted by the elders with a friendly air:

— Bonjour, Etienne, how are you?

He decided to leave that country. His wife had been dead for some years; the married children had enough to feed their little ones, without taking care of the father, who, moreover, did not want to ask them for anything. "The old should not eat the portion of the young," he said.

He left, then, at random. It mattered little where he went now!

And he roamed the roads like that for four or five years, having neither shelter for his age, nor fire to warm his thin and trembling hands, once so sturdy, which had accounted for so much labor!

He knew the pains, the disgraces, and the humiliating hardships of vagabondage; going hither and yon, aimless, without fixed course, seeking his subsistence like the birds seek grain. Cast off, often rejected, inspiring mistrust with his shabby clothes, his shuffling step, his haggard eyes and his shaggy beard; sleeping in barns, in the grass, anywhere. Sometimes he received some humanity in the municipalities, in the villages where he passed—a little bread and some straw to sleep on, in a shed open to all the winds—and he has lucky to find even that much relief. Other times, he passed the night in the open air, stretching himself on the bare earth at the edge of the ditches, having only water to comfort him and roots for his food. Oh! What a sad and abominable life that was!...

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No one knew what had become of the poor man, he had never given news to anyone, his children least of all, so they would not be tormented.

To beg!... He must do it now, to eat, to tender to the fortunate the rude and calloused hand of a proletarian, accustomed to handling tools and not to being held out, soft and weak, to beg for charity! Ah! How many times, the color rising in his face, had he suddenly pulled back his timid hand, preferring to go without bread than to demand it.

Five years of that dreadful life had murdered in old Etienne all that remained to him of resilience and vitality.

And now, faltering, blanched, all bent over with fatigue, harassed and weary, exhausted by the struggle, he went jolting along, head bowed, without knowing where.

For four days he had not eaten, and was slowly dying, but his despondency was so great that he was not even hungry. His cheekbones protruding, his eyes bright and hollow, his skin wet with the sticky sweat with which long privations cover the bodies of paupers: his was indeed the look of those unfortunates who die of poverty and slow starvation.

He walked like one in a dream, hardly able to advance. He found himself unexpectedly before the doors of a great factory, a workers' hive, where the sounds of work and life rang out everywhere. The workers left hurriedly, their work-day ended.

Old Etienne looked on curiously. Then, suddenly, he started. He recognized several comrades, some old friends... But none of them recognized him. He had changed so much!...

Habit, instinct, and love of country had led the steps of the poor old man back to the workshop where he had worked for forty years of his life, and from which he had been chased, because he was too old to produce!...

He hid himself in a corner so as to not be seen by his friends.

After the workers, a carriage left the factory at a gallop, pulled by two superb horses.

— Someone should clear the streets of these beggars, said a gentleman who rode in the elegant coupé, angrily. It is insufferable to constantly meet them on the road!

The carriage passed rapidly and the old man sank, exhausted, on a stone by the door.

— The boss, he murmured, is always rich and happy, and me, I beg and I die of hunger!...

He bent his head sadly, teeth chattering, while chills shook his whole frame...

Little by little, he collapsed completely... From his tightened throat issued only rattles of pain and croaks of agony...

The following day, when the factory opened, he was found dead, rigid and frozen at the door of the workshop where his life had passed.

Some comrades recognized him:

— But! It is old Etienne, they said, full of pity. Poor old man! To have worked so much, toiled so hard, and to die of hunger and cold like this! Good lord! If that does not break your heart!...

— It is too much, all the same, exclaimed other friends, that there is not a corner somewhere where the old workers can die in peace after slaving away all their dog's life! Damn it! Damn!...

And the comrades entered the workshop sadly, strongly impressed by the tragic fate of old Etienne,—which could also be their fate one day.

PAULE MINK.

“Pauvre Vieux.” *La Revue Socialiste*. 8, no. 119 (November, 1894) 562-566.

BROKEN ARM: A TRUE STORY

Fruit of the sewer or flower of love, stream-scum or hedge-bud, result of a brutal crossroads passion or of naive tenderness: what was his origin? He did not know...

Picked up in the street, one morning, between a pile of rubbish and some rubble from a demolition, abandoned like a small cat someone wants to be rid of, he was carried to the alms-house, and then placed among some farmers who raised him, giving him bread, when he got to be a little bigger, in exchange for labor that was very hard for a child. But they never had for him either affection or caresses.

He had a roof, under which he could lie down, and a share of the soup, but not of the familial affection. Mama!... That word, tender and sweet, the first stammering of every little one, he had never murmured except in the fever dreams of his abandoned childhood...

He had never known the soft maternal embrace, nor the supreme happiness of tears shed and quickly dried by the kisses of the one who makes a soul bloom by giving all the love in her heart.

Alone, he had always been alone.

Yet he wanted so much to love! He felt a great void within him, a vague melancholy that nothing could console.

When he was bigger and took a state job, the gloom of his isolation increased still more. Adolescence raised feelings in him which gripped his heart and threatened to smother it. His comrades in the workshop all had brothers, sisters, a mother — a mother! — and he was alone in the midst of all these loves.

Often on returning to his small room, cold and naked, he would throw himself on his bed, sobbing sorrowfully, biting his pillow in despair when he heard to children of the house laugh and embrace.

How often tears mounted to his eyes on seeing a mother on the arm of her son, a little sister on her big brother's knee! And he always went alone through life, without his heart being able to expand with tenderness.

When he was twenty years old, his horizon brightened: love shone down on him its prism of happiness, his life was transfigured.

A little working-woman, fresh, pure and beautiful, loved the orphan and gave him all her heart.

