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MEMOIRS
OF
A REVOLUTIONIST
VOL. II.





Waller & Brattall, photo.

P. Kropotkin

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MEMOIRS
OF
A REVOLUTIONIST

BY
P. KROPOTKIN

WITH A PREFACE BY GEORGE BRANDES

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. II.



WITH PORTRAITS

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PART FOURTH

ST. PETERSBURG—FIRST JOURNEY
TO WESTERN EUROPE

I

EARLY in the autumn of 1867 my brother and I, with his family, were settled at St. Petersburg. I entered the university, and sat on the benches among young men, almost boys, much younger than myself. What I had so longed for five years before was accomplished : I could study ; and, acting upon the idea that a thorough training in mathematics is the only solid basis for all subsequent scientific work and thought, I joined the physico-mathematical faculty in its mathematical section. My brother entered the Military Academy for Jurisprudence, whilst I entirely gave up military service, to the great dissatisfaction of my father, who hated the very sight of a civilian dress. We both had now to rely entirely upon ourselves.

Study at the university and scientific work absorbed all my time for the next five years. A student of the mathematical faculty has, of course, very much to do, but my previous studies in higher mathematics permitted me to devote part of my time to geography ; and, moreover, I had not lost in Siberia the habit of hard work.

The report of my last expedition was in print ; but in the meantime a vast problem rose before me. The journeys that I had made in Siberia had convinced me

that the mountains which at that time were drawn on the maps of Northern Asia were mostly fantastic, and gave no idea whatever of the structure of the country. The great plateaux which are so prominent a feature of Asia were not even suspected by those who drew the maps. Instead of them several great ridges, such as, for instance, the eastern portion of the Stanovói, which used to be drawn on the maps as a black worm creeping eastward, had grown up in the topographic bureaux, contrary to the indications and even to the sketches of such explorers as L. Schwartz. These ridges have no existence in nature. The heads of the rivers which flow toward the Arctic Ocean on the one side, and toward the Pacific on the other, lie intermingled on the surface of a vast plateau; they rise in the same marshes. But, in the European topographer's imagination, the highest mountain ridges must run along the chief water-partings, and the topographers had drawn there the highest Alps, of which there is no trace in reality. Many such imaginary mountains were made to intersect the maps of Northern Asia in all directions.

To discover the true leading principles in the disposition of the mountains of Asia—the harmony of mountain formation—now became a question which for years absorbed my attention. For a considerable time the old maps, and still more the generalizations of Alexander von Humboldt, who, after a long study of Chinese sources, had covered Asia with a network of mountains running along the meridians and parallels, hampered me in my researches, until at last I saw that even Humboldt's generalizations, stimulating though they had been, did not agree with the facts.

Beginning, then, with the beginning, in a purely inductive way, I collected all the barometrical observations of previous travellers, and from them calculated hundreds of altitudes; I marked on a large-scale map all geological and physical observations that had been made by different travellers—the facts, not the hypotheses—and I tried to find out what structural lines would answer best to the observed realities. This preparatory work took me more than two years; and then followed months of intense thought, in order to find out what the bewildering chaos of scattered observations meant, until one day, all of a sudden, the whole became clear and comprehensible, as if it were illuminated with a flash of light. The main structural lines of Asia are *not* north and south, or west and east; they are from the south-west to the north-east—just as, in the Rocky Mountains and the plateaux of America, the lines are north-west to south-east; only secondary ridges shoot out north-west. Moreover the mountains of Asia are not bundles of independent ridges, like the Alps, but are subordinated to an immense plateau—an old continent which once pointed toward Behring Strait. High border ridges have towered up along its fringes, and in the course of ages terraces, formed by later sediments, have emerged from the sea, thus adding on both sides to the width of that primitive backbone of Asia.

There are not many joys in human life equal to the joy of the sudden birth of a generalization, illuminating the mind after a long period of patient research. What has seemed for years so chaotic, so contradictory, and so problematic takes at once its proper position within an harmonious whole. Out of the wild confusion of

facts and from behind the fog of guesses—contradicted almost as soon as they are born—a stately picture makes its appearance, like an Alpine chain suddenly emerging in all its grandeur from the mists which concealed it the moment before, glittering under the rays of the sun in all its simplicity and variety, in all its mightiness and beauty. And when the generalization is put to a test, by applying it to hundreds of separate facts which seemed to be hopelessly contradictory the moment before, each of them assumes its due position, increasing the impressiveness of the picture, accentuating some characteristic outline, or adding an unsuspected detail full of meaning. The generalization gains in strength and extent; its foundations grow in width and solidity; while in the distance, through the far-off mist on the horizon, the eye detects the outlines of new and still wider generalizations.

He who has once in his life experienced this joy of scientific creation will never forget it; he will be longing to renew it; and he cannot but feel with pain that this sort of happiness is the lot of so few of us, while so many could also live through it—on a small or on a grand scale—if scientific methods and leisure were not limited to a handful of men.

This work I consider my chief contribution to science. My first intention was to produce a bulky volume, in which the new ideas about the mountains and plateaux of Northern Asia should be supported by a detailed examination of each separate region; but in 1873, when I saw that I should soon be arrested, I only prepared a map which embodied my views and wrote an explanatory paper. Both were published by the

Geographical Society, under the supervision of my brother, while I was already in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul. Petermann, who was then preparing a map of Asia, and knew my preliminary work, adopted my scheme for his map, and it has been accepted since by most cartographers. The map of Asia, as it is now understood, explains, I believe, the main physical features of the great continent, as well as the distribution of its climates, faunas, and floras, and even its history. It reveals, also, as I was able to see during my last journey to America, striking analogies between the structure and the geological growth of the two continents of the northern hemisphere. Very few cartographers could say now whence all these changes in the map of Asia have come; but in science it is better that new ideas should make their way independently of any name attached to them. The errors which are unavoidable in a first generalization are easier to rectify.

II

AT the same time I worked a great deal for the Russian Geographical Society in my capacity of secretary to its section of physical geography.

Great interest was taken then in the exploration of Turkestan and the Pamírs. Syévertsoff had just returned after several years of travel. A great zoologist, a gifted geographer, and one of the most intelligent men I ever came across, he, like so many Russians,

disliked writing. When he had made an oral communication at a meeting of the Society he could not be induced to write anything beyond revising the reports of his communication, so that all that has been published under his signature is very far from doing full justice to the real value of the observations and the generalizations he had made. This reluctance to put down in writing the results of thought and observation is unfortunately not uncommon in Russia. His remarks on the orography of Turkestan, on the geographical distribution of plants and animals, and especially on the part played by hybrids in the production of new species of birds, which I have heard him make, or on the importance of mutual support in the progressive development of species which I have found just mentioned in a couple of lines in some report of a meeting, bore the stamp of more than an ordinary talent and originality; but he did not possess the exuberant force of exposition in an appropriately beautiful form, which might have made of him one of the most prominent men of science of our time.

Miklúkho Makláy, well known in Australia, which towards the end of his life became the country of his adoption, belonged to the same order of men—the men who have had so much more to say than they have said in print. He was a tiny, nervous man, always suffering from malaria, who had just returned from the coasts of the Red Sea, when I made his acquaintance. A follower of Hæckel, he had worked a great deal upon the marine invertebrates in their life surroundings. The Geographical Society managed next to get him taken on board a Russian man-of-war to some

unknown part of the coast of New Guinea, where he wanted to study the most primitive savages. Accompanied by one sailor only, he was left on this inhospitable shore, the inhabitants of which had the reputation of being cannibals. A hut was built for the two Robinsons, and they lived eighteen months or more by the side of a native village on excellent terms with the natives. Always to be straightforward towards them, and never to deceive them—not even in the most trifling matters—not even for scientific purposes—was his ethics. On this point he was most scrupulous. When he was travelling some time later on in the Malayan peninsula he had with him a native who had entered into his service on the express condition of never being photographed. The natives, as everyone knows, consider that something is taken out of them when their likeness is taken by photography. Makláy, who was collecting anthropological materials, confessed that one day, when the man was fast asleep, he was awfully tempted to photograph him, the more so as he was a typical representative of his tribe and he would have never known that he had been photographed. But Makláy remembered his promise and never did it. When he left New Guinea the natives made him promise to return; and a few years later, although he was severely ill, he kept his word and did return. This remarkable man has, however, published only an infinitesimal part of the truly invaluable observations he had made.

Fédchenko, who had made extensive travels and zoological observations in Turkestan—in company with his wife, Olga Fédchenko, also a naturalist—was, as

we used to say, a 'West European.' He worked hard to bring out in an elaborated form the results of his observations; but he was, unfortunately, killed in climbing a mountain in Switzerland. Glowing with youthful ardour after his journeys in the Turkestan mountains, and full of confidence in his own powers, he undertook an ascent without proper guides, and perished in a snow storm. His wife, happily, completed the publication of his 'Travels' after his death, and I believe she has now a son who continues the work of his father and mother.

I also saw a great deal of Prjeválsky, or rather Przewalski, as his Polish name ought to be spelt, although he himself preferred to appear as a 'Russian patriot.' He was a passionate hunter, and the enthusiasm with which he made his explorations of Central Asia was almost as much the result of his desire to hunt all sorts of difficult game—bucks, wild camels, wild horses, and so on—as of his desire to discover lands new and difficult to approach. When he was induced to speak of his discoveries he would soon interrupt his modest descriptions with an enthusiastic exclamation: 'But what game there! What hunting! . . . ' and he would describe passionately how he crept such and such a distance to approach a wild horse within shooting range. No sooner was he back at St. Petersburg than he schemed a new expedition, and parsimoniously laid aside all his money, trying to increase it by Stock Exchange operations, for a new expedition. He was the type of a traveller by his strong physique and his capacity for enduring the life of a mountain hunter, full of

privations. He delighted in leading such a life. He made his first journey with only three comrades, and always kept on excellent terms with the natives. However, as his subsequent expeditions took a more military character, he began unfortunately to rely upon the force of his armed escort in preference to a peaceful intercourse with the natives, and I heard it said in well-informed quarters that if he had not died at the very start of his Tibet expedition—so admirably and peacefully conducted after his death by his companions, Pyevtsóff, Roboróvsky, and Kozlóff—he very probably would not have returned alive.

There was considerable activity at that time in the Geographical Society, and numerous were the geographical questions in which our section, and consequently its secretary, took a lively interest. Most of them were too technical to be mentioned in this place, but I must allude to the awakening of interest in navigation, in the fisheries and trade in the Russian portion of the Arctic Ocean, which took place in these years. A Siberian merchant and goldminer, Sídoroff, made the most persevering efforts to awaken that interest. He foresaw that with a little aid in the shape of naval schools, the exploration of the Norman Coast and the White Sea, and so on, the Russian fisheries and Russian navigation could be largely developed. But unfortunately that little had to be done all through St. Petersburg, and the ruling portion of that courtly, bureaucratic, red-tapist, literary, artistic, and cosmopolitan city could not be moved to take an interest in anything 'provincial.' Poor Sídoroff was simply ridiculed for his efforts. Interest

in our far North had to be enforced upon the Russian Geographical Society from abroad.

In the years 1869-71 the bold Norwegian seal-hunters had quite unexpectedly opened the Kara Sea to navigation. To our extreme astonishment we learned one day at the Society that the sea which lies between the island of Nónvaya Zemlyá and the Siberian coast, and which we used confidently to describe in our writings as 'an ice cellar permanently stocked with ice,' had been entered by a number of small Norwegian schooners and crossed by them in all directions. Even the wintering place of the famous Dutchman Barentz, which we believed to be concealed for ever from the eyes of man by ice fields hundreds of years old, had been visited by these adventurous Norsemen.

'Exceptional seasons and an exceptional state of the ice' was what our elder navigators said. But to a few of us it was quite evident that, with their small schooners and their small crews, the bold Norwegian hunters, who feel at home amid the ice, had ventured to pierce the floating ice which usually bars the way to the Kara Sea, while the commanders of Government ships, hampered by the responsibilities of the naval service, had never risked doing so.

A general interest in Arctic exploration was awakened by these discoveries. In fact, it was the seal-hunters who opened the new era of Arctic enthusiasm which culminated in Nordenskjöld's circumnavigation of Asia, in the permanent establishment of the north-eastern passage to Siberia, in Peary's discovery of North Greenland, and in Nansen's 'Fram' expedition. Our Russian Geographical Society also began to move, and

a committee was appointed to prepare the scheme of a Russian Arctic expedition, and to indicate the scientific work that could be done by it. Specialists undertook to write each of the special scientific chapters of this report; but, as often happens, a few chapters only—botany, geology, and meteorology—were ready in time, and I, as secretary of the committee, had to write the remainder. Several subjects, such as marine zoology, the tides, pendulum observations, and terrestrial magnetism, were quite new to me; but the amount of work which a healthy man can accomplish in a short time, if he strains all his forces and goes straight to the root of the subject, no one would suppose beforehand—and so my report was ready.

It concluded by advocating a great Arctic expedition, which would awaken in Russia a permanent interest in Arctic questions and Arctic navigation, and in the meantime a reconnoitring expedition on board a schooner chartered in Norway with its captain, pushing north or north-east of *Nóvaya Zemlyá*. This expedition, we suggested, might also try to reach, or at least to sight, an unknown land which must be situated at no great distance from *Nóvaya Zemlyá*. The probable existence of such a land had been indicated by an officer of the Russian navy, Baron Schilling, in an excellent but little known paper on the currents in the Arctic Ocean. When I read this paper, as also Lütke's '*Journey to Nóvaya Zemlyá*,' and made myself acquainted with the general conditions of this part of the Arctic Ocean, I saw at once that the supposition must be correct. There must be a land to the north-

west of Nývaya Zemlyá, and it must reach a higher latitude than Spitzbergen. The steady position of the ice at the west of Nývaya Zemlyá, the mud and stones on it, and various other smaller indications confirmed the hypothesis. Besides, if such a land were not located there, the ice current which flows westward from the meridian of Behring Strait to Greenland (the current of the 'Fram's' drift) would, as Baron Schilling had truly remarked, reach the North Cape and cover the coasts of Laponia with masses of ice, just as it covers the northern extremity of Greenland. The warm current alone—a feeble continuation of the Gulf Stream—could not have prevented the accumulation of ice on the coasts of Northern Europe. This land, as is known, was discovered a couple of years later by the Austrian expedition, and named Franz Josef Land.

The Arctic report had a quite unexpected result for me. I was offered the leadership of the reconnoitring expedition, on board a Norwegian schooner chartered for the purpose. I replied, of course, that I had never been to sea; but I was told that by combining the experience of a Carlsen or a Johansen with the initiative of a man of science something valuable could be done; and I should have accepted had not the Ministry of Finance at this juncture interposed with its veto. It replied that the Exchequer could not grant the three or four thousand pounds which would be required for the expedition. Since that time Russia has taken no part in the exploration of the Arctic seas. The land which we distinguished through the subpolar mists was discovered by Payer and Weyprecht, and the archipelagoes which must exist to the north-east of

Nóvaya Zemlyá—I am even more firmly persuaded of it now than I was then—remain undiscovered.

Instead of joining an Arctic expedition I was sent out by the Geographical Society on a modest tour in Finland and Sweden, to explore the glacial deposits; and that journey drifted me in a quite different direction.

The Russian Academy of Sciences sent out this summer two of its members—the old geologist General Helmersen and Friedrich Schmidt, the indefatigable explorer of Siberia—to study the structure of those long ridges of drift which are known as *åsar* in Sweden and Finland, and as *esker*, *kames*, and so on, in the British Isles. The Geographical Society sent me to Finland for the same purpose. We visited, all three, the beautiful ridge of Pungaharju and then separated. I worked hard during this summer. I travelled a great deal in Finland, and crossed over to Sweden, where I spent many happy hours in the company of A. Nordenskjöld. Already then (in 1871) he mentioned to me his schemes of reaching the mouths of the Siberian rivers, and even the Behring Strait, by the northern route. Returning to Finland I continued my researches till late in the autumn, and collected a mass of most interesting observations relative to the glaciation of the country. But I also thought a great deal during this journey about social matters, and these thoughts had a decisive influence upon my subsequent development.

All sorts of valuable materials relative to the geography of Russia passed through my hands in the Geographical Society, and the idea gradually came to me of writing an exhaustive physical geography of

that immense part of the world. My intention was to give a thorough geographical description of the country, basing it upon the main lines of the surface structure which I began to disentangle for European Russia; and to sketch in that description the different forms of economic life which ought to prevail in different physical regions. Take, for instance, the wide prairies of Southern Russia, so often visited by droughts and failures of crops. These droughts and failures must not be treated as accidental calamities: they are as much a natural feature of that region as its position on a southern slope, its fertility, and the rest; and the whole of the economic life of the southern prairies ought to be organized in prevision of the unavoidable recurrence of periodical droughts. Each region of the Russian Empire ought to be treated in the same scientific way, as Karl Ritter treated parts of Asia in his beautiful monographs.

But such a work would have required plenty of time and full freedom for the writer, and I often thought how helpful to this end it would be were I to occupy some day the position of secretary to the Geographical Society. Now, in the autumn of 1871, as I was working in Finland, slowly moving on foot toward the sea coast along the newly built railway, and closely watching the spot where the first unmistakable traces of the former extension of the post-glacial sea would appear, I received a telegram from the Geographical Society: 'The council begs you to accept the position of secretary to the Society.' At the same time the outgoing secretary strongly urged me to accept the proposal.

My hopes were realized. But in the meantime

other thoughts and other longings had pervaded my mind. I seriously thought over the reply, and wired, 'Most cordial thanks, but cannot accept.'

III

It often happens that men pull in a certain political, social, or familiar harness simply because they never have time to ask themselves whether the position they stand in and the work they accomplish are right; whether their occupations really suit their inner desires and capacities, and give them the satisfaction which everyone has the right to expect from his work. Active men are especially liable to find themselves in such a position. Every day brings with it a fresh batch of work, and a man throws himself into his bed late at night without having completed what he expected to have done; then in the morning he hurries to the unfinished task of the previous day. Life goes, and there is no time left to think, no time to consider the direction that one's life is taking. So it was with me.

But now, during my journey in Finland, I had leisure. When I was crossing in a Finnish two-wheeled *karria* some plain which offered no interest to the geologist, or when I was walking, hammer on shoulder, from one gravel pit to another, I could think; and, amidst the undoubtedly interesting geological work I was carrying on, one idea, which appealed far more

strongly to my inner self than geology, persistently worked in my mind.

I saw what an immense amount of labour the Finnish peasant spends in clearing the land and in breaking up the hard boulder clay, and I said to myself, 'I will write, let me say, the physical geography of this part of Russia, and tell the peasant the best means of cultivating this soil. Here an American stump-extractor would be invaluable; there certain methods of manuring would be indicated by science. . . . But what is the use of talking to this peasant about American machines, when he has barely enough bread to live upon from one crop to the next; when the rent which he has to pay for that boulder clay grows heavier and heavier in proportion to his success in improving the soil? He gnaws at his hard-as-a-stone rye-flour cake, which he bakes twice a year; he has with it a morsel of fearfully salted cod and a drink of skimmed milk. How dare I talk to him of American machines, when all that he can raise must be sold to pay rent and taxes? He needs me to live with him, to help him to become the owner or the free occupier of that land. Then he will read books with profit, but not now.'

And my thoughts wandered from Finland to our Nikólskoye peasants, whom I had lately seen. Now they are free, and they value freedom very much. But they have no meadows. In one way or another the landlords have got nearly all the meadows for themselves. When I was a child the Savókhins used to send out six horses for night pasture; the Tolkachóffs had seven. Now these families have only three horses each; other families, which formerly had three horses,

have only one or none. What can be done with one miserable horse? No meadows, no horses, no manure! How can I talk to them of grass-sowing? They are already ruined—poor as Lazarus—and in a few years they will be made still poorer by a foolish taxation. How happy they were when I told them that my father gave them permission to mow the grass in the small open spaces in his Kóstino forest! ‘Your Nikólskoye peasants are *ferocious* for work,’ that is the common saying about them in our neighbourhood; but the arable land, which our step-mother has taken out of their allotments in virtue of the ‘law of minimum’—that diabolic clause introduced by the serf-owners when they were allowed to revise the emancipation law—is now a forest of thistles, and the ‘ferocious’ workers are not allowed to till it. And the same sort of thing goes on throughout Russia. Even at that time it was evident, and official commissioners gave warning of it, that the first serious failure of crops in Middle Russia would result in a terrible famine—and famine came, in 1876, in 1884, in 1891, in 1895, and again in 1898.

Science is an excellent thing. I knew its joys and valued them, perhaps more than many of my colleagues did. Even now, as I was looking on the lakes and the hillocks of Finland, new and beautiful generalizations arose before my eyes. I saw in a remote past, at the very dawn of mankind, the ice accumulating from year to year in the northern archipelagoes, over Scandinavia and Finland. An immense growth of ice invaded the north of Europe and slowly spread as far as its middle portions. Life dwindled in that

part of the northern hemisphere, and, wretchedly poor, uncertain, it fled further and further south before the icy breath which came from that immense frozen mass. Man—miserable, weak, ignorant—had every difficulty in maintaining a precarious existence. Ages passed away, till the melting of the ice began, and with it came the lake period, when countless lakes were formed in the cavities, and a wretched subpolar vegetation began timidly to invade the unfathomable marshes with which every lake was surrounded. Another series of ages passed before an extremely slow process of drying up set in, and vegetation began its slow invasion from the south. And now we are fully in the period of a rapid desiccation, accompanied by the formation of dry prairies and steppes, and man has to find out the means to put a check to that desiccation to which Central Asia already has fallen a victim, and which menaces South-Eastern Europe.

Belief in an ice cap reaching Middle Europe was at that time rank heresy; but before my eyes a grand picture was rising, and I wanted to draw it, with the thousands of details I saw in it; to use it as a key to the present distribution of floras and faunas; to open up new horizons to geology and physical geography.

But what right had I to these higher joys, when all round me was nothing but misery and struggle for a mouldy bit of bread; when whatsoever I should spend to enable me to live in that world of higher emotions must needs be taken from the very mouths of those who grew the wheat and had not bread enough for their children? From somebody's mouth it must be taken, because the aggregate production of mankind remains still so low.

Knowledge is an immense power. Man must know. But we already know much ! What if that knowledge—and only that—should become the possession of all ? Would not science itself progress in leaps and cause mankind to make strides in production, invention, and social creation, of which we are hardly in a condition now to measure the speed ?

The masses want to know : they are willing to learn ; they *can* learn. There, on the crest of that immense moraine which runs between the lakes, as if giants had heaped it up in a hurry to connect the two shores, there stands a Finnish peasant plunged in contemplation of the beautiful lakes, studded with islands, which lie before him. Not one of these peasants, poor and downtrodden though they may be, will pass this spot without stopping to admire the scene. Or there, on the shore of a lake, stands another peasant, and sings something so beautiful that the best musician would envy him his melody for its feeling and its meditative power. Both deeply feel, both meditate, both think ; they are ready to widen their knowledge : only give it to them ; only give them the means of getting leisure. This is the direction in which, and these are the kind of people for whom, I must work. All those sonorous phrases about making mankind progress, while at the same time the progress-makers stand aloof from those whom they pretend to push onwards, are mere sophisms made up by minds anxious to shake off a fretting contradiction.

So I sent my negative reply to the Geographical Society.

IV

ST. PETERSBURG had changed greatly from what it was when I left it in 1862. 'Oh yes, you knew the St. Petersburg of Chernyshévsky,' the poet Máikoff remarked to me once. True, I knew the St. Petersburg of which Chernyshévsky was the favourite. But how shall I describe the city which I found on my return? Perhaps as the St. Petersburg of the *cafés chantants*, of the music halls, if the words 'all St. Petersburg' ought really to mean the upper circles of society, which took their keynote from the Court.

At the Court, and in its circles, liberal ideas were in sorely bad repute. All prominent men of the sixties, even such moderates as Count Nicholas Muravióff and Nicholas Milútin, were treated as suspects. Only Dmítri Milútin, the Minister of War, was kept by Alexander II. at his post, because the reform which he had to accomplish in the army required many years for its realization. All other active men of the reform period had been brushed aside.

I spoke once with a high dignitary of the Ministry for foreign affairs. He sharply criticized another high functionary, and I remarked in the latter's defence, 'Still there is this to be said for him, that he never accepted service under Nicholas I.' 'And now he is in service under the reign of Shuváloff and Trépoff!' was the reply, which so correctly described the situation that I could say nothing more.

General Shuváloff, the chief of the State police, and General Trépoff, the chief of the St. Petersburg police, were indeed the real rulers of Russia. Alexander II. was their executive, their tool. And they ruled by fear. Trépoff had so frightened Alexander by the spectre of a revolution which was going to break out at St. Petersburg, that if the omnipotent chief of the police was a few minutes late in appearing with his daily report at the palace, the Emperor would ask, 'Is everything quiet at St. Petersburg?'

Shortly after Alexander II. had given an 'entire dismissal' to Princess X. he conceived a warm friendship for general Fleury, the aide-de-camp of Napoleon III., that sinister man who was the soul of the *coup d'état* of December 2, 1852. They were continually seen together, and Fleury once informed the Parisians of the great honour which was bestowed upon him by the Russian Tsar. As the latter was riding along the Nevsky Perspective he saw Fleury, and asked him to mount into his carriage, an *égoïste* which had a seat only twelve inches wide, for a single person; and the French general recounted at length how the Tsar and he, holding fast to each other, had to leave half of their bodies hanging in the air on account of the narrowness of the seat. It is enough to name this friend, fresh from Compiègne, to suggest what the friendship meant.

Shuváloff took every advantage of the present state of mind of his master. He prepared one reactionary measure after another, and when Alexander showed reluctance to sign any of them Shuváloff would speak of the coming revolution and the fate of Louis XVI.,

and, 'for the salvation of the dynasty,' would implore him to sign the new additions to the laws of repression. For all that sadness and remorse would from time to time besiege Alexander. He would fall into a gloomy melancholy, and speak in a sad tone of the brilliant beginning of his reign, and of the reactionary character which it was taking. Then Shuváloff would organize an especially lively bear hunt. Hunters, merry courtiers, and carriages full of ballet girls would go to the forests of Nóvgorod. A couple of bears would be killed by Alexander II., who was a good shot and used to let the animal approach to within a few yards of his rifle; and there, in the excitement of the hunting festivities, Shuváloff would obtain his master's consent to any scheme of repression which he had concocted.

Alexander II. certainly was not a rank and file man, but two different men lived in him, both strongly developed, struggling with each other; and this inner struggle became more and more violent as he advanced in age. He could be charming in his behaviour, and the next moment display sheer brutality. He was possessed of a calm, reasoned courage in the face of a real danger, but he lived in constant fear of dangers which existed in his brain only. He assuredly was not a coward; he would meet a bear face to face; on one occasion, when the animal was not killed outright by his first bullet, and the man who stood behind him with a lance, rushing forward, was knocked down by the bear, the Tsar came to his rescue, and killed the bear close to the muzzle of his gun (I know this from the man himself); yet he was haunted all his life by

the fears of his own imagination and of an uneasy conscience. He was very kind in his manner toward his friends, but that kindness existed side by side with the terrible cold-blooded cruelty—a seventeenth-century cruelty—which he displayed in crushing the Polish insurrection, and later on in 1880, when similar measures were taken to crush the revolt of the Russian youth—a cruelty of which no one would have thought him capable. He thus lived a double life, and at the period of which I am speaking he merrily signed the most reactionary decrees, and afterward became despondent about them. Towards the end of his life this inner struggle, as will be seen later on, became still stronger, and assumed an almost tragical character.

In 1872 Shuváloff was nominated ambassador in England, but his friend General Potápoff continued the same policy till the beginning of the Turkish war in 1877. During all this time the most scandalous plundering of the State exchequer, and also of the Crown lands, of the estates confiscated in Lithuania after the insurrection, of the Bashkir lands in Orenbúrg, and so on, was proceeding on a grand scale. Several such scandals were subsequently brought to light and some of them were judged by the Senate, acting as high court of justice, after Potápoff, who became insane, and Trépoff had been dismissed, and their rivals at the palace wanted to show them to Alexander II. in their true light. In one of these judicial inquiries it came out that a friend of Potápoff had most shamelessly robbed the peasants of a Lithuanian estate of their lands, and afterward, empowered by his friends at the Ministry of the Interior, he had caused the peasants, who sought redress,

to be imprisoned, subjected to wholesale flogging, and shot down by the troops. This was one of the most revolting stories of the kind even in the annals of Russia, which teem with similar robberies up to the present time. It was only after Véra Zasúlich had shot at Trépoff and wounded him (to avenge his having ordered one of the political prisoners to be flogged in prison) that the thefts of this party became widely known and Trépoff was dismissed. Thinking he was going to die, he wrote his will, from which it became known that this man, who had made the Tsar believe he was poor, even though he had occupied for years the lucrative post of chief of the St. Petersburg police, left in reality to his heirs a considerable fortune. Some courtiers carried the report to Alexander II. Trépoff lost his credit, and it was then that a few of the robberies of the Shuváloff-Potápoff-Trépoff party were brought before the Senate.

The pillage which went on in all the ministries, especially in connection with the railways and all sorts of industrial enterprises, was really enormous. Immense fortunes were made at that time. The navy, as Alexander II. himself said to one of his sons, was 'in the pockets of So-and-so.' The cost of the railways, guaranteed by the State, was simply fabulous. As to commercial enterprises, it was openly known that none could be launched unless a specified percentage of the dividends was promised to different functionaries in the several ministries. A friend of mine, who intended to start some enterprise at St. Petersburg, was frankly told at the Ministry of the Interior that he would have

to pay twenty-five per cent. of the net profits to a certain person, fifteen per cent. to one man at the Ministry of Finances, ten per cent. to another man in the same ministry, and five per cent. to a fourth person. The bargains were made without concealment, and Alexander II. knew it. His own remarks, written on the reports of the Comptroller-General, bear testimony to this. But he saw in the thieves his protectors from the revolution, and kept them until their robberies became an open scandal.

The young grand dukes, with the exception of the heir-apparent, afterwards Alexander III., who always was a good and thrifty *paterfamilias*, followed the example of the head of the family. The orgies which one of them used to arrange in a small restaurant on the Nevsky Perspective were so degradingly notorious that one night the chief of the police had to interfere and warned the owner of the restaurant that he would be marched to Siberia if he ever again let his 'grand duke's room' to the grand duke. 'Imagine my perplexity,' this man said to me on one occasion, when he was showing me that room, the walls and ceiling of which were upholstered with thick satin cushions. 'On the one side I had to offend a member of the Imperial Family, who could do with me what he liked, and on the other side General Trépoff menaced me with Siberia! Of course I obeyed the General; he is, as you know, omnipotent now.' Another grand duke became conspicuous for ways belonging to the domain of psychopathy; and a third was exiled to Turkestan, after he had stolen the diamonds of his mother.

The Empress Marie Alexandrovna, abandoned by

her husband, and probably horrified at the turn which Court life was taking, became more and more a devotee, and soon she was entirely in the hands of the palace priest, a representative of a quite new type in the Russian Church—the Jesuitic. This new genus of well-combed, depraved, and Jesuitic clergy made rapid progress at that time ; already they were working hard and with success to become a power in the State and to lay hands on the schools.

It has been proved over and over again that the village clergy in Russia are so much taken up by their functions—performing baptisms and marriages, administering Communion to the dying, and so on—that they cannot pay due attention to the schools ; even when the priest is paid for giving the Scripture lesson at a village school he usually passes that lesson to some one else, as he has no time to attend to it himself. Nevertheless the higher clergy, exploiting the hatred of Alexander II. toward the so-called revolutionary spirit, began their campaign for laying their hands upon the schools. ‘ No schools unless clerical ones ’ became their motto. All Russia wanted education, but even the ridiculously small sum of two million roubles included every year in the State budget for primary schools used *not* to be spent by the Ministry of Public Instruction, while nearly as much was given to the Synod as an aid for establishing schools under the village clergy—schools most of which existed, and now exist, on paper only.

All Russia wanted technical education, but the Ministry opened only classical gymnasia, because formidable courses of Latin and Greek were considered

the best means of preventing the pupils from reading and thinking. In these gymnasia only two or three per cent. of the pupils succeeded in completing an eight years' course, all boys promising to become something and to show some independence of thought being carefully sifted out before they could reach the last form, and all sorts of measures were taken to *reduce* the numbers of pupils. Education was considered as a sort of luxury, for the few only. At the same time the Ministry of Education was engaged in a continuous, passionate struggle against all private persons and institutions—district and county councils, municipalities, and the like—which endeavoured to open teachers' seminaries or technical schools, or even simple primary schools. Technical education—in a country which was so much in want of engineers, educated agriculturists, and geologists—was treated as equivalent to revolutionism. It was prohibited, prosecuted; so that up to the present time, every autumn, something like two or three thousand young men are refused admission to the higher technical schools from mere lack of vacancies. A feeling of despair took possession of all those who wished to do anything useful in public life; while the peasantry were ruined at an appalling rate by over-taxation, and by 'beating out' of them the arrears of the taxes by means of semi-military executions, which ruined them for ever. Only those governors of the provinces were in favour at the capital who managed to beat out the taxes in the most severe ways.

Such was the official St. Petersburg. Such was the influence it exercised upon Russia.

V

WHEN we were leaving Siberia we often talked, my brother and I, of the intellectual life which we should find at St. Petersburg, and of the interesting acquaintances we should make in the literary circles. We made such acquaintances, indeed, both among the radicals and among the moderate Slavophiles; but I must confess that they were rather disappointing. We found plenty of excellent men—Russia is full of excellent men—but they did not quite correspond to our ideal of political writers. The best writers—Chernyshévsky, Mikháiloff, Lavróff—were in exile, or were kept in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, like Písareff. Others, taking a gloomy view of the situation, had changed their ideas, and were leaning toward a sort of paternal absolutism; while the greater number, though holding still to their beliefs, had become so cautious in expressing them that their prudence was almost equal to desertion.

At the height of the reform period nearly everyone in the advanced literary circles had had some relations either with Herzen or with Turguéneff and his friends, or with the 'Great Russian' or the 'Land and Freedom' secret societies, which had at that period an ephemeral existence. Now, these same men were only the more anxious to bury their former sympathies as deep as possible, so as to appear above political suspicion.

One or two of the liberal reviews which were

tolerated at that time, owing chiefly to the superior diplomatic talents of their editors, contained excellent material, showing the ever growing misery and the desperate conditions of the great mass of the peasants, and making clear enough the obstacles that were put in the way of every progressive worker. The amount of such facts was enough to drive one to despair. But no one dared to suggest any remedy, or to hint at any field of action, at any outcome from a position which was represented as hopeless. Some writers still cherished the hope that Alexander II. would once more assume the character of reformer; but with the majority the fear of seeing their reviews suppressed, and both editors and contributors marched 'to some more or less remote part of the empire,' dominated all other feelings. Fear and hope equally paralysed them.

The more radical they had been ten years before, the greater were their fears. My brother and I were very well received in one or two literary circles, and we went occasionally to their friendly gatherings; but the moment the conversation began to lose its frivolous character, or my brother, who had a great talent for raising serious questions, directed it toward home affairs, or toward the state of France, where Napoleon III was hastening to his fall in 1870, some sort of interruption was sure to occur. 'What do you think, gentlemen, of the latest performance of "*La Belle Hélène*"?' or, 'What is your opinion of that cured fish?' was loudly asked by one of the elder guests, and the conversation was brought to an end.

Outside the literary circles things were even worse. In the sixties Russia, especially in St. Petersburg,

was full of men of advanced opinions, who seemed ready at that time to make any sacrifices for their ideas. 'What has become of them?' I asked myself. I looked up some of them; but, 'Prudence, young man!' was all they had to say. 'Iron is stronger than straw,' or 'One cannot break a stone wall with his forehead,' and similar proverbs, unfortunately too numerous in the Russian language, constituted now their code of practical philosophy. 'We have done something in our life: ask no more from us;' or, 'Have patience: this sort of thing will not last,' they told us, while we, the youth, were ready to resume the struggle, to act, to risk, to sacrifice everything, if necessary, and only asked them to give us advice, some guidance and some intellectual support.

Turguéneff has depicted in 'Smoke' some of the ex-reformers from the upper layers of society, and his picture is disheartening. But it is especially in the heart-rending novels and sketches of Madame Kohanóvskaya, who wrote under the pseudonym of 'V. Krestóvsky' (she must not be confounded with another novel-writer, Vsévolod Krestóvsky), that one can follow the many aspects which the degradation of the 'liberals of the sixties' took at that time. 'The joy of living'—perhaps the joy of having survived—became their goddess, as soon as the nameless crowd which ten years before made the force of the reform movement refused to hear any more of 'all that sentimentalism.' They hastened to enjoy the riches which poured into the hands of 'practical' men.

Many new ways to fortune had been opened since serfdom had been abolished, and the crowd rushed with

eagerness into these channels. Railways were feverishly made in Russia ; to the lately opened private banks the landlords went in numbers to mortgage their estates ; the newly established private notaries and lawyers at the courts were in the possession of large incomes ; the shareholders' companies multiplied with an appalling rapidity and the promoters flourished. A class of men who formerly would have lived in the country on the modest income of a small estate cultivated by a hundred serfs, or on the still more modest salary of a functionary in a law court, now made fortunes, or had such yearly incomes as in the times of serfdom were possible only for the land magnates.

The very tastes of 'society' sank lower and lower. The Italian Opera, formerly a forum for radical demonstrations, was now deserted ; the Russian Opera, timidly asserting the rights of its great composers, was frequented by a few enthusiasts only. Both were found 'tedious,' and the cream of St. Petersburg society crowded to a vulgar theatre where the second-rate stars of the Paris small theatres won easy laurels from their *jeunesse dorée* admirers, or went to see 'La Belle Hélène,' which was played on the Russian stage, while our great dramatists were forgotten. Offenbach's music reigned supreme.

It must be said that the political atmosphere was such that the best men had reasons, or had at least weighty excuses, for keeping quiet. After Karakózzoff had shot at Alexander II. in April 1866 the State police had become omnipotent. Everyone suspected of 'radicalism,' no matter what he had done or what he

had not done, had to live under the fear of being arrested any night for the sympathy he might have shown to some one involved in this or that political affair, or for an innocent letter intercepted in a midnight search, or simply for his 'dangerous' opinions; and arrest for political reasons might mean anything—years of seclusion in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, transportation to Siberia, or even torture in the casemates of the fortress.

This movement of the circles of Karakózoff remains up to this date very imperfectly known, even in Russia. I was at that time in Siberia, and know of it only by hearsay. It appears, however, that two different currents combined in it. One of them was the beginning of that great movement 'towards the people' which later on took such a formidable extension, while the other current was mainly political. Groups of young men, some of whom were on the road to become brilliant university professors, or men of mark as historians and ethnographers, had come together about 1864, with the intention of carrying to the people education and knowledge in spite of the opposition of the Government. They went as mere artisans to great industrial towns, and started there co-operative associations, as well as informal schools, hoping that by the exercise of much tact and patience they might be able to educate the people, and thus to create the first centres from which better and higher conceptions would gradually radiate amongst the masses. Their zeal was great; considerable fortunes were brought into the service of the cause; and I am inclined to think that, compared with all similar movements which

took place later on, this one stood perhaps on the most practical basis. Its initiators certainly were very near to the working people.

On the other side, with some of the members of these circles—Karakózoff, Ishútín, and their nearest friends—the movement took a political direction. During the years from 1862 to 1866 the policy of Alexander II. had assumed a decidedly reactionary character; he had surrounded himself with men of the most reactionary type, taking them as his nearest advisers; the very reforms which made the glory of the beginning of his reign were now wrecked wholesale by means of by-laws and ministerial circulars: a return to manorial justice and serfdom in a disguised form was openly expected in the old camp; while no one could hope at that time that the main reform—the abolition of serfdom—could withstand the assaults directed against it from the Winter Palace itself. All this must have brought Karakózoff and his friends to the idea that a further continuance of Alexander II.'s reign would be a menace even to the little that had been won; that Russia would have to return to the horrors of Nicholas I. if Alexander continued to rule. Great hopes were felt at the same time—this is 'an often repeated story, but always new'—as to the liberal inclinations of the heir to the throne and his uncle Constantine. I must also say that before 1866 such fears and such considerations were not unfrequently expressed in much higher circles than those with which Karakózoff seems to have been in contact. At any rate Karakózoff shot at Alexander II. one day, as he was coming out of the Summer Garden to take his

carriage. The shot missed, and Karakózzoff was arrested on the spot.

Katkóff, the leader of the Moscow reactionary party, and a great master in extracting pecuniary profits from every political disturbance, at once accused all radicals and liberals of complicity with Karakózzoff—which was certainly false—and insinuated in his paper—making all Moscow believe it—that Karakózzoff was a mere instrument in the hands of the Grand Duke Constantine, the leader of the reform party in the highest spheres. One can imagine how the two rulers, Shuváloff and Trépoff, exploited these accusations and the fears of Alexander II.

Mikhael Muravióff, who had won during the Polish insurrection his nickname of 'the Hangman,' received orders to make a most searching inquiry, and to discover by every possible means the plot which was supposed to exist. He made arrests in all classes of society, ordered hundreds of searches, and boasted that he 'would find the means to render the prisoners more talkative.' He certainly was not the man to recoil even before torture; and public opinion in St. Petersburg was almost unanimous in saying that Karakózzoff was tortured to obtain avowals, but made none.

State secrets are well kept in fortresses, especially in that huge mass of stone opposite the Winter Palace, which has seen so many horrors, only in recent times disclosed by historians. It still keeps Muravióff's secrets. However the following may perhaps throw some light on this matter.

In 1866 I was in Siberia. One of our Siberian officers, who travelled from Russia to Irkútsk toward

the end of that year, met at a post station two gendarmes. They had accompanied to Siberia a functionary exiled for theft, and were now returning home. Our Irkútsk officer, who was a very amiable man, finding the gendarmes at the tea table on a cold winter night, joined them and chatted with them while the horses were being changed. One of the men knew Karakó-zoff.

‘He was cunning, he was,’ he said. ‘When he was in the fortress we were ordered, two of us—we were relieved every two hours—not to let him sleep. So we kept him sitting on a small stool, and as soon as he began to doze we shook him to keep him awake. . . . What will you? we were ordered to do so! . . . Well, see how cunning he was: he would sit with crossed legs, swinging one of his legs to make us believe that he was awake, and himself, in the meantime, would get a nap, continuing to swing his leg. But we soon made it out and told those who relieved us, so that he was shaken and waked up every few minutes, whether he swung his legs or not.’ ‘And how long did that last?’ my friend asked. ‘Oh, many days—more than one week.’

The naïve character of this description is in itself a proof of veracity: it could not have been invented; and that Karakó-zoff was tortured to this degree may be taken for granted.

When Karakó-zoff was hanged one of my comrades from the corps of pages was present at the execution with his regiment of cuirassiers. ‘When he was taken out of the fortress,’ my comrade told me, ‘sitting on the high platform of the cart which was jolting on the

rough glacis of the fortress, my first impression was that they were bringing out an india-rubber doll to be hanged, that Karakózzoff was already dead. Imagine that the head, the hands, the whole body were absolutely loose, as if there were no bones in the body, or as if the bones had all been broken. It was a terrible thing to see, and to think what it meant. However, when two soldiers took him down from the cart I saw that he moved his legs and made strenuous endeavours to walk by himself and to ascend the steps of the scaffold. So it was not a doll, nor could he have been in a swoon. All the officers were very much puzzled at the circumstance and could not explain it.' When, however, I suggested to my comrade that perhaps Karakózzoff had been tortured the colour came into his face, and he replied, 'So we all thought.'

Absence of sleep for weeks would alone be sufficient to explain the state in which that morally very strong man was during the execution. I may add that I have the absolute certitude that—at least in one case—drugs were administered to a prisoner in the fortress—namely, 'Sabúroff,' in 1879. Did Muravióff limit the torture to this only? Was he prevented from going any further, or not? I do not know. But this much I know: that I often heard from high officials at St. Petersburg that torture had been resorted to in this case.

Muravióff had promised to root out all radical elements in St. Petersburg, and all those who had had in any degree a radical past now lived under the fear of falling into the despot's clutches. Above all they kept

aloof from the younger people, from fear of being involved with them in some perilous political associations. In this way a chasm was opened not only between the 'fathers' and the 'sons,' as Turguéneff described it in his novel, not only between the two generations, but also between all men who had passed the age of thirty and those who were in their early twenties. Russian youth stood consequently in the position not only of having to fight in their fathers the defenders of serfdom, but of being left entirely to themselves by their elder brothers, who were unwilling to join them in their leanings toward socialism, and were afraid to give them support even in their struggle for more political freedom. Was there ever before in history, I ask myself, a youthful band engaging in a fight against so formidable a foe, so deserted by fathers and even by elder brothers, although those young men had merely taken to heart, and had tried to realize in life, the intellectual inheritance of these same fathers and brothers? Was there ever a struggle undertaken in more tragical conditions than these?

VI

THE only bright point which I saw in the life of St. Petersburg was the movement which was going on amongst the youth of both sexes. Various currents joined to produce the mighty agitation which soon took

an underground and revolutionary character, and engrossed the attention of Russia for the next fifteen years. I shall speak of it in a subsequent chapter; but I must mention in this place the movement which was carried on, quite openly, by our women for obtaining access to higher education. St. Petersburg was at that time its main centre.

Every afternoon the young wife of my brother, on her return from the women's pedagogical courses which she followed, had something new to tell us about the animation which prevailed there. Schemes were laid for opening a medical academy and universities for women; debates upon schools or upon different methods of education were organized in connection with the courses, and hundreds of women took a passionate interest in these questions, discussing them over and over again in private. Societies of translators, publishers, printers, and bookbinders were started, in order that work might be provided for the poorest members of the sisterhood who flocked to St. Petersburg, ready to do any sort of work, only to live in the hope that they, too, would some day have their share of higher education. A vigorous, exuberant life reigned in those feminine centres, in striking contrast to what I met with elsewhere.

Since the Government had shown its determined intention not to admit women to the existing universities they had directed all their efforts toward opening universities of their own. They were told at the Ministry of Education that the girls who had passed through the girls' gymnasia (the high schools) were not prepared to follow university lectures. 'Very well,'

they replied, 'permit us to open intermediate courses, preparatory to the university, and impose upon us any programme you like. We ask no grants from the State. Only give us the permission, and it will be done.' Of course the permission was not given.

