



P. J. PROUDHON.

PROUDHON was born in 1809 of parents in humble circumstances, at Besançon, the birthplace, by the way of Fourier; and where Proudhon began life as a compositor in a printing office. This printing office he afterwards occupied on his own account; but some years since, he quitted Besançon for an engagement in a mercantile house at Lyons. In his youth he was much attached to metaphysical, philological, and theological studies; but he subsequently became familiar with questions of banking, inland navigation, and general traffic. In 1839 while still residing at Besançon, he produced his first work, an essay "On the Celebration of the Sabbath," the Academy of Besançon having offered a prize for the best memoir on that subject; but as Proudhon's memoir contained opinions on social points to which the Academy could not subscribe, it did not gain their approbation, and the author published it himself. For the same learned Society, he produced in the following year, a second essay, entitled "What is Property," in which the anti-social doctrines that had appeared in his first essay, were developed with such audacity, that when it was printed the Society publicly disclaimed all connection with it. The book however, became widely known; and, being read in some circles of Paris, it apprised people there of an eccentric paradoxical being living at Besançon; whilst the attention of the Minister of Justice had been called to it, the author narrowly escaped prosecution as an enemy of public order. The impression made by this treatise was renewed from time to time, by subsequent works from the same pen, including a "Second Memoir on Property;" a pamphlet entitled "A Warning to Proprietors;" a volume "On the creation of Order in Humanity," published in 1843, and a large work published in 1846, named "Economic Contradictions on the Philosophy of Misery;" besides tracts on "Credit and Currency," and on the "Competition between Canals and Railways." It was only a month or two before the Revolution of 1848 that Proudhon, then about 39 years of age, went to reside at Paris, presenting himself to persons who had already known him through his books, as a man of spare and somewhat peculiar figure, with severe hirsute visage, and wearing spectacles.

"To give an idea of Proudhon to those who have not seen any of his writings is impossible," says the writer of a very able paper in the *North British Review*, No. 20. "To say that he is a Socialist, or even that he is the

most daring and profound of Socialists, is to call up a notion very insufficient. Of an intellect that one would call enormous, plying a remorseless logic, bringing into literature a plainness of speech quite unusual, and paying deference to hardly any man or sect that he names, one regards him at first as a great scornful misanthropist dealing blows out of sheer hate. Even then, however, one admits his gifts as a writer—the terrible energy of his style, the almost blasting eloquence that bursts up amid his algebraic reasonings, the resistless force with which he makes the French language go down to depths that it rarely seems to reach. At length, through some characteristic passage one sees him better, and recognises in him a man whose mood is that of fierce and universal intolerance. Not as a smooth-tongued flatterer does he come before the people, with the French balderdash in his mouth of *glorie, honneur, &c.*, but as a task-master with a whip of scorpions. That crime is punishable and retribution just; that work is obligatory; that marriage is holy, and all unchastity an offence against nature; that a lie is the murder of the intelligence; that law is not the expression of will, either individual or general, but the *dictamen* of conscience applied by reason; that he who provokes to debauch by word or witness is infamous; and that he who denies God is frantic—such are the sayings that Proudhon seems to rest in and recur to, careless whether or not, to use one of his own expressions, his readers may find the medicine too harsh, the brewage too bitter. Though he marches, therefore, in the same general direction as the Socialists, it is in a character quite his own, and with a disposition ever and anon to knock one of them down. Causidiere, for example, loving him as he says extremely, yet cannot but lament very much that waywardness which leads him, in his fits of despondency, to 'turn round on his own supporters, and to treat men as if they were nine pins. On many points Proudhon is at one with the Economists.'"

THE CONFESSIONS OF A REVOLUTIONIST.

THIS remarkable and original production of the boldest writer of the French Socialist school, displays on its very title page a motto which is completely characteristic of the man; it is taken from the song of Moses, in Deuteronomy 32 and 40, "For I lift my hand to heaven and say; *I live for ever*," that is, in M. Proudhon's translation, *my idea is immortal*; a very modest reply to the question

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asked in his work on property, "who is he that says property is plunder?"

In the first chapter entitled CONFITEOR, I Confess, after declaring that the Democratic and Socialist party is everywhere crushed under the superior physical force of the pretended friends of order and family, and that Europe is now governed by a pretorian guard, he maintains that even now the fate of these charlatans is sealed and that the Republicans have the game in their own hands if they will only refrain from attempting revolutions; and, leaving their cause in the hands of Providence, with the confidence of certain victory, employ the present period of inactivity in educating and strengthening themselves in their faith. France has ever been the great exemplar of nations, whether in her shame or in her glory; if she rises, the nations arise, if she sinks, the nations succumb, therefore, it is important to all people to trace the causes that have led the French nation to taste only the bitterness of democracy, without experiencing its promised advantages. He proposes, by an examination of the various steps of the revolution and by a statement of his own proceedings, projects, and errors, to show who are the real anarchists, atheists, and plunderers. He will compare the faith of the Democratic Socialists with that of these men of God, who, the enemies of every society that will not reward their vices, of every religion which condemns their licentiousness, and, laden with the spoil of the fatherless and the widow, cry out with hypocritical indignation against us as robbers, and irreligious rebels. In exposing the motive of his own actions, and thus publicly confessing his faults, he expresses a hope that it may lead the Democrats to discover the secret of their miseries and to indulge the hope of a happier future.

In the 2nd Class, entitled "PROFESSION OF FAITH: NATURE AND DESTINATION OF PARTIES, M. Proudhon first declares his abhorrence of the priestly doctrine that the views of Providence are inscrutable to human wisdom, that fallen man has no more right to inquire of God what are the reasons of his dealings towards us than the vessel has to ask the potter why he has made it; and adds, that by the help of philosophy, he will endeavour to make the ways of Providence intelligible to all that although we must bow before the indisputable decrees of the Deity, we may and ought to investigate every thing to the bottom, and above all examine the causes of our differences; for had we always occupied ourselves in this way, man would long ago have been the master of the earth, and the Democratic Socialists would not from Feb. 24, 1848, to June 13th, 1849, have forsaken the substance for the shadow.

He then goes on to examine the causes of the differences of opinion amongst men on social and political subjects. Society, like time, consists of two dimensions Past and Future, the Present is the imaginary line which divides them. Past and Future are the two poles of humanity; the first the parent of the second—the latter the necessary and logical complement of the former; these two dimensions of history, viewed in their totality, form a complete social system, without interruption (*solution de continuité*, a medical term, signifying the separation of parts caused by a wound), identical with itself in all its parts, in which the anomalous and accidental circumstances serve to bring out more plainly the order that reigns through the whole course of history. Hence no one can possibly understand the social system in its integrality until it be completed at the end of time; the last man will alone be able to comprehend the truth, beauty, and uniformity of the whole social system; we can only approximate to it by crude conjectures and our business, therefore, is from a comprehensive knowledge of the past, to aid the development of the future. Our fathers handed down to us a certain form of society—we, in our turn, shall transmit another to our descendants.

Since humanity is progressive, acting upon the memory of the past or the foresight of the future, it is necessarily divided into two great classes; the one admiring the experience of former ages, hesitates to trust itself to the dangers of an untried path; the other, im-

patient of present evil is, eager for reform. It would be contrary to the imperfection of human reason to hold an even course of progress, by deciding impartially between the merits of tradition and theory, hence discord is the first condition of our education. Having thus discovered the cause of our disputes, we may reasonably hope to banish them from human society, without the aid of magic or mysticism.

To come to facts: the admirers of the past, according as we view them in a religious, political, or economical light, are comprised in the terms Catholicism, Legitimism, and Property; and the general term for these three is Absolutism.

Our present condition, powers, and wishes, are derived from the past, that is, from property, royalty, and Catholicism, either as flowing directly from them, or by opposition, of principles, and we are no longer to-day what we were yesterday, precisely because we were so then. The manner of this evolution is threefold. Catholicism by its very attempts to rationalise itself becomes corrupted, and, through various phases, arrives at the tolerance, or rather legal and constitutional indifference, of the 19th century.

So-royalty, which, mathematically speaking, may be termed the increment of paternal authority, by its very attempts at organisations the division of labour, applied to politics leads inevitably to democracy; for the various changes that have been introduced from the time of Louis XI. to the constitution of 1848 are but so many manifestations of the revolutionary principle. Lastly, property, by the various influences it has continually been submitted to, from the feudal times to the latest attempts to equalise taxation, is ever tending towards a radical change in its nature and form. Hence we see these three parallel movements are but the expressions of one and the same thing, namely, the gradual conversion of the absolutist into the democratic and social idea. Philosophically considered, royalty is but an emanation of Catholicism, by the separation of the spiritual and temporal power; property is an emanation of royalty through the feudal system; in like manner Socialism, the final result of Catholicism, is but the last form of royalty and property. Socialism the necessary result, and, at the same time, the adversary of Catholicism. Catholicism, royalty, and property, these three are one, and under the name of absolutism, express the past of history and society, of which social democracy expresses the future. As long as these two parties do not understand each other, they will be at open war; but the moment they discover that both are tending towards the same result they will hasten to combine and amalgamate, to the annihilation of all social and political differences. Catholicism has enunciated the problem, Socialism will give the solution: such is the inevitable necessity of events. But these revolutions are not brought about with the calmness and regularity of philosophy, for men receive new truths with reluctance, and human reason is naturally free; hence at every progressive step, a tempest of oppositions and contradictions arises, which, instead of being settled in an amicable rational manner, result in some terrible catastrophe. From these disturbing causes, human nature does not move on to its destiny in a straight and regular path, but is subject to a variety of transverse oscillations, which, combined with the attacks of Socialism and the resistance of Absolutism, produce that apparently discordant and varied drama of society which is ever passing before our eyes.

These secondary oscillations produce two other parties equally opposed to each other and to the former two; the first is known in history, and the party of the *juste-milieu doctrine*, or *moderatism*; the second that of *démagogie*, *jacobinism*, or *radicalism*. The *juste-milieu* is the hypocrisy, as *radicalism* is the fanaticism of progress.

The former addresses itself peculiarly to the middle class, hates the inactivity and privileges of the aristocracy, and fears the radical tendencies of progress. The latter is the favourite of the people, for the more a man feels he is disinherited the more ready he is to destroy everything, and reconstruct society by violence.

These four parties may be considered as the four cardinal points of history, and are met with under some name or other in all ages of the world, are all equally necessary and useful in the evolution of man's destiny, and impersonate the necessary conditions of social life.

The characteristic of Absolutism is its *vis inertia*: the truth it contains is its spirit of preservation, hence its other name of *conservative*. The *juste-milieu*, *moderate*, or *whig* party is distinguished by its sophistry and love of the arbitrary. Its true idea is the right to self-government. Law, according to this party, proceeds directly from the government, and is, therefore, pre-eminently *subjective*.

Radicalism is known by its violence against conservatism and arbitrary rule.

Socialism considers that society should be the result of a positive, an *objective science*; but is apt to look upon its theories as realities, and mistake its utopias for actual institutions.

There are, moreover, many different political parties, just as there are various systems of philosophy, the one arising out of the other, to which it serves as the extreme or opposite pole; hence the multitudes of shades of opinion. Sure every man who thinks, must class himself with one or the other; and the man who never thinks is alone of no party, philosophy or religion. This last is the normal condition of the masses which, however, is not altogether unproductive; for it is the people who, in the long run, by their spontaneous creations, modify, reform and absorb, the plans of politicians and the doctrines of philosophers, and by continually creating a new existence are ever changing the basis of politics and philosophy. Of all the various parties and principles that have lately disturbed our country, what remains now under the flag of the republic but a combination of half-ruined *bourgeois* against a coalition of half-starved *proletarians*. Already political parties have ceased to exist, and universal misery will soon bring to pass what human reason has failed to accomplish; by destroying wealth it will have destroyed antagonism.