To love, and to be loved! Him, the found child, the abandoned!... To have someone of his own, whose whole life was his, who had smiles and kisses for him, when thus far all these joys had been unknown to him!...

That was for him an infinite euphoria, a superhuman happiness!

The young man attached himself with an intense tenderness to this woman, whom he made his fiancée, giving her his whole soul, devoting to her his entire existence.

And what superb plans they made!... Yes, she would be his wife, the dear girl whom he loved, the companion of his life, the other half of himself! He

delivered up all his heart to her and consecrated to her his whole existence. He, the result of a failure of love, did not want to fail the one who relied on him. He would marry her, and right away. Their little household would be poor, but oh so happy! With courage and strong arms one needn't fear poverty. Wasn't that right? Talented locksmith that he was, he could earn well for his wife and children. His children! These words made a tear tremble in his eye, which shone then with happiness: his children!... Oh! How he would love them, his dear little alls! He who had not been loved and who had suffered so much from it! What a sweet, happy life he would make for them and their mother!...

These thoughts spun him round, but with joy and endless laughter.

His heart filled with happiness, he fervently redoubled his work, to earn the means to set up his household; and the future appeared to him happy and clear, all lit by the sun.

One obstacle arose that stood between him and this fine plans: he could not be married until he had performed his military service. He had no mother, but he still had a motherland.

He despaired. To go, to leave his beloved, for two or three long years, to live again amidst often hostile strangers, without affection, without tenderness!... He joined his regiment filled with sadness, and dark forebodings: his Marie, would he ever see her again? What kisses, what tears, what oaths were exchanged! She promised to wait for him, to keep him in her heart, to write him often, but two years of separation is so long for those who love!...

He was big, and robust. They put him in the cavalry, he who did not like horses, who even had an instinctive fear of them! So much the worse; he had to perform his service regardless; "What a fine thing the army would be, if we concerned ourselves with the tastes and the caprices of the soldiers," said the captains.

To mount a horse! A painful and difficult exercise, especially for he who had never engaged in it!... Awkward, mixed-up, he did not know how to mount or how to dismount, or how to keep himself on this enormous beast who reared and frightened him at time.

One day an arrogant and brutal noncommissioned officer assisted in the equitation exercises that filled the young man with so much fear.

— Ah! you're afraid of the beast, you blasted idiot, said the officer, you will see.

He came close to the young cavalier, and commanded that someone tie his hands behind his back and make him mount a horse without saddle or cover: To harden him, he said, laughing.

Despite his supplications, his fright, the unfortunate was obliged to jump a large ditch, more than a meter wide.

— I beg of you, my lieutenant, implored the frozen soldier.

— Do it, you blasted animal!

The poor man resisted, begged.

— But I'll be hurt! I'll crack my head! He cried, his face drawn and pale.

— You will jump, I tell you, even if you jump clean out of your skin!

And giving a blow from the whip to the flank of the horse, which took of at a gallop, the non-com uttered a well-chosen oath.

The obstacle was cleared once, then twice; at the third attempt a terrible crack, followed by a frightful cry was heard: the unfortunate horseman had fallen from the horse and his right arm was snapped clean above the elbow...

They carried the young soldier to the infirmary. His broken arm hung piteously.

Amputation was considered necessary, and the entire arm was cut off.

The patient courageously endured the operation, but after it he had an intense fever and was soon delirious. Always, he called for his fiancée, his Marie, with painful sobs.

For long days, his life was in danger. He recovered, but he was one-armed, crippled for ever...

In the dreary hospital room he paced sadly, thinking of his beloved; since he was in convalescence, this was his only thought. Thus maimed, he could no longer work!... his life was now finished; for him there was no more future, no more love, no more marriage, no more children, never, never!... All his dreams of happiness, so sweetly entertained, were destroyed!...

A shiver shook him... To live now, he must beg... To beg!... to live by holding out his hand! He whose sturdy arms and courage to work would have guaranteed a life and dignity for himself and his family, who had never lowered himself before anyone!... No, no, such a life could not be endured... He must then end it, and as quickly as possible.

Oh! The dreams of yesteryear! Their pretty nest, the cradles! All that was gone, was broken, destroyed by the violence and brutality of a minor officer!

His heart gripped by pain, he sent a letter to his fiancée by a comrade, to recount his accident, tell her that he could no longer marry her and address to her a tender and final adieu...

A terribly fracturing ran then all through his being; he, the pariah, the orphan who had never been loved, he would have to renounce that love which was his life! Alone, he would always be alone!... Never again would there be smiles for him, never tenderness, never joy... The gloom of his sad youth enveloped him anew... It was too much!

His head on fire, with faltering steps he wandered the barracks, seeking a rifle. He found one, belonging to a sentinel, leaning against a wall, close to the door. He took it quickly, and sat down on a stone, securing it between his trembling legs; with his good hand he lowered the hammer and took the shot. A detonation rang out... He fell, his head shattered...

The brutal officer, whose hardness of heart had caused the death of the unfortunate one, was simply placed under arrest for one month.

Was that enough to pay for the death of a man?

Soon afterwards he was promoted: it is necessary to teach the soldiers to respect commands.

WORKER MORTALITY

While so much noise is made about the anarchist attacks (*attentats*) and the victims they have produced, it is not without interest to consider briefly the conditions of the worker's labor and to see how many victims have been made by the capitalist, that devourer of strengths and of workers' lives.

We do not want, at present, to enumerate the victims of the frequent accidents in the mines, the railroads, and construction sites, which can add up to millions and millions each year; we will concern ourselves, for the moment, only with those unfortunates who die slowly as a consequence their labor and the atrocious conditions under which they engage in it.