Then they started private courses and drawing-room lectures in all parts of St. Petersburg. Many university professors, in sympathy with the new movement, volunteered to give lectures. Poor men themselves, they warned the organizers that any mention of remuneration would be taken as a personal offence. Natural science excursions used to be made every summer in the neighbourhood of St. Petersburg, under the guidance of university professors, and women constituted the bulk of the excursionists. In the courses for midwives they forced the professors to treat each subject in a far more exhaustive way than was required by the programme, or to open additional courses. They took advantage of every possibility, of every breach in the fortress, to storm it. They gained admission to the anatomical laboratory of old Dr. Gruber, and by their admirable work they won this enthusiast of anatomy entirely to their side. If they learned that a professor had no objection to letting them work in his laboratory on Sundays and at night on week days, they took advantage of the opening, working late on week days and all day on Sunday.

At last, notwithstanding all the opposition of the Ministry, they opened the intermediate courses, only giving them the name of pedagogical courses. Was it possible, indeed, to forbid future mothers studying the methods of education? But as the

methods of teaching botany or mathematics could not be taught in the abstract, botany, mathematics, and the rest were soon introduced into the curriculum of the pedagogical courses, which became preparatory for the university.

Step by step the women thus widened their rights. As soon as it became known that at some German university a certain professor might open his lecture room to a few women, they knocked at his door and were admitted. They studied law and history at Heidelberg, and mathematics at Berlin; at Zürich more than a hundred girls and women worked at the University and the Polytechnicum. There they won something more valuable than the degree of Doctor of Medicine; they won the esteem of the most learned professors, who expressed it publicly several times. When I came to Zürich in 1872, and became acquainted with some of the students, I was astonished to see quite young girls, who were studying at the Polytechnicum, solving intricate problems of the theory of heat, with the aid of the differential calculus, as easily as if they had had years of mathematical training. One of the Russian girls who studied mathematics under Weierstrass at Berlin, Sophie Kovalévsky, became a mathematician of high repute, and was invited to a professorship at Stockholm; she was, I believe, the first woman in our century to hold a professorship in a university for men. She was so young that in Sweden no one wanted to call her anything but by her diminutive name of Sónya.

In spite of the open hatred of Alexander II. for educated women—when he met in his walks a girl

wearing spectacles and a round Garibaldian cap he began to tremble, thinking that she must be a Nihilist bent on shooting him—in spite of the bitter opposition of the State police, who represented every woman student as a revolutionist; in spite of the thunders and the vile accusations which Katkóff directed against the whole of the movement in almost every number of his venomous gazette, the women succeeded, in the teeth of the Government, in opening a series of educational institutions. When several of them had obtained medical degrees abroad they forced the Government, in 1872, to let them open a medical academy with their own private means. And when the Russian women were recalled by their Government from Zürich, to prevent their intercourse with the revolutionist refugees, they forced the Government to let them open in Russia four universities of their own, which soon had nearly a thousand pupils. It seems almost incredible, but it is a fact that notwithstanding all the prosecutions which the Women's Medical Academy had to live through, and its temporary closure, there are now in Russia more than six hundred and seventy women practising as doctors.

It was certainly a grand movement, astounding in its success and instructive in a high degree. Above all it was through the unlimited devotion of a mass of women in all possible capacities that they gained their successes. They had already worked as sisters of charity during the Crimean war, as organizers of schools later on, as the most devoted schoolmistresses in the villages, as educated midwives and doctors'

assistants amongst the peasants. They went afterward as nurses and doctors in the fever-stricken hospitals during the Turkish war of 1878, and won the admiration of the military commanders and of Alexander II. himself. I know two ladies, both very eagerly 'wanted' by the State police, who served as nurses during the war, under assumed names which were guaranteed by false passports; one of them, the greater 'criminal' of the two, who had taken a prominent part in my escape, was even appointed head nurse of a large hospital for wounded soldiers, while her friend nearly died from typhoid fever. In short, women took any position, no matter how low in the social scale, and no matter what privations it involved, if only they could be in any way useful to the people; not a few of them, but hundreds and thousands. They have *conquered* their rights in the true sense of the word.

Another feature of this movement was that in it the chasm between the two generations—the older and the younger sisters—did not exist; or, at least, it was bridged over to a great extent. Those who were the leaders of the movement from its origin never broke the link which connected them with their younger sisters, even though the latter were far more advanced in their ideals than the older women were.

They pursued their aims in the higher spheres; they kept strictly aloof from any political agitation; but they never committed the fault of forgetting that their true force was in the masses of younger women, of whom a great number finally joined the radical or revolutionary circles. These leaders were correctness itself—I considered them too correct—but they did not

break with those younger students who went about as typical Nihilists, with short-cropped hair, disdaining crinoline, and betraying their democratic spirit in all their behaviour. The leaders did not mix with them, and occasionally there was friction, but they never repudiated them—a great thing, I believe, in those times of madly raging prosecutions.

They seemed to say to the younger and more democratic people, 'We shall wear our velvet dresses and chignons, because we have to deal with fools who see in a velvet dress and a chignon the tokens of "political reliability;" but you, girls, remain free in your tastes and inclinations.' When the women who studied at Zürich were ordered by the Russian Government to return, these correct ladies did not turn against the rebels. They simply said to the Government, 'You don't like it? Well, then, open women's universities at home; otherwise our girls will go abroad in still greater numbers, and of course will enter into relations with the political refugees.' When they were reproached with breeding revolutionists, and were menaced with the closing of their academy and universities, they retorted, 'Yes, many students become revolutionists; but is that a reason for closing all universities?' How few political leaders have the moral courage not to turn against the more advanced wing of their own party!

The real secret of their wise and fully successful attitude was that none of the women who were the soul of that movement were mere 'feminists,' desirous to get their share of the privileged positions in society and the State. Far from that. The sympathies of

most of them went with the masses. I remember the lively part which Miss Stásova, the veteran leader of the agitation, took in the Sunday schools in 1861, the friendships she and her friends made among the factory girls, the interest they manifested in the hard life of those girls outside the school, the fights they fought against their greedy employers. I recall the keen interest which the women showed, at their pedagogical courses, in the village schools and in the work of those few who, like Baron Korff, were permitted for some time to do something in that direction, and the social spirit which permeated their courses. The rights they strove for—both the leaders and the great bulk of the women—were not only the individual right to higher instruction, but much more, far more, the right to be useful workers among the people, the masses. This was why they succeeded to such an extent.

VII

FOR the last few years the health of my father had been going from bad to worse, and when my brother Alexander and I came to see him, in the spring of 1871, we were told by the doctors that with the first frosts of autumn he would be gone. He had continued to live in the old style, in the Stáraya Konúshennaya, but around him everything in this aristocratic quarter had changed. The rich serf-owners, who once were so prominent there, had gone. After having spent in a

reckless way the redemption money which they had received at the emancipation of the serfs, and after having mortgaged and remortgaged their estates in the new land banks which preyed upon their helplessness, they had withdrawn at last to the country or to provincial towns, there to sink into oblivion. Their houses had been taken by 'the intruders'—rich merchants, railway contractors, and the like—while in nearly every one of the old families which remained in the Old Equerries' Quarters a young life struggled to assert its rights upon the ruins of the old one. A couple of retired generals, who cursed the new ways, and relieved their griefs by predicting for Russia a certain and speedy ruin under the new order, or some relative occasionally dropping in, were all the company my father had now. Out of our many relatives, numbering nearly a score of families at Moscow alone in my childhood, two families only had remained in the capital, and these had joined the current of the new life, the mothers discussing with their girls and boys such matters as schools for the people and women's universities. My father looked upon them with contempt. My step-mother and my younger step-sister, Pauline, who had not changed, did their best to comfort him; but they themselves felt strange in their unwonted surroundings.

My father had always been unkind and most unjust toward my brother Alexander, but Alexander was utterly incapable of holding a grudge against anyone. When he entered our father's sick-room, with the deep, kind look of his dark blue eyes and with a smile revealing his infinite kindness, and when he immediately

found out what could be done to render the sufferer more comfortable in his sick-chair, and did it as naturally as if he had left the sick-room only an hour before, my father was simply bewildered ; he stared at him without being able to understand. Our visit brought life into the dull, gloomy house ; nursing became more bright ; my step-mother, Pauline, the servants themselves, grew more animated, and my father felt the change.

One thing worried him, however. He had expected to see us come as repentant sons, imploring his support. But when he tried to direct conversation into that channel we stopped him with such a cheerful 'Don't bother about that ; we get on very nicely,' that he was still more bewildered. He looked for a scene in the old style—his sons begging pardon, and money—perhaps he even regretted for a moment that this did not happen ; but he regarded us with a greater esteem. We were all three affected at parting. He seemed almost to dread returning to his gloomy loneliness amidst the wreckage of a system he had lived to maintain. But Alexander had to go back to his service, and I was leaving for Finland.

When I was called home again, from Finland, I hurried to Moscow, to find the burial ceremony just beginning, in that same old red church where my father had been baptized, and where the last prayers had been said over his mother. As the funeral procession passed along the streets, of which every house was familiar to me in my childhood, I noticed that the houses had changed little, but I knew that in all of them a new life had begun.

In the house which had formerly belonged to our father's mother and then to Princess Mirski, and which now was bought by General N——, an old inhabitant of the Quarter, the only daughter of the family maintained for a couple of years a painful struggle against her good-natured but obstinate parents, who worshipped her but would not allow her to study at the university courses which had been opened for ladies at Moscow. At last she was allowed to join these courses, but was taken to them in an elegant carriage, under the close supervision of her mother, who courageously sat for hours on the benches amongst the students, by the side of her beloved daughter; and yet, notwithstanding all this care and watchfulness, a couple of years later the daughter joined the revolutionary party, was arrested, and spent one year in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul.

In the house opposite, the despotic heads of the family, Count and Countess Z——, were in a bitter struggle against their two daughters, who were sick of the idle and useless existence their parents forced them to lead, and who wanted to join those other girls who, free and happy, flocked to the university courses. The struggle lasted for years; the parents did not yield in this case, and the result of it was that the elder girl ended her life by poisoning herself, when her younger sister was allowed to follow her own inclinations.

In the house next door, which had been our family residence for a year, when I entered it with Tchaykóvsky to hold in it the first secret meeting of a circle which we founded at Moscow, I at once recognized the rooms which had been so familiar to me, in such a different

atmosphere, in my childhood. It now belonged to the family of Nathalie Armfeld, that highly sympathetic Kará 'convict' whom George Kennan has so touchingly described in his book on Siberia.

And in a house within a stone's throw of that where my father had died, and within a few months after his death, I received Stepniák, clothed as a peasant, he having escaped from a country village where he had been arrested for socialist propaganda amongst the peasants.

Such was the change which had been accomplished in the Old Equerries' Quarter within the last fifteen years. The last stronghold of the old nobility was now invaded by the new spirit.

VIII

THE next year, early in the spring, I made my first journey to Western Europe. In crossing the Russian frontier I experienced, even more intensely than I was prepared to do, what every Russian feels on leaving his mother country. So long as the train runs on Russian ground; through the thinly populated north-western provinces, one has the feeling of crossing a desert. Hundreds of miles are covered with low growths which hardly deserve the name of forests. Here and there the eye discovers a small, miserably poor village buried in the snow, or an impracticable, muddy, narrow, and winding village road. But everything—scenery

and surroundings—changes all of a sudden as soon as the train enters Prussia, with its clean-looking villages and farms, its gardens, and its paved roads ; and the sense of contrast grows stronger and stronger as one penetrates further into Germany. Even dull Berlin seemed animated after our Russian towns.

And the contrast of climate ! Two days before I had left St. Petersburg thickly covered with snow, and now, in Middle Germany, I walked without an overcoat along the railway platform, in warm sunshine, admiring the budding flowers. Then came the Rhine, and further on Switzerland, bathed in the rays of a bright sun, with its small, clean hotels, where breakfast was served out of doors, in view of the snow-clad mountains. I never before had realized so vividly what Russia's northern position meant, and how the history of the Russian nation had been influenced by the fact that the main centres of its life had to develop in high latitudes, as far north as the shores of the Gulf of Finland. Only then I fully understood the uncontrollable attraction which southern lands have exercised on the Russians, the colossal efforts which they have made to reach the Black Sea, and the steady pressure of the Siberian colonists southward, further into Manchuria.

At that time Zürich was full of Russian students, both women and men. The famous Oberstrass, near the Polytechnicum, was a corner of Russia, where the Russian language prevailed over all others. The students lived as most Russian students do, especially the women—that is, upon very little. Tea and bread,

some milk, and a thin slice of meat cooked over a spirit lamp, amidst animated discussions about the latest news of the socialistic world or the last book read, that was their regular fare. Those who had more money than was needed for such a mode of living gave it for the 'common cause'—the library, the Russian review which was going to be published, the support of the Swiss labour papers. As to their dress, the most parsimonious economy reigned in that direction. Púshkin has written in a well known verse, 'What hat may not suit a girl of sixteen?' Our girls at Zürich seemed defiantly to throw this question at the population of the old Zwinglian city: 'Can there be a simplicity in dress which does not become a girl, when she is young, intelligent, and full of energy?'

With all this the busy little community worked harder than any other students have ever worked since there were universities in existence, and the Zürich professors were never tired of showing the progress accomplished by the women at the university as an example to the male students.

For many years I had longed to learn all about the International Workingmen's Association. Russian papers mentioned it pretty frequently in their columns, but they were not allowed to speak of its principles or what it was doing. I felt that it must be a great movement, full of consequences, but I could not grasp its aims and tendencies. Now that I was in Switzerland I determined to satisfy my longings.

The Association was then at the height of its development. Great hopes had been awakened in the

years 1840-48 in the hearts of European workers. Only now we begin to realize what a formidable amount of socialist literature was circulated in those years by socialists of all denominations, Christian socialists, State socialists, Fourierists, Saint-Simonists, Owenites, and so on ; and only now we begin to understand the depth of that movement, and to discover how much of what our generation has considered the product of contemporary thought was already developed and said—often with great penetration—during those years. The republicans understood then under the name of ‘republic’ a quite different thing from the democratic organization of capitalist rule which now goes under that name. When they spoke of the United States of Europe they understood the brotherhood of workers, the weapons of war transformed into tools, and these tools used by all members of society for the benefit of all—‘the iron returned to the labourer,’ as Pierre Dupont said in one of his songs. They meant not only the reign of equality as regards criminal law and political rights, but particularly economic equality. The nationalists themselves saw in their dreams Young Italy, Young Germany, and Young Hungary taking the lead in far-reaching agrarian and economic reforms.

The defeat of the June insurrection at Paris, of Hungary by the armies of Nicholas I., and of Italy by the French and the Austrians, and the fearful reaction, political and intellectual, which followed everywhere in Europe, totally destroyed that movement. Its literature, its achievements, its very principles of economic

revolution and universal brotherhood were simply forgotten, lost, during the next twenty years.

However, one idea had survived—the idea of an international brotherhood of all the workers, which a few French emigrants continued to preach in the United States, and the followers of Robert Owen in England. The understanding which was reached by some English workers and a few French workers' delegates to the London International Exhibition of 1862 became then the starting point for a formidable movement, which soon spread all over Europe, and included several million workers. The hopes which had been dormant for twenty years were awakened once more, when the workers were called upon to unite, 'without distinction of creed, sex, nationality, race, or colour,' to proclaim that 'the emancipation of the workers must be their own work,' and to throw the weight of a strong, united, international organization into the evolution of mankind—not in the name of love and charity, but in the name of justice, of the force that belongs to a body of men moved by a reasoned consciousness of their own aims and aspirations.

Two strikes at Paris, in 1868 and 1869, more or less helped by small contributions sent from abroad, especially from England, insignificant though they were in themselves, and the prosecutions which the Imperial Government directed against the International, became the origin of an immense movement, in which the solidarity of the workers of all nations was proclaimed in the face of the rivalries of the States. The idea of an international union of all trades, and of a struggle against capital with the aid of international support,

carried away the most indifferent of the workers. The movement spread like wildfire in France, Belgium, Italy, and Spain, bringing to the front a great number of intelligent, active, and devoted workers, and attracting to it some decidedly superior men and women from the wealthier educated classes. A force, never before suspected to exist, grew stronger every day in Europe ; and if the movement had not been arrested in its growth by the Franco-German war, great things would probably have happened in Europe, deeply modifying the aspects of our civilization, and undoubtedly accelerating human progress. Unfortunately, the crushing victory of the Germans brought about abnormal conditions in Europe ; it stopped for a quarter of a century the normal development of France, and threw all Europe into a period of militarism, which we are still living in at the present moment.

All sorts of partial solutions of the great social question had currency at that time among the workers—co-operation, productive associations supported by the State, people's banks, gratuitous credit, and so on. Each of these solutions was brought before the 'sections' of the Association, and then before the local, regional, national, and international congresses, and eagerly discussed. Every annual congress of the Association marked a new step in advance, in the development of ideas about the great social problem which stands before our generation and calls for a solution. The amount of intelligent things which were said at these congresses, and of scientifically correct, deeply thought over ideas which were circu-

lated—all being the results of the *collective* thought of the workers—has never yet been sufficiently appreciated; but there is no exaggeration in saying that all schemes of social reconstruction which are now in vogue under the name of ‘scientific socialism’ or ‘anarchism’ had their origin in the discussions and reports of the different congresses of the International Association. The few educated men who joined the movement have only put into a theoretical shape the criticisms and the aspirations which were expressed in the sections, and subsequently in the congresses, by the workers themselves.

The war of 1870–71 had hampered the development of the Association, but had not stopped it. In all the industrial centres of Switzerland numerous and animated sections of the International existed, and thousands of workers flocked to their meetings, at which war was declared upon the existing system of private ownership of land and factories, and the near end of the capitalist system was proclaimed. Local congresses were held in various parts of the country, and at each of these gatherings most arduous and difficult problems of the present social organization were discussed, with a knowledge of the matter and a depth of conception which alarmed the middle classes even more than did the numbers of adherents who joined the sections, or groups, of the International. The jealousies and prejudices which had hitherto existed in Switzerland between the privileged trades (the watchmakers and jewellers) and the rougher trades (weavers, building trades, and so on), and which had prevented joint action in labour disputes, were disap-

pearing. The workers asserted with increasing emphasis that of all the divisions which exist in modern society by far the most important is that between the owners of capital and those who not only come into the world penniless, but are doomed to remain producers of wealth for the favoured few.

Italy, especially middle and northern Italy, was honeycombed with groups and sections of the International; and in these the Italian unity so long struggled for was declared a mere illusion. The workers were called upon to make their own revolution—to take the land for the peasants and the factories for the workers themselves, and to abolish the oppressive centralized organization of the State, whose historical mission always was to protect and to maintain the exploitation of man by man.

In Spain similar organizations covered Catalonia, Valencia, and Andalusia; they were supported by, and united with, the powerful labour unions of Barcelona, which already then had introduced the eight hours' day in the building trades. The International had no less than eighty thousand regularly paying Spanish members; it embodied all the active and thinking elements of the population; and by its distinct refusal to meddle with the political intrigues during 1871-72 it had drawn to itself in an immense degree the sympathies of the masses. The proceedings of its provincial and national congresses, and the manifestoes which they issued, were models of a severe logical criticism of the existing conditions, as well as admirably lucid statements of the workers' ideals.

In Belgium, Holland, and even in Portugal the

same movement was spreading, and it had already brought into the Association the great mass and the best elements of the Belgian coal miners and weavers. In England the trades unions had also joined the movement, at least in principle, and, without committing themselves to Socialism, were ready to support their Continental brethren in direct struggles against capital, especially in strikes. In Germany the socialists had concluded a union with the rather numerous followers of Lassalle, and the first foundations of a social democratic party had been laid. Austria and Hungary followed in the same track ; and although no international organization was possible at that time in France, after the defeat of the Commune and the reaction which followed (Draconic laws having been enacted against the adherents of the Association), everyone was persuaded, nevertheless, that this period of reaction would not last, and that France would soon join the Association again and take the lead in it.

When I came to Zürich I joined one of the local sections of the International Workingmen's Association. I also asked my Russian friends where I could learn more about the great movement which was going on in other countries. 'Read,' was their reply, and my sister-in-law, who was then studying at Zürich, brought me large numbers of books and collections of newspapers for the last two years. I spent days and nights in reading, and received a deep impression which nothing will efface ; the flood of new thoughts awakened is associated in my mind with a tiny clean room in the Oberstrass, commanding from a window a view of the blue lake, with the mountains

beyond it, where the Swiss fought for their independence, and the high spires of the old town—that scene of so many religious struggles.

Socialistic literature has never been rich in books. It is written for workers, for whom one penny is money, and its main force lies in its small pamphlets and its newspapers. Moreover he who seeks for information about socialism finds in books little of what he requires most. They contain the theories or the scientific arguments in favour of socialist aspirations, but they give no idea how the workers accept socialist ideals, and how they could put them into practice. There remains nothing but to take collections of papers and read them all through—the news as well as the leading articles—the former, perhaps, even more than the latter. Quite a new world of social relations and methods of thought and action is revealed by this reading, which gives an insight into what cannot be found anywhere else—namely, the depth and the moral force of the movement, the degree to which men are imbued with the new theories, their readiness to carry them out in their daily life and to suffer for them. All discussions about the impracticability of socialism and the necessary slowness of evolution are of little value, because the speed of evolution can only be judged from a close knowledge of the human beings of whose evolution we are speaking. What estimate of a sum can be made without knowing its components?

The more I read the more I saw that there was before me a new world, unknown to me, and totally unknown to the learned makers of sociological theories—a world that I could know only by living in the

Workingmen's Association and by meeting the workers in their everyday life. I decided, accordingly, to spend a couple of months in such a life. My Russian friends encouraged me, and after a few days' stay at Zürich I left for Geneva, which was then a great centre of the international movement.

The place where the Geneva sections used to meet was the spacious Masonic Temple Unique. More than two thousand men could come together in its large hall at the general meetings, while every evening all sorts of committee and section meetings took place in the side-rooms, or classes in history, physics, engineering, and so on, were held. Free instruction was given there to the workers by the few, very few, middle-class men who had joined the movement, mainly French refugees of the Paris Commune. It was a people's university as well as a people's forum.

One of the chief leaders of the movement at the Temple Unique was a Russian, Nicholas Ootin, a bright, clever, and active man; and the real soul of it was a most sympathetic Russian lady, who was known far and wide amongst the workers as Madame Olga. She was the working force in all the committees. Both Ootin and Madame Olga received me cordially, made me acquainted with all the men of mark in the sections of the different trades, and invited me to be present at the committee meetings. So I went, but I preferred being with the workers themselves. Taking a glass of sour wine at one of the tables in the hall, I used to sit there every evening amid the workers, and soon became friendly with several of them, especially with a stone-

mason from Alsace, who had left France after the insurrection of the Commune. He had children, just about the age of the two whom my brother had so suddenly lost a few months before, and through the children I was soon on good terms with the family and their friends. I could thus follow the movement from the inside, and know the workers' view of it.

The workers had built all their hopes on the international movement. Young and old flocked to the Temple Unique after their long day's work, to get hold of the scraps of instruction which they could obtain there, or to listen to the speakers who promised them a grand future, based upon the common possession of all that man requires for the production of wealth, and upon a brotherhood of men, without distinction of caste, race, or nationality. All hoped that a great social revolution, peaceful or not, would soon come and totally change the economic conditions. No one desired class war, but all said that if the ruling classes rendered it unavoidable, through their blind obstinacy, the war must be fought over, provided it would bring with it well-being and liberty to the downtrodden masses.

One must have lived among the workers at that time to realize the effect which the sudden growth of the Association had upon their minds—the trust they put in it, the love with which they spoke of it, the sacrifices they made for it. Every day, week after week and year after year, thousands of workers gave their time and their coppers, taken upon their very food, in order to support the life of each group, to secure the appearance of the papers, to defray the expenses of the congresses, to support the comrades who had suffered

for the Association. Another thing that impressed me deeply was the elevating influence which the International exercised. Most of the Paris Internationalists were almost total abstainers from drink, and all had abandoned smoking. 'Why should I nurture in myself that weakness?' they said. The mean, the trivial disappeared to leave room for the grand, the elevating inspirations.

Outsiders never realize the sacrifices which are made by the workers in order to keep their labour movements alive. No small amount of moral courage was required to join openly a section of the International Association, and to face the discontent of the master and a probable dismissal at the first opportunity, with the long months out of work which usually followed. But, even under the best circumstances, belonging to a trade union, or to any advanced party, requires a series of uninterrupted sacrifices. Even a few pence given for the common cause represent a burden on the meagre budget of the European worker, and many pence have to be disbursed every week. Frequent attendance at the meetings means a sacrifice too. For us it may be a pleasure to spend a couple of hours at a meeting, but for men whose working day begins at five or six in the morning those hours have to be stolen from necessary rest.

I felt this devotion as a standing reproach. I saw how eager the workers were to gain instruction, and how despairingly few were those who volunteered to aid them. I saw how much the toiling masses needed to be helped by men possessed of education and leisure in their endeavours to spread and to develop the

organization; but few and rare were those who came to assist without the intention of making political capital out of this very helplessness of the people! More and more I began to feel that I was bound to cast in my lot with them. Stepniák says, in his 'Career of a Nihilist,' that every revolutionist has had a moment in his life when some circumstance, maybe unimportant in itself, has brought him to pronounce his oath of giving himself to the cause of revolution. I know that moment; I lived through it after one of the meetings at the Temple Unique, when I felt more acutely than ever before how cowardly are the educated men who hesitate to put their education, their knowledge, their energy at the service of those who are so much in need of that education and that energy. 'Here are men,' I said to myself, 'who are conscious of their servitude, who work to get rid of it; but where are the helpers? Where are those who will come to serve the masses—not to utilize them for their own ambitions?'

Gradually some doubts began, however, to creep into my mind as to the soundness of the agitation which was carried on at the Temple Unique. One night a well-known Geneva lawyer, Monsieur A., came to the meeting, and stated that if he had not hitherto joined the Association it was because he had first to settle his own business affairs; having now succeeded in that direction, he came to join the labour movement. I felt shocked at this cynical avowal, and when I communicated my reflections to my stone-mason friend he explained to me that this gentleman, having been defeated at the previous election, when he sought the

support of the radical party, now hoped to be elected by the support of the labour vote. 'We accept their services for the present,' my friend concluded, 'but when the revolution comes our first move will be to throw all of them overboard.'

Then came a great meeting, hastily convoked, to protest, as it was said, against the calumnies of the '*Journal de Genève*.' This organ of the moneyed classes of Geneva had ventured to suggest that mischief was brewing at the Temple Unique, and that the building trades were going once more to make a general strike, such as they had made in 1869. The leaders at the Temple Unique called the meeting. Thousands of workers filled the hall, and Ootin asked them to pass a resolution, the wording of which seemed to me very strange: an indignant protest was expressed in it against the inoffensive suggestion that the workers were going to strike. 'Why should this suggestion be described as a calumny?' I asked myself. 'Is it, then, a crime to strike?' Ootin concluded in the meantime a hurried speech in support of his resolution with the words, 'If you agree, citizens, with it I will send it at once to the press.' He was going to leave the platform, when somebody in the hall suggested that discussion would not be out of place; and then the representatives of all branches of the building trades stood up in succession, saying that the wages had lately been so low that they could hardly live upon them; that with the opening of the spring there was plenty of work in view, of which they intended to take advantage to increase their wages; and that if an increase were refused they intended to begin a general strike.

I was furious, and next day hotly reproached Ootin for his behaviour. 'As a leader,' I told him, 'you were bound to know that a strike had really been spoken of.' In my innocence I did not suspect the real motives of the leaders, and it was Ootin himself who made me understand that a strike at that time would be disastrous for the election of the lawyer, Monsieur A.

I could not reconcile this wire-pulling by the leaders with the burning speeches I had heard them pronounce from the platform. I felt disheartened, and spoke to Ootin of my intention to make myself acquainted with the other section of the International Association at Geneva, which was known as the Bakunists. The name 'anarchist' was not much in use then. Ootin gave me at once a word of introduction to another Russian, Nicholas Joukóvsky, who belonged to that section, and, looking straight into my face, he added with a sigh, 'Well, you won't return to us; you will remain with them.' He had guessed right.

IX

I WENT first to Neuchâtel, and then spent a week or so among the watchmakers in the Jura Mountains. I thus made my first acquaintance with that famous Jura Federation which played for the next few years an important part in the development of socialism, introducing into it the no-government, or anarchist, tendency.

In 1872, the Jura Federation was becoming a rebel against the authority of the general council of the International Workingmen's Association. The Association was essentially a working-men's organization, the workers understanding it as a labour movement and not as a political party. In East Belgium, for instance, they had introduced into the statutes a clause in virtue of which no one could be a member of a section unless employed in a manual trade ; even foremen were excluded.

The workers were moreover federalist in principle. Each nation, each separate region, and even each local section had to be left free to develop on its own lines. But the middle-class revolutionists of the old school who had entered the International, imbued as they were with the notions of the centralized, pyramidal secret organizations of earlier times, had introduced the same notions into the Workingmen's Association. Beside the federal and national councils, a general council was nominated at London, to act as a sort of intermediary between the councils of the different nations. Marx and Engels were its leading spirits. It soon appeared, however, that the mere fact of having such a central body became a source of substantial inconvenience. The general council was not satisfied with playing the part of a correspondence bureau ; it strove to govern the movement, to approve or to censure the action of the local federations and sections, and even of individual members. When the Commune insurrection began in Paris—and 'the leaders had only to follow,' without being able to say whereto they would be led within the next twenty-four hours—the general

council insisted upon directing the insurrection from London. It required daily reports about the events, gave orders, favoured this and hampered that, and thus put in evidence the disadvantage of having a governing body, even within the Association. The disadvantage became still more apparent when, at a secret conference held in 1871, the general council, supported by a few delegates, decided to direct the forces of the Association towards electoral agitation. It set people thinking about the evils of any government, however democratic its origin. This was the first spark of anarchism. The Jura Federation became the centre of opposition against the general council.

The separation between leaders and workers which I had noticed at Geneva in the Temple Unique did not exist in the Jura Mountains. There were a number of men who were more intelligent, and especially more active, than the others; but that was all. James Guillaume, one of the most intelligent and broadly educated men I ever met, was a proof-reader and the manager of a small printing office. His earnings in this capacity were so small that he had to give his nights to translating novels from German into French, for which he was paid eight francs for sixteen pages.

When I came to Neuchâtel, he told me that unfortunately he could not spare even as much as a couple of hours for a friendly chat. The printing office was just issuing that afternoon the first number of a local paper, and in addition to his usual duties of proof-reader and co-editor, he had to write on the wrappers a

thousand addresses of persons to whom the first three numbers would be sent, and to fasten himself the wrappers.

I offered to aid him in writing the addresses, but that was not practicable, because they were either kept in memory or written on scraps of paper in an unreadable hand. . . . 'Well, then,' said I, 'I will come in the afternoon to the office and fasten the wrappers, and you will give me the time which you may thus save.'

We understood each other. Guillaume warmly shook my hand, and that was the beginning of our friendship. We spent all the afternoon in the office, he writing the addresses, I fastening the wrappers, and a French Communard, who was a compositor, chatting with us all the while as he rapidly composed a novel, intermingling his conversation with the sentences which he had to put in type and which he read aloud.

'The fight in the streets,' he would say, 'became very sharp.' . . . 'Dear Mary, I love you.' . . . 'The workers were furious and fought like lions at Montmartre,' . . . 'and he fell on his knees before her,' . . . 'and that lasted for four days. We knew that Galliffet was shooting all prisoners—the more terrible still was the fight,' and so on he went, rapidly lifting the type from the case.

It was late in the evening that Guillaume took off his working blouse, and we went out for a friendly chat for a couple of hours, when he had to resume his work as editor of the 'Bulletin' of the Jura Federation.

At Neuchâtel I also made the acquaintance of Malon. He was born in a village, and in his childhood

he was a shepherd. Later on he came to Paris, learned there a trade—basket-making—and, like the book-binder Varlin and the carpenter Pindy, with whom he was associated in the International, had come to be widely known as one of the leading spirits of the Association when it was prosecuted in 1869 by Napoleon III. All three had entirely won the hearts of the Paris workers, and when the Commune insurrection broke out they were elected members of the Council of the Commune, all three receiving formidable numbers of votes. Malon was also mayor of one of the Paris *arrondissements*. Now, in Switzerland, he was earning his living as a basket-maker. He had rented for a few coppers a month a small open shed out of the town, on the slope of a hill, from which he enjoyed while at work an extensive view of the Lake of Neuchâtel. At night he wrote letters, a book on the Commune, short articles for the labour papers—and thus he became a writer. Every day I went to see him and to hear what this broad-faced, laborious, slightly poetical, quiet, and most good-hearted Communard had to tell me about the insurrection in which he took a prominent part, and which he had just described in a book, 'The Third Defeat of the French Proletariate.'

One morning when I had climbed the hill and reached his shed, he met me quite radiant with the words: 'You know, Pindy is alive! Here is a letter from him; he is in Switzerland.' Nothing had been heard of Pindy since he was seen last on May 25 or May 26 at the Tuileries, and he was supposed to be dead, while in reality he remained in concealment at Paris. And while Malon's fingers

continued to ply the wickers and to shape them into an elegant basket, he told me in his quiet voice, which only slightly trembled at times, how many men had been shot by the Versailles troops on the supposition that they were Pindy, Varlin, himself, or some other leader. He told me what he knew of the death of Varlin, the bookbinder whom the Paris workers worshipped, or old Delécluze, who did not want to survive the defeat, and many others; and he related the horrors which he had witnessed during that carnival of blood with which the wealthy classes of Paris celebrated their return to the capital, and then—the spirit of retaliation which took hold of a crowd, led by Raoul Rigault, which executed the hostages of the Commune.

His lips quivered when he spoke of the heroism of the children; and he quite broke down when he told me the story of that boy whom the Versailles troops were going to shoot, and who asked the officer's permission to hand first a silver watch, which he had on, to his mother, who lived close by. The officer, yielding to a moment of pity, let the boy go, probably hoping that he would never return. But a quarter of an hour later the boy was back and, taking his place amidst the corpses at the wall, said: 'I am ready.' Twelve bullets put an end to his young life.

I think I never suffered so much as when I read that terrible book, 'Le Livre Rouge de la Justice Rurale,' which contained nothing but extracts from the letters of the *Standard*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Times* correspondents, written from Paris during the last days of May 1871, relating the horrors committed by the Versailles army under Galliffet, together with a few quotations from

the Paris *Figaro*, imbued with a bloodthirsty spirit towards the insurgents. In reading these pages I was filled with despair concerning mankind, and should have continued to despair, had I not afterwards seen in those of the defeated party who had lived through all these horrors, that absence of hatred, that confidence in the final triumph of their ideas, that calm though sad gaze of their eyes directed towards the future, that readiness to forget the nightmare of the past, which struck me in Malon; in fact, in nearly all the refugees of the Commune whom I met at Geneva, and which I still see in Louise Michel, Lefrançais, Elisée Reclus, and other friends.

From Neuchâtel I went to Sonvilliers. In a little valley in the Jura hills there is a succession of small towns and villages of which the French-speaking population was at that time entirely employed in the various branches of watchmaking; whole families used to work in small workshops. In one of them I found another leader, Adhémar Schwitzguébel, with whom, also, I afterward became very closely connected. He sat among a dozen young men who were engraving lids of gold and silver watches. I was asked to take a seat on a bench or table, and soon we were all engaged in a lively conversation upon socialism, government or no government, and the coming congresses.

In the evening a heavy snowstorm raged; it blinded us, and froze the blood in our veins, as we struggled to the next village. But, notwithstanding the storm, about fifty watchmakers, chiefly old people, came from the neighbouring towns and villages—some of them as far as seven miles distant—to join

in a small informal meeting that was called for that evening.

The very organization of the watch trade, which permits men to know one another thoroughly and to work in their own houses, where they are free to talk, explains why the level of intellectual development in this population is higher than that of workers who spend all their life from early childhood in the factories. There is more independence and more originality among petty trades' workers. But the absence of a division between the leaders and the masses in the Jura Federation was also the reason why there was not a question upon which every member of the federation would not strive to form his own independent opinion. Here I saw that the workers were not a mass that was being led and made subservient to the political ends of a few men ; their leaders were simply their more active comrades—initiators rather than leaders. The clearness of insight, the soundness of judgment, the capacity for disentangling complex social questions, which I noticed amongst these workers, especially the middle-aged ones, deeply impressed me ; and I am firmly persuaded that if the Jura Federation has played a prominent part in the development of socialism, it is not only on account of the importance of the no-government and federalist ideas of which it was the champion, but also on account of the expression which was given to these ideas by the good sense of the Jura watchmakers. Without their aid, these conceptions might have remained mere abstractions for a long time.

The theoretical aspects of anarchism, as they were

then beginning to be expressed in the Jura Federation, especially by Bakúnin ; the criticisms of state socialism—the fear of an economic despotism, far more dangerous than the merely political despotism—which I heard formulated there ; and the revolutionary character of the agitation, appealed strongly to my mind. But the equalitarian relations which I found in the Jura Mountains, the independence of thought and expression which I saw developing in the workers, and their unlimited devotion to the cause appealed even more strongly to my feelings ; and when I came away from the mountains, after a week's stay with the watchmakers, my views upon socialism were settled. I was an anarchist.

A subsequent journey to Belgium, where I could compare once more the centralized political agitation at Brussels with the economic and independent agitation that was going on amongst the clothiers at Verviers, only strengthened my views. These clothiers were one of the most sympathetic populations that I have ever met with in western Europe.

X

BAKÚNIN was at that time at Locarno. I did not see him, and now regret it very much, because he was dead when I returned four years later to Switzerland. It was he who had helped the Jura friends to clear up their ideas and to formulate their aspirations ; he who had inspired them with his powerful, burning,

irresistible revolutionary enthusiasm. As soon as he saw that a small newspaper, which Guillaume began to edit in the Jura hills (at Locle), was sounding a new note of independent thought in the socialist movement, he came to Locle, talked for whole days and whole nights long to his new friends about the historical necessity of a new move in the anarchist direction; he wrote for that paper a series of profound and brilliant articles on the historical progress of mankind towards freedom; he infused enthusiasm into his new friends, and he created that centre of propaganda from which anarchism spread later on to other parts of Europe.

After he had moved to Locarno—from whence he started a similar movement in Italy and, through his sympathetic and gifted emissary, Fanelli, also in Spain—the work that he had begun in the Jura hills was continued independently by the Jurassians themselves. The name of ‘Michel’ often recurred in their conversations—not, however, as that of an absent chief whose opinions would make law, but as that of a personal friend of whom everyone spoke with love, in a spirit of comradeship. What struck me most was that Bakúnin’s influence was felt much less as the influence of an intellectual authority than as the influence of a moral personality. In conversations about anarchism, or about the attitude of the federation, I never heard it said, ‘Bakúnin has said so’ or ‘Bakúnin thinks so,’ as if it clenched the discussion. His writings and his sayings were not a text that one had to obey—as is often unfortunately the case in political parties. In all such matters, in which intellect is the supreme judge, everyone in discussion used his own arguments. Their

general drift and tenor might have been suggested by Bakúnin, or Bakúnin might have borrowed them from his Jura friends—at any rate, in each individual the arguments retained their own individual character. I only once heard Bakúnin's name invoked as an authority in itself, and that struck me so much that I even now remember the spot where the conversation took place and its surroundings. The young men began once in the presence of women some young men's talk, not very respectful towards the other sex, when one of the women present put a sudden stop to it by exclaiming: 'Pity that Michel is not here: he would have put you in your place!' The colossal figure of the revolutionist who had given up everything for the sake of the revolution, and lived for it alone, borrowing from his conception of it the highest and purest conceptions of life, continued to inspire them.

I returned from this journey with distinct sociological conceptions which I have retained since, doing my best to develop them in more and more definite, concrete forms.

There was, however, one point which I did not accept without having given to it a great deal of thinking and many hours of my nights. I clearly saw that the immense change which would hand over everything that is necessary for life and production into the hands of society—be it the Folk State of the social democrats, or the free unions of freely associated groups, as the anarchists say—would imply a revolution far more profound than any of those which history has on record. Moreover, in such a revolution

the workers would have against them, not the rotten generation of aristocrats against whom the French peasants and republicans had to fight in the last century—and even that fight was a desperate one—but the far more powerful, intellectually and physically, middle classes, which have at their service all the potent machinery of the modern State. However, I soon noticed that no revolution, whether peaceful or violent, has ever taken place without the new ideals having deeply penetrated into the very class itself whose economical and political privileges had to be assailed. I had witnessed the abolition of serfdom in Russia, and I knew that if a conviction of the injustice of their rights had not widely spread within the serf-owners' class itself (as a consequence of the previous evolution and revolutions accomplished in western Europe), the emancipation of the serfs would never have been accomplished as easily as it was in 1861. And I saw that the idea of emancipation of the workers from the present wage-system was making headway amongst the middle classes themselves. The most ardent defenders of the present economical conditions had already abandoned the plea of *right* in defending the present privileges—questions as to the *opportuneness* of such a change having already taken its place. They did not deny the desirability of some such change, and only asked whether the new economical organization advocated by the socialists would really be better than the present one; whether a society in which the workers would have a dominant voice would be able to manage production better than the individual capitalists, actuated

by mere considerations of self-interest, manage it at the present time.

Besides, I began gradually to understand that revolutions, *i.e.* periods of accelerated rapid evolution and rapid changes, are as much in the nature of human society as the slow evolution which incessantly goes on now among the civilized races of mankind. And each time that such a period of accelerated evolution and thorough reconstruction begins, civil war may break out on a small or on a grand scale. The question is, then, not so much how to avoid revolutions as how to attain the greatest results with the most limited amount of civil war, the least number of victims, and a minimum of mutual embitterment. For that end there is only one means ; namely, that the oppressed part of society should obtain the clearest possible conception of what they intend to achieve and how, and that they should be imbued with the enthusiasm which is necessary for that achievement—in which case they will be sure to attract to their cause the best and the freshest intellectual forces of the class which is possessed of historically grown up privileges.

The Commune of Paris was a terrible example of an outbreak with yet undetermined ideals. When the workers became, in March 1871, the masters of the great city, they did not attack the property rights vested in the middle classes. On the contrary, they took these rights under their protection. The leaders of the Commune covered the National Bank with their bodies, and notwithstanding the crisis which had paralysed industry, and the consequent absence of

earning for a mass of workers, they protected the rights of the owners of the factories, the trade establishments, and the dwelling-houses at Paris with their decrees. However, when the movement was crushed, no account was taken by the middle classes of the modesty of the Communalist claims of the insurgents. Having lived for two months in fear that the workers would make an assault upon their property rights, the rich men of France took upon the workers just the same revenge as if they had made the assault in reality. Nearly thirty thousand workers were slaughtered, as is known, not in battle but after they had lost the battle. If the workers had taken steps towards the socialisation of property, the revenge could not have been more terrible.

If, then, my conclusion was that there are periods in human development when a conflict is unavoidable, and civil war breaks out quite independently of the will of particular individuals, let, at least, these conflicts take place, not on the ground of vague aspirations, but upon definite issues; not upon secondary points, the insignificance of which does not diminish the violence of the conflict, but upon broad ideas which inspire men by the grandness of the horizon which they bring into view. In this last case the conflict itself will depend much less upon the efficacy of firearms and guns than upon the force of the creative genius which will be brought into action in the work of reconstruction of society. It will depend chiefly upon the constructive forces of society taking for the moment a free course; upon the inspirations being of a higher standard, and so winning more sympathy even

from those who, as a class, are opposed to the change. The conflict, being thus engaged in on larger issues, will purify the social atmosphere itself; and the numbers of victims on both sides will certainly be much smaller than they would have been in case the fight had been fought upon matters of secondary importance in which the lower instincts of men find a free play.

With these ideas I returned to Russia.

XI

DURING my journey I had bought a number of books and collections of socialist newspapers. In Russia such books were 'unconditionally prohibited' by censorship; and some of the collections of newspapers and reports of international congresses could not be bought for any amount of money even in Belgium. 'Shall I part with them, while my brother and my friends would be so glad to have them at St. Petersburg?' I asked myself; and I decided that by all means I must get them into Russia.

I returned to St. Petersburg *viâ* Vienna and Warsaw. Thousands of Jews live by smuggling on the Polish frontier, and I thought that if I could succeed in discovering only one of them my books would be carried in safety across the border. However, to alight at a small railway station near the frontier while every other passenger went on, and to hunt there for smugglers, would hardly have been reasonable; so I

took a side branch of the railway and went to Cracow. 'The capital of Old Poland is near to the frontier,' I thought, 'and I shall find there some Jew who will lead me to the men I seek.'

I reached the once renowned and brilliant city in the evening, and early next morning went out from my hotel on my search. To my bewilderment I saw, however, at every street corner and wherever I turned my eyes in the otherwise deserted market place a Jew, wearing the traditional long dress and locks of his forefathers, and watching there for some Polish nobleman or tradesman who might send him on an errand and pay him a few coppers for the service. I wanted to find *one* Jew; and now there were too many of them. Whom should I approach? I made the round of the town, and then, in my despair, I decided to accost the Jew who stood at the entrance gate of my hotel—an immense old palace, of which in former days every hall was filled with elegant crowds of gaily dressed dancers, but which now fulfilled the more prosaic function of giving food and shelter to a few occasional travellers. I explained to the man my desire of smuggling into Russia a rather heavy bundle of books and newspapers.

'Very easily done, sir,' he replied. 'I will just bring to you the representative of the Universal Company for the International Exchange of (let me say) Rags and Bones. They carry on the largest smuggling business in the world, and he is sure to oblige you.' Half an hour later he really returned with the representative of the company—a most elegant young man, who spoke in perfection Russian, German, and Polish.

He looked at my bundle, weighed it with his hands, and asked what sort of books were in it.

‘All severely prohibited by Russian censorship ; that is why they must be smuggled in.’

‘Books,’ he said, ‘are not exactly in our line of trade ; our business lies in costly silks. If I were going to pay my men by weight, according to our silk tariff, I should have to ask you a quite extravagant price. And then, to tell the truth, I don’t much like meddling with books. The slightest mishap, and “they” would make of it a political affair, and then it would cost the Universal Rags and Bones Company a tremendous sum of money to get clear of it.’

I probably looked very sad, for the elegant young man who represented the Universal Rags and Bones Company immediately added : ‘Don’t be troubled. He [the hotel commissionnaire] will arrange it for you in some other way.’

‘Oh yes. There are scores of ways to arrange such a trifle, to oblige the gentleman,’ jovially remarked the commissionnaire, as he left me.

In an hour’s time he came back with another young man. This one took the bundle, put it by the side of the door, and said : ‘It’s all right. If you leave to-morrow, you shall have your books at such a station in Russia,’ and he explained to me how it would be managed.