What has been said of the parties that have from the beginning divided society, is simply a definition; and yet it comprehends all history, it is the philosophy of progress, the death blow of social mysticism, *finis theologice*, the end of theology. It is true, because, it is necessary and universal, common to all ages and people; it is true because it cannot be that it should not be true.

Society, that living and perfectible existence, which develops itself through time, the opposite of the Deity who remains motionless in eternity, has necessarily two poles; the one directed to the past, the other to the future; the Absolutist who would preserve the past, the Socialist who would produce the future. But society, in accordance with the laws of human nature, continually oscillating and deviating to the right or left of the direct line of progress comprises two secondary parties, in parliamentary language, a right centre and a left centre, a Girondist and a Mountain, which are ever turning aside the Revolution from its proper course.

CHAPTER III.

THE NATURE AND DESTINATION OF GOVERNMENT.

The Scriptures declare that "there must be divisions (*i.e.* parties) among men," and the priest exclaims, "terrible necessity," arising from original sin! But a little reflection has shown us the origin and signification of parties, we have now to learn their object and final destiny.

All men are born free and equal;—society in therefore by nature self-governing, *i.e.* ungovernable; and he who lays his hand on me to govern me is a usurper and tyrant, my declared enemy. But this idea of equality did not appear in the earliest phases of society. When men met together the first thing they agreed to do was to appoint a ruler, *Constituamus super nos regem!* some one in AUTHORITY. Such then was the first idea of human society, and the next was im-

mediately to overthrow this society, each wishing to use it for his own liberty against that of others. All parties have been eager for the possession of power, to work their own ends; hence the aphorism of the radicals, to which the absolutists would willingly subscribe, *Social revolution is the end, political revolution (i. e. the transference of authority) is the means*; which simply means;—give us power of life and death over your persons and property and we will make you free! what kings and priests have repeated for six thousand years.

So that government and party are reciprocally to each other cause, end and means, beginning, middle and end; and, *thou shalt do this, thou shalt not do that*, has been the sole education of man by governments from the time of Adam and Eve; but when mankind shall have arrived at years of discretion parties and governments will disappear; thus liberty will grow out of authority, as we have seen Socialism result from absolutism. Philosophy therefore shows us that the establishment of authority over a people can be but a transition state, and must continually diminish until it is swallowed up in industrial organisation; the aphorism, therefore, must be read inversely *Political revolution, that is, the abolition of authority among men is the end, social revolution is the means*. There can be no liberty for citizens, order for society, or union among producers, until there be

No more parties;

No more authority;

Absolute liberty of the individual and the citizen.

In these three sentences I have made my profession of faith political and social. M. de Girardin says, he is a revolutionist *par en haut* (from above) and never will be a revolutionist, *par en bas* (from below). Now he thinks he has said something very original and profound in these expressions *par en haut, par en bas*, which are nothing more than the old idea of the demagogues. By the former he means evidently the government, and calls it revolutionising by instruction, intelligence, progress and the extension of ideas; by the latter he means the people, and terms it revolutionising by insurrection and despair; but the contrary is the truth. For let us examine which of the two is the most intelligent, progressive and peaceful, that by the government or that by the people. The former is manifestly revolutionising according to the pleasure of the prince, the impulses of an assembly, the violence of a club, the whim of a dictator or a despot, Louis XIV., Napoleon, Charles, X. and practised it after this manner; and Guizot, Louis Blanc, Leon Faucher, wish to try the same mode.

The other way, however, by the people is revolutionising by the common consent of all citizens, by the experience of the labourer, by the progress and diffusion of knowledge; it is the freedom of revolution, such as Condorcet, Turgot, and Robespierre desired it.

The greatest revolutionist in France was St. Louis, when he was only the registrar of the public will.

The socialists have fallen into the same error as the radicals; St. Simon, Fourier, Owen, Cabet, Louis Blanc, are all for an organisation of labour by means of the state, or by capital or by some other form of authority; instead of teaching the people to organise themselves, and to appeal to their own reason and experience; they say "give us power." They are utopians like the despots.

Governments from their very nature never can be revolutionary. Society, the whole mass of the people elevated in intelligence, can alone revolutionise itself. Governments are the scourges of God to discipline the world; for them to create liberty would be to destroy themselves. Every revolution in the world, from the crowning of the first king down to the declaration of the rights of man, has been accomplished by the spontaneous will of the people. Did government possess the science of revolution and social progress they could not apply it; they must first transfer it to the people, and then gain their consent; which would be a contradiction, in terms, and a complete misconception of the meaning of power and authority.

Look at the countries that are the freest, are they not those where the power of the

government is the most restricted—where the people generally take the initiative; the United States of America for instance? England, Switzerland, Holland; and those are the most enslaved—where the governing power is the best organised and the strongest; ourselves for example? and yet we are always complaining of not being governed, and asking for a stronger, arm at the helm of state.

The church, like an affectionate mother, came first; and said "every thing for the people but all by the priests."

Then came the monarchy, "every thing for the people, but all by the prince."

Next the doctrinaires or liberals, "every thing for the people, but all by the middle-class."

The radicals, though changing the formula, have retained the principle, "everything for the people, but all by the government."

Always the same communism, the same governmentalism!

Who then will say? everything for the people, and everything by the people, even the government!

According to M. de Lamartine, the government has to issue its commands, and the country only to yield its consent. Whereas all history tells us that that government is the best which comes nearest to making itself useless. Do we want parasites to labour or priests to speak to God? neither do we want representatives to govern us. It has been said by some one, that for man to speculate in his fellow-man, is open robbery. And the government of man by man is slavery; so every religion founded upon any form whatever of papal infallibility is sheer idolatry, the worship of man by man.

And yet after all these fruits of the absolutist principle we have still.

The judgment of man by man.

The condemnation of man by man.

And to crown the list, the punishment of man by man.

All these, however, we must submit to, until in the progress of time they grow old, perish, and fall off like ripe fruits in their due season; they are the instruments of our apprenticeship. Philosophy repudiates these symbols of a barbarous age, and yet admits not the right of any one to compel a people to be free, who wish to be governed.

It has no confidence in any social reforms that do not arise spontaneously from the people, and acknowledge no revolutions that do not receive the initiative from the masses.

I have made my profession of faith. You know the personages who are to play the principal parts in this drama of my political life; you know the subject of the piece; listen attentively to what I shall now relate.

(To be continued in our next.)

THE CONFESSIONS OF A
REVOLUTIONIST.

(Continued from our last.)

CHAP. IV.—1789 to 1830.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE GOVERNMENT.

As children are taught morals by allegories and fables, so the people learn philosophy by the records of history. Revolutions are the apologues of nations. History is a fable in the pantagruel style, in which the laws of society are taught us by the wonderful adventures of a remarkable personage, occasionally sublime, but more often ridiculous; at one time claiming our affection, at another our pity, whom the ancient orientals called ADAM, and we Humanity; always attended by a bad angel, named Fancy or Imagination, that is, continually leading him into evil, but ever restored to the path of right by his good genius, Experience.

In this light, all the events of history may be considered as *unrealities*, the acted myths of the great dramas that are performed, occasionally for centuries, on the vast stage of the world, simply to correct our prejudices, and amend our practice. All the moving events that have transpired during the last 60 years, have no other end but to teach us that nations are not saved, but ruined, by their governments, yet even now we are unable to comprehend the signification of this *divina comedia* of the human race; let philosophy come to our aid, and show us the interpretation.

For fourteen centuries the government of France had been witness of the efforts of the *tiers etat*, to establish public liberty. The moment at last arrived for accomplishing the great work, and the government was compelled to execute it or perish. But this was not because the government considered the reason and justice of the thing, for it was the *tiers etat* who made the revolution in 1789, and in the same year 1789, it was the government that opposed obstacles to that revolution.

So powerful was this opposition, that in order to counteract it, the nation was called to arms, and, on the 14th July, the people dragged the government to the bar, as a victim to the sacrifice. Had our fathers understood that the government was only acting in obedience to its nature, instead of trying to remodel it, they would have gone about seeing how they could do without it; this error was the cause of all the revolutionary vagaries that we have witnessed from that day to the present. Governments said they had existed from time immemorial; no one thought of suppressing it, the boldest only hoped to change its form; they pretended that it flowed from the social contract, from the sovereignty of the people and expected, by a sort of legal fiction, to reconcile power with progress. What God has joined together, shall no man separate; so government remained what it ever had been, and the lawful son of Jupiter, could be but the adopted son of the people's sovereignty. The constitutional hereditary King was the greatest enemy to the constitution, and true to the spirit of its nature, the government could never comprehend these constitutional fictions, but threw every obstacle in the way of the revolution, until another great day was required to vanquish

this refractory spirit. The 10th August, 1792 was the second act of the revolution.

The Convention, so long as it was engaged in struggling for the existence of the republic, the liberty of the country, and the equality of the citizens went on gloriously, but so irresistible is the power of an innate principle, the moment it was seized with the mania for governing, it hurried into a course of tyranny and oppression; the whim of the dictators was the only law, and the day that terror became an organised system, the crisis was inevitable, and the 9th Thermidor was the Convention's funeral knell. Thus the possession of power ruined the Jacobins.

Next came the Directory. The means follow the extremes; after the terrorists came the moderates; each in its turn, as the necessities of the times required, but each carrying its principle to the extreme. A powerful government was required, and Robespierre came with too severe a hand. A desire for repose called the Directory to the helm, which soon sunk into a state of useless lethargy, and was totally unable to obtain respect. Again the country was in danger from the incapacity of the government, and the Consulate was called into existence to run its course until it also, by the necessary tendency of its principle, should become an obstacle to the Revolution. The 18th Brumaire may be considered as less the act of Bonaparte than of a large majority of the country. Finally, Bonaparte himself became the Revolution incarnate, and from him we shall find that it received no better treatment than before. The great mistake was, that men depended more upon the government for public liberty and prosperity than on the initiative of the people. They wanted a man who would take the whole charge of the Revolution upon himself, while they, wearied with their long struggles, might repose in peace. The country was like a company who advertised for a manager; Bonaparte presented himself, and he was chosen unanimously.

But power has its own peculiar logic, that of the cannon-ball, which holds its straight and steady course, turning aside neither for the brother, the child, nor the old man—the logic of fatality, which heeds not the desires of man, nor deviates one iota from its eternal principle. The country demanded a strong government, and it had one to its heart's content. Bonaparte, with his hand on his sword, declared that he was the Revolution—he might have said he was the Right Divine. The country, groaning under his strong hand, felt that such terrible evils demanded extraordinary remedies. They repudiated their choice, implored the foreigner to invade their country and rid them of the chief who had substituted his own will for that of the people. So great was the general indignation, that nothing less than Waterloo could expiate the tyrant's crimes and restore us our liberty.

Bonaparte, while First Consul the best of magistrates, no sooner ascended the throne than he became the greatest of plunderers; and what followed? The Restoration was installed, restricted by conditions called a Charter; and, in 1814, absolutism, for the first time in the world, was christened *legitimate*, or *constitutional*. The Restoration implied two things perfectly incompatible—right divine royalty, represented by the prescribed family of the Bourbons, and the constitutional system attempted in '89, but overthrown by the 10th August. "The declaration of St. Ouen, May 2, 1814 (as Chateaubriand says), was not the act of the king or his ministers; it was simply Old Time awaking from a repose of some few years. In '92 his fight had been arrested, he now re-entered on his course. Mankind had lost five-and-twenty years of its existence; but what are twenty-five years in the duration of the human race?" This was not all; for who were the men that hailed the Restoration with enthusiasm? "They were (says Chateaubriand) imperialists and republicans. Savants, literary men and philosophers, philanthropists and theophilanthropists, ministers, generals, and functionaries appointed by Napoleon, bowed the knee to the descendant of Henri Quatre, wrote proclamations and addresses insulting to their former patron, and ushered in the Restoration with festivity and acclamation. The Monarchy, the Republic, the

Empire, and the Restoration had each, in its turn, been joyfully accepted by the people. This last apostasy was not likely to succeed better than the others; and we consequently find that the Restoration, like its predecessors in power, carried out to the very letter the principle of its existence. This legitimate Monarchy set about restoring everything the Revolution had abolished, and abolishing everything the Revolution had established, until, finding itself beyond the pale of the law, it had to flee the country, driven out by the very party who had invited them in; who had recalled legitimacy to power, and received the Charter as a boon. And when we ought to have died of shame—if a nation could die—we erected a monument; instituted a festival to commemorate the *glorious days of July*, and once more set ourselves to organise a government.