There is a lot of talk about pension funds for the old workers, of 60 years of age or more; the exploiters, and the government itself, are hesitant to make such a feeble reform, and yet these workers' pensions will bankrupt no one, for there are not many of the poor old workers who reach that almost fateful age of 60 years; the majority do not even live to be 50. The official statistics affirm that the mean is 32 years for day-laborers; 41 years for the hewers of stone, lithographers and compositors-typographers; 44 years for the boot-makers, tailors and bakers; 47 years for the locksmiths and blacksmiths; 49 years for the carpenters, masons and house-painters; as for the miners, no one has dared to prepare the statistics.

Thus, according to the official data itself, not a worker lives to be 50 years of age. Ah! The fields of labor are largely covered with the corpses of the producers of the public fortune, dead from the trouble of enriching and fattening the exploiters! And we balk at giving a meager pension to those—who are indeed very few—who have reached that phenomenal age of 60 years!...

The statistics aren't given for workers employed in absolutely murderous labors. Those figures would be horrible.

In the congress on hygiene held recently, some men of science have established in a brutal manner the degree of noxiousness in certain industries in which the gas and dust that the workers breathe are rapidly fatal to them.

We know the horrible ravages worked on the human body by phosphorous, which rots the bones and destroys the teeth; by carbon disulphide, which produces madness; by the fabrication of verdigris, made by women who cannot withstand more than three years of this murderous labor; by the production of lead and white lead, which produces horrible colics, and little by little destroys the organism of those who handle it. And the salts and derivatives of lead are employed in more than fifty different occupations.

Dr. Hirt claims that on will find 21 consumptives in every 100 laborers working with lead: a fifth! For those employed in the extraction of the mineral, it is worse still, and the same doctor, as well as Dr. Proust, affirms that, for every 1,000 workers, 870 are ill. In certain factories where the lead is handled—at Lille, among other places—the number of the sick is from 42 to 56 per 100 annually.

As for poisoning by white lead, it is dreadful. Dr. Meurein, H. Desplats, and Arnould Proust, show that the fabrication of lead leaves 50 to 60 of each one hundred workers ill annually. And what awful maladies! The workers rarely recover from them. With regard to reproduction, the effects of lead poisoning [*intoxication saturnine*] are still more disastrous. Among the saturnine mothers—for women also work with lead—of 27 pregnancies, there are 22 miscarriages, 4 still-births, and 1 child alone survives. When only the fathers are afflicted with saturnism, of 120 pregnancies, there are 82 miscarriages, 9 still-born, 25 children dead before the age of 7, 4 alone survive, but how puny and sickly they are!

And these cruel slaughters of workers have not only taken place among the unfortunate workers in lead and white lead; we know how great the mortality is among the women and girls employed in the textile mills and at the looms, the majority of whom become consumptive due to the continual respiration of unhealthy dust from wool and cotton. It is the same for all those who work with stone or flint.

According to Dr. Napias, of 100 stonemasons, 80 die consumptive; 70 percent of sharpeners and file-makers are affected by the disease; 45 percent of the lithographers are also sick with tuberculosis.

There then is the cruel murderer, the great devourer of human life: it is industry; it is exploitation, which, by obliging men to labor long hours in atrocious conditions, assassinates them bit by bit, takes their lives in exchange for a bit of bread.

These are the real social crimes: the anarchist *attentats* are far from their equal.

Paule Mink

EUGÉNIE NIBOYET

LA GUERRE

« De ces monts escarpés nous
gravirons les cimes
Pour compter les héros et non pas les
victimes.
Soldats, serrons nos rangs, il faut
vaincre ou mourir
Sans crainte des dangers qui restent à
courir.
Les Balkans ont tremblé jusque dans
leurs entrailles :
Russes! des Musulmans ce sont les
funérailles...
Los popes nous l'ont dit : nous serons
triomphants.
Exterminons des Turcs les femmes, les
enfants.
Ces fils de Mahomet, si fiers de leur
Prophète,
S'ils furent grand un jour marchent à
leur défaite.
Dieu le veut! Dieu le veut ! il guidera
nos coups :
Nous vaincrons ! l'univers de nous sera
jaloux!... »

Ils ont dit, et soudain, pris d'une fièvre
ardente,
Les Russes ont partout répandu
l'épouvante;
Les deux camps sont couverts de morts
et de blessés,
Tous ont été vaillants, tous se sont
surpassés !...

.....
Pleurez mères, pleurez : chaque soldat
qui tombe,
C'est un de vos enfants qui descend
dans la tombe !
Aucuns n'avaient de haine, on leur en
inspira..
Deux chefs s'étaient maudits, un grand
peuple expira!

THE WAR

"The peaks of these steep mountains
we will climb
To count the heroes and not the
victims.
Soldiers, let us close our ranks, we
must conquer or die
Without fear of the dangers still to run.
The Balkans have trembled down to
their bowels:
Russians! These are some Muslim
funerals...
The popes have told us: we will be
triumphant.
Let us exterminate the women of the
Turks, their children.
These children of Mahomet, so proud of
their Prophet,
However great, they march one day to
their defeat.
God wills it! God wills it! He will guide
our blows:
We shall overcome! the universe will
envy us!..."

They have said, and suddenly, seized
with a burning fever,
The Russians have spread terror
everywhere;
The two camps were blanketed with
dead and wounded,
All have been valiant, all have outdone
themselves!...

.....
Weep, mothers, weep: each soldier who
falls,
Is one of your children who descends
into the grave!
None of them were filled with hate,
[until] it was inspired.
Two leaders cursed, a great people
expired!