‘How much will it cost?’ I asked.

‘How much are you disposed to pay?’ was the reply.

I emptied my purse on the table, and said : ‘That

much for my journey. The remainder is yours. I will travel third class !'

'Wai! wai! wai!' exclaimed both men at once. 'What are you saying, sir? Such a gentleman travel third class! Never! No, no, no, that won't do. . . . Eight roubles will do for us, and then one rouble or so for the commissionnaire, if you are agreeable to it—just as much as you like. We are not highway robbers, but honest tradesmen.' And they bluntly refused to take more money.

I had often heard of the honesty of the Jewish smugglers on the frontier; but I had never expected to have such a proof of it. Later on, when our circle imported many books from abroad, or still later, when so many revolutionists and refugees crossed the frontier in entering or leaving Russia, there was not a case in which the smugglers betrayed anyone, or took advantage of the circumstances to exact an exorbitant price for their services.

Next day I left Cracow; and at the designated Russian station a porter approached my compartment, and, speaking loudly, so as to be heard by the gendarme who was walking along the platform, said to me, 'Here is the bag your highness left the other day,' and handed me my precious parcel.

I was so pleased to have it that I did not even stop at Warsaw, but continued my journey directly to St. Petersburg, to show my trophies to my brother.

XII

A FORMIDABLE movement was developing in the meantime amongst the educated youth of Russia. Serfdom was abolished. But quite a network of habits and customs of domestic slavery, of utter disregard of human individuality, of despotism on the part of the fathers, and of hypocritical submission on that of the wives, the sons, and the daughters, had developed during the two hundred and fifty years that serfdom had existed. Everywhere in Europe, at the beginning of this century, there was a great deal of domestic despotism—the writings of Thackeray and Dickens bear ample testimony to it—but nowhere else had that tyranny attained such a luxurious development as in Russia. All Russian life, in the family, in the relations between commander and subordinate, military chief and soldier, employer and employee, bore the stamp of it. Quite a world of customs and manners of thinking, of prejudices and moral cowardice, of habits bred by a lazy existence, had grown up; and even the best men of the time paid a large tribute to these products of the serfdom period.

Law could have no grip upon these things. Only a vigorous social movement, which would attack the very roots of the evil, could reform the habits and customs of everyday life; and in Russia this movement—this revolt of the individual—took a far more powerful character, and became far more sweeping in

its criticisms, than anywhere in western Europe or America. 'Nihilism' was the name that Turguéneff gave it in his epoch-making novel, 'Fathers and Sons.'

The movement is often misunderstood in western Europe. In the press, for example, Nihilism is confused with terrorism. The revolutionary disturbance which broke out in Russia toward the close of the reign of Alexander II., and ended in the tragical death of the Tsar, is constantly described as Nihilism. This is, however, a mistake. To confuse Nihilism with terrorism is as wrong as to confuse a philosophical movement like Stoicism or Positivism with a political movement, such as, for example, republicanism. Terrorism was called into existence by certain special conditions of the political struggle at a given historical moment. It has lived, and has died. It may revive and die out again. But Nihilism has impressed its stamp upon the whole of the life of the educated classes of Russia, and that stamp will be retained for many years to come. It is Nihilism, divested of some of its rougher aspects—which were unavoidable in a young movement of that sort—which gives now to the life of a great portion of the educated classes of Russia a certain peculiar character which we Russians regret not to find in the life of western Europe. It is Nihilism, again, in its various manifestations which gives to many of our writers that remarkable sincerity, that habit of 'thinking aloud,' which astounds western European readers.

First of all, the Nihilist declared war upon what may be described as 'the conventional lies of civilized mankind.' Absolute sincerity was his distinctive

feature, and in the name of that sincerity he gave up, and asked others to give up, those superstitions, prejudices, habits, and customs which their own reason could not justify. He refused to bend before any authority except that of reason, and in the analysis of every social institution or habit he revolted against any sort of more or less masked sophism.

He broke, of course, with the superstitions of his fathers, and in his philosophical conceptions he was a positivist, an agnostic, a Spencerian evolutionist, or a scientific materialist; and while he never attacked the simple, sincere religious belief which is a psychological necessity of feeling, he bitterly fought against the hypocrisy that leads people to assume the outward mask of a religion which they continually throw aside as useless ballast.

The life of civilized people is full of little conventional lies. Persons who dislike each other, meeting in the street, make their faces radiant with a happy smile; the Nihilist remained unmoved, and smiled only for those whom he was really glad to meet. All those forms of outward politeness which are mere hypocrisy were equally repugnant to him, and he assumed a certain external roughness as a protest against the smooth amiability of his fathers. He saw them wildly talking as idealist sentimentalists, and at the same time acting as real barbarians toward their wives, their children, and their serfs; and he rose in revolt against that sort of sentimentalism, which, after all, so nicely accommodated itself to the anything but ideal conditions of Russian life. Art was involved in the same sweeping negation. Continual talk about

beauty, the ideal, art for art's sake, æsthetics, and the like, so willingly indulged in—while every object of art was bought with money exacted from starving peasants or from underpaid workers, and the so-called 'worship of the beautiful' was but a mask to cover the most commonplace dissoluteness—inspired him with disgust; and the criticisms of art which one of the greatest artists of the century, Tolstóy, has now powerfully formulated, the Nihilist expressed in the sweeping assertion, 'A pair of boots is more important than all your Madonnas and all your refined talk about Shakespeare.'

Marriage without love and familiarity without friendship were repudiated. The Nihilist girl, compelled by her parents to be a doll in a doll's house, and to marry for property's sake, preferred to abandon her house and her silk dresses; she put on a black woollen dress of the plainest description, cut off her hair, and went to a high school, in order to win there her personal independence. The woman who saw that her marriage was no longer a marriage—that neither love nor friendship connected any more those who were legally considered husband and wife—preferred to break a bond which retained none of its essential features; and she often went with her children to face poverty, preferring loneliness and misery to a life which, under conventional conditions, would have given a perpetual lie to her best self.

The Nihilist carried his love of sincerity even into the minutest details of everyday life. He discarded the conventional forms of society talk, and expressed his opinions in a blunt and terse way, even with a certain affectation of outward roughness.

We used in Irkútsk to meet once a week in a club, and to have some dancing. I was for a time a regular visitor at these *soirées*, but gradually, having to work, I abandoned them. One night, as I had not made my appearance for several weeks in succession, a young friend of mine was asked by one of the ladies why I did not come any more to their gatherings. 'He takes a ride now when he wants exercise,' was the rather rough reply of my friend. 'But he might come to spend a couple of hours with us, without dancing,' one of the ladies ventured to say. 'What would he do here?' retorted my Nihilist friend, 'talk with you about fashions and furbelows? He has had enough of that nonsense.' 'But he sees occasionally Miss So-and-So,' timidly remarked one of the young ladies present. 'Yes, but she is a studious girl,' bluntly replied my friend, 'he helps her with her German.' I must add that this undoubtedly rough rebuke had the effect that most of the Irkútsk girls began next to besiege my brother, my friend, and myself with questions as to what we should advise them to read or to study. With the same frankness the Nihilist spoke to his acquaintances, telling them that all their talk about 'this poor people' was sheer hypocrisy so long as they lived upon the underpaid work of these people whom they commiserated at their ease as they chatted together in richly decorated rooms; and with the same frankness a Nihilist would inform a high functionary that he (the said functionary) cared not a straw for the welfare of those whom he ruled, but was simply a thief!

With a certain austerity the Nihilist would rebuke

the woman who indulged in small talk, and prided herself on her 'womanly' manners and elaborate toilette. He would bluntly say to a pretty young person: 'How is it that you are not ashamed to talk this nonsense and to wear that chignon of false hair?' In a woman he wanted to find a comrade, a human personality—not a doll or a 'muslin girl'—and he absolutely refused to join in those petty tokens of politeness with which men surround those whom they like so much to consider as 'the weaker sex.' When a lady entered a room a Nihilist did not jump off his seat to offer it to her—unless he saw that she looked tired and there was no other seat in the room. He behaved towards her as he would have behaved towards a comrade of his own sex; but if a lady—who might have been a total stranger to him—manifested the desire to learn something which he knew and she knew not, he would walk every night to the far end of a great city to help her with his lessons. The young man who would not move his hand to serve a lady with a cup of tea, would transfer to the girl who came to study at Moscow or St. Petersburg the only lesson which he had got and which gave him daily bread, simply saying to her: 'It is easier for a man to find work than it is for a woman. There is no attempt at knighthood in my offer, it is simply a matter of equality.'

Two great Russian novelists, Turguéneff and Goncharóff, have tried to represent this new type in their novels. Goncharóff, in *Precipice*, taking a real but unrepresentative individual of this class, made a caricature of Nihilism. Turguéneff was too good an

artist, and had himself conceived too much admiration for the new type, to let himself be drawn into caricature painting; but even his Nihilist, Bazároff, did not satisfy us. We found him too harsh, especially in his relations with his old parents, and, above all, we reproached him with his seeming neglect of his duties as a citizen. Russian youth could not be satisfied with the merely negative attitude of Turguéneff's hero. Nihilism, with its affirmation of the rights of the individual and its negation of all hypocrisy, was but a first step toward a higher type of men and women, who are equally free, but live for a great cause. In the Nihilists of Chernyshévsky, as they are depicted in his far less artistic novel, 'What is to be Done?' they saw better portraits of themselves.

'It is bitter, the bread that has been made by slaves,' our poet Nekrásóff wrote. The young generation actually refused to eat that bread, and to enjoy the riches that had been accumulated in their fathers' houses by means of servile labour, whether the labourers were actual serfs or slaves of the present industrial system.

All Russia read with astonishment, in the indictment which was produced at the court against Karakózoff and his friends, that these young men, owners of considerable fortunes, used to live three or four in the same room, never spending more than ten roubles (one pound) apiece a month for all their needs, and giving at the same time their fortunes for co-operative associations, co-operative workshops (where they themselves worked), and the like. Five years later,

thousands and thousands of the Russian youth—the best part of it—were doing the same. Their watchword was, ‘*V naród !*’ (To the people; be the people.) During the years 1860–65 in nearly every wealthy family a bitter struggle was going on between the fathers, who wanted to maintain the old traditions, and the sons and daughters, who defended their right to dispose of their life according to their own ideals. Young men left the military service, the counter, the shop, and flocked to the university towns. Girls, bred in the most aristocratic families, rushed penniless to St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Kieff, eager to learn a profession which would free them from the domestic yoke, and some day, perhaps, also from the possible yoke of a husband. After hard and bitter struggles, many of them won that personal freedom. Now they wanted to utilize it, not for their own personal enjoyment, but for carrying to the people the knowledge that had emancipated them.

In every town of Russia, in every quarter of St. Petersburg, small groups were formed for self-improvement and self-education; the works of the philosophers, the writings of the economists, the researches of the young Russian historical school, were carefully read in these circles, and the reading was followed by endless discussions. The aim of all that reading and discussion was to solve the great question which rose before them: In what way could they be useful to the masses? Gradually, they came to the idea that the only way was to settle amongst the people and to live the people’s life. Young men went into the villages as doctors, doctors’ assistants, teachers, village scribes, even as

agricultural labourers, blacksmiths, woodcutters, and so on, and tried to live there in close contact with the peasants. Girls passed teachers' examinations, learned midwifery or nursing, and went by the hundred into the villages, devoting themselves entirely to the poorest part of the population.

They went without even having any ideals of social reconstruction or any thought of revolution; merely and simply they wanted to teach the mass of the peasants to read, to instruct them, to give them medical help, or in any way to aid to raise them from their darkness and misery, and to learn at the same time from them what were *their* popular ideals of a better social life.

When I returned from Switzerland I found this movement in full swing.

XIII

I HASTENED, of course, to share with my friends my impressions of the International Workingmen's Association and my books. At the university I had no friends, properly speaking; I was older than most of my companions, and among young people a difference of a few years is always an obstacle to complete comradeship. It must also be said that since the new rules of admission to the university had been introduced in 1861, the best of the young men, the most developed and the most independent in thought, were sifted out of

the gymnasia, and did not gain admittance to the university. Consequently, the majority of my comrades were good boys, laborious, but taking no interest in anything besides the examinations.

I was friendly with only one of them : let me call him Dmitri Kelnitz. He was born in South Russia, and, although his name was German, he hardly spoke German, and his face was South Russian rather than Teutonic. He was very intelligent, had read a great deal, and had seriously thought over what he had read. He loved science and deeply respected it, but, like many of us, he soon came to the conclusion that to follow the career of a scientific man meant to join the camp of the Philistines, and that there was plenty of other and more urgent work that he could do. He attended the university lectures for two years, and then abandoned them, giving himself entirely to social work. He lived anyhow ; I even doubt if he had a permanent lodging. Sometimes he would come to me and ask, 'Have you some paper?' and, having taken a supply of it, he would sit at the corner of a table for an hour or two, diligently making a translation. The little that he earned in this way was more than sufficient to satisfy all his limited wants. Then he would hurry to a distant part of the town to see a comrade or to help a needy friend ; or he would cross St. Petersburg on foot, to a remote suburb, in order to obtain free admission to a college for some boy in whom the comrades were interested. He was undoubtedly a gifted man. In Western Europe a man far less gifted would have worked his way to a position of political or socialist leadership. No such thought ever entered the brain of

Kelnitz. To lead men was by no means his ambition, and there was no work too insignificant for him to do. This trait, however, was not distinctive of him alone; all those who had lived some years in the students' circles of those times were possessed of it to a high degree.

Soon after my return Kelnitz invited me to join a circle which was known among the youth as 'the Circle of Tchaykóvsky.' Under this name it played an important part in the history of the social movement in Russia, and under this name it will go down to history. 'Its members,' Kelnitz said to me, 'have hitherto been mostly constitutionalists; but they are excellent men, with minds open to any honest idea; they have plenty of friends all over Russia, and you will see later on what you can do.' I already knew Tchaykóvsky and a few other members of this circle. Tchaykóvsky had won my heart at our first meeting, and our friendship has remained unshaken for twenty-seven years.

The beginning of this circle was a very small group of young men and women—one of whom was Sophie Peróvskaya—who had united for purposes of self-education and self-improvement. Tchaykóvsky was of their number. In 1869 Necháieff had tried to start, amidst the youth imbued with the above-mentioned desire of working amongst the people, a secret revolutionary organization, and to secure this end he resorted to the ways of old conspirators, without recoiling even before deceit when he wanted to force his associates to follow his lead. Such methods could have no success in Russia, and very soon his

society broke down. All the members were arrested, and some of the best and purest of the Russian youth went to Siberia before they had done anything. The circle of self-education of which I am speaking was constituted in opposition to the methods of Necháieff. The few friends had judged, quite correctly, that a morally developed individuality must be the foundation of every organization, whatever political character it may take afterward and whatever programme of action it may adopt in the course of future events. This was why the circle of Tchaykóvsky, gradually widening its programme, spread so extensively in Russia, achieved such important results, and later on, when the ferocious prosecutions of the government created a revolutionary struggle, produced that remarkable set of men and women who fell in the terrible contest they waged against autocracy.

At that time, however—that is, in 1872—the circle had nothing revolutionary in it. If it had remained a mere circle of self-improvement, it would soon have petrified, like a monastery. But the members found a suitable work. They began to spread good books. They bought the works of Lassalle, Bervi (on the condition of the labouring classes in Russia), Marx, Russian historical works, and so on—whole editions—and distributed them among students in the provinces. In a few years there was not a town of importance in ‘thirty-eight provinces of the Russian Empire,’ to use official language, where this circle did not have a group of comrades engaged in the spreading of that sort of literature. Gradually, following the general drift of the times, and stimulated by the news which

came from Western Europe about the rapid growth of the labour movement, the circle became more and more a centre of socialistic propaganda among the educated youth, and a natural intermediary between numbers of provincial circles; and then, one day, the ice between students and workers was broken, and direct relations were established with working people at St. Petersburg and in some of the provinces. It was at that juncture that I joined the circle, in the spring of 1872.

All secret societies are fiercely prosecuted in Russia, and the western reader will perhaps expect from me a description of my initiation and of the oath of allegiance which I took. I must disappoint him, because there was nothing of the sort, and could not be; we should have been the first to laugh at such ceremonies, and Kelnitz would not have missed the opportunity of putting in one of his sarcastic remarks, which would have killed any ritual. There was not even a statute. The circle accepted as members only persons who were well known and had been tested in various circumstances, and of whom it was felt that they could be trusted absolutely. Before a new member was received, his character was discussed with the frankness and seriousness which were characteristic of the Nihilist. The slightest token of insincerity or conceit would have barred the way to admission. The circle did not care either to make a show of numbers, and had no tendency to concentrate in its hands all the activity that was going on among the youth, or to include in one organization the scores of different circles which existed in the capitals and the provinces.

With most of them friendly relations were maintained ; they were helped, and they helped us, when necessity arose, but no assault was made on their autonomy.

The circle preferred to remain a closely united group of friends ; and never did I meet elsewhere such a collection of morally superior men and women as the score of persons whose acquaintance I made at the first meeting of the circle of Tchaykóvsky. I still feel proud of having been received into that family.

XIV

WHEN I joined the circle of Tchaykóvsky, I found its members hotly discussing the direction to be given to their activity. Some were in favour of continuing to carry on radical and socialistic propaganda among the educated youth ; but others thought that the sole aim of this work should be to prepare men who would be capable of arousing the great inert labouring masses, and that their chief activity ought to be among the peasants and workmen in the towns. In all the circles and groups which were formed at that time by the hundred at St. Petersburg and in the provinces the same discussions went on, and everywhere the second programme prevailed over the first.

If our youth had merely taken to socialism in the abstract, it might have felt satisfied with a mere declaration of socialist principles, including as a distant aim ' the communistic possession of the instruments of

production,' and in the meantime it might have carried on some sort of political agitation. Many middle-class socialist politicians in Western Europe and America really take this course. But our youth had been drawn to socialism in quite another way. They were not theorists about socialism, but had become socialists by living no richer than the workers live, by making no distinction between 'mine and thine' in their circles, and by refusing to enjoy for their own satisfaction the riches they had inherited from their fathers. They had done with regard to capitalism what Tolstóy advises should now be done with regard to war—that is, that people, instead of criticising war and continuing to wear the military uniform, should refuse, each one for himself, to be a soldier and to use arms. In the same way our Russian youth, each one for himself or herself, refused to take personal advantage of the revenues of their fathers. Such a youth had to go to the people—and they went. Thousands and thousands of young men and women had already left their homes, and tried now to live in the villages and the industrial towns in all possible capacities. This was not an organised movement: it was one of those mass movements which occur at certain periods of sudden awakening of human conscience. Now that small organised groups were formed, ready to try a systematic effort for spreading ideas of freedom and revolt in Russia, they were forcibly brought to carry on that propaganda amidst the dark masses of peasants and workers in the towns. Various writers have tried to explain this movement 'to the people' by influences from abroad—'foreign agitators' are everywhere a

favourite explanation. It is certainly true that our youth listened to the mighty voice of Bakúnin, and that the agitation of the International Workingmen's Association had a fascinating effect upon us. But the movement 'V národ'—To the people—had a far deeper origin: it began before 'foreign agitators' had spoken to the Russian youth, and even before the International Association had been founded. It began already in the groups of Karakózoff in 1866; Turguéneff saw it coming, and already in 1859 faintly indicated it. I did my best to promote that movement in the circle of Tchaykóvsky; but I was only working with the tide, which was infinitely more powerful than any individual efforts.

We often spoke, of course, of the necessity of a political agitation against our absolute government. We saw already that the mass of the peasants were being driven to unavoidable and irremediable ruin by foolish taxation, and by the still more foolish selling off of their cattle to cover the arrears of taxes. We, 'visionaries,' saw coming that complete ruin of a whole population which by this time, alas, has been accomplished to an appalling extent in Central Russia, and is confessed by the government itself. We knew how, in every direction, Russia was being plundered in a most scandalous manner. We knew, and we learned more every day, of the lawlessness of the functionaries, and the almost incredible bestiality of many among them. We heard continually of friends whose houses were raided at night by the police, who disappeared in prisons, and who—we ascertained later on—had been transported without judgment to hamlets in some remote province of Russia. We felt, therefore, the

necessity of a political struggle against this terrible power, which was crushing the best intellectual forces of the nation. But we saw no possible ground, legal or semi-legal, for such a struggle.

Our elder brothers did not want our socialistic aspirations, and we could not part with them. Nay, even if some of us had done so, it would have been of no avail. The young generation, as a whole, were treated as 'suspects,' and the elder generation feared to have anything to do with them. Every young man of democratic tastes, every young woman following a course of higher education, was a suspect in the eyes of the state police, and was denounced by Katkóff as an enemy of the state. Cropped hair and blue spectacles worn by a girl, a Scotch plaid worn in winter by a student, instead of an overcoat, which were evidences of Nihilist simplicity and democracy, were denounced as tokens of 'political unreliability.' If any student's lodging came to be frequently visited by other students, it was periodically invaded by the state police and searched. So common were the night raids in certain students' lodgings that Kelnitz once said, in his mildly humorous way, to the police officer who was searching the rooms: 'Why should you go through all our books, each time you come to make a search? You might as well have a list of them, and then come once a month to see if they are all on the shelves; and you might, from time to time, add the titles of the new ones.' The slightest suspicion of political unreliability was sufficient ground upon which to take a young man from a high school, to imprison him for several months, and finally to send him to

some remote province of the Urals—‘for an undetermined term,’ as they used to say in their bureaucratic slang. Even at the time when the circle of Tchaykóvsky did nothing but distribute books, all of which had been printed with the censor’s approval, Tchaykóvsky was twice arrested and kept some four or six months in prison—on the second occasion at a critical time of his career as a chemist. His researches had recently been published in the Bulletin of the Academy of Sciences, and he had come up for his final university examinations. He was released at last, because the police could not discover sufficient evidence against him to warrant his transportation to the Urals! ‘But if we arrest you once more,’ he was told, ‘we shall send you to Siberia.’ In fact, it was a favourite dream of Alexander II. to have, somewhere in the steppes, a special town, guarded night and day by patrols of Cossacks, where all suspected young people could be sent, so as to make of them a city of ten or twenty thousand inhabitants. Only the menace which such a city might some day offer prevented him from carrying out this truly Asiatic scheme.

One of our members, an officer, had belonged to a group of young men whose ambition was to serve in the provincial *Zémstvós* (district and county councils). They regarded work in this direction as a high mission, and prepared themselves for it by serious studies of the economical conditions of Central Russia. Many young people cherished for a time the same hopes; but all these hopes vanished at the first contact with the actual government machinery.

Having granted institutions of a very limited form of self-government to certain provinces of Russia, the government, immediately after having passed that law, directed all its efforts to reduce that reform to nothing and to deprive it of all its meaning and vitality. The provincial 'self-government' had to content itself with the mere function of state officials who would collect additional local taxes and spend them for the local needs of the state. Every attempt of the county councils to take the initiative in any improvement—schools, teachers' colleges, sanitary measures, agricultural improvements, &c.—was met by the central government with suspicion—nay with hatred—and denounced by the 'Moscow Gazette' as 'separatism,' as the creation of 'a state within the state,' as rebellion against autocracy.

If anyone were to tell the true history, for example, of the teachers' college of Tver, or of any similar undertaking of a Zémstvo in those years, with all the petty persecutions, the prohibitions, the suspensions, and what not with which the institution was harassed, no West European, and especially no American reader, would believe it. He would throw the book aside, saying, 'It cannot be true; it is too stupid to be true.' And yet it was so. Whole groups of the elected representatives of several Zémstvos were deprived of their functions, ordered to leave their province and their estates, or were simply exiled, for having dared to petition the emperor in the most loyal manner concerning such rights as belonged to the Zémstvos by law. 'The elected members of the

provincial councils must be simple ministerial functionaries, and obey the Minister of the Interior : ' such was the theory of the St. Petersburg government. As to the less prominent people—teachers, doctors, and the like, in the service of the local councils—they were removed and exiled by the state police in twenty-four hours, without further ceremony than an order of the omnipotent Third Section of the imperial chancelry. No longer ago than last year, a lady whose husband is a rich landowner and occupies a prominent position in one of the Zémstvos, and who is herself interested in education, invited eight schoolmasters to her birthday party. ' Poor men,' she said to herself, ' they never have the opportunity of seeing anyone but the peasants.' The day after the party the village policeman called at the mansion and insisted upon having the names of the eight teachers, in order to report them to the police authorities. The lady refused to give the names. ' Very well,' he replied, ' I will find them out, nevertheless, and make my report. Teachers *must not* come together, and I am bound to report if they do.' The high position of the lady sheltered the teachers in this case ; but if they had met in the lodgings of one of their own number they would have received a visit from the state police, and half of them would have been dismissed by the Ministry of Education ; and if, moreover, an angry word had escaped from one of them during the police raid, he or she would have been sent to some province of the Urals. This is what happens to-day, thirty-three years after the opening of the county and district councils ; but it was far worse in

the seventies. What sort of basis for a political struggle could such institutions offer?

When I inherited from my father his Tambóv estate, I thought very seriously for a time of settling on that estate, and devoting my energy to work in the local Zémstvo. Some peasants and the poorer priests of the neighbourhood asked me to do so. As for myself, I should have been content with anything I could do, no matter how small it might be, if only it would help to raise the intellectual level and the well-being of the peasants. But one day, when several of my advisers were together, I asked them: 'Supposing I were to try to start a school, an experimental farm, a co-operative enterprise, and, at the same time, also took upon myself the defence of that peasant from our village who has lately been wronged—would the authorities let me do it?' 'Never!' was the unanimous reply.

An old grey-haired priest, a man who was held in great esteem in our neighbourhood, came to me a few days later, with two influential dissenting leaders, and said: 'Talk with these two men. If you can manage it, go with them and, Bible in hand, preach to the peasants. . . . Well, you know what to preach. . . . No police in the world will find you, if they conceal you. . . . There's nothing to be done besides; that's what I, an old man, advise you.'

I told them frankly why I could not assume the part of Wiclif. But the old man was right. A movement similar to that of the Lollards is rapidly growing now amongst the Russian peasants. Such tortures as have been inflicted on the peace-loving Dukhobórs, and such raids upon the peasant dissenters in South Russia as

were made in 1897, when children were kidnapped so that they might be educated in orthodox monasteries, will only give to that movement a force that it could not have attained five-and-twenty years ago.

As the question of agitation for a constitution was continually being raised in our discussions, I once proposed to our circle to take it up seriously and to choose an appropriate plan of action. I was always of the opinion that when the circle decided anything unanimously, each member ought to put aside his personal feeling and give all his strength to the task. 'If you decide to agitate for a constitution,' I said, 'this is my plan: I will separate myself from you, for appearance sake, and maintain relations with only one member of the circle—for instance, Tchaykóvsky—through whom I shall be kept informed how you succeed in your work, and can communicate to you in a general way what I am doing. My work will be among the courtiers and the higher functionaries. I have among them many acquaintances, and know a number of persons who are disgusted with the present conditions. I will bring them together and unite them, if possible, into a sort of organisation; and then, some day, there is sure to be an opportunity to direct all these forces toward compelling Alexander II. to give Russia a constitution. There certainly will come a time when all these people, feeling that they are compromised, will in their own interest take a decisive step. If it is necessary, some of us, who have been officers, might be very helpful in extending the propaganda amongst the officers in the army; but this action must

be quite separate from yours, though parallel with it. I have seriously thought of it. I know what connections I have and who can be trusted, and I believe some of the discontented already look upon me as a possible centre for some action of this sort. This course is not the one I should take of my own choice; but if you think that it is best, I will give myself to it with might and main.'

The circle did not accept that proposal. Knowing one another as well as they did, my comrades probably thought that if I went in this direction I should cease to be true to myself. For my own personal happiness, for my own personal life, I cannot feel too grateful now that my proposal was not accepted. I should have gone in a direction which was not the one dictated by my own nature, and I should not have found in it the personal happiness which I have found in other paths. But when, six or seven years later, the terrorists were engaged in their terrible struggle against Alexander II., I regretted that there had not been somebody else to do the sort of work I had proposed to do in the higher circles at St. Petersburg. With some understanding there beforehand, and with the ramifications which such an understanding probably would have taken all over the empire, the holocausts of victims would not have been made in vain. At any rate, the underground work of the executive committee ought by all means to have been supported by a parallel agitation at the Winter Palace.

Over and over again the necessity of a political effort thus came under discussion in our little group,

with no result. The apathy and the indifference of the wealthier classes were hopeless, and the irritation among the persecuted youth had not yet been brought to that high pitch which ended, six years later, in the struggle of the terrorists under the Executive Committee. Nay—and this is one of the most tragical ironies of history—it was the same youth whom Alexander II., in his blind fear and fury, ordered to be sent by the hundred to hard labour and condemned to slow death in exile; it was the same youth who protected him in 1871–78. The very teachings of the socialist circles were such as to prevent the repetition of a Karakózzoff attempt on the Tsar's life. 'Prepare in Russia a great socialist mass movement amongst the workers and the peasants,' was the watchword in those times. 'Don't trouble about the Tsar and his counsellors. If such a movement begins, if the peasants join in the mass movement to claim the land and to abolish the serfdom redemption taxes, the imperial power will be the first to seek support in the moneyed classes and the landlords and to convoke a Parliament—just as the peasant insurrection in France in 1789 compelled the royal power to convoke the National Assembly; so it will be in Russia.'

But there was more than that. Separate men and groups, seeing that the reign of Alexander II. was hopelessly doomed to sink deeper and deeper in reaction, and entertaining at the same time vague hopes as to the supposed 'liberalism' of the heir apparent—all young heirs to thrones are supposed to be liberal—persistently reverted to the idea that the example of Karakózzoff ought to be followed. The

organised circles, however, strenuously opposed such an idea, and urged their comrades not to resort to that course of action. I may now divulge the following fact, which has hitherto remained unknown. When a young man came to St. Petersburg from one of the southern provinces with the firm intention of killing Alexander II., and some members of the Tchaykóvsky circle learned of his plan, they not only applied all the weight of their arguments to dissuade the young man, but, when he would not be dissuaded, they informed him that they would keep a watch over him and prevent him by force from making any such attempt. Knowing well how loosely guarded the Winter Palace was at that time, I can positively say that they saved the life of Alexander II. So firmly were the youth opposed at that time to the war in which later, when the cup of their sufferings was filled to overflowing, they took part.

XV

THE two years that I worked with the circle of Tchaykóvsky, before I was arrested, left a deep impression upon all my subsequent life and thought. During those two years it was life under high pressure—that exuberance of life when one feels at every moment the full throbbing of all the fibres of the inner self, and when life is really worth living. I was in a family of men and women so closely united by their common object, and so broadly and delicately humane in their mutual

relations, that I cannot now recall a single moment of even temporary friction marring the life of our circle. Those who have had any experience of political agitation will appreciate the value of this statement.

Before abandoning entirely my scientific career, I considered myself bound to finish the report of my journey to Finland for the Geographical Society, as well as some other work that I had in hand for the same society ; and my new friends were the first to confirm me in that decision. It would not be fair, they said, to do otherwise. Consequently, I worked hard to finish my geological and geographical books.

Meetings of our circle were frequent, and I never missed them. We used to meet then in a suburban part of St. Petersburg, in a small house of which Sophie Peróvskaya, under the assumed name and the fabricated passport of an artisan's wife, was the supposed tenant. She was born of a very aristocratic family, and her father had been for some time the military governor of St. Petersburg ; but, with the approval of her mother, who adored her, she had left her home to join a high school, and with the three sisters Korniloff—daughters of a rich manufacturer—she had founded that little circle of self-education which later on became our circle. Now, in the capacity of an artisan's wife, in her cotton dress and men's boots, her head covered with a cotton kerchief, as she carried on her shoulders her two pails of water from the Nevá, no one would have recognized in her the girl who a few years before shone in one of the most fashionable drawing-rooms of the capital. She was a general favourite, and every one of us, on entering the house, had a specially

friendly smile for her—even when she, making a point of honour of keeping the house relatively clean, quarrelled with us about the dirt which we, dressed in peasant top boots and sheepskins, brought in after walking the muddy streets of the suburbs. She tried then to give to her girlish, innocent, and very intelligent little face the most severe expression possible to it. In her moral conceptions she was a ‘rigorist,’ but not in the least of the sermon-preaching type. When she was dissatisfied with some one’s conduct, she would cast a severe glance at him from beneath her brows; but in that glance one saw her open-minded, generous nature, which understood all that is human. On one point only she was inexorable. ‘A women’s man,’ she once said, speaking of some one, and the expression and the manner in which she said it, without interrupting her work, is engraved for ever in my memory.

Peróvskaya was a ‘popularist’ to the very bottom of her heart, and at the same time a revolutionist, a fighter of the truest steel. She had no need to embellish the workers and the peasants with imaginary virtues in order to love them and to work for them. She took them as they were, and said to me once: ‘We have begun a great thing. Two generations, perhaps, will succumb in the task, and yet it must be done.’ None of the women of our circle would have given way before the certainty of death on the scaffold. Each would have looked death straight in the face. But none of them, at that stage of our propaganda, thought of such a fate. Peróvskaya’s well known portrait is exceptionally good; it records so well her earnest courage, her bright intelligence, and her loving nature. The

letter she wrote to her mother a few hours before she went to the scaffold is one of the best expressions of a loving soul that a woman's heart ever dictated.

The following incident will show what the other women of our circle were. One night, Kupreyánoff and I went to Varvara B., to whom we had to make an urgent communication. It was past midnight, but, seeing a light in her window, we went upstairs. She sat in her tiny room at a table copying a programme of our circle. We knew how resolute she was, and the idea came to us to make one of those stupid jokes men sometimes think funny. 'B.,' I said, 'we come to fetch you: we are going to try a rather mad attempt to liberate our friends from the fortress.' She asked not one question. She quietly laid down her pen, rose from her chair, and said only, 'Let us go.' She spoke in so simple, so unaffected a voice that I felt at once how foolishly I had acted, and told her the truth. She dropped back into her chair, with tears in her eyes, and in a despairing voice asked: 'It was only a joke? Why do you make *such* jokes?' I fully realized then the cruelty of what I had done.

Another general favourite in our circle was Serghéi Kravchínsky, who became so well known, both in England and in the United States, under the name of Stepniák. He was often called 'the Baby,' so unconcerned was he about his own security: but his carelessness about himself was merely the result of a complete absence of fear, which, after all, is often the best policy for one who is hunted by the police. He soon became well known for his propaganda in the circles

of workers, under his real Christian name of Serghéi, and consequently was very much wanted by the police ; notwithstanding that, he took no precautions whatever to conceal himself, and I remember that one day he was severely scolded at one of our meetings for what was described as a gross imprudence. Being late for the meeting, as he often was, and having a long distance to cover in order to reach our house, he, dressed as a peasant in his sheepskin, ran the whole length of a great main thoroughfare at full speed in the middle of the street. ‘How could you do it?’ he was reproachfully asked. ‘You might have aroused suspicion, and have been arrested as a common thief.’ But I wish that everyone had been as cautious as he was in affairs where other people could be compromised.

We made our first intimate acquaintance over Stanley’s book, ‘How I Discovered Livingstone.’ One night our meeting had lasted till twelve, and as we were about to leave, one of the Korniloff’s entered with a book in her hand, and asked who among us could undertake to translate by the next morning at eight o’clock sixteen printed pages of Stanley’s book. I looked at the size of the pages, and said that if somebody would help me the work could be done during the night. Serghéi volunteered, and by four o’clock the sixteen pages were done. We read to each other our translations, one of us following the English text ; then we emptied a jar of Russian porridge which had been left on the table for us, and went out together to return home. We became close friends from that night.

I have always liked people capable of working, and doing their work properly. So Serghéi’s translation

and his capacity of working rapidly had already influenced me in his favour. But when I came to know more of him, I felt real love for his honest, frank nature, for his youthful energy and good sense, for his superior intelligence, simplicity, and truthfulness, and for his courage and tenacity. He had read and thought a great deal, and upon the revolutionary character of the struggle which we had undertaken it appeared we had similar views. He was ten years younger than I was, and perhaps did not quite realize what a hard contest the coming revolution would be. He told us later on, with much humour, how he once worked among the peasants in the country. 'One day,' he said, 'I was walking along the road with a comrade when we were overtaken by a peasant in a sleigh. I began to tell the peasant that he must not pay taxes, that the functionaries plunder the people, and I tried to convince him by quotations from the Bible that they must revolt. The peasant whipped up his horse, but we followed rapidly; he made his horse trot, and we began to run behind him; all the time I continued to talk to him about taxes and revolt. Finally he made his horse gallop; but the animal was not worth much—an underfed peasant pony—so my comrade and I did not fall behind, but kept up our propaganda till we were quite out of breath.'

For some time Serghéi stayed in Kazán, and I had to correspond with him. He always hated writing letters in cipher, so I proposed a means of correspondence which had often been used before in conspiracies. You write an ordinary letter about all sorts of things, but in this letter it is only certain words—let us

say, every fifth word—which has a meaning. You write, for instance : ‘Excuse my hurried letter. Come to-night to see me ; to-morrow I shall go away to my sister. My brother Nicholas feels worse ; it was late to make an operation.’ Reading each fifth word, you find : ‘Come to-morrow to Nicholas, late.’ We had to write letters of six or seven pages to transmit one page of information, and we had to cultivate our imagination in order to fill the letters with all sorts of things by way of introducing the words that were required. Serghéi, from whom it was impossible to obtain a cipher letter, took to this kind of correspondence, and used to send me letters containing stories with thrilling incidents and dramatic endings. He said to me afterward that this correspondence helped to develop his literary talent. When one has talent, everything contributes to its development.

In January or February 1874 I was at Moscow, in one of the houses in which I had spent my childhood. Early in the morning I was told that a peasant desired to see me. I went out and found it was Serghéi, who had just escaped from Tver. He was strongly built, and he, with another ex-officer, Rogachóff, endowed with equal physical strength, went travelling about the country as lumber sawyers. The work was very hard, especially for inexperienced hands, but both of them liked it ; and no one would have thought to look for disguised officers in these two strong sawyers. They wandered in this capacity for about a fortnight without arousing suspicion, and made revolutionary propaganda right and left without fear. Sometimes Serghéi, who knew the New Testament almost by

heart, spoke to the peasants as a religious preacher, proving to them by quotations from the Bible that they ought to start a revolution. Sometimes he formed his arguments of quotations from the economists. The peasants listened to the two men as to real apostles, took them from one house to another, and refused to be paid for food. In a fortnight they had produced quite a stir in a number of villages. Their fame was spreading far and wide. The peasants, young and old, began to whisper to one another in the barns about the 'delegates;' they began to speak out more loudly than they usually did that the land would soon be taken from the landlords, who would receive pensions from the Tsar. The younger people became more aggressive toward the police officers, saying: 'Wait a little; our turn will come soon: you Herods will not rule long now.' But the fame of the sawyers reached the ears of one of the police authorities, and they were arrested. An order was given to take them to the next police official, ten miles away.

They were taken under the guard of several peasants, and on their way had to pass through a village which was holding its festival. 'Prisoners? All right! Come on here, my uncle,' said the peasants, who were all drinking in honour of the occasion. They were kept nearly the whole day in that village, the peasants taking them from one house to another, and treating them to home-made beer. The guards did not have to be asked twice. They drank, and insisted that the prisoners should drink too. 'Happily,' Serghéi said, 'they gave us the beer in such large wooden bowls, which were passed round,

that I could put my mouth to the rim of the bowl as if I were drinking, but no one could see how much beer I had imbibed.' The guards were all drunk toward night, and preferred not to appear in this state before the police officer, so they decided to stay in the village till morning. Serghéi kept talking to them, and all listened to him, regretting that such a good man had been caught. As they were going to sleep, a young peasant whispered to Serghéi, 'When I go to shut the gate I will leave it unbolted.' Serghéi and his comrade understood the hint, and as soon as all fell asleep they went out into the street. They started at a fast pace, and at five o'clock in the morning were twenty miles away from the village, at a small railway station, where they took the first train, and went to Moscow. Serghéi remained there, and later, when all of us at St. Petersburg had been arrested, the Moscow circle, under his inspiration, became the main centre of the agitation.

Here and there, small groups of propagandists had settled in towns and villages in various capacities. Blacksmiths' shops and small farms had been started, and young men of the wealthier classes worked in the shops or on the farms, to be in daily contact with the toiling masses. At Moscow, a number of young girls, of rich families, who had studied at the Zürich university and had started a separate organization, went even so far as to enter cotton factories, where they worked from fourteen to sixteen hours a day, and lived in the factory barracks the miserable life of the Russian factory girls. It was a grand movement, in

which, at the lowest estimate, from two to three thousand persons took an active part, while twice or thrice as many sympathizers and supporters helped the active vanguard in various ways. With a good half of that army our St. Petersburg circle was in regular correspondence—always, of course, in cipher.

The literature which could be published in Russia under a rigorous censorship—the faintest hint of socialism being prohibited—was soon found insufficient, and we started a printing office of our own abroad. Pamphlets for the workers and the peasants had to be written, and our small ‘literary committee,’ of which I was a member, had its hands full of work. Serghéi wrote a couple of such pamphlets—one in the Lamennais style, and another containing an exposition of socialism in a fairy tale—and both had a wide circulation. The books and pamphlets which were printed abroad were smuggled into Russia by thousands, stored at certain spots, and sent out to the local circles, which distributed them amongst the peasants and the workers. All this required a vast organization as well as much travelling about, and a colossal correspondence, particularly for protecting our helpers and our bookstores from the police. We had special ciphers or different provincial circles, and often, after six or seven hours had been passed in discussing all details, the women, who did not trust to our accuracy in the cipher correspondence, spent all the night in covering sheets of paper with cabalistic figures and fractions.

The utmost cordiality always prevailed at our meetings. Chairmen and all sorts of formalism are so utterly repugnant to the Russian mind that we had

none ; and although our debates were sometimes extremely hot, especially when 'programme questions' were under discussion, we always managed very well without resorting to Western formalities. An absolute sincerity, a general desire to settle the difficulties for the best, and a frankly expressed contempt for all that in the least degree approached theatrical affectation were quite sufficient. If anyone of us had ventured to attempt oratorical effects by a speech, friendly jokes would have shown him at once that speech-making was out of place. Often we had to take our meals during these meetings, and they invariably consisted of rye bread, with cucumbers, a bit of cheese, and plenty of weak tea to quench the thirst. Not that money was lacking ; there was always enough, and yet there was never too much to cover the steadily growing expenses for printing, transportation of books, concealing friends wanted by the police, and starting new enterprises.

At St. Petersburg it was not long before we had wide acquaintance amongst the workers. Serdukóff, a young man of splendid education, had made a number of friends amongst the engineers, most of them employed in a state factory of the artillery department, and he had organized a circle of about thirty members, who used to meet for reading and discussion. The engineers are pretty well paid at St. Petersburg, and those who were not married were fairly well off. They soon became quite familiar with the current radical and socialist literature—Buckle, Lassalle, Mill, Draper, Spielhagen, were familiar names to them ; and in their aspect these engineers differed little from

students. When Kelnitz, Serghéi, and I joined the circle, we frequently visited their group, and gave them informal lectures upon all sorts of things. Our hopes, however, that these young men would grow into ardent propagandists amidst less privileged classes of workers were not fully realised. In a free country they would have been the habitual speakers at public meetings; but, like the privileged workers of the watch trade in Geneva, they treated the mass of the factory hands with a sort of contempt, and were in no haste to become martyrs to the socialist cause. It was only after they had been arrested and kept three or four years in prison for having dared to *think* as socialists, and had sounded the full depth of Russian absolutism, that several of them developed into ardent propagandists, chiefly of a political revolution.

My sympathies went especially toward the weavers and the workers in the cotton factories. There are many thousands of them at St. Petersburg, who work there during the winter, and return for the three summer months to their native villages to cultivate the land. Half peasants and half town workers, they had generally retained the social spirit of the Russian villager. The movement spread like wildfire among them. We had to restrain the zeal of our new friends; otherwise they would have brought to our lodgings hundreds at a time, young and old. Most of them lived in small associations, or *artéls*, ten or twelve persons hiring a common apartment and taking their meals together, each one paying every month his share of the general expenses. It was to these lodgings that

we used to go, and the weavers soon brought us in contact with other *artéls* of stone-masons, carpenters, and the like. In some of these *artéls* Serghéi, Kelnitz, and a couple more of our friends were quite at home, and spent whole nights talking about socialism. Besides, we had in different parts of St. Petersburg special apartments, kept by some of our people, to which ten or twelve workers would come every night to learn reading and writing, and after that to have a talk. From time to time one of us went to the native villages of our town friends, and spent a couple of weeks in almost open propaganda amongst the peasants.

Of course, all of us who had to deal with this class of workers had to dress like the workers themselves—that is, to wear the peasant garb. The gap between the peasants and the educated people is so great in Russia, and contact between them is so rare, that not only does the appearance in a village of a man who wears the town dress awaken general attention, but even in town, if one whose talk and dress reveal that he is not a worker is seen to go about with workers, the suspicion of the police is aroused at once. ‘Why should he go about with “low people,” if he has not a bad intention?’ Often, after a dinner in a rich mansion, or even in the Winter Palace, where I went frequently to see a friend, I took a cab, hurried to a poor student’s lodging in a remote suburb, exchanged my fine clothes for a cotton shirt, peasant’s top boots, and a sheepskin, and, joking with peasants on the way, went to meet my worker friends in some slum. I told them what I had seen of the labour movement abroad.

They listened with an eager attention ; they lost not a word of what was said ; and then came the question, ' What can we do in Russia ? ' ' Agitate, organize,' was our reply ; ' there is no royal road ; ' and we read them a popular story of the French Revolution, an adaptation of Erckmann-Chatrian's admirable ' Histoire d'un Paysan.' Everyone admired M. Chovel, who went as a propagandist through the villages colporting prohibited books, and burned to follow in his footsteps. ' Speak to others,' we said ; ' bring men together ; and when we become more numerous, we shall see what we can attain.' They fully understood, and we had only to moderate their zeal.

Amongst them I passed my happiest hours. New Year's day of 1874, the last I spent in Russia at liberty, is especially memorable to me. The previous evening I had been in a choice company. Inspiring, noble words were spoken that night about the citizen's duties, the well-being of the country, and the like. But underneath all the thrilling speeches, one note resounded : How could each of the speakers preserve his own personal well-being ? Yet no one had the courage to say, frankly and openly, that he was ready to do only that which would not endanger his own dovecote. Sophisms—no end of sophisms—about the slowness of evolution, the inertia of the lower classes, the uselessness of sacrifice, were uttered to justify the unspoken words, all intermingled with assurances of each one's willingness to make sacrifices. I returned home, seized suddenly with profound sadness amid all this talk.