It began to be suspected that the instincts of power were something different from the interests of the people; but to do without government at all was not imagined for a moment; and believing that a government is to society what God is to the universe—the motive power, the principle of order—they persisted in placing over society a power that should give direction to its movements, never suspecting that society is its own self-acting motive power, and always gives the impulse, never receives it.

Liberty and Order was the motto under which the new government was installed, and at first sight it would seem to have been merely a change of dynasty. Not so, however; for 1830 and 1848 are indissolubly connected together by the same principle—the *Democratic and Social Republic* was conceived in 1830, in February, 1848, it was brought forth.

The Monarchy of 1814 derived its right from feudal inheritance, that of '30 from the will of the nation. The Charter of 1830 was not *octroyée*, it was *accepted*. Louis Philippe was the middle class enthroned; an innovation which, however moderate it may appear to some, was, in reality, a radical revolution. In fact, the monarchy was *humanised*, and between humanism and socialism there is but a difference in terms. As Charles X., however, was ruined by the 14th Art. of his Charter, so Louis Philippe was overthrown by observing too strictly the 13th Art. of the Charter of 1830. So fatal is the improvidence of man! so remarkable the ingratitude of an unenlightened people!

Another important change brought about by the doctrinaires of 1830 was the *deatholicisation* of the church, when they declared that from that time there should be no state religion; and put the seal to their reform by decreeing that the tri-coloured flag should be the future flag of France—in other words, that henceforth the only sacred, holy, and legitimate thing is the Revolution. Power was dethroned from its celestial seat to take root in the humble soil of the earth. It was no longer mystical, it was a real and positive fact. From that time the hours of its existence were numbered. Two-thirds of the work were already completed, the other third alone remains to be accomplished. Capital was the only obstacle left by the reformers of 1830. This they enthroned; they bowed down before the golden image and worshipped it; they made it their god and their government. Take this away, and all would be brothers and equals. But, said they, nothing can prevail against property. Catholicism has disappeared before the silent workings of philosophy, and the sovereignty of the people has prevailed over royal prerogative; and for monarchical faith and priestly authority we have substituted the worship of self-interest, the religion of property. Our institutions must be eternal, and 1830 has closed the era of revolutions. Thus reasoned the doctrinaires; revolutionists against the altar and the throne, absolutists in respect to monopoly.

CHAPTER V.—1830 to 1848.

GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION.

Louis Philippe's reign was essentially the government of the *banquoeracy*; its ruling principle property and capital. It was necessary that it should develop its principle, and fulfil its destiny. This was done for eighteen years by Louis Philippe, more designedly,

more intelligently, and more completely than by any of his predecessors. Though abused, hated, and attacked on all sides with the greatest bitterness by the base brood of hypocrites, the slaves of sensuality and pride, whom his gold had reduced to the lowest stage of moral corruption, he was, nevertheless, the man of his age,—the truly moral man who, faithful to the cause that placed him on the throne,—the cause of the golden calf,—the monied interest,—the abnegation of every principle but that of getting money, systematically and successfully carried out the work appointed him by the fates, and strictly fulfilled his mission, that by the universal corruption of society he might prepare the way for the grand *palingenesis* [regeneration] of the nineteenth century. Placed on the throne by a party whose maxim was *laissez faire* and *laissez passer*, or, non-interference, and *everyone for himself, and God for us all*, a cunning, shuffling, unmanageable middle class, believing in nothing but the art of buying cheap, and selling dear, Louis Philippe, himself incorruptible, cleverly performed the necessary work of blasting the national character, uprooting all our old convictions, political and religious, and reducing society to a homogeneous mass of corruption. A man was wanted to complete the ruin of old society, and Louis Philippe was that man. The revolution of 1830 has been termed the Revolution of Contempt, and this is the great secret of Louis Philippe's wonderful destiny. He, alone, of all kings, established and confirmed his power by the very means that have been the ruin of others,—by the general contempt in which he was held. His throne was founded upon scorn. None esteemed him—none loved him; he was hated and despised by all that ever served him, and yet none was better served than he. Of all the reproaches with which he has been loaded, that of the Thiers-Barrot Opposition is the only one with any spark of justice in it,—“We,” said they, “would do the same things as you, but we should do them better than you.” Louis Philippe required eighteen years, and 1,500 millions of francs to demoralise France. This was certainly too long a time, and much too expensive, and leads us to regret that M. Odilon Barrot was not made minister, till under the Republic. And might not this king with justice have replied to his accusers,—“Ye shameless doctrinaires,—Malthusian egotists, and ungrateful bourgeois! You established my throne upon a dunghill, and now you accuse my reign of corruption. There is nothing left for you but to annihilate yourselves in my person.” Louis Philippe, the ingenious, the conscientious corrupter, the respected father of a family, strict in his own household, complete master of himself, restrained by no laws, human or divine, troubled by no remorse, he set himself to his task with cheerfulness and determination; he made a league with hell for the damnation of his country, and yet he remains without a stain upon his character before God and man. Let the base wretches whom he corrupted sell virtue, justice, and honour, for a commission, or a government appointment,—their's the immorality—their's the disgrace. But he who was the head of the State, and representative of society,—the instrument of Providence,—the man of his age,—in what was he immoral? His moral duty was to sacrifice these debased and polluted souls to the cause of progress, that he might fulfil his appointed work.

His peculiar mission was to demonstrate to the world that the constitutional system is the absence of all faith, the negative of everything, and, like the empire and legitimism, a miserable sham. By his State influences, he attacked the parliamentary system; by the ridiculous exhibition of royalty, he destroyed the monarchical principle—in the only form that was possible to the age—that of the citizen king; and, by the same withering craft, he undermined the Catholic Church. Of what use to the non-reading classes are the multitudes of volumes written by philosophers?—they convert but a few thousand readers at most. Providence takes quite another course. He sets religion and interest at variance, overthrows faith by egotism, and the demonstration is accomplished.

(To be continued.)

THE CONFESSIONS OF A
REVOLUTIONIST.

(Continued from our last.)

Louis Philippe's reign, however, would have been incomplete without a minister worthy of such a king. In M. Guizot he found one,—a man untouched by any passion but the love of power. Like his master, undefiled himself in the midst of the corruption he created around him. Alone he comprehended the ruling *idea of the reign*, and he alone was the friend of Louis Philippe.

Thou wast indeed sublime, thou great minister, and greater man, when, at the banquet of Lisieux, thou dardest reveal the secret of thy power in a proud toast to corruption!

Thou knewest well those legitimists and radicals, those Jesuits and economists, and the whole base brood of reptiles, though, as thou didst truly say, *they knew not themselves*. Thou knewest the price of their virtue, and if they pretended to deny thee, thou didst rejoice the more; for they had attained the very acme of crime; they became traitors even to corruption. But corruption is not the destiny reserved for France; had it been so, M. Guizot would still be minister, and Louis Philippe's dynasty would reign for ever. Installed in 1830, as the only principle with any chance of success, the rule of capital became, in 1848 the pest of society, the *abomination of desolation*. A parliamentary quarrel overthrew the prostitute in the dust, and the same men of money who had hailed his accession, rejoiced in his downfall; the people stood behind their ranks ready to stamp the catastrophe with its true character. For eighteen years they had been waiting the opportunity, and I, who neither sold myself before, nor became a renegade after, swear that the French bourgeoisie, by overturning the dynasty they had established, at the same time destroyed the principle of property.

CHAPTER VI.

FEBRUARY 24.—THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT.

Every government is established in direct opposition to the one that preceded it, hence the government of Louis Philippe being suddenly overthrown necessarily called to existence its contrary. On the 24th of February the Cash Box government received its death blow, on the 25th the government of *Labour* was inaugurated. The decree guaranteeing the right to labour, was the birth-day register of the Republic of February. Six thousand years of revolutionary arguments were required to lead us to this result!

But this change from the government of capital to that of labour was not only logical, it was just; for cash which boasted to be the first principle and end of all social institutions, proved itself only a *product*, and no more the plastic and motive power of society than the right divine or the sword had been. The capitalist theory after corrupting everything, at last endangered even capital itself. When the Revolution of February broke out, trade and commerce were perishing from stagnation, agriculture was ruined, manufactures at a standstill, the warehouses crammed with goods for want of a market, and the public finances as bad as the private ones. The annual deficit was from 800 to 1000 millions, and 65 millions of the increased expenses were paid to public functionaries. The *bankocrats* of 1830, who had promised cheap government, the political economists, *Debtor* and *Creditor* philosophers, spent half as much again as the legitimists, and twice as much as the Imperial Government, and yet could not make their income and expenses balance. This plainly proved that *cash*, usury, monopoly, or the monied interest, was utterly incapable of producing what the revolution of 1830 was intended to accomplish; that we must descend deeper into the heart of society until we arrive at *labour* and the proletarians. The revolution of February then was to all intents and purposes a revolution of the working class. How could the bourgeoisie, who had traversed the whole scale from Catholicism to Capital, who only asked for production and exchange, who themselves had been raised by labour and economy; how could they see anything prejudicial to their interests in the republic of labour?

The middle class being thus vanquished by themselves as it were, acquiesced in everything, and gave in their adhesion to the new order of things, having already by their opposition hastened the downfall of a government that had become an obstacle to their well-being. The establishment of the Republic met with less opposition than that of Louis Philippe's government, so great was the step we had already made towards a comprehensive knowledge of times and revolutions!

The government of labour! that must be a government of progress and intelligence. But what is it? Can labour govern or be governed? Is there anything in common between labour and power? These questions occurred to none. The people, led away by

the governmental mania, were in a desperate hurry to form a government by appointing certain men to establish the Republic and solve the Social problem, the problem of proletarianism. "We give you three months" said they, and then with a sublimity and generous heroism unequalled in ancient or modern times they added; "*We have yet three months of misery devoted to the service of the Republic!*"

The men chosen by the people were installed in the Hotel de Ville and were styled the *Provisional Government*, which means a Government without purpose or idea. Now was the time for developing socialist ideas and putting them in practice, but those who for long years had repeatedly told us that *social revolution is the object, political revolution the means*, were embarrassed now that they had the power in their hands and discovered no doubt what Thiers since, and Sauzet before told them, that governments are not made to give labour to the people. And yet these men did not want intelligence or good advisers. How was it that they wasted three months without advancing the Revolution one iota, without establishing a single organised association of agriculture or manufactures (what an argument would one experiment have been) and seemed only anxious to devise means how they should avoid fulfilling their promises? The reason was because they were a government, and to take the initiative in matters of revolution is totally incompatible with power. This is the key to all the events that have transpired in France and Europe since February, and which may yet take place for many years to come.

That which makes government necessarily conservative and opposed to progress, may even anti-revolutionary, is that a revolution is an *organic* operation, a work of *creation*, and government is a mere mechanical, an executive work. The intimate changes that take place in the form, habits, and internal constitution of society are organic, and over these legal institutions have no influence, they are rather the results of such changes, and any attempts by government to oppose or hasten these, must inevitably fail, as when the convention attempted by legal enactments to abolish the Christian religion. Every such evolution must come from the inward life of society and manifest itself externally, and is legitimate only when it is spontaneous, peaceful, and as it were developing itself in the natural and gradual course of things.

The *organisation of labour*, which the Provisional Government was pressed to introduce, affected property, and consequently marriage and family; it implied the abolition, or if you prefer it, the buying up by the state of all the property of the country. Those socialists who persist in denying this, or regret that others should have mentioned it, are acting a dishonest part. The first business of the Provisional Government before taking any step or even deliberating was to distinguish between the *organic* and the *executive* question, or what was within the sphere of its powers and what was not. Its only course then would be to invite the citizens to produce by the free exercise of their powers those new facts which the government would afterwards be called upon either to watch, or, if needs be, to superintend.