O Guerre ! tes hauts faits dont
s'enrichit l'histoire
Des souverains passés flétrissent la
mémoire.
Tu no fus que Terreur, tes beaux jours
sont finis :
Les peuples, désormais, par la paix
sont unis.
Il leur importe peu d'un nom
héréditaire,
Pour la fraternité Dieu les mit sur la
terre...
Justice et liberté, ce sont là leur vrai
bien,
Les posséder est tout. Le reste n'est
plus rien.

.....
Maître de l'Infini, toi qui régis les
mondes,
Qui règles les soleils et limites les
ondes,
Inspire à l'univers ton principe
d'amour :
Qu'il soit à tous les yeux plus brillant
que le jour.
La Paix et l'Union, filles de l'Harmonie,
Dans un commun accord enfantent le
Génie !
Assez de sang versé ! — Aujourd'hui
c'est la Loi
Qui prescrit la Justice et fait le Peuple
roi :
La Paix ! vivo la Paix aux quatre coins
du monde!
La Guerre, c'est le deuil; la Paix, l'eau
qui féconde;
La Guerre est l'ouragan nous voilant le
soleil ;
La Paix, c'est l'horizon d'un jour pur et
vermeil !
Oh ! quo vienne la Paix ! les Arts et la
Science
Par elle de leurs droits auront la
conscience.
Sachons honorer mieux le Père des
humains ;
La Paix qui vient de nous est l'œuvre
de ses mains!

O War! Your deeds, with which history
is enriched
Blacken the memory of past
sovereigns.
You are only Terror, your best days are
over:
The peoples, from now on, are united
by peace.
A hereditary name matters little to
them,
For fraternity God has put them on the
Earth...
Justice et liberty, these are their true
goods,
To possess them is everything. The
rest is nothing.

.....
Master of the Infinite, you who governs
worlds,
Who rules the suns and restrains the
waves,
Breathe into the universe your
principle of love:
Let it be to all eyes more bright than
day.
Peace and Union, daughters of
Harmony,
In a mutual accord bring forth Genius!
Enough bloodshed! — Today it is the
law
Which dictates Justice and makes the
People king:
Peace! Long live peace in the four
corners of the Earth!
War is loss and mourning; Peace, the
water that gives life;
War is the hurricane, concealing from
us the sun ;
Peace is the horizon of a pure and
ruddy dawn!
Oh! Let Peace come! the Arts and
Sciences
Become conscious of their rights by it.
Let us learn to better honor the Father
of humans;
The Peace which comes to us is the
work of his hands!

Nous sommes ses enfants, créés à son
 imago,
Et le Progrès par nous doit grandir
 d'âge on âge,
Point de division : nos droits d'égalité,
Il faut les conquérir par la Fraternité!

EUGÉNIE NIBOYET,

Fondatrice de la Voix des Femmes.

26 janvier 1878.

We are his children, created in his
 image,
And Progress we must increase from
 age to age,
No division: our rights of equality,
Must by won by us through Fraternity!

EUGÉNIE NIBOYET,

Founding editor of the Voix des
 Femmes.

January 26, 1878.

La Muse Républicaine (1878) 119-120.

FROM LES OPINIONS DES FEMMES

Socialism

It is the modern Proteus.—It is the hydra with innumerable heads.—You fall upon the communists!—Socialism rises up behind you in another form.—Socialism is the crucible into which all those touched by misery inevitably fall, one by one.—Socialism, which a few years ago was the meeting of several systems, is today a militant army, peaceful in its spirit, but marching with the blind force of the providential legions, which have at all times led the people towards their new destinies! — Désirée Gay

L'opinion des Femmes, No. 1, August 21 1849. p. 1

The Malthusians.

As women and as Christians, we embrace with all our hearts the opinions expressed by M. Proudhon, against the system of Malthus; we have seen, not without pain, over the last few years, Miss Martineau and several intelligent women of England, declare themselves partisans of a doctrine that simple and honest spirits reject as immoral and anti-religious. — Désirée Gay

L'opinion des Femmes, No. 1, August 21 1849. p. 1

God, Women, and Proudhon.

The enemies of socialism are tireless in their slanders. They exhaust against the new truth by which they sense that the world will be invaded all sorts of malicious ruses, but also all the contradictions of a mind at bay. It is thus, for example, that, after having presented socialism as the most infernal inspiration that has taken possession of the human brain, it is not rare to see the same adversary opposing to it as a flat refusal the impossibility of finding people pure enough, or perfect enough to be worthy and capable of realizing it. Each of the points of which socialism rests is the source of an accusation aiming to alienate the noblest souls and most generous hearts. It invites all the children of God, without exclusion, to the banquet of life, and those who want to sit down alone at that banquet, who push their unfortunate fellows from it, claim that the

socialists are materialists, sensualists exclusively concerned with the needs of the body.

There is for socialism, in this situation that we have made of it, an absolute need to make the world understand that all these insinuations are the sophisms of selfishness, attacked in its essence and principle, et, and for this is it first necessary that socialism demonstrate clearly to all sincere minds that it deserves none of the reproaches addressed to it.

But, in order to achieve that socialism must establish, so to speak, its moral independence by not indenturing itself to any of its particular expressions, or to any of the men whom one could consider as the leaders of the schools; it must not hesitate, each time that the occasion presents itself, to distance itself from the more or less eccentric assertions that some thinker or another has taken it upon themselves to risk in the absolute development of their eccentricities. This work of purification made in the name of the common sense of humanity implies no ingratitude with regard to the men of genius to which socialism owes its brightest illuminations. Recognition does not entail servility of thought. There is one that has more reason than any particular socialist, and that is socialism itself, in its greatest generality. We say that boldly, because we believe that attitude of the most advanced minds necessary to their own progress, and is at the same time indispensable to the progressive constitution of the true social science. De plus, it is incontestable that whatever reproaches we could legitimately address to an individual could not justly be applied to socialism as a whole. Thus it is good not to hesitate to establish that salutary distinction that the old world has so much interest in not admitting.