Next morning I went to one of our weavers

meetings. It took place in an underground dark room. I was dressed as a peasant, and was lost in the crowd of other sheepskins. My comrade, who was known to the workers, simply introduced me: 'Borodín, a friend.' 'Tell us, Borodín,' he said, 'what you have seen abroad.' And I spoke of the labour movement in Western Europe, its struggles, its difficulties, and its hopes.

The audience consisted mostly of middle-aged people. They were intensely interested. They asked me questions, all to the point, about the minute details of the working men's unions, the aims of the International Association and its chances of success, and then came questions about what could be done in Russia, and the prospects of our propaganda. I never minimized the dangers of our agitation, and frankly said what I thought. '*We* shall probably be sent to Siberia, one of these days; and you—part of you—will be kept long months in prison for having listened to us.' This gloomy prospect did not frighten them. 'After all, there are men in Siberia, too—not bears only.' 'Where men are living others can live.' 'The devil is not so terrible as they paint him.' 'If you are afraid of wolves, never go into the wood,' they said as we parted. And when, afterward, several of them were arrested, they nearly all behaved bravely, sheltering us and betraying no one.

XVI

DURING the two years of which I am now speaking many arrests were made, both at St. Petersburg and in the provinces. Not a month passed without our losing someone, or learning that members of this or that provincial group had disappeared. Toward the end of 1873 the arrests became more and more frequent. In November one of our main settlements in a suburb of St. Petersburg was raided by the police. We lost Peróvskaya and three other friends, and all our relations with the workers in this suburb had to be suspended. We founded a new settlement, further away from the town, but it had soon to be abandoned. The police became very vigilant, and the appearance of a student in the workmen's quarters was noticed at once; spies circulated among the workers, who were watched closely. Dmítri Kelnitz, Serghéi, and myself, in our sheepskins and with our pleasant looks, passed unnoticed, and continued to visit the haunted ground. But Dmítri and Serghéi, whose names had acquired a wide notoriety in the workmen's quarters, were eagerly wanted by the police; and if they had been found accidentally during a nocturnal raid at a friend's lodgings they would have been arrested at once. There were periods when Dmítri had every day to hunt for a place where he could spend the night in relative safety. 'Can I stay the night with you?' he would ask, entering some comrade's room at ten o'clock.

‘Impossible ! my lodgings have been closely watched lately. Better go to N——.’ ‘I have just come from him, and he says spies swarm in his neighbourhood. ‘Then, go to M—— ; he is a great friend of mine, and above suspicion. But it is far from here, and you must take a cab. Here is money.’ But, on principle, Dmítri would not take a cab, and would walk to the other end of the town to find a refuge, or at last go to a friend whose rooms might be searched at any given moment.

Early in January 1874, another settlement, our main stronghold for propaganda amongst the weavers, was lost. Some of our best propagandists disappeared behind the gates of the mysterious Third Section. Our circle became narrower, general meetings were increasingly difficult, and we made strenuous efforts to form new circles of young men who might continue our work when we should all be arrested. Tchaykóvsky was in the south, and we forced Dmítri and Serghéi to leave St. Petersburg—actually forced them, imperiously ordering them to leave. Only five or six of us remained to transact all the business of our circle. I intended, as soon as I should have delivered my report to the Geographical Society, to go to the south-west of Russia, and there to start a sort of land league, similar to the league which became so powerful in Ireland at the end of the seventies.

After two months of relative quiet, we learned in the middle of March that nearly all the circle of the engineers had been arrested, and with them a young man named Nízovkin, an ex-student, who unfortunately had their confidence, and, we were sure, would soon

try to clear himself by telling all he knew about us. Besides Dmítri and Serghéi he knew Serdukóff, the founder of the circle, and myself, and he would certainly name us as soon as he was pressed with questions. A few days later, two weavers—most unreliable fellows, who had even embezzled some money from their comrades, and who knew me under the name of Borodín—were arrested. These two would surely set the police at once upon the track of Borodín, the man, dressed as a peasant, who spoke at the weavers' meetings. Within a week's time all the members of our circle, excepting Serdukóff and myself, were arrested.

There was nothing left us but to fly from St. Petersburg: this was exactly what we did not want to do. All our immense organization for printing pamphlets abroad and for smuggling them into Russia; all the network of circles, farms, and country settlements with which we were in correspondence in nearly forty (out of fifty) provinces of European Russia and which had been slowly built up during the last two years; finally, our workers' groups at St. Petersburg and our four different centres for propaganda amongst workers of the capital—how could we abandon all these without having found men to maintain our relations and correspondence? Serdukóff and I decided to admit to our circle two new members, and to transfer the business to them. We met every evening in different parts of the town, and as we never kept any addresses or names in writing—the smuggling addresses alone had been deposited in a secure place, in cipher—we had to teach our new members hundreds of names and addresses and a dozen ciphers, repeating them over and

over, until our friends had learned them by heart. Every evening we went over the whole map of Russia in this way, dwelling especially on its western frontier, which was studded with men and women engaged in receiving books from the smugglers, and the eastern provinces, where we had our main settlements. Then, always in disguise, we had to take the new members to our sympathizers in the town, and introduce them to those who had not yet been arrested.

The thing to be done in such a case was to disappear from one's apartments, and to re-appear somewhere else under an assumed name. Serdukóff had abandoned his lodging, but, having no passport, he concealed himself in the houses of friends. I ought to have done the same, but a strange circumstance prevented me. I had just finished my report upon the glacial formations in Finland and Russia, and this report had to be read at a meeting of the Geographical Society. The invitations were already issued, but it happened that on the appointed day the two geological societies of St. Petersburg had a joint meeting, and they asked the Geographical Society to postpone the reading of my report for a week. It was known that I was going to present certain ideas about the extension of the ice cap as far as Middle Russia, and our geologists, with the exception of my friend and teacher, Friedrich Schmidt, considered this speculation of far too reaching character, and wanted to have it thoroughly discussed. For one week more, consequently, I could not go away.

Strangers prowled about my house and called upon me under all sorts of fantastical pretexts : one of them

wanted to buy a forest on my Tambóv estate, which was situated in absolutely treeless prairies. I noticed in my street—the fashionable Morskáya—one of the two arrested weavers whom I have mentioned, and thus learned that my house was watched. Yet I had to act as if nothing extraordinary had happened, because I was to appear at the meeting of the Geographical Society the following Friday night.

The meeting came. The discussions were very animated, and one point, at least, was won. It was recognized that all old theories concerning the diluvial period in Russia were totally baseless, and that a new departure must be made in the investigation of the whole question. I had the satisfaction of hearing our leading geologist, Barbot-de-Marny, say, ‘Ice cap or not, we must acknowledge, gentlemen, that all we have hitherto said about the action of floating ice had no foundation whatever in actual exploration.’ And I was proposed at that meeting to be nominated president of the Physical Geography section, while I was asking myself whether I should not spend that very night in the prison of the Third Section.

It would have been best not to return at all to my apartment, but I was broken down with fatigue after the exertions of the last few days, and went home. There was no police raid during that night. I looked through the heaps of my papers, destroyed everything that might be compromising for anyone, packed all my things, and prepared to leave. I knew that my apartment was watched, but I hoped that the police would not pay me a visit before late in the night, and that at dusk I could slip out of the house without

being noticed. Dusk came, and, as I was starting, one of the servant girls said to me, 'You had better go by the service staircase.' I understood what she meant, and went quickly down the staircase and out of the house. One cab only stood at the gate; I jumped into it. The driver took me to the great Perspective of Névsky. There was no pursuit at first, and I thought myself safe; but presently I noticed another cab running full speed after us; our horse was delayed somehow, and the other cab passed ours.

To my astonishment, I saw in it one of the two arrested weavers, accompanied by someone else. He waved his hand as if he had something to tell me. I told my cabman to stop. 'Perhaps,' I thought, 'he has been released from arrest, and has an important communication to make to me.' But as soon as we stopped, the man who was with the weaver—he was a detective—shouted loudly, 'Mr. Borodín, Prince Kropótkin, I arrest you!' He made a signal to the policemen, of whom there are hosts along the main thoroughfare of St. Petersburg, and at the same time jumped into my cab and showed me a paper which bore the stamp of the St. Petersburg police. 'I have an order to take you before the Governor-General for an explanation,' he said. Resistance was impossible—a couple of policemen were already close by—and I told my cabman to turn round and drive to the Governor-General's house. The weaver remained in his cab and followed us.

It was now evident that the police had hesitated for ten days to arrest me, because they were not sure that Borodín and I were the same person.

My response to the weaver's call had settled their doubts.

It so happened that just as I was leaving my house a young man came from Moscow, bringing me a letter from a friend, Voinarálsky, and another from Dmíttri, addressed to our friend Polakóff. The former announced the establishment of a secret printing office at Moscow, and was full of cheerful news concerning the activity in that city. I read it and destroyed it. As the second letter contained nothing but innocent friendly chat, I took it with me. 'Now that I was arrested I thought it would be better to destroy it, and, asking the detective to show me his paper again, I took advantage of the time that he was fumbling in his pocket to drop the letter on the pavement without his noticing it. However, as we reached the Governor-General's house the weaver handed it to the detective, saying, 'I saw the gentleman drop this letter on the pavement, so I picked it up.'

Now came tedious hours of waiting for the representative of the judicial authorities, the procureur or public prosecutor. This functionary plays the part of a straw man, who is paraded by the State police during their searches: he gives an aspect of legality to their proceedings. It was many hours before that gentleman was found and brought to perform his functions as a sham representative of justice. I was taken back to my house, and a most thorough search of all my papers was made: this lasted till three in the morning, but did not reveal a scrap of paper that could tell against me or anyone else.

From my house I was taken to the Third Section,

that omnipotent institution which has ruled in Russia from the beginning of the reign of Nicholas I. down to the present time—a true ‘state in the state.’ It began under Peter I. in the Secret Department, where the adversaries of the founder of the Russian military empire were subjected to the most abominable tortures, under which they expired; it was continued in the Secret Chancery during the reigns of the Empresses, when the Torture Chamber of the powerful Minich inspired all Russia with terror; and it received its present organization from the iron despot, Nicholas I., who attached to it the corps of gendarmes—the chief of the gendarmes becoming a person far more dreaded in the Russian Empire than the Emperor himself.

In every province of Russia, in every populous town, nay, at every railway station, there are gendarmes who report directly to their own generals or colonels, who in turn correspond with the chief of the gendarmes; and the latter, seeing the Emperor every day, reports to him what he finds necessary to report. All functionaries of the empire are under gendarme supervision; it is the duty of the generals and colonels to keep an eye upon the public and private life of every subject of the Tsar—even upon the governors of the provinces, the ministers, and the grand dukes. The Emperor himself is under their close watch, and as they are well informed of the petty chronicle of the palace, and know every step that the Emperor takes outside his palace, the chief of the gendarmes becomes, so to speak, a confidant of the most intimate affairs of the rulers of Russia.

At this period of the reign of Alexander II. the

Third Section was absolutely all-powerful. The gendarme colonels made searches by the thousand without troubling themselves in the least about the existence of laws and law courts in Russia. They arrested whom they liked, kept people imprisoned as long as they pleased, and transported hundreds to North-east Russia or Siberia according to the fancy of general or colonel; the signature of the Minister of the Interior was a mere formality, because he had no control over them and no knowledge of their doings.

It was four o'clock in the morning when my examination began. 'You are accused,' I was solemnly told, 'of having belonged to a secret society which has for its object the overthrow of the existing form of government, and of conspiracy against the sacred person of his Imperial Majesty. Are you guilty of this crime?'

'Till I am brought before a court where I can speak publicly, I will give you no replies whatever.'

'Write,' the procureur dictated to a scribe: "'Does not acknowledge himself guilty.'" Still, he continued, after a pause, 'I must ask you certain questions. Do you know a person of the name of Nikolái Tchaykóvsky?'

'If you persist in your questions, then write "No" to any question whatsoever that you are pleased to ask me.'

'But if we ask you whether you know, for instance, Mr. Polakóff, whom you spoke about awhile ago?'

'The moment *you* ask me such a question, don't hesitate: write "No." And if you ask me whether I know my brother, or my sister, or my stepmother, write "No." You will not receive from me another

reply : because if I answered "Yes" with regard to any person, you would at once plan some evil against him, making a raid or something worse, and saying next that I named him.'

A long list of questions was read, to which I patiently replied each time, 'Write "No."' That lasted for an hour, during which I learned that all who had been arrested, with the exception of the two weavers, had behaved very well. The weavers knew only that I had twice met a dozen workers, and the gendarmes knew nothing about our circle.

'What are you doing, prince?' a gendarme officer said, as he took me to my cell. 'Your refusal to answer questions will be made a terrible weapon against you.'

'It is my right, is it not?'

'Yes, but—you know. . . . I hope you will find this room comfortable. It has been kept warm since your arrest.'

I found it quite comfortable, and fell sound asleep. I was waked the next morning by a gendarme, who brought me the morning tea. He was soon followed by somebody else, who whispered to me in the most unconcerned way, 'Here's a scrap of paper and a pencil: write your letter.' It was a sympathizer, whom I knew by name; he used to transmit our correspondence with the prisoners of the Third Section.

From all sides I heard knocks on the walls, following in rapid succession. It was the prisoners communicating with one another by means of light taps; but, being a newcomer, I could make nothing

out of the noise, which seemed to come from all parts of the building at once.

One thing worried me. During the search in my house, I overheard the procureur whispering to the gendarme officer about going to make a search at the apartment of my friend Polakóff, to whom the letter of Dmítri was addressed. Polakóff was a young student, a very gifted zoologist and botanist, with whom I had made my Vitím expedition in Siberia. He was born of a poor Cossack family on the frontier of Mongolia, and, after having surmounted all sorts of difficulties, he had come to St. Petersburg, entered the university, where he had won the reputation of a most promising zoologist, and was then passing his final examinations. We had been great friends since our long journey, and had even lived together for a time at St. Petersburg, but he took no interest in my political activity.

I spoke of him to the procureur. 'I give you my word of honour,' I said, 'that Polakóff has never taken part in any political affair. To-morrow he has to pass an examination, and you will spoil forever the scientific career of a young man who has gone through great hardships, and has struggled for years against all sorts of obstacles, to attain his present position. I know that you do not much care for it, but he is looked upon at the university as one of the future glories of Russian science.'

The search was made, nevertheless, but a respite of three days was given for the examinations. A little later I was called before the procureur, who trium-

phantly showed me an envelope addressed in my handwriting, and in it a note, also in my handwriting, which said, 'Please take this packet to V. E., and ask that it be kept until demand in due form is made.' The person to whom the note was addressed was not mentioned in the note. 'This letter,' the procureur said, 'was found at Mr. Polakóff's; and now, prince, his fate is in your hands. If you tell me who V. E. is, Mr. Polakóff will be released; but if you refuse to do so, he will be kept as long as he does not make up his mind to give us the name of that person.'

Looking at the envelope, which was addressed in black chalk, and the letter, which was written in common lead pencil, I immediately remembered the circumstances under which the two had been written. 'I am positive,' I exclaimed at once, 'that the note and the envelope were not found together! It is *you* who have put the letter in the envelope.'

The procureur blushed. 'Would you have me believe,' I continued, 'that you, a practical man, did not notice that the two are written in quite different pencils? And now you are trying to make people think that the two belong to each other! Well, sir, then I tell you that the letter was not to Polakóff.'

He hesitated for some time, but then, regaining his audacity, he said, 'Polakóff has admitted that this letter of yours was written to him.'

Now I knew he was lying. Polakóff would have admitted everything concerning himself; but he would have preferred to be marched to Siberia rather than to involve another person. So, looking straight in the face of the procureur, I replied, 'No, sir, he has

never said that, and you know perfectly well that your words are not true.'

He became furious, or pretended to be so. 'Well, then,' he said, 'if you wait here a moment, I will bring you Polakóff's written statement to that effect. He is in the next room under examination.'

'Ready to wait as long as you like.'

I sat on a sofa, smoking countless cigarettes. The statement did not come, and never came.

Of course there was no such statement. I met Polakóff in 1878 at Geneva, whence we made a delightful excursion to the Aletsch glacier. I need not say that his answers were what I expected them to be: he denied having any knowledge of the letter, or of the person the letters V. E. represented. Scores of books used to be taken from me to him, and back to me, and the letter was found in a book, while the envelope was discovered in the pocket of an old coat. He was kept several weeks under arrest, and then released, owing to the intervention of his scientific friends. V. E. was not molested, and delivered my papers in due time.

Later on, each time I saw the procureur, I teased him with the question: 'And what about Polakóff's statement?'

I was not taken back to my cell, but an hour later the procureur came in, accompanied by a gendarme officer. 'Our examination,' he announced to me, 'is now terminated; you will be removed to another place.'

A four-wheeled cab stood at the gate. I was asked

to enter it, and a stout gendarme officer, of Caucasian origin, sat by my side. I spoke to him, but he only snored. The cab crossed the Chain Bridge, then passed the parade grounds and ran along the canals, as if avoiding the more frequented thoroughfares. 'Are we going to the Litóvsky prison?' I asked the officer, as I knew that many of my comrades were already there. He made no reply. The system of absolute silence which was maintained toward me for the next two years began in this four-wheeled cab; but when we went rolling over the Palace Bridge I understood that I was taken to the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul.

I admired the beautiful river, knowing that I should not soon see it again. The sun was going down. Thick grey clouds were hanging in the west above the Gulf of Finland, while light clouds floated over my head, showing here and there patches of blue sky. Then the carriage turned to the left and entered a dark arched passage, the gate of the fortress.

'Now I shall have to remain here for a couple of years,' I remarked to the officer.

'No, why so long?' replied the Circassian who, now that we were within the fortress, had regained the power of speech. 'Your affair is almost terminated, and may be brought into court in a fortnight.'

'My affair,' I replied, 'is very simple; but before bringing me to a court you will try to arrest all the socialists in Russia, and they are many, very many; in two years you will not have done.' I did not then realize how prophetic my remark was.

The carriage stopped at the door of the military commander of the fortress, and we entered his reception hall. General Korsákoff, a thin old man, came in, with a peevish expression on his face. The officer spoke to him in a subdued voice, and the old man answered, 'All right,' looking at him with a sort of scorn, and then turned his eyes toward me. It was evident that he was not at all pleased to receive a new inmate, and that he felt slightly ashamed of his rôle; but he seemed to add, 'I am a soldier, and only do my duty.' Presently we got into the carriage again, but soon stopped before another gate, where we were kept a long time until a detachment of soldiers opened it from the inside. Proceeding on foot through narrow passages, we came to a third iron gate, opening into a dark arched passage, from which we entered a small room where darkness and dampness prevailed.

Several non-commissioned officers of the fortress troops moved noiselessly about in their soft felt boots, without speaking a word, while the governor signed the Circassian's book acknowledging the reception of a new prisoner. I was required to take off all my clothes, and to put on the prison dress—a green flannel dressing-gown, immense woollen stockings of an incredible thickness, and boat-shaped yellow slippers, so big that I could hardly keep them on my feet when I tried to walk. I always hated dressing-gowns and slippers, and the thick stockings inspired me with disgust. I had to take off even a silk undergarment, which in the damp fortress it would have been especially desirable to retain, but that could not be allowed. I naturally began to protest and to make a

noise about this, and after an hour or so it was restored to me by order of General Korsákoff.

Then I was taken through a dark passage, where I saw armed sentries walking about, and was put into a cell. A heavy oak door was shut behind me, a key turned in the lock, and I was alone in a half-dark room.

PART FIFTH

THE FORTRESS—THE ESCAPE

I

THIS was, then, the terrible fortress where so much of the true strength of Russia had perished during the last two centuries, and the very name of which is uttered in St. Petersburg in a hushed voice.

Here Peter I. tortured his son Alexis and killed him with his own hand ; here the Princess Tarakánova was kept in a cell which filled with water during an inundation—the rats climbing upon her to save themselves from drowning ; here the terrible Minich tortured his enemies, and Catherine II. buried alive those who objected to her having murdered her husband. And from the times of Peter I., for a hundred and seventy years, the annals of this mass of stone which rises from the Nevá in front of the Winter Palace were annals of murder and torture, of men buried alive, condemned to a slow death, or driven to insanity in the loneliness of the dark and damp dungeons.

Here the Decembrists, who were the first to unfurl in Russia the banner of republican rule and the abolition of serfdom, underwent their first experiences of martyrdom, and traces of them may still be found in the Russian Bastille. Here were imprisoned the poets Ryléeff and Shevchénko, Dostoévsky, Bakunin,

Chernyshévsky, Písareff, and so many others of our best contemporary writers. Here Karakózzoff was tortured and hanged.

Here, somewhere in the Alexis ravelin, was still kept Necháieff, who was given up to Russia by Switzerland as a common-law criminal, but was treated as a dangerous political prisoner, and would never again see the light. In the same ravelin were also two or three men whom, rumour said, Alexander II., because of what they knew, and what others must not know, about some palace mystery, ordered to be imprisoned for life. One of them, adorned with a long grey beard, was lately seen by an acquaintance of mine in the mysterious fortress.

All these shadows rose before my imagination. But my thoughts fixed especially on Bakúnin, who, though he had been shut up in an Austrian fortress, after 1848, for two years chained to the wall, and then was handed over to Nicholas I. who kept him in this fortress for six years longer, came out, when the Iron Tsar's death released him after an eight years' imprisonment, fresher and fuller of vigour than his comrades who had remained at liberty. 'He has lived it through,' I said to myself, 'and I must, too; I will *not* succumb here!'

My first movement was to approach the window, which was placed so high that I could hardly reach it with my lifted hand. It was a long, low opening, cut in a wall five feet thick, and protected by an iron grating and a double iron window-frame. At a distance of a dozen yards from this window I saw the outer wall of the fortress, of immense thickness, on the top

of which I could make out a grey sentry-box. Only by looking upward could I perceive a bit of the sky.

I made a minute inspection of the room where I had now to spend no one could say how many years. From the position of the high chimney of the Mint I guessed that I was in the south-western corner of the fortress, in a bastion overlooking the Nevá. The building in which I was incarcerated, however, was not the bastion itself, but what is called in a fortification a *reduit*; that is, an inner two-storied pentagonal piece of masonry which rises a little higher than the walls of the bastion, and is meant to contain two tiers of guns. This room of mine was a casemate destined for a big gun, and the window was an embrasure. The rays of the sun could never penetrate it; even in summer they are lost in the thickness of the wall. The room held an iron bed, a small oak table, and an oak stool. The floor was covered with painted felt, and the walls with yellow paper. However, in order to deaden sounds, the paper was not put on the wall itself; it was pasted upon canvas, and behind the canvas I discovered a wire grating, back of which was a layer of felt; only beyond the felt could I reach the stone wall. At the inner side of the room there was a washstand, and a thick oak door in which I made out a locked opening, for passing food through, and a little slit protected by glass and by a shutter from the outside: this was the 'Judas,' through which the prisoner could be spied upon at every moment. The sentry who stood in the passage frequently lifted the shutter and looked inside—his boots squeaking as he crept toward the door. I tried to speak to him; then the eye which I could see

through the slit assumed an expression of terror, and the shutter was immediately let down, only to be furtively opened a minute or two later; but I could not get a word of response from the sentry.

Absolute silence reigned all round. I dragged my stool to the window and looked upon the little bit of sky that I could see; I tried to catch some sound from the Nevá, or from the town on the opposite side of the river; but I could not. This dead silence began to oppress me, and I tried to sing, slowly at first, and louder and louder afterwards.

‘Have I then to say farewell to love for ever’—I caught myself singing from my favourite opera of Glinka, “Ruslán and Ludmila.”’

‘Sir, do not sing, please,’ a bass voice resounded through the food-window in my door.

‘I *will* sing, and I shall.’

‘You may not.’

‘I will sing nevertheless.’

Then came the governor, who tried to persuade me that I must not sing, as it would have to be reported to the commander of the fortress, and so on.

‘But my throat will become blocked and my lungs become useless if I do not speak and cannot sing,’ I tried to argue.

‘You had better try to sing in a lower tone, more or less to yourself,’ said the old governor in a supplicatory manner.

But all this was useless. A few days later I had lost all desire to sing. I tried to do it on principle, but it was of no avail.

‘The main thing,’ I said to myself, ‘is to preserve

my physical vigour. I *will* not fall ill. Let me imagine myself compelled to spend a couple of years in a hut in the far north, during an arctic expedition. I will take plenty of exercise, practise gymnastics, and not let myself be broken down by my surroundings. Ten steps from one corner to the other is already something. If I repeat them one hundred and fifty times, I shall have walked one verst' (two thirds of a mile). I determined to walk every day seven versts—about five miles: two versts in the morning, two before dinner, two after dinner, and one before going to sleep. 'If I put on the table ten cigarettes, and move one of them each time that I pass the table, I shall easily count the three hundred times that I must walk up and down. I must walk rapidly, but turn slowly in the corner to avoid becoming giddy, and turn each time a different way. Then twice a day I shall practise gymnastics with my heavy stool.' I lifted it by one leg, holding it at arm's length. I turned it like a wheel, and soon learned to throw it from one hand to the other, over my head, behind my back, and across my legs.

A few hours after I had been brought into the prison the governor came to offer me some books, and among them was an old acquaintance and friend of mine, the first volume of George Lewes's 'Physiology,' in a Russian translation; but the second volume, which I especially wanted to read again, was missing. I asked, of course, to have paper, pen, and ink, but was absolutely refused. Pen and ink are never allowed in the fortress, unless special permission is obtained from the Emperor himself. I suffered very much from this

forced inactivity, and began to compose in my imagination a series of novels for popular reading, taken from Russian history—something like Eugène Sue's 'Mystères du Peuple.' I made up the plot, the descriptions, the dialogues, and tried to commit the whole to memory from the beginning to the end. One can easily imagine how exhausting such a work would have been if I had had to continue it for more than two or three months.

But my brother Alexander obtained pen and ink for me. One day I was asked to enter a four-wheeled cab, in company with the same speechless Georgian gendarme officer of whom I have spoken before. I was taken to the Third Section, where I was allowed an interview with my brother, in the presence of two gendarme officers.

Alexander was at Zürich when I was arrested. From early youth he had longed to go abroad, where men think as they like, read what they like, and openly express their thoughts. Russian life was hateful to him. Veracity—absolute veracity—and the most open-hearted frankness were the dominating features of his character; he could not bear deceit or even conceit in any form. The absence of free speech in Russia, the Russian readiness to submit to oppression, the veiled words to which our writers resort, were utterly repulsive to his frank and open nature. Soon after my return from Western Europe he removed to Switzerland, and decided to settle there. After he had lost his two children—one from cholera in a few hours, and another from consumption—St. Petersburg became doubly repugnant to him.

My brother did not take part in our work of

agitation. He did not believe in the possibility of a popular uprising, and he conceived a revolution only as the action of a representative body, like the National Assembly of France in 1789. As for the socialist agitation, he understood it when it is conducted by means of public meetings—not as the secret, minute work of personal propaganda which we were carrying on. In England he would have sided with John Bright or with the Chartists. If he had been in Paris during the uprising of June, 1848, he would surely have fought with the last handful of workers behind the last barricade; but in the preparatory period he would have followed Louis Blanc or Ledru Rollin.

In Switzerland he settled at Zürich, and his sympathies went with the moderate wing of the International. Socialist on principle, he carried out his principles in his most frugal and laborious mode of living, toiling on passionately at his great scientific work—the main purpose of his life—a work which was to be a nineteenth-century counter-part to the famous *Tableau de la Nature* of the Encyclopædists. He soon became a close personal friend of the old refugee, Colonel P. L. Lavróff, with whom he had very much in common in his Kantian philosophical views.

When he learned about my arrest, Alexander immediately left everything—the work of his life, the life itself of freedom which was as necessary for him as free air is necessary for a bird—and returned to St. Petersburg, which he disliked, only to help me through my imprisonment.

We were both very much affected at this interview. My brother was extremely excited. He hated the very

sight of the blue uniforms of the gendarmes—those executioners of all independent thought in Russia—and expressed his feeling frankly in their presence. As for me, the sight of him at St. Petersburg filled me with the most dismal apprehensions. I was happy to see his honest face, his eyes full of love, and to hear that I should see them once a month; and yet I wished him hundreds of miles away from that place to which he came free that day, but to which he would inevitably be brought some night under an escort of gendarmes. ‘Why did you come into the lion’s den? Go back at once!’ my whole inner self cried; and yet I knew that he would remain as long as I was in prison.

He understood better than any one else that inactivity would kill me, and had already made application to obtain for me the permission of resuming work. The Geographical Society wanted me to finish my book on the glacial period, and my brother turned the whole scientific world in St. Petersburg upside down to move it to support his application. The Academy of Sciences was interested in the matter; and finally, two or three months after my imprisonment, the governor entered my cell and announced to me that I was permitted by the Emperor to complete my report to the Geographical Society, and that I should be allowed pen and ink for that purpose. ‘Till sunset only,’ he added. Sunset, at St. Petersburg, is at three in the afternoon, in winter time; but that could not be helped. ‘Till sunset’ were the words used by Alexander II. when he granted the permission.

II

So I could work !

I could hardly express now the immensity of relief I then felt at being enabled to resume writing. I would have consented to live on nothing but bread and water, in the dampest of cellars, if only permitted to work.

I was, however, the sole prisoner to whom writing materials were allowed. Several of my comrades spent three years and more in confinement before the famous trial of 'the hundred and ninety-three' took place, and all they had was a slate. Of course, even the slate was welcome in that dreary loneliness, and they used it to write exercises in the languages they were learning, or to work out mathematical problems ; but what was jotted down on the slate could last only a few hours.

My prison life now took a more regular character. There was something immediate to live for. At nine in the morning I had already made the first three hundred paces across my cell, and was waiting for my pencils and pens to be delivered to me. The work which I had prepared for the Geographical Society contained, beside a report of my explorations in Finland, a discussion of the bases upon which the glacial hypothesis ought to rest. Now, knowing that I had plenty of time before me, I decided to rewrite and enlarge that part of my work. The Academy of Sciences put its admirable library at my service, and a corner of my cell soon filled up with books and maps, including the whole of the excellent Swedish Geological

Survey publications, a nearly full collection of reports of all Arctic travels, and whole sets of the *Quarterly Journal of the London Geological Society*. My book grew in the fortress to the size of two large volumes. The first of them was printed by my brother and Polakóff (in the Geographical Society's Memoirs); while the second, not quite finished, remained in the hands of the Third Section when I ran away. The manuscript was only found in 1895, and given to the Russian Geographical Society, by whom it was forwarded to me in London.

At five in the afternoon—at three in the winter—as soon as the tiny lamp was brought in, my pencils and pens were taken away, and I had to stop work. Then I used to read, mostly books of history. Quite a library had been formed in the fortress by the generations of political prisoners who had been confined there. I was allowed to add to the library a number of staple works on Russian history, and with the books which were brought to me by my relatives I was enabled to read almost every work and collection of acts and documents bearing on the Moscow period of the history of Russia. I relished in reading, not only the Russian annals, especially the admirable annals of the democratic mediæval republic of Pskov—the best, perhaps, in Europe for the history of that type of mediæval cities—but all sorts of dry documents, and even the Lives of the Saints, which occasionally contain facts of the real life of the masses which cannot be found elsewhere. I also read during this time a great number of novels, and even arranged for myself a treat on Christmas Eve. My relatives managed to send me then the Christmas

stories of Dickens, and I spent the festival laughing and crying over those beautiful creations of the great novelist.

III

THE worst was the silence, as of the grave, which reigned about me. In vain I knocked on the walls and struck the floor with my foot, listening for the faintest sound in reply. None was to be heard. One month passed, then two, three, fifteen months, but there was no reply to my knocks. We were only six, scattered among thirty-six casemates—all my arrested comrades being kept in the Litóvskiy Zámok prison. When the non-commissioned officer entered my cell to take me out, for a walk, and I asked him, 'What kind of weather have we? Does it rain?' he cast a furtive side glance at me, and without saying a word promptly retired behind the door, where a sentry and another non-commissioned officer kept watch upon him. The only living being from whom I could hear even a few words was the governor, who came to my cell every morning to say 'good-morning' and ask whether I wanted to buy tobacco or paper. I tried to engage him in conversation; but he also cast furtive glances at the non-commissioned officers who stood in the half-opened door, as if to say, 'You see, I am watched, too.' Pigeons only were not afraid to keep intercourse with me. Every morning and every afternoon they came to my window to receive through the gratings their food.

There were no sounds whatever except the squeak of the sentry's boots, the hardly perceptible noise of the shutter of the Judas, and the ringing of the bells on the fortress cathedral. They rang a 'Lord save me' ('Góspodi pomíluí') every quarter of an hour—one, two, three, four times. Then, each hour, the big bell struck slowly, with long intervals between successive strokes. A lugubrious canticle followed, chimed by the bells, which at every sudden change of temperature went out of tune, making at such times a horrible cacophony which sounded like the ringing of bells at a burial. At the gloomy hour of midnight, the canticle, moreover, was followed by the discordant notes of a 'God save the Tsar.' The ringing lasted a full quarter of an hour; and no sooner had it come to an end than a new 'Lord save me' announced to the sleepless prisoner that a quarter of an hour of his uselessly spent life had gone in the meantime, and that many quarters of an hour, and hours, and days, and months of the same vegetative life would pass, before his keepers, or, maybe, death, would release him.

Every morning I was taken out for a half hour's walk in the prison yard. This yard was a small pentagon with a narrow pavement round it, and a little building—the bath house—in the middle. But I liked those walks.

The need of new impressions is so great in prison that, when I walked in our narrow yard, I always kept my eyes fixed upon the high gilt spire of the fortress cathedral. This was the only thing in my surroundings which changed its aspect, and I liked to see it glittering like pure gold when the sun shone from

a clear blue sky, or assuming a fairy aspect when a light bluish haze lay upon the town, or becoming steel grey when dark clouds began to gather.

During these walks, I saw occasionally the daughter of our governor, a girl of eighteen, as she came out from her father's apartment and had to walk a few steps in our yard in order to reach the entrance gate—the only issue from the building. She always hurried to pass away, with her eyes cast down, as if she felt ashamed of being the daughter of a jailor. Her younger brother, on the contrary, a cadet whom I also saw once or twice in the yard, always looked straight in my face with such a frank expression of sympathy that I was struck by it, and even mentioned it to some one after my release. Four or five years later, when he was already an officer, he was exiled to Siberia. He had joined the revolutionary party, and must have helped, I suppose, to carry on correspondence with prisoners in the fortress.

Winter is gloomy at St. Petersburg for those who cannot be out in the brightly lighted streets. It was still gloomier, of course, in a casemate. But dampness was even worse than darkness. In order to drive away moisture the casemate was overheated, and I could not breathe; but when, at last, I obtained my request, that the temperature should be kept lower than before, the outer wall became dripping with moisture, and the paper was as if a pail of water had been poured upon it every day—the consequence being that I suffered a great deal from rheumatism.

With all that I was cheerful, continuing to write and to draw maps in the darkness, sharpening my lead

pencils with a broken piece of glass which I had managed to get hold of in the yard ; I faithfully walked my five miles a day in the cell, and performed gymnastic feats with my oak stool. Time went on. But then sorrow crept into my cell and nearly broke me down. My brother Alexander was arrested.

Toward the end of December 1874, I was allowed an interview with him and our sister H  l  ne, in the fortress, in the presence of a gendarme officer. Interviews, granted at long intervals, always bring both the prisoner and his relatives into a state of excitement. One sees beloved faces and hears beloved voices, knowing that the vision will last but a few moments ; one feels so near to the other, and yet so far off, as there can be no intimate conversation before a stranger, an enemy and a spy. Besides, my brother and sister felt anxious for my health, upon which the dark, gloomy winter days and the dampness had already marked their first effects. We parted with heavy hearts.

A week after that interview, I received, instead of an expected letter from my brother concerning the printing of my book, a short note from Polak  ff. He informed me that henceforward he would read the proofs, and that I should have to address to him everything relative to the printing. From the very tone of the note I understood at once that something must be wrong with my brother. If it were only illness, Polak  ff would have mentioned it. Days of fearful anxiety came upon me. Alexander must have been arrested, and I must have been the cause of it ! Life suddenly ceased to have any meaning for me. My walks, my gymnastics, my work, lost interest. All

the day long I went ceaselessly up and down my cell, thinking of nothing but Alexander's arrest. For me, an unmarried man, imprisonment was only personal inconvenience; but he was married, he passionately loved his wife, and they now had a boy, upon whom they had concentrated all the love that they had felt for their first two children.

Worst of all was the incertitude. What could he have done? For what reason had he been arrested? What were they going to do with him? Weeks passed; my anxiety became deeper and deeper; but there was no news, till at last I heard in a roundabout way that he had been arrested for a letter written to P. L. Lavróff.

I learned the details much later. After his last interview with me he wrote to his old friend, who at that time was editing a Russian socialist review, *Forward*, in London. He mentioned in this letter his fears about my health; he spoke of the many arrests which were made then in Russia; and he freely expressed his hatred of the despotic rule. The letter was intercepted at the post office by the Third Section, and they came on Christmas Eve to search his apartments. They carried out their search in an even more brutal manner than usual. After midnight half a dozen men made an irruption into his flat, and turned everything upside down. The very walls were examined; the sick child was taken out of its bed, that the bedding and the mattresses might be inspected. They found nothing—there was nothing to find.

My brother very much resented this search. With his customary frankness, he said to the gendarme

officer who conducted it: 'Against you, captain, I have no grievance. You have received little education, and you hardly understand what you are doing. But you, sir,' he continued, turning toward the procureur, 'you know what part you are playing in these proceedings. You have received a university education. You know the law, and you know that you are trampling all law, such as it is, under your feet, and covering the lawlessness of these men by your presence; you are simply—a scoundrel!'

They swore hatred against him. They kept him imprisoned in the Third Section till May. My brother's child—a charming boy, whom illness had rendered still more affectionate and intelligent—was dying from consumption. The doctors said he had only a few days more to live. Alexander, who had never asked any favour of his enemies, asked them this time to permit him to see his child for the last time. He begged to be allowed to go home for one hour, upon his word of honour to return, or to be taken there under escort. They refused. They could not deny themselves that vengeance.

The child died, and its mother was thrown once more into a state bordering on insanity when my brother was told that he was to be transported to East Siberia, to a small town, Minusínsk. He would travel in a cart between two gendarmes, and his wife might follow later, but could not travel with him.

'Tell me, at least, what is my crime,' he demanded; but there was no accusation of any sort against him beyond the letter. This transportation appeared so arbitrary, so much an act of mere revenge on the part of

the Third Section, that none of our relatives could believe that the exile would last more than a few months. My brother lodged a complaint with the Minister of the Interior. The reply was that the minister could not interfere with the will of the chief of the gendarmes. Another complaint was lodged with the Senate. It was of no avail.

A couple of years later, our sister H  l  ne, acting on her own initiative, wrote a petition to the Tsar. Our cousin Dm  tri, Governor-general of Kh  rkoff, aide-de-camp of the Emperor and a favourite at the court, also deeply incensed at this treatment by the Third Section, handed the petition personally to the Tsar, and in so doing added a few words in support of it. But the vindictiveness of the Rom  noffs was a family trait strongly developed in Alexander II. He wrote upon the petition, 'Pust posid  t' (Let him remain some time more). My brother stayed in Siberia twelve years, and never returned to Russia.

IV

THE countless arrests which were made in the summer of 1874, and the serious turn which was given by the police to the prosecution of our circle, produced a deep change in the opinions of Russian youth. Up to that time the prevailing idea had been to pick out among the workers, and eventually the peasants, a number of men who should be prepared to become socialistic

agitators. But the factories were now flooded with spies, and it was evident that, do what they might, both propagandists and workers would very soon be arrested and hidden for ever in Siberia. Then began a great movement 'to the people' in a new form, when several hundred young men and women, disregarding all precautions hitherto taken, rushed to the country, and, travelling through the towns and villages, incited the masses to revolution, almost openly distributing pamphlets, songs, and proclamations. In our circles this summer received the name of 'the mad summer.'

The gendarmes lost their heads. They had not hands enough to make the arrests nor eyes enough to trace the steps of every propagandist. Yet not less than fifteen hundred persons were arrested during this hunt, and half of them were kept in prison for years.

One day in the summer of 1875, in the cell that was next to mine I distinctly heard the light steps of heeled boots, and a few minutes later I caught fragments of a conversation. A feminine voice spoke from the cell, and a deep bass voice—evidently that of the sentry—grunted something in reply. Then I recognised the sound of the colonel's spurs, his rapid steps, his swearing at the sentry, and the click of the key in the lock. He said something, and a feminine voice loudly replied: 'We did not talk. I only asked him to call the non-commissioned officer.' Then the door was locked, and I heard the colonel swearing in whispers at the sentry.

So I was alone no more. I had a lady neighbour, who at once broke down the severe discipline which

had hitherto reigned amongst the soldiers. From that day the walls of the fortress, which had been mute during the last fifteen months, became animated. From all sides I heard knocks with the foot on the floor: one, two, three, four, eleven knocks; twenty-four knocks, fifteen knocks; then an interruption, followed by three knocks and a long succession of thirty-three knocks. Over and over again these knocks were repeated in the same succession, until the neighbour would guess at last that they were meant for 'Kto vy?' (Who are you?) the letter *v* being the third letter in our alphabet. Thereupon conversation was soon established, and usually was conducted in the abridged alphabet; that is, the alphabet being divided into six rows of five letters, each letter is marked by its row and its place in the row.

I discovered with great pleasure that I had at my left my friend Serdukóff, with whom I could soon talk about everything, especially when we used our cipher. But intercourse with men brought its sufferings as well as its joys. Underneath me was lodged a peasant, whom Serdukóff knew. He talked to him by means of knocks; and even against my will, often unconsciously during my work, I followed their conversations. I also spoke to him. Now, if solitary confinement without any sort of work is hard for educated men, it is infinitely harder for a peasant who is accustomed to physical work, and not at all wont to spend years in reading. Our peasant friend felt quite miserable, and having been kept for nearly two years in another prison before he was brought to the fortress—his crime was that he had listened to socialists—he was already

broken down. Soon I began to notice, to my terror, that from time to time his mind wandered. Gradually his thoughts grew more and more confused, and we two perceived, step by step, day by day, evidences that his reason was failing, until his talk became at last that of a lunatic. Frightful noises and wild cries came next from the lower story; our neighbour was mad, but was still kept for several months in the casemate before he was removed to an asylum, from which he never emerged. To witness the destruction of a man's mind, under such conditions, was terrible. I am sure it must have contributed to increase the nervous irritability of my good and true friend Serdukóff. When, after four years' imprisonment, he was acquitted by the court and released, he shot himself.

One day I received a quite unexpected visit. The Grand Duke Nicholas, brother of Alexander II., who was inspecting the fortress, entered my cell, followed only by his aide-de-camp. The door was shut behind him. He rapidly approached me, saying, 'Good-day, Kropótkin.' He knew me personally, and spoke in a familiar, good-natured tone, as to an old acquaintance. 'How is it possible, Kropótkin, that you, a page de chambre, a sergeant of the corps of pages, should be mixed up in this business, and now be here in this horrible casemate?'

'Every one has his own opinions,' was my reply.

'Opinions! So your opinions were that you must stir up a revolution?'

What was I to reply? Yes? Then the construction which would be put upon my answer would be

that I, who had refused to give any answers to the gendarmes, 'avowed everything' before the brother of the Tsar. His tone was that of a commander of a military school when trying to obtain 'avowals' from a cadet. Yet I could not say 'No': it would have been a lie. I did not know what to say, and stood without saying anything.

'You see! You feel ashamed of it now'—

This remark angered me, and I at once said in a rather sharp way, 'I have given my replies to the examining magistrate, and have nothing more to add.'

'But understand, Kropótkin, please,' he said then in the most familiar tone, 'that I don't speak to you as an examining magistrate. I speak quite as a private person—quite as a private man,' he repeated, lowering his voice.

Thoughts went whirling in my head. To play the part of Marquis Posa? To tell the emperor through the grand duke of the desolation of Russia, the ruin of the peasantry, the arbitrariness of the officials, the terrible famines in prospect? To say that we wanted to help the peasants out of their desperate condition, to make them raise their heads—and by all this try to influence Alexander II.? These thoughts followed one another in rapid succession, till at last I said to myself: 'Never! Nonsense! They know all that. They are enemies of the nation, and such talk would not change them.'

I replied that he always remained an official person, and that I could not look upon him as a private man.

He then began to ask me indifferent questions.

‘Was it not in Siberia, with the Decembrists, that you began to entertain such ideas?’

‘No; I knew only one Decembrist, and with him I had no conversation worth speaking of.’

‘Was it then at St. Petersburg that you got them?’

‘I was always the same.’

‘Why! Were you such in the corps of pages?’ he asked me with terror.

‘In the corps I was a boy, and what is indefinite in boyhood grows definite in manhood.’

He asked me some other similar questions, and as he spoke I distinctly saw what he was driving at. He was trying to obtain avowals, and my imagination vividly pictured him saying to his brother: ‘All these examining magistrates are imbeciles. He gave them no replies, but I talked to him ten minutes, and he told me everything.’ That began to annoy me; and when he said to me something to this effect, ‘How could you have anything to do with all these people—peasants and people with no names?’—I sharply turned upon him and said, ‘I have told you already that I have given my replies to the examining magistrate.’ Then he abruptly left the cell.

Later, the soldiers of the guard made quite a legend of that visit. The person who came in a carriage to carry me away at the time of my escape wore a military cap, and, having sandy whiskers, bore a faint resemblance to the Grand Duke Nicholas. So a tradition grew up amongst the soldiers of the St. Petersburg garrison that it was the grand duke himself who came to rescue me and kidnapped me. Thus are legends created even in times of newspapers and biographical dictionaries.

V

Two years had passed. Several of my comrades had died, several had become insane, but nothing was heard yet of our case coming before a court.

My health gave way before the end of the second year. The oak stool now seemed heavy in my hand, and the five miles became an endless distance. As there were about sixty of us in the fortress, and the winter days were short, we were taken out for a walk in the yard for twenty minutes only every third day. I did my best to maintain my energy, but the 'arctic wintering' without an interruption in the summer got the better of me. I had brought back from my Siberian journeys slight symptoms of scurvy; now, in the darkness and dampness of the casement, they developed more distinctly; that scourge of the prisons had got hold of me.