The Provisional Government was probably not influenced by such high motives; but composed as it was of Conservatives, Doctrinaires, Jacobins, and Socialists, it really could not agree upon the mode of beginning the work of revolution they were so anxious to perform; hence the dissensions that reigned within the camp preserved the country from the infliction of the Utopias threatened by the Provisional Government.

The great, the peculiar fault of the Provisional Government was not its ignorance how to construct, but that it did not know how to destroy. It ought to have curtailed the oppressive laws against personal freedom, put a stop to the scandal of arbitrary arrests, and restricted by legal enactments the frequency of criminal accusations. On the contrary, they only thought of defending the privileges of the magistracy, and the individual was left more than ever at the mercy of arbitrary officials; an eating-house was made a sort of trap by the police to catch a number of innocent

persons, hurry them away from their families, and throw them into prison. When brought before the tribunal, the magistrate could not ascertain what they were accused of by the police, and, after a long time, came to the conclusion that there was no charge against them.

They ought to have disarmed the Government, disbanded half the army, abolished conscription, organised a landsturm, sent the troops away from the capital, have declared that from that time the Executive should never have the power, under any pretext whatever, to dissolve or disarm the National Guard. Instead of which, they were engaged in the formation of those eighty-four battalions of *mobiles*, whose usefulness and patriotism was afterwards impressed upon us in the month of June!

They ought to have insured the right of meeting, first, by abrogating all laws in any way capable of injuring it, and next, by organising clubs in connexion with the representatives of the people, and gradually accustoming them to parliamentary life. The organisation of popular societies is the pivot of Democracy,—the very corner stone of a Republic. The Provisional Government, however, had nothing but toleration and the spy system to offer them.

They ought to have deprived the Government of every means of injury, by transferring its powers to the body of the citizens, not only to prevent the Government from attempting anything against the public liberty, but in order to take from its Utopias their last hope of being established. The 16th of April and the 15th of May proved the strength and power of the country against all attempts of minorities. There would have been neither the one nor the other, had not the excessive power vested in the Government held up an irresistible temptation to the impatience of the demagogues.

Just the contrary course was taken; for what they ought never to have attempted, that they wished to do, and what they ought to have done they neglected; hence it happened that from the 17th of March, the revolution was retarded by the very men who were its warmest advocates. Instead of restoring to the people the power of taking the initiative in all organic changes, they attempted, by the power of the Government, to force upon them theories which the latter were not sufficiently enlightened to receive. There was no impulse from without—no expression of public opinion in favour of such proceedings. The people were daily alarmed by decrees which the Government itself could not defend, except under the plea of necessity. What was the result? It was not direct opposition, as before, it was the *charivari* of liberty and power. All history shows that organic changes cannot be introduced and established until the masses are thoroughly imbued with their principles; and that when they are so imbued, no powers of Government can prevent them from prevailing. John Huss and Luther are instances of these facts. Again, with respect to other matters: we have never seen a Government forcing a system of canals, railways, or steamboats upon a country; it never interfered about such matters. It was left for our times to see revolutionising attempted by Government, and so making it obnoxious to the people. Socialism had been quietly spreading for eighteen years under the protection of the Charter, when the demagogues of February succeeded, by establishing it in power, to excite the hostility of the nation against it, so that the principles themselves came to be proscribed. It was they who, by their clumsy subversion of principles, gave rise to that antagonism between the middle and working classes, which no more existed in the three days of 1848, than it did in those of 1830, which did not proceed from the revolutionary principle, but was destined to lead to the most frightful and bloody catastrophe, and the most pitiful discomfiture.

While the Provisional Government was thus losing its time in vain attempts at impossible things, a sort of Governmental Socialism spread like a fever through men's minds, aimed at the dictatorship, and, more strange than all, gave the signal itself of resistance to its own theories.

(To be continued.)

THE CONFESSIONS OF A REVOLUTIONIST.

By J. S. PROUDHON.

CHAPTER VII.—17th MARCH.

THE REACTION OF LOUIS BLANC.

Question—Given a country in the following situation:

The government that had been established on the principle of selfishness is overthrown by a revolution, from the contempt into which it had fallen. This revolution, being the adversary of capital, inaugurates labour, and establishes it in the government. Now, according to generally received prejudices, labour having become the governing power, ought to proceed by governmental means; that is to say, it is now the business of the government to do what had always hitherto been done without, and in opposition to it, to take the initiative and develop the revolutionary ideas; for, says prejudice, revolution ought to proceed from above, since there is the greatest power and intelligence.

But experience and philosophy are opposed to prejudice, and convince us that revolution does not proceed from the head of the government, but arises spontaneously from the efforts of the people; that the only connexion there can be between government and labour is, that the former should be the servant and not the protector of the latter.

In these circumstances, a few citizens, carried away by the common prejudice, with natural impatience, try to force the government to turn revolutionist and organize labour; an attempt entirely consistent with popular prejudice, but opposed to philosophy and history. On its side, the government, feeling its incapacity, and supported by a few of the citizens, refuses to act, or rather reacts against its advisers; a re-action perfectly in accordance with true Democratic and Social principles, but in the highest degree unjust in the eyes of popular prejudice.

Required the result of this conflict of opinions:

Answer—The only means of reconciling the parties would be to demonstrate to them the natural incapacity of government for any other duties than those of police. If this be not done the contest is inevitable. The greater the exciting force the greater the resistance. In short, the more it is attempted to push the government forward in the revolutionary course, the more it will persist in taking up a series of positions in a diametrically opposite direction; so that those men who endeavour to give a progressive impulse to government compel it to move in a retrograde course.

Thus says theory; what says history?

A fortnight had scarcely passed after the proclamation of the republic, when uneasiness began to manifest itself; for according to received opinions the government was all-powerful, and yet it was seen to undertake nothing. The most ardent among the people

complained that the Provisional Government was doing nothing to forward the revolution; the most timid among the *bourgeois* accused it of doing too much. The decrees respecting the hours of labour and regulation of wages were much more alarming, to the middle class, than Ledru Rollin's famous circulars. The reactionary principle, however, did not appeal so much to the Luxembourg, at that time, as to the Hotel de Ville. The working men were well aware that Louis Blanc and Albert had no power to put in practice their daring projects, and that their influence with the government was little or nothing; but the *bourgeoisie*, on account of some circulars sent out by the Minister of the Interior, thought the republic was going to lay its hands upon the whole property and income of the country. The fears and hopes of all parties, therefore, were directed to the government, and particularly to Ledru Rollin. A pretext afforded the opportunity that everybody was looking out for.

On the 16th of March a few hundred national guards came to the Hotel de Ville, to protest against the decree suppressing the *compagnies d'elite*, and the prohibition to wear the grenadier cap. This manifestation was directed, principally, against Ledru Rollin, and showed great want of discretion. At that time there was nothing in common between the political ideas of the Minister of the Interior, and the Socialist theories of the president of the Luxembourg. But the impulse was given, and the fates were soon to be accomplished.

The government remained firm against the *grenadier caps*, and dispersed the manifestation. No sooner was the report spread through the Faubourgs that the Provisional Government was menaced, than a counter manifestation was arranged for the morrow, which, however, like the former, was merely a pretext. Several of the leading men in it aimed at nothing less than a modification of the Provisional Government, for the purpose of taking more vigorous and decisive steps, and an adjournment of the day of election. Lists were circulated, and I was told by Huber that my name was on some of them. The manifestation had a threefold object; the greater number merely intended it as a moral support to the Provisional Government; others required the postponement of the elections; and others, again, demanded the expulsion of certain members of the government. Here is what Louis Blanc, a spectator and actor in this drama, says of the event:—

"Was the Provisional Government to consider itself as a Dictatorial authority, that should give no account to universal suffrage till after having done all the good possible? Or was it to confine its mission to the mere convoking the National Assembly, performing only those acts that were immediately necessary?"

"The Council was of the latter opinion; but I was entirely opposed to this."

"Considering the ignorance and moral degradation of the rural districts, the numerous resources of the enemies of progress for influencing the votes, and the superiority of the numbers of the ignorant in the rural districts over the enlightened in the towns; I believed that we ought to postpone, as long as possible, the day for the elections."

"That, in the meantime, we should boldly take the initiative of the vast reforms to be accomplished, which might afterwards be confirmed or overthrown by the sovereign power of the National Assembly."

It will be easily seen, without my pointing it out, that the arguments here made use of by Louis Blanc, in support of a dictatorship, are the very same as those used by the respectable and moderate republicans after him, in order, on two occasions, to legalise the state of siege, to give Cavaignac the dictatorship, raise Louis Bonaparte to the Presidency, declare the Socialists enemies of society, and under the protection of the republic to establish such a despotism that we should be tempted to consider as a liberator the first pretender that may seize upon the crown.

To what extremities will a nation go when friends and foes entice it on with the same language?

"My opinion was the same as that of the people of Paris. I heard, several days before

the 17th March, at the Luxembourg, that the people intended to make an imposing manifestation, with the twofold object of obtaining the adjournment of the elections, and the dismissal of the troops from Paris."

What Louis Blanc says about the dismissal of the troops is quite true. The people earnestly demanded it; only Louis Blanc does not see that this second request contradicts the first. What did the people want by the dismissal of the troops, but, to disarm the hand of power, and weaken the government? The people, when left to their own instincts, always act more justly than when led by the policy of others; they felt strongly the truth of the old saying, "that the best government is the weakest." "Our worst enemy is our master," said old La Fontaine, who was par excellence the man of the people.

The plan was then, 1st. To ask the Provisional Government to adjourn the elections, in order to insure to it that dictatorial authority, without which, says Louis Blanc, it could do no good. 2nd. To modify the composition of the government, for as Louis Blanc confesses, there existed serious differences in the Provisional Government, incompatible with the exercise of the dictatorship. Now, he who desires the end must also desire the means; therefore, what use the dictatorial authority with a divided government.

But who are to be the dictators?

Reaction was the only reply that was given to this delicate question, for let us hear our faithful historian.

"I must confess the idea of the manifestation terrified me. I could, with difficulty, believe that more than 150,000 workmen would parade Paris, without producing the least agitation, or causing the slightest disorder."

Once having tasted power, all men are the same. Still the same zeal for authority, the same distrust of the people, the same fanaticism for order. Is it not curious to observe that the 17th March, Louis Blanc, the secret instigator of the manifestation, was agitated by precisely the same fears that three weeks before had disturbed M. Guizot.

"The people were to go, en masse, to the Hotel de Ville, to get the elections put off. Was such a step without danger? Up to that time Paris had maintained a calm and majestic attitude, reposing in her strength; and ought we not to take care that this demeanour should be preserved to the end?"

Here we have again the same cry of order, order—in other words obedience. "We must have obedience," is their constant cry. "Without order," cries Guizot, "you will have a revolution." "Without order," cries Louis Blanc, "you will have no revolution."

"How then to counteract this threatened manifestation?" These are Louis Blanc's words: "And if it were true that unknown agitators would seek to drive the multitude to outrage, how should we manage to disconcert their plans?" Again it is Louis Blanc who is fearful of danger, and immediately cries out Agitators! M. Guizot called them factious fellows.

The measures proposed by Louis Blanc should really have been suggested to M. Guizot, as in that case the revolution would have been prevented on the 22nd February, just as the pretended dictatorship of Blanqui was on the 17th March. Here they are:—

"We must grant them," said Louis Blanc, "the postponement of the elections, (the only thing mentioned in the delegates' petition), on the sole condition that the Provisional Government shall remain unaltered." In a word, grant the letter of the petition, and pretend not to see its spirit. Such was Louis Blanc's method of paying off the petitioners. Another time, when the people petition, they will see the necessity of expressing themselves with clearness and precision.