That said, we are comfortable speaking about one of the most curious and most powerful minds of our era, of a man who has had the formidable privilege of announcing the world some truths, by exerting over it a sort of moral terror that his frame of mind has perhaps made him spread involuntarily. Proudhon glimpses all the elements of which truth is composed, in the form of an incessant antagonism, thesis and antithesis, which should finally be reconciled in a higher term, the synthesis; but, it must be admitted that, by his moral temperament, Proudhon is not the man of that last term. Where his genius excels, is in making apparent that sort of duel between the two aspects of a single idea; it is to highlight what he calls the *antinomy* in all the possible objects of human knowledge. Thus he appears like the spirit of destruction simply because he has a genius for analysis. Those who are aware of this psychological phenomenon, which certainly has, like every other, its providential purpose, are not frightened at all, but the minds who stick to appearance recoil in dread, as before the most horrible monstrosity. Proudhon is always the most skillful anatomist of the social body; no one has dissected it with more boldness, to penetrate the most invisible structure; in the midst of that disintegration, and as he only considers the various parts that he has separated one by one, it happens that he casts a light at time more proper to lead astray than to lead well; but his paradoxes always overexcite the

intellectual faculties of those who attempt to rectify them. Proudhon is the thinker who thinks the most. When we are not in agreement with him on a point, we must, in order to respond to him seriously, take up anew his previous studies, and delve deeper into the principles that we believe we have must fully plumbed.

But that daring intelligence has, like every other, its domain which is proper to it and apart from which it not only no longer has ordinary superiority, but even the most common rectitude, the most vulgar good sense. Proudhon is very powerful in the exercise of pure reason, but there is more than just reason in us. There is not only one order of truths in our conception. There are truths of external and material observation which fall within the realm of the senses, logical and mathematical truths, conforming to the laws of our understanding, and, finally, there are truths of sentiment which have their source and certainty in the heart. Well, Proudhon understands neither the importance, nor the legitimacy of that last order of truths; he does not accept that the heart is the seat of its own lights, which complete the illumination of our life and self-consciousness. He relegates everything that comes from there to the sphere of illusion, and that philosophical exclusivism dramatically limits his competence on certain subjects, before which, however, he does not stop. Like at metaphysicians, at all times, he does not wish to be contained, and readily imagines that his speciality is universal being.

It is easy to see that universality does not depend on any individuality. God does not permit that absolute dictatorship to one of his children. There are always some gaps in his capacities which oblige other minds not to completely abdicate in his favor; when he tackles subjects which are not, so to speak, of his intellectual vocation, he falls beneath himself, and, at times, even below the average minds. That is, in our opinion, what has happened to Proudhon every time he has wanted to tackled questions that reason by itself does not suffice to treat well. We have two example to cite: the woman question, and the question of God. both can only be explored effectively when the insights of the heart are combined with the lights of reason. Reason is crushed by these complex problems; to account for the nature and destiny of woman, requires the most extreme sensitivity of heart. God appeared only to hearts ablaze with his love! When reason judges women, it is empiricism which notes what has been in this regard, without being able to discover what should be. Reason determining God, is reason idealizing itself in the notion of the absolute. It is really an idolatry of the intelligence; it is not God.

We do not have the time to justify the propositions that we have expressed here. We have only wanted to faire entendre that socialism, in its essential spirit, cannot, at least without putting itself in contradiction with itself, accept the ideas of Proudhon on women and God. To aspire to the unlimited, successive improvement of human sociability, and preserve the traditions, the prejudices of the old world on half the human race, is to commit a logical error which profits those who want the social order to rest eternally on material force. To give to

his thought the least appearance of atheism or blasphemy against the highest good is to perpetuate the misunderstandings, to fortifier the calumnies of those who want to make believe that socialism is essentially irreligious, when it is, on the contrary, the only living religion of humanity in the present state of its development.

Socialism, based on the idea of right, cannot have the opinion about women of a society on le fait brutal ; socialism, which is like a sort of new flowering of the conscience and heart of humanity, cannot have the ideas about God of a selfish world. Women and God will be transfigured in the human mind.

Eugène Stourm.

L'opinion des Femmes, No. 4, May, 1849. p. 2

Moral Thermometer

We read in several newspapers that the growth of the names of women increases among the shareholders of the Bank of the People founded by Mr. Proudhon.

We indicate the fact with pleasure, for it is indispensable that the women mix more and more in the social life, and that they encourage with all their resources works which aim at the improvement of the condition of the people.

— H.

L'opinion des Femmes, No. 2, March 10, 1849. p. 5

[From the Masthead]

“We welcome the bills of the Bank of the People, and of the associations.”

JOSEPH DÉJACQUE

THE HUMAN BEING, MALE AND FEMALE³¹

In the depths of Louisiana, whither I have been driven by the vicissitudes of my exile, I have read in a United States paper, "La Revue de l'Ouest," a fragment of correspondence between you, P. J. Proudhon, and a Madam Hericourt.

Some words of Madam Hericourt, cited in that paper, cause me to fear the feminine antagonist may not have the strength—polemically speaking—to cope with her brutal masculine adversary.

I know nothing of Madam Hericourt nor of her writings, if she is a writer, nor of her position in the word, nor of her personality. But to argue well concerning women, or to argue well concerning men, earnestness is not all that is necessary. One must have seen much and studied much. One must, I believe, have experienced their personal passions in all stations of society, from the silver-tipped summits where vice is happiness to the depths where misery seeks solace in debauchery, Upon the human rock thus battered by the shocks of life, the logic, the stenciled truth, may be read.