In March or April 1876, we were at last told that the Third Section had completed the preliminary inquest. The 'case' had been transmitted to the judicial authorities, and consequently we were removed to a prison attached to the court of justice—the House of Detention.

It was an immense show prison, recently built on the model of the French and Belgian prisons, consisting of four stories of small cells, each of which had a window overlooking an inner yard and a door opening on an iron balcony; the balconies of the several stories were connected by iron staircases.

For most of my comrades the transfer to this prison was a great relief. There was much more life in it than in the fortress ; more opportunity for correspondence, for seeing one's relatives, and for mutual intercourse. Tapping on the walls continued all day long undisturbed, and I was able in this way to relate to a young neighbour the history of the Paris Commune from the beginning to the end. It took, however, a whole week's tapping.

As to my health, it grew even worse than it had lately been in the fortress. I could not bear the close atmosphere of the tiny cell, which measured only four steps from one corner to another, and where, as soon as the steam-pipes were set to work, the temperature changed from a glacial cold to an unbearable heat. Having to turn so often, I became giddy after a few minutes' walk, and ten minutes of outdoor exercise, in the corner of a yard inclosed between high brick walls, did not refresh me in the least. As to the prison doctor, who did not want to hear the word 'scurvy' pronounced 'in his prison,' the less said of him the better.

I was allowed to receive food from home, it so happening that one of my relatives, married to a lawyer, lived a few doors from the court. But my digestion had become so bad that I was soon able to eat nothing but a small piece of bread and one or two eggs a day. My strength rapidly failed, and the general opinion was that I should not live more than a few months. When climbing the staircase which led to my cell in the second story, I had to stop two or three times to rest, and I remember an elderly soldier

from the escort once commiserating me and saying, 'Poor man, you won't live till the end of the summer.'

My relatives now became very much alarmed. My sister H  l  ne tried to obtain my release on bail, but the procureur, Sh  ubin, replied to her, with a sardonic smile, 'If you bring me a doctor's certificate that he will die in ten days, I will release him.' He had the satisfaction of seeing my sister fall into a chair and sob aloud in his presence. She succeeded, however, in gaining her request that I should be visited by a good physician—the chief doctor of the military hospital of the St. Petersburg garrison. He was a bright, intelligent, aged general, who examined me in the most scrupulous manner, and concluded that I had no organic disease, but was suffering simply from a want of oxidation of the blood. 'Air is all that you want,' he said. Then he stood a few minutes in hesitation, and added in a decided manner, 'No use talking, you cannot remain here ; you must be transferred.'

Some ten days later I was transferred to the military hospital, which is situated on the outskirts of St. Petersburg, and has a special small prison for the officers and soldiers who fall ill when they are under trial. Two of my comrades had already been removed to this hospital prison, when it was certain that they would soon die of consumption.

In the hospital I began at once to recover. I was given a spacious room on the ground floor, close by the room of the military guard. It had an immense grated window looking south, which opened on a small boulevard with two rows of trees ; and beyond

the boulevard there was a wide space where two hundred carpenters were engaged in building wooden shanties for typhoid patients. Every evening they gave an hour or so to singing in chorus—such a chorus as is formed only in large carpenters' *artels*. A sentry marched up and down the boulevard, his box standing opposite my room.

My window was kept open all the day, and I basked in the rays of the sun, which I had missed for such a long time. I breathed the balmy air of May with a full chest, and my health improved rapidly—too rapidly, I began to think. I was soon able to digest light food, gained strength, and resumed my work with renewed energy. Seeing no way how I could finish the second volume of my work, I wrote a *résumé* of it, which was printed in the first volume.

In the fortress I had heard from a comrade who had been in the hospital prison that it would not be hard for me to escape from it, and I made my presence there known to my friends. However, escape proved far more difficult than I had been led to believe. A stricter supervision than had ever before been heard of was exercised over me. The sentry in the passage was placed at my door, and I was never let out of my room. The hospital soldiers and the officers of the guard who occasionally entered it seemed to be afraid to stay more than a minute or two.

Various plans were made by my friends to liberate me—some of them very amusing. I was, for instance, to file through the iron bars of my window. Then, on a rainy night, when the sentry on the boulevard was dozing in his box, two friends were to creep up from

behind and overturn the box, so that it would fall upon the sentry and catch him like a mouse in a trap, without hurting him. In the meantime, I was to jump out of the window. But a better solution came in an unexpected way.

‘Ask to be let out for a walk,’ one of the soldiers whispered to me one day. I did so. The doctor supported my demand, and every afternoon, at four, I was allowed to take an hour’s walk in the prison yard. I had to keep on the green flannel dressing-gown which is worn by the hospital patients, but my boots, my vest, and my trousers were delivered to me every day.

I shall never forget my first walk. When I was taken out, I saw before me a yard fully three hundred paces long and more than two hundred paces wide, all covered with grass. The gate was open, and through it I could see the street, the immense hospital opposite, and the people who passed by. I stopped on the doorsteps of the prison, unable for a moment to move when I saw that yard and that gate.

At one end of the yard stood the prison—a narrow building, about one hundred and fifty paces long—at each end of which was a sentry-box. The two sentries paced up and down in front of the building, and had tramped out a footpath in the green. Along this footpath I was told to walk, and the two sentries continued to walk up and down—so that I was never more than ten or fifteen paces from the one or the other. Three hospital soldiers took their seats on the doorsteps.

At the opposite end of this spacious yard wood for fuel was being unloaded from a dozen carts, and piled up along the wall by a dozen peasants. The whole

yard was inclosed by a high fence made of thick boards. Its gate was open to let the carts in and out.

This open gate fascinated me. 'I must not stare at it,' I said to myself; and yet I looked at it all the time. As soon as I was taken back to my cell I wrote to my friends to communicate to them the welcome news. 'I feel well-nigh unable to use the cipher,' I wrote with a tremulous hand, tracing almost illegible signs instead of figures. 'This nearness of liberty makes me tremble as if I were in a fever. They took me out to-day in the yard; its gate was open, and no sentry near it. Through this unguarded gate I will run out; my sentries will not catch me'—and I gave the plan of the escape. 'A lady is to come in an open carriage to the hospital. She is to alight, and the carriage to wait for her in the street, some fifty paces from the gate. When I am taken out at four, I shall walk for a while with my hat in my hand, and somebody who passes by the gate will take it as a signal that all is right within the prison. Then you must return a signal: "The street is clear." Without it I shall not start: once beyond the gate I must not be recaptured. Light or sound only can be used for your signal. The coachman may send a flash of light—the sun's rays reflected from his lacquered hat upon the main hospital building; or, still better, the sound of a song that goes on as long as the street is clear; unless you can occupy the little grey bungalow which I see from the yard, and signal to me from its window. The sentry will run after me like a dog after a hare, describing a curve, while I run in a straight line, and I *will* keep five or ten paces in advance of him. In the street, I shall spring into the carriage

and we shall gallop away. If the sentry shoots—well, that cannot be helped; it lies beyond our foresight; and then, against a certain death in prison, the thing is well worth the risk.’

Counter proposals were made, but that plan was ultimately adopted. The matter was taken in hand by our circle; people who never had known me entered into it, as if it were the release of the dearest of their brothers. However, the attempt was beset with difficulties, and time went with terrible rapidity. I worked hard, writing late at night; but my health improved, nevertheless, at a speed which I found appalling. When I was let out into the yard for the first time, I could only creep like a tortoise along the footpath; now I felt strong enough to run. True, I continued to go at the same tortoise pace, lest my walks should be stopped; but my natural vivacity might betray me at any moment. And my comrades, in the meantime, had to enlist more than a score of people in the affair, to find a reliable horse and an experienced coachman, and to arrange hundreds of unforeseen details which always spring up around such conspiracies. The preparations took a month or so, and any day I might be moved back to the House of Detention.

At last the day of the escape was settled. June 29, old style, is the day of St. Peter and St. Paul. My friends, throwing a touch of sentimentalism into their enterprise, wanted to set me free on that day. They had let me know that in reply to my signal ‘All right within’ they would signal ‘All right outside’ by sending up a red toy balloon. Then the carriage would come,

and a song would be sung to let me know when the street was open.

I went out on the 29th, took off my hat, and waited for the balloon. But nothing of the kind was to be seen. Half an hour passed. I heard the rumble of a carriage in the street; I heard a man's voice singing a song unknown to me; but there was no balloon.

The hour was over, and with a broken heart I returned to my room. 'Something must have gone wrong,' I said to myself.

The impossible had happened that day. Hundreds of children's balloons are always on sale in St. Petersburg, near the Gostínoi Dvor. That morning there were none; not a single balloon was to be found. One was discovered at last, in the possession of a child, but it was old and would not fly. My friends rushed then to an optician's shop, bought an apparatus for making hydrogen, and filled the balloon with it; but it would not fly any better: the hydrogen had not been dried. Time pressed. Then a lady attached the balloon to her umbrella, and, holding the latter high above her head, walked up and down in the street alongside the high wall of our yard; but I saw nothing of it; the wall being too high, and the lady too short.

As it turned out, nothing could have been better than that accident with the balloon. When the hour of my walk had passed, the carriage was driven along the streets which it was intended to follow after the escape; and there, in a narrow street, it was stopped by a dozen or more carts which were carrying wood to the hospital. The horses of the carts got into disorder—some of them on the right side of the street, and some

on the left—and the carriage had to make its way at a slow pace amongst them ; at a turning it was actually blocked. If I had been in it, we should have been caught.

Now a whole system of signals was established along the streets through which we should have to go after the escape, in order to give notice if the streets were not clear. For a couple of miles from the hospital my comrades took the position of sentries. One was to walk up and down with a handkerchief in his hand, which at the approach of the carts he was to put into his pocket ; another was to sit on a stone and eat cherries, stopping when the carts came near ; and so on. All these signals, transmitted along the streets, were finally to reach the carriage. My friends had also hired the grey bungalow that I could see from the yard, and at an open window of that little house a violinist stood with his violin, ready to play when the signal : ' Street clear,' reached him.

The attempt had been settled for the next day. Further postponement would have been dangerous. In fact, the carriage had been taken notice of by the hospital people, and something suspicious must have reached the ears of the authorities, as on the night before my escape I heard the patrol officer ask the sentry who stood opposite my window, ' Where are your ball cartridges ? ' The soldier began to take them in a clumsy way out of his cartridge pouch, spending a couple of minutes before he got them. The patrol officer swore at him. ' Have you not been told to-night to keep four ball cartridges in the pocket of your coat ? ' And he stood by the sentry till the latter put four

cartridges into his pocket. 'Look sharp!' he said as he turned away.

The new arrangements concerning the signals had to be communicated to me at once; and at two on the next day a lady—a dear relative of mine—came to the prison, asking that a watch might be transmitted to me. Everything had to go through the hands of the procureur; but as this was simply a watch, without a box, it was passed along. In it was a tiny cipher note which contained the whole plan. When I saw it I was seized with terror, so daring was the feat. The lady, herself under pursuit by the police for political reasons, would have been arrested on the spot, if anyone had chanced to open the lid of the watch. But I saw her calmly leave the prison and move slowly along the boulevard.

I came out at four, as usual, and gave my signal. I heard next the rumble of the carriage, and a few minutes later the tones of the violin in the grey house sounded through our yard. But I was then at the other end of the building. When I got back to the end of my path which was nearest the gate—about a hundred paces from it—the sentry was close upon my heels. 'One turn more,' I thought—but before I reached the farther end of the path the violin suddenly ceased playing.

More than a quarter of an hour passed, full of anxiety, before I understood the cause of the interruption. Then a dozen heavily loaded carts entered the gate and moved to the other end of the yard.

Immediately, the violinist—a good one, I must say—began a wildly exciting mazurka from Kontsky, as if

to say, 'Straight on now—this is your time!' I moved slowly to the nearer end of the footpath, trembling at the thought that the mazurka might stop before I reached it. °

When I was there I turned round. The sentry had stopped five or six paces behind me; he was looking the other way. 'Now or never!' I remember that thought flashing through my head. I flung off my green flannel dressing-gown and began to run.

For many days in succession I had practised how to get rid of that immeasurably long and cumbrous garment. It was so long that I carried the lower part on my left arm, as ladies carry the trains of their riding habits. Do what I might, it would not come off in one movement. I cut the seams under the armpits, but that did not help. Then I decided to learn to throw it off in two movements: one, casting the end from my arm, the other dropping the gown on the floor. I practised patiently in my room until I could do it as neatly as soldiers handle their rifles. 'One, two,' and it was on the ground.

I did not trust much to my vigour, and began to run rather slowly, to economize my strength. But no sooner had I taken a few steps than the peasants who were piling the wood at the other end shouted, 'He runs! Stop him! Catch him!' and they hastened to intercept me at the gate. Then I flew for my life. I thought of nothing but running—not even of the pit which the carts had dug out at the gate. Run! run! full speed!

The sentry, I was told later by the friends who witnessed the scene from the grey house, ran after me,

followed by three soldiers who had been sitting on the doorsteps. The sentry was so near to me that he felt sure of catching me. Several times he flung his rifle forward, trying to give me a blow in the back with the bayonet. One moment my friends in the window thought he had me. He was so convinced that he could stop me in this way that he did not fire. But I kept my distance, and he had to give up at the gate.

Safe out of the gate, I perceived, to my terror, that the carriage was occupied by a civilian who wore a military cap. He sat without turning his head to me. 'Sold!' was my first thought. The comrades had written in their last letter, 'Once in the street, don't give yourself up: there will be friends to defend you in case of need,' and I did not want to jump into the carriage if it was occupied by an enemy. However, as I got nearer to the carriage I noticed that the man in it had sandy whiskers which seemed to be those of a warm friend of mine. He did not belong to our circle, but we were personal friends, and on more than one occasion I had learned to know his admirable, daring courage, and how his strength suddenly became herculean when there was danger at hand. 'Why should he be there? Is it possible?' I reflected, and was going to shout out his name, when I caught myself in good time, and instead clapped my hands, while still running, to attract his attention. He turned his face to me—and I knew who it was.

'Jump in, quick, quick!' he shouted in a terrible voice, calling me and the coachman all sorts of names, a revolver in his hand and ready to shoot. 'Gallop! gallop! I will kill you!' he cried to the coachman.

The horse—a beautiful racing trotter, which had been bought on purpose—started at full gallop. Scores of voices yelling, ‘Hold them! Get them!’ resounded behind us, my friend meanwhile helping me to put on an elegant overcoat and an opera hat. But the real danger was not so much in the pursuers as in a soldier who was posted at the gate of the hospital, about opposite to the spot where the carriage had to wait. He could have prevented my jumping into the carriage or could have stopped the horse by simply rushing a few steps forward. A friend was consequently commissioned to divert this soldier by talking. He did this most successfully. The soldier having been employed at one time in the laboratory of the hospital, my friend gave a scientific turn to their chat, speaking about the microscope and the wonderful things one sees through it. Referring to a certain parasite of the human body, he asked, ‘Did you ever see what a formidable tail it has?’ ‘What, man, a tail?’ ‘Yes it has; under the microscope it is as big as that.’ ‘Don’t tell me any of your tales!’ retorted the soldier. ‘I know better. It was the first thing I looked at under the microscope.’ This animated discussion took place just as I ran past them and sprang into the carriage. It sounds like fable, but it is fact.

The carriage turned sharply into a narrow lane, past the same wall of the yard where the peasants had been piling wood, and which all of them had now deserted in their run after me. The turn was so sharp that the carriage was nearly upset, when I flung myself inward, dragging toward me my friend; this sudden movement righted the carriage.

We trotted through the narrow lane and then turned to the left. Two gendarmes were standing there, at the door of a public-house, and gave to the military cap of my companion the military salute. 'Hush! hush!' I said to him, for he was still terribly excited. 'All goes well; the gendarmes salute us!' The coachman thereupon turned his face toward me, and I recognised in him another friend, who smiled with happiness.

Everywhere we saw friends, who winked to us or gave us a Godspeed as we passed at the full trot of our beautiful horse. Then we entered the large Nevsky Perspective, turned into a side street, and alighted at a door, sending away the coachman. I ran up a staircase, and at its top fell into the arms of my sister-in-law, who had been waiting in painful anxiety. She laughed and cried at the same time, bidding me hurry to put on another dress and to crop my conspicuous beard. Ten minutes later my friend and I left the house and took a cab.

In the meantime the officer of the guard at the prison and the hospital soldiers had rushed out into the street, doubtful as to what measures they should take. There was not a cab for a mile round, every one having been hired by my friends. An old peasant woman from the crowd was wiser than all the lot. 'Poor people,' she said, as if talking to herself, 'they are sure to come out on the Perspective, and there they will be caught if somebody runs along that lane, which leads straight to the Perspective.' She was quite right, and the officer ran to the tramway car which stood close by, and asked the men to let him have their

horses to send somebody on horseback to the Perspective. But the men obstinately refused to give up their horses, and the officer did not use force.

As to the violinist and the lady who had taken the grey house, they too rushed out and joined the crowd with the old woman, whom they heard giving advice, and when the crowd dispersed they quietly went away.

It was a fine afternoon. We drove to the islands where the St. Petersburg aristocracy go on bright spring days to see the sunset, and called on the way, in a remote street, at a barber's shop to shave off my beard, which operation changed me, of course, but not very much. We drove aimlessly up and down the islands, but, having been told not to reach our night quarters till late in the evening, did not know where to go. 'What shall we do in the meantime?' I asked my friend. He also pondered over that question. 'To Donon's!' he suddenly called out to the cabman, naming one of the best St. Petersburg restaurants. 'No one will ever think of looking for you at Donon's,' he calmly remarked. 'They will hunt for you everywhere else, but not there; and we shall have a dinner, and a drink, too, in honour of your successful escape.'

What could I reply to so reasonable a suggestion? So we went to Donon's, passed the halls flooded with light and crowded with visitors at the dinner hour, and took a separate room, where we spent the evening till the time came when we were expected. The house where we had first alighted was searched less than two hours after we left, as were also the apartments of nearly all our friends. Nobody thought of making a search at Donon's.

A couple of days later I was to take possession of an apartment which had been engaged for me, and which I could occupy under a false passport. But the lady who was to take me in a carriage to that house took the precaution of visiting it first by herself. It was densely surrounded by spies. So many of my friends had come to inquire whether I was safe there that the suspicions of the police had been aroused. Moreover, my portrait had been printed by the Third Section, and hundreds of copies had been distributed to policemen and watchmen. All the detectives who knew me by sight were looking for me in the streets ; while those who did not were accompanied by soldiers and warders who had seen me during my imprisonment. The Tsar was furious that such an escape should have taken place in his capital in full daylight, and had given the order, 'He *must* be found.'

It was impossible to remain at St. Petersburg, and I concealed myself in country houses in its neighbourhood. In company with half-a-dozen friends, I stayed at a village frequented at this time of the year by St. Petersburg people bent on picnicking. Then it was decided that I should go abroad. But from a foreign paper we had learned that all the frontier stations and railway termini in the Baltic provinces and Finland were closely watched by detectives who knew me by sight. So I determined to travel in a direction where I should be least expected. Armed with the passport of a friend, and accompanied by another friend, I crossed Finland, and went northward to a remote port on the Gulf of Bothnia, whence I crossed to Sweden.

After I had gone on board the steamer, and it was about to sail, the friend who was to accompany me to the frontier told me the St. Petersburg news, which he had promised our friends not to tell me before. My sister Hélène had been arrested, as well as the sister of my brother's wife, who had visited me in prison once a month after my brother and his wife went to Siberia.

My sister knew absolutely nothing of the preparations for my escape. Only after I had escaped a friend had hurried to her, to tell her the welcome news. She protested her ignorance in vain: she was taken from her children, and was kept imprisoned for a fortnight. As to the sister of my brother's wife, she had known vaguely that something was to be attempted, but she had had no part in the preparations. Common sense ought to have shown the authorities that a person who had officially visited me in prison would not be involved in such an affair. Nevertheless, she was kept in prison for over two months. Her husband, a well known lawyer, vainly endeavoured to obtain her release. 'We are aware now,' he was told by the gendarme officers, 'that she has had nothing to do with the escape; but, you see, we reported to the emperor, on the day we arrested her, that the person who had organized the escape was discovered and arrested. It will now take some time to prepare the emperor to accept the idea that she is not the real culprit.'

I crossed Sweden without stopping anywhere, and went to Christiania, where I waited a few days for a steamer to sail for Hull, gathering information in the meantime about the peasant party of the Norwegian

Storthing. As I went to the steamer I asked myself with anxiety, 'Under which flag does she sail—Norwegian, German, English?' Then I saw floating above the stern the Union Jack—the flag under which so many refugees, Russian, Italian, French, Hungarian, and of all nations, have found an asylum. I greeted that flag from the depth of my heart.

PART SIXTH

WESTERN EUROPE

I

A STORM raged in the North Sea, as we approached the coasts of England. But I met the storm with delight. I enjoyed the struggle of our steamer against the furiously rolling waves, and sat for hours on the stem, the foam of the waves dashing into my face. After the two years I had spent in a gloomy casemate, every fibre of my inner self seemed to be throbbing with life, and eager to enjoy the full intensity of life.

My intention was not to stay abroad more than a few weeks or months ; just enough time to allow the hue and cry caused by my escape to subside, and also to restore my health a little. I landed under the name of Levashóff, the name under which I had left Russia ; and, avoiding London, where the spies of the Russian embassy would soon have been at my heels, I went first to Edinburgh.

It has, however, so happened that I have never returned to Russia. I was soon taken up by the wave of the anarchist movement, which was just then rising in Western Europe ; and I felt that I should be more useful in helping that movement to find its proper expression than I could possibly be in Russia. In my mother country I was too well known to carry on an open propaganda, especially among the workers

and the peasants ; and later on, when the Russian movement became a conspiracy and an armed struggle against the representative of autocracy, all thought of a popular movement was necessarily abandoned ; while my own inclinations drew me more and more intensely toward casting in my lot with the labouring and toiling masses. To bring to them such conceptions as would aid them to direct their efforts to the best advantage of all the workers ; to deepen and to widen the ideals and principles which will underlie the coming social revolution ; to develop these ideals and principles before the workers, not as an order coming from their leaders, but as a result of their own reason ; and so to awaken their own initiative, now that they were called upon to appear in the historical arena as the builders of a new, equitable mode of organization of society—this seemed to me as necessary for the development of mankind as anything I could accomplish in Russia at that time. Accordingly, I joined the few men who were working in that direction in Western Europe, relieving those of them who had been broken down by years of hard struggle.

When I landed at Hull and went to Edinburgh, I informed but a few friends in Russia and in the Jura Federation of my safe arrival in England. A socialist must always rely upon his own work for his living, and consequently, as soon as I was settled in the Scotch capital in a small room in the suburbs, I tried to find some work.

Among the passengers on board our steamer there was a Norwegian professor, with whom I talked, trying

to remember the little that I formerly had known of the Swedish language. He spoke German. 'But as you speak some Norwegian,' he said to me, 'and are trying to learn it, let us both speak it.'

'You mean Swedish?' I ventured to ask. 'I speak Swedish, don't I?'

'Well, I should rather say Norwegian; certainly not Swedish,' was his reply.

Thus happened to me what happened to one of Jules Verne's heroes, who had learned by mistake Portuguese instead of Spanish. At any rate, I talked a good deal with the professor—let it be in Norwegian—and he gave me a Christiania paper, which contained the reports of the Norwegian North Atlantic deep-sea expedition, just returned home. As soon as I reached Edinburgh I wrote a note in English about these explorations, and sent it to 'Nature,' which my brother and I used regularly to read at St. Petersburg from its first appearance. The sub-editor acknowledged the note with thanks, remarking with an extreme leniency which I have often met with since in England, that my English was 'all right' and only required to be made 'a little more idiomatic.' I may say that I had learned English in Russia, and, with my brother, had translated Page's 'Philosophy of Geology' and Herbert Spencer's 'Principles of Biology.' But I had learned it from books, and pronounced it very badly, so that I had the greatest difficulty in making myself understood by my Scotch landlady; her daughter and I used to write on scraps of paper what we had to say to each other; and as I had no idea of idiomatic English, I must have made the most amusing mistakes. I remember, at any

rate, protesting once to her, in writing, that it was not a 'cup of tea' that I expected at tea time, but many cups. I am afraid my landlady took me for a glutton, but I must say, by way of apology, that neither in the geological books I had read in English nor in Spencer's 'Biology' was there any allusion to such an important matter as tea-drinking.

I got from Russia the Journal of the Russian Geographical Society, and soon began to supply the 'Times' also with occasional paragraphs about Russian geographical explorations. Prjeválsky was at that time in Central Asia, and his progress was followed in England with interest.

However, the money I had brought with me was rapidly disappearing, and all my letters to Russia being intercepted, I could not succeed in making my address known to my relatives. So I moved in a few weeks to London, thinking I could find more regular work there. The old refugee, P. L. Lavróff, continued to edit at London his newspaper *Forward*; but as I hoped soon to return to Russia, and the editorial office of the Russian paper must have been closely watched by spies, I did not go there.

I went, very naturally, to the office of 'Nature,' where I was most cordially received by the sub-editor, Mr. J. Scott Keltie. The editor wanted to increase the column of Notes, and found that I wrote them exactly as they were required. A table was consequently assigned me in the office, and scientific reviews in all possible languages were piled upon it. 'Come every Monday, Mr. Levashóff,' I was told, 'look over these reviews, and if there is any article that strikes you as

worthy of notice, write a note, or mark the article : we will send it to a specialist.' Mr. Keltie did not know, of course, that I used to rewrite each note three or four times before I dared to submit my English to him ; but taking the scientific reviews home, I soon managed very nicely, with my ' Nature ' notes and my ' Times ' paragraphs, to get a living. I found that the weekly payment, on Thursday, of the paragraph contributors to the ' Times ' was an excellent institution. To be sure, there were weeks when there was no interesting news from Prjeválsky, and news from other parts of Russia was not found interesting ; in such cases my fare was bread and tea only.

One day, however, Mr. Keltie took from the shelves several Russian books, asking me to review them for ' Nature.' I looked at the books, and, to my embarrassment, saw that they were my own works on the Glacial Period and the Orography of Asia. My brother had not failed to send them to our favourite ' Nature.' I was in great perplexity, and, putting the books into my bag, took them home, to reflect upon the matter. ' What shall I do with them ? ' I asked myself. ' I cannot praise them, because they are mine ; and I cannot be too sharp on the author, as I hold the views expressed in them.' I decided to take them back next day, and explain to Mr. Keltie that, although I had introduced myself under the name of Levashóff, I was the author of these books, and could not review them.

Mr. Keltie knew from the papers about Kropótkin's escape, and was very much pleased to discover the refugee safe in England. As to my scruples, he remarked wisely that I need neither scold nor praise

the author, but could simply tell the readers what the books were about. From that day a friendship, which still continues, grew up between us.

In November or December 1876, seeing in the letter box of P. L. Lavróff's paper an invitation for 'K.' to call at the editorial office to receive a letter from Russia, and thinking that the invitation was for me, I called at the office, and soon established friendship with the editor and the younger people who printed the paper.

When I called for the first time at the office—my beard shaved and my top hat on—and asked the lady who opened the door, in my very best English: 'Is Mr. Lávroff in?' I imagined that no one would ever know who I was as long as I had not mentioned my name. It appeared, however, that the lady—who did not know me at all, but well knew my brother while he stayed at Zürich—at once recognized me and ran upstairs to say who the visitor was. 'I knew you immediately,' she said afterwards, 'by your eyes, which reminded me of those of your brother.'

That time, I did not stay long in England. I was in lively correspondence with my friend James Guillaume, of the Jura Federation, and as soon as I found some permanent geographical work, which I could do in Switzerland as well as in London, I removed to Switzerland. The letters that I got at last from home told me that I might as well stay abroad, as there was nothing particular to be done in Russia. A wave of enthusiasm was rolling over the country at that time in favour of the Slavonians who had revolted

against the age-long Turkish oppression, and my best friends, Serghéi (Stepniák), Kelnitz, and several others had gone to the Balkán peninsula to join the insurgents. 'We read,' my friends wrote, 'the "Daily News" correspondence about the horrors in Bulgaria; we weep at the reading, and go next to enlist either as volunteers in the Balkán insurgents' bands or as nurses.'

I went to Switzerland, joined the Jura Federation of the International Working Men's Association, and, following the advice of my Swiss friends, settled in La Chaux-de-Fonds.

II

THE Jura Federation has played an important part in the modern development of socialism.

It always happens that after a political party has set before itself a purpose, and has proclaimed that nothing short of the complete attainment of that aim will satisfy it, it divides into two fractions. One of them remains what it was, while the other, although it professes not to have changed a word of its previous intentions, accepts some sort of compromise, and gradually, from compromise to compromise, is driven farther from its primitive programme, and becomes a party of modest makeshift reform.

Such a division had occurred within the International Working Men's Association. Nothing less than an expropriation of the present owners of land and

capital, and a transmission of all that is necessary for the production of wealth to the producers themselves, was the avowed aim of the Association at the outset. The workers of all nations were called upon to form their own organizations for a direct struggle against capitalism; to work out the means of socializing the production of wealth and its consumption; and, when they should be ready to do so, to take possession of the necessaries for production, and to control production with no regard to the present political organization, which must undergo a complete reconstruction. The Association had thus to be the means for preparing an immense revolution in men's minds, and later on in the very forms of life—a revolution which would open to mankind a new era of progress based upon the solidarity of all. That was the ideal which aroused from their slumber millions of European workers, and attracted to the Association its best intellectual forces.

However, two fractions soon developed. When the war of 1870 had ended in a complete defeat of France, and the uprising of the Paris Commune had been crushed, and the Draconian laws which were passed against the Association excluded the French workers from participation in it; and when, on the other hand, parliamentary rule had been introduced in 'united Germany'—the goal of the Radicals since 1848—an effort was made by the Germans to modify the aims and the methods of the whole socialist movement. The 'conquest of power *within the existing states*' became the watchword of that section, which took the name of 'Social Democracy.' The first electoral successes of this party at the elections to the German

Reichstag aroused great hopes. The number of the social democratic deputies having grown from two to seven, and next to nine, it was confidently calculated by otherwise reasonable men that before the end of the century the social democrats would have a majority in the German Parliament, and would then introduce the socialist 'popular state' by means of suitable legislation. The socialist ideal of this party gradually lost the character of something that had to be worked out by the labour organizations themselves, and became state management of the industries—in fact, state socialism; that is, state capitalism. To-day, in Switzerland, the efforts of the social democrats are directed in politics toward centralization as against federalism, and in the economic field to promoting the state management of railways and the state monopoly of banking and of the sale of spirits. The state management of the land and of the leading industries, and even of the consumption of riches, would be the next step in a more or less distant future.

Gradually, all the life and activity of the German social democratic party was subordinated to electoral considerations. Trade unions were treated with contempt and strikes were met with disapproval, because both diverted the attention of the workers from electoral struggles. Every popular outbreak, every revolutionary agitation in any country of Europe, was received by the social democratic leaders with even more animosity than by the capitalist press.

In the Latin countries, however, this new direction found but few adherents. The sections and federations of the International remained true to the principles

which had prevailed at the foundation of the Association. Federalist by their history, hostile to the idea of a centralized state, and possessed of revolutionary traditions, the Latin workers could not follow the evolution of the Germans.

The division between the two branches of the socialist movement became apparent immediately after the Franco-German war. The International, as I have already mentioned, had created a governing body in the shape of a general council which resided at London ; and the leading spirits of that council being two Germans, Engels and Marx, the council became the stronghold of the new social democratic direction ; while the inspirers and intellectual leaders of the Latin federations were Bakúnin and his friends.

The conflict between the Marxists and the Bakunists was not a personal affair. It was the necessary conflict between the principles of federalism and those of centralization, the free Commune and the State's paternal rule, the free action of the masses of the people and the betterment of existing capitalist conditions through legislation—a conflict between the Latin spirit and the German *Geist*, which, after the defeat of France on the battlefield, claimed supremacy in science, politics, philosophy, and in socialism too, representing its own conception of socialism as 'scientific,' while all other interpretations it described as 'utopian.'

At the Hague Congress of the International Association, which was held in 1872, the London general council, by means of a fictitious majority, excluded Bakúnin, his friend Guillaume, and even the Jura

Federation from the International. But as it was certain that most of what remained then of the International—that is, the Spanish, the Italian, and the Belgian Federations—would side with the Jurasians, the congress tried to dissolve the Association. A new general council, composed of a few social democrats, was nominated in New York, where there were no workmen's organizations belonging to the Association to control it, and where it has never been heard of since. In the meantime, the Spanish, the Italian, the Belgian, and the Jura Federations of the International continued to exist and to meet as usual, for the next five or six years, in annual international congresses.

The Jura Federation, at the time when I came to Switzerland, was the centre and the leading voice of the international federations. Bakúnin had just died (July 1, 1876), but the federation retained the position it had taken under his impulse.

The conditions in France, Spain, and Italy were such that only the maintenance of the revolutionary spirit that had developed amongst the Internationalist workers previous to the Franco-German war prevented the governments from taking decisive steps toward crushing the whole labour movement and inaugurating the reign of White Terror. It is well known that the re-establishment of a Bourbon monarchy in France was very near becoming an accomplished fact. Marshal MacMahon was maintained as president of the republic only in order to prepare for a monarchist restoration; the very day of the solemn entry of Henry V. into

Paris was settled, and even the harnesses of the horses, adorned with the pretender's crown and initials, were ready. And it is also known that it was only the fact that Gambetta and Clémenceau—the opportunist and the radical—had covered wide portions of France with committees, armed and ready to rise as soon as the *coup d'état* should be made, which prevented the proposed restoration. But the real strength of those committees was in the workers, many of whom had formerly belonged to the International and had retained the old spirit. Speaking from personal knowledge, I may venture to say that the radical middle-class leaders would have hesitated in case of an emergency, while the workers would have seized the first opportunity for an uprising which, beginning with the defence of the republic, might have gone further on in the socialist direction.

The same was true in Spain. As soon as the clerical and aristocratic surroundings of the king drove him to turn the screws of reaction, the republicans menaced him with a movement in which, they knew, the real fighting element would be the workers. In Catalonia alone there were over one hundred thousand men in strongly organized trade unions, and more than eighty thousand Spaniards belonged to the International, regularly holding congresses, and punctually paying their contributions to the association with a truly Spanish sense of duty. I can speak of these organizations from personal knowledge, gained on the spot, and I know that they were ready to proclaim the United States of Spain, abandon ruling the colonies, and in some of the most advanced regions make serious

attempts in the direction of collectivism. It was this permanent menace which prevented the Spanish monarchy from suppressing all the workers' and peasants' organizations, and from inaugurating a frank clerical reaction.

Similar conditions prevailed also in Italy. The trade unions in North Italy had not reached the strength they have now ; but parts of Italy were honeycombed with International sections and republican groups. The monarchy was kept under continual menace of being upset should the middle-class republicans appeal to the revolutionary elements among the workers.

In short, looking back upon these years, from which we are separated now by a quarter of a century, I am firmly persuaded that if Europe did not pass through a period of stern reaction after 1871, this was mainly due to the spirit which was aroused in Western Europe before the Franco-German war, and has been maintained since by the Anarchist Internationalists, the Blanquists, the Mazzinians, and the Spanish 'cantonalist' republicans.

Of course, the Marxists, absorbed by their local electoral struggles, knew little of these conditions. Anxious not to draw the thunderbolts of Bismarck upon their heads, and fearing above all that a revolutionary spirit might make its appearance in Germany and lead to repressions which they were not strong enough to face, they not only repudiated, for tactical purposes, all sympathy with the Western revolutionists, but gradually became inspired with hatred toward the revolutionary spirit, and denounced it with virulence wheresoever it

made its appearance, even when they saw its first signs in Russia.

No revolutionary papers could be printed in France at that time, under Marshal MacMahon. Even the singing of the 'Marseillaise' was considered a crime; and I was once very much amazed at the terror which seized several of my co-passengers in a train when they heard a few recruits singing the revolutionary song (in May 1878). 'Is it permitted again to sing the "Marseillaise"?' they asked one another with anxiety. The French Press had consequently no socialist papers. The Spanish papers were very well edited, and some of the manifestoes of their congresses were admirable expositions of anarchist socialism; but who knows anything of Spanish ideas outside of Spain? As to the Italian papers, they were all short-lived, appearing, disappearing, and re-appearing elsewhere under different names; and admirable as some of them were, they did not spread beyond Italy. Consequently, the Jura Federation, with its papers printed in French, became the centre for the maintenance and expression in the Latin countries of the spirit which—I repeat it—saved Europe from a very dark period of reaction. And it was also the ground upon which the theoretical conceptions of anarchism were worked out by Bakúnin and his followers in a language that was understood all over continental Europe.

III

QUITE a number of remarkable men of different nationalities, nearly all of whom had been personal friends of Bakúnin, belonged at that time to the Jura Federation. The editor of our chief paper, the 'Bulletin' of the federation, was James Guillaume, a teacher by profession, who belonged to one of the aristocratic families of Neuchâtel. Small, thin, with the stiff appearance and resoluteness of Robespierre, and with a truly golden heart which opened only in the intimacy of friendship, he was a born leader by his phenomenal powers of work and his stern activity. For eight years he fought against all sorts of obstacles to maintain the paper in existence, taking the most active part in every detail of the federation, till he had to leave Switzerland, where he could find no work whatever, and settled in France, where his name will be quoted some day with the utmost respect in the history of education.

Adhémar Schwitzguébel, also a Swiss, was the type of the jovial, lively, clear-sighted French-speaking watchmakers of the Bernese Jura hills. A watch engraver by trade, he never attempted to abandon his position of manual worker, and, always merry and active, he supported his large family through the severest periods of slack trade and curtailed earnings. His gift of taking a difficult economic or political question, and, after much thought about it, considering it from the working man's point of view, without

divesting it of its deepest meaning, was wonderful. He was known far and wide in the 'mountains,' and with the workers of all countries he was a general favourite.

His direct counterpart was another Swiss, also a watchmaker, Spichiger. He was a philosopher, slow in both movement and thought, English in his physical aspect; always trying to get at the full meaning of every fact, and impressing all of us by the justness of the conclusions he reached while he was pondering over all sorts of subjects during his work of scooping out watch lids.

Round these three gathered a number of solid, staunch, middle-aged or elderly workmen, passionate lovers of liberty, happy to take part in such a promising movement, and a hundred or so bright young men, also mostly watchmakers—all very independent and affectionate, very lively, and ready to go to any length in self-sacrifice.

Several refugees of the Paris Commune had joined the federation. Elisée Reclus, the great geographer, was of their number—a type of the true Puritan in his manner of life, and of the French encyclopædist philosopher of the last century in his mind; the man who inspires others, but never has governed anyone, and never will do so; the anarchist whose anarchism is the epitome of his broad, intimate knowledge of the forms of life of mankind under all climates and in all stages of civilization; whose books rank among the very best of the century; whose style, of a striking beauty, moves the mind and the conscience; and who, as he enters the office of an anarchist paper, says to the editor—maybe a boy in comparison with himself: 'Tell me what

I have to do,' and will sit down, like a newspaper subordinate, to fill up a gap of so many lines in the current number of the paper. In the Paris Commune he simply took a rifle and stood in the ranks; and if he invites a contributor to work with him upon a volume of his world-famed Geography, and the contributor timidly asks, 'What have I to do?' he replies: 'Here are the books, here is a table. Do as you like.'

At his side was Lefrançais, an elderly man, formerly a teacher, who had been thrice in his life an exile: after June 1848, after Napoleon's *coup d'état*, and after 1871. An ex-member of the Commune, and consequently one of those who were said to have left Paris carrying away millions in their pockets, he worked as a freight handler at the railway at Lausanne, and was nearly killed in that work, which required younger shoulders than his. His book on the Paris Commune is the one in which the real historical meaning of that movement was put in its proper light. 'A Communalist, not an Anarchist, please,' he would say. 'I cannot work with such fools as you are;' and he worked with none but us, 'because,' as he said, 'you fools are still the men whom I love best. With you one can work, and remain one's self.'

Another ex-member of the Paris Commune who was with us was Pindy, a carpenter from the north of France, an adopted child of Paris. He became widely known at Paris, during a strike, supported by the International, for his vigour and bright intelligence, and was elected a member of the Commune, which nominated him commander of the Tuileries Palace. When the Versailles troops entered Paris, shooting their

prisoners by the hundred, three men at least were shot in different parts of the town, having been mistaken for Pindy. After the fight, however, he was concealed by a brave girl, a seamstress, who saved him by her calmness when the house was searched by the troops, and who afterwards became his wife. Only twelve months later they succeeded in leaving Paris unnoticed, and came to Switzerland. Here Pindy learned assaying, at which he became skilful; spending his days by the side of his red-hot stove, and at night devoting himself passionately to propaganda work, in which he admirably combined the passion of a revolutionist with the good sense and organizing powers characteristic of the Parisian worker.

Paul Brousse was then a young doctor, full of mental activity, uproarious, sharp, lively, ready to develop any idea with a geometrical logic to its utmost consequences; powerful in his criticisms of the State and State organization; finding enough time to edit two papers, in French and in German, to write scores of voluminous letters, to be the soul of a workmen's evening party; constantly active in organizing men, with the subtle mind of a true 'southerner.'

Among the Italians who collaborated with us in Switzerland, two men whose names stood always associated, and will be remembered in Italy by more than one generation, two close personal friends of Bakúnin, were Cafiero and Malatesta. Cafiero was an idealist of the highest and the purest type, who gave a considerable fortune to the cause, and who never since has asked himself what he shall live upon to-morrow; a thinker plunged in philosophical specula-

tion ; a man who never would harm anyone, and yet took the rifle and marched in the mountains of Benevento, when he and his friends thought that an uprising of a socialist character might be attempted, were it only to show the people that their uprisings ought to have a deeper meaning than that of a mere revolt against tax collectors. Malatesta was a student of medicine, who had left the medical profession and also his fortune for the sake of the revolution ; full of fire and intelligence, a pure idealist, who all his life—and he is now approaching the age of fifty—has never thought whether he would have a piece of bread for his supper and a bed for the night. Without even so much as a room that he could call his own, he would sell sherbet in the streets of London to get his living, and in the evening write brilliant articles for the Italian papers. Imprisoned in France, released, expelled, re-condemned in Italy, confined to an island, escaped, and again in Italy in disguise ; always in the hottest of the struggle, whether it be in Italy or elsewhere—he has persevered in this life for thirty years in succession. And when we meet him again, released from a prison or escaped from an island, we find him just as we saw him last ; always renewing the struggle, with the same love of men, the same absence of hatred toward his adversaries and jailers, the same hearty smile for a friend, the same caress for a child.

The Russians were few among us, most of them following the German social democrats. We had, however, Joukóvsky, a friend of Hérzen, who had left Russia in 1863—a brilliant, elegant, highly intelligent nobleman, a favourite with the workers.—who better

than any of the rest of us had what the French call *l'oreille du peuple* (the ear of the workers), because he knew how to fire them by showing them the great part they had to play in rebuilding society, to lift them by holding before them high historical views, to throw a flash of light on the most intricate economic problem, and to electrify them with his earnestness and sincerity. Sokolóff, formerly an officer of the Russian general staff, an admirer of Paul Louis Courier for his boldness and of Proudhon for his philosophical ideas, who had made many a socialist in Russia by his review articles, was also with us temporarily.

I mention only those who became widely known as writers, or as delegates to congresses, or in some other way. And yet I ask myself if I ought not rather to speak of those who never committed their names to print, but were as important in the life of the federation as any one of the writers; who fought in the ranks, and were always ready to join in any enterprise, never asking whether the work would be grand or small, distinguished or modest—whether it would have great consequences, or simply result in infinite worry to themselves and their families.

I ought also to mention the Germans Werner and Rinke, the Spaniard Albarracin, and many others; but I am afraid that these faint sketches of mine may not convey to the reader the same feelings of respect and love with which every one of this little family inspired those who knew him or her personally.

IV

OF all the towns of Switzerland that I know, La Chaux-de-Fonds is perhaps the least attractive. It lies on a high plateau entirely devoid of any vegetation, open to bitterly cold winds in the winter, when the snow lies as deep as at Moscow, and melts and falls again as often as at St. Petersburg. But it was important to spread our ideas in that centre, and to give more life to the local propaganda. Pindy, Spichiger, Albarracin, the two Blanquists, Ferré and Jeallot, were there, and from time to time I could pay visits to Guillaume at Neuchâtel, and to Schwitzguébel in the valley of St. Imier.

A life full of work that I liked began now for me. We held many meetings, distributing ourselves our announcements in the cafés and the workshops. Once a week we held our section meetings, at which the most animated discussions took place, and we went also to preach anarchism at the gatherings convoked by the political parties. I travelled a good deal, visiting other sections and helping them.

During that winter we won the sympathy of many, but our regular work was very much hampered by a crisis in the watch trade. Half the workers were out of work or only partially employed, so that the municipality had to open dining rooms to provide cheap meals at cost price. The co-operative workshop established by the anarchists at La Chaux-de-Fonds, in which the earnings were divided equally among all the members, had great difficulty in getting work, in

spite of its high reputation, and Spichiger had to resort several times to wool-combing for an upholsterer in order to get his living.

We all took part, that year, in a manifestation with the red flag at Bern. The wave of reaction spread to Switzerland, and the carrying of the workers' banner was prohibited by the Bern police in defiance of the constitution. It was necessary, therefore, to show that at least here and there the workers would not have their rights trampled underfoot, and would offer resistance. We all went to Bern on the anniversary of the Paris Commune, to carry the red flag in the streets, notwithstanding the prohibition. Of course there was a collision with the police in which two comrades received sword cuts and two police officers were rather seriously wounded. But the red flag was carried safe to the hall, where a most animated meeting was held. I hardly need say that the so-called leaders were in the ranks, and fought like all the rest. The trial involved nearly thirty Swiss citizens, all themselves demanding to be prosecuted, and those who had wounded the two police officers coming forward spontaneously to say that they had done it. A great deal of sympathy was won to the cause during the trial; it was understood that all liberties have to be defended jealously, in order not to be lost. The sentences were consequently very light, not exceeding three months' imprisonment.

However, the Bern Government prohibited the carrying of the red flag anywhere in the canton; and the Jura Federation thereupon decided to carry it, in defiance of the prohibition, in St. Imier, where we held our congress that year. This time most of us were

armed, and ready to defend our banner to the last extremity. A body of police had been placed in a square to stop our column; a detachment of the militia was kept in readiness in an adjoining field, under the pretext of target practice—we distinctly heard their shots as we marched through the town. But when our column appeared in the square, and it was judged from its aspect that aggression would result in serious bloodshed, the mayor let us continue our march undisturbed to the hall where the meeting was to be held. None of us desired a fight; but the strain of that march, in fighting order, to the sound of a military band, was such that I do not know what feeling prevailed in most of us during the first moments after we reached the hall—relief at having been spared an undesired fight, or regret that the fight did not take place. Man is a very complex being.