But what could possess Louis Blanc, who supported the objects of the manifestation, who had developed them at the council board, and taught them to the people, to object so strongly to any alteration in the Provisional Government? It could not have been from any affection for his colleagues. Let us hear what he says himself.

"These dissensions which rendered the Provisional Government very unfit as a power for unity of action, constituted its originality as a transitory government, destined to take

charge of the sovereignty for a short period. Yes, it was this very discordance in its elements that enabled it to perform its peculiar office of MAINTAINING IN EQUILIBRIUM the different forces of society."

It follows, from this, that the Provisional Government being there only to maintain equilibrium, had no business to direct the revolutionary movement either one way or the other; that since it was conservative it could not be initiatory; therefore, it had nothing to do with dictatorial power; therefore, the postponement of the elections was worse than useless; it was an offence against the sovereignty of the people; therefore, the manifestation was absurd. Such are the consequences that Louis Blanc ought to have drawn from his premises, and though he failed to do so, events have done it for him.

"We were all waiting in expectation. Suddenly, a dark and compact mass appeared at one end of the Place de Greve. It was the corporation. Separated from each other by equal intervals, preceded by their banners, they advanced in solemn silence, with all the order and discipline of an army.

"The delegates having entered the Hotel de Ville, one of them having read the petition, I perceived among the spectators several strange faces, with a very sinister look about them."

These were, apparently, the same that were observed afterwards by the respectables and moderates on the 15th of May, and again in June. Men in office are subject to these peculiar hallucinations.

"I soon saw that several had mixed themselves up with the movement who had no connexion with the corporation, (why not? were none but the Luxembourg corporations worthy of representing the people?) and that many who pretended to be deputed by the multitude, were not really so, or at least not by the same title. There were men who were ready for the advancement of the opinions represented by Ledru Rollin, Flocon, Albert, and myself, to thrust out those members of the Provisional Government who were opposed to us."

Those men, it must be confessed, were more consistent than you. They represented pure demagogism, whereas, you with your delegates and all your Provisional Government, were nothing but doctrinaires.

As is the custom on such occasions, Louis Blanc, Ledru Rollin, and Lamartine amuse the people with speeches. Sobrier, Cabet, Barbés, and others, take part with the government against Flotte, Huber, Blanqui, and Co. Threatening voices demand a positive reply. They are told that the government cannot act if it is not allowed to deliberate. One man rushes upon Louis Blanc, and seizing him by the arm, says: *Thou art a traitor then; thou also!* "Struck by this instance of the injustice of man, under the excitement of passion," says Louis Blanc, "I could not refrain from a bitter smile, and that was all." At last the government show themselves at the balcony, and the farce terminates with the people's departure.

"Such," adds Louis Blanc, "was this 17th of March, the most remarkable day in history, or in the memory of man."

MM. Ledru Rollin, Cremieux, and Lamartine, have a right to say that the 17th of March was a grand day for them, and to claim the honour of it. They wanted no dictatorship; and on that day France was, perhaps, saved for ever from dictators.

But for Louis Blanc, and those who with him demanded the indefinite postponement of the elections in order that the government, clothed with absolute power, might have time to serve the country; for them it was indeed a pitiful day. Why! here we have a man convinced that the dictatorship is necessary for the interests of the people; that his colleagues in the government are hostile to progress; that the revolution is perilled by their remaining in office; aware that the opportunity seldom occurs, that once lost it will never recur; that he has but a moment to strike the decisive blow; and when the moment arrives he uses it to drive back the very men who have come to offer him their services and assistance; and turns away from their sinister-looking faces. Can you see this and not believe that there was a power within him

stronger than his convictions, that actuated him without his being aware of it.

The 17th of March was the first step in that long course of re-action which, passing from Socialism to Jacobinism, from Jacobinism to Doctrinarism, from Doctrinarism to Jesuitism, is not likely to stop there, unless the good sense of the people should put it right. It began in the heart of the Provisional Government, and by whom? Good God! by the very man, the greatest advocate for progress, Louis Blanc. I by no means blame him for it. I have proved to his acquittal that the instinct in him was stronger than his judgment. I could only have wished that he had not put himself in the necessity of re-acting against the very men, who, after all, only expressed his own ideas; for every kind of reaction is to be regretted. But this, at least, will be granted me, that if the republic has not fulfilled any of its promises, if Socialism is still but a utopia, the cause is not alone in the incapacity of the Provisional Government and the intrigues of the middle class. The cause is in those who would realize the revolution by means of government before the public mind was prepared to receive their ideas, and who, in order to carry out this chimera, excited the mistrust of the country, by retarding for a single day or a single hour the exercise of universal suffrage.

(To be continued.)

THE CONFESSIONS OF A
REVOLUTIONIST.

By P. J. PROUDHON.

CHAPTER VIII.—16th APRIL.

THE REACTION OF LEDRU ROLLIN.

The following chapters will be condensed as much as is possible without dropping the thread of the history, or losing the peculiar features of this remarkable and original work. After asserting that governmental democracy may be said to have been eliminated on the 17th of March, that henceforth the Demagogue and Social party had their ultras and their moderates, and the bourgeoisie were ready to support that party which should favour them; that though the idea of dictatorial authority was in every mind, yet in overthrowing Blanqui, they had destroyed the principle; he passes in review the various acts and decrees of the Provisional Government, and the propositions of its friends, alluding in particular to George Sand and the *Democrat Pacific*, which he declares to have been all, with the exception of a few measures of public economy and public utility imperatively demanded by the *Times*, mere farce, parade, and nonsense, and Paris during the period to have been a very *Panurge's* world. The people, seeing that their interests were not forwarded by these vagaries, determined, through the Luxemburg corporations, to rally to the charge, and all the Socialists fell in with the project. A manifestation was organised for Sunday, the 16th April; the pretext was the nomination of fourteen officers of the *état-major*, with whom they were to go in procession to the Hotel de Ville, to present a petition and tell the Government, that the people demanded "the organisation of labour by means of association." The clubs immediately declared themselves *en permanence*, appointed a committee of public safety, and prepared to take the lead for the purpose of purging the Government. If Louis Blanc did not know of any plot, he ought to, for the people, the Government, the National Guards, every one knew it; and to suppose that he did not intend an attack upon the Government is almost too great an insult to his reason and common sense, for, without such an object, the manifestation was an absurdity.

The 16th of April came, however, and Ledru Rollin ordered the *rappel* to be beaten, Barbes, myself, and Leroux, ignorant how things stood, rallied round the Government. as the Revolutionary flag; Ledru Rollin has been unjustly blamed for the part he took; Barbes shed tears of regret when he saw the real state of things; Louis Blanc and Albert were observed at the balcony, pale with agitation and terror; and that evening the cry of "Down with the Communists," plainly told the Government that they stood before the country on the same conditions as Figaro before the censorship; that they might say and do everything on condition of being of the same opinion as every body else.

Louis Blanc had the honour of the reactionary movement of the 17th March, and Ledru Rollin that of the 16th April; the latter saw an attempt at usurpation, and, as Minister of the Interior, he resisted. Who dares blame him? Certainly not Louis Blanc. The 16th April was no less than the 17th March, a check to the revolution; for it was an attempt to seize upon power for the purpose of establishing an idea that was opposed to the national interests and wishes. From the 16th April, Socialism became particularly odious to the country. It had existed unnoticed by all parties from July, 1830, but the moment when a miserable minority it attempted to seize upon the Government, it excited the whole wrath of a nation against it. If there were no Government there would be no parties; if there were no parties there would be no Government. When shall we get out of this circle?

CHAPTER IX.—MAY 15.

THE BASTIDE AND MARRAST REACTION.

The idea of a sovereign power constituted under the name of Government, State, or Authority over the nation for the purpose of directing and governing it, dictating laws and prescribing regulations, imposing opinions and penalties, is no other than the principle of despotism, under whatever form it may appear, sacerdotal, hereditary, or elective. All the blunders of the democrats resolve themselves into this, "that they only revolutionize the personnel of the sovereignty, transferring authority from the right divine to the sovereignty of the people." Democracy has been merely a defection from royalty; we are not republicans, we are, as Guizot says, *factionous followers*. Governmentalism is as old as the times of Moses and the Egyptians.

Moses in attempting to change an idolatrous people into a nation of Deists, only succeeded in tormenting them for twelve centuries. It was not till the time of the Maccabees or of Christ, that the Jews became hearty followers of the Mosaic institutions.

More than 2,000 years after Moses, in nearly the same countries another reformer accomplished the same change in one generation. What was the reason of this difference? Moses, as the Bible says, had called the people of Israel, whilst Mahomet was called by the Edomites.

The Popes, following the example of Moses, in endeavouring to establish the celibacy of the clergy, put the people of the middle ages to a lengthened torture, till Luther appeared, and in one generation he gave the death blow to Catholicism, and advanced the era of universal emancipation; the Albigenses, Waldenses, Hussites, and others perished in the attempt; but the times demanded Luther, and he was victorious.

But to return:

Universal Suffrage at last made itself heard. The National Assembly met, but still nothing was done.

The Democratic Governmentalists resolved to try another effort; and this time they omitted all mention of Socialism and confined themselves to the political question. The emancipation of Poland was the pretext of this third day.

Let the Assembly send armies to emancipate the Poles and free the nations, or if they preferred it, go at once to the organisation of labour, they cared not which, for both tended to the same end. The events proved the truth of this. The government was told for three months "you have done nothing either for the organisation of labour, or the liberty of

peoples, two things perfectly identical. If you will not form these men into an industrial army, make of them an army of propaganda." War, in fine, was offered as a temporary relief from the labour question. The time was well chosen; M. Wolowski was in the midst of his speech in favour of the emancipation of Poland, when the chamber was invaded. The rest is known. The people soon disappeared from the streets, wearied with this constant struggle for the mere change of masters, and by the timely opposition of M. M. Bastide and Marrast the project failed. Polish intervention signified war with Europe, in fact nothing short of universal socialism, the revolution of humanity by the intervention of government. Defeat was inevitable; and even had the country the means of sending armies into Poland, all the liberals of Europe would have joined with their governments to oppose such a deluge of socialism; and what would have been our situation in such a case. We should have stood before Europe, as our army does now before Rome, with this difference, "that here we are victorious, and there we should be conquered." For this reason I opposed the manifestation in the *Représentant du Peuple*, as I was convinced the best safeguard for the nationalities of Europe, more powerful than all armed interventions, was the attitude of the French nation. And what have we seen since? Rome, Venice, Hungary, succumbed one after another, at the news that democracy had been vanquished in Paris. The election of the 10th December was to the insurgent nations like the loss of a great battle, and the 13th June, 1849 was their Waterloo. If liberty has succumbed, it is not because we have withheld assistance, it is that we have stabbed her with our own hands. Democracy would have prevailed all over Europe, if, instead of wishing to make her queen, we had allowed her to remain plebeian.

Thus has re-action rolled steadily onwards with the regularity of a time piece.

The 17th March it commenced against Blanqui; Louis Blanc giving the signal.

The 16th April it continued, but against Louis Blanc, at the sound of Ledru Rollin's drums.

The 15th May it advanced another step this time against Ledru Rollin, Flocon and the *Reforme* party led on by Bastide, Marrast and the *National* party. It is true it struck only the most violent of the democrats, such as Barbés, Albert, Sobriere, &c., and afterwards Causidière and Louis Blanc; but the influence of Ledru Rollin was ruined on this day, just as Louis Blanc's was the 16th of April.

We shall soon see the republicans of the *National* party, in their turn, fall and give place to the republicans of the morrow; then will come the doctrinaires, thinking they have regained a usurped inheritance. At last, Fortune, giving the final turn to her wheel, will bring to the summit the real authors of government, the catholic absolutists, beyond whom there is no retrograding, until Democracy, seeing her mistake, overthrows with a single stroke of universal suffrage, the whole host of her adversaries, by choosing men who, instead of asking the government for progress, will seek it of liberty.