I should like to see the question of the emancipation of woman treated by a woman who has loved much and has loved many, and who in her past life has associated with both the aristocratic and the lowly; for the woman of the garret. I can penetrate and understand the private or official views and the thoughts of the luxurious grand dame more easily than I the woman of the salon can comprehend the open or hidden privations of the daughter of poverty. However, in default of another Magdalen, bathing the feet of crucified humanity with her fecund tears and striving to lift it to a better world, for lack of this voice of civilized repentance, for lack of this woman who proudly and publicly abjuring all prejudices of sex and race, of laws and customs, will bring us back to the former world, I, a human being of the male sex, will endeavor to answer you, Aliboron-Proudhon. For the emancipation of woman is nothing else than the emancipation of humanity—both sexes.

Is it possible, great publicist, that under your lion's skin so much of the ass may be found? You who have in your veins such powerful revolutionary pulsations for all that pertains to labor with the arms or filling the stomach, your transports are no less fiery, but are stupid and reactionary, when you come to consider the emotions of the heart and of the sentiments. Your nervous

³¹ Letter written to P. J. Proudhon by Joseph Dejacque in 1857. Translated from *Les Temps Nouveaux* by Jonathan Mayo Crane.

and unending logic in questions of industrial production and consumption is without force when you consider questions of moral production and consumption. Your intelligence, virile for nil that concerns man, seems emasculated when it is it question concerning woman. With hermaphrodite brain your thoughts recoil upon themselves in powerless efforts to conceive and give birth to social truth.

A masculine Joan of Arc who, it is said, has kept him· self chaste for forty years, the maceration of love has ulcerated your heart, the rancor of jealousy has filled you with disgust and you cry "War against women!" as the maid of Orleans cried "War against the English!" The English burnt her alive. The women have made you a husband, oh, holy man, long time a virgin and always a martyr.

Father Proudhon, shall I say it? When you talk of women you appear like a college boy who talks very loudly and in a high key, at random and with impertinence, in order to appear learned, as you do to your callow hearers, and who like you knows not the first thing of the matter he is talking about.

After having profaned your flesh for forty years you now profane your intelligence, and passing from pollution to pollution you pour forth your impurities to besmirch women.

Is that what you call manly and honest civility, Narcissus-Proudhon? I quote your words:

"No, Madam, you know nothing about your sex; you know not the first thing about the questions you and your honorable associates agitate with so much noise and so little success. And if you do not understand this question, if in the eight pages of the response which you have made to my letter there are forty illogical conclusions, that shows the truth of what I have said of the infirmity of your sex. I mean by these words—the exactness of which may not be irreproachable—the quality of your understanding which will not permit you to seize the significance of thing; which we men have at our fingers' ends. In your skull, as in your abdomen, is a certain organ which is incapable of conquering its own inertia; which requires the male to make it perform its functions. And even then it is not always successful. Such madam, is my opinion, the result of my direct and positive observations. I leave it to your obstetrical sagacity to calculate from it for your thesis the incalculable consequences."

You wild boar—which is merely an undomesticated hog—if it is true, as you say, that woman can give birth to nothing from either the brain or the abdomen without man's assistance—and it is true—it is equally true the other way; it is reciprocal; neither can man produce from his flesh or his brain without woman's assistance. That is logic and good logic, Madelon-Proudhon, that an apprentice who has always been your obedient servant can snatch from your hands and throw in your face.

Emancipation or non-emancipation of woman, emancipation or non-emancipation of man—what does it mean? Is it that by nature one has rights and the other has no rights? Is it that humanity is singular and not plural, masculine and not feminine! Is it that the difference in the sexes is a difference

in the nature of humanity. Are the drops of rain which fall from the clouds not the same whether they are few or many, whether they are large or small?

Place the question of the emancipation of woman in line with the emancipation of the serf—woman as well as man; or to say the same thing differently, the human slave—whether in the seraglio or the workshop. This understood and it is revolutionary. But from the privileged man's point of view of social progress, it is senseless and reactionary. To avoid quibbling and equivocation we must demand the emancipation of the human being. In such terms the question is complete.

From day to day humanity gravitates from revolution to revolution towards its ideal of perfectibility—liberty. But the man and the woman will advance with the same step, the same heart fortified by love, toward their natural destiny, the community of anarchy. But man and woman enter thus arm in arm, the face of one shedding its radiance on the face of the other, until they reach the garden of Social Harmony. But the group of the Human Being, the dream of happiness realized, the animated picture of the future, the harmonic tones and the radiant glory of equality offend your ears and dazzle your eyes. Your understanding, distorted by petty vanity, makes you see in posterity a man-statue erected on a woman-pedestal, a man-patriarch and a woman-servant.

Flogger of woman and absolute serf of man, Proudhon Magnan, you use your words for a lash. Like a slave-driver you seem delighted to disrobe your beautiful victims (on paper) and flagellate them with invectives. Moderate anarchist, liberal, but not libertarian, you want free exchange of cotton and candles and you seek to protect man against woman in the exchange of affectional human passion. You cry against the great barons of capital, and you would rebuild a proud barony of man on vassal-woman. Logician with misfit eyeglasses, you are unable to read the lessons of the present or the past; you can discern nothing that is elevated or at a distance or in the perspective of the future.