Our main activity, however, was in working out the practical and theoretical aspects of anarchist socialism, and in this direction the federation has undoubtedly accomplished something that will last.

We saw that a new form of society is germinating in the civilised nations, and must take the place of the old one: a society of equals, who will not be compelled to sell their hands and brains to those who choose to employ them in a haphazard way, but who will be able to apply their knowledge and capacities to production, in an organism so constructed as to combine all the efforts for procuring the greatest sum possible of well-being for all, while full, free scope will be left for every individual initiative. This society will be composed

of a multitude of associations, federated for all the purposes which require federation: trade federations for production of all sorts—agricultural, industrial, intellectual, artistic; communes for consumption, making provision for dwellings, gas works, supplies of food, sanitary arrangements, &c.; federations of communes among themselves, and federations of communes with trade organizations; and finally, wider groups covering the country, or several countries, composed of men who collaborate for the satisfaction of such economic, intellectual, artistic, and moral needs as are not limited to a given territory. All these will combine directly, by means of free agreements between them, just as the railway companies or the postal departments of different countries co-operate now, without having a central railway or postal government, even though the former are actuated by merely egoistic aims and the latter belong to different and often hostile States; or as the meteorologists, the Alpine clubs, the lifeboat stations in Great Britain, the cyclists, the teachers, and so on, combine for all sorts of work in common, for intellectual pursuits, or simply for pleasure. There will be full freedom for the development of new forms of production, invention, and organisation; individual initiative will be encouraged, and the tendency toward uniformity and centralization will be discouraged.

Moreover, this society will not be crystallized into certain unchangeable forms, but will continually modify its aspect, because it will be a living, evolving organism; no need of government will be felt, because free agreement and federation can take its place in all those

functions which governments consider as theirs at the present time, and because, the causes of conflict being reduced in number, those conflicts which may still arise can be submitted to arbitration.

None of us minimized the importance and depth of the change which we looked for. We understood that the current opinions upon the necessity of private ownership in land, factories, mines, dwelling houses, and so on, as a means of securing industrial progress, and of the wage-system as a means of compelling men to work, would not soon give way to higher conceptions of socialized ownership and production. We knew that a tedious propaganda and a long succession of struggles, individual and collective revolts against the now prevailing forms of property, of individual self-sacrifice, of partial attempts at reconstruction and partial revolutions would have to be lived through, before the current ideas upon private ownership would be modified. And we understood also that the now current ideas concerning the necessity of authority—in which all of us have been bred—would not and could not be abandoned by civilized mankind all at once. Long years of propaganda and a long succession of partial acts of revolt against authority, as well as a complete revision of the teachings now derived from history, would be required before men could perceive that they had been mistaken in attributing to their rulers and their laws what was derived in reality from their own sociable feelings and habits. We knew all that. But we also knew that in preaching change in both these directions we should be working with the tide of human progress.

When I made a closer acquaintance with the working population and their sympathisers from the better educated classes, I soon realised that they valued their personal freedom even more than they valued their personal well-being. Fifty years ago the workers were ready to sell their personal liberty to all sorts of rulers, and even to a Cæsar, in exchange for a promise of material well-being, but now this was no longer the case. I saw that the blind faith in elected rulers, even if they were taken from amongst the best leaders of the labour movement, was dying away amongst the Latin workers. 'We must know first what we want, and then we can do it best ourselves,' was an idea which I found widely spread among them—far more widely than is generally believed. The sentence which was put in the statutes of the International Association: 'The emancipation of the workers must be accomplished by the workers themselves,' had met with general sympathy and had taken root in minds. The sad experience of the Paris Commune only confirmed it.

When the insurrection broke out, considerable numbers of men belonging to the middle classes themselves were prepared to make, or at least to accept, a new start in the social direction. 'When my brother and myself, coming out of our little room, went out in the streets,' Elisée Reclus said to me once, 'we were asked on all sides by people belonging to the wealthier classes: "Tell us what is to be done? We are ready to try a new start;" but *we* were not prepared yet to make the suggestions.'

Never before had a government been as fairly

representative of all the advanced parties as the Council of the Commune, elected on March 25, 1871. All shades of revolutionary opinion—Blanquists, Jacobinists, Internationalists—were represented in it in a true proportion. And yet the workers themselves, having no distinct ideas of social reform to impress upon their representatives, the Commune Government did nothing in that direction. The very fact of having been isolated from the masses and shut up in the Hôtel de Ville paralysed them. For the very success of socialism, the ideas of no-government, of self-reliance, of free initiative of the individual—of anarchism, in a word—had thus to be preached side by side with those of socialized ownership and production.

We certainly foresaw that if full freedom is left to the individual for the expression of his ideas and for action, we should have to face a certain amount of extravagant exaggerations of our principles. I had seen it in the Nihilist movement in Russia. But we trusted—and experience has proved that we were right—that social life itself, supported by a frank, open-minded criticism of opinions and actions, would be the most effective means for threshing out opinions and for divesting them of the unavoidable exaggerations. We acted, in fact, in accordance with the old saying that freedom remains still the wisest cure for freedom's temporary inconveniences. There is, in mankind, a nucleus of social habits, an inheritance from the past, not yet duly appreciated, which is *not* maintained by coercion and is superior to coercion. Upon it all the progress of mankind is based, and so long as mankind does not begin to deteriorate physically and

mentally, it will not be destroyed by any amount of criticism or of occasional revolt against it. These were the opinions in which I grew confirmed more and more in proportion as my experience of men and things increased.

We understood, at the same time, that such a change cannot be produced by the conjectures of one man of genius, that it will not be one man's discovery, but that it must result from the constructive work of the masses, just as the forms of judicial procedure which were elaborated in the early mediæval ages, the village community, the guild, the mediæval city, or the foundations of international law, were worked out by the people.

Many of our predecessors had undertaken to picture ideal commonwealths, basing them upon the principle of authority, or, on some rare occasions—upon the principle of freedom. Robert Owen and Fourier had given the world their ideals of a free, organically developing society, in opposition to the pyramidal ideals which had been copied from the Roman Empire or from the Roman Church. Proudhon had continued their work, and Bakúnin, applying his wide and clear understanding of the philosophy of history to the criticism of present institutions, 'built up while he was demolishing.' But all that was only preparatory work.

The International Working Men's Association inaugurated a new method of solving the problems of practical sociology by appealing to the workers themselves. The educated men who had joined the association undertook only to enlighten the workers as to what was going on in different countries of the world to analyse the obtained results, and, later on, to aid

the workers in formulating their conclusions. We did not pretend to evolve an ideal commonwealth out of our theoretical views as to what a society *ought to be*, but we invited the workers to investigate the causes of the present evils, and in their discussions and congresses to consider the practical aspects of a better social organization than the one we live in. A question raised at an international congress was recommended as a subject of study to all labour unions. In the course of the year it was discussed all over Europe, in the small meetings of the sections, with a full knowledge of the local needs of each trade and each locality; then the work of the sections was brought before the next congress of each federation, and finally it was submitted in a more elaborate form to the next international congress. The structure of the society which we longed for was thus worked out, in theory and practice, from beneath, and the Jura Federation took a large part in that elaboration of the anarchist ideal.

For myself, placed as I was in such favourable conditions, I gradually came to realize that anarchism represents more than a mere mode of action and a mere conception of a free society; that it is part of a philosophy, natural and social, which must be developed in a quite different way from the metaphysical or dialectic methods which have been employed in sciences dealing with man. I saw that it must be treated by the same methods as natural sciences; not, however, on the slippery ground of mere analogies, such as Herbert Spencer accepts, but on the solid basis of induction applied to human institutions. And I did my best to accomplish what I could in that direction.

V

Two congresses were held in the autumn of 1877 in Belgium: one of the International Working Men's Association at Verviers, and the other an International Socialist congress at Ghent. The latter was especially important, as it was known that an attempt would be made by the German social democrats to bring all the labour movement of Europe under one organization, subject to a central committee, which would be the old general council of the International under a new name. It was therefore necessary to preserve the autonomy of the labour organizations in the Latin countries, and we did our best to be well represented at this congress. I went under the name of Levashóff; two Germans, the compositor Werner and the engineer Rinke, walked nearly all the distance from Basel to Belgium; and although we were only nine anarchists at Ghent, we succeeded in checking the centralization scheme.

Twenty-two years have passed since; a number of International Socialist congresses have been held, and at every one of them the same struggle has been renewed—the social democrats trying to enlist all the labour movement of Europe under their banner and to bring it under their control, and the anarchists opposing and preventing it. What an amount of wasted force, of bitter words exchanged and efforts divided, simply because those who have adopted the formula of 'conquest of power within the existing states' do not understand that activity in this direction

cannot embody all the socialist movement ! From the outset socialism took three independent lines of development, which found their expression in Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Robert Owen. Saint-Simonism has developed into social democracy, and Fourierism into anarchism ; while Owenism is developing, in England and America, into trade-unionism, co-operation, and the so-called municipal socialism, and remains hostile to social democratic state socialism, while it has many points of contact with anarchism. But because of failure to recognize that the three march toward a common goal in three different ways, and that the two latter bring their own precious contribution to human progress, a quarter of a century has been given to endeavours to realize the unrealizable Utopia of a unique labour movement of the social democratic pattern.

The Ghent congress ended for me in an unexpected way. Three or four days after it had begun, the Belgian police learned who Levashóff was, and received the order to arrest me for a breach of police regulations which I had committed in giving at the hotel an assumed name. My Belgian friends warned me. They maintained that the clerical ministry which was in power was capable of giving me up to Russia, and insisted upon my leaving the congress at once. They would not let me return to the hotel ; Guillaume barred the way, telling me that I should have to use force against him if I insisted upon returning thither. I had to go with some Ghent comrades, and as soon as I joined them, muffled calls and whistling came from

all corners of a dark square over which groups of workers were scattered. It all looked awfully mysterious. At last, after much whispering and subdued whistling, a group of comrades took me under escort to a social democrat worker, with whom I had to spend the night, and who received me, anarchist though I was, in the most touching way as a brother. Next morning I left once more for England, on board a steamer, provoking a number of good-natured smiles from the British custom-house officers, who wanted me to show them my luggage, while I had nothing to show but a small hand-bag.

I did not stay long in London. In the admirable collections of the British Museum I studied the beginnings of the French Revolution—how revolutions come to break out; but I wanted more activity, and soon went to Paris. A revival of the labour movement was beginning there, after the rigid suppression of the Commune. With the Italian Costa and the few anarchist friends we had among the Paris workers, and with Jules Guesde and his colleagues who were not strict social democrats at that time, we started the first socialist groups.

Our beginnings were ridiculously small. Half a dozen of us used to meet in cafés, and when we had an audience of a hundred persons at a meeting we felt happy. No one would have guessed then that two years later the movement would be in full swing. But France has its own ways of development. When a reaction has gained the upper hand, all visible traces of a movement disappear. Those who fight against the current are few. But in some mysterious way, by a

sort of invisible infiltration of ideas, the reaction is undermined; a new current sets in, and then it appears, all of a sudden, that the idea which was thought to be dead was there alive, spreading and growing all the time; and as soon as public agitation becomes possible, thousands of adherents, whose existence nobody suspected, come to the front. 'There are at Paris,' old Blanqui used to say, 'fifty thousand men who never come to a meeting or to a demonstration; but the moment they feel that the people can appear in the streets to manifest their opinion, they are there to storm the position.' So it was then. There were not twenty of us to carry on the movement, not two hundred openly to support it. At the first commemoration of the Commune, in March 1878, we surely were not two hundred. But two years later the amnesty for the Commune was voted, and the working population of Paris was in the streets to greet the returning Communards; it flocked by the thousand to cheer them at the meetings, and the socialist movement took a sudden expansion, carrying with it the Radicals.

The time had not yet come for that revival, however, and one night, in April 1878, Costa and a French comrade were arrested. A police-court condemned them to imprisonment for eighteen months as Internationalists. I escaped arrest only by mistake. The police wanted Levashóff, and went to arrest a Russian student whose name sounded very much like that. I had given my real name, and continued to stay at Paris under that name for another month. Then I was called to Switzerland.

VI

DURING this stay at Paris I made my first acquaintance with Turguéneff. He had expressed to our common friend, P. L. Lavróff, the desire to see me, and, as a true Russian, to celebrate my escape by a small friendly dinner. It was with almost a feeling of worship that I crossed the threshold of his room. If by his 'Sportsman's Notebook' he rendered to Russia the immense service of throwing odium upon serfdom (I did not know at that time that he took a leading part in Hérzen's powerful 'Bell'), he has rendered no less service through his later novels. He has shown what the Russian woman is, what treasures of mind and heart she possesses, what she may be as an inspirer of men; and he has taught us how men who have a real claim to superiority look upon women, how they love. Upon me, and upon thousands of my contemporaries, this part of his teaching made an indelible impression, far more powerful than the best articles upon women's rights.

His appearance is well known. Tall, strongly built, the head covered with soft and thick grey hair, he was certainly beautiful; his eyes gleamed with intelligence, not devoid of a touch of humour, and his whole manner testified to that simplicity and absence of affectation which are characteristic of the best Russian writers. His fine head revealed a vast development of brain power, and when he died, and Paul Bert, with Paul Reclus (the surgeon), weighed his brain, it so

much surpassed the heaviest brain then known—that of Cuvier—reaching something over two thousand grammes, that they would not trust to their scales, but got new ones, to repeat the weighing.

His talk was especially remarkable. He spoke, as he wrote, in images. When he wanted to develop an idea, he did not resort to arguments, although he was a master in philosophical discussions; he illustrated his idea by a scene presented in a form as beautiful as if it had been taken out of one of his novels.

‘You must have had a great deal of experience in your life amongst Frenchmen, Germans, and other peoples,’ he said to me once. ‘Have you not remarked that there is a deep, unfathomable chasm between many of their conceptions and the views which we Russians hold on the same subjects—points upon which we can never agree?’

I replied that I had not noticed such points.

‘Yes, there are some. Here is one of them. One night, we were at the first representation of a new play. I was in a box with Flaubert, Daudet, Zola. . . . (I am not quite sure whether he named both Daudet and Zola, but he certainly named one of the two). All were men of advanced opinions. The subject of the play was this: A woman had separated from her husband. She had had a new love and had settled with another man. This man was represented in the play as an excellent person. For years they had been quite happy. Her two children—a girl and a boy—were babies at the moment of the separation; now, they had grown, and throughout all these years they had considered the man as their real father. The girl

was about eighteen and the boy about seventeen. The man treated them quite as a father, they loved him, and he loved them. The scene represented the family meeting at breakfast. The girl comes in, approaches her supposed father, and he is going to kiss her—when the boy, who has learned in some way that they are not his children, rushes forward towards him, and shouts out: “Don’t dare!” *N’osez pas!*

‘The hall was brought down by this exclamation. There was an outburst of frantic applause. Flaubert and the others joined in it. I was disgusted. “Why,” I said, “this family was happy; the man was a better father to these children than their real father, . . . their mother loved him and was happy with him. . . . This mischievous, perverted boy ought simply to be flogged for what he has said. . . .” It was of no use. I discussed for hours with them afterwards: none of them could understand me!’

I was, of course, fully in accord with Turguéneff’s point of view. I remarked, however, that his acquaintances were chiefly amongst the middle classes. There the difference from nation to nation is immense indeed. But my acquaintances were exclusively amongst the workers, and there is an immense resemblance between the workers, and especially amongst the peasants, of all nations.

In so saying, I was, however, quite wrong. After I had had the opportunity of making a closer acquaintance with French workers, I often thought of the rightness of Turguéneff’s remark. There is a real chasm indeed between the conceptions which prevail in Russia upon marriage relations and those which prevail

in France: amongst the workers as well as in the middle classes; and upon many other points there is almost the same chasm between the Russian point of view and that of other nations.

It was said somewhere, after Turguéneff's death, that he intended to write a novel upon this subject. If it was begun, the above mentioned scene must be in his manuscript. What a pity that he did not write that novel! He, a thorough 'Occidental' in his ways of thinking, could have said very deep things upon a subject which must have so deeply affected him personally throughout his life.

Of all novel-writers of our century, Turguéneff has certainly attained the greatest perfection as an artist, and his prose sounds to the Russian ear like music—music as deep as that of Beethoven. His principal novels—the series of 'Dmítri Rúdin,' 'A Nobleman's Retreat,' 'On the Eve,' 'Fathers and Sons,' 'Smoke,' and 'Virgin Soil'—represent the leading 'history-making' types of the educated classes of Russia, which evolved in rapid succession after 1848; all sketched with a fulness of philosophical conception and humanitarian understanding and an artistic beauty which have no parallel in any other literature. Yet 'Fathers and Sons'—a novel which he rightly considered his profoundest work—was received by the young people of Russia with a loud protest. Our youth declared that the Nihilist Bazároff was by no means a true representation of his class; many described him even as a caricature of Nihilism. This misunderstanding deeply affected Turguéneff, and, although a reconciliation between him and the young generation took place

later on at St. Petersburg, after he had written 'Virgin Soil,' the wound inflicted upon him by these attacks was never healed.

He knew from Lavróff that I was an enthusiastic admirer of his writings; and one day, as we were returning in a carriage from a visit to Antokólsky's studio, he asked me what I thought of Bazároff. I frankly replied, 'Bazároff is an admirable painting of the Nihilist, but one feels that you did not love him as much as you did your other heroes.' 'On the contrary, I loved him, intensely loved him,' Turguéneff replied, with unexpected vigour. 'When we get home I will show you my diary, in which I have noted how I wept when I had ended the novel with Bazároff's death.'

Turguéneff certainly loved the intellectual aspect of Bazároff. He so identified himself with the Nihilist philosophy of his hero that he even kept a diary in his name, appreciating the current events from Bazároff's point of view. But I think that he admired him more than he loved him. In a brilliant lecture on Hamlet and Don Quixote, he divided the history-makers of mankind into two classes, represented by one or the other of these characters. 'Analysis first of all, and then egoism, and therefore no faith—an egoist cannot even believe in himself:' so he characterized Hamlet. 'Therefore he is a sceptic, and never will achieve anything; while Don Quixote, who fights against wind-mills, and takes a barber's plate for the magic helmet of Mambrin (who of us has never made the same mistake?), is a leader of the masses, because the masses always follow those who, taking no heed of the sarcasms of the majority, or even of persecutions, march straight

forward, keeping their eyes fixed upon a goal which they may be alone to see. They search, they fall, but they rise again, and find it—and by right, too. Yet, although Hamlet is a sceptic, and disbelieves in Good, he does not disbelieve in Evil. He hates it; Evil and Deceit are his enemies; and his scepticism is not indifference, but only negation and doubt, which finally consume his will.'

These thoughts of Turguéneff give, I think, the true key for understanding his relations to his heroes. He himself and several of his best friends belonged more or less to the Hamlets. He loved Hamlet, and admired Don Quixote. So he admired also Bazároff. He represented his superiority admirably well: he understood the tragic character of his isolated position; but he could not surround him with that tender, poetical love which he bestowed, as on a sick friend, when his heroes approached the Hamlet type. It would have been out of place.

'Did you know Mýshkin?' he once asked me, in 1878. At the trial of our circle Mýshkin revealed himself as the most powerful personality. 'I should like to know all about him,' he continued. 'That *is* a man; not the slightest trace of Hamletism.' And in so saying he was obviously meditating on this new type in the Russian movement, which did not exist in the phase that Turguéneff described in 'Virgin Soil,' but was to appear two years later.

I saw him for the last time in the autumn of 1881. He was very ill, and worried by the thought that it was his duty to write to Alexander III.—who had just come to the throne, and hesitated as to the policy he

should follow—asking him to give Russia a constitution, and proving to him by solid arguments the necessity of that step. With evident grief he said to me : ‘ I feel that I must do it, but I feel I shall not be able to do it.’ In fact, he was already suffering awful pains occasioned by a cancer in the spinal cord, and had the greatest difficulty even in sitting up and talking for a few moments. He did not write then, and a few weeks later it would have been useless. Alexander III. had announced in a manifesto his intention to remain the absolute ruler of Russia.

VII

IN the meantime affairs in Russia took quite a new turn. The war which Russia began against Turkey in 1877 had ended in general disappointment. There was in the country, before the war broke out, a great deal of enthusiasm in favour of the Slavonians. Many believed, also, that the war of liberation in the Balkans would result in a move in the progressive direction in Russia itself. But the liberation of the Slavonian populations was only partly accomplished. The tremendous sacrifices which had been made by the Russians were rendered ineffectual by the blunders of the higher military authorities. Hundreds of thousands of men had been slaughtered in battles which were only half victories, and the concessions wrested from Turkey were brought to naught at the Berlin Congress. It was also

widely known that the embezzlement of State money went on during this war on almost as large a scale as during the Crimean war.

It was amidst the general dissatisfaction which prevailed in Russia at the end of 1877, that one hundred and ninety-three persons, arrested since 1873, in connection with our agitation, were brought before a high court. The accused, supported by a number of lawyers of talent, won at once the sympathies of the public. They produced a very favourable impression upon St. Petersburg society; and when it became known that most of them had spent three or four years in prison, waiting for this trial, and that no less than twenty-one of them had either put an end to their lives by suicide or become insane, the feeling grew still stronger in their favour, even among the judges themselves. The court pronounced very heavy sentences upon a few, and relatively lenient ones upon the remainder; saying that the preliminary detention had lasted so long, and was so hard a punishment in itself, that nothing could justly be added to it. It was confidently expected that the Emperor would still further mitigate the sentences. It happened, however, to the astonishment of all, that he revised the sentences only to increase them. Those whom the court had acquitted were sent into exile in remote parts of Russia and Siberia, and from five to twelve years of hard labour were inflicted upon those whom the court had condemned to short terms of imprisonment. This was the work of the chief of the Third Section, General Mézentsoff.

At the same time, the chief of the St. Petersburg

police, General Trépoff, noticing, during a visit to the house of detention, that one of the political prisoners, Bogolúboff, did not take off his hat to greet the omnipotent satrap, rushed upon him, gave him a blow, and, when the prisoner resisted, ordered him to be flogged. The other prisoners, learning the fact in their cells, loudly expressed their indignation, and were in consequence fearfully beaten by the warders and the police. The Russian political prisoners bore without murmuring all hardships inflicted upon them in Siberia or through hard labour, but they were firmly decided not to tolerate corporal punishment. A young girl, Véra Zasúlich, who did not even personally know Bogolúboff, took a revolver, went to the chief of police, and shot at him. Trépoff was only wounded. Alexander II. came to look at the heroic girl, who must have impressed him by her extremely sweet face and her modesty. Trépoff had so many enemies at St. Petersburg that they managed to bring the affair before a common-law jury, and Véra Zasúlich declared in court that she had resorted to arms only when all means for bringing the affair to public knowledge and obtaining some sort of redress had been exhausted. Even the St. Petersburg correspondent of the *London Times*, who had been asked to mention the affair in his paper, had not done so, perhaps thinking it improbable. Then, without telling anyone about her intentions, she went to shoot Trépoff. Now that the affair had become public, she was quite happy to know that he was but slightly wounded. The jury acquitted her unanimously ; and when the police tried to rearrest her, as she was leaving the court-house, the young men of St.

Petersburg, who stood in crowds at the gates, saved her from their clutches. She went abroad, and soon was among us in Switzerland.

This affair produced quite a sensation throughout Europe. I was at Paris when the news of the acquittal came, and had to call that day on business at the offices of several newspapers. I found the editors glowing with enthusiasm, and writing forcible articles in honour of this Russian girl. Even the '*Revue des Deux Mondes*,' in its review of the year 1878, declared that the two persons who had most impressed public opinion in Europe during the year were Prince Gortchakóff at the Berlin Congress and Véra Zasúlich. Their portraits were given side by side in several almanacs. Upon the workers of Western Europe the devotion of Véra Zasúlich produced a profound impression.

During the same year, 1878, without any plot having been formed, four attempts were made against crowned heads in close succession. The workman Hoedel, and after him Dr. Nobiling, shot at the German Emperor; a few weeks later, a Spanish workman, Oliva Moncási, followed with an attempt to shoot the King of Spain, and the cook Passanante rushed with his knife upon the King of Italy. The governments of Europe could not believe that such attempts upon the lives of three kings should have occurred without there being at the bottom some international conspiracy, and they jumped to the conclusion that the anarchist Jura Federation was the centre of that conspiracy.

More than twenty years have passed since then, and I can say most positively that there was absolutely no ground whatever for such a supposition. However, all the

European governments fell upon Switzerland, reproaching her with harbouring revolutionists who organized such plots. Paul Brousse, the editor of our Jura newspaper, the 'Avant-Garde,' was arrested and prosecuted. The Swiss judges, seeing there was not the slightest foundation for connecting Brousse or the Jura Federation with the recent attempts, condemned Brousse to only a couple of months' imprisonment for his articles ; but the paper was suppressed, and all the printing offices of Switzerland were asked by the federal government not to publish this or any similar paper. The Jura Federation was thus silenced.

Besides, the politicians of Switzerland, who looked with an unfavourable eye on the anarchist agitation in their country, acted privately in such a way as to compel the leading Swiss members of the Jura Federation either to retire from public life or to starve. Brousse was expelled from Switzerland. James Guillaume, who for eight years had maintained against all obstacles the 'Bulletin' of the federation, and made his living chiefly by teaching, could obtain no employment, and was compelled to leave Switzerland and remove to France. Adhémar Schwitzguébel, boycotted in the watch trade and burdened by a large family, had finally to retire from the movement. Spichiger was in the same condition, and emigrated. It thus happened that I, a foreigner, had to undertake the editing of a paper for the federation. I hesitated, of course, but there was nothing else to be done, and with two friends, Dumarthey and Herzig, I started a new fortnightly at Geneva, in February 1879, under the title of 'Le Révolté.' I had to write most of it

myself. We had only twenty-three francs to start the paper, but we all set to work to get subscriptions, and succeeded in issuing our first number. It was moderate in tone, but revolutionary in substance, and I did my best to write it in such a style that complicated historical and economical questions should be comprehensible to every intelligent worker. Six hundred was the utmost limit which the edition of our previous papers had ever attained. We printed two thousand copies of 'Le Révolté,' and in a few days not one was left. It was a success, and it still continues, at Paris, under the title of 'Temps Nouveaux.'

Socialist newspapers have often a tendency to become mere annals of complaints about existing conditions. The oppression of the workers in the mine, the factory, and the field is related; the misery and sufferings of the workers during strikes are told in vivid pictures; their helplessness in the struggle against their employers is insisted upon; and this succession of hopeless efforts, described every week, exercises a most depressing influence upon the reader. To counterbalance that effect, the editor has to rely chiefly upon burning words, by means of which he tries to inspire his readers with energy and faith. I thought, on the contrary, that a revolutionary paper must be, above all, a record of those symptoms which everywhere announce the coming of a new era, the germination of new forms of social life, the growing revolt against antiquated institutions. These symptoms should be watched, brought together in their intimate connection, and so grouped as to show to the hesitating

minds of the greater number the invisible and often unconscious support which advanced ideas find everywhere, when a revival of thought takes place in society. To make one feel in sympathy with the throbbing of the human heart all over the world, with its revolt against age-long injustice, with its attempts at working out new forms of life—this should be the chief duty of a revolutionary paper. It is hope, not despair, which makes successful revolutions.

Historians often tell us how this or that system of philosophy has accomplished a certain change in human thought, and subsequently in institutions. But this is not history. The greatest social philosophers have only caught the indications of coming changes, have understood their inner relations, and, aided by induction and intuition, have foretold what was to occur. Sociologists have also drawn plans of social organizations, by starting from a few principles and developing them to their necessary consequences, like a geometrical conclusion from a few axioms ; but this is not sociology. A correct social forecast cannot be made unless one keeps an eye on the thousands of signs of the new life, separating the occasional facts from those which are organically essential, and building the generalization upon that basis.

This was the method of thought with which I endeavoured to familiarize our readers—using plain comprehensible words, so as to accustom the most modest of them to judge for himself whereunto society is moving, and himself to correct the thinker if the latter comes to wrong conclusions. As to the criticism of what exists, I went into it only to disentangle the

roots of the evils, and to show that a deep-seated and carefully-nurtured fetishism with regard to the antiquated survivals of past phases of human development, and a widespread cowardice of mind and will, are the main sources of all evils.

Dumartheray and Herzig gave me full support in that direction. Dumartheray was born in one of the poorest peasant families in Savoy. His schooling had not gone beyond the first rudiments of a primary school. Yet he was one of the most intelligent men I ever met. His appreciations of current events and men were so remarkable for their uncommon good sense that they were often prophetic. He was also one of the finest critics of the current socialist literature, and was never taken in by the mere display of fine words, or would-be science. Herzig was a young clerk, born at Geneva; a man of suppressed emotions, shy, who would blush like a girl when he expressed an original thought, and who, after I was arrested, when he became responsible for the continuance of the journal, by sheer force of will learned to write very well. Boycotted by all Geneva employers, and fallen with his family into sheer misery, he nevertheless supported the paper till it became possible to transfer it to Paris.

To the judgment of these two friends I could trust implicitly. If Herzig frowned, muttering, 'Yes—well—it may go,' I knew that it would not do. And when Dumartheray, who always complained of the bad state of his spectacles when he had to read a not quite legibly written manuscript, and therefore generally read proofs only, interrupted his reading by exclaiming, 'Non, ça ne va pas !' I felt at once that it was not the proper

thing, and tried to guess what thought or expression provoked his disapproval. I knew there was no use asking him, 'Why will it not do?' He would have answered: 'Ah, that is not my affair; that's yours. It won't do; that is all I can say.' But I felt he was right, and I simply sat down to rewrite the passage, or, taking the composing stick, set up in type a new passage instead.

I must own that we had also hard times with our paper. No sooner had we issued five numbers than the printer asked us to find another printing office. For the workers and their publications the liberty of the Press inscribed in the Constitutions has many limitations beside the paragraphs of the law. The printer had no objection to our paper—he liked it; but in Switzerland all printing offices depend upon the government, which employs them more or less in issuing statistical reports and the like; and our printer was plainly told that if he continued to harbour our paper he need not expect to have any more orders from the Geneva government. I made the tour of all the French speaking part of Switzerland and saw the heads of all the printing offices, but everywhere, even from those who did not dislike the tendency of the paper, I received the same reply: 'We could not live without orders from the government, and we should have none if we undertook to print "*Le Révolté*."'

I returned to Geneva in very low spirits, but Dumartheray was only the more ardent and hopeful. 'It's all very simple,' he said. 'We buy our own

printing plant on a three months' credit, and in three months we shall have paid it.' 'But we have no money, only a few hundred francs,' I objected. 'Money? nonsense! We *shall* have it! Let us only order the type at once and immediately issue our next number, and money will come!' Once more he had judged quite right. When our next number came out from our own *Imprimerie Jurassienne*, and we had told our difficulties and issued a couple of small pamphlets besides—all of us helping in the printing—the money came in, mostly in coppers and silver, but it came. Over and over again in my life I have heard complaints among the advanced parties about the want of money, but the longer I live the more I am persuaded that our chief difficulty does not lie so much in money as in *men* who would march firmly and steadily towards a given aim in the right direction and inspire others. For twenty-one years our paper has now continued to live from hand to mouth, appeals for funds appearing on the front page almost in every number; but as long as there is a man who sticks to it and puts all his energy into it, as Herzig and Dumartheray did at Geneva, and Grave has done for the last sixteen years at Paris, the money comes in and the printing expenses are more or less covered, mainly by the pennies of the workers. For a paper, as for everything else, men are of an infinitely greater value than money.

We started our printing office in a tiny room, and our compositor was a Little Russian, who undertook to put our paper in type for the very modest sum of sixty francs a month. So long as he had his plain dinner every day, and the possibility of going occasionally

to the opera, he cared for nothing more. 'Going to the Turkish bath, John?' I asked him once as I met him at Geneva in the street, with a brown paper parcel under his arm. 'No, removing to a new lodging,' he replied in his melodious voice, with his usual smile.

Unfortunately, he knew no French. I used to write my manuscript to the best of my caligraphic ability—often thinking with regret of the time I had wasted in the writing classes of our good Ebert at school—but John would read a French manuscript in the most fantastical way, and would set up in type the most extraordinary words of his own invention; but as he 'kept the space,' and the length of his lines had not to be altered for making the corrections, there were only a dozen letters in each line to be changed, and we managed to do it pretty well. We were on excellent terms with him, and I soon learned some 'comping' under his direction. The paper was always ready in time to take the proofs to a Swiss comrade who was the responsible editor, and to whom we pedantically submitted them before going to print, and then one of us carted the formes to a printing office. Our *Imprimerie Jurassienne* soon became widely known for its publications, especially for its pamphlets, which Dumartheray insisted upon never selling at more than one penny. Quite a new style had to be worked out for such pamphlets. I must say that I often had the wickedness of envying those writers who could use any amount of pages for developing their ideas, and were allowed to make the well-known excuse of Talleyrand: 'I have not had the

time to be short.' When I had to condense the results of several months' work—upon, let me say, the origins of law—into a penny pamphlet, I had to give extra time in order to be short. But we wrote for the workers, and twopence for a pamphlet is often too much for them. The result was that our penny and halfpenny pamphlets sold by the scores of thousands, and were reproduced in every other country in translations. My leaders from that period were edited later on, while I was in prison, by Elisée Reclus, under the title of 'The Words of a Rebel,' 'Paroles d'un Révolté.'

France was always the chief object of our aims, but 'Le Révolté' was severely prohibited in France, and the smugglers have so many good things to import into France from Switzerland that they did not care to endanger their trade by meddling with papers. I went once with them, crossing in their company the French frontier, and found that they were very brave and reliable men, but I could not induce them to undertake the smuggling in of our paper. All we could do was to send it in sealed envelopes to about a hundred persons in France. We charged nothing for postage, leaving it to the voluntary contributions of our subscribers to cover our extra expenses—which they always did—but we often thought that the French police were missing a splendid opportunity for ruining 'Le Révolté,' by subscribing to a hundred copies and sending no voluntary contributions.

For the first year we had to rely entirely upon ourselves; but gradually Elisée Reclus took a greater interest in the work, and finally joined us, giving after my arrest more life than ever to the paper. Reclus had

invited me to aid him in the preparation of the volume of his monumental geography, which dealt with the Russian dominions in Asia. He knew Russian himself, but he thought that, as I was well acquainted with Siberia, I might aid him in a special way; and as the health of my wife was poor, and the doctor had ordered her to leave Geneva with its cold winds at once, we removed early in the spring of 1880 to Clarens, where Elisée Reclus lived at that time. We settled above Clarens, in a small cottage overlooking the blue waters of the lake, with the pure snow of the Dent du Midi in the background. A streamlet that thundered like a mighty torrent after rains, carrying away immense rocks in its narrow bed, ran under our windows, and on the slope of the hill opposite rose the old castle of Châtelard, of which the owners, up to the revolution of the *burla papei* (the burners of the papers) in 1799, levied upon the neighbouring serfs feudal taxes on the occasion of their births, marriages, and deaths. Here, aided by my wife, with whom I used to discuss every event and every proposed paper, and who was a severe literary critic of my writings, I produced the best things that I wrote for 'Le Révolté,' among them the address 'To the Young,' which was spread in hundreds of thousands of copies in all languages. In fact, I worked out here the foundation of nearly all that I have written later on. Contact with educated men of similar ways of thinking is what we anarchist writers, scattered by proscription all over the world, miss, perhaps, more than anything else. At Clarens I had that contact with Elisée Reclus and Lefrançais, in addition to permanent contact with the workers, which I con-

tinued to maintain ; and although I worked much for the geography, I was able to produce even more than usually for the anarchist propaganda.

VIII

IN Russia, the struggle for freedom was taking a more and more acute character. Several political trials had been brought before high courts—the trial of ‘the hundred and ninety-three,’ of ‘the fifty,’ of ‘the Dolgúshin circle,’ and so on—and in all of them the same thing was apparent. The youth had gone to the peasants and the factory workers, preaching socialism to them ; socialist pamphlets, printed abroad, had been distributed ; appeals had been made to revolt—in some vague, indeterminate way—against the oppressive economical conditions. In short, nothing was done that is not done in the socialist agitation in every other country of the world. No traces of conspiracy against the Tsar, nor even of preparations for revolutionary action, were found ; in fact, there were none. The great majority of our youth were at that time hostile to such action. Nay, looking now over that movement of the years 1870–78, I can confidently say that most of them would have felt satisfied if they had been simply allowed to live by the side of the peasants and the factory-workers, to teach them, to collaborate with them, either individually or as members

of the local self-government, in any of the thousand capacities in which an educated and earnest man or woman can be useful to the masses of the people. I knew the men and say so with full knowledge of them.

Yet the sentences were ferocious—stupidly ferocious, because the movement, which had grown out of the previous state of Russia, was too deeply rooted to be crushed down by mere brutality. Hard labour for six, ten, twelve years in the mines, with subsequent exile to Siberia for life, was a common sentence. There were such cases as that of a girl who got nine years' hard labour and life exile to Siberia, for giving one socialist pamphlet to a worker: that was all her crime. Another girl of fourteen, Miss Gukóvskaya, was transported for life to a remote village of Siberia, for having tried, like Goethe's Klärchen, to excite an indifferent crowd to deliver Koválsky and his friends when they were going to be hanged—an act the more natural in Russia, even from the authorities' standpoint, as there is no capital punishment in our country for common-law crimes, and the application of the death penalty to 'politicals' was then a novelty, a return to almost forgotten traditions. Thrown into the wilderness, this young girl soon drowned herself in the Yeniséi. Even those who were acquitted by the courts were banished by the gendarmes to little hamlets in Siberia and North-east Russia, where they had to starve on the government allowance of six shillings per month. There are no industries in such hamlets, and the exiles were strictly prohibited from teaching.

As if to exasperate the youth still more, their con-

demned friends were not sent direct to Siberia. They were locked up first for a number of years, in central prisons, which made them envy the convict's life in a Siberian mine. These prisons were awful indeed. In one of them—'a den of typhoid fever,' as the priest of that particular gaol said in a sermon—the mortality reached twenty per cent. in twelve months. In the central prisons, in the hard labour prisons of Siberia, in the fortress, the prisoners had to resort to the strike of death, the famine strike, to protect themselves from the brutality of the warders, or to obtain conditions—some sort of work, or reading, in their cells—that would save them from being driven into insanity in a few months. The horror of such strikes, during which men and women refused to take any food for seven or eight days in succession, and then lay motionless, their minds wandering, seemed not to appeal to the gendarmes. At Khárkoff, the prostrated prisoners were tied up with ropes and fed artificially, by force.

Information of these horrors leaked out from the prisons, crossed the boundless distances of Siberia, and spread far and wide among the youth. There was a time when not a week passed without disclosing some new infamy of that sort, or even worse.

Sheer exasperation took hold of our young people. 'In other countries,' they began to say, 'men have the courage to resist. An Englishman, a Frenchman, would not tolerate such outrages. How can we tolerate them? Let us resist, arms in hand, the nocturnal raids of the gendarmes; let them know, at least, that since arrest means a slow and infamous death at their hands, they will have to take us in a mortal struggle.' At Odessa,

Koválsky and his friends met with revolver shots the gendarmes who came one night to arrest them.

The reply of Alexander II. to this new move was the proclamation of a state of siege. Russia was divided into a number of districts, each of them under a governor-general, who received the order to hang offenders pitilessly. Koválsky and his friends—who, by the way, had killed no one by their shots—were executed. Hanging became the order of the day. Twenty-three persons perished in two years, including a boy of nineteen, who was caught posting a revolutionary proclamation at a railway station: this act was the only charge against him. He was a boy, but he died like a man.

Then the watchword of the revolutionists became 'self-defence': self-defence against the spies who introduced themselves into the circles under the mask of friendship, and denounced members right and left, simply because they would not be paid if they did not denounce large numbers of persons; self-defence against those who ill-treated prisoners; self-defence against the omnipotent chiefs of the state police.

Three functionaries of mark and two or three small spies fell in that new phase of the struggle. General Mézentsoff, who had induced the Tsar to double the sentences after the trial of the hundred and ninety-three, was killed in broad daylight at St. Petersburg; a gendarme colonel, guilty of something worse than that, had the same fate at Kieff; and the Governor-General of Khárkoff—my cousin, Dmítri Kropótkin—was shot as he was returning home from a theatre. The central prison, in which the first famine strike and artificial

feeding took place, was under his orders. In reality, he was not a bad man—I know that his personal feelings were somewhat favourable to the political prisoners ; but he was a weak man and a courtier, and he hesitated to interfere. One word from him would have stopped the ill-treatment of the prisoners. Alexander II. liked him so much, and his position at the court was so strong, that his interference very probably would have been approved. ‘Thank you ; you have acted according to my own wishes,’ the Tsar said to him, a couple of years before that date, when he came to St. Petersburg to report that he had taken a peaceful attitude in a riot of the poorer population of Khárkoff, and had treated the rioters very leniently. But this time he gave his approval to the gaolers, and the young men of Khárkoff were so exasperated at the treatment of their friends that one of them shot him.

However, the personality of the Emperor was kept out of the struggle, and down to the year 1879 no attempt was made on his life. The person of the Liberator of the serfs was surrounded by an aureole which protected him infinitely better than the swarms of police officials. If Alexander II. had shown at this juncture the least desire to improve the state of affairs in Russia ; if he had only called in one or two of those men with whom he had collaborated during the reform period, and had ordered them to make an inquiry into the conditions of the country, or merely of the peasantry ; if he had shown any intention of limiting the powers of the secret police, his steps would have been hailed with enthusiasm. A word would have made

him 'the Liberator' again, and once more the youth would have repeated Hérzen's words: 'Thou hast conquered, Galilean.' But just as during the Polish insurrection the despot awoke in him, and, inspired by Katkóff, he resorted to hanging, so now again, following the advice of the same evil genius, Katkóff, he found nothing to do but to nominate special military governors—for hanging.

Then, and then only, a handful of revolutionists—the Executive Committee—supported, I must say, by the growing discontent in the educated classes, and even in the Tsar's immediate surroundings, declared that war against absolutism which, after several attempts, ended in 1881 in the death of Alexander II.

Two men, I have said already, lived in Alexander II., and now the conflict between the two, which had grown during all his life, assumed a really tragic aspect. When he met Solovióff, who shot at him and missed the first shot, he had the presence of mind to run to the nearest door, not in a straight line, but in zigzags, while Solovióff continued to fire; and he thus escaped with but a slight tearing of his overcoat. On the day of his death, too, he gave a proof of his undoubted courage. In the face of real danger he was courageous; but he continually trembled before the phantasms of his own imagination. Once he shot at an aide-de-camp, when the latter had made an abrupt movement, and Alexander thought he was going to attempt his life. Merely to save his life, he surrendered entirely all his imperial powers into the hands of those who cared nothing for him, but only for their lucrative positions.

He undoubtedly retained an attachment to the

mother of his children, even though he was then with the Princess Dolgorúki, whom he married immediately after the death of the Empress. 'Don't speak to me of the Empress; it makes me suffer too much,' he more than once said to Lóris Mélikoff. And yet he entirely abandoned the Empress Marie, who had stood faithfully by his side while he was the Liberator; he let her die in the palace in complete neglect, having by her side only two ladies entirely devoted to her, while he stayed himself in another palace, and paid her only short official visits. A well-known Russian doctor, now dead, told his friends that he, a stranger, felt shocked at the neglect with which the Empress was treated during her last illness—deserted, of course, by the ladies of the court, who reserved their courtesies for the Princess Dolgorúki.

When the Executive Committee made the daring attempt to blow up the Winter Palace itself, Alexander II. took a step which had no precedent. He created a sort of dictatorship, vesting unlimited powers in Lóris Mélikoff. This General was an Armenian, to whom Alexander II. had once before given similar dictatorial powers, when the bubonic plague broke out on the Lower Vólga, and Germany threatened to mobilize her troops and put Russia under quarantine if the plague were not stopped. Now, when he saw that he could not have confidence in the vigilance even of the Palace police, Alexander II. gave dictatorial powers to Lóris Mélikoff, and as Mélikoff had the reputation of being a Liberal, this new move was interpreted in the sense that the convocation of a National Assembly would soon follow. However, no new attempts against his life having been made immediately after that explosion, he

regained confidence, and a few months later, before Mélikoff had been allowed to do anything, the dictator became simply a Minister of the Interior.

The sudden attacks of sadness of which I have already spoken, during which Alexander II. reproached himself with the reactionary character his reign had assumed, now took the shape of violent paroxysms of tears. He would sit weeping by the hour, filling Mélikoff with despair. Then he would ask his minister, 'When will your constitutional scheme be ready?' But if, two days later, Mélikoff said that it was ready, the Emperor seemed to have forgotten all about it. 'Did I mention it?' he would ask. 'What for? We had better leave it to my successor. That will be his gift to Russia.'

When rumours of a new plot reached him, he was ready to undertake something, in order to give satisfaction to the Executive Committee; but when everything seemed to be quiet among the revolutionists, he turned his ear again to his reactionary advisers, and let things go. At any moment Mélikoff expected dismissal.

In February 1881 Mélikoff reported that a new plot had been laid by the Executive Committee, but its plan could not be discovered by any amount of searching. Thereupon Alexander II. decided that a sort of consultative assembly of delegates from the provinces should be called. Always under the idea that he would share the fate of Louis XVI., he described this gathering as an *Assemblée des Notables*, like the one convoked by Louis XVI. before the National Assembly in 1789. The scheme had to be

laid before the council of state, but then again he hesitated. It was only on the morning of March 1 (13), 1881, after a new warning by Lóris Mélikoff, that he ordered it to be brought before the council on the following Thursday. This was on Sunday, and he was asked by Mélikoff not to go out to the parade that day, there being immediate danger of an attempt on his life. Nevertheless, he went. He wanted to see the Grand Duchess Catherine (daughter of his aunt, Hélène Pávlovna, who had been one of the leaders of the reform party in 1861), and to carry her the welcome news, perhaps as an expiatory offering to the memory of the Empress Marie. He is said to have told her, '*Je me suis décidé à convoquer une Assemblée des Notables.*' However, this belated and half-hearted concession had not been announced, and on his way back to the Winter Palace he was killed.