M. Proudhon, then proceeds with a lament at the injustice of the fate of Barbés, Blanqui and their friends, and concludes the chapter with these words:

M. de Lamartine, in one of his poetical hallucinations, declared to the National Assembly, that he had once approached Blanqui, as the lightning conductor approaches the thunder-cloud to draw off the destructive fluid. M. de Lamartine had been so long dreaming of ogres and giants, that he began to fancy himself Tom Thumb. But it is not his fault if our history since the days of February has resembled a fairy tale. When shall we cease to play at thrones and revolutions? When shall we be truly men and citizens.

CHAPTER X.—23rd, 26th JUNE.

THE CAVAIGNAC RE-ACTION.

It will be objected to me that if the provisional government had been composed of other men than it was; if Barbés and Blanqui

had acted together, if a thousand other things had happened which did not happen, the result would have been quite different from what it was. I can only reply that there are two ways of studying history; the one may be called the *providential* method, and the other, the *philosophic*. The former theory is no other than that of chance, which the believer calls PROVIDENCE, the sceptic, FORTUNE.

The Philosophic method shows that, though the particular facts may vary indefinitely, the great ruling idea, the fundamental principle remains the same. Thus, in the revolution of February, the events might have been quite other than they were as they constitute the accidental, the *factitious* phase of history; the revolutionary condition through which modern society is now passing must remain the same; the events must inevitably be the expression of the struggle that is going on between tradition and revolution. The drama instead of being a tragedy might have been a melo-drama; but the signification, the moral, of the piece would be unchanged.

In the transactions I am about to relate, we shall show that while the democratic and the conservative party obey the same passions, history will develop itself according to its own laws with the precision of a syllogism.

The Provisional Government had guaranteed the right to labour in the most positive manner. Three months were given them to fulfil their promise, which, under the circumstances, appeared so simple and easy. The time had elapsed, and, after the 15th of May, the people saw their hopes fading away. To all their demands the government could only show their utter incapacity to fulfil the engagement. "The Revolution of February then was all to no purpose," cried the people in despair, "and we must perish for having made it." The government hoped by time and order to restore confidence, and that labour would re-establish itself; all they could do was, in the meantime, to relieve the working classes in their immediate distress.

With this view the *Ateliers Nationaux* were established, an idea suggested by the greatest humanity and the best intentions, but a striking confession of weakness. The Doctrinaires allied to the Absolutists and pushed on by the Jesuits, seeing the difficulties of the Government, thought this a favourable opportunity for re-establishing themselves. "We must have order in France," said they, "Republican if you like, but, above all Conservative." The *Ateliers Nationaux*, they contended, are incompatible with order, and they must be dissolved. So the Assembly, seeing the impossibility of executing the treaty between the Government and the people, refused to subscribe to it. Thus, these gentlemen, so very nice in respect to bankruptcy, when their own revenues were concerned, did not hesitate to become bankrupts to the people in respect to the promised labour, and, if necessary, to support this bankruptcy by force.

Such was the situation of affairs. Lalanne, the new director of the *Ateliers*, and Trélat, Minister of Public Works, who, in those fearful days, performed his duty like a man of honour and feeling, exerted themselves to bring about an accommodation between the feelings of humanity, common justice, and a desire for peace on the one side, and the embarrassed finances, the difficulty of the question, and the incompetency of the Government on the other. But the Assembly was obstinate. "What!" cried the calculating Charles Dupin, "200,000,000 to disband an army of 100,000 men; impossible!"—if it had been a railway company instead of a number of workmen?

But it was little use reasoning with men who only repeated, "We must put a stop to this!" When these words reached the masses outside, the exasperation of the people was un governable. "Labour! useful labour!" cried they for the whole month of June. "Yes!" cried Trélat, in one of his noblest aspirations; "The Assembly must decree labour as the Convention formerly decreed victory!" The multitudes only smiled. The die was cast. On the 23rd of June the dissolution of the *Ateliers* was resolved, cost what it might; the report was read by de Falloux, concluding with an offer of thirty francs to each man! Thirty francs for having founded the Re-

public! Thirty francs for the ransom of monopoly! Thirty francs in exchange for an eternity of misery! It reminds us of the thirty pieces of money given to Judas for the blood of Jesus Christ. To this offer of thirty francs the workmen replied by barricades.

The author goes on to detail the events of the eventful days from the 21st of June, showing how the *jesuituo-juste-milieu* party pushed matters to a crisis, and, pitiless in their determination to annihilate the Republic; vented their rage against the executive commission, having made it hateful to the people they overthrew it, established Cavaignac as Dictator, and placed Paris in a state of siege, which ended in the defeat of the people, and lost the cause of proletarianism and nationalities all over Europe. "All these evils," says M. Proudhon, "were owing to the error of supposing that the Government should take the initiative in all great reforms." He concludes by acknowledging that he was ignorant, up to the 25th, of the real state of affairs, being occupied in committees, reading papers, documents, and bills, so stultifying is the effect of parliamentary routine.

CHAPTER IX.—WHO AM I?

In this chapter M. Proudhon gives a history of his meditations, writings, and public acts from the year 1837, when the Academy of Besançon, had to decree the triennial pension left by M. Suard for such youths of Franche-Comté, who without fortune devote themselves to literature and science. In his memoir to the Academy, he declares his intention to devote himself to the physical, intellectual, and moral amelioration of his brethren and companions, the working classes, of whom he was one by birth and education. His first step in this road was a memoir on the institution of the Sabbath, in which he showed Moses to be, both philosopher and socialist; ; it obtained the bronze medal of the Academy, and thus, said he, I rushed headlong into infidelity, encouraged by the applauses of the Academy. I had come to the conclusion that every principle which, when pushed to its extreme results is a contradiction, must be false, and any institution founded on it—Utopia. With this criterion I investigated the most ancient and universal institution of society, that of Property; all know the conclusion which I came to. Property being a contradictory idea the necessary corollary was, that the best form of government is anarchy. Continuing my studies I necessarily came to the conclusion, that what we call Providence is not every thing in the transactions of this world. From that moment, without being an atheist, I ceased to worship God. He can do very well without your worship said the *Constitutionnel*. Perhaps so.

My first memoir on this subject was addressed to the Academy of Moral and Political science; it was favourably received, and obtained for the author, the approbation of the reporter M. Blanqui.

In a second memoir to M. Blanqui, I showed that property, which he had declared to be in the ascendant, is really on the decline, which is the case also with religion. In a third memoir to M. Considérant, I insisted on the necessity of immediately reforming the schools of political economy and civil law. Carried away by a passion for logic, my pamphlet grew into a book, and I was cited before the *Cour d'Assises* of the department of Doubs, on the four charges of an attack on property, exciting contempt of Government, and an outrage against religion and morals, but was acquitted.

But philosophy is not satisfied with destroying and denying, it must also affirm and construct. Before he begins to build, he must find a way to get out of the difficulty by inventing a philosophy no longer negative, but, as M. Aug. Comte calls it, *positive*. M. Proudhon enters into a train of thought which savours much of the philosophy of Jean Gottlieb Fichte. We shall content ourselves with stating that his next work was "The Creation of Order in Humanity," with which, however, he was not at all satisfied, and considered it below mediocrity. He calls it an infernal machine which ought to have contained all the instruments of creation and destruction. "The System of Contradictions;

er, Great Book of Institutions and Morals," was his next publication, and of this he gives an analysis. The object of the work was to show that every proposition in economics has its positive and negative pole; thus, *property is plunder*; so also *property is liberty*. The former is represented by the actual social institutions of property; the latter by which the evils may be negated, is *community*. So we have *competition* the opposite pole to *monopoly*, *citizen*, to *government*, *man* to *God*. The part of the work in which God and man were shown to be in opposition give much offence to the *tartufes*, and yet this part is nothing else than Catholicism explained by philosophy, the reality substituted for the symbol.

Instinct and reason are the two springs of the mind; the former is intelligence, as manifested in God; the latter in man. In society, the manifestations of instinct constitute the government of Providence; the manifestations of reason constitute the reign of liberty. But reason is always gaining upon instinct, reflection upon spontaneous action. Hence, nature seems to recede, while reason advances: in other terms, God departs, Humanity arrives.

Humanity first worshipped itself as God or Nature; now, in the person of Jesus Christ, it worships itself as Humanity. But liberty will abolish all idolatry, and man will reconcile himself to God by the knowledge of nature and himself. Regret this philosophy, or not, as you please. I want no disciples. But let no one, under pretence of its being atheism, make it a means of counter revolution. This I forbid to all Papists, Royalists, and Reformers, under pain of reprisals. We are stronger than you, gentlemen; take care!

The next portion of the system to be investigated was the *synthetic*; the first two numbers of which appeared in the end of March; but very little notice was taken of a work that appeared to the Democrats like proving the existence of the sun at mid-day. The work was therefore suspended, and I determined to publish my ideas on *Credit* in a pamphlet of about forty pages, in which I proposed, for the first time, to work the revolution *from below*, by appealing to the reason and interest of every citizen. As this work was nothing less than a declaration of the fall of governmental power, it was not understood, and I was proclaimed a visionary and malcontent. I addressed myself to the electors of Doubs as a candidate for their suffrages; but the 16th of April came, and put an end to my candidanship. What has the *juste milieu* of the Constituent Assembly produced? And what will the absolutism of the Legislative produce? Our Mountaineers who rejected me are turning *rouge*; in two years the peasants will cry, from one end to the other of Catholic and Monarchical Franche Comté,—“Vive la Republique Democratique et Sociale!”

A rejected candidate, an author without readers, I was now compelled to throw myself on the press. Every day I was told, “Write books, it will be better than writing in journals.” That is quite true. But nobody reads the books. You may consume ten years of your life in composing octavos; fifty admirers purchase it, then comes the journalist, who throws you into his basket, and there’s an end of it. Books serve for the apprenticeship of the journalist; the highest kind of literature of the present day is the *feuilleton*.

Observing that the revolutionists were bent upon imitating the past, I determined to oppose these retrospective tendencies, and start the revolution on its proper course by establishing *Le Representant du Peuple*. One of our chief objects was to show that the revolution of February bore no resemblance to that of '89 to '92. Useless efforts! *Le Representant du Peuple* only obtained esteem, and its place in the sunshine of publicity; it neither accomplished, nor prevented anything.

About this time I became acquainted with M. de Girardin. He approved of my ideas on credit, but objected to any initiative coming from the people. “One hour of power,” said he, “is worth ten years of journalism.” Owing to his confining himself to particulars and details, and neglecting the universal and the general, he is ever falling into some contradiction, either with facts, with the opinion

of the time, or with himself. Why was not M. de Girardin chosen minister after the 10th of December? Because he is revolutionary, and would revolutionise the country through the government: for this reason, that M.M. Thiers, Barrot, &c., no more than the middle class, the peasant, or the mechanic, wish to be revolutionised.

When I think how much I have said, written, and published for the last ten years on the duties of the Executive in society, on the subordination of power, and the revolutionary incapacity of Government, I cannot but suppose that my election in June, 1848 was a mistake of the people. These ideas of mine date from my first meditations; they are contemporaneous with my call to Socialism. Study and experience have developed them; they have ever directed my writings and my conduct; they inspired all the acts which I am about to relate; it is strange that, with the guarantee they present, which is the highest an innovator can offer, I could for a single moment have appeared a formidable adversary, either to society, whom I accept as judge, or to the Government, with whom I have nothing to do.

(To be continued.)

victory of the Reactionists in June, when Cavaignac, by lending himself as a party to the accusation of Louis Blanc and Causidiere, destroyed his own influence, as his predecessors had theirs. So extensive was the spread of Socialism among the people, that the Socialist cause had become the popular cause; and when the Mountain perceived this to be the case, they changed their policy, no longer looking with distrust upon opinions to which, for eighteen years previous to February, they had been wilfully blind. They, therefore, began to consider how they should go over to the Socialists. They at last decided upon a middle course, and, adopting the Socialist opinions in general, with only one distinct and clearly-defined idea, namely, to force the revolution upon the country by means of government. The Socialists were not able to resist the temptation of acquiring so influential an addition to their party, whereby they hoped that Socialism, increased by Democracy, would strike terror into the Reactionary party, and the *Democratic and Social Republic* would become a reality. The real effect, however, must necessarily be, and was, to involve the Socialist in the inevitable ruin of the Democratic party, and could lead to nothing else than disputes and rivalry.