You should know that woman is the mover of man, as man is the mover of woman. There is not an idea in your deformed brain, no, nor in the brain of any other man, that was not given life by woman; not one voluntary motion of your muscles or of your intelligence but what its object has been to attract the attention of woman and to please her, even including that which seems the most contradictory, your insults. Everything beautiful that man has made, everything grand that man has produced, all the masterpieces of art and of industry, all the discoveries of science, the titanic steps which man has taken into the fields of the unknown, all conquests and all aspirations of man are duo to woman who imposes the tasks upon him as a queen of a tournament assigns a task to a knight and rewards him with a smile when he has accomplished it. All man's heroism, all his physical and moral valor comes from love. Without woman he would still crawl on his belly or on all fours and browse on herbs and roots. He would equal the ox in intelligence. He is superior to the beast only because woman has said, "Be so." It is her will that has created him and made him man

instead of brute. It is to satisfy the supreme exigencies of the feminine soul that he had attempted sublime things.

See what woman has done for man, and then see what man has done for woman!

Alas! to please her lord and master it is not necessary for her to possess great intelligence and moral force. If she will only mimic the she monkey in antics and grimaces, hang a few bits of glassware to her neck and ears, dress herself in ridiculous finery, pad her hips until she resembles a Hottentot Venus with the aid of whalebone and crinoline, if she knows how to handle a fan like a skimmer, or can make porridge or strum on the piano, that is all her Sultan demands of her, all that is necessary to bring joy to the masculine soul—the alpha and omega of his desires and aspirations. If she can do these things she is rewarded with a lace handkerchief.

She who has regarded such a role as shameful and has shown her good sense by finding beauty in worthiness and by her self-reliant conduct testified to her sane intelligence has been set upon and pitilessly stoned by the multitude of Proudhons, past and present, called a blue stocking and persecuted with imbecile sarcasm and forced to stifle her individuality. For the crowd of heartless and brainless men she has sinned by having too much heart and too much intelligence. They have thrown stones at her and rarely has she the good fortune to meet a man who will take her by the hand and say: "Woman, rise; you are worthy of love; you are worthy of liberty."

No; what man wants—that is, what he who usurps the name of man wants—is not woman in all her physical and moral beauty, the woman of natural and artistic form, her face beaming with the aureole of grace, her heart sympathetic and tender, her thoughts enthusiastic, her soul enamored of poetic and humane ideals. No, that brainless booby, like a footman at a fair, wants a colored and beplumed wax figure. Like a glutton in an ecstasy before a butcher shop, he wants a quarter of veal garnished with lace.

Disgusted with the man she finds such an idiot, weary of him in whom she has sought in vain for sympathy of sentiment, history tells us—alas! I wish it were only a fable, a legend, a Bible story—the woman passes from the biped to the quadruped. Boast for beast. It is natural after all that she should permit herself to be seduced by a greater beast than herself. Then, at last, nature having endowed her with impulses and affections too robust to be extinguished by repression and abstinence, she turns disgusted from humanity and seeks in temples of superstition, in the devotees' aberrations of mind and impulse, the food for the passional hunger of her nature. Failing to find the man of her dreams, she lavishes her affection on an imaginary god, and the priest has replaced the beast of a husband.

Ah! if there are so many abject females and so few real women, what is the cause of it? What have you to complain of Dandin-Proudhon? You wish it to be so.

I admit that you personally have fought valiantly for the revolution; you have gashed the marrow and the trunk of property and have made the noise of tumult resound afar. You have stripped off its husk and left it exposed to the gaze of the populace; you have shaken down like dead branches and leaves your powerless authoritarian antagonists and have shown the emptiness of the revamped Greek theories of the state socialists, your own included. You have drawn with you through the sinuous avenues of reform all the pack of appetites physical and moral. You have traveled the road and took the others with you. You are tired. You would like to rest, but the voice of logic urges you to follow up your revolutionary deductions and march onward, always onward, lest you be overtaken by those whom you have deluded.

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 by 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.

Do I need, for example, one sun for myself, one river for myself, one forest for my own, or all the houses in all the streets for my own? Have I the right to become the proprietor of them to the exclusion of others, especially when I do not need them? If I have not that right, is it any more just for me to wish, as under the system of contracts, to measure to each one—according to his accidental ability to produce—just what proportion he should receive of all things; how much of the sun's rays he is entitled to, how many cubic feet of air and of water shall he allotted to him, or the extent of his promenades in the forests; what number or the parts of the houses he may occupy, what streets he may walk in and what streets he must keep out of?

With or without contract, will I consume more than is good for me? Will I take all of the sunlight, all of the air, all of the water? Will I monopolize all of the shade of the trees, all of the streets of the city, all of the houses or all of the rooms of the houses? And if I have a right to the productions of nature, such as the light and the air, have I not also a right to manufactured products, such as the street or the house? Of what use then is a contract that can add nothing to my liberty, but on the contrary most certainly will restrain it?

And as for production, will the activity of my nature be developed all the more by being restrained? It is absurd to assert such a thing. The so-called free workman even in the present state of society, produces more and does his work

better than the negro slave. How would it be if he were really and universally free? His productive power would increase one-hundred fold.

But the idlers? you say. Idlers are produced by the abnormal conditions of society. That is to say, when idleness is held in honor and labor in contempt it is not surprising that men are reluctant to engage in labor which repays them in bitter fruit. But in an anarchist community, with the arts and sciences developed as they will be developed in our days, nothing of the kind could be seen. Of course there would be, as there are today, some who would be greater producers than others, and there would be some who would be greater consumers than others, but those most active in producing would also be most active in consuming. The equation is natural. Do you demand proof? Take one hundred workmen at random and you will find the greatest producers are the greatest consumers.

The human organism is supplied with certain precious implements the use of which is genuine pleasure. There are the arms, the hands, the heart, the brain—all made for use—and can you imagine a man voluntarily will let such precious tools rust? In the free state of nature with its marvels of industry and science where all calls to activity and joyous life, in such a state do you imagine a human being would seek for happiness in imbecile idleness? Nonsense. It would be impossible.