It is known how it happened. A bomb was thrown under his iron-clad carriage, to stop it. Several Circassians of the escort were wounded. Rysakóff, who flung the bomb, was arrested on the spot. Then, although the coachman of the Tsar earnestly advised him not to get out, saying that he could drive him still in the slightly damaged carriage, he insisted upon alighting. He felt that his military dignity required him to see the wounded Circassians, to condole with them as he had done with the wounded during the Turkish war, when a mad storming of Plevna, doomed to end in a terrible disaster, was made on the day of his fête. He approached Rysakóff and asked him something; and as he passed close by another young man, Grinevétsky, who stood there with a bomb, Grinevétsky

threw the bomb between himself and the Tsar, so that both of them should be killed. Both were fearfully wounded, and lived but a few hours.

There Alexander II. lay upon the snow, abandoned by every one of his followers! All had disappeared. It was some cadets, returning from the parade, who lifted the dying Tsar and put him in a sledge, covering his shivering body with a cadet mantle. And it was one of the terrorists, Emeliánoff, with a bomb wrapped in a paper under his arm, who, at the risk of being arrested on the spot and hanged, rushed with the cadets to the help of the wounded man. Human nature is full of these contrasts.

Thus ended the tragedy of Alexander the Second's life. People could not understand how it was possible that a Tsar who had done so much for Russia should have met his death at the hands of revolutionists. To me, who had the chance of witnessing the first reactionary steps of Alexander II. and his gradual deterioration, who had caught a glimpse of his complex personality, and seen in him a born autocrat, whose violence was but partially mitigated by education, a man possessed of military gallantry, but devoid of the courage of the statesman, a man of strong passions and weak will—it seemed that the tragedy developed with the unavoidable fatality of one of Shakespeare's dramas. Its last act was already written for me on the day when I heard him address us, the promoted officers, on June 13, 1862, immediately after he had ordered the first executions in Poland.

IX

A WILD panic seized the court circles at St. Petersburg. Alexander III., who, notwithstanding his colossal stature and force, was not a very courageous man, refused to move to the Winter Palace, and retired to the palace of his grandfather, Paul I., at Gatchina. I know that old building, planned as a Vauban fortress, surrounded by moats and protected by watch towers, from the tops of which secret staircases lead to the Emperor's study. I have seen the trap-doors in the study for suddenly throwing an enemy on the sharp rocks in the water underneath, and the secret staircase leading to underground prisons and to an underground passage which opens on a lake. All the palaces of Paul I. had been built on a similar plan. In the meantime, an underground gallery, supplied with automatic electric appliances to protect it from being undermined by the revolutionists, was dug round the Anichkoff palace in which Alexander III. resided when he was heir-apparent.

A secret league for the protection of the Tsar was started. Officers of all grades were induced by triple salaries to join it, and to undertake voluntary spying in all classes of society. Amusing scenes followed, of course. Two officers, without knowing that they both belonged to the league, would entice each other into a disloyal conversation, during a railway journey, and then proceed to arrest each other, only to discover at the last moment that their pains had been labour lost.

This league still exists in a more official shape, under the name of Okhrána (Protection), and from time to time frightens the present Tsar with all sorts of concocted dangers, in order to maintain its existence.

A still more secret organization, the Holy League, was formed at the same time, under the leadership of the brother of the Tsar, Vladímir, for the purpose of opposing the revolutionists in different ways, one of which was to kill those of the refugees who were supposed to have been the leaders of the late conspiracies. I was of this number. The grand duke violently reproached the officers of the league for their cowardice, regretting that there were none among them who would undertake to kill such refugees; and an officer, who had been a page de chambre at the time I was in the corps of pages, was appointed by the league to carry out this particular work.

The fact is that the refugees abroad did not interfere with the work of the Executive Committee at St. Petersburg. To pretend to direct conspiracies from Switzerland, while those who were at St. Petersburg acted under a permanent menace of death, would have been sheer nonsense; and as Stepniák and I wrote several times, none of us would have accepted the dubious task of forming plans of action without being on the spot. But, of course, it suited the plans of the St. Petersburg police to maintain that they were powerless to protect the Tsar because all plots were devised abroad, and their spies—I know it well—amply supplied them with the desired reports.

Skóbeleff, the hero of the Turkish war, was also asked to join this league, but he blankly refused. It

appears from Lóris Mélikoff's posthumous papers, part of which were published by a friend of his at London, that when Alexander III. came to the throne, and hesitated to convoke the Assembly of Notables, Skóbeleff even made an offer to Lóris Mélikoff and Count Ignátieff ('the lying Pasha,' as the Constantinople diplomatists used to nickname him) to arrest Alexander III., and compel him to sign a constitutional manifesto; whereupon Ignátieff is said to have denounced the scheme to the Tsar, and thus to have obtained his nomination as prime minister, in which capacity he resorted, with the advice of M. Andrieux, the ex-prefect of police at Paris, to various stratagems in order to paralyze the revolutionists.

If the Russian Liberals had shown even moderate courage and some power of organized action at that time, a National Assembly would have been convoked. From the same posthumous papers of Lóris Mélikoff, it appears that Alexander III. was willing for a time to convoke a National Assembly. He had made up his mind to do so, and had announced it to his brother. Old Wilhelm I. supported him in this intention. It was only when he saw that the Liberals undertook nothing, while the Katkóff party was busy at work in the opposite direction—M. Andrieux advising him to crush the nihilists and indicating how it ought to be done (the ex-prefect's letter to this effect was published in the said papers)—that Alexander III. finally resolved on declaring that he would continue to be an absolute ruler of the Empire.

A few months after the death of Alexander II.

I was expelled from Switzerland by order of the federal council. I did not take umbrage at this. Assailed by the monarchical powers on account of the asylum which Switzerland offered to refugees, and menaced by the Russian official press with a wholesale expulsion of all Swiss governesses and ladies' maids, who are numerous in Russia, the rulers of Switzerland, by banishing me, gave some sort of satisfaction to the Russian police. But I very much regret, for the sake of Switzerland itself, that that step was taken. It was a sanction given to the theory of 'conspiracies concocted in Switzerland,' and it was an acknowledgment of weakness, of which other powers took advantage at once. Two years later, when Jules Ferry proposed to Italy and Germany the partition of Switzerland, his argument must have been that the Swiss Government itself had admitted that Switzerland was 'a hotbed of international conspiracies.' This first concession led to more arrogant demands, and has certainly placed Switzerland in a far less independent position than it might otherwise have occupied.

The decree of expulsion was delivered to me immediately after I had returned from London, where I was present at an anarchist congress in July 1881. After that congress I had stayed for a few weeks in England, writing the first articles on Russian affairs from our standpoint, for the 'Newcastle Chronicle.' The English press, at that time, was an echo of the opinions of Madame Novikóff—that is, of Katkóff and the Russian state police—and I was most happy when Mr. Joseph Cowen agreed to give me the hospitality of his paper in order to state our point of view.

I had just joined my wife in the high mountains where she was staying, near the abode of Elisée Reclus, when I was asked to leave Switzerland. We sent the little luggage we had to the next railway station and went on foot to Aigle, enjoying for the last time the sight of the mountains that we loved so much. We crossed the hills by taking short cuts over them, and laughed when we discovered that the short cuts led to long windings; and when we reached the bottom of the valley, we tramped along the dusty road. The comical incident which always comes in such cases was supplied by an English lady. A richly dressed dame, reclining by the side of a gentleman in a hired carriage, threw several tracts to the two poorly dressed tramps, as she passed them. I lifted the tracts from the dust. She was evidently one of those ladies who believe themselves to be Christians, and consider it their duty to distribute religious tracts among 'dissolute foreigners.' Thinking we were sure to overtake the lady at the railway station, I wrote on one of the pamphlets the well-known verse relative to the rich and the Kingdom of God, and similarly appropriate quotations about the Pharisees being the worst enemies of Christianity. When we came to Aigle, the lady was taking refreshments in her carriage. She evidently preferred to continue the journey in this vehicle along the lovely valley, rather than to be shut up in a stuffy railway train. I returned her the pamphlets with politeness, saying that I had added to them something that she might find useful for her own instruction. The lady did not know whether to fly at me or to

accept the lesson with Christian patience. Her eyes expressed both impulses in rapid succession.

My wife was about to pass her examination for the degree of Bachelor of Science at the Geneva University, and we settled, therefore, in a tiny town of France, Thonon, situated on the Savoy coast of the Lake of Geneva, and stayed there a couple of months.

As to the death sentence of the Holy League, a warning reached me from one of the highest quarters of Russia. Even the name of the lady who was sent from St. Petersburg to Geneva to be the head centre of the conspiracy became known to me. So I simply communicated the fact to the Geneva correspondent of the 'Times,' asking him to publish the information if anything should happen, and I put a note to that effect in 'Le Révolté.' After that I did not trouble myself more about it. My wife did not take it so lightly, and the good peasant woman, Madame Sansaux, who gave us board and lodgings at Thonon, and who had learned of the plot in a different way (through her sister, who was a nurse in the family of a Russian agent), bestowed the most touching care upon me. Her cottage was out of town, and whenever I went to town at night—sometimes to meet my wife at the railway station—she always found a pretext to have me accompanied by her husband with a lantern. 'Wait only a moment, Monsieur Kropótkin,' she would say; 'my husband is going that way for purchases, and you know he always carries a lantern!' Or else she would send her brother to follow me at a distance, without my noticing it.

X

IN October or November 1881, as soon as my wife had passed her examination, we removed from Thonon to London, where we stayed nearly twelve months. Few years separate us from that time, and yet I can say that the intellectual life of London and of all England was quite different then from what it became a little later. Everyone knows that in the forties England stood almost at the head of the socialist movement in Europe; but during the years of reaction that followed, this great movement, which had deeply affected the working classes, and in which all that is now put forward as scientific or anarchist socialism had already been said, came to a standstill. It was forgotten in England as well as on the Continent, and what the French writers describe as 'the third awakening of the proletarians' had not yet begun in Britain. The labours of the agricultural commission of 1871, the propaganda amongst the agricultural labourers, and the previous efforts of the Christian socialists had certainly done something to prepare the way; but the outburst of socialist feeling in England which followed the publication of Henry George's 'Progress and Poverty' had not yet taken place.

The year that I then passed in London was a year of real exile. For one who held advanced socialist opinions, there was no atmosphere to breathe in. There was no sign of that animated socialist movement

which I found so largely developed on my return in 1886. Burns, Champion, Hardie, and the other labour leaders were not yet heard of; the Fabians did not exist; Morris had not declared himself a socialist; and the trade unions, limited in London to a few privileged trades only, were hostile to socialism. The only active and outspoken representatives of the socialist movement were Mr. and Mrs. Hyndman, with a very few workers grouped round them. They had held in the autumn of 1881 a small congress, and we used to say jokingly—but it was very nearly true—that Mrs. Hyndman had received all the congress in her house. Moreover, the more or less socialist radical movement which was certainly going on in the minds of men did not assert itself frankly and openly. That considerable number of educated men and women who appeared in public life four years later, and, without committing themselves to socialism, took part in various movements connected with the well-being or the education of the masses, and who have now created in almost every city of England and Scotland a quite new atmosphere of reform and a new society of reformers, had not then made themselves felt. They were there, of course; they thought and spoke; all the elements for a widespread movement were in existence; but, finding none of those centres of attraction which the socialist groups subsequently became, they were lost in the crowd; they did not know one another, or remained unconscious of their own selves.

Tchaykóvsky was then in London, and, as in years past, we began a socialist propaganda amongst the workers. Aided by a few English workers whose

acquaintance we had made at the congress of 1881, or whom the prosecutions against John Most had attracted to the socialists, we went to the Radical clubs, speaking about Russian affairs, the movement of our youth toward the people, and socialism in general. We had ridiculously small audiences, seldom consisting of more than a dozen men. Occasionally some gray-bearded Chartist would rise from the audience and tell us that all we were saying had been said forty years before, and was greeted then with enthusiasm by crowds of workers, but that now all was dead, and there was no hope of reviving it.

Mr. Hyndman had just published his excellent exposition of Marxist socialism under the title of 'England for All'; and I remember, one day in the summer of 1882, earnestly advising him to start a socialist paper. I told him with what small means we began editing 'Le Révolté,' and predicted a certain success if he would make the attempt. But so unpromising was the general outlook, that even he thought the undertaking would be a certain failure, unless he had the means to defray all its expenses. Perhaps he was right; but when, less than three years later, he started 'Justice,' it found a hearty support among the workers, and early in 1886 there were three socialist papers, and the Social Democratic Federation was an influential body.

In the summer of 1882 I spoke, in broken English, before the Durham miners at their annual gathering; I delivered lectures at Newcastle, Glasgow, and Edinburgh about the Russian movement, and was received with enthusiasm, a crowd of workers giving

hearty cheers for the Nihilists, after the meeting, in the street. But my wife and I felt so lonely at London, and our efforts to awaken a socialist movement in England seemed so hopeless, that in the autumn of 1882 we decided to remove again to France. We were sure that in France I should soon be arrested; but we often said to each other, 'Better a French prison than this grave.'

Those who are prone to speak of the slowness of evolution ought to study the development of socialism in England. Evolution *is* slow; but its rate is not uniform. It has its periods of slumber and its periods of sudden progress.

XI

WE settled once more in Thonon, taking lodgings with our former hostess, Madame Sansaux. A brother of my wife, who was dying of consumption, and had come to Switzerland, joined us.

I never saw such numbers of Russian spies as during the two months that I remained at Thonon. To begin with, as soon as we had engaged lodgings, a suspicious character, who gave himself out for an Englishman, took the other part of the house. Flocks, literally flocks of Russian spies besieged the house, seeking admission under all possible pretexts, or simply tramping in pairs, trios, and quartettes in front of the house. I can imagine what wonderful reports they wrote. A spy must report. If he should merely say

that he has stood for a week in the street without noticing anything mysterious, he would soon be put on the half-pay list or dismissed.

It was then the golden age of the Russian secret police. Ignátieff's policy had borne fruit. There were two or three bodies of police competing with one another, each having any amount of money at their disposal, and carrying on the boldest intrigues. Colone Sudéikin, for instance, chief of one of the branches—plotting with a certain Degáeff, who after all killed him—denounced Ignátieff's agents to the revolutionists, and offered to the terrorists all facilities for killing the minister of the interior, Count Tolstóy, and the Grand Duke Vladímir; adding that he himself would then be nominated minister of the interior, with dictatorial powers, and the Tsar would be entirely in his hands. This activity of the Russian police culminated, later on, in the kidnapping of the Prince of Battenberg from Bulgaria.

The French police, also, were on the alert. The question, 'What is he doing at Thonon?' worried them. I continued to edit 'Le Révolté,' and wrote articles for the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' and the 'Newcastle Chronicle.' But what reports could be made out of that? One day the local gendarme paid a visit to my landlady. He had heard from the street the rattling of some machine, and wished to report that I had in the house a secret printing press. So he came in my absence and asked the landlady to show him the press. She replied that there was none, and suggested that perhaps the gendarme had overheard the noise of her sewing-machine. But he would not be convinced by

so prosaic an explanation, and actually compelled the landlady to use the machine, while he listened inside the house and outside, to make sure that the rattling he had heard was the same.

‘What is he doing all day?’ he asked the landlady.

‘He writes.’

‘He cannot write all day long.’

‘He saws wood in the garden at midday, and he takes walks every afternoon between four and five.’ It was in November.

‘Ah, that’s it! When the dusk is coming on?’ (*A la tombée de la nuit?*) And he wrote in his note-book, ‘Never goes out except at dusk.’

I could not well explain at that time this special attention of the Russian spies; but it must have had some connection with the following. When Ignátieff was nominated prime minister, advised by the ex-prefect of Paris, Andrieux, he hit on a new plan. He sent a swarm of his agents into Switzerland, and one of them undertook the publication of a paper which slightly advocated the extension of provincial self-government in Russia, but whose chief purpose was to combat the revolutionists, and to rally to its standard those of the refugees who did not sympathize with terrorism. This was certainly a means of sowing division. Then, when nearly all the members of the Executive Committee had been arrested in Russia, and a couple of them had taken refuge at Paris, Ignátieff sent an agent to Paris to offer an armistice. He promised that there should be no further executions on account of the plots during the reign of Alexander II., even if those who had escaped arrest fell into the hands of the government;

that Chernyshévsky should be released from Siberia; and that a commission should be nominated to revise the cases of all those who had been exiled to Siberia without trial. On the other side, he asked the Executive Committee to promise to make no attempts against the Tsar's life until his coronation was over. Perhaps the reforms in favour of the peasants, which Alexander III. intended to make, were also mentioned. The agreement was made at Paris, and was kept on both sides. The terrorists suspended hostilities. Nobody was executed for complicity in the former conspiracies; those who were arrested later on under this indictment were immured in the Russian Bastille at Schlüsselburg, where nothing was heard of them for fifteen years, and where most of them still are. Chernyshévsky was brought back from Siberia, and ordered to stay at Astrakhan, where he was severed from all connection with the intellectual world of Russia, and soon died. A commission went through Siberia, releasing some of the exiles, and specifying terms of exile for the remainder. My brother Alexander received from it an additional five years.

While I was at London, in 1882, I was also told one day that a man who pretended to be a *bonâ fide* agent of the Russian government, and could prove it, wanted to enter into negotiations with me. 'Tell him that if he comes to my house I will throw him down the staircase,' was my reply. The consequence of it was, I suppose, that while Ignátieff considered the Tsar guaranteed from the attacks of the Executive Committee, he thought that the anarchists might make some attempt, and wanted therefore to have me out of the way.

XII

THE anarchist movement had taken a considerable development in France during the years 1881 and 1882. It was generally believed that the French mind was hostile to communism, and within the International Workingmen's Association 'collectivism' was preached instead. Collectivism meant then the possession of the instruments of production in common, each separate group having, however, to settle for itself whether the consumption of produce should be on individualistic or communistic lines. In reality, the French mind was hostile only to the monastic communism, to the *phalanstère* of the old schools. When the Jura Federation, at its congress of 1880, boldly declared itself anarchist-communist—that is, in favour of free communism—anarchism won wide sympathy in France. Our paper began to spread in that country, letters were exchanged in great numbers with French workers, and an anarchist movement of importance rapidly developed at Paris and in some of the provinces, especially in the Lyons region. When I crossed France in 1881, on my way from Thonon to London, I visited Lyons, St. Etienne, and Vienne, lecturing there, and I found in these cities a considerable number of workers ready to accept our ideas.

By the end of 1882 a terrible crisis prevailed in the Lyons region. The silk industry was paralysed, and the misery among the weavers was so great that crowds of children stood every morning at the gates of the

barracks, where the soldiers gave away what they could spare of their bread and soup. This was the beginning of the popularity of General Boulanger, who had permitted this distribution of food. The miners of the region were also in a very precarious state.

I knew that there was a great deal of fermentation, but during the eleven months I had stayed at London I had lost close contact with the French movement. A few weeks after I returned to Thonon I learned from the papers that the miners of Monceau-les-Mines, incensed at the vexations of the ultra-Catholic owners of the mines, had begun a sort of movement; they were holding secret meetings, talking of a general strike; the stone crosses erected on all the roads round the mines were thrown down or blown up by dynamite cartridges, which are largely used by the miners in underground work, and often remain in their possession. The agitation at Lyons also took a more violent character. The anarchists, who were rather numerous in the city, allowed no meeting of the opportunist politicians to be held without obtaining a hearing for themselves—storming the platform, as a last resource. They brought forward resolutions to the effect that the mines and all necessities for production, as well as the dwelling-houses, ought to be owned by the nation; and these resolutions were carried with enthusiasm, to the horror of the middle classes.

The feeling among the workers was growing every day against the opportunist town councillors and political leaders as also against the Press, who made light of a very acute crisis, and undertook nothing to

relieve the widespread misery. As is usual at such times, the fury of the poorer people turned especially against the places of amusement and debauch, which become only the more conspicuous in times of desolation and misery, as they impersonate for the worker the egotism and dissoluteness of the wealthier classes. A place particularly hated by the workers was the underground café at the Théâtre Bellecour, which remained open all night, and where, in the small hours of the morning, one could see newspaper men and politicians feasting and drinking in company with gay women. Not a meeting was held but some menacing allusion was made to that café, and one night a dynamite cartridge was exploded in it by an unknown hand. A socialist working man, who was occasionally there, jumped to blow out the lighted fuse of the cartridge, and was killed, while a few of the feasting politicians were slightly wounded. Next day a dynamite cartridge was exploded at the doors of a recruiting bureau, and it was said that the anarchists intended to blow up the huge statue of the Virgin which stands on one of the hills of Lyons. One must have lived at Lyons or in its neighbourhood to realize the extent to which the population and the schools are still in the hands of the Catholic clergy, and to understand the hatred that the male portion of the population feel toward the clergy.

A panic now seized the wealthier classes of Lyons. Some sixty anarchists—all workers, and only one middle-class man, Emile Gautier, who was on a lecturing tour in the region—were arrested. The Lyons papers undertook at the same time to incite the

government to arrest me, representing me as the leader of the agitation, who had come from England in order to direct the movement. Russian spies began to parade again in conspicuous numbers in our small town. Almost every day I received letters, evidently written by spies of the international police, mentioning some dynamite plot, or mysteriously announcing that consignments of dynamite had been shipped to me. I made quite a collection of these letters, writing on each of them 'Police Internationale,' and they were taken away by the police when they made a search in my house. But they did not dare to produce these letters in court, nor did they ever restore them to me. In December, the house where I stayed was searched in Russian fashion, and my wife, who was going to Geneva, was arrested at the station in Thonon, and also searched. But of course nothing was found to compromise me or anyone else.

Ten days passed, during which I was quite free to go away, if I had wished to do so. I received several letters advising me to disappear—one of them from an unknown Russian friend, perhaps a member of the diplomatic staff, who seemed to have known me, and who wrote that I must leave at once, because otherwise I should be the first victim of an extradition treaty which was about to be concluded between France and Russia. I remained where I was; and when the 'Times' inserted a telegram saying that I had disappeared from Thonon, I wrote a letter to the paper giving my address, and declaring that since so many of my friends were arrested I had no intention of leaving.

In the night of December 21, my brother-in-law

died in my arms. We knew that his illness was incurable, but to see a young life extinguished in your presence, after a brave struggle against death, is terrible. We both were quite broken down. Three or four hours later, as the dull winter morning was dawning, gendarmes came to the house to arrest me. Seeing in what a state my wife was, I asked to remain with her till the burial was over, promising upon my word of honour to be at the prison door at a given hour; but this was refused, and the same night I was taken to Lyons. Elisée Reclus, notified by telegraph, came at once, bestowing on my wife all the gentleness of his great heart; friends came from Geneva; and although the funeral was an absolutely civil one, which was a novelty in that little town, half of the population was at the burial, to show my wife that the hearts of the poorer classes and the simple Savoy peasants were with us, and not with their rulers. When my trial was going on, the peasants followed it with sympathy, and used to come every day from the mountain villages to town to get the papers.

Another incident which profoundly touched me was the arrival at Lyons of an English friend. He came on behalf of a gentleman well-known and esteemed in the English political world, in whose family I had spent many happy hours at London in 1882. He was the bearer of a considerable sum of money for the purpose of obtaining my release on bail, and he transmitted me at the same time the message of my London friend that I need not care in the least about the bail, but must leave France immediately. In some mysterious way he managed to see me freely—not in the double-

grated iron cage in which I was allowed interviews with my wife—and he was as much affected by my refusal to accept the offer he came to make as I was by this touching token of friendship on the part of one who, with his wonderfully excellent wife, I had already learnt to esteem so highly.

The French government wanted to have one of those great trials which produce an impression upon the population, but there was no possibility of prosecuting the arrested anarchists for the explosions. It would have required bringing us before a jury, which in all probability would have acquitted us. Consequently, the government adopted the Machiavellian course of prosecuting us for having belonged to the International Workingmen's Association. There is in France a law, passed immediately after the fall of the Commune, under which men can be brought before a simple police court for having belonged to that association. The maximum penalty is five years' imprisonment; and a police court is always sure to pronounce the sentences which are wanted by the government.

The trial began at Lyons in the first days of January 1883, and lasted about a fortnight. The accusation was ridiculous, as everyone knew that none of the Lyons workers had ever joined the International, and it entirely fell through, as may be seen from the following episode. The only witness for the prosecution was the chief of the secret police at Lyons, an elderly man, who was treated at the court with the utmost respect. His report, I must say, was quite correct as concerns the facts. The anarchists, he said, had taken hold of the population, they had rendered

opportunistic meetings impossible because they spoke at each such meeting, preaching communism and anarchism, and carrying with them the audiences. Seeing that so far he had been fair in his testimony, I ventured to ask him a question: 'Did you ever hear the name of the International Workingmen's Association spoken of at Lyons?'

'Never,' he replied sulkily.

'When I returned from the London congress of 1881, and did all I could to have the International reconstituted in France, did I succeed?'

'No. They did not find it revolutionary enough.'

'Thank you,' I said, and turning toward the procureur I added, 'There you have all your case overthrown by your own witness!'

Nevertheless, we were all condemned for having belonged to the International. Four of us got the maximum sentence, five years' imprisonment and a hundred pounds' fine; the remainder got from four years to one year. In fact, our accusers never tried to prove anything concerning the International. It was quite forgotten. We were simply asked to speak about anarchism, and so we did. Not a word was said about the explosions; and when one or two of the Lyons comrades wanted to have this point cleared up, they were bluntly told that they were not prosecuted for that, but for having belonged to the International—to which I alone belonged.

There is always some comical incident in such trials, and this time it was supplied by a letter of mine. There was nothing upon which to base the whole accusation. Scores of searches had been made at the

French anarchists', but only two letters of mine had been found. The prosecution tried to make the best of them. One was written to a French worker, who felt despondent and disheartened. I spoke to him in my letter about the great times we were living in, the great changes coming, the birth and spreading of new ideas, and so on. The letter was not long, and little capital was made out of it by the procureur. As to the other letter, it was twelve pages long. I had written it to another French friend, a young shoemaker. He earned his living by making shoes in his own room for a shop. On his left side he used to have a small iron stove, upon which he himself cooked his daily meal, and upon his right a small stool upon which he wrote long letters to the comrades, without leaving his shoemaker's low bench. After he had made just as many pairs of shoes as were required for covering the expenses of his extremely modest living, and for sending a few francs to his old mother in the country, he would spend long hours in writing letters in which he developed the theoretical principles of anarchism with admirable good sense and intelligence. He is now a writer, well-known in France and generally respected for the integrity of his character. Unfortunately, at that time he would cover eight or twelve pages of notepaper without having put one single full-stop, or even a comma. I once sat down and wrote a long letter in which I explained to him how our thoughts subdivide into groups of sentences, which must be marked by full-stops; into separate sentences which must be separated by stops, and finally into secondary ones which deserve the charity

of being marked at least with commas. I told him how much it would improve his writings if he took this simple precaution.

This letter was read by the prosecutor before the court, and elicited from him most pathetic comments : ‘ You have heard, gentlemen, this letter ’—he went on, addressing the court. ‘ You have listened to it. There is nothing particular in it at first sight. He gives a lesson of grammar to a worker. . . . But ’—and here his voice vibrated with accents of deep emotion—‘ it was not in order to help a poor worker in instruction which he, owing probably to his laziness, failed to get at school. It was not to help him in earning an honest living. . . . No, gentlemen—it was written in order to inspire him with hatred for our grand and beautiful institutions, in order only the better to infuse him with the venom of anarchism, in order to make of him only a more terrible enemy of society. . . . Cursed be the day that Kropótkin put his foot on the soil of France ! ’ he exclaimed with a wonderful pathos.

We could not help laughing like boys all the time he delivered that speech ; the judges stared at him as if to tell him that he was overdoing his rôle, but he seemed not to notice anything, and, carried on by his eloquence, he went on speaking with more and more theatrical gestures and intonations. He really did his best to obtain his reward from the Russian government.

Very soon after the condemnation the presiding magistrate was promoted to the magistracy of an assize court. As to the procureur and another magistrate—one would hardly believe it—the Russian

government offered them the Russian cross of Sainte-Anne, and they were allowed by the republic to accept it! The famous Russian alliance had thus its origin in the Lyons trial.

This trial, which lasted a fortnight, during which most brilliant anarchist speeches, reported by all the papers, were made by such first-rate speakers as the worker Bernard and Emile Gautier, and during which all the accused took a very firm attitude, preaching all the time our doctrines, had a powerful influence in spreading anarchist ideas in France, and assuredly contributed to some extent to the revival of socialism in other countries. As to the condemnation, it was so little justified by the proceedings that the French Press—with the exception of the papers devoted to the government—openly blamed the magistrates. Even the moderate 'Journal des Economistes' blamed the condemnation, which 'nothing in the proceedings of the court could have made one foresee.' The contest between the accusers and ourselves was won by us, in the public opinion. Immediately a proposition of amnesty was brought before the Chamber, and received about a hundred votes in support of it. It came up regularly every year, each time securing more and more votes, until we were released.

XIII

THE trial was over, but I remained for another couple of months at the Lyons prison. Most of my comrades had lodged an appeal against the decision of the police court and we had to wait for its results. With four more comrades I refused to take any part in that appeal to a higher court, and continued to work in my *pistole*. A great friend of mine, Martin—a clothier from Vienne—took another *pistole* by the side of the one which I occupied, and as we were already condemned, we were allowed to take our walks together; and when we had something to say to each other between the walks, we used to correspond by means of taps on the wall, just as in Russia.

Already during my sojourn at Lyons I began to realize the awfully demoralising influence of the prisons upon the prisoners, which brought me later to condemn unconditionally the whole institution.

The Lyons prison is a 'modern' prison, built in the shape of a star, on the cellular system. The spaces between the rays of the star-like building are occupied by small asphalte-paved yards, and, weather permitting, the inmates are taken to these yards to work outdoors. They mostly beat out the unwound silk cocoons to obtain floss silk. Flocks of children are also taken at certain hours to these yards. Thin, emasculated, underfed—the shadows of children—I often watched them from my window. Anæmia was plainly written on all

the little faces and manifest in their thin, shivering bodies; and not only in the dormitories but also in the yards, in the full light of the sun, they themselves increased their anæmia. What will become of these children after they have passed through that schooling and come out with their health ruined, their will annihilated, their energy weakened? Anæmia, with its weakened energy and unwillingness to work, its enfeebled will, weakened intellect, and perverted imagination, is responsible for crime to an infinitely greater extent than plethora, and it is precisely this enemy of the human race which is bred in prison. And then, the teachings which the children receive in these surroundings! Mere isolation, even if it were rigorously carried out—and it cannot be—would be of little avail; the whole atmosphere of every prison is an atmosphere of glorification of that sort of gambling in ‘clever strokes’ which constitutes the very essence of theft, swindling, and all sorts of similar anti-social deeds. Whole generations of future prisoners are bred in these nurseries which the state supports and society tolerates, simply because it does not want to hear its own diseases spoken of and dissected. ‘Imprisoned in childhood: prison-bird for life,’ was what I heard afterwards from all those who were interested in criminal matters. And when I saw these children and realized what they had to expect in the future, I could not but continually ask myself: ‘Which of them is the worst criminal—this child or the judge who condemns every year hundreds of children to this fate?’ I gladly admit that the crime of these judges is unconscious. But are, then, all the ‘crimes’ for which

people are sent to prison as conscious as they are supposed to be?

There was another point which I vividly realized since the very first weeks of my imprisonment, but which, in some inconceivable way, escapes the attention of both the judges and the writers on criminal law—namely, that imprisonment in an immense number of cases is a punishment which strikes quite innocent people far more severely than the condemned prisoners themselves.

Nearly every one of my comrades, who represented a fair average of the working men population, had either their wife and children to support, or a sister or an old mother who depended for their living upon his earnings. Now, being left without support, these women did their best to get work, and some of them got it, but none of them succeeded in earning regularly even as much as fifteen pence a day. Nine francs (less than eight shillings), and often six shillings a week, to support themselves and their children was all they could earn. And that meant evidently underfeeding, privations of all sorts, and the deterioration of the health of the wife and the children: weakened intellect, weakened energy and will. I thus realized that what was going on in our law courts was in reality a condemnation of quite innocent people to all sorts of hardships, in most cases even worse than those to which the condemned man himself is submitted. The fiction is that the law punishes the man by inflicting upon him a variety of physical and degrading hardships. But man is such a creature that whatever hardships be imposed upon him, he gradually grows accustomed

to them. As he cannot modify them he accepts them, and after a certain time he puts up with them, just as he puts up with a chronic disease, and grows insensible to it. But what, during his imprisonment, becomes of his wife and children, that is, of the innocent people who depend upon him for support? They are punished even more cruelly than he himself is. And in our routine habits of thought no one ever thinks of the immense injustice which is thus committed. I realized it only from actual experience.

In the middle of March 1883, twenty-two of us who had been condemned to more than one year of imprisonment, were removed in great secrecy to the central prison of Clairvaux. It was formerly an abbey of St. Bernard, of which the great Revolution had made a house for the poor. Subsequently it became a house of detention and correction, which went among the prisoners and the officials themselves under the well-deserved nickname of 'house of detention and corruption.'

So long as we were kept at Lyons we were treated as the prisoners under preliminary arrest are treated in France; that is, we had our own clothes, we could get our own food from a restaurant, and one could hire for a few francs per month a larger cell, a *pistole*. I took advantage of this for working hard upon my articles for the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' and the 'Nineteenth Century.' Now, the treatment we should have at Clairvaux was an open question. However, in France it is generally understood that, for political prisoners, the loss of liberty and forced inactivity are in themselves

so hard that there is no need to inflict additional hardships. Consequently, we were told that we should remain under the *régime* of preliminary detention. We should have separate quarters, retain our own clothes, be free from compulsory work, and be allowed to smoke. 'Those of you,' the governor said, 'who wish to earn something by manual work, will be enabled to do so by sewing stays or engraving small things in mother of pearl. This work is poorly paid; but you could not be employed in the prison workshops for the fabrication of iron beds, picture frames, and so on, because that would require your lodging with the common-law prisoners.' Like the other prisoners we were allowed to buy from the prison canteen some additional food and a pint of claret every day, both being supplied at a very low price and of good quality.

The first impression which Clairvaux produced upon me was most favourable. We had been locked up and had been travelling all the day, from two or three o'clock in the morning, in those tiny cupboards into which the cellular railway carriages are usually divided. When we reached the central prison we were taken temporarily to the cellular, or punishment quarters, and were introduced into the usual but extremely clean cells. Hot food, plain but of excellent quality, had been served to us notwithstanding the late hour of the night, and we had been offered the opportunity of having the half-pint of very good *vin du pays* (local wine) which was sold to the prisoners by the prison canteen, at the extremely low price of 24 centimes (less than 2½d.) per quart. The governor and the warders were most polite to us.

Next day the governor of the prison took me to see the rooms which he intended to give us, and when I remarked that they were all right but only a little too small for such a number—we were twenty-two—and that overcrowding might result in illness, he gave us another set of rooms in what was in olden times the house of the superintendent of the abbey, and now was the hospital. Our windows looked out upon a little garden, and beyond it we had beautiful views of the surrounding country. In another room on the same landing old Blanqui had been kept the last three or four years before his release. Before that he had been imprisoned in the cellular house.

Besides the three spacious rooms which were given to us, a smaller room was spared for Gautier and myself, so that we could pursue our literary work. We probably owed this last favour to the intervention of a considerable number of English men of science who, as soon as I was condemned, had addressed a petition to the President asking for my release. Many contributors to the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' as well as Herbert Spencer and Swinburne, had signed, while Victor Hugo had added to his signature a few warm words. Altogether, public opinion in France received our condemnation very unfavourably; and when my wife had mentioned at Paris that I required books, the Academy of Sciences offered the use of its library, and Ernest Renan, in a charming letter, put his private library at her service.

We had a small garden, where we could play ninepins or *jeu de boules*. We managed, moreover, to cultivate a narrow bed running along the wall,

and, on a surface of some eighty square yards, we grew almost incredible quantities of lettuces and radishes, as well as some flowers. I need not say that we at once organized classes, and during the three years that we remained at Clairvaux I gave my comrades lessons in cosmography, geometry, or physics, also aiding them in the study of languages. Nearly every one learned at least one language—English, German, Italian, or Spanish—while a few learned two. We also managed to do some bookbinding, having learned how from one of those excellent *Encyclopédie Roret* booklets.

At the end of the first year, however, my health again gave way. Clairvaux is built on marshy ground, upon which malaria is endemic, and malaria, with scurvy, laid hold of me. Then my wife, who was studying at Paris, working in Würtz's laboratory and preparing to take an examination for the degree of Doctor of Science, abandoned everything, and came to stay in the hamlet of Clairvaux, which consists of less than a dozen houses grouped at the foot of an immense high wall which encircles the prison. Of course, her life in that hamlet, with the prison wall opposite, was anything but gay; yet she stayed there till I was released. During the first year she was allowed to see me only once in two months, and all interviews were held in the presence of a warder, who sat between us. But when she settled at Clairvaux, declaring her firm intention to remain there, she was soon permitted to see me every day, in one of the small guard-houses of the warders, within the prison walls, and food was brought me from the inn where she stayed. Later,

we were even allowed to take a walk in the governor's garden, closely watched all the time, and usually one of my comrades joined us in the walk.

I was quite astonished to discover that the central prison of Clairvaux had all the aspects of a small manufacturing town, surrounded by orchards and cornfields, all encircled by an outer wall. The fact is that if in a French central prison the inmates are perhaps more dependent upon the fancies and caprices of the governor and the warders than they seem to be in English prisons, the treatment of the prisoners is far more humane than it is in the corresponding lock-ups on this side of the Channel. The mediæval spirit of revenge which still prevails in English prisons has long since been given up in France. The imprisoned man is not compelled to sleep on planks, or to have a mattress on alternate days only; the day he comes to prison he gets a decent bed and retains it. He is not compelled either to do degrading work, such as to climb a wheel, or to pick oakum; he is employed, on the contrary, in useful work, and this is why the Clairvaux prison has the aspect of a manufacturing town in which iron furniture, picture-frames, looking-glasses, metric measures, velvet, linen, ladies' stays, small things in mother of pearl, wooden shoes, and so on, are fabricated by the nearly 1,600 men who are kept there.

Moreover, if the punishment for insubordination is very cruel, there is none of the flogging which still goes on in English prisons: such a punishment would be absolutely impossible in France. Altogether, the central prison at Clairvaux may be

described as one of the best prisons in Europe. And yet, the results obtained at Clairvaux are as bad as in any one of the lock-ups of the old type. 'The watchword nowadays is to say that prisoners are reformed in our prisons,' one of the members of the prison administration once said to me. 'This is all nonsense, and I shall never be induced to tell such a lie.'

The pharmacy at Clairvaux was underneath the rooms which we occupied, and we occasionally had some contact with the prisoners who were employed in it. One of them was a grey-haired man in his fifties, who ended his term while we were there. It was touching to learn how he parted with the prison. He knew that in a few months or weeks he would be back, and begged the doctor to keep the place at the pharmacy open for him. This was not his first visit to Clairvaux, and he knew it would not be the last. When he was set free he had not a soul in the world to whom he might go to spend his old age. 'Who will care to employ me?' he said. 'And what trade have I? None! When I am out I must go to my old comrades; they, at least, will surely receive me as an old friend.' Then would come a glass too much of drink in their company, excited talk about some capital fun—some capital 'new stroke' to be made in the way of theft—and, partly from weakness of will, partly to oblige his only friends, he would join in it, and would be locked up once more. So it had been several times before in his life. Two months passed, however, after his release, and he was not yet back to Clairvaux.

Then the prisoners, and the warders too, began to feel uneasy about him. 'Has he had time to move to another judicial district, that he is not yet back? One can only hope that he has not been involved in some bad affair,' they would say, meaning something worse than theft. 'That would be a pity: he was such a nice, quiet man.' But it soon appeared that the first supposition was the right one. Word came from another prison that the old man was locked up there, and was now endeavouring to be transferred to Clairvaux.

The old prisoners were the most pitiful sight. Many of them had begun their prison experience in childhood or early youth, others at a riper age. But 'once in prison, always in prison,' such is the saying derived from experience. And now, having reached or passed over the age of sixty, they knew that they must end their lives in a gaol. To quicken their departure from life the prison administration used to send them to the workshops where felt socks were made out of all sorts of woollen refuse. The dust in the workshop soon gave these old men consumption, which finally released them. Then four fellow prisoners would carry the old comrade to the common grave, the graveyard warder and his black dog being the only two beings to follow him; and while the prison priest would march in front of the procession, mechanically reciting his prayer and looking round at the chestnut or fir-trees along the road, and the four comrades carrying the coffin would enjoy their momentary escape out of prison, the black dog would be the only being affected by the solemnity of the ceremony.

When the reformed central prisons were introduced in France, it was believed that the principle of absolute silence could be maintained in them. But it is so contrary to human nature that its strict enforcement had to be abandoned. In fact, even solitary confinement is no obstacle to intercourse between the prisoners.

To the outward observer the prison seems to be quite mute; but in reality life goes on in it as busily as in a small town. In suppressed voices, by means of whispers, hurriedly dropped words, and scraps of notes, every news of any interest spreads immediately all over the prison. Nothing can happen either among the prisoners themselves, or in the *cour d'honneur*, where the lodgings of the administration are situated, or in the village of Clairvaux, where the employers of the factories live, or in the wide world of Paris politics, but that it is communicated at once throughout all the dormitories, workshops, and cells. Frenchmen are of too communicative a nature for their underground telegraph ever to be stopped. We had no intercourse with the common-law prisoners, and yet we knew all the news of the day. 'John, the gardener, is back for two years.' 'Such an inspector's wife has had a fearful scrimmage with So-and-So's wife.' 'James, in the cells, has been caught transmitting a note of friendship to John from the framers' workshop.' 'That old beast So-and-So is no more minister of justice: the ministry has been upset.' And so on; and when the news goes that 'Jack has got two five-penny packets of tobacco in exchange for two flannel spencers,' it flies round the prison in no time.

Demands for tobacco were continually pouring in upon us; and when a small lawyer detained in the prison wanted to transmit to me a note, in order to ask my wife, who was staying in the village, to see from time to time his wife, who was also there, quite a number of men took the liveliest interest in the transmission of that message, which had to pass I do not know how many hands before it reached its goal. And when there was something that might specially interest us in a paper, this paper, in some unaccountable way, would reach us, with a little stone wrapped into it, to help its being thrown over a high wall.

Cellular imprisonment is no obstacle to communication. When we came to Clairvaux and were first lodged in the cellular quarter, it was bitterly cold in the cells; so cold, indeed, that when I wrote to my wife, who was then at Paris, and she got my letter, she did not recognize the writing, my hand being so stiff with the cold. The order came to heat the cells as much as possible; but do what they might, the cells remained as cold as ever. It appeared afterwards that all the hot-air tubes in the cells were choked with scraps of paper, bits of notes, penknives, and all sorts of small things which several generations of prisoners had concealed in the pipes.

Martin, the same friend of mine whom I have already mentioned, obtained permission to serve part of his time in cellular confinement. He preferred isolation to life in a room with a dozen comrades, and went to a cell in the cellular building. To his great astonishment he found that he was not at all alone in his cell. The walls and the keyholes spoke round him. In a

day or two all the inmates of the cells knew who he was, and he had acquaintances all over the building. Quite a life goes on, as in a beehive, between the seemingly isolated cells ; only that life often takes such a character as to make it belong entirely to the domain of psychopathy. Kraft-Ebbing himself had no idea of the aspects it takes with certain prisoners in solitary confinement.

I will not repeat here what I have said in a book, 'In Russian and French Prisons,' which I published in England in 1886, soon after my release from Clairvaux, upon the moral influence of prisoners upon prisoners. But there is one thing which must be said. The prison population consists of heterogeneous elements ; but, taking only those who are usually described as 'the criminals' proper, and of whom we have heard so much lately from Lombroso and his followers, what struck me most as regards them was that the prisons, which are considered as a preventive measure against anti-social deeds, are exactly the institutions for breeding them and for rendering these offences worse and worse after a man has received prison education. Everyone knows that the absence of education, the dislike of regular work acquired since childhood, the physical unpreparedness for sustained effort, the love of adventure when it receives a wrong direction, the gambling propensities, the absence of energy and an untrained will, and carelessness about the happiness of others, are the causes which bring this category of men before the courts. Now I was deeply impressed during my imprisonment by the fact that it is exactly these defects of human nature—each one of them—

which the prison breeds in its inmates ; and it is bound to breed them because it is a prison, and will breed them so long as there are prisons. Incarceration in a prison necessarily, fatally, destroys the energy of a man, and still more kills his will. In prison life there is no room for exercising one's will. To possess one's own will in prison means surely to get into trouble. The will of the prisoner *must* be killed, and it is killed. Still less is there room for exercising one's natural sympathies, everything being done to destroy free contact with those outside the prison and within it with whom the prisoner may have feelings of sympathy. Physically and mentally he is rendered less and less prepared for sustained effort ; and if he has had formerly a dislike for regular work, this dislike is only the more increased during his prison years. If, before he first came to the prison, he soon felt tired by monotonous work, which he could not do properly, or had a grudge against underpaid overwork, his dislike now becomes hatred. If he doubted about the social utility of current rules of morality, now, after having cast a critical glance upon the official defenders of these rules, and learned his comrades' opinions of them, he openly casts the rules overboard. And if he has got into trouble in consequence of a morbid development of the passionate sensual side of his nature, now, after having spent a number of years in prison, this morbid character is still more developed—in many cases to an appalling extent. In this last direction—the most dangerous of all—prison education is most effective.

In Siberia I had seen what sinks of filth, and what

workshops of physical and moral deterioration the dirty, overcrowded, 'unreformed' Russian prisons were, and at the age of nineteen I imagined that if there were less overcrowding in the rooms, and a certain classification of the prisoners, and healthy occupations were provided for them, the institution might be substantially improved. Now, I had to part with these illusions. I could convince myself that as regards their effects upon the prisoners, and their results for society at large, the best 'reformed' prisons—whether cellular or not—are as bad as, or even worse, than the dirty lock-ups of old. They do not 'reform' the prisoners. On the contrary, in the immense, overwhelming majority of cases, they exercise upon them the most deteriorating effect. The thief, the swindler, the rough man, and so on, who has spent some years in a prison, comes out of it more ready than ever to resume his former career; he is better prepared for it; he has learned how to do it better; he is more embittered against society, and he finds a more solid justification for being in revolt against its laws and customs; necessarily, unavoidably, he is bound to go farther and farther along the anti-social path which first brought him before a law court. The offences he will commit after his release will be graver than those which first got him into trouble; and he is doomed to finish his life in a prison or in a hard-labour colony. In the above-mentioned book I wrote that prisons are 'universities of crime, maintained by the state.' And now, thinking of it at fifteen years' distance, in the light of my subsequent experience, I can only confirm that statement of mine.