CHAPTER XIV.

4TH NOVEMBER—THE CONSTITUTION

In this chapter the author endeavours to show what a political constitution is; how society can do without it; and what must be substituted for it.

In all political constitutions, from the one given by Moses to the Israelites down to the newest French fashion of 1848, the great fault has been the separation of the legislative and executive powers. This dualism of government, joined to a centralisation of power and concentration of offices in one person, is an obstacle to the exercise of every right contained in the Constitution, down to universal suffrage itself. Thus we are ever turning in an endless circle; without centralisation, no strength in the government, no unity in the Republic; without separation of powers, no control or responsibility, and, therefore, no liberty. In the former case, federalism would soon blot out France from the nations of Europe; in the latter, we should perish under a despotism or dictatorship. But with centralisation the government is in perpetual opposition to society, and with the separation of powers it is in opposition to itself. The means by which we are to get out of this difficulty is by a political and social constitution, by which there would be a perfect centralisation of government, and a complete separation of powers. For instance, in respect to the Church; 1st, let it be entirely separated from the State, receiving no support from, nor in any way connected with, it; 2d, let the government of the Church be centralised in itself by a system of progressive elections—thus the parishioners would elect their own vicars and parish priests, the priests in each diocese would elect their bishop, and the assembly of bishops would regulate the affairs of the church, theological instruction, and religious worship; 3d, let the ecclesiastical, as well as all the other powers of the State, be established upon universal suffrage. The same may be done with respect to the judicial, the military, and all the other so-called branches of government. Let the heads of all these different administrations unite to form a council, and you have your ministerial council, your executive power.

Over all these let there be a jury, legislature, or national assembly, elected by the whole nation, to examine accounts, make laws, decide disputes between different administrations, always having previously heard the public ministry, or minister of the interior: thus you would have a constitution at once political and social. To this anti-governmental constitution we are rapidly tending, and I would have explained this in a few words to the Assembly, had it not taken up a position which plainly said—I defy you to convince me!

CHAPTER XV.

THE PEOPLE'S BANK.

This chapter contains, first, an explanation of the principles and objects of the Bank, and, secondly, an analysis and refutation of the plan proposed by Louis Blanc at the end of his catechism of Socialism. The whole object of the chapter is to show the superiority of the People's Bank over Louis Blanc's Organisation of Labour, for introducing truth, liberty and order into society, and emancipating the proletariat from his present dependent condition. By means of the People's Bank, the Revolution would have been carried out and perfected by the people themselves, without money or assistance from the government, or any other body whatever.

The People's Bank cost nothing to the citizens, nothing to the government. It would soon return the latter a revenue of 200 millions, while it guaranteed to the former a constant employment for their capital, and a never-ending source of labour. Sooner or later, this prolific institution will be demanded by a bankrupt government and a ruined country, from which neither the commercial nor the financial world will be able to withdraw themselves. But, previous to this event, we shall have spent many hundreds of millions, in gratuitous assistance, armaments, transportation, colonisation, repression, and incarceration. We shall have tried all kinds of economical chimeras, the most ridiculous, troublesome, and ruinous; mortgage deeds, fictitious circulation, loans at enormous interest, taxes of all kinds, progressive and sumptuary, on income and inheritance, and so on, till we finish with national bankruptcy. Such is the fate of humanity, and of our unhappy country. Those who are thus working its ruin are called conservatives, while we, who, to save it from such frightful calamities, only ask a little tolerance, are called the enemies of family and property!

CHAPTER XVI.

10TH DECEMBER—LOUIS BONAPARTE.

In this chapter the author declares his utter incapacity, for six months, to understand the cause, the enigma, of Louis Bonaparte's election. His character and politics being unknown, he had opposed him with all his influence, and invited the Socialists to vote for Raspail, as a testimony of their disapprobation of any presidential authority at all. But in this case a greater power than any they could control exerted its influence, and, fortunately for the interests of progress, Providence seemed to compel all parties to vote contrary to their real interests; so that all, in obedience to a higher power than their judgments or passions, combined to elevate Louis Bonaparte, the MAN OF NO PARTY, to the presidential chair. And herein is the solution of the enigma. France was tired of parties, and, wearied of government, henceforth (she said) we want no government, no authority, temporal or spiritual, revolutionary or legitimate.

Adieu Pope!
Adieu King!
Adieu Dictator!
Adieu Emperor!
Go on thy way, Bonaparte, fulfil thy task with wisdom, and, if possible, with more honour than Louis Philippe. Thou shalt be the last governor of France!

CHAPTER XVII.

1849: 29TH JANUARY—THE BARROT-FALLOUX REACTION—DESTRUCTION OF GOVERNMENT.

The destiny of Louis Bonaparte is to bring down contempt and ruin upon the governmental system; he is only another victim, in the course of nature, to bring about the Democratic and Social Republic. I should, therefore, rather have pitied him than have written against him with such virulence as was manifested in *Le Peuple*. Under the presidency of Louis Napoleon, the Jacobins become pure Socialists. Finding no chance of obtaining power, they wish to reduce the influence of government and its chief support, capital. Thus the principle of authority and of the

THE CONFESSIONS OF A
REVOLUTIONIST.

BY P. J. PROUDHON.

CHAPTER XIII.

17TH SEPTEMBER—PROGRESS OF SOCIALISM
—CONVERSION OF THE MOUNTAIN.

This chapter contains an account of the great increase and spread of Socialism after the

capitalist was to be overthrown; the only power whose dying struggles were to be feared was the Church; but the Church, as if to promote the Socialist idea, hastens to perform a suicidal act. The Barrot-Falloux, or jesuitic, or trinitaire ministry, rush headlong into the state. The Church puts itself in direct opposition to the people in every country of Europe; it supports the Holy Alliance in opposition to nationalities; it maintains governments against their subjects; and supports capital against labour. At Rome, the opposition between Theocracy and Revolution was seen and manifest; and, as if to render the Socialist demonstration more palpably on the field of truth and justice, the government of Louis Bonaparte, in the name of the Catholic interest, openly embraced the cause of the Pope. What further was necessary, than for us to point out to the people this flagrant three-fold conspiracy of Capital, Church, and State against their liberties. Henceforth, Socialism must become the opinion of the masses, and the people be cured of Monarchism and Catholicism. And if this be only in part accomplished, the remainder is but the work of time. Capital can never regain its preponderance; its secret is revealed. Let it celebrate its last orgies; to-morrow, like Sardanapalus, it must burn itself on its funeral pile.

Government is destroyed in France, condemned as it is every day for its own defence to perform the very acts that Socialism would devise for its destruction.

Catholicism did not wait to have the mask taken off it. The skeleton unveiled itself; and the Christian world cries vengeance against the Church and against the Pope. In the person of Pius IX. the throne of St. Peter has crumbled to ruin. The Papacy overthrown, Catholicism has lost its virtue: *the optic killed, its poison is destroyed.*

Pitiable, indeed, is the situation of the President of the Republic. When I reflect on this fate, I bless my own prison walls. Never was man more frightfully sacrificed than he. Two ways alone are open to him. The one, by the initiative of the people and the organic solidarity of interests, leads to equality and peace; the other, by love of power, will inevitably lead to catastrophes—it is the road to usurpation, disguised, if possible, but otherwise open, in which the elected of the 10th December is manifestly engaged. Must he, also, be cast out into outer darkness like so many others, and without any hope of return? Those who live will see.

Subjects for opposition were not long in manifesting themselves, and government soon commenced its suicidal process. The Ruteau proposition, coming just after the summons to the President of the Council, opened up hostilities. The incongruity of the two powers did not wait for the thirtieth day to show itself, and at the same time was increased the mutual hatred of the people for the government, and the government for the people. The 29th January, which saw the people and the government accuse each other of conspiracy, and come out into the streets ready for combat, was probably only a panic caused by mutual distrust. What was plainer than all was, that war had commenced between the President and Democracy.

By this battle of the 29th January I gained at least three years of improvement, for no victory was ever gained yet without some killed and wounded. I do not murmur at my lot. *He who seeks danger must expect loss.* I imagined I was within the bounds of law in writing against the political conduct of the President; but the casuists of the bar had little difficulty in surmounting obstacles which appeared to me safe defences. To my astonishment, for simply speaking against the President of the Republic, I saw myself accused—

1st. Of exciting hatred against the government.

2d. Of provoking to civil war.

3d. Of attacking property and the Constitution.

What had I to expect from a jury, who, according to the civil code, had simply to express whether it was their *thorough conviction* that the witnesses had proved the point in question. In matter of fact, the jury were

asked: Are you thoroughly convinced that P. J. PROUDHON, here present, is a dangerous man to the government, disagreeable to the Jesuits, and a troublesome enemy to your revenues and property? You have no necessity to give your reasons or your motives, or consider legal arguments respecting this or that part of the evidence; you have merely to state your conviction. It is only the old story over again: "*What has Aristides done to you?*" "*I am annoyed,*" was the reply, "*to hear him always called the Just.*" Such is your *thorough conviction.*

I had, at least, hoped to see myself tried, condemned, and imprisoned for some serious cause; for the People's Bank, for instance. Providence, however, it seems, did not deem me worthy to suffer for the cause of truth.

The Democratic and Social Republic for ever!

(To be continued.)

we fell into the hands of the jesuits. Step by step we advanced towards the completion of the revolution, the annihilation of authority. It was necessary first that government should show itself incapable of existing either with the constitution, with free institutions, with principles or classes; the first was attacked by Odilon Barrot, the second by Leon Faucher, in his bill against the clubs, the others would come afterwards, under the government of Louis Bonaparte, who was destined to lead governmental authority to the final act of its suicidal course; and this was done with a consistency and strictness that belong to no other country; for the French are the most logical people in the world.

The attack upon the clubs was an attack upon all the institutions established and confirmed by the revolution; it was, as M. Cremieux loudly declared on the 21st March, a direct violation of the constitution. Henceforth there were two classes in the country; a majority and a minority, the oppressors and the oppressed; for everywhere the socialists were hunted down, and those who were only suspected of opinions then looked upon as aggravating circumstances, were treated as common malefactors.

The right of insurrection can only exist under an absolute government, where the people have no voice in the constitution; but in the present case, universal suffrage remaining to us, our only legitimate mode of defeating our adversaries was by *legal resistance*; and the plan proposed by *Le Peuple*, viz., an organised refusal to pay the taxes all over the country, would have been a most effectual instrument. Since the 13th June, however, this is no longer practicable or necessary; my proposition was received with distrust by the radicals: if the people refuse to pay taxes once, said these slavish advocates of government, they will refuse them altogether, and then government will be impossible: and my reward was a fine of 10,000 francs and ten years' imprisonment.

But to my shame, I must confess, we were all blind to our own real interests, and the event has proved that radicalism was better served by its own incapacity than it could have been by the means I proposed. Since the 13th June, we have done with parties and governments; and that is much better than to have established the mountain in the room of the doctrinaires and jesuits. The revolution has left us nothing further to do. *Il mondo va da se!* The world moves of itself.

CHAPTER XIX.

16TH APRIL: EXPEDITION TO ROME.

THE coincidence of the revolutionary dates in 1848 and 1849 almost to the very days, is rendered still more remarkable by the similarity of the events at each date; those in 1849 being in each case the counterparts of the same date in 1848. This analogy must lead us to the conclusion that the collective human thought has a greater influence in the government of the world than those two powers that have hitherto shared the worship of man—Providence and Chance. The war against the Roman republic was the death-blow given to the principle of authority by the hand of Louis Bonaparte. Wonderful coincidence! At the beginning of the century a Bonaparte is the mightiest personification of authority; fifty years afterwards the most powerful instrument of its destruction is a Bonaparte. Is this chance or mystery?

We have already shown how the constitution established the separation of powers as the necessary condition of government, and the deductions to be drawn from this principle—we shall now put these in a logical formula; for as in physical science, so in history, all the grand phenomena may be translated by a simple algebraical or logical formula.

The events following the revolution of February completed the experiments necessary to establish the following syllogism respecting government:—

MAJOR—Government must be either a despotism or dualism;

MINOR—Now despotism is impossible, and dualism is also impossible;

CONCLUSION—Therefore government is impossible.

The Rataeu proposition was the practical representation of this syllogism.

The next step was to show that free institutions were incompatible with government; this was done on the 21st March by the mouth of Leon Faucher, who, by his law against the clubs, declared republican institutions, the liberty of the press, the right of association and meeting, inconsistent with power and authority. The dilemma now becomes more contracted, the formula more expressive.

No liberty,

Or no government.

The Government now plainly said to Liberty—"Slay me, or I slay thee."

The next step was the final blow, it was directed against the church, the sole legitimate source of authority. From the beginning the temporal had endeavoured to render itself independent of the spiritual. When royalty first took up the sword to free itself from the thralldom of the church, it set the example of insurrection to its own slaves. Royalty, in rising against the pope, made the first step towards its own ruin. From this schism of the temporal and spiritual, the people continued to derive fresh strength. In the 16th century the company of Jesus was established for the purpose of reducing the temporal once more under the spiritual power. The puritanic school of Jansen exposed their secret intentions, and royalty overthrew the Jesuits and confirmed the separation of the Gallican church. Then came the charter of 1830, which, by declaring catholicism only the religion of a majority, humiliated the church, and thus destroyed the principle of authority in its very source; power was now but a shadow and the state a fiction. The people could now say to the government—Who are you that we should obey you? The European powers must now abjure themselves or restore Jesuitism. The last hour has struck; the tempest that is destined to sweep away the throne and the holy see is already heard in the distance. The dilemma is contracted to its narrowest bounds, the formula appears in its inexorable conciseness.

No papacy,

Or no liberty.

The vote of the 16th April, sanctioning the expedition to Rome, was an inevitable event; but after the taking of Rome by the French army, the fall of the papacy was no longer doubtful.

The doctrinaires wished to form a sort of constitutional papacy, and wrote a book called, *Reason in harmony with Faith*, which only tended to show that the two were incompatible; just as the revolution had for the last fifty years shown that the co-existence of liberty and authority were impossible, and are both very similar to perpetual motion and the quadrature of the circle.

What eclecticisms attempts to discover in philosophy, the *juste-milieu* attempts in politics.

Ask the eclectic—Are you a materialist?

He replies—No.

A spiritualist?—Certainly not.

What then? a realist?—God forbid!

An idealist?—I differ from him.

A pantheist?—I know not what it is.

An atheist?—I know not the meaning of it.

A sceptic?—That is impossible.

Out of my sight then; you're a humbug or a stupid!

We shall see that the doctrinaire's politics are the counterpart of this.

What do you think of the republic?—A great fact.

The monarchy?—I stick to legality.

The president?—He is elected by six millions of votes.

The constitution?—The sum total of our political ideas.

Socialism?—A beautiful utopia.

Property?—A necessary evil.

Do you believe in religion?—I respect it.

Do you believe in equality?—I wish for it.

Do you believe in progress?—I do not oppose it.

The eclectic and the doctrinaire (the utilitarian, or Benthamite), and above them both, the Jesuit, such are the three elements that now govern France, I had almost said that have ever governed the world.

At present, the Jesuit seems to reign unopposed in Europe; and yet the attack on Rome was the commencement of their ruin. For

THE CONFESSIONS OF A
REVOLUTIONIST.

By P. J. PROUDHON.

CHAPTER XVIII.

21 MARCH: LAW CONCERNING THE CLUBS;
LEGAL RESISTANCE.

By the election of the 10th December and the formation of the Barrot-Faucher-Falloix ministry, reaction made another step from the republicans of the morrow to the doctrinaires; but one more false move of the democrats, and

whether successful or not, the ruin of the papacy must be the result; for, either it must disappear under the reforms of Mazzini, by which the pope, simply Bishop of Rome, having no authority in the church, his power as pope would be gone; or, restored by foreign bayonets, established in the blood of its revolted subjects, the papacy must become an object of horror to the Christian world, and perish by its own victory: a pope, the vicar of Christ, reigning by the sword, is a blasphemy of the tiara: it is Antichrist.

The alliance of the Doctrinaires with the Jesuits has overthrown every obstacle, religion, papacy, monarchy, and government. Bishops of France, take care! The war against the Roman Republic, rousing the people against the Church, and disgracing Catholicism, corrupts the revolution, disturbs men's consciences, and compromises the peace of Europe. Socialism, whose mission was to convert you, is your destroyer. Take care! Separate yourselves from the Jesuits while there is yet time, warn your chief, Pius IX., or you are ruined.

CHAPTER XX.

13th MAY—13th JUNE, 1849: CONSTITUTIONALISM OF THE DEMOCRATIC-SOCIALIST PARTY. THINGS were come to that pass now, that there were but two parties; every one must either be a socialist-democrat, or a reactionist. The duty of the socialists was now to declare that for the present and the future they would bring about the triumph of the revolution by EXCLUSIVELY LEGAL MEANS. They must abjure all idea of a dictatorship, and place all their hopes in legality and the Constitution. The agrarian law of the Gracchi was to the Romans what socialism was to the democrats of 1849. As long as they continued in a constitutional course, there were hopes for the people; but the moment they depended for success on the dictatorship of a Marius or a Julius Cæsar, all was lost; the Roman constitution became a dead letter, and nothing remained to the Roman people but the despotism of an emperor, with an occasional distribution of corn, and free admission to the public games. Again, the position of affairs in 1849 was totally different from what it was in '89 or '93.

In '89, the revolution represented—the protection of the property of the tiers état against the oppressors of feudal privileges.

The revolution of 1848 signified—the protection of labour against the abuses of property.

The neo-jacobins could not perceive this distinction, and had they gained the victory of the 13th June, they would have established a dictatorship, thrown socialism overboard with the exception of the State buying up the railways, &c., and granting some pecuniary assistance to associations of trades, which would have only established a new species of tyranny, and so occupied the people's attention, that they would not have time to think of the organisation of labour. Then the reactionists were ready to play the same game over again as in 1848. It could not have been otherwise. As it was, the manifestation of the 13th June was not illegal; the people, called upon by a large minority of the Assembly, had a right to express their opinion that the Constitution was violated. But it was untimely, impolitic, and badly managed. Has the government, therefore, a right to punish us for our bad management? Certainly not; and its victory was only another source of embarrassment; for henceforth it must be either inactive, and then it necessarily perishes, or it must go on in the course of progress, and in that case it destroys itself.

For some time it appeared doubtful which course it would take, and for a moment the President's letter seemed to place the government on the side of the Versailles' prisoners. But the Legislative Assembly preferred the policy of the Vatican to that of the Elysée; the *juste milieu* sacrificed itself on the altar of absolutism; the counter revolution having reached its apogee, had nothing to do but to maintain itself there. And yet it moves, said Galileo. *E pur si muove*

CHAPTER XXI.

8th JULY.—CONCLUSION.

THUS, reader, we have tracked every party to

its ruin. All are dead—mere corpses; and whether they attempt government or opposition, it is but a ghostly dance to celebrate their own funeral solemnities.

The socialists who wished to inscribe the right to labour in the constitution without knowing how to realise it are dead. Let them sleep their sleep, and wait till they are roused by a science which is not theirs.

The demagogues, neo-jacobins, democrat-governmentalists, or whatever else you like, who, with liberty ever on their lips, were always dreaming of dictatorships, and after four months of dictatorial authority, brought forth no fruits but reactionist agitations and a murderous civil war; they also are dead, and their sepulchre sealed. They can never govern again; if ever they return, it will be but to give life and energy to the people.

The doctrinaires, too, are dead. The just-milieu utilitarians, who induced a republican assembly to try the experiment of a doctrinaire papacy, they can never more hold the reins of government. Louis Bonaparte has exhausted all their powers.

The absolutist party, logically and historically the original party of all, must shortly perish in the convulsions of a bloody and liberticide death. After the victories of Radetzki, Oudinot, and Haynau, the principle of authority, both spiritual and temporal, is destroyed. Absolutism has no longer anything to do with governing, its only office is that of the assassin. That which now oppresses Europe is but the shadow of tyranny. Soon will arise in all its splendour the glorious sun of liberty, never to set but with the last of the human race. Liberty, like Christ, triumphs after a struggle of eighteen centuries. Its name is in every mouth,—its faith in every heart. For absolutism ever to raise its head again, it is not sufficient for it to subdue men, it must make war upon ideas. Louis Bonaparte has revealed to us this confusion of parties, this destruction of government. To make a man requires both a body and soul; so, to make a government you must have a party and a principle. Parties and principles both have perished. Government is therefore impossible.

For myself, having seen on the 13th of June the final ruin of political chicanery, I was not the man to revive it. With this view I published my list of candidates selected from all parties. I acknowledged not the demagogue party, and protested against the universal governmental error; that the ruin might not be universal; that SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY, opening its ranks to all, might consistently become the party of LIBERTY.

I am of the labour party against the capitalist, and have worked for this my whole life. And let this be well understood; of all parasites that I know, the most detestable race is the revolutionary parasite.

Henceforth a truce to all grief and all calamities. The course is cleared of parties and governments. The people have but to open their eyes, and they are free.

No power, human or divine, can stop the course of the revolution; the people can now be their own propaganda.

The principle of the revolution is LIBERTY: by liberty I mean, 1st.—Political enfranchisement by the organisation of universal suffrage, by the independent centralisation of the social functions (what are termed branches or departments of government), and by the perpetual and incessant revision of the constitution. 2nd.—Industrial enfranchisement by a mutual guarantee of credit and the implements of labour.

In other words:—

No government of man by man, by means of the accumulation of powers.

No trading of man in man by means of the accumulation of capital.

Liberty! the alpha and omega of all social philosophy. It is for this that man has toiled throughout so many ages of suffering; that by errors and misfortunes he may finally arrive at Truth.

What our generation wants is neither a Mirabeau, a Robespierre, or a Bonaparte; it is a Voltaire. We can reason, we can philosophise, and seriously pursue our interests or our fancies, but we cannot point the finger of ridicule, or laugh at the follies and vices of the world. Thus exclaims the author of this

extraordinary work, and concludes with an apostrophe to his ideal of true liberty.

And what, reader, do you think is that which the author calls "True Liberty, the Mistress of Truth, the Providence of Genius and Virtue, my only Lawful Sovereign?" The word, perhaps, contains the key to the enigma of the book. Read it if you can; it is INOXY.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

- I. I confess.
- II. Profession of faith. Nature and destiny of parties.
- III. Nature and destination of government.
- IV. 1789—1830: Proceedings of the government.
- V. 1830—1848: Governmental corruption.
- VI. February 24th: Provisional government.
- VII. March 17th: Reaction of Louis Blanc.
- VIII. April 16th: Reaction of Ledru-Rollin.
- IX. May 15th: Bastille and Marrast reaction.
- X. June 23rd—26th: Cavaignac reaction.
- XI. Who am I?
- XII. July 31st: New manifestation of Socialism.
- XIII. September 17th: Progress of Socialism. Conversion of the Mountain.
- XIV. Nov. 4th: The Constitution.
- XV. The people's bank.
- XVI. Dec. 10th: Louis Bonaparte.
- XVII. 1849, January 29th. Barrot-Falloux reaction. Destruction of government.
- XVIII. March 21st: Law concerning the clubs. Legal resistance.
- XIX. April 16th: Expedition to Rome.
- XX. May 13th—June 13th, 1849: Constitutionalism of the Democratic Socialist Party.
- XXI. July 8th: Conclusion.