On the soil of true anarchy, of absolute freedom, there would be such diversity among the people—diversity of age, of sex and of tastes—that none would be without congenial society. Equality is not uniformity. That diversity of people and of each succeeding moment of time is just what makes all governments, all constitutions and all contracts destructive of liberty. How can you bind yourself for a year, for a day, for an hour, when in an hour, a day or a year you may think entirely different from the way you thought at the time of making the contract?

Under the conditions of radical anarchy there will be some women, as there will be some men, of more relative worth than others. There will be children and there will be old folks, but all, without distinction, will be none the less human beings and they should be equally free to move in the circles of their mutual attractions, free to produce and consume as they see fit, without any parental, marital or governmental authority, without any legal regulations to restrain or to hinder them.

In a society thus constituted—and you ought to know it, you anarchist who pride yourself as a logician—what would you have to say of the sexual infirmity of either the female or male human being?

Listen, Master Proudhon! Before you talk of woman, study her; go to school. Stop calling yourself an anarchist, or be an anarchist clear through. Talk to us, if you wish to, of the unknown and the known, of God who is evil, of property which is robbery; but when you talk of man do not make him an autocratic divinity, for I will answer you that man is evil. Attribute not to him a stock of intelligence which belongs to him only by right of conquest, by the commerce of

love, by usury on the capital that comes entirely from woman and is the product of the soul within her. Dare not to attribute to him that which he has derived from another or I will answer you in your own words: "Property is robbery!"

Raise your voice, on the contrary, against the exploitation of woman by man. Proclaim to the world with that vigor of argument which has made him famous as an intellectual athlete, that man, without the aid of woman, is unable to drag the revolution out of the mire, to pluck it out of the filthy and bloodstained rut into which it has fallen; that alone he is powerless; that he must have the support of woman's heart and brain; that in the path of progress they should march forward together, side by side, hand in hand; that man can not attain his goal and endure the fatigue of the journey without the sustaining sympathy and the encouraging caresses of woman.

Say to the man and to the woman that their destinies are to draw nearer together and to understand each other better; that they have one and the same name as they are one and the same being—the human being; that they are, each in turn, the one right and the other the left hand and that in the human identity their hearts are as one heart and their thoughts are inseparable.

Say to them that in this condition only can they be able to sustain and support each other in the journey and the light of their love shall pierce the shadows that separate the present from the future, or civilized society from harmonized society. Tell them the human being, in its relative proportion and manifestations, is like the glow-worm, which shines only by love and for love.

Say that. Be stronger than your prejudices; more generous than spiteful. Proclaim Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, the indivisibility of the human being. Do it; it is for the salvation of the public. Declare humanity in danger; call on man and woman to cast prejudiced invaders out of the frontier of social progress; create a second and a third of September against that other masculine nobility, that aristocracy of sex which would rivet us to customs of the past. Do it; it is necessary. Proclaim it with passion, with genius, trumpet-tongued, make it thunder . . . and you will have well won the esteem of others and of yourself.

JOSEPH DEJACQUE

CHARLES KELLER

(“JACQUES TURBIN”)

LEURS PAUVRES RAISONS

A Madame André Léo.

Ce n'est pas sans bonnes raisons
Qu'ils trottinent tous vers l'église,
Chaque dimanche, comme oisons
Que le Bon Pasteur mobilise!

* * *

Leurs raisons? — Interrogez-les.
Ils n'en ont point, ou n'en ont guère :
— Leurs ancêtres y sont allés;
C'est la coutume séculaire.

— Il faut de la religion,
Disent les bonnes paysannes;
La messe et la communion
Ne sont pas faites pour les ânes.

— Et pourquoi, grondent les anciens,
Les gens qui travaillent la terre
Vivraient-ils comme des païens ?
Ils ont déjà tant de misère.

— L'impie appartient au démon,
Chuchotent les femmes entre elles.
Sans la messe et sans le sermon,
Nos hommes en feraient de belles!

— On y fait voir ses robes, donc !
Pensent les fillettes gentilles.
Quant aux garçons, ding-ding, din-don!
Ils y vont à cause des filles.

Les fortes têtes de l'endroit
Grognent : — Dame, cette bêtise!
Chacun nous montrerait au doigt,
Si nous n'allions pas à l'église.

THEIR POOR REASONS

To Madame André Léo.

It is not without good reasons
That they scurry towards the church,
Each Sunday, like goslings
That the Good Shepherd mobilizes!

* * *

Their reasons? — Question them.
They do not have reasons, or hardly
have them:
— Their ancestors went there;
It is the secular custom.

— There must be religion,
Say the good peasants;
The mass and communion
Were not made for asses.

— And why, growl the ancients,
Should the people who work the land
Live as pagans?
They already have so much misery.

— The ungodly belong to the devil,
The women whisper to one another.
Without the mass and without the
sermon,
Wouldn't our men be fine!

— We will show off our dresses, then!
Think the pretty girls.
As for the young men, ding-ding, din-
don!
They go there because of the girls.

The headstrong of the place
Growl: — *Parbleu*, this foolishness!
Each will point their finger at us,
If we don't go to church.

Et puis, la maison du bon Dieu,
De Jésus, de la bonne Vierge,
Il faut bien qu'on y prie un peu
Avant de trinquer à l'auberge.

* * *

Et ce sont ces pauvres raisons
Qui font, dans les âmes champêtres,
Durer de saisons en saisons
L'influence des *messieurs prêtres*.

And then, we must pray a bit
At the house of the good God,
Of Jesus, of the blessed Virgin,
Before we go drinking at the public
house.

* * *

And these are their poor reasons
Which make, in rural souls,
Endure for season after season
The influence of the priestly gentlemen.



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