Personally I have no reason whatever to complain of the years I have spent in a French prison. For an active and independent man the restraint of liberty and activity is in itself so great a privation that all the remainder, all the petty miseries of prison life, are not worth speaking of. Of course, when we heard of the active political life which was going on in France, we resented very much our forced inactivity. The end of the first year, especially during a gloomy winter, is always hard for the prisoner. And when spring comes, one feels more strongly than ever the want of liberty. When I saw from our windows the meadows assuming their green garb, and the hills covered with a spring haze, or when I saw a train flying into a dale between the hills, I certainly felt a strong desire to follow it, to breathe the air of the woods, to be carried along with the stream of human life into a busy town. But one who casts his lot with an advanced party must be prepared to spend a number of years in prison, and he need not grudge it. He feels that even during his imprisonment he remains not quite an inactive part of the stream of human progress which spreads and strengthens the ideas which are dear to him.

At Lyons my comrades, my wife, and myself certainly found the warders a very rough set of men. But after a couple of encounters all was set right. Moreover, the prison administration knew that we had the Paris press with us, and they did not want to draw upon themselves the thunders of Rochefort or the cutting criticisms of Clémenceau. And at Clairvaux there was no need of such a restraint. All the administration had been renewed a few months before

we came thither. A prisoner had been killed by warders in his cell, and his corpse had been hanged to simulate suicide; but this time the affair leaked out through the doctor; the governor was dismissed, and altogether a better tone prevailed in the prison. I took back from Clairvaux the best recollections of its governor; and altogether, while I was there, I more than once thought that, after all, men are often better than the institutions to which they belong. But having no personal griefs, I can all the more freely, and most unconditionally condemn the institution itself, as a survival from the dark past, wrong in its principles, and a source of unfathomable evil to society.

One thing more I must mention as it struck me, perhaps, even more than the demoralising effects of prisons upon their inmates. What a nest of infection is every prison, and even a law court for its neighbourhood—for the people who live about them. Lombroso has made very much of the 'criminal type' which he believes to have discovered amongst the inmates of the prisons. If he had made the same efforts to observe people who hang about the law courts—detectives, spies, small solicitors, informers, people preying upon simpletons, and the like—he would have probably concluded that his 'criminal type' has a far greater geographical extension than the prison walls. I never saw such a collection of faces of the lowest human type, sunk far below the average type of mankind, as I saw by the score round and within the Palais de Justice at Lyons. Certainly not within the prison walls of Clairvaux. Dickens and Cruikshank have immortalized a few of these types; but they represent

quite a world which gravitates round the law courts, and infuses its infection far and wide around them. And the same is true of each central prison like Clairvaux. Quite an atmosphere of petty thefts, petty swindlings, spying and corruption of all sorts spreads like a blot of oil round every prison.

I saw all this ; and if before my condemnation I already knew that society is wrong in its present system of punishments, after I left Clairvaux I knew that it is not only wrong and unjust in this system, but that it is simply foolish when, in its partly unconscious and partly wilful ignorance of realities, it maintains at its own expense these universities of crime and these sinks of corruption, acting under the illusion that they are necessary as a bridle to the criminal instincts of man.

XIV

EVERY revolutionist meets a number of spies and *agents provocateurs* in his path, and I have had my fair share of them. All governments spend considerable sums of money in maintaining this kind of reptile. However, they are mainly dangerous to young people. One who has had some experience of life and men soon discovers that there is about these creatures something which puts him on his guard. They are recruited from the scum of society, amongst men of the lowest moral standard, and if one is watchful of the moral character of the men he meets with, he soon notices something

in the manners of these 'pillars of society' which shocks him, and then he asks himself the question: 'What has brought this person to me? What in the world can he have in common with us?' In most cases this simple question is sufficient to put a man upon his guard.

When I first came to Geneva, the agent of the Russian government who had been commissioned to spy the refugees was well known to all of us. He went under the name of Count Something; but as he had no footman and no carriage on which to emblazon his coronet and arms, he had had them embroidered on a sort of mantle which covered his tiny dog. We saw him occasionally in the cafés, without speaking to him; he was, in fact, an 'innocent' who simply bought in the kiosques all the publications of the exiles, very probably adding to them such comments as he thought would please his chiefs.

Different men began to pour in when Geneva was peopled with more and more refugees of the young generation; and yet, in one way or another, they also became known to us.

When a stranger appeared on our horizon, he was asked with usual nihilist frankness about his past and his present prospects, and it soon appeared what sort of person he or she was. Frankness in mutual intercourse is altogether the best way for bringing about proper relations between men. In this case it was invaluable. Numbers of persons whom none of us had known or heard of in Russia—absolute strangers to the circles—came to Geneva, and many of them, a few days or even hours after their arrival, stood on the

most friendly terms with the colony of refugees ; but in some way or another the spies never succeeded in crossing the threshold of familiarity. A spy might make common acquaintances ; he might give the best accounts, sometimes correct, of his past in Russia ; he might possess in perfection the nihilist slang and manners, but he never could assimilate the particular kind of nihilist ethics which had grown up amongst the Russian youth—and this alone kept him at a distance from our colony. Spies can imitate anything else but those ethics.

When I was working with Reclus there was at Clarens one such individual, from whom we all kept aloof. We knew nothing bad about him, but we felt that he was not 'ours,' and as he tried only the more to penetrate into our society, we became suspicious of him. I had never said a word to him, and consequently he was especially after me. Seeing that he could not approach me through the usual channels, he began to write me letters, giving me mysterious appointments for mysterious purposes in the woods and in similar places. For fun, I once accepted his invitation and went to the spot, with a good friend following me at a distance ; but the man, who probably had a confederate, must have noticed that I was not alone, and did not appear. So I was spared the pleasure of ever saying to him a single word. Besides, I worked at that time so hard that every minute of my time was taken up either with the Geography or 'Le Révolté,' and I entered into no conspiracies. However, we learned later on that this man used to send to the Third Section detailed reports about the supposed

conversations which he had had with me, my supposed confidences, and the terrible plots which I was concocting at St. Petersburg against the Tsar's life! All that was taken for ready money at St. Petersburg. And in Italy, too. When Cafiero was arrested one day in Switzerland, he was shown formidable reports of Italian spies, who warned their government that Cafiero and I, loaded with bombs, were going to enter Italy. The fact was that I never was in Italy, and never had had any intention of visiting the country.

In point of fact, however, the spies do not always fabricate reports wholesale. They often tell things that are true, but all depends upon the way a story is told. We passed some merry moments about a report which was addressed to the French government by a French spy who followed my wife and myself as we were travelling in 1881 from Paris to London. The spy, probably playing a double part—as they often do—had sold that report to Rochefort, who published it in his paper. Everything that the spy had told in this report was correct—but the way he had told it!

He wrote for instance: 'I took the next compartment to the one that Kropótkin had taken with his wife.' Quite true; he was there. We noticed him, for he had managed at once to attract our attention by his sullen, unpleasant face. 'They spoke Russian all the time, in order not to be understood by the other passengers.' Very true again: we spoke Russian as we always do. 'When they came to Calais, they both took a *bouillon*.' Most correct again: we took a *bouillon*. But here the mysterious part of the journey

begins. 'After that, they both suddenly disappeared, and I looked for them in vain, on the platform and elsewhere; and when they reappeared, he was in disguise, and was followed by a Russian priest, who never left him until they reached London, where I lost sight of the priest.' All that was true again. My wife had a slight toothache, and I asked the keeper of the restaurant to let us go into his private room, where the tooth could be stopped. So we had disappeared indeed; and as we had to cross the channel, I put my soft felt hat into my pocket and put on a fur cap: so I was 'in disguise.' As to the mysterious priest, he was also there. He was not a Russian, but this is irrelevant: he wore at any rate the dress of the Greek priests. I saw him standing at the counter and asking something which no one understood. 'Agua, agua,' he repeated in a woful tone. 'Give the gentleman a glass of water,' I said to the waiter. Whereupon the priest began to thank me for my intervention with a truly Eastern effusion. My wife took pity on him and spoke to him in different languages, but he understood none but modern Greek. It appeared at last that he knew a few words in one of the South Slavonian languages, and we could make out: 'I am a Greek; Turkish embassy, London.' We told him, mostly by signs, that we too were going to London, and that he might travel with us.

The most amusing part of the story was that I really found for him the address of the Turkish embassy, even before we had reached Charing Cross. The train stopped at some station on the way, and two elegant ladies entered our already full third-class com-

partment. Both had newspapers in their hands. One was English, and the other—a tall, nice-looking person, who spoke good French—pretended to be English. After having exchanged a few words, she asked me *à brûle-pourpoint*: ‘What do you think of Count Ignátieff?’ And immediately after that: ‘Are you soon going to kill the new Tsar?’ I was clear as to her profession from these two questions; but, thinking of my priest, I said to her: ‘Do you happen to know the address of the Turkish embassy?’ ‘Street So-and-so, number So-and-so,’ she replied without hesitation, like a schoolgirl in a class. ‘You could, I suppose, also give the address of the Russian embassy?’ I asked her, and the address having been given with the same readiness, I communicated both to the priest. When we reached Charing Cross, the lady was so obsequiously anxious to attend to my luggage, and even to carry a heavy package herself with her gloved hands, that I finally told her, much to her surprise: ‘Enough of that; ladies do not carry gentlemen’s luggage. Go away!’

But to return to my trustworthy French spy. ‘He alighted at Charing Cross’—he wrote in his report—‘but for more than half an hour after the arrival of the train he did not leave the station, until he had ascertained that everyone else had left it. I kept aloof in the meantime, concealing myself behind a pillar. Having ascertained that all passengers had left the platform, they both suddenly jumped into a cab. I followed them nevertheless, and overheard the address which the cabman gave at the gate to the policeman—12, street So-and-so—and ran after the cab. There were no cabs in the neighbourhood; so I ran up

to Trafalgar Square, where I got one. I then drove after him, and he alighted at the above address.'

All facts in this narrative are true again—the address and the rest; but how mysterious it all reads. I had warned a Russian friend of my arrival, but there was a dense fog that morning, and my friend overslept himself. We waited for him half an hour, and then, leaving our luggage in the cloak-room, drove to his house.

'There they sat till two o'clock with drawn curtains, and then a tall man came out of the house, and returned one hour later with their luggage.' Even the remark about the curtains was correct: we had to light the gas on account of the fog, and drew down the curtains to get rid of the ugly sight of a small Islington street wrapped in a dense fog.

When I was working with Elisée Reclus at Clarens I used to go every fortnight to Geneva to see to the bringing out of '*Le Révolté*.' One day as I came to our printing office, I was told that a Russian gentleman wanted to see me. He had already seen my friends and had told them that he came to induce me to start a paper like '*Le Révolté*' in Russian. He offered for that purpose all the money that might be required. I went to meet him in a café, where he gave me a German name—Tohnlehm, let us say—and told me that he was a native of the Baltic provinces. He boasted of possessing a large fortune in certain estates and manufactures, and he was extremely angry with the Russian Government, for their Russianizing schemes. On the whole he produced a somewhat

indefinite impression, so that my friends insisted upon my accepting his offer; but I did not much like the man from first sight.

From the café he took me to his rooms in an hotel, and there began to show less reserve and to appear more like himself and in a still more unpleasant light. 'Don't doubt my fortune,' he said to me; 'I have made a capital invention. There's a lot of money in it. I shall patent it, and get a considerable sum for it, and give it all for the cause of the revolution in Russia.' And he showed me, to my astonishment, a miserable candlestick, the originality of which was that it was awfully ugly and had three bits of wire to put the candle in. The poorest housewife would not have cared for such a candlestick, and even if it could have been patented, no ironmonger would have paid the patentee more than a couple of sovereigns. 'A rich man placing his hopes on such a candlestick! This man,' I thought to myself, 'can never have seen better ones,' and my opinion about him was made up: 'He was no rich man at all, and the money he offered was not his own.' So I bluntly told him: 'Very well, if you are so anxious to have a Russian revolutionary paper, and hold the flattering opinion about myself which you have expressed, you will have to put your money in my name at a bank, and at my entire disposal. But I warn you that you will have absolutely nothing to do with the paper.' 'Of course, of course,' he said, 'but just see to it, and sometimes advise you, and aid you in smuggling it into Russia.' 'No, nothing of the sort! You need not see me at all.' My friends thought that I was too hard upon the man, but some time after that a letter was

received from St. Petersburg warning us that we would have the visit of a spy of the Third Section—Tohnlehm by name. The candlestick had thus rendered us a good service.

Candlesticks, or anything else, these people almost always betray themselves in one way or another. When we were at London in 1881 we received, on a foggy morning, the visit of two Russians. I knew one of them by name; the other, a young man whom he recommended as his friend, was a stranger. He had volunteered to accompany his friend on a few days' visit to England. As he was introduced by a friend, I had no suspicions whatever about him; but I was very busy that day with some work, and asked another friend who stayed close by to find them rooms and to take them about to see London. My wife had not yet seen London either, and she went with them. In the afternoon she returned saying to me: 'Do you know, I dislike that man very much. Beware of him.' 'But why? What's the matter?' I asked. 'Nothing, absolutely nothing; but he is surely not "ours." By the way he treated the waiter in a café, and the way he handles money, I saw at once that he is not "ours," and if he is not—why should he come to us?' She was so certain of her suspicions that, while she performed her duties of hospitality, she nevertheless managed never to leave that young man alone in my study, even for one minute. We had a chat, and the visitor began to exhibit himself more and more under such a low moral aspect that even his friend blushed for him, and when I asked more details about him, the explanations he

gave were even still less satisfactory. We were both on our guard. In short, they both left London in a couple of days, and a fortnight later I got a letter from my Russian friend, full of excuses for having introduced to me the young man who, they had found out, at Paris, was a spy in the service of the Russian embassy. I looked then into a list of Russian secret service agents in France and Switzerland which we, the refugees, had received lately from the Executive Committee—they had their men everywhere at St. Petersburg—and I found the name of that young man on the list, with one letter only altered in it.

To start a paper, subsidized by the police, with a police agent at its head, is an old plan, and the prefect of the Paris police, Andrieux, resorted to it in 1881. I was with Elisée Reclus in the mountains when we received a letter from a Frenchman, or rather a Belgian, who announced to us that he was going to start an anarchist paper at Paris and asked our collaboration. The letter, full of flatteries, produced upon us an unpleasant impression, and Reclus had moreover some vague reminiscence of having heard the name of the writer in some unfavourable connection. We decided to refuse collaboration, and I wrote to a Paris friend that we must first of all ascertain from whence the money came with which the paper was going to be started. 'It may come from the Orleanists—an old trick of the family—and we must know its origin.' My Paris friend, with a workman's straightforwardness, read that letter at a meeting at which the would-be editor of the paper was present. He simulated offence, and I had

to answer several letters on this subject ; but I stuck to my words : ' If the man is in earnest, he must show us the origin of the money.'

And so he did at last. Pressed by questions he said that the money came from his aunt—a rich lady of antiquated opinions who yielded, however, to his fancy of having a paper and had parted with the money. The lady was not in France ; she was staying at London. We insisted nevertheless upon having her name and address, and our friend Malatesta volunteered to see her. He went with an Italian friend who was connected with the second-hand trade in furniture. They found the lady occupying a small flat, and while Malatesta spoke to her and was more and more convinced that she was simply playing the aunt's part in the comedy, the furniture-friend, looking round at the chairs and tables, discovered that all of them had been taken the day before—probably hired—from a second-hand furniture dealer, his neighbour. The labels of the dealer were still fastened to the chairs and the tables. This did not prove much, but naturally reinforced our suspicions. I absolutely refused to have anything to do with the paper.

The paper was of an unheard-of violence. Burning, assassination, dynamite bombs—there was nothing but that in it. I met the man, the editor of the paper, as I went to the London congress, and the moment I saw his sullen face, and heard a bit of his talk, and caught a glance of the sort of women with whom he always went about, my opinions concerning him were settled. At the congress, during which he introduced all sorts of terrible resolutions, the delegates kept aloof from him ;

and when he insisted upon having the addresses of anarchists all over the world, the refusal was made in anything but a flattering manner.

To make a long story short, he was unmasked a couple of months later, and the paper was stopped for ever on the very next day. Then, a couple of years after that, the prefect of police, Andrieux, published his 'Memoirs,' and in this book he told all about the paper which he had started and the explosions which his agents had organized at Paris, by putting sardine boxes filled with 'something' under the statue of Thiers.

One can imagine the quantities of money all these things cost the French and every other nation.

I might write several chapters on this subject but I will mention only one more story of two adventurers at Clairvaux.

My wife stayed in the only inn of the little village which has grown up under the shadow of the prison wall. One day the landlady entered her room with a message from two gentlemen, who came to the hotel and wanted to see my wife. The landlady interceded with all her eloquence in their favour. 'Oh, I know the world,' she said, 'and I may assure you, madame, that they are the most correct gentlemen. Nothing could be more *comme-il-faut*. One of them gave the name of a German officer. He is surely a baron or a "milord," and the other is his interpreter. They know you perfectly well. The baron is going now to Africa, perhaps never to return, and he wants to see you before he leaves.'

My wife looked at the address of the message,

which was: 'A Madame la Principesse Kropotkine,' and needed no further proof of the *comme-il-faut* of the two gentlemen. As to the contents of the message, they were even worse than the address. Against all rules of grammar and common-sense the 'baron' wrote about a mysterious communication which he had to make. She refused point-blank to receive the baron and his interpreter.

Thereupon the baron wrote to my wife letter upon letter, which she returned unopened. All the village soon became divided into two parties—one siding with the baron and led by the landlady, and the other against him, and headed, as a matter of fact, by the landlady's husband. Quite a romance was circulated. 'The baron had known my wife before her marriage. He had danced with her many times at the Russian embassy in Vienna. He was still in love with her, but she, the cruel one, refused even to allow him to cast a glance at her before he went upon his perilous expedition. . . .'

Then came the mysterious story of a boy whom we were said to conceal. 'Where is their boy?' the baron wanted to know. 'They have a son, six years old by this time—where is he?' 'She never would part with a boy if she had one,' the one party said. 'Yes, they have one, but they conceal him,' the other party maintained.

For us two, this contest was a very interesting revelation. It proved that our letters were not only read by the prison authorities, but that their contents were made known to the Russian embassy as well. When I was at Lyons, and my wife went to see

Elisée Reclus in Switzerland, she wrote to me once that 'our boy' was going on well; his health was excellent, and they all spent a very nice evening at the anniversary of his fifth birthday. I knew that she meant 'Le Révolté,' which we often used to name in conversation 'our *gamin*'—our naughty boy. But now that these gentlemen were inquiring about 'our *gamin*,' and even designated so correctly his age, it was evident that the letter had passed through other hands than those of the governor. It was well to know such a thing.

Nothing escapes the attention of village folk in the country, and the baron soon awakened suspicions. He wrote a new letter to my wife, even more loquacious than the former ones. Now, he asked her pardon for having tried to introduce himself as an acquaintance. He owned that she did not know him; but nevertheless he was a well-wisher. He had to make to her a most important communication. My life was in danger and he wanted to warn her. The baron and his secretary took an outing in the fields to read together that letter and to consult about its tenor—the forest-guard following them at a distance—but they quarrelled about it, and the letter was torn to pieces and thrown in the fields. The forester waited till they were out of sight, gathered the pieces, connected them, and read the letter. In one hour's time the village knew that the baron had never really been acquainted with my wife; the romance which was so sentimentally repeated by the baron's party crumbled to pieces.

'Ah, then, they are not what they pretended to be,' the *brigadier de gendarmerie* concluded in his turn;

‘then they must be German spies’—and he arrested them.

It must be said in his excuse that a German spy had really been at Clairvaux shortly before. In time of war the vast buildings of the prison might serve as dépôts for provisions or barracks for the army, and the German General Staff was surely interested to know the inner capacity of the prison buildings. A jovial travelling photographer came accordingly to our village, made friends with everyone by photographing them for nothing, and was admitted to photograph, not only the inside of the prison yards, but also the dormitories. Having done this, he travelled to some other town on the eastern frontier, and was there arrested by the French authorities as a man found in possession of compromising military documents. The brigadier, fresh from the impression of the photographer’s visit, jumped to the conclusion that the baron and his secretary were also German spies, and took them in custody to the little town of Bar-sur-Aube. There they were released next morning, the local paper stating that they were not German spies but ‘persons commissioned by another more friendly power.’

Now public opinion turned entirely against the baron and his secretary, who had to live through more adventures. After their release they entered a small village café, and there ventilated their griefs in German in a friendly conversation over a bottle of wine. ‘You were stupid, you were a coward,’ the would-be interpreter said to the would-be baron. ‘If *I* had been in your place, I would have shot that examining magistrate with this revolver. Let him only repeat that.

with *me*—he will have these bullets in his head !' And so on.

A commercial traveller who quietly sat in the corner of the room, rushed at once to the brigadier to report the conversation which he had overheard. The brigadier made at once an official report, and once more arrested the secretary—a pharmacist from Strasburg. He was taken before a police court at the same town of Bar-sur-Aube, and got a full month's imprisonment for 'menaces uttered against a magistrate in a public place.' At last the two adventurers left Clairvaux.

These spy adventures ended in a comical way. But how many tragedies—terrible tragedies—we owe to these villains ! Precious lives lost, and whole families wrecked, simply to get an easy living for such swindlers. When one thinks of the thousands of spies going about the world in the pay of all governments ; of the traps they lay for all sorts of artless people ; of the lives they sometimes bring to a tragical end, and the sorrows they sow broadcast ; of the vast sums of money thrown away in the maintenance of that army recruited from the scum of society ; of the corruption of all sorts which they pour into society at large, nay, even into families, one cannot but be appalled at the immensity of the evil which is thus done. And this army of villains is not only limited to those who play the spy on revolutionists or to the military espionage system. In this country there are papers, especially in the watering towns, whose columns are covered with advertisements of private detective agencies which undertake to collect all sorts of information for divorce suits, to spy upon husbands for

their wives and upon wives for their husbands, to penetrate into families and entrap simpletons, and who will undertake anything which may be asked of them, for a corresponding sum of money. And while people feel scandalized at the espionage villainies lately revealed in the highest military spheres of France, they do not notice that amongst themselves, perhaps under their own roofs, the same and even worse things are being committed by both the official and private detective agencies.

XV

DEMANDS for our release were continually raised, both in the Press and in the Chamber of Deputies—the more so as about the same time that we were condemned Louise Michel was condemned, too—for robbery. Louise Michel, who always gives literally her last shawl or cloak to the woman who is in need of it, and who never could be compelled, during her imprisonment, to have better food, because she always gave her fellow prisoners what was sent to her, was condemned, together with another comrade, Pouget, to nine years' imprisonment for highway robbery! That sounded too bad even for the middle-class opportunists. She marched one day at the head of a procession of the unemployed, and, entering a baker's shop, took a few loaves from it and distributed them to the hungry column: this was her robbery. The release of the anarchists thus became a war-cry against

the government, and in the autumn of 1885 all my comrades save three were set at liberty by a decree of President Grévy. Then the outcry on behalf of Louise Michel and myself became still louder. However, Alexander III. objected to it; and one day the prime minister, M. Freycinet, answering an interpellation in the Chamber, said that 'diplomatic difficulties stood in the way of Kropótkin's release.' Strange words in the mouth of the prime minister of an independent country; but still stranger words have been heard since in connection with that ill-omened alliance of France with imperial Russia.

At last, in the middle of January 1886, both Louise Michel and Pouget, as well as the four of us who were still at Clairvaux, were set free.

We went to Paris and stayed there for a few weeks with our friend, Elie Reclus—a writer of great power in anthropology, who is often mistaken outside France for his younger brother, the geographer, Elisée. A close friendship has united the two brothers from early youth. When the time came for them to enter a university, they went from a small country place in the valley of the Gironde to Strasburg, making the journey on foot—accompanied, as true wandering students, by their dog; and when they stayed at some village it was the dog which got his bowl of soup, while the two brothers' supper very often consisted of bread only, with a few apples. From Strasburg the younger brother went to Berlin, whereto he was attracted by the lectures of the great Ritter. Later on, in the forties, they were both at Paris. Elie Reclus became a convinced Fourierist, and both saw in the republic of

1848 the coming of a new era of social evolution. Consequently, after Napoleon III.'s coup d'état, they both had to leave France, and emigrated to England. When the amnesty was voted, and they returned to Paris, Elie edited there a Fourierist co-operative paper which was widely spread among the workers. It is not generally known, but may be interesting to note, that Napoleon III.—who played the part of a Cæsar, interested, as behoves a Cæsar, in the conditions of the working classes—used to send one of his aides-de-camp to the printing office of the paper, each time it was printed, to take to the Tuileries the first sheet issued from the press. He was, later on, even ready to patronize the International Workingmen's Association, on the condition that it should put in one of its reports a few words of confidence in the great socialist plans of the Cæsar; and he ordered its prosecution when the Internationalists refused point-blank to do anything of the sort.

When the Commune was proclaimed, both brothers heartily joined it and Elie accepted the post of keeper of the National Library and the Louvre museum under Vaillant. It was, to a great extent, to his foresight and to his hard work that we owe the preservation of the invaluable treasures of human knowledge and art accumulated in these two institutions; otherwise they would have perished during the bombardment of Paris by the armies of Thiers, and the subsequent conflagration. A passionate lover of Greek art, and profoundly acquainted with it, he had had all the most precious statues and vases of the Louvre packed and stored in the caves, while the greatest precautions were taken

to protect the building of the National Library from the conflagration which raged round it. His wife, a courageous, worthy companion of the philosopher, followed in the streets by her two little boys, organized in the meantime in her own quarter of the town the feeding of the population which had been reduced to sheer destitution by a second siege. During the final few weeks of its existence, the Commune at last realized that a supply of food to the population, which was deprived of the means of earning it for itself, ought to have been the Commune's first duty, and volunteers organized the relief. It was by mere accident that Elie Reclus, who had kept to his post till the last moment, escaped being shot by the Versailles troops; and a sentence of deportation having been pronounced upon him—for having dared to accept so necessary a service under the Commune—he went with his family into exile. Now, on his return to Paris, he had resumed the work of his life—ethnology. What this work is may be judged from a few, very few, chapters of it published in book form under the title of 'Primitive Folk' and 'The Australians,' as well as from the history of the origin of religions, which he now lectures upon at the *École des Hautes Études*, at Brussels—a foundation of his brother. In the whole of the ethnological literature there are not many works imbued to the same extent with a thorough and sympathetic understanding of the true nature of primitive man. As to his 'Origin of Religions' (which is being published in the review, 'Société Nouvelle,' and its continuation 'Humanité Nouvelle'), it is, I venture to say, the best work on the subject that has been

published—undoubtedly superior to Herbert Spencer's attempt in the same direction, because Herbert Spencer, with all his immense intellect, does not possess that understanding of the artless and simple nature of the primitive man which Elie Reclus possesses to a rare perfection, and to which he has added an extremely wide knowledge of a rather underrated branch of folk-psychology—the evolution and transformation of beliefs. It is needless to speak of Elie Reclus's infinite good nature and modesty, or of his superior intelligence and vast knowledge of all subjects relating to humanity; it is all comprehended in his style. With his unbounded modesty, his calm manner and his deep philosophical insight, he is the type of the Greek philosopher of antiquity. In a society less fond of patented tuition and of piecemeal instruction, and more appreciative of the development of wide humanitarian conceptions, he would be surrounded by flocks of pupils, like one of his Greek prototypes.

A very animated socialist and anarchist movement was going on at Paris while we stayed there. Louise Michel lectured every night, and aroused the enthusiasm of her audiences, whether they consisted of working men or were made up of middle-class people. Her already great popularity became still greater and spread even amongst the university students, who might hate advanced ideas but worshipped in her the ideal woman; so much so that a riot, caused by someone speaking disrespectfully of Louise Michel in the presence of students, took place one day in a café. The young people took up her defence and made a fearful

uproar, smashing all the tables and glasses in the café. I also lectured once on anarchism, before an audience of several thousand people, and left Paris immediately after that lecture, before the government could obey the injunctions of the reactionary and the pro-Russian press, which insisted upon my being expelled from France.

From Paris we went to London, where I found once more my two old friends, Stepniák and Tchaykóvsky. The socialist movement was in full swing, and life in London was no more the dull, vegetating existence that it had been for me four years before.

We settled in a small cottage at Harrow. We cared little about the furniture of our cottage, a good part of which I made myself with the aid of Tchaykóvsky—he had been in the meantime in the United States and had learned some carpentering—but we rejoiced immensely at having a small plot of heavy Middlesex clay in our garden. My wife and myself went with much enthusiasm into small culture, the admirable results of which I began to realize after having made acquaintance with the writings of Toubeau, and some Paris *marâchers* (gardeners), and after our own experiment in the prison garden at Clairvaux. As for my wife, who had typhoid fever soon after we settled at Harrow, the work in the garden during the period of convalescence was more completely restorative for her than a stay at the very best sanatorium.

By the end of the summer a heavy stroke fell upon us. We learned that my brother Alexander was no longer alive.

During the years that I had been abroad before my

imprisonment in France, we had never corresponded with each other. In the eyes of the Russian government, to love a brother who is persecuted for his political opinions is in itself a sin. To maintain relations with him after he has become a refugee is a crime. A subject of the Tsar must hate all the rebels against the supreme ruler's authority—and Alexander was in the clutches of the Russian police. I persistently refused therefore to write to him or to any of my relatives. After the Tsar had written on the petition of our sister Hélène, 'Let him remain there,' there was no hope of a speedy release for my brother. Two years after that, a committee was nominated to settle terms for those who had been exiled to Siberia without judgment for an undetermined time, and my brother got five years. That made seven with the two years he had already been kept there. Then a new committee was nominated under Lóris Mélikoff, and added another five years. My brother was thus to be liberated in October 1886. That made twelve years of exile, first in a tiny town of East Siberia, and afterwards at Tomsk—that is in the lowlands of West Siberia, where he had not even the dry and healthy climate of the high prairies farther East.

When I was imprisoned at Clairvaux, he wrote to me, and we exchanged a few letters. He wrote that as our letters would be read by the Russian police in Siberia and by the French prison authorities in France, we might as well write to each other under this double supervision. He spoke of his family life, of his three children whom he characterized admirably well, and of his work. He earnestly advised me to keep a watchful

eye upon the development of science in Italy, where excellent and original researches are made, but remain unknown in the scientific world until they have been re-manufactured in Germany; and he gave me his opinions about the probable march of political life in Russia. He did not believe in the possibility with us in a near future, of constitutional rule on the pattern of the West European parliaments; but he looked forward—and found it quite sufficient for the moment—to the convocation of a sort of deliberative National Assembly (*Zémskiy Sobór* or *Etats Généraux*). It would not vote new laws, but would only work out the schemes of laws to which the imperial power and the Council of State would give their definitive form and the final sanction.

Above all he wrote to me about his scientific work. He always had a decided leaning towards astronomy, and when we were at St. Petersburg he had published in Russian an excellent summary of all our knowledge of the shooting stars. With his fine critical mind he soon saw the strong or the weak points of different hypotheses; and without sufficient knowledge of mathematics, but endowed with a powerful imagination, he succeeded in grasping the results of the most intricate mathematical researches. Living with his imagination amongst the moving celestial bodies, he realized their complex movements often better than some mathematicians—especially the pure algebraists—realize them, because they often lose sight of the realities of the physical world to see only the formulæ and their logical connections. Our St. Petersburg astronomers spoke to me with great appreciation of that

work of my brother. Now he undertook to study the structure of the universe : to analyze the data and the hypotheses about the worlds of suns, star-clusters, and nebulae in the infinite space, and to disentangle their probable grouping, their life, and the laws of their evolution and decay. The Pulkova astronomer, Gylden, spoke highly of this new work of Alexander, and introduced him by correspondence to Mr. Holden in the United States, from whom I had lately the pleasure of hearing, at Washington, an appreciative estimate of my brother's researches. Science is greatly in need, from time to time, of such scientific speculations of a higher standard, made by a scrupulously laborious, critical, and at the same time, imaginative mind.

But in a small town of Siberia, far away from all the libraries, unable to follow the progress of science, he had only succeeded in embodying in his work the researches which had been done up to the date of his exile. Some capital work had been done since—he knew it—but how could he get access to the necessary books so long as he remained in Siberia? The approach of the term of his liberation did not inspire him with hope either. He knew that he would not be allowed to stay in any of the university towns of Russia or of Western Europe, but that his exile to Siberia would be followed by a second exile, perhaps even worse than the first, to some hamlet of Eastern Russia.

Despair took possession of him. 'A despair like Faust's takes hold of me at times,' he wrote to me. When the time of his liberation was coming, he sent his wife and children to Russia, taking advantage of one of

the last steamers before the close of the navigation, and, on a gloomy night, the despair of Faust put an end to his life. . . .

A dark cloud hung upon our cottage for many months—until a flash of light pierced it. It came next spring, when a tiny being, a girl who bears my brother's name, came into the world, and at whose helpless cry I overheard in my heart quite new chords vibrating.

XVI

IN 1886 the socialist movement in England was in full swing. Large bodies of workers had openly joined it in all the principal towns, as well as a number of middle-class people, chiefly young, who helped it in different ways. An acute industrial crisis prevailed that year in most trades, and every morning, and often all the day long, I heard groups of workers going about in the streets singing 'We've got no work to do,' or some hymn, and begging for bread. People flocked at night into Trafalgar Square to sleep there in the open air, under the wind and rain, between two newspapers; and one day in February a crowd, after having listened to the speeches of Burns, Hyndman, and Champion, rushed into Piccadilly and broke a few windows in the great shops. Far more important, however, than this outbreak of discontent, was the spirit which prevailed amongst the poorer portion of the working population

in the outskirts of London. It was such that if the leaders of the movement, who were prosecuted for the riots, had received severe sentences, a spirit of hatred and revenge, hitherto unknown in the recent history of the labour movement in England, but the symptoms of which were very well marked in 1886, would have been developed, and would have impressed its stamp upon the subsequent movement for a long time to come. However, the middle classes seemed to have realized the danger. Considerable sums of money were immediately subscribed in the West End for the relief of misery in the East End—certainly quite inadequate to relieve a widely spread destitution, but sufficient to show, at least, good intentions. As to the sentences which were passed upon the prosecuted leaders, they were limited to two and three months' imprisonment.

The amount of interest in socialism and all sorts of schemes of reform and reconstruction of society was very great in all layers of society. Beginning with the autumn and throughout the winter, I was asked to lecture over the country, partly on prisons, but mainly on anarchist socialism, and I visited in this way nearly every large town of England and Scotland. As I had, as a rule, accepted the first invitation I received to stay the night after the lecture, it consequently happened that I stayed one night in a rich man's mansion, and the next night in the narrow abode of a working family. Every night I saw considerable numbers of people of all classes; and whether it was in the worker's small parlour, or in the reception-rooms of the wealthy, the most animated discussions went on about socialism and anarchism till a late hour of the

night—with hope in the workman's home, with apprehension in the mansion, but everywhere with the same earnestness.

In the mansions, the main question was to know, 'What do the socialists want? What do they intend to do?' and next, 'What are the concessions which it is absolutely necessary to make at some given moment in order to avoid serious conflicts?' In these conversations I seldom heard the justice of the socialist contention merely denied, or described as sheer nonsense. But I found also a firm conviction that a revolution was impossible in England; that the claims of the mass of the workers had not yet reached the precision nor the extent of the claims of the socialists, and that the workers would be satisfied with much less; so that secondary concessions, amounting to a prospect of a slight increase of well-being or of leisure, would be accepted by the working classes of England as a pledge in the meantime of still more in the future. 'We are a left-centre country, we live by compromises,' I was once told by an old member of Parliament, who had had a wide experience of the life of his mother country.

In workmen's dwellings too, I noticed a difference in the questions which were addressed to me in England to those which I was asked on the Continent. General principles, of which the partial applications will be determined by the principles themselves, deeply interest the Latin workers. If this or that municipal council votes funds in support of a strike, or organizes the feeding of the children at the schools, no importance is attached to such steps. They are taken as a matter of fact. 'Of course, a hungry child cannot

learn,' a French worker says. 'It must be fed.' 'Of course, the employer was wrong in forcing the workers to strike.' This is all that is said, and no praise is given on account of such minor concessions by the present individualist society to communist principles. The thought of the worker goes beyond the period of such concessions, and he asks whether it is the Commune, or the unions of workers, or the State which ought to undertake the organization of production; whether free agreement alone will be sufficient to maintain Society in working order, and what would be the moral restraint if Society parted with its present repressive agencies; whether an elected democratic government would be capable of accomplishing serious changes in the socialist direction, and whether accomplished facts ought not to precede legislation? and so on. In England, it was upon a series of palliative concessions, gradually growing in importance, that the chief weight was laid. But, on the other hand, the impossibility of state administration of industries seemed to have been settled long ago in the workers' minds, and what chiefly interested most of them were matters of constructive realization, as well as how to attain the conditions which would make such a realization possible. 'Well, Kropótkin, suppose that to-morrow we were to take possession of the docks of our town. What's your idea about how to manage them?' I would, for instance, be asked as soon as we had sat down in a small workman's parlour. Or, 'We don't like the idea of state management of railways, and the present management by private companies is organized robbery. But suppose the workers owned

all the railways. How could the working of them be organized?' The lack of general ideas was thus supplemented by a desire of going deeper into the details of the realities.

Another feature of the movement in England was the considerable number of middle-class people who gave it their support in different ways, some of them frankly joining it, while others helped it from the outside. In France or in Switzerland, the two parties—the workers and the middle classes—not only stood arrayed against each other, but were sharply separated. So it was, at least, in the years 1876–85. When I was in Switzerland I could say that during my three or four years' stay in the country I was acquainted with none but workers—I hardly knew more than a couple of middle-class men. In England this would have been impossible. We found quite a number of middle-class men and women who did not hesitate to appear openly, both in London and in the provinces, as helpers in organizing socialist meetings, or in going about during a strike with boxes to collect coppers in the parks. Besides, we saw a movement, similar to what we had had in Russia in the early seventies, when our youth rushed 'to the people,' though by no means so intense, so full of self-sacrifice, and so utterly devoid of the idea of 'charity.' Here also, in England, a number of people went in all sorts of capacities to live near to the workers: in the slums, in people's palaces, in Toynbee Hall, and the like. It must be said that there was a great deal of enthusiasm at that time. Many probably thought that a social revolution had commenced, like the hero of Morris's comical play, 'Tables

Turned,' who says that the revolution is not simply coming, but has already begun. As always happens however with such enthusiasts, when they saw that in England, as everywhere, there was a long, tedious, preparatory, uphill work that had to be done, very many of them retired from active propaganda, and now stand outside of it as mere sympathetic onlookers.

XVII

I TOOK a lively part in this movement, and with a few English comrades we started, in addition to the three socialist papers already in existence, an anarchist-communist monthly, 'Freedom,' which continues to live up to the present day. At the same time I resumed my work on anarchism where I had had to interrupt it at the moment of my arrest. The critical part of it was published during my Clairvaux imprisonment by Elisée Reclus, under the title of 'Paroles d'un Révolté.' Now I began to work out the constructive part of an anarchist-communist society—so far as it can now be forecast—in a series of articles published at Paris in 'La Révolte.' Our 'boy,' 'Le Révolté,' prosecuted for anti-militarist propaganda, was compelled to change its title-page and now appeared under a feminine name. Later on these articles were published in a more elaborate form in a book, 'La Conquête du Pain.'

These researches caused me to study more thoroughly certain points of the economic life of our

present civilized nations. Most socialists had hitherto said that in our present civilized societies we actually produce much more than is necessary for guaranteeing full well-being to all. It is only the distribution which is defective; and if a social revolution took place, nothing more would be required than for everyone to return to his factory or workshop, Society taking possession for itself of the 'surplus value' or benefits which now go to the capitalist. I thought, on the contrary, that under the present conditions of private ownership production itself had taken a wrong turn, so as to neglect, and often to prevent, the production of the very necessities for life on a sufficient scale. None of these are produced in greater quantities than would be required to secure well-being for all; and the over-production, so often spoken of, means nothing but that the masses are too poor to buy even what is now considered as necessary for a decent existence. But in all civilized countries the production, both agricultural and industrial, ought to and easily might be immensely increased so as to secure a reign of plenty for all. This brought me to consider the possibilities of modern agriculture, as well as those of an education which would give to everyone the possibility of carrying on at the same time both enjoyable manual work and brain work. I developed these ideas in a series of articles in the 'Nineteenth Century,' which are now published as a book under the title of 'Fields, Factories, and Workshops.'

Another great question also engrossed my attention. It is known to what conclusions Darwin's formula, 'The Struggle for Existence,' had been developed by most of

his followers, even the most intelligent of them, such as Huxley. There is no infamy in civilized society, or in the relations of the whites towards the so-called lower races, or of the 'strong' towards the 'weak,' which would not have found its excuse in this formula.

Already during my stay at Clairvaux I saw the necessity of completely revising the formula itself of 'struggle for existence' in the animal world, and its applications to human affairs. The attempts which had been made by a few socialists in this direction had not satisfied me, when I found in a lecture of a Russian zoologist, Prof. Kessler, a true expression of the law of struggle for life. 'Mutual aid,' he said in that lecture, 'is as much a law of nature as mutual struggle; but for the *progressive* evolution of the species the former is far more important than the latter.' These few words—confirmed unfortunately by only a couple of illustrations (to which Syévertsoff, the zoologist of whom I have spoken in an earlier chapter, added one or two more)—contained for me the key of the whole problem. When Huxley published in 1888 his atrocious article, 'The Struggle for Existence: a Program,' I decided to put in a readable form my objections to his way of understanding the struggle for life, among animals as well as among men, the materials for which I had accumulated during a couple of years. I spoke of it to my friends. However, I found that the comprehension of 'struggle for life' in the sense of a war-cry of 'Woe to the weak,' raised to the height of a commandment of nature revealed by science, was so deeply inrooted in this country that it had become

almost a matter of religion. Two persons only supported me in my revolt against this misinterpretation of the facts of nature. The editor of the 'Nineteenth Century,' Mr. James Knowles, with his admirable perspicacity, at once seized the gist of the matter, and with a truly youthful energy encouraged me to take it in hand. The other was H. W. Bates, whom Darwin has truly described in his autobiography as one of the most intelligent men whom he ever met. He was secretary of the Geographical Society, and I knew him. When I spoke to him of my intention he was delighted with it. 'Yes, most assuredly write it,' he said. 'That is true Darwinism. It is a shame to think of what "they" have made of Darwin's ideas. Write it, and when you have published it, I will write you a letter in that sense which you may publish.' I could not have had better encouragement, and began the work which was published in the 'Nineteenth Century' under the titles of 'Mutual Aid among Animals,' 'among Savages,' 'among Barbarians,' 'in the Mediæval City,' and 'among Ourselves.' Unfortunately I neglected to submit to Bates the first two articles of this series, dealing with animals, which were published during his lifetime; I hoped to be soon ready with the second part of the work, 'Mutual Aid among Men,' but it took me several years before I completed it, and in the meantime Bates was no more among us.

The researches which I had to make during these studies in order to acquaint myself with the institutions of the barbarian period and with those of the mediæval free cities, led me to another important research—the part played in history by the state, since its last

incarnation in Europe, during the last three centuries. And on the other side, the study of the mutual-support institutions at different stages of civilization, led me to examine the evolutionist bases of the sense of justice and of morality in man.

Within the last ten years the growth of socialism in England has taken a new aspect. Those who judge only by the numbers of socialist and anarchist meetings held in the country, and the audiences attracted by these meetings, are prone to conclude that socialist propaganda is now on the decline. And those who judge the progress of it by the numbers of votes that are given to those who claim to represent socialism in Parliament, jump to the conclusion that there is now hardly any socialist propaganda in England. But the depth and the penetration of the socialist ideas can nowhere be judged by the numbers of votes given in favour of those who bring more or less socialism into their electoral programmes. Still less so in England. The fact is, that out of the three directions of socialism which were formulated by Fourier, Saint Simon, and Robert Owen, it is the latter which prevails in England and Scotland. Consequently it is not so much by the numbers of meetings or socialist votes that the intensity of the movement must be judged, but by the infiltration of the socialist point of view into the trade unionist, the co-operative, and the so-called municipal socialist movements, as well as the general infiltration of socialist ideas all over the country. Under this aspect, the extent to which the socialist views have penetrated is vast in comparison to what

it was in 1886; and I do not hesitate to say that it is simply immense in comparison to what it was in the years 1876-82. I may also add that the persevering endeavours of the tiny anarchist groups have contributed, to an extent which makes us feel that we have not wasted our time, to spread the ideas of No-Government, of the rights of the individual, of local action, and free agreement—as against those of State all-mightiness, centralization, and discipline, which were dominant twenty years ago.

Europe altogether is traversing now a very bad phase of the development of the military spirit. This was an unavoidable consequence of the victory obtained by the German military empire, with its universal military service system, over France in 1871, and it was already then foreseen and foretold by many—in an especially impressive form by Bakúnin. But the counter-current already begins to make itself felt in modern life.

As to the way communist ideas, divested of their monastic form, have penetrated in Europe and America, the extent of that penetration has been immense during the twenty-seven years that I have taken an active part in the socialist movement and could observe their growth. When I think of the vague, confused, timid ideas which were expressed by the workers at the first congresses of the International Workingmen's Association, or which were current at Paris during the Commune insurrection, even amongst the most thoughtful of the leaders, and compare them with those which have been arrived at to-day by an immense number of workingmen, I must say they seem to me as two entirely different worlds.

There is no period in history—with the exception, perhaps, of the period of the insurrections in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries (which led to the birth of the mediæval Communes), during which a similarly deep change has taken place in the current conceptions of Society. And now, in my fifty-seventh year, I am even more deeply convinced than I was twenty-five years ago, that a chance combination of accidental circumstances may bring about in Europe a revolution far more important and as widely spread as that of 1848; not in the sense of mere fighting between different parties, but in the sense of a deep and rapid social reconstruction; and I am convinced that whatever character such movements may take in different countries, there will be displayed in all of them a far deeper comprehension of the required changes than has ever been displayed within the last six centuries; while the resistance which such movements will meet in the privileged classes will hardly have the character of obtuse obstinacy which made revolutions assume the violent character which they took in times past.

To obtain this immense result was well worth the efforts which so many thousands of men and women of all nations and all classes have made within the last thirty years.